

C O S M I C S H E L T E R

Hélio Oiticica and Neville D’Almeida’s  
Private *Cosmococas*

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*Cosmic Shelter: Hélio Oiticica y Neville D’Almeida’s Private Cosmococas*

As described by poet Waly Salomão, “COSMOCOCA is pure nitroglycerine. It is a holistic environment, it is cosmos.” Made by Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980) during his self-exile to New York in collaboration with Brazilian filmmaker Neville D’Almeida (born 1941), the 1973 series of *Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress* [Block Experiments in Cosmococa–Program in Progress] or *Cosmococas*, operate on multiple levels to transform pop and underground culture into a psychedelic experience. Part of Oiticica’s larger series of *quasi-cinemas*, each installation features cacophonous soundscapes, fragmentary projections, cocaine drawings, and tactile elements meant to engage the senses. Underscoring the artists’ radical beliefs in individual liberation and social critique, the *Cosmococas* embody Oiticica’s twin philosophies of *crelazer* [creleisure]—a neologism of the Portuguese words for “to create,” “to believe,” and “leisure,” —which stipulates that unprescribed leisure is integral to creativity, and the *supra-sensorial* [super-sensorial], which aims to expand participants’ sensory capacities linked to everyday experiences and awaken their internal creativity.

For each of the five original *Cosmococas*, the artists crafted two sets of instructions: one for public institutional presentations and, in an anti-elitist effort to democratize the series, another for display in private homes. The private instructions were open propositions that viewers could set up without prior initiation into any culture—be it “high” or “low”—allowing people of any status or background to enjoy the *Cosmococas*. Delving deeper into diasporic otherness, Oiticica felt acutely the need for such safe spaces for exploration as he embraced more rebellious personal politics and behaviors. Blurring the lines between art and life, he transformed his homes into sites for countercultural protest and experimentation. It was in these shelters that he and D’Almeida first dreamt up the *Cosmococas*.

Despite the artists’ desire to share their work with a diverse audience, the illicit subject matter forced the *Cosmococas* to remain clandestine, shown only to a select audience of friends, until their public display in 1992, twelve years after Oiticica’s death. Presented in the United States for the first time in the work’s fifty-year history, *Cosmic Shelter* debuts the private versions of *CC2 Onobject* and *CC3 Maileryn*, reimagining the gallery as a space for individual relaxation and play.

Curated by Daniela Mayer. The exhibition was developed in conjunction with a two-semester independent study by Hunter College MA Art History students Thais Bignardi, Rowan Diaz-Toth, and Angelica Pomar. Support for this exhibition is provided by the Hunter College

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**BLOCO-EXPERIÊNCIAS IN COSMOCOCA-PROGRAMA IN PROGRESS**

D'Almeida coined the name *Cosmococa*—a combination of the words *cosmos* and *coca*, the plant from which cocaine is derived—for a new film before it became the primary title for his and Oiticica's subsequent *quasi-cinema*. Within the series, each *Bloco-Experiência* [Block-Experiment], or *Bloco*, is an ideologically open artistic “program.” From the start, the artists intended the *Blocos* to evolve based on variations in their sites and chance interactions with participants. By embracing a system of delirious mutation and creating opportunities for *crelazer* [creleisure], the artists intended the *Cosmococas* to create “multiple let-outs for collective and individual participation as an experimental exercise of liberty.”

The public and private versions of each *Bloco* feature roughly thirty non-narrative, colorful slides projected in a loop onto the walls or ceiling as loud music plays. They center on unique individuals—Luis Buñuel, Yoko Ono, Marilyn Monroe, John Cage, and Jimi Hendrix, respectively—that the artistic duo viewed as countercultural revolutionaries for their impact on art and culture at large. Manipulating light, sound, and tactile elements, the series integrates unconventional environments and instructions for behavior—or more aptly, playful suggestions—to disrupt the status quo and encourage a *supra-sensorial* state that activates participants' creativity. The public versions utilize elaborate settings, while the private versions pared down physical elements can be modified according to each participant's vision and means, enhancing the collaborative, democratic spirit of the series.

As a gallery located in a university, a second home to its students, the *Cosmococas* in *Cosmic Shelter* explore the liminal space between the private and public spheres.

CC3 MAILERYN, PRIVATE VERSION

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC3 Maileryn, Private Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa—Programa in Progress, 1973*

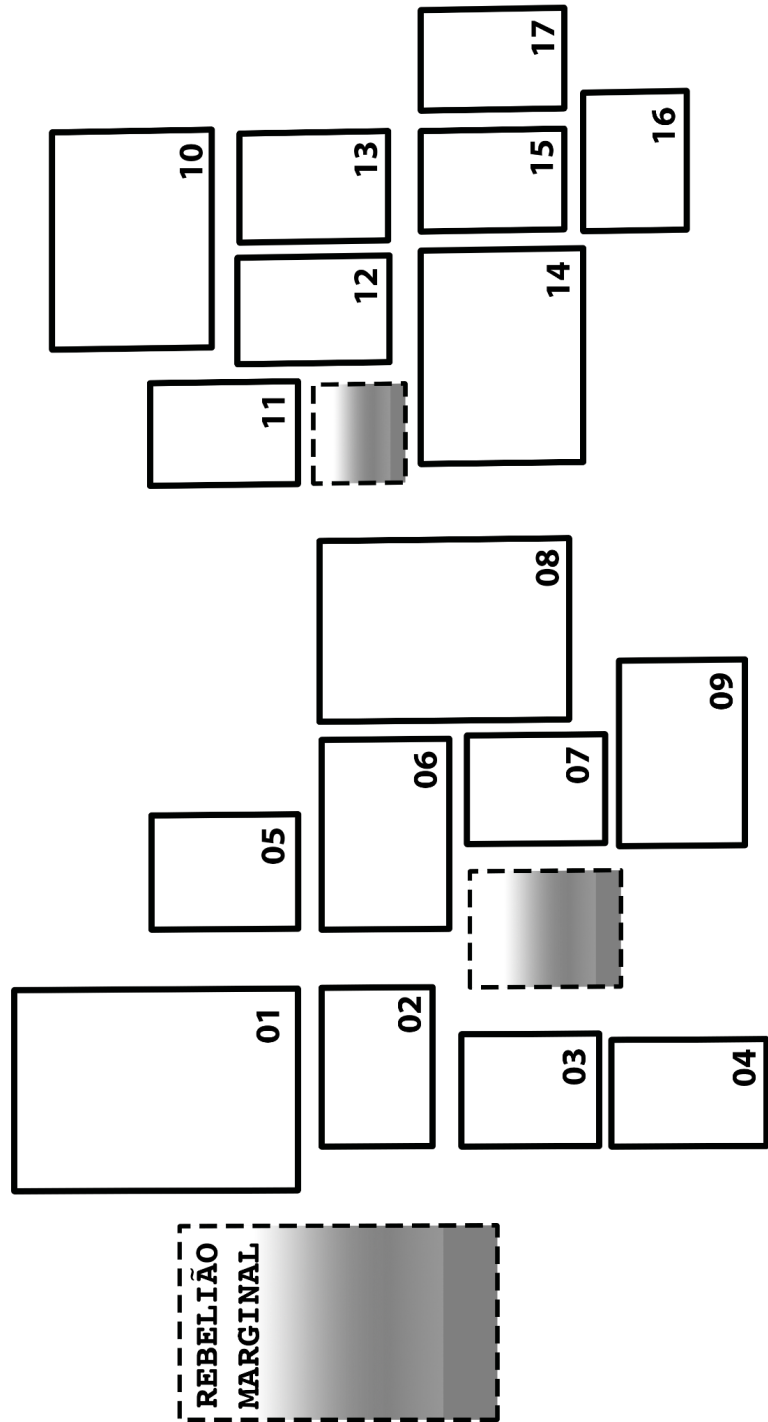
Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida and César and Claudio Oiticica

The cover of Norman Mailer's 1973 biography of Marilyn Monroe is the central image among the slides in *CC3 Maileryn*, the actress's famous beauty masked by garish cocaine drawings, or *mancoquilagens*. As the shrink-wrap around the newly purchased book is slowly cut back, Monroe's plain visage is revealed, only to be covered once more by cocaine. In the public version, her face is projected onto four walls and the ceiling, looking out onto a thick, vinyl floor placed over low sand dunes and covered with yellow and orange balloons. It was suggested that participants lie down barefoot and roll around on the ground while blowing up balloons with a whistle as the quivering, operatic voice of Yma Sumac—known as "Hollywood's Incan Princess"—echoed throughout the space. The mambo music is a nod to Oiticica's "tropicamp" aesthetics; the heightened self-parody of Brazilian/Latinx tropes is a constant theme throughout the *Cosmococas*.

The artists reimagined the tangible elements in the private version, cutting the number of projections to two opposing slideshows and translating the vinyl floor into "a screen/surface of white velvet (real or artificial) or white/thick/shiny vinyl." Rather than activate the playful nature of their collaborators, the private *Bloco* wordlessly directs participants toward the meditative, relaxing side of *crelazer* [creleisure]. Asking that participants step into basins of water at an undetermined pace, the work draws attention to the calming sensation of cool water on bare skin. The instructions further invite collaboration, asking participants to "improvise at will: in a way that is both INVENTIVE and MUSICAL."

R E B E L I Ã O M A R G I N A L



### REBELIÃO MARGINAL

Oiticica's understanding of marginality developed during his upbringing in Rio de Janeiro, where he began to interact with the people of its infamous *comunidades* [communities]. During the late 1960s, the social, economic, and racist oppression endured by residents of these neighborhoods—often located on the physical (and metaphorical) margins of the city—was exacerbated by the repressive policies of the authoritarian Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–85).

The same year as the regime's coup d'état, Oiticica began frequenting the *comunidade* of Mangueira for rehearsals with the neighborhood's renowned samba school, subsequently befriending bandits, brothel owners, and drug dealers. These relationships influenced the artist's self-described "ethical moment," his desire to resist—and set in motion a series of artistic interventions that would prove influential in developing the *Cosmococas*. He gradually shifted his practice from purely formal investigations toward socially directed, sensory interventions. His relationship with Mangueira directly inspired several series, including his wearable *Parangolés* (1965–80), forerunners to the protest art of the *Tropicália* movement (1967–72). Along with his artistic contemporaries Oiticica started to self-identify as "marginal," appropriating the identity to intensify his artworks' (and his own) political fervor. Yet, for all his empathy, as a middle-class, educated white man, Oiticica could not truly belong to these marginalized communities.

By the end of the decade, as the dictatorship was censoring, arresting, and torturing dissidents under the auspices of the harsh Ato Institucional Número Cinco [Institutional Act Number Five, 1968], many artists and leftists fled Brazil. Oiticica traveled to London in 1969, then settled in New York the following year. Financial insolvency, growing crime, and the social unrest of the Black Power, gay rights, and women's liberation movements saw the city become a frenetic site of creative experimentation, led by many on the economic fringes of society. Oiticica's charged identity as a foreign "other" in this new environment helped him to more intrinsically embody an outsider status, amplified by his embrace of a queer, countercultural lifestyle. This new set of conditions and self-identity on the fringes of mainstream society and the art world fed his increasingly subversive embrace of taboos, transforming Oiticica's perception of marginality abroad and catalyzing his increasingly rebellious work.

1. **Desdémone Bardin**

Mangueira I, c. 1965 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of the Estate of Desdémone Bardin © Desdémone Bardin

2. **Unknown Photographer**

Festival das Bandeiras [Festival of Flags], Rio de Janeiro, February 18, 1968 (printed 2023)

Artwork center left: Hélio Oiticica, *Seja Marginal, Seja Herói* [Be Marginal, Be a Hero/Be an Outlaw, Be a Hero], 1968; Screenprint on fabric

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

For his 1968 *Bandeira-Poema* [Banner-Poem], *Seja Marginal, Seja Herói*, Oiticica paid homage to deceased bandit Alcir Figueira da Silva, a Brazilian man who died by suicide rather than be arrested—and tortured—by the police. Oiticica perceived this as a noble act, the only choice of self-determination in a rigged system, which aligned with his lifelong anarchist, ethical principles. Screenprinted onto multiple banners of various colors, Silva's deceased body is shown lying above the work's titular proclamation, which can be translated in English as both "Be Marginal, Be a Hero" and "Be an Outlaw, Be a Hero." The latter interpretation makes clear the perceived relationship between marginality and crime in Brazil.

*Seja Marginal* was unveiled on February 18, 1968, at the Festival das Bandeiras [Festival of Flags] at the Praça General Osório [General Osório Square], a happening where artists hung flags with political imagery on trees and clotheslines in a park in Rio de Janeiro's affluent Ipanema neighborhood. This work marks Oiticica's embrace of marginality as a broad creative framework against oppression of any kind—political or otherwise. Through his banner, the artist transformed Silva into a martyr and a symbol of resistance that called on the public to become outlaws and revolt against the brutality of the Brazilian authoritarian regime.

3. **Claudio Oiticica**

Hélio Oiticica with *B33 Bólido Caixa 18, Homenagem à Cara de Cavalo, Caixa-poema 2* [B33 Bólido Box 18, Homage to Horseface, Box-poem 2], 1965; Wood, photography, nylon, fabric, glass, iron, plastic, and pigment

Image c. 1966 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

As Oiticica's personal relationship with the Mangueira residents deepened, so did his animosity toward the situation afflicting the *comunidades* and its residents. This unique *Bólido* [Fireball] commemorates the death of Oiticica's friend, twenty-three-year-old bandit Manoel Moreira, also known as Cara de Cavalo, who was shot over a hundred times by an extrajudicial military police squadron. A black-and-white image widely circulated in the press of the eviscerated bandit covers all four walls of the *Bólido's* interior. In the center, a clear plastic packet of dry red pigment, a

stand-in for cremated ashes, is imprinted with a poem that reads:

AQUI ESTA  
E FICARÁ  
CONTEMPLAI  
SEU  
SILÊNCIO  
HEROICO

Translated, it says, “Here he is, and will stay! Contemplate his heroic silence.” A master of wordplay, Oiticica used the dual tense of the word *seu* in Portuguese to create an alternate translation: “Contemplate *your* heroic silence”—a sarcastic, somewhat hostile address of the viewer’s complacency (and even complicity) in the anti-hero’s death.

4. **Hélio Oiticica**

“O HERÓI ANTI-HERÓI E O ANTI-HERÓI ANÔNIMO,” [THE ANTI-HERO HERO AND THE ANONYMOUS ANTI-HERO], March 23, 1968 (facsimile)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica bemoaned the deaths of marginal figures like Cara de Cavalo [Horseface] and Alcir Figueira da Silva, in his 1968 essay “*O Herói Anti-Herói e o Anti-Herói Anônimo*”. In it, Oiticica impugned Brazilian society for its oppression of the *comunidades* and their residents, stating that they “castrated every possibility of its [the *comunidades* and its residents] survival, as if it were a leprosy, an incurable evil” and further “collaborated to make it [the *comunidades*] the symbol of one who must die, and I mean more, die violently, with all cannibalistic refinement.”

5. **Desdémone Bardin**

Mangueira II, c. 1965 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of the Estate of Desdémone Bardin © Desdémone Bardin

### PARANGOLÉS

*Parangolés* (1965–80) are colorful, wearable garments made of banners, capes, tents, and other materials that require movement for activation. Often adorned with political slogans and images, these works lift the veil between the art-object, performer, and spectator, the latter of whom become participants simply by reacting to the *Parangolés*. The series' makeshift and kinetic qualities were directly inspired by Oiticica's experiences in the *comunidade* of Mangueira, making anyone who donned them embody the association with displacement, financial insecurity, and the provisional.

The paramount issue of existence “on the margins”—and its economic and racial fault lines—was underscored by Oiticica in the *Parangolés*' debut. The artist inaugurated the *Parangolés* on August 12, 1965, during the opening of *Opinião 65* [Opinion 65], a sociopolitically focused group exhibition at Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro [Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro]. In a now infamous incident, Oiticica led a predominantly Afro-Brazilian, working-class group of men and women from Mangueira, dressed in the vibrant *Parangolés* in a small but exuberant samba-style procession. For reasons unstated—but which the artist understood and announced to be racial discrimination—the leftist museum director refused entry to the dancers. Undeterred, Oiticica instead led the defiant group through the museum's gardens, stressing the revolutionary yet jubilant quality of the work. The economic and racial divide between the performers and watchers was starkly evident, making power disparities between segments of Brazilian society the true performance. This incident highlights Oiticica's rejection of institutional and social oppression, a focus in the joyously transgressive works that dominate the latter half of his career.



6. **Desdémone Bardin**

*Parangolé* Dancers on the Grounds Outside the Opening of *Opinião 65* [Opinion 65] at the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1965 (printed 2023)

Center: Young boy with *P2 Parangolé Bandeira 1* [P2 Parangolé flag 1], 1964

Right: Hélio Oiticica wearing *P7 Parangolé Capa 4 Homenagem à Lygia Clark* [P7 Parangolé Cape 4 Homage to Lygia Clark], 1964–65

Courtesy of the Estate of Desdémone Bardin © Desdémone Bardin

7. **Desdémone Bardin**

Roseni wearing *P7 Parangolé Capa 4 Homenagem à Lygia Clark* [P7 Parangolé Cape 4 Homage to Lygia Clark], 1964–65 at the Opening of *Opinião 65* [Opinion 65], Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1965 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of the Estate of Desdémone Bardin © Desdémone Bardin

8. **Claudio Oiticica**

Nildo of Mangueira wearing Hélio Oiticica's *P15 Parangolé P15 Capa 11, Eu incorporo a revolta* [P15 Parangolé, Cape 11, I Embody Revolt], 1967; Paint, burlap, cotton fabric, straw, and leather

Image c. 1968 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Although upbeat in their presentations, many of the *Parangolés* took on a subversive, antagonistic character through the incorporation of phrases that played up the stereotypes of the marginalized dancers who usually wore them. For *P15 Parangolé Capa 11, Eu incorporo a revolta*, the wearer would don the work like a sandwich-board comprising of many layers of fabric and lift the uppermost beige sheet to “flash” onlookers with the titular declaration. In this 1967 photograph of Nildo of Mangueira, a young Afro-Brazilian man, the statement is not just a generic political one, but a self-aware farce that, in modern parlance, dares to say the quiet part aloud: he was what society feared.

9. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Parangolé Cape 30*, 1972, in the New York City Subway, February 2, 1973 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica continued to disrupt norms by staging *Parangolé* performances in public spaces around Manhattan, updating his conception of the *Parangolé*. Now a “parody of the ‘serious artist,’” Oiticica focused on “PARANGOPLAY,” writing in 1972, “I am not interested in dance in its naturalistic state of 'human manifestation' or reductions in *ego-trip* (neuro-psychic fragmentation) but in inventive liberation of play capacities.”

The graffiti-covered subway cars and stations of 1970s New York were a hotbed for criminal activity, deterring many from the middle and upper classes from using public transportation. This quickened the transformation into a zone for the marginalized and the poor who were literally forced underground by way of their class conditions. For the performance with the *Parangolé Cape 30*, Oiticica and his companion Romero Cavalcanti invited subway riders to interact and dance with the cape. As with their performance in Brazil, Oiticica's lively subway *Parangolé* performances brought joy to a space, and a people, that were being increasingly neglected by the government.

## **SOUTH BRONX**

Oiticica was introduced to the South Bronx in 1973 by photographer Martine Barrat. In the 1970s, the South Bronx was being impacted by New York's policy of "planned shrinkage"—the removal of municipal services, including fire and police protection, from poor neighborhoods that did not contribute significant tax revenue, leading to worsening conditions and crumbling infrastructure. As in the Brazilian *comunidades*, the Bronx was systematically neglected by the government; people were left to their own devices, which led to the formation of eighty-five youth gangs who perpetuated violent territorial disputes.

Barrat, who moved from Paris to New York in 1968, embedded herself with the Ghetto Brothers, Roman Kings, and Roman Queens gangs, all of whom collaborated on her film and photography projects, including her collection of documentary video reels *You Do the Crime, You Do the Time* (1976). She further introduced Oiticica to Carlos "Karate Charlie" Suarez, president of the Ghetto Brothers gang. Reflecting on a videotape that Barrat had taken of an hours-long conversation between himself and Suarez, Oiticica recalled a connection similar to those he had made with marginal figures in Mangueira: "we were talking for hours he and I in [Barrat's apartment at] the CHELSEA HOTEL like old friends on the day we met: we reviewed the long tape made with him: cool: I layed down the speech of my friends: about MANGUIERA-MANGUE-OTO OF THE SAMBA SCHOOL-ZEZÉ and RENÔ [...]" Indeed, the camaraderie that Oiticica formed with Suarez and other figureheads of the South Bronx exposed the artist to the impact of American politics in practice, informing his nuanced perspective of the landscape of New York's underground and marginal identity as a whole.

10. **Martine Barrat**

*Pearl, President of the Roman Kings, the Day He Got Out of Jail*, South Bronx, New York, 1976 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Martine Barrat

11. **Hélio Oiticica**

Martine Barrat and Gang Members Filming, South Bronx, New York, c. 1976 (printed 2023)  
Martine Barrat Collection

In these photographs, Oiticica captured Martine Barrat aiding gang members in recording themselves and their “rap sessions,” giving them creative license to direct and craft their own representation. The images display a perspective of the gangs that countered mainstream depictions of them as violent criminals. Rather than these dehumanizing portrayals, Oiticica’s photos display the kinship and camaraderie of the gang members’ collective filmmaking and recording process.

12. **Martine Barrat**

*Hélio Oiticica Having Fun in the South Bronx I*, New York, c. 1973–76 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Martine Barrat

Barrat captured Oiticica playfully posing on the streets of the South Bronx. These photographs showcase Oiticica’s irreverent sense of humor and fascination with the cultural trappings of New York. In this picture he stands behind a fence—“behind bars”—and points to a piece of graffiti spelling out “The Joint,” a slang term for jail.

13. **Martine Barrat**

*Hélio Oiticica Having Fun in the South Bronx II*, New York, c. 1973–76 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Martine Barrat

14. **Martine Barrat**

*Jennifer, Daughter of Vicky, President of the Roman Queens, and Her Cousin Playing in the South Bronx*, New York, c. 1976 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Martine Barrat

Disproportionately affected by the city’s impending bankruptcy and subsequent reduction in municipal services, the predominantly Black and Latinx community in the South Bronx suffered from an epidemic of fires throughout the 1970s that destroyed much of the neighborhood’s architectural infrastructure. These photographs depict the children of street gang members playing in the rubble of these destroyed buildings. The landscapes of urban wreckage share some visual parity with the government-neglected neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro—although Barrat (who later

lived in Mangueira) recalled the South Bronx as suffering from an overall greater sense of desperation than the Brazilian *comunidades*.

15. **Hélio Oiticica**

Two Youths Posing with Black Power Fists, South Bronx, New York, c. 1976 (printed 2023) Martine Barrat Collection

16. **Hélio Oiticica**

Martine Barrat with Roman Queens and Their Children Recording Audio, South Bronx, New York, c. 1976 (printed 2023)  
Martine Barrat Collection

Originally a dancer, French artist Martine Barrat was brought to New York in 1968 by Ellen Stewart, founder of La MaMa Experimental Theater Club. After an injury ended her dance career, she began her journey as a documentarian and photographer, embedding herself with members of the gangs in the South Bronx for six years, from 1971–1977. Her work with the gangs was premiered at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York at the 1978 exhibition *You Do the Crime, You Do the Time*. The show featured looping videos with Barrat's interviews of gang members, in which she captured their vulnerability and honesty as they shared their stories. These works provide a glimpse into the lives of those living in the neglected neighborhood of the South Bronx, their nuanced perspectives countering the ongoing media narratives about gang members as purely violent individuals.

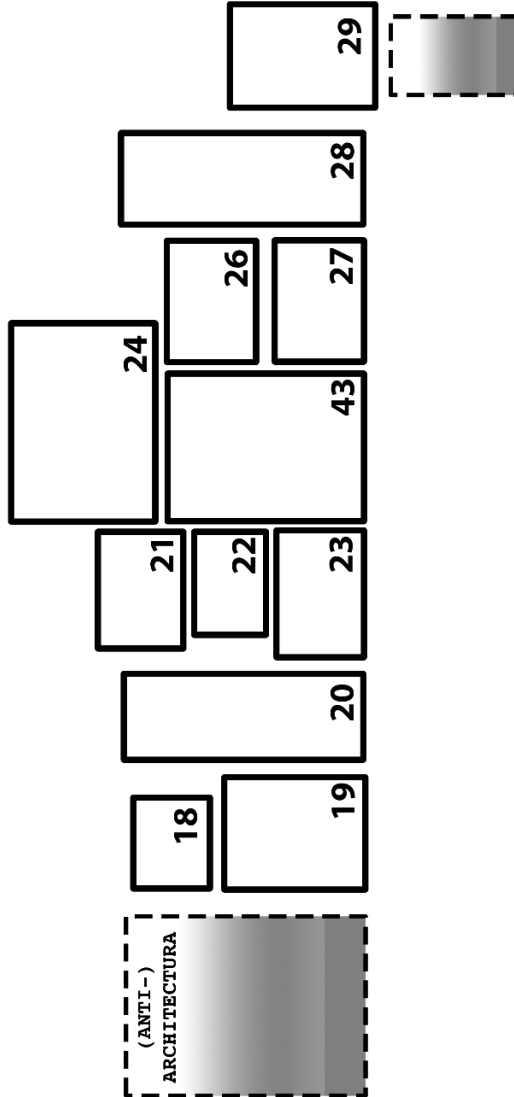
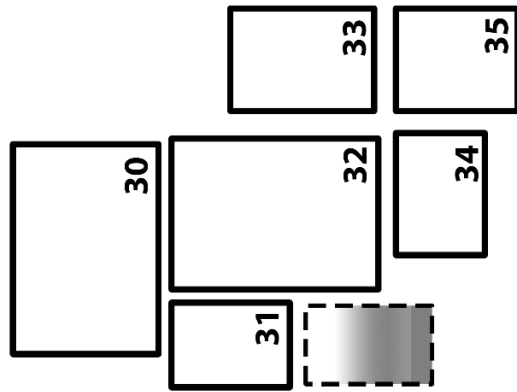
Barrat continues to live and work in New York.

17. **Hélio Oiticica**

"Rap in Progress," October 28, 1973 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

"Rap in Progress" demonstrated Oiticica's fascination with speech patterns and the language of rap through "rap sessions," or informal meetings about a particular subject. Likely introduced to this mode of conversation through his experiences with South Bronx residents, Oiticica engaged Brazilian artist Carlos Vergara as a "participator" in "Rap in Progress." He described the "Rap" "not as a questionnaire but as a varied conversation. I start and its *progress* can result in often *rappist* writing talking."

(Anti-)ARCHITECTURA



ABRIGO (ANTI-)ARCHITECTURA

Beginning in 1967, Oiticica sought to democratize space by eschewing traditional architectural principles of structural permanence and functionality—what could be called “anti-architecture.” This stance was not only aesthetic but political for the artist, who was acutely aware of the rapid globalization of Brazil and the resulting impact on the country’s built environment. With the institution of military rule in 1964, Oiticica’s formerly utopian outlook on architecture began to sour. New modernist structures that once symbolized technological prowess and national prosperity became synonymous with fascism.

These failed architectural politics were the catalyst for a countercultural, unpolished aesthetic mentality that would prove fundamental to Oiticica's immediate projects and the *Cosmococas* years later. The early series of *Penetráveis* [Penetrables, 1967–79] and *Ninhos* [Nests, 1969–78], with their flexible constructions and unprescribed functionality, offer glimpses of this anti-architectural ethos. This choice takes partial inspiration from the informal architecture of the *comunidades* [communities] that Oiticica frequented, where tight space and limited resources necessitated a provisional style of construction. The first of the *Penetráveis*, made while Oiticica was living in Brazil, include specific references to Brazilian culture and politics, but later iterations made while living in London in 1969 reflect an increasing ambiguousness informed by the artist’s desire for spectators to actively participate in the works and in his words, “be in a situation where you can release inside yourself some essential things.”

When he relocated to New York in 1970, Oiticica was brimming with ideas to further synthesize interior and exterior, art and life, via a series of outdoor structural installations. Due to various bureaucratic and access constraints these plans were not realized, but they soon found new shapes and environments. Oiticica’s Second Avenue loft, known as Loft 4, became the site of his *Babylonests* (1971–74). These amalgamations of the deinstalled *Ninhos* and street finds that resembled military barracks were a world in microcosm that sheltered inhabitants from the world at large or, more simply put, by Oiticica’s friend, poet Waly Salomão, a “MUNDO-ABRIGO” [WORLD-SHELTER]. The *Babylonests*—spaces designed for both personal introspection and social interaction—were the sites of many of Oiticica’s pieces, including the *Cosmococas*.

18. **Unknown Photographer**

Hélio Oiticica and two visitors with his *Projeto Cães de Caça* [Hunting Dogs Project], 1961, at the Bloco Escola [School Block] at the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1961 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica began his formal art studies in 1954 at the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, where he was introduced to and subsequently joined the *Grupo Frente* [Front Group, 1954–56], a collective within the modernist Concrete art movement. These studies led to his involvement with the Neo-Concrete movement (1959–61), which, in contrast to Concretists' interest in industrial design and city-planning, was inward facing and focused on individual spectator relationships to artwork. Reflecting this shift, Oiticica's work evolved from geometric, abstract paintings to experiments focused on color, light, and labyrinthian environments with organic, collaborative elements. His new interest is encapsulated in the *Projeto Cães de Caça*, a multilevel, public garden surrounded by a sloping modernist, concrete wall. The series integrates some of the earliest examples of Oiticica's *Penetráveis*, intimate-scale installations that participants were encouraged to enter and interact with. Although *Cães* was never realized, Oiticica viewed his maquettes as finished works in themselves, prioritizing the highly conceptual nature of his projects over their physical actualization. This installation and other unrealized works are therefore considered complete within Oiticica's oeuvre.

19. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Tropicalália*, 1967; Plants, sand, birds, and poems by Roberta Camila Salgado, site specific

*PN3 Penetrável Imagético* [PN3 Penetrable Imagetical], 1966–67; Wood, plastic, tissue, jute, television

Installation view, *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* [New Brazilian Objectivity], Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, April 1967 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Installed for the *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* exhibition at the Museu de Arte Moderna in Rio de Janeiro, this installation included cliché Brazilian motifs such as live parrots, sand, and lush tropical plants surrounding makeshift comunidade-inspired structures. The latter inclusion disrupted the exoticized fantasy of Brazil by reminding viewers of the nation's extensive poverty. The installation inspired the name for the *Tropicalália* movement, also known as *Tropicalismo* (1967–72), which used various art forms to criticize the military regime. According to playwright Zé Celso, the cultural revolution of *Tropicalália* was led by a desire to destroy the "cardboard, proto-American Brazil." It encouraged collective participation to forge "another history of Brazil, one that was born of the resistance of slaves, indigenous groups, and immigrants."



20. **Hélio Oiticica**  
“SUBTERRÂNIA,” September 21, 1969 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

In this prose poem written from London, Oiticica simultaneously decried and exalted the “underground” status of Brazil and Latin America in relation to the broader world. Defining the global south to be *subterrânia* [subterranean/underground], he began, “IT’S ME IT’S YOU IT’S LATIN AMERICA south sub below the earth far from the chatter inside you [*sic*] unique condition of creation.” Noting the difference in the underground from “in Brazil” and “from the world to Brazil,” or within and outside of the country, Oiticica invokes a unity among the Latinx (sub)continent and hints at a belief that outside Brazil, all Brazilians were marginal.

21. **Hélio Oiticica**  
*Éden* [Eden], 1969; Sand, crushed bricks, dry leaves, water, cushions, foam flakes, books, magazines, “pulp fiction,” straw, matting, and incense, site specific  
Installation view, *Whitechapel Experiment*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, February 25–April 6, 1969 (printed 2023)  
Photograph: Guy Brett  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

A retrospective at Whitechapel Gallery brought Oiticica to London in 1969, where he resided for a majority of the year. Located in the historically working-class East End, the gallery provided an ideal environment for an artist like Oiticica, who was delighted by locals’ extensive interaction with his show. As part of his exhibition—known as the *Whitechapel Experiment*—Oiticica created a new installation, *Éden*, an environment of select concepts and components from previous series of work, including numerous *Penetráveis*. Participants could interact with various ad-hoc structures as they moved barefoot through the sand-covered space, all senses engaged. Among the *Penetráveis* were *PN6 Penetrável Cannabiana* (1967–68) and *PN7 Penetrável Lololiana* (1967–68). In keeping with Oiticica’s *supra-sensorial* ambitions and foreshadowing the *Cosmococas*, *PN6* and *PN7* were designed to include illicit substances for participant consumption—cannabis and a hallucinogenic inhalant known as Lolo’s breath in Brazil, respectively—although these components were abandoned due to health and feasibility concerns. *PN6* and *PN7* are nevertheless indicative of Oiticica’s growing interest in expanding the senses to produce a more holistic experience.

22. **Hélio Oiticica**  
*Barracão Experiment 1* [Barrack Experiment 1], 1969; Plywood, burlap, colored lights, hay, collaged materials, plastic tape, aluminum foil, crepe paper  
Installation view, University of Sussex, Brighton, October 16–November 9, 1969 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica designed *Barracão Experiment 1* during a yearlong artist residency at the University of Sussex, England, in 1969. Eight *Ninhos* were arranged in several rows stacked two levels high, located in a common area on the university campus where students could freely enter and lounge inside the structure. The residency proved to be an incubatory period for Oiticica, wherein he was able to put his concept of *crelazer* [creleisure], into practice. He considered the university context to be especially conducive to his aims of blurring the boundary between art and life, as students were more open-minded and used to communal living. Oiticica detailed this sentiment to art critic Mário Pedrosa in a letter from December 1969, declaring the project even more successful than *Éden* at the Whitechapel Gallery earlier that year:

*The students helped me a lot, and there was a crazy euphoria at the opening; the thing [Barracão Experiment 1] is there to be used as if it were a piano or a ping-pong table; attendance has been incredible ever since; imagine that there are 4 levels of 1 meter high each, which makes a real building! Guy Brett came that day, and he really liked it. I prefer all of this to the entire Whitechapel exhibition, as the thing is played here in a different context, with a different meaning, etc.*

*Barracão Experiment 1* served as a precursor to the second iteration that Oiticica would show in the exhibition *Information* at the Museum of Modern Art the following year.

23. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Barracão Experiment 1* [Barrack Experiment 1], 1969; Plywood, burlap, colored lights, hay, collaged materials, plastic tape, aluminum foil, crepe paper  
Installation view, University of Sussex, Brighton, October 16–November 9, 1969  
(printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

24. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Barracão Experiment 2, Ninhos* [Barrack Experiment 2, Nests], 1970; Wood burlap, branches, foam mattresses, ladders, pillows, silver foil, lights  
Installation view, *Information*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 2–September 20, 1970 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

The *Ninhos* were designed to be private spaces within the public realm. For Oiticica, these spaces for intimacy and self-reflection set against the backdrop of a busy museum or other public venue were principally sites for his concept of *crelazer* [creleisure]. For the groundbreaking exhibition *Information* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970, which brought together new work from 100 international artists, Oiticica created his *Barracão Experiment 2, Ninhos*, a group of twenty-eight nests stacked

three levels high and separated by thick burlap fabric. In a deliberate challenge to traditional institutional display, active engagement with the *Ninhos* was encouraged. Oiticica considered participants to be artists in their own right, as their various interactions within and around the artwork transformed and completed it. After the show ended Oiticica disassembled and moved *Barracão 2* into his Second Avenue loft where the structures were remade into the *Babylonests* and imbued with a new functionality in a private residence.

25. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Barracão Experiment 2, Ninhos* [Barrack Experiment 2, Nests], 1970; Wood burlap, branches, foam mattresses, ladders, pillows, silver foil, lights  
Installation view, *Information*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, July 2–September 20, 1970 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

26. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Rhodislandia*, 1971; Nylon screens, gray gravel, orange and yellow lighting, collaborator additions  
Installation view, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, November 29–December 17, 1971 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Following *Barracão Experiment 2, Ninhos* (1970) and the *Information* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Oiticica delved deeper into multisensorial installation and further abandoned the hierarchical relationship between artist, artwork, and audience. While conducting a weeklong multidisciplinary workshop at the University of Rhode Island in November 1971, Oiticica collaborated with students to create *Rhodislandia*. Though he provided a basic plan, the outcome of *Rhodislandia* was largely impacted by student input and participation—one student even suggested planting vegetation to create an idealized environment within a reduced interior space, to which Oiticica enthusiastically agreed. The final installation featured a group of large cell-like structures with walls made of semi-transparent nylon fabric, each filled with ephemera selected by students such as twigs, a chair, and a piano, meant to encourage individual self-performance within a communal space. *Rhodislandia's* open propositions for interaction foreshadow the freeform *Babylonests* that Oiticica would construct in his New York loft later that same year.

27. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Rhodislandia*, 1971; Nylon screens, gray gravel, orange and yellow lighting, collaborator additions  
Installation view, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI, November 29–December 17, 1971 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

28. **Hélio Oiticica**

"Barnbilônia," January 23, 1971 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica referred to Manhattan interchangeably as *Babilônia* and Babylon in a tongue-in-cheek reference to the city's decadence and chaos. Though he found New York inspiring as an artist, gay man, and avid consumer of pop culture, he also thought it increasingly rife with the same neoconservatist policies that were then overtaking North and South America as a whole. To this point he remarks in the poem's closing line that "the world isn't so round, it's Manhattan-penis"—above a drawing of Manhattan-as-penis and the phrase "twowaynis" written in the bottom corner—referring to both the island's phallic shape and its two-sidedness as a site of social and sexual excess as well as a capitalist stronghold. "Barnbilônia" is but one example of the witty, stream-of-consciousness writing style that dominates Oiticica's journal entries and published writings.

29. **Miguel Rio Branco**

Hélio Oiticica in the *Babylonists* at Loft 4 with the maquette for *Subterranean Tropicália Projects*, 1971–72  
Image c. 1971 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Miguel Rio Branco and César and Claudio Oiticica

**Vitrine**

**Hélio Oiticica**

*Subterranean Tropicália Projects, Maquette of PN10, PN11, PN12, PN13 Penetráveis*, 1971–72;  
Corrugated cardboard, cardboard, yellow cellophane, shredded paper, and plastic mesh  
Collection of The Ortiz Family

When applying for the Guggenheim Fellowship that brought him to New York in 1970, Oiticica conceived of a plan for an interactive art-environment in Central Park known as the *Subterranean Tropicália Projects*. The installation would feature four new *Penetráveis* (*PN10*, *PN11*, *PN12*, and *PN13*) of differing configurations, as well as gardens and communal spaces for relaxation and live performances. *Projects* was particularly inspired by Oiticica's theory of a "subterranean" or metaphorical underground identity synonymous with the Brazilian condition. As Brazilian artists faced marginalization and persecution both at home and beyond, he envisioned these spaces of *crelazer* [creleisure] as avenues for unrepressed universal communication, "an open plan that can be expanded, grow." Despite a series of reimaginings and attempts, funding and permissions could not be secured for the ambitious *Projects*, resulting in its final form in 1972 as a blueprint in *Changes* magazine. The inability to physically actualize his ideas contributed to Oiticica's shifting concerns and increasingly insular practice, though much of his creative output while living in New York continued to be shaped

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by the principle of providing “a plan for a practice.” Decades later, in 2022, one element of *Subterranean Tropicália Projects, Penetrável PN15*, was realized at Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City.

**BABYLONESTS**

The *Babylonests* (c. 1971–74) were site-specific iterations of the earlier *Ninhos* located in Oiticica's Second Avenue loft. Six nests were arranged in three double-stacked rows; each interior could be decorated to the inhabitant's tastes. In contrast to the *Ninhos* from *Barracão Experiment 2* (1970) and their public audience, the *Babylonests* had a revolving cast that Oiticica encouraged to come and go as they pleased. In this private yet communal environment, the *Babylonests* were more hedonistically charged. Oiticica replaced the opaque fabric walls used in the previous installations with a changing assortment of dividers including bubble wrap, chicken wire, and clear nylon. These flimsy divisions between each bunk guaranteed neither visual nor auditory privacy, and further testify to Oiticica's erotic conception of the *Babylonests'* spatiality and functionality. Liberated from any intrinsic social conditions and restricted to an intimate gathering of Oiticica's friends and lovers, the *Babylonests* were spaces for play—particularly related to sex and drug use—that intentionally allowed for communion or isolation.

**30. Thomas Valentin**

Hélio Oiticica and Andreas Valentin in Loft 4, 82 Second Avenue, New York, c. 1973  
(printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Thomas Valentin

**31. Thomas Valentin**

Hélio Oiticica in Loft 4, 82 Second Avenue, New York, c. 1973 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Thomas Valentin

**32. Andreas Valentin**

Hélio Oiticica in the *Babylonests*, Loft 4, 82 Second Avenue, New York, c. 1974 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Andreas Valentin

These 1972 portraits of Oiticica in the Second Avenue *Babylonests* provide an intimate view of the artist's domestic life. He is seen lounging and using drugs in his personal *Ninho*, the bright red vinyl walls decorated with photographs of friends and lovers. The kitschy, at times chaotic design of Oiticica's *Ninho* was further described by Waly Salomão:

*The NINHO [of Oiticica] was equipped with a TV set and remote control zapping non-stop, newspapers, radio, recorder, cassette tapes, books, magazines, telephone (the phone not underutilized as a mere pragmatic means but as compulsive reel-talk with its vivid interjections seemingly improvised like hot jazz, talking blues and rap) camera, slide projector, viewfinder, boxes of classified slides, tissue box, disposable bottles and cups, straws, blade-cut agate stone, etc. etc. NINHOS and*

*its archipelago structures: neither solid nor linear nor insular: like a television that transcodes the most private corner into windows open to others and to the world: WORLD-SHELTER.*

Indeed, the sounds, sights, and multisensorial stimulation of Oiticica's private nest mirrored the motifs of his artwork; more generally, the *Babylonests* exemplified the liberatory potential of his anti-architectural practice.

**33. Unknown Photographer**

Hélio Oiticica in front of the theatrical poster for Neil Simon's *The Prisoner of Second Avenue*, c. 1972 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

The liberation and inspiration Oiticica found in New York was undeniable. "I love that city [New York] and it is the only place in the world that interests me," he detailed in a 1970 letter to friend and fellow artist Lygia Clark: "I feel free all of a sudden and that pleases me a lot; that trip and now the prospect of returning has given me such insight, it seems I am alive again." Yet this sentiment proved unsustainable as he later found himself unsteadily employed, low on money, and frustrated with the deepening consumerism and elitism of the city's art scene. In the city where he sought refuge Oiticica was once again alienated, writing of Manhattan to Clark in 1972 that he felt "in prison on this infernal island." Restless within the confines of the East Village, Oiticica may have thus imagined a poster for *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* to be a darkly comedic nod to his own situation living in the city.

**34. Unknown Photographer**

People in the *Babylonests* at Loft 4, c. 1971 (printed 2023)

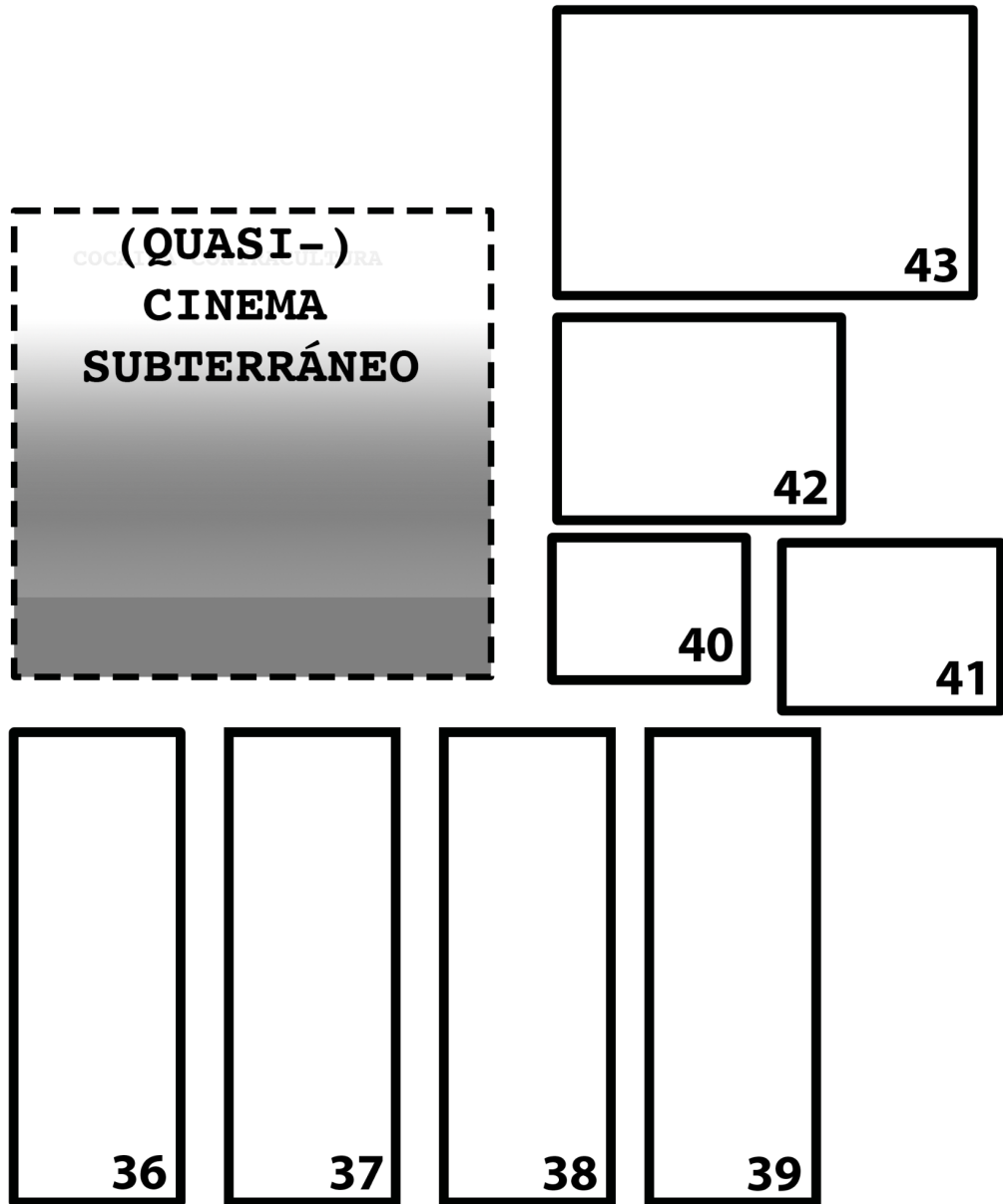
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

**35. Miguel Rio Branco**

Hélio Oiticica in the *Babylonests*, c. 1971 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of Miguel Rio Branco and César and Claudio Oiticica

( Q U A S I - ) C I N E M A  
S U B T E R R Á N E O





(QUASI-)CINEMA SUBTERRÂNEO

Developed while Oiticica was living abroad, the *quasi-cinemas* (1973–75) are a series of sequences of projected images and an accompanying soundtrack. Yet, their integration of participant instructions and unconventional sensory elements, as seen in the *Cosmococas*, challenge the traditional medium of cinema, or what Oiticica described as “the spectator’s hypnosis and submission to the screen’s visual and absolute super-definition”—through warped “quasi-,” or “kind of,” cinema experiments.

The aesthetic and conceptual rationale for this series was borne out of Oiticica’s exposure to the Brazilian Cinema Marginal group (1968–73)—also known as the *Udigrudi*, a joke on the Brazilian pronunciation of “underground”—and the queer, North American Underground Cinema movement of the 1960s. Dedicated, in his own words, to rejecting his “excessive intellectualization” and “bourgeoisie conditioning,” Oiticica found ideological compatriots in *Udigrudi* filmmakers like Neville D’Almeida, Júlio Bressane, Ivan Cardoso, and Rogério Sganzerla, who used commercially available Super 8 cameras to create low-budget films with experimental narratives and unpolished aesthetics heightened by subversive subject matter. Foreshadowing the importance of this movement on his projects, Oiticica met D’Almeida, the *Cosmococas* co-creator, at a private screening of D’Almeida’s 1967 seditious film *Jardim de Guerra* [War Garden] in Brazil. The two men bonded around their kindred, radical sensibilities and creative ambitions. As noted by D’Almeida, “Hélio was an artist who wanted to be a filmmaker, and I was a filmmaker who wanted to be an artist.”

Oiticica’s cinematic ideas expanded again while in London in 1969, where he saw films by gay Underground directors like Andy Warhol and Jack Smith, which merged queerness and counterculture with raw visual sequences and experimental modes of display. Synthesizing his overlapping personal interests in identity politics, anti-architectural practice, and film, Oiticica began creating scripts for (unrealized) projects that mixed pre-recorded footage with live performance and *supra-sensorial* elements in atypical environments. It was not until moving to New York, where the artist enrolled in film classes and ingratiated himself with key figures in the Underground scene, that Oiticica began to realize his cinematic ambitions, ultimately bringing to light the artform that would become the *quasi-cinemas*.

36. **Hélio Oiticica**  
“Hermaphrodipotesis,” 1969 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Written during his year in London in 1969, “Hermaphrodipotesis” underscores the centrality of pleasure in Oiticica’s work. In the text, he questions whether the *Ninhos* and similar constructions were perhaps intended to create spaces for pleasure with oneself, where one could “be self-enchanted (selfenchanted) [sic], as if on a hermaphrodite activity.” He urges the reader to “hermaphroditize your acts” and participate in unrestricted acts of pleasure-making or *crelazer* [creleisure]: “you will be self-enchanted, and sexier, and have appetite for everything.” At the end of the text he includes a drawing of a snake biting its tail, referring back to his closing sentiments about being “hermaphroditized from you [society]—I am the snake who bites its tail.” Oiticica expanded on this theory in his later text “Londocumento,” explaining that divisions between sexes and sexual orientations “never existed as something real: they are the shadow of social oppression.” Oiticica’s pursuit of pleasure unfettered by social restraint led to a break from discursive and aesthetic conventions, exemplified in his project *Neyrótika* from 1973, which synthesized the freeform structure of the *Babylonests* with the same gender- and sexuality-bending theory of “Hermaphrodipotesis.”

37. **Hélio Oiticica**  
“Londocumento” [Londocument], August 27, 1969 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Written before his move to New York, “Londocumento” captures a fruitful moment in the theoretical side of Oiticica’s practice. He muses on his identity as a Brazilian expatriate in London and pines for the same sort of visceral passion, excitement, and *crelazer* [creleisure] abroad as he felt at home, and reflects upon his previous creative endeavors, writings, and poems, particularly “Hermaphrodipotesis.” He also discusses his cinematic aspirations, detailing plans for his unrealized film project and *quasi-cinema* forerunner *Nitro Benzol & Black Linoleum*, declaring himself a challenger to the eminent figures of the Underground film scene, particularly Andy Warhol: “Cinema must be strong like the “underground” (I am the “underground” of Latin America!), like [Warhol’s infamous film] *Chelsea Girls* that is in (North) America, but I will be stronger.”

38. **Hélio Oiticica**

Audience Guide for *Nitro Benzol & Black Linoleum*, 1969 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Predating the formal conception of a *quasi-cinema* by four years, the multimedia installation *Nitro Benzol & Black Linoleum* demonstrates Oiticica's early interest in combining the moving image and the visual arts. The title refers to nitrobenzene—a common recreational inhalant in Brazil—and the black linoleum floors commonly seen in movie theaters. This collection of eleven installations, which Oiticica referred to more generally as “ideas,” featured a combination of live and recorded components like colored spotlights and ambient sound recordings. Between filmic sequences projected onto multiple walls, the audience is intermittently instructed to do actions like continuously drink “COKE” (Coca-Cola) or eat from shared cups of ice cream. The project was never realized, but its open, collaborative propositions for viewer interaction set up the core components of the artist's future experiments.

39. **Hélio Oiticica**

Letter to Waly Salomão, April 25, 1971 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica first met famed Underground Cinema director Jack Smith in early 1971 at the filmmaker's SoHo loft, during one of his performances of *Claptailism of Palmola Economic Spectacle: Saturdays at Midnight at the Plaster Foundation, 36 Greene Street*. (The evening initiated a casual, sexual friendship between the two men.) The episode has since become lore for its impact on Oiticica, who incidentally first used the term *quasi-cinema* when he explained the experience in this letter to Waly Salomão:

*It all started at ten-thirty, three hours later, and he [Smith] spent half an hour on the first three slides alone: he moved the screen, so that the slides suffered a cut when they were projected, and he moved the projector from place to place give each one the proper cut: the rest of the slides spread across the environment: incredible; the wait and the anxiety that dominated were worth it: it was a kind of quase-cinema, for me as cinema as anything imaginable : the same complex-simplicity that one could feel in godard [Godard].*

40. **Carlos Vergara**

Mario Montez costumed like Carmen Miranda for the role of Mala Femina in Jackie Curtis's *Vain Victory: The Vicissitudes of the Damned*, 1969, WPA Theatre, 333 Bowery, New York, c. September 1971 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of Carlos Vergara and César and Claudio Oiticica

Drag performer Mario Montez was a legendary figure in New York's queer Underground, known for starring roles in films by Andy Warhol and Jack Smith. Born in Puerto Rico, Montez fashioned his persona after Maria Montez, a Latina B-movie actress who garnered a cult following. His play with gender and ironic embodiment of Latinx cultural tropes captivated Oiticica, whom he met at a party in 1971. Montez thereafter became an avatar of Oiticica's radically queer concept of "tropicamp"—a Latinx kitsch that filtered exoticized tropical imagery and hypersexual stereotypes through the exaggerated aesthetic lens of camp.

Later that same year, Oiticica saw Montez star in Warhol superstar Jackie Curtis's musical *Vain Victory: The Vicissitudes of the Damned* playing Mala Femina, "a wheelchair-ridden aerialist" who dressed as actress Carmen Miranda to perform the song "Uruguay." Miranda became a homogenizing icon of Latin American culture upon arriving in the US in 1939, known for her typical costume of platform sandals and a fruit headdress. This later reappropriation of her image resonated with Oiticica—to such an extent that he planned to hire Montez to appear as Miranda in his unrealized installation *Subterranean Tropicália Projects* (1971–72). He reflected on Montez's performance to his friend, poet Torquato Neto, in October 1971: "he does CARMEN: without imitating, what makes a lot of good people say it's badly done: though image-CARMEN is in fact far more than that: it is not a naturalistic-imitative representation of CARMEN MIRANDA, but a key reference to the TROPICAMP-cliché."

41. **Unknown Photographer**

Neville D'Almeida at the Sound-Mixing Session for his film *Piranhas do Asfalto* [Pavement Whores], 1971, Image c. 1970–71 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida

Born in 1941 in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, Neville D'Almeida became devoted to cinema at age sixteen, when he joined the film club at the Estudos Cinematográficos de Belo Horizonte [Center of Cinematographic Studies of Belo Horizonte] and was exposed to various global cinema movements. The artist moved to New York during the 1960s to continue his cinema studies before returning to Brazil, where he created experimental films that gained a reputation for their frequent censorship. His early feature films, *Jardim de Guerra* [War Garden, 1967], *Piranhas do Asfalto* [Pavement Whores, 1971], *Night Cats* (1972), and *Surucucu Catiripapo* [Surucucu Punch, 1973], were intercepted by the Brazilian military government, who destroyed scenes and prevented the movies' public display.

D'Almeida found commercial and critical success with his erotic drama *A Dama do Lotação* [Lady on the Bus, 1978] starring actress Sônia Braga, which remains the sixth highest-grossing movie in Brazilian cinema history. His subsequent movies in the same genre, *Os Sete Gatinhos* [The Seven Kittens, 1980] and *Rio Babilônia* [Rio Babylon, 1983], were also national box-office hits. In 1991, he was awarded best director both at *Festival Brasília do Cinema Brasileiro* [Brasília Festival of Brazilian Cinema] and *Festival de Cinema de Gramado* [Gramado Film Festival] for *Matou a Família e Foi ao Cinema* [Killed the Family and Went to the Movies, 1991]. D'Almeida currently lives in Rio de Janeiro, where he continues to make films.

42. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Agrippina é Roma-Manhattan* [Agrippina is Rome-Manhattan], 1972; Super 8 film:  
color, silent, 16:27 minutes

Film Still with Mario Montez and Antonio Dias (printed 2023)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Among the network of artists and creatives in Oiticica's social circle, perhaps most notable were the artist's connections to infamous figures in New York's queer Underground cinema scene, namely film star Mario Montez and director Jack Smith. While he had become disillusioned with much of the scene and its increasing commerciality—particularly related to the growing popularity of Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey's films—Oiticica considered Montez and Smith to be bastions of the Underground's true transgressive potential, envisioning Smith's queer-camp aesthetics to be "PRE- and POST-TROPICÁLIA at the same time, an impressive fusion of tropihollywood and camp clichés." He developed a particularly strong rapport with Montez, who was later featured as a "Spanish woman" in Oiticica's short Super 8 film *Agrippina é Roma-Manhattan*, a campy remythologizing of the story of Agrippina the Younger set in 1970s Manhattan.

43. **Hélio Oiticica**

Slide from *Neyrótika*, 1973; Slide series with soundtrack (facsimile)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Though publicly closeted while in Brazil, upon moving to New York Oiticica lived openly as a gay man. Records of his involvement with the city's queer culture can be found in letters to friends back home detailing the landscape of clubs and gay bars he visited near his loft in the East Village, his Super 8 film footage from the 1971 Pride parade, and journal entries chronicling his meetings with key figures in the queer Underground circuit. His sexuality and exploits are perhaps most vividly captured in *Neyrótika*, another of Oiticica's experiments in *quasi-cinema* made while he was living in New York, which further illustrates the social and sexual excesses of the *Babylonests*. The work consists of eighty slides of several young men that Oiticica referred to as the "golden kids of the Babylonests," all in various languorous positions and states of

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undress. The slides are projected in nonnarrative order, accompanied by a soundtrack of unedited local radio recordings interspersed with audio of the artist reading from texts by poet Arthur Rimbaud.

**Television 1:**

**Neville D'Almeida**

*Jardim de Guerra* [War Garden], 1967; 35 mm film transferred to digital video: black and white, sound, 91:15 minutes (excerpts)

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida and the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro

Set in Rio de Janeiro under the military dictatorship in the 1960s, *Jardim de Guerra* follows a young leftist Edson and his love interest, aspiring filmmaker Maria, played by Joel Barcellos and Maria do Rosário, respectively. The plot takes a dark turn when Edson, in an attempt to raise fast money for Maria's film, is baselessly arrested and tortured for his suspected involvement in a plot to overthrow the regime. Ironically, *Jardim's* seditious content led to its interception by the real Brazilian military government, which used the infamous 1968 Ato Institucional Número Cinco [Institutional Act Number Five] to censor the press, music, film, theater, and television for inflammatory political and moral content. *Jardim* was barred from public screenings and some scenes were destroyed or lost forever.

The film showcases D'Almeida's signature style as an *auteur*: he breaks the fourth wall of his fictional narratives with shots of political propaganda and photographs to communicate subversive (and ironic) ideological concepts to the audience. These elements reportedly impressed Oiticica, who met D'Almeida at a private screening of *Jardim* in Brazil, initiating the duo's artistic relationship. The scenes on view here showcase D'Almeida's radical political commentary, with his ideas and imagery of Latin America, war, race, and drugs foreshadowing his later collaboration with Oiticica on the *Cosmococas*.

**Neville D'Almeida**

*Mangue Banguê*, 1971; 16 mm film transferred to digital video: color, soundtrack, 62:11 minutes (excerpt)

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida and The Museum of Modern Art, New York

D'Almeida originally imagined *Mangue Banguê* as a collaboration with Oiticica, but the latter's transcontinental move led D'Almeida to complete the film himself, editing the project in London to avoid censorship. The silent film's story loosely follows a stockbroker as he devolves into a primitive creature that raves between Rio de Janeiro's financial center and Mangue, the neighboring red-light district, before disappearing into the jungle. Blurring the line between documentary and fiction, D'Almeida integrated long sequences of actors and real people performing common tasks, from laundry to drug use, to capture the ordinary lives of criminal and marginalized figures in Brazil.

The film was shown for the first time on March 9, 1973, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to a handpicked group of Brazilian and North American artists and critics. Oiticica was taken immediately with the film's adept visual representation of the minutiae of everyday life, writing that "MANGUE BANGUE is not a naturalist document of life-as-it-is or a search on the part of a poet-artist for what's fucked up in life: it is rather the perfect measure of the film-sound gaps-fragments of concrete elements." The raw authenticity of the film and its extended visual sequences were key forerunners to the *Cosmococas*, the first of which was created only four days after the screening of *Mangue Bangue*.

### **Hélio Oiticica**

*Brasil Jorge*, 1971; Super 8 film converted to digital video: color, silent, 3:21 minutes  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica's interest in film intensified in New York, where he enrolled in a film course at New York University and embarked on many projects with a Super 8 camera. Oiticica transformed the small kitchen of his Second Avenue loft into a photo-lab as needed, including a drafting table and a *Penetrável* covered in plastic that he used for film editing. Some scenes from *Brasil Jorge* were presumably shot and edited in this space, although much of the footage has been lost. The remaining scenes capture Oiticica's friend, American artist Lee Jaffe, shirtless and slowly brushing his long hair in the mirror, a figure dusting plants, shots of colorfully garbed people walking the streets, and a distant Statue of Liberty. Oiticica repeated the extended sequences and integration of New York iconography in other filmic projects, including *Agrippina é Roman-Manhattan* [*Agrippina is Rome-Manhattan*, 1972].

### **Andreas Valentin**

*One Night on Gay Street*, 1975; Super 8 film converted to digital video: black and white, silent, 5:35 minutes  
Courtesy of Andreas Valentin

A friend and former art student of Oiticica, Brazilian photographer and professor Andreas Valentin frequently collaborated with the artist on photo and film projects while visiting his New York lofts. Shot on a winter night, *One Night on Gay Street* takes place near Oiticica's Christopher Street apartment and depicts a drug deal turned murder. In the film, Oiticica's character, Mike the Addict, solicits drugs from Charlie the Hustler (Luiz Carlos Joels), who acquires them nearby from Colombo the Man (Thomas Valentin). After receiving the drugs, Mike walks off without paying, causing a fight between him and the dealers. Mike stabs Colombo and flees; an innocent passerby (Waly Salomão) then robs the lifeless dealer. The aesthetics and narrative play on 1970s *neo-noir* film tropes around the various criminal activities taking place in New York, specifically the drug trade in Lower Manhattan.



**Television 2:**

**Marcos Bonisson**

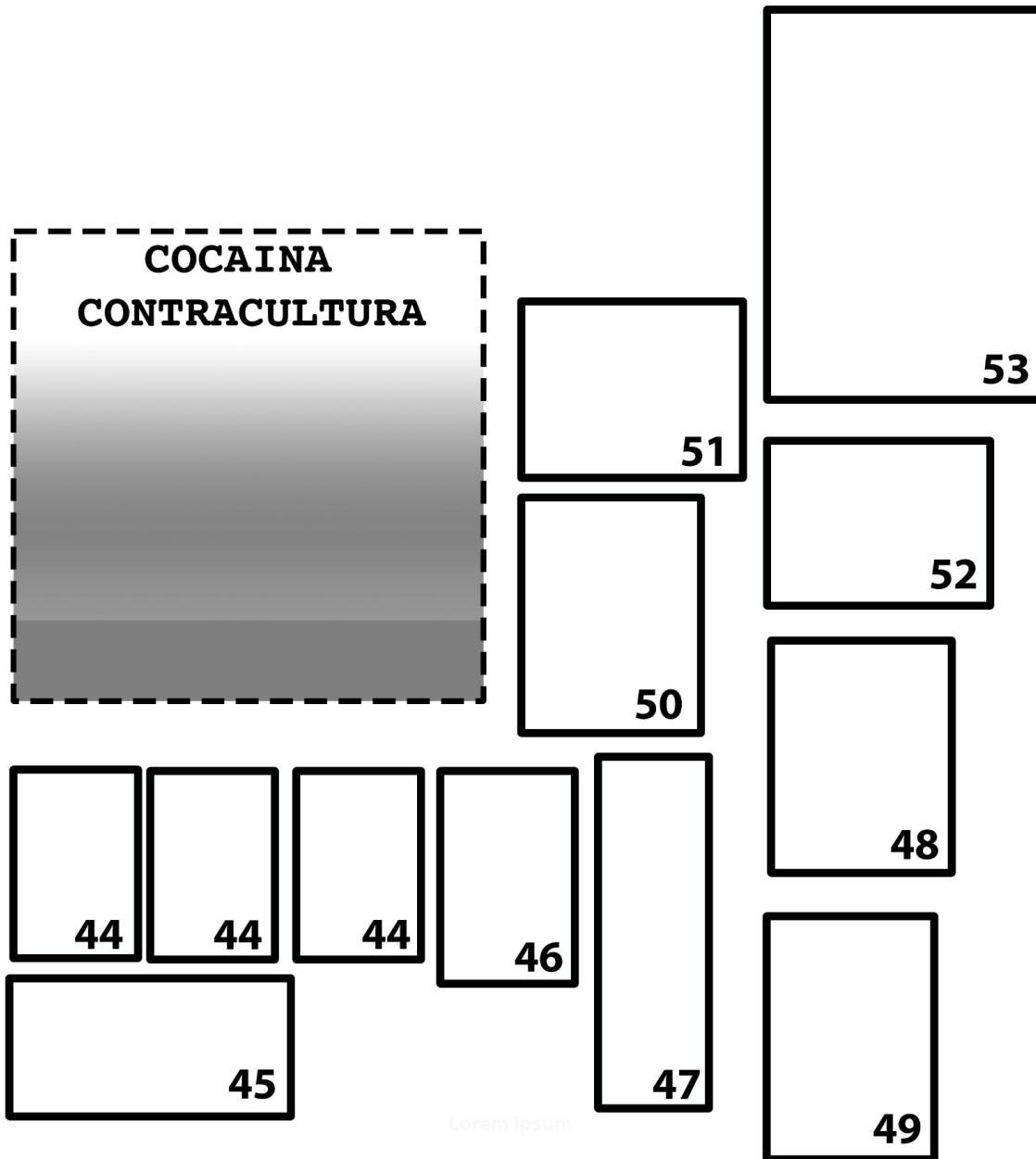
*Héliophonia*, 2002; Digital video: color, sound, 17:13 minutes

Made with support from the Projeto Hélio Oiticica and Rio Arte

Courtesy of Marcos Bonisson

*Héliophonia* mixes archival footage and audio clips from Oiticica and his collaborators to construct a creative if anachronistic perspective of Oiticica's experiences between Rio de Janeiro and New York in the 1970s. In addition to providing insights into Oiticica's environment, artistic milieu, and sense of humor, the film features Super 8 footage of D'Almeida creating the *mancoquilagens* with cocaine-pigment in *CC1 Trashiscapes*. Confirming the continued clandestine nature of the project even years after their creation, Oiticica referred to the *Cosmococas* in a public interview as the "CCs," while laughing, "We cannot say the complete name."

C O C A Í N A  
C O N T R A C U L T U R A



### COCAÍNA CONTRACULTURA

In 1973—two years after the money from his Guggenheim grant ran out and President Richard Nixon infamously declared what became known as the “war on drugs”—Oiticica began selling cocaine on Saint Marks Place in the East Village and in Central Park. The artist came to see the illicit drug as not only a means of economic survival, but also another medium for creative experimentation. By November 7, 1974, Oiticica viewed cocaine as integral to his artistic practice and agency, writing in a notebook that, “dealing has become (more serious than having sex!) art and the main totalizer of I DO—I MAKE—I ACT in FULL!” The artist examined the history and science of his “PRIMA” [COUSIN]—his personal nickname for cocaine inspired by the Rolling Stones’ song “Sister Morphine”—by reading Incan mythology and studying the drug’s effects. He wrote passionately about his PRIMA in poetry, letters, and notebooks, while using the stimulant to stay up for days without sleep. Although his addiction to cocaine would eventually take a negative toll on his mental and physical health, the artist’s initial enthusiasm underscored his belief in total personal liberation.

In no artistic series is the importance of cocaine more evident than in the *Cosmococas*. The *Blocos’* cocaine operates on multiple levels: as a white pigment, a vehicle for countercultural protest, and a medium to translate the stimulant’s effects into *supra-sensorial* art. Although drug use is related to the project’s inception and theoretical foundation, the artists specified that cocaine consumption was not necessary to experience the *Cosmococas*. As Oiticica wrote, the series “is not intended to surround COKE with the so-called deifying-mystical absolutes of lsd: COCAINE neither toxic nor water.” Rather, the cocaine integrated into the *Cosmococas* is a material and conceptual means of liberating participants from restrictive norms.

44. **Hélio Oiticica**

List of Types of Cocaine, 1973 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica tested different types of cocaine and detailed their crystalline density, origin, and hallucinogenic effects alongside a personalized description on notecards. “Neville 73” was notably acquired in March 1973 and named after Neville D’Almeida, suggesting it is the powdered variety that appears in the *Cosmococas*’ slides. Oiticica was not alone in his drug dealing; many other exiled Brazilians in New York were connected to the cocaine trade in one way or another for economic survival, providing narcotics to satisfy the growing appetites in the city’s nightclubs.

45. **Hélio Oiticica**

“*O Aparecimento do Supra-Sensorial*” [The Appearance of the Super-Sensorial],  
December 1967 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica defined his ideas about the *supra-sensorial* in this essay originally written for a conference in December 1967. Rather than a purely sensory experience or aesthetic object or environment, *supra-sensorial* artworks “are directed at the senses in order that, through them, through ‘total perception,’ they may lead the individual to a ‘supra-sensation,’ to the expansion of his [the participant’s] usual sensory capacities, to the discovery of his internal creative center, of his dormant expressive spontaneity, linked to the quotidian.” Oiticica further noted that the *supra-sensorial* would be represented by both hallucinogenic states—“with or without hallucinogenic drug use, as *supra-sensorial* life experiences, of various kinds, can also lead to a similar state”—and non-hallucinogenic states. Taking some inspiration from drugs’ effects, Oiticica’s art exists between sober states to achieve its true mettle: generating direct emotional responses capable of freeing individuals from “oppressive” social conditioning and behavioral norms.

46. **Andreas Valentin**

Hélio Oiticica in the *Babylonests*, Loft 4, 82 Second Avenue, New York, c. 1974 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Andreas Valentin

47. **Hélio Oiticica**

“YOKO ONO’S GRAPEFRUIT,” August 12, 1973 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Written the same day that he created *CC2 Onobject*, this text shows Oiticica singing the praises of Yoko Ono’s *Grapefruit* (1964), proclaiming the book of conceptual art propositions a “monument of anti-art.” Finding a precedent for his own ambitions for

the *Cosmococas* ever-changing *Programa in Progress*, he noted, “Yoko does not propose ‘conceptual art’: she proposes infinite forms of asymptotic formations.”

48. **Hélio Oiticica**

Document Naming Oiticica’s Collaborators for all Nine *Cosmococas*, March 3, 1974 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Oiticica extended the series of *Cosmococas* independently from September 1973 to March 1974. Only *CC6 Coke Head’s Soup*, made in collaboration with the artist Thomas Valentin, was completed during his lifetime. *CC7* was a proposal for the curator Guy Brett. *CC8 Mr. D of Dado*, was originally planned with the poet Silviano Santiago but later became a solo project for Oiticica. Lastly, *CC9 Cocaoculta Renô Gone* was proposed for the artist Carlos Vergara to be created in Rio de Janeiro.

49. **Hélio Oiticica**

“YOKO ONOWISE,” September 13, 1973 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

50. **Hélio Oiticica**

“C O S M O C O C A,” June 24, 1973 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

Nine *Cosmococas* were conceptualized in written notes by Oiticica for various friends and collaborators between March 1973 and March 1974, but many remained incomplete or otherwise unrealized during Oiticica’s lifetime. The photographic slides for the original five—and their corresponding instructions for public and private display, including audience behavior—were created with D’Almeida in March and August 1973 after multihour “rap” sessions where the pair discussed their ideas at Oiticica’s loft. The artists collaborated equally on the series; while Oiticica took the photographs that became the *Cosmococas*’ slides, D’Almeida created the cocaine drawings, using the drug as a white pigment applied like makeup on various faces found printed on objects. Oiticica called these creations *mancoquilagens*—a combination of the Portuguese word *maquilhagem* [makeup] and Manco Cápac, the mythological founder of the Incan people who first gifted them the coca plant.

51. **Unknown Photographer**

Hélio Oiticica Leaning out the Window from his Apartment on 18 Christopher Street, New York, c. 1977 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

At an uncertain date while living on Christopher Street, Oiticica was unceremoniously visited by two federal agents after his friend was detained for cocaine possession at John F. Kennedy International Airport with his address in

her pocket. Although they did not find illicit substances in his home, in an antagonistic gesture, Oiticica boldly proclaimed to the federal agents that he was gay, unknowingly jeopardizing his bid for a green card. Subsequently harassed by immigration officers regarding his sexuality, the artist conceded he would need to leave New York in late January 1978.

52. **Hélio Oiticica**

Drawing for *Hendrixsts*, 18 Christopher Street, New York, 1974 (facsimile)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

In October 1974, Oiticica's East Village home was burglarized, an event that contributed to his decision to move to the West Village. He subsequently withdrew to a small one-bedroom apartment at 18 Christopher Street, whose main room measured just twelve by twelve feet. Perhaps due to the apartment's scale, this move ended the artist's utopian experiment with communal living in favor of a more solitary domestic life. The artist built two new *Ninhos*, now dubbed *Hendrixsts* after counterculture icon and rock musician Jimi Hendrix, that were akin to a conventionally lofted bed with an upper enclosure above a worktable. This environment was particularly suitable for Oiticica's production of the *Newyorkaises*, later the *Conglomerado* [Conglomerate], a never-ending book project that grew out of his writings for the *Subterranean Tropicália Projects* (1971–72). Oiticica was consumed by this text and other writing projects until he returned to Brazil in early 1978.

53. **Hélio Oiticica**

*Manhattan Brutalista—Objet semi-mágico-trouvé* [Brutalist Manhattan—Semi-magical Found Object], 1978; Asphalt fragment  
Photograph: Bob Wolfenson (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

The final two years of Oiticica's life were productive for him artistically; no longer an exiled outsider, he enjoyed a level of notoriety upon his return to Rio de Janeiro. After years of a practice intentionally dominated by writing and unrealized projects, he resumed performance and the making of physical objects and environments. Oiticica installed a material memento of his exilic era—Manhattan itself—into his home through his 1978 *Manhattan Brutalista—Objet semi- mágico-trouvé*. To document this work, Oiticica photographed himself holding the large block of asphalt shaped like Manhattan, which he found at a construction site along a popular samba route, in his bathroom—hence fashioning New York from Brazilian bitumen.

Tragically, just two years after this work, Oiticica suffered an incapacitating stroke in his apartment in the Leblon neighborhood. He died seven days later at the Clínica São Vicente [Saint Vincent's Clinic] in Rio de Janeiro on March 22, 1980, at the age of forty-two.

**Vitrine with Books:**

[Left to Right]

**Norman Mailer**

*Marilyn: A Biography*, First Edition, 1973

Private Collection

**Yoko Ono**

*Grapefruit*, First Paperback Edition, Third Overall Printing, 1972

Private Collection

Yoko Ono's book *Grapefruit* (1964) and Norman Mailer's *Marilyn: A Biography* (1973) are central objects within *CC2 Onobject* and *CC3 Maileryn*, respectively. These books, as with the other items featured in the *Cosmococas* slides, were collected by Oiticica or D'Almeida if not found in Oiticica's Second Avenue loft. D'Almeida reportedly encountered *Marilyn* in the window of the Rizzoli bookstore before excitedly calling Oiticica, who instructed him to purchase it for a *Cosmococa*. Oiticica is further known to have used LPs and books as portable tables for drug consumption around his loft, adding another element of personal biography to the series.

### Cosmococas Frame Wall

#### Top Row:

[Left to Right]

#### **Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

Slide from *CC1 Trashiscapes, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress, 1973*

The first of the *Cosmococas*, *CC1 Trashiscapes* invites guests to recline on large cushions on the floor and file their nails while listening to Northeastern Brazilian music; cocaine embellished slides feature an LP cover for *Weasels Ripped My Flesh* (1970) by The Mothers of Invention, a photograph of Oiticica's lover Luiz Fernando Guimarães wearing a sheer white *Parangolé* on the streets of New York (*P30 Parangolé Cape 23 M'Way Ke, 1972*), and a *New York Times* cover with Surrealist filmmaker Luis Buñuel's face. Guimarães's presence adds a homoerotic flair to the work: suggestively placed knives and cigarettes create phallic references on his figure.

The private version of *Trashiscapes* seems inspired by Oiticica's Second Avenue loft, known as Loft 4. Projecting the slides onto a white screen placed alongside an actively transmitting color TV with an FM radio in a far corner "blasting out ROCK," the *Bloco* mirrors the cultivated sensorial (over)stimulation of Oiticica's *Babylonests* and the liberating hedonism inherent to his broader conception of private space. The combination of leisure and excess within the work made it an arena of open possibility where, as Waly Salomão, one of the few friends of the artists to see the *Cosmococas* in New York, explained: "There is an erotic relationship there, eroticism light, something like sensual inaction, dissipation, the pleasure of time without immediacy, a time of vacancy, a time of eternity, a time without intentional, a delightful time, without urgent appointments, without obligations."

#### **Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

Slide from *CC2 Onobject, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress, 1973*

The cocaine in *Onobject*, as in the other *Cosmococas*, can be read as a criticism of the bourgeois artistic community, both in Brazil and New York. For the *Cosmococas*, Oiticica and D'Almeida took multiple photographs of images imprinted on mass-produced objects. The artists' selection of such reproducible objects suited their self-described parody of "the notion of 'authenticity' in the plastic arts" and mockery of artistic concerns, and, in their view, "class hang-ups" with plagiarism. Further, the cocaine in the *mancoquilagens* often "copies the surface" by tracing aspects of the faces of Yoko Ono and others in a way that is "uncritical of its plagiarizing." The slides in the *Cosmococas* are thus photographic replicas of retraced images on reproducible products in a work whose open *Programa in Progress* meant it could be recreated infinitely.



### **Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

Slide from *CC3 Maileryn, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa—Programa in Progress, 1973*

References to South America and the Peruvian drug trade are rife in the *Cosmococas*, from the inclusion of vocals by Yma Sumac in *CC3 Maileryn* to mentions of Manco Cápac in the cocaine drawings. There is a certain subversive hilarity and pithy self-satire in creating artworks that both acknowledge and then amplify the stereotype—and reality—of Latinx drug dealers. However, an anti-imperialist sentiment underlies the *Cosmococas'* celebration of a drug whose traditional use as an indigenous medicinal plant was superseded by its cultivation for exploitation centered on satiating Western habits, first as a celebrated panacea in the nineteenth century and then as an illicit narcotic in the 1970s. In a November 2020 interview, D'Almeida explained the cultural bias and discrimination behind the criminalization of both cocaine's use and dealing itself:

*If there were in France, a plantation of cocaine leaves, for five hundred years, one thousand years, two thousand [years], and if we had in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, a plantation of wine [grapes]—what would be forbidden? The wine or the cocaine? The cocaine would be something great, to make people laugh and to make people have fun, and the wine would be forbidden. And you could go to prison, you could get a life sentence, you could get killed, because you're drinking wine, because you're selling wine.*

### **Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

Slide from *CC4 Nocagions, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa—Programa in Progress, 1973*

*CC4 Nocagions* is a tribute to composer and artist John Cage, who is perhaps most famous for his 1952 piece "4'33," in which an audience sits for four minutes and thirty-three seconds while listening to their own ambient silence. As with the other *Cosmococas*, the *Nocagions'* slides emphasized "CHANCE-RELATIONS"; their order was determined through a "semi-chance operation" based on their numbered frames in the box of developed slides. At the aesthetic center of the slides, *Notations* (1969), Cage's book of chance-based musical scores, is set beneath geometric cocaine drawings and different drug accoutrements. Oiticica and D'Almeida planned to invite Cage to create the soundtrack for the work, although there is no evidence this collaboration took place. Instead, Cage's music was to be played "LOUDLY" in tandem with slides projected onto two screens that were positioned at each end of the rectangular pool illuminated with green light. The ambient sound of the water splashing, mixed with the maestro's durational music, creates a scene that emphasizes its own tedious prolongation, resulting in *supra-sensorial* temporal distortion.

The private performance of *CC4* was an open-ended invitation to Brazilian poets and theorists Augusto and Haroldo de Campos to take the *Nocagions'* slides and "INVENT and/or TRANSFORM the INSTRUCTIONS for a PERFORMANCE to take place in SÃO PAULO or RIO." This performance finally took place in March 2023 at the Casa SP-Arte in São Paulo, Brazil.

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

Slide from *CC5 Hendrix-War, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973

Music and musicians play an integral role in the *Cosmococas*; both D'Almeida and Oiticica were dedicated acolytes of rock'n'roll and the youth counterculture it represented. Its importance comes to the fore in *CC5 Hendrix-War*, an homage to Jimi Hendrix. The artists decorated the guitarist's face on his posthumous album *War Heroes* (1972) with mask-like, geometric lines of cocaine. In the public version, these images were to be projected onto four walls in the room, surrounding guests who sway in hammocks, literally "high" off the ground, while Hendrix's electric guitar wails overhead. The hammocks relate to Hendrix's time as a paratrooper in the US Army, quietly pointing to his, and the artists', anti-war sentiments.

In the private version, the slides are projected onto four or more rooms in an apartment or house, complemented again by Hendrix's music. As written by Oiticica, "As the day wears out and projections and soundtracks go on and on people should try to turn everything into dance and playful apotheosis: new people from elsewhere should be invited in." As an egalitarian musical style with no learned steps, Hendrix's rock music is an ideal vehicle for the artists' vision of a utopian party full of delirious dancing.

(All facsimiles)

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida and César and Claudio Oiticica

**Middle Row:**

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

"Cosmococas, CC1–CC5," Typewritten English instructions, 1973 (facsimile)

Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

**Bottom Row:**

[Left to Right]

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC1 Trashiscapes, Public Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973; Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific

Installation view, Centro Municipal de Arte Hélio Oiticica, Rio de Janeiro, 2005 (printed 2023)

Courtesy of the César and Claudio Oiticica

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC2 Onobject, Public Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973;

Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific

Installation view, *Exposição Momentos–Frames*, Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo, March 13–April 17, 2003 (printed 2023)  
Photograph: Cesar Oiticica Filho  
Courtesy of the César and Claudio Oiticica

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC3 Maileryn, Public Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973;  
Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific  
Installation view, *Exposição Momentos–Frames*, Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo, March 13–April 17, 2003 (printed 2023)  
Photograph: Cesar Oiticica Filho  
Courtesy of the César and Claudio Oiticica

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC4 Nocagions, Public Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973;  
Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific  
Installation view, Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, March 13, 2023 (printed 2023)  
Photograph: Cesar Oiticica Filho  
Courtesy of César and Claudio Oiticica

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC5 Hendrix-War, Public Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress*, 1973; Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific  
Installation view, *Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida: Cosmococas*, Lisson Gallery, New York, June 29–August 11, 2023 (printed 2023)  
Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida, César and Claudio Oiticica and Lisson Gallery

CC2 ONOJECT, PRIVATE VERSION

**Hélio Oiticica and Neville D'Almeida**

*CC2 Onobject, Private Version, Bloco-Experiências in Cosmococa–Programa in Progress, 1973*

Slide series, soundtrack, instructions, site-specific

Courtesy of Neville D'Almeida and César and Claudio Oiticica

*CC2 Onobject* inverts the last name of artist and musician Yoko Ono in a pun on the Brazilian Neo-Concrete term *non-object*—art that is neither painting nor sculpture. Hinting that Ono's practice of inventive, conceptual instructions resembled their own radical ideas, they stipulated that the public performance of *Onobject* be neither "PERFORMANCE" or "ANTI-PERFORMANCE" but rather "it should be S-O-M-E-T-H-I-N-G N-E-W as YOKO herself is." Slide images depict Ono's book *Grapefruit* (1964) covered in playful cocaine tracings and surrounded by objects such as scattered pencils and notebooks. Occasionally *Grapefruit* appears beside a copy of serial killer Charles Manson's book *Your Children* (1973) or German philosopher Martin Heidegger's meditative text on philosopher Immanuel Kant, *What Is a Thing?* (1967). In the public iteration, these slides were meant to be projected "onto two walls of a square room" as participants were "sitting/reclining/lying but mostly dancing" atop "medium-thick white foam rubber" to Ono's screaming experimental music. The springy surface, littered with oversized geometric foam shapes in bright colors, provides the ideal setting for the "joyful play of BODY through DANCE rising ABOVE THE GROUND" that Oiticica envisioned.

In contrast, the instructions for the private version are stripped down to emphasize the slides and Ono's intense vocalizations. Specifying "four slide-sets to be projected SIMULTANEOUSLY" onto improvised "white surfaces," the artists further proposed, "perhaps white bedsheets arranged to create spatial divisions" or "perhaps use them to cover furniture/inside or bushes and trees/outside." Able to be staged in variable locales with easily attainable materials, the artists entrusted collaborators to "IMPROVISE and PROJECT."