

## Bodies in Peril:

### Enacting Censorship in Early Brazilian Video Art (1974–1978)

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Physical pain happens, of course, not several miles below our feet or many miles above our heads but within the bodies of persons who inhabit the world through which we each day make our way, and who may at any moment be separated from us by only a space of several inches.

— Elaine Scarry<sup>1</sup>

A reference to physical pain immediately invokes the body. On the one hand, the body is especially vulnerable to the painful consequences of repression in instances of torture, exile, and psychological fear. On the other hand, it is one of the most effective sites for exposing tension and voicing dissent. Addressing this contradiction, I want to explore some of the stakes of corporeality as a critical category for the investigation of traumatic histories. Looking to a number of **early Brazilian artists' videos made between 1974 and 1978**, I will explore the urgency to assert the corporeal within the confines of the electronic. By concentrating on a four-year time span during the most repressive decade of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985), this investigation seeks to identify and examine a number of key moments when artists deferred to the sentient body so as to voice a critique of the dictatorship and its human-rights' abuses. Any investigation of electronic media in Brazil must attend to the

irreconcilable gaps between the official public and—often contradictory—private versions of history of these years. By breaching the divide between the public and private, artist's videos from the 1970s are an especially effective starting point for such an inquiry.

### A Brief History

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Video was first introduced to Brazil in the early 1960s in order to broadcast the official government ceremonies and attendant, quasi-propagandistic, discourses from Brasília, the newly inaugurated capital, to the rest of the country. The history of the establishment of the category of video art in Brazil almost a decade later is, however, centered on a number of artists from Rio de Janeiro.<sup>2</sup> Led by Anna Bella Geiger, a group that included Sônia Andrade, Ângelo de Aquino, Fernando Cochiarella, Miriam Danowski, Paulo Herkenhoff, Ivens Machado, and Letícia Parente used the platform of an international exhibition of video art, curated by Suzanne Delehanty at the Institute of Contemporary Art (University of Pennsylvania) in 1975, to engage in a series of video experiments.<sup>3</sup> The set of works created (with borrowed equipment) sparked interest on a national level that allowed video to develop in a more organized and systematic fashion.<sup>4</sup> The availability of video equipment permitted artists to offer a technological re-negotiation of questions of participation raised by Brazilian avant-garde artists such as Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Clark, and Lygia Pape during the 1960s. In contrast to the fervent activity of 1970s video artists in the United States, where equipment was easily accessible, technological paraphernalia in Brazil often came at a prohibitive cost, immediately restricting the number of artists who were able to obtain and use it. In consequence, both the makers of and audience for video art were limited to a small sector of the population. This prompted certain critics to dismiss video as an elitist mode of communication that could not, in turn, be taken seriously as a coherent art movement. However, investigation of the remaining early works will, I argue, generate crucial insights into the role of electronic media in creating alternatives to mainstream media within the oppressive context of the military dictatorship.

Although the social circulation of electronic media has often pro-

moted more democratic access to the organs of communication, the rise of such media in Brazil was associated with government manipulation and censorship. The military regime that came to power in 1964 worked in proximity with Brazil's largest media conglomerate, TV Globo, closely monitoring and modifying television programming to fit the military's needs. President Médici, who ruled during the most repressive years of the dictatorship between 1969–1974, considered it an offense to broadcast violence on public television. In January of 1970 he passed a decree prohibiting all publication and transmission of materials considered “morally offensive or of bad taste.” The ambiguity of this statement made all programming suspect.<sup>5</sup> Shaping media circuits to meet the ideological needs of a repressive dictatorship and absolve the government of its responsibility in cases of torture and human rights' abuses was clearly predicated on the active suppression of voices of dissent.<sup>6</sup> Though censorship had been practiced, systematically, since the military coup in 1964, it became pervasive after the passage of Institutional Act no. 5 (commonly referred to as **AI-5**) on December 13, **1968**. Declaring a national state of emergency, the act allowed for the suspension of civil rights, the reinstatement of capital punishment, and exile as punishment; special military courts were established to try anyone deemed subversive by the state. This marked a new turning point for the impact of the military on social life, dramatically altering the possibilities of artistic expression and making artists who were publicly critical of the government more vulnerable to sanctions.<sup>7</sup> The National Service of Information (SNI, created in 1964) was meant to keep the executive branch of government well informed about what was going on in the country.<sup>8</sup> Despite public assurances that it would not become a secret political agency, the establishment of the SNI and its methods of information collection soon became the basis for expanded political control and the Service emerged as emblematic of the severe repressive measures associated with the dictatorship.<sup>9</sup> In hindsight, one is left to wonder if the following announcement by President Médici was delusional or sardonic:<sup>10</sup>

I am happy every night when I turn on the television to watch the news. While the news talks about strikes, agitations, murder attempts, and conflicts in different parts of the world, Brazil moves ahead in peace toward the path of development.

It's as if I took a tranquilizer after a day of work.<sup>11</sup>

Not surprisingly, artists viewed their practice at this time as offering unique opportunities to confront censorship by symbolically enacting it—to underline the “reality” of its existence—and, at the same time, by directly challenging it. Motivated by the prospect of an alternative to television and of an uncensored means with which to communicate with the public, artists, and in particular those associated with Anna Bella Geiger's group from Rio de Janeiro, looked to video as a means of establishing a critical opposition to state-sanctioned televisual information. Influenced by the rise of Conceptual works that challenged traditional notions of the art object, and distrustful of institutions, these artists sought to create alternate circuits for the transmission of information—viable alternatives to television that lead one critic to proclaim video a kind of “counter-television.”<sup>12</sup> In Brazil, information and communication theories popularized by Marshall McLuhan and others were prominent in all areas of the humanities.<sup>13</sup> McLuhan's ideas helped orchestrate more critical analyses not only of the role of media structures and technology in social life, but also of their political uses. McLuhan's insistence on the need to teach media literacy was especially important in the Brazilian context where the manipulation of media, especially TV, was intended to shape the national psyche according to an explicit government agenda. While, regrettably, this did not always translate into the accelerated consumption of video by a mass public, it did represent a decisive attempt to carve out an alternative space in which somewhat freer, less predetermined voices could express social dissent.

### The Body Uncontained

One of the most prominent themes that emerged in artists' videos from the 1970s was denominated by the functions and significations of the body. In her video experiments from 1974–1977 in particular, Sônia Andrade posited the body as the site of certain irresolvable tensions, probing its limits as subject and object of electronic display. In four of her three- to five-minute vignettes from 1977, *Fio* (Wire), *Pelos* (Hair),

*Gaiola* (Cage), and *Pregos* (Nails), Andrade organizes her body as a direct critique of the dictatorship, situating it in precarious situations recalling scenes of torture and violence.<sup>14</sup> She is clearly challenging the prohibition by censors of violence and sexuality on broadcast television. In *Fio*, the artist wraps a wire around her head until she is no longer recognizable. The unidentifiable, disfigured face thus produced immediately evokes the victims of torture. It is symbolic of the violence experienced by bodies during the dictatorship and inevitably provokes discomfort and anxiety in the viewer who becomes implicated in the violence through the process of watching the apparent suffering. This situation reflects the helplessness, even guilt, felt by many viewers when they realized that they were unintentionally incriminated by their knowledge of and proximity to widespread torture. In fact, by inflicting pain on herself in this way, the artist places herself in the ambiguous position of an active perpetrator who is also the passive recipient of bodily violence. Thought in terms of Scarry's suggestion (in the head text of this essay), she intimates that physical pain is, indeed, not a distant reality but rather an experience that can “at any moment be separated from us by only a space of several inches”<sup>15</sup>—here, quite literally, the distance between the viewer and the television screen.

In *Pelos* Andrade uses a pair of small scissors to cut away at her bodily hair. Commencing with a shot of the naked, seated artist cutting her pubic hair, the piece probes the boundaries of what was acceptable for broadcast according to the censorship regimes of the time. The camera zooms in on the most intimate and vulnerable corners of her body as she continues to cut the hair under her arms, on her head and eyebrows, and finally her eyelashes. Intimating bodily rituals promoted by the gendered notions of beauty typically broadcast on television, Andrade awkwardly attempts to contain bodily excess for electronic display. *Pelos* raises questions about these idealized bodily routines encountered in televisual space, offering one of several forms of critique of their appearance. Andrade's grooming ritual in *Pelos* aims not only to eliminate bodily “excess,” but also positions this self-pruning alongside intimations of self-inflicted violence. As in *Fio*, the possibility of pain is palpable in every tense clip of the scissors; the cutting is performed with Andrade's eyes closed, so that the less reliable sense of touch guides her performance. Proffering an allusion to our own blindness as television viewers, the

performance becomes increasingly uncomfortable for an audience caught in continual anticipation of a possible slip or a mistake and its attendant, and inevitable, pain. It is precisely these moments of discomfort, founded on the anticipation and unavoidability of bodily violence, that recall the violence suffered by countless victims of torture hidden from the television-viewing public. Throughout her work, Andrade examined topics that were deliberately avoided by public media and consequently by the general television-viewing public living under the dictatorship. Although everyone probably knew what was going on around them, they had to close their eyes to the reality to avoid the repercussions of denouncing it.

The short vignette with cages (*Gaiola*) is a comparable attempt to contain the body's physical impulses and, likewise, meditates on the impossibility of doing so. In it Andrade is seated on the ground surrounded by five birdcages of different sizes, which she attempts to place on her feet, hands, and head—the most mobile body parts. After a lengthy and awkward struggle as she fits her body parts into the cages, Andrade clumsily stands up and walks toward the camera. While the cages are bulky and cumbersome, Andrade overcomes these obstacles to her balance and mobility and is eventually able to move forward. During the period of the dictatorship, a number of artists worked with cages as a metaphor for the imprisonment and containment of the body. Andrade offers not simply a reprise of this suggestive iconography, but works through the time-based medium of video to explore a certain refusal to be imprisoned; for the cages she wears cannot contain all of her, nor do they arrest her purposive movement. She seems to envisage a more optimistic future, one in which she can move ahead despite the barriers in her way.

Paulo Herkenhoff's *Estomago Embrulhado—Jejum, Sobremesa* (*Upset Stomach—Fast, Dessert*, 1975, 8 min.) adds another dimension to the bodily interventions investigated by Andrade. As in *Pelos*, he begins this work seated and nude, though his pubic area is covered by a stack of newspapers. The artist sifts through each newspaper, methodically, seeking out articles that have to do with government abuses and censorship. When he chances on one, the camera zooms in just enough for the viewer to catch a glimpse of the headlines detailing the case.<sup>16</sup> He then cuts the article out, crumples it up, and eats it, suggesting that the act

of ingesting the printed paper will somehow erase or hide the evidence of act of censorship it outlines. Digesting newspaper information in this way creates a unique, if unusual, relationship between the body and media. While we are normally expected to absorb media information visually or mentally, in this case the absorption takes place corporeally, challenging the normative dualities of mind and body. It is as if censorship had a direct internal effect on the body. Herkenhoff's ingestion of the news also alludes to the cultural model that emerged during Brazilian Modernism known as *Antropofagia*, and in particular to the often-cited phrase from the *Antropofagite Manifesto*: "Anthropophagy. Absorption of the sacred enemy. In order to transform him into totem."<sup>17</sup> The piece provokes a key question: Is Herkenhoff implying that his ingestion of bits and pieces on censorship might have regenerative value or somehow actively intervene in the political arena? He certainly insinuates that, while censorship acts as a barrier to textual transmission, it can be challenged through more visceral and literal bodily means. The not-so-subtle reference to censorship converted into bodily waste is undoubtedly a critique of government practices. Flouting the law that prohibits any mention, let alone critique of, censorship, this work mobilizes the body as a repository or an electronically documented alternative archive that testifies to the existence of censorship.

As with much Brazilian video art made during the 1970s, the works I have discussed here are largely autobiographical, and the narratives they enact are mostly confined to everyday activities carried out in domestic space. The compositional formatting of the video camera is, in fact, well suited to recording the private spaces traditionally associated with women. Likewise, the nature of the video apparatus, which, though clunky, could be managed by one person (unlike film equipment which generally requires a crew of people whose size is inimical to domestic scale), lends itself quite well to recording performances conducted inside the home. The lack of an immediate audience also encouraged an intimacy in relations between the performer/artist and the camera, which are relatively free from the intimidations of a co-present viewership and the perils of exposure in public space.

In her seminal essay, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976), Rosalind Krauss asserted that one dominant feature of video art was the centrality of the artist's body, which she identified with Freud's configu-



Sonia Andrade  
*Untitled*, 1974  
54 min.





Paulo Herkenhoff,  
*Estomago Embrulhado - Jejum*  
(*Upset Stomach - Fast*), 1975  
8 min.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

ration of narcissism. She argued that “most of the work produced over the very short span of video art’s existence has used the human body as its central instrument. In the case of work on tape this has most often been the body of the artist practitioner”; adding that “video’s real medium is a psychological situation, the very terms of which are to withdraw attention from an external object—an Other—and invest it in the Self.”<sup>18</sup> This assessment, however, is not entirely applicable to early Brazilian video art, in which selves and bodies were embedded within a range of determining political contexts that had important social consequences. In a society in which free, uncensored expression often exposed one to imminent dangers including torture, exile, or death, unmediated self-expression was not limited to a psychological condition but was, at the same time, an often subversive assertion of personal freedom and political dissent. I would like to suggest that the affirmation of the artist’s body within the intimacy of domestic space could be used by the self not to withdraw attention from the Other, as Krauss alleged, but rather to articulate a social alliance with Others who had been silenced. Within this scenario, the artist’s body became a pivotal site for such an exploration.

Discussing the site of the body as a means for artists to explore its signification both politically and conceptually under repressive regimes,<sup>19</sup> cultural critic Nelly Richard has convincingly argued that “Under circumstances where censorship is applied to vast areas of meaning in language, any superfluous discourse or unspoken pressure which escapes or undermines the syntax of the permitted can only surface as bodily gestures.”<sup>20</sup> Proposing that “the corporeal not only lies at the frontier of the sayable, it also becomes the domain of the unsayable,”<sup>21</sup> Richard’s analysis of the body as a site for exposing tension in repressive societies is crucial for any discussion of the social nuances of the bodily actions performed in the work of Leticia Parente and Geraldo Mello.

Parente’s *Marca registrada* (*Trademark*, 1974–1975) begins with a cameo of the artist’s legs. As the camera zooms in on her feet, the sole of the foot, now disembodied, becomes the canvas onto which the narrative of the video unfolds. We follow the artist to her seated position and she begins to thread a needle. At this point we assume she will undertake a minor domestic chore that involves sewing or perhaps embroidering.



Our expectations, however, are abruptly thwarted when she begins to thread the sole of her bare foot. Each time the needle pierces the skin an uncomfortable response is provoked, and this is sustained for the entire ten-minute duration of the work. Though seemingly a painful process, the sewing takes place in the calmest of surroundings, a domestic interior, and there is no hesitation on the part of the artist, despite the suffering she must have been experiencing. It is as if pain—or torture—had become normalized. A few minutes into the work, the viewer can make out that Parente is sewing the words “Made in Brasil” onto her foot, literally branding herself as a Brazilian product. The practice of branding human bodies can be traced back to colonial times when it was the punishment doled out to runaway slaves. But, as the title of Parente’s work refers to a trademark, the piece is more closely associated with the branding of consumer products, suggesting that Brazilian citizens were industrially manufactured. The objectification of the body as presented in Parente’s work is significant on multiple levels. On the one hand, as a woman, she offers a critique of the long-standing objectification of the female body, particularly in visual representation. On the other, the video can also be read as a critique of the military government, whose many slogans were geared to creating model, if not uniform, Brazilian citizens, who were also the passive consumers of mass production. The fact that the words are written in English suggests the pervasive influence of American products, while the allusion to torture and American products might also acknowledge US involvement in the 1964 coup that led to the installation of the military dictatorship.<sup>22</sup> Using the body as the site for text, and ultimately as the inscribed locus for a critique of the dictatorship, is an expert maneuver given censorship restrictions on explicit textual critique in Brazil. Through the subversion of an everyday activity associated with women, Parente’s work activates the body’s polysemic condition as a site for political, social, and gender critique.

In Geraldo Mello’s work, *Situação* (*Situation*, 1978), the artist is seated in front of the screen, dressed in a suit and tie. A bottle of pinga, a cheap sugarcane alcohol, stands next to him, which he quickly drinks while toasting the Brazilian political, economic, social, and cultural situation.<sup>23</sup> Mimicking the format of a televised news broadcast, Mello gets progressively intoxicated by the pinga (he drank the life-threatening quantity of two liters during the nine-minute duration of the tape), and

Leticia Parente  
*Marca Registrada*  
 (Trademark), 1974–1975  
 10 min.



COURTESY OF ANDRÉ PARENTE



Geraldo Mello  
*A Situação (The Situation)*, 1978  
 9 min.



as he repeats the same toast starts slurring his words, laughing hysterically as he does so, and gradually losing control of his body. In this obviously ironic celebration of the Brazilian situation, Mello puts his body in danger by ingesting such a large quantity of alcohol in a short time span, so that impending bodily peril taints the humor of his ludicrous behavior. Mello's laughter, while addressing the gravity of a political situation, is one of the consequences often associated with the solicitation of risk. Freud argued that by its very nature "humor has something liberating about it."<sup>24</sup> The ego, he claims, "refuses to be distressed by the provocations of reality, to let itself be compelled to suffer. It insists that it cannot be affected by the traumas of the external world; it shows, in fact, that such traumas are no more than occasions for it to gain pleasure."<sup>25</sup> Refusing to let the traumas of the Brazilian economic, cultural, political, and social situation get to him, Mello allows for the body's comic response as a way to mobilize humor in an oblique critique of the political situation. While his alcohol-induced laughter grows progressively rowdier, it becomes clear that the humor of the situation is not entirely redemptive. Seated alone facing the viewer, Mello beseeches sympathy from the spectator, while he slowly crumbles under the effects of the alcohol. As his speech slurs, the critique of both news broadcasting and the political, economic, and social situation becomes manifest, as if it were these situations and not the alcohol that inebriated him and violated his body. As he slowly collapses, his capacity to articulate through language dissipates, so that it is ultimately the body that broadcasts the suffering caused by the loss of language, and as Richard pointed out becomes symbolic of the unsayable.

The risk of censorship, or worse, of detention and subsequent bodily harm, obscured the possibilities for widespread public dissent during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985) and in particular during the ten year period following the 1968 Institutional Act, known as AI-5. The government's control over official media, and in particular over television content, dictated public programming and silenced artists' voices that were critical of government practices. The aim, then, of this investigation into Brazilian video art has been to highlight its role in generating an alternative circuit through which artists were able to express opposition from within a repressive government system. The videos introduced here are not meant to offer a comprehensive history of early video



in Brazil, but have been chosen because they foreground theoretical consideration of the body as a key mediating space between technology, aesthetic practices, and social realities. Though not a full-fledged movement, video art in Brazil provides a rare glimpse into the unofficial, private, gendered—and vulnerable—spaces that the body inhabits and in which it struggles to intervene.

Encouraging an intersubjective experience, early Brazilian video art deviated from the more traditional approach of documentaries, whose objective was to register instances of imperiled bodies and act as a historical archive. One prominent example is Haskell Wexler's early documentary, *Torture in Brazil* (1971), in which victims describe the mechanisms of interrogation and torture in detail, chronicling the bodily harm they sustained, in an attempt to come to terms with their trauma.<sup>26</sup> While evoking a sympathetic viewer, the documentary sustains not only temporal but also subjective detachment from the narrative. The experience of viewing video art, in which artists challenged censorship protocol and inflicted the painful consequences of such an act onto their own bodies is, on the other hand, a destabilizing experience. As the risk of bodily violence unfolds, the spectator is implicated more directly in the violence, but at the same time is unable to intervene. Thus, both viewers and artists become more vulnerable in what are often unsettling encounters between private and public spheres.

## NOTES

1

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Oxford University Press, New York 1985, p. 4.

2

It should be noted that Brazilian artist Antonio Dias had used video as part of his series *The Illustration of Art*, in two works entitled *Music Piece* (1971) and *Two Musical Models on the Use of Multimedia* (1974), while was living in Milan.

3

Anna Bella Geiger was invited by Walter Zanini, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in São Paulo, to participate in the Institute of Contemporary Art show. Allegedly only artists from Rio de Janeiro were included, since São Paulo artists could not get access to video equipment. Antonio Dias, a Brazilian artist living in Milan at the time, exhibited with Geiger's group. For a more detailed account see the exhibition catalogue, Arlindo Machado (ed.), *Made in Brasil: três décadas do vídeo brasileiro*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo 2003.

4

Jom Azulay, a former consul based in Los Angeles, brought the Portapak back to Rio de Janeiro in 1974. According to first hand accounts, Jom, a filmmaker himself, shared his equipment with the Rio de Janeiro group of artists who included Anna Bella Geiger, Paulo Herkenhoff, Sônia Andrade, Fernando Cocchiarella, Miriam Danowski, Ivens Machado, and Letícia Parente. In many of the works he appears in the credits as the cameraman. The camera was passed between members of the group who often conceived and executed works within a week so that it could be returned to its owner. The group acquired their own

Portapak in 1975. Walter Zanini was later able to purchase video equipment for MAC USP after which São Paulo artists began to produce video art as well.

5

"Ofensivas à moral e aos bons costumes," in Sérgio Augusto Mattos, *A televisão no Brasil: 50 anos de história (1950–2000)*, PAS-Ianamá, Salvador 2000, p. 112.

6

His policy of silencing was formalized in a 1973 decree that stated: "By superior order the publication of critiques to the system of censorship, its foundation and legitimacy, as well as any news, critique, written reference, spoken and televised, directly or indirectly formulated against the organ of censorship, censors and censorial legislation is conclusively prohibited" (Proibição da Polícia Federal, de 4.6.73), in Paolo Marconi, *A Censura política na imprensa brasileira*, Global, São Paulo 1980, p. 37.

7

Before 1968 the arts were largely disregarded by censors who mostly pursued unions, overtly political communist groups, and rural strike organizers. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

8

Maria H. M. Alves, *Estado e oposição no Brasil (1964–1984)*, Vozes, Petrópolis 1984, p. 72.

9

*Ibid.*, p. 73.

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Though there are no official numbers, one study assesses that there were 12,000 political prisoners during these years. See chapter 2.2, "Institutionalization da Tortura," in *ibid.*, p. 166.

- 11  
Mattos, *A televisão no Brasil*, p. 119.
- 12  
Interestingly, many of the artists who worked with video in the 1970s stopped doing so in the 1980s when conceptualism as an aesthetic proposition also declined.
- 13  
These ideas circulated more widely following the translation by concrete poet Décio Pignatari of McLuhan's groundbreaking *Understanding Media* in 1969.
- 14  
While there has been confusion surrounding the titles for the series of **eight vignettes** from 1974–1977, Andrade underlined in an interview with the author (October 26, 2005) that the series should be considered as one work that is untitled. The individual vignettes identified above are supplied with descriptive designations so that they can be differentiated.
- 15  
Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p. 4.
- 16  
Some of the headlines we see are: "Censura troca de casa" (Censorship changes homes); "Senador aplaude Censura" (Senator applauds censorship); "Cartas ao Leitor: Artes e Censura" (Letters to the Reader: Art and Censorship); *Cadernos de Opinião é apreendido* (Cadernos de Opinião is seized).
- 17  
Brazilian Modernism refers to the literary, musical, and artistic movement that originated in 1922 with the Week of Modern Art event in São Paulo. It was a movement characterized by a nationalist, even regionalist, aesthetic that was challenged by the more internationalist movement of Concretism in the 1950s. Anthropophagy

was an intervention by poet Oswald de Andrade appropriating foreign influences to construct something distinctly Brazilian, offering an important alternative to the blind imitation of foreign models. As a cultural strategy, anthropophagy recognizes the inevitable penetration of foreign influences but at the same time proclaims that a conscious negotiation of European and indigenous Brazilian cultures will lead to cultural autonomy. The phrase quoted is from the Antrophagite Manifesto originally published in *Revista de Antropofagia*, May 1, 1928, in São Paulo. A version is available in English at: [http://www.coleccionisneros.org/st\\_writ.asp?ID=17&Type=2](http://www.coleccionisneros.org/st_writ.asp?ID=17&Type=2)

18  
Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," in *Video Culture: A Critical Investigation*, ed. John G. Hanhardt, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York, 1976, p. 180.

19  
Though Richard's writing emerges from her work on Chilean women artists during the military dictatorship (1973–1990), it is clearly applicable to the Brazilian context. As in Brazil, negative references and/or public critique of the Chilean dictatorship were prohibited by law.

20  
Nelly Richard, "Margins and Institutions: Performances of the Chilean Avanzada," in *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*, ed. Coco Fusco, Routledge, London 2000, p. 214.

21  
*Ibid.*, p. 215.

22  
Documents have surfaced recently pointing to US involvement in and support of the coup in Brazil in 1964 against the President João Goulart, who was viewed as communist menace. A number of the original transcripts and documents are available on the National Security Archives website at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB118/index.htm>.

23  
Mello is one of the artists from São Paulo who joined the group of video artists in 1976, when Zanini purchased a Sony Portapak and made it available to the artists. Other important artists from that group include Regina Silveira, Julio Plaza, Carmela Gross, Donato Ferrari, Gabriel Borba, Marcello Nitsche, and Gastão de Magalhães. My selection of a large contingent of Rio de Janeiro-based artists is due largely to the more explicit treatment of the body in their work and their more appropriate inclusion into the chronological framework of my wider study of Brazilian art during the 1970s in my forthcoming dissertation, "Conceptual Encounters: Art and Information in Brazil 1968–1978," University of California, Los Angeles.

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Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion: Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*, trans. James Strachey, vol. XXI (1927–1931), Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, London 1961, p. 162.

25  
*Ibid.*, p. 162.

26  
The documentary was shot in Chile where formerly incarcerated Brazilian victims were sent into exile. For obvious reasons, the movie was distributed outside of Brazil.