



VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Scholars Compass

Theses and Dissertations


Graduate School

2024

Tchu Tcha Tcha: The Transformative Role of Funk

Adriane de Souza
Virginia Commonwealth University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Audio Arts and Acoustics Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons](#)

© The Author

Downloaded from

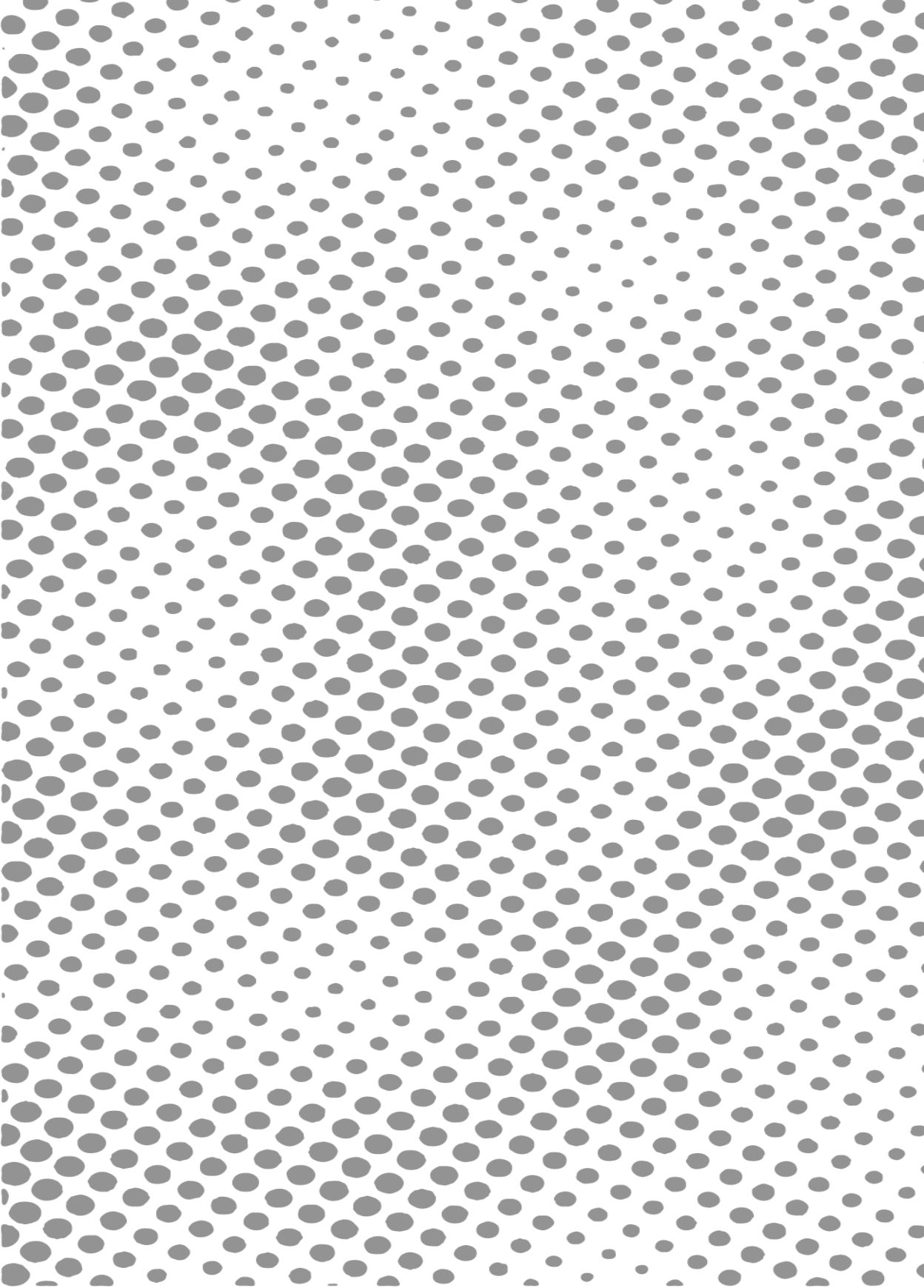
<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/7747>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.

TCHU TCHA TCHA

The Transformative Role of Funk





1.ABSTRACT

2.INTRODUCTION

3.LITERATURE REVIEW

4.PRECEDENTS

5.INVESTIGATIONS

6.OUTCOME

7.EXHIBITION

8.CONCLUSION


9.LIST OF FIGURES

10.BIBLIOGRAPHY

11.ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT





Cultural disconnection and homesickness are part of expatriate life. My research investigates the transformative power of Brazilian funk, which, for me, evokes restorative memories of home and life in Rio de Janeiro.

Originating in North America, funk made an exciting leap and found a new home in Brazil, particularly in Rio de Janeiro. Over time, it has become firmly established and thoroughly Brazilianized, infused with local instruments and influences, leading to the emergence of a new genre of music known as Brazilian funk.

Transplanted again, to Qatar, this work celebrates the migration of funk through a combination of still images, concrete blocks, and sound, reflecting both Brazilian and Qatari elements and influences. The resulting exhibition offers a cultural translation of funk in Doha, providing a unique exploration of identity and belonging, showcasing funk's vitality, adaptability, and transformative ability to create community through music.

INTRODUCTION

Some, like me, feel the urge to reconnect with our culture, traditions, and the elements that shape our identity. Each individual forges their unique bond with their cultural heritage, and personally, I find solace and connection through music, especially Brazilian funk. It serves as a channel for me to express and maintain this vital connection to my roots.

There are numerous reasons why individuals choose to reside abroad. Some opt for this living arrangement willingly, while others lack the privilege of choice. However, a common thread that binds us is the connection to home – the nostalgia for our culture, family, music, and homeland. In a nation such as Qatar where nationals constitute less than 15% of the population¹, this sense of longing can be pervasive.

BRAZILIAN FUNK

This project explores the evolution of funk from its origins to the contemporary era, tracing its trajectory up to the present moment. Positioned in Doha, I leverage my geographical location to craft a cultural reinterpretation of funk, making use of its accessibility, adaptability, and inherent enjoyment, along with a do-it-yourself ethos. “Funk carioca results from the creative appropriation of cheap technology by non-musicians to produce music for segregated segments of the population.”² Through this lens, I offer my perspective on how funk could manifest in the context of Qatar, reflecting its unique blend of influences and cultural nuances.

In the 1980s, Rio de Janeiro witnessed the rise of a new music genre. Initially heavily influenced by North American music, funk carioca, known simply as “funk” in Brazil, gradually assimilated local instruments, developing its own style and incorporating original lyrics. A versatile genre emerged, one that freely incorporates beats and elements from different genres across the world, becoming the artistic freedom of expression that represents the marginalized communities of Rio de Janeiro.

These communities have faced numerous challenges in being heard and represented. Historical legacies of systemic discrimination, economic disparities, and social prejudices have exacerbated their marginalization, relegating the people to the periphery of communication channels and, subsequently, to the outer edges of broader public consciousness. Their narratives are suffocated by the more privileged stories and discourses, thus contributing to a history of neglect.

“Out of nearly 2,000 deaths caused by the police in the city of Rio de Janeiro over 10 years, more than 60% of the victims are young people under the age of 25, black, and residents of favelas – likely many of them funk participants, whether as producers, consumers, or attendees at dances.”³

Mainstream media in Brazil have historically overlooked and disregarded the lived experiences of the underprivileged, thereby perpetuating stereotypes and contributing to the erasure and diminution of the culture, playing a pivotal role in sensationalizing crime and poverty. This is exemplified by the media’s tendency to exaggerate, a practice that distorts the realities of these communities and plays a determining role in silencing voices within the wider cultural conversation. This silencing process perpetuates a cycle of misrepresentation and neglect, strengthening prejudice. The prevailing prejudice extends to both the individuals and the cultural productions emerging from these communities.⁴

In 2010, MCs Frank, Max, Tikão, Dido, and Smith, were detained by the police. This news was televised by the biggest Brazilian channel, and they showed the police entering MC Frank's house, encountering "an MC in underwear, astounded — his first daughter, Yasmin, was born the day before — by hundreds of thousands of viewers during lunchtime".⁵ This illustrates a perspective perpetuated by certain influential groups in society, notably those wielding power such as the police, in conjunction with the media, given the event's live television coverage.

There is a constant association of funk with criminality, as well as the refusal to acknowledge that funk has become an important part of Brazilian culture. The stigmatization of funk is rooted in an elitist discourse that defines acceptable forms of art and culture. Despite these challenges, funk stands as a force capable of amplifying voices and making them be heard. Funk serves as a transformative tool enabling individuals to challenge the prevailing narratives and contribute to a discourse that authentically reflects reality. Funk empowers, transcending limiting stereotypes and becoming a dynamic force for cultural expression and change.

Despite decades of criticism and prejudice, funk has evolved into a powerful sociocultural force transcending the geographical limits of Rio de Janeiro. Nowadays funk is made all over the country, embodying enough unique characteristics within its diversity to be recognized as a distinct musical genre separate from traditional North American funk.⁶

Today, funk transcends its national borders and this reach only increases with the help of social media. In its trajectory from Rio de Janeiro, funk has defied decades of criticism and prejudice to emerge as a potent sociocultural force, symbolizing its adaptability and resilience. The genre has been exported and is now produced in Finland, England, and Japan, "inverting completely the direction of the flow of this movement that now spreads from Brazil and "culturally invades" other countries."⁷

In essence, funk exemplifies the transformative potential of music to bridge divides and challenge stereotypes. As the genre expands, it not only challenges classist narratives but also amplifies underrepresented perspectives by its inherent accessibility. Funk's proliferation across continents symbolizes cultural exchange, wherein the creative expressions of marginalized communities gain visibility and influence. This evolution highlights funk's ability to adapt, innovate, and resonate with audiences worldwide, despite their cultural differences, while retaining its distinct cultural identity.

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/qatar-population>

² "Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca" | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu."

³ "(PDF) A Era Lula/Tamborzão: Política e Sonoridade."

⁴ Cymrot, O funk na batida. & Arruda et al., "De Pivete a Funqueiro."

⁵ "(PDF) A Era Lula/Tamborzão: Política e Sonoridade."

⁶ Cymrot, O funk na batida.

⁷ Fornaciari, "Funk da Gema: De Apropriação a Invenção, Por Uma Estética Popular Brasileira."

BECO
PERGENTINO



LITERATURE

REVIEW

Brazilian funk, originating in Rio de Janeiro, serves as a reflection of the state's multifaceted reality while captivating audiences nationwide. While its roots lie in Rio, funk has proliferated across a variety of regions of Brazil, gaining the most traction in São Paulo. It is important to note that despite regional variations, once exported beyond state borders, this form of music becomes universally recognized as Brazilian funk. Throughout this thesis, the term "funk" will be employed to denote this genre.

Since its birth in the 1980s, the funk genre has become an integral part of Rio de Janeiro's identity. Since those early beginnings, funk spread across Brazil and is now recognized around the world and is seen as an influence for other musical genres. This unique musical genre serves as a vehicle to enable a new way of giving voice to those who are continuously silenced and ignored since it mainly represents communities that are predominantly marginalized.

THE BEGINNING

The first events in Rio that incorporated North American funk were called *Bailes da Pesada* (*baile* is the term used to describe funk parties) in a venue called Canecão. These parties were inspired by the disco album *Revolution of Mind* by James Brown⁸ and they featured mostly music from North America. This phase of funk is called the first generation of funk according to Christina Forniacciari,⁹ and during this phase, the rhythm was more like that of North American soul music. These parties were popular but their glory was short-lived, lasting only between 1970 and 1971, because the event organizers decided to host the famous singer Roberto Carlos in Canecão for one season. Without access to Canecão, the funk events then moved to the suburbs of Rio.¹⁰

The change of location coincides with the rise of the popularity of disco, which became very popular in the South and North Zones of Rio de Janeiro. However this genre did not please the *baile* funk goers, it was considered to be "of a hedonist spirit, commercial, depoliticized, more Europeanized, "domesticated" and adapted to the white taste".¹¹ Disco music was considered by the DJs from the 1970s and 80s as the "unfunky little thing that had killed the *bailes*"¹²(Italics added).Of course, disco did not stop the *bailes* from happening, the *bailes* just had to adapt and move to different locations.

The *Bailes da Pesada* were still in high demand in the suburbs. Soul and funk music were the predominant forms of music played at these events. It is very important to note that these *bailes* were growing in popularity during the dictatorship in Brazil and the political police believed that the sound teams were involved with radical left clandestine groups so the Black Rio movement was under constant scrutiny from the military. Several DJs and organizers were taken for questioning, people not known to the movement infiltrated the *bailes* and sound systems were destroyed by the police.¹³

One party in particular was called *Noite do Shaft*, which was named after a black character from a police

movie that was successful at the time. Scenes from this movie were exhibited on a big screen, while the baile happened. However, as the event grew, these images were replaced by Formula 1 races to avoid the unwanted attention from the military. This is when the first sound system team is created in Rio, and it was renamed Soul Grand Prix.¹⁴

SOUND SYSTEM CULTURE

The sound system culture has been of tremendous importance to funk since its early development. The sound teams were constantly trying to develop better equipment and acquire more to broaden their event presence and reach. This eventually led to festivals of sound systems, *bailes* that lasted more than eight hours when several sound system teams performed.¹⁵ The *bailes* were promoted by “equipos de som (sound teams) that were the local equivalent of the Jamaican sound systems of the sixties”.¹⁶ These sound systems are a good reference to how the sound system looked like and how it has evolved throughout the years.

The *festivals de equipe* (sound teams festival) would consist of each team bringing their equipment to places big enough to host them. Teams like Furacao 2000, Cash Box, Pipo’s, and Soul Grand Prix, would compete to show who had the most powerful equipment.¹⁷ They would assemble walls made of speakers. This wall is called Paradao, which is still relevant to funk culture. “Whatever the format, a massive wall of loudspeakers is de rigueur.”¹⁸

INFLUENCES

The African American influence in these events and the local music production were significant. Carlos Palombini, both in *Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca* and *A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat*, tells the story of the early beginnings of funk carioca.

Although the African American influence in Brazilian music was considerable in the 1970s and 1980s, its influence can be seen as early as 1906, with the song *Gargalhada* by Eduardo Neves. This is when African American music was given a new meaning by Brazilian artists. This way of music-making continued to increase, with influences from soul, funk, disco, and others. As Palombini states, “if there is funk today – no matter how mediocre it may be... it is all soul’s fault”.²⁰ Rio’s *baile*’s music relied heavily on US-produced African American music. “The appropriation and resignification of African North American musics by Brazilian artists is as old as the recording industry itself”.²¹

Electro LA and Miami bass replaced funk and soul as the soundscape of choice²² and hundreds of *bailes* emerged every weekend in Rio. As Palombini noted, “1988 LA electro track gives rise to an Afro-Brazilian beat in the greater Rio de Janeiro city”.²³ There were shifts in the music that was being played, “first, from African North American soul and funk to disco, then to a slower kind of rhythm and blues locally known as *charme* and finally to African North American hip-hop”.²⁴

Due to these influences, funk changed throughout the years. Before widespread acceptance, funk terminology referred to its tracks as raps, and the singers were called MCs. The term MC is still today, however, the songs are no longer referred to as raps. From the mid-1980s, the volt-mix (1900s) became hegemonic in carioca funk

(funk from Rio de Janeiro), which was later replaced with *tamborzão* (2000-2009). Towards the end of the decade (1980s), the most popular funk was either instrumental or in English. These songs were spontaneously translated into Portuguese, into words that had a similar sound to the original track but were not the literal translation. This way, a Run DMC song called *You Talk Too Much* would become *Melô do Taca Tomate*, which roughly translates to Melody of the Tomato Throw.²⁵ The disc released by DJ Malboro, was a mark in the history of funk because it featured several MCs singing in Portuguese for the first time.²⁶

THE BRAZILIANIZATION OF FUNK

Throughout this time, *funkeiros* (people who enjoy or make funk) started inserting Portuguese lyrics into North American songs. The music received an even more local identity and personality after Brazilian instruments were added to the music production. Examples include the *berimbau* (a single-string instrument, commonly used in the martial art called capoeira) and *atabaque* (a type of drum), thus creating, as Palombini said, a conversation between Afro-diasporic cultures.²⁷ This conversation includes the influence of *candomblé*, an African diasporic religion that developed in Brazil during the 19th century, and had a strong impact on the music production and construction of the carioca funk identity.

At this point we see funk carioca starting to take shape and becoming more like what we have today. Palombini equates the transition of funk *bailes* locations moving from clubs to favelas, to the transition between the predominance of volt-mix beat to the *tamborzão* beat which is created from various percussion samples. “The eviction of funk dances from clubs to favelas coincides with the passage from volt-mix to *tamborzão*”.²⁸

THE ARRASTÃO

The *bailes*, with time, also developed a new form of entertainment: recreational violence. There were *corredor bailes*, where groups of people would go to fight rival groups. These fights did not always happen during the *bailes*, they also happened in meeting places, on public transportation, or at the beaches. When such conflicts reached the upper class of Rio de Janeiro by disturbing their beach time, Rio experienced a wave of blame culminating in the criminalization of the *funkeiro* following an incident at Ipanema beach. On October 18 of 1992, an *arrastão* (a form of crime committed by large groups at once) happened at Ipanema Beach. The poor become the center of discussions in the media and on the streets, further exacerbating and intensifying an already existing fear the elites held toward the residents of the favelas.²⁹

The term *funkeiro* was used not only to describe someone who enjoys funk, it became a synonym for someone who is marginalized and dangerous.³⁰ Funk suffered State repression, and a new Parliamentary Inquiry Commission (the CPI do Funk or CPI of Funk) was established in 1995 specifically to investigate the connection between the *bailes* funk and drug trafficking in the city of Rio de Janeiro. This was followed by other legislation created to regulate *bailes*. Political actions such as this show the farce of the racial democracy that Rio de Janeiro claimed so proudly.

The *arrastão* can be viewed as a struggle for space, as this restriction confined the poor to their neighborhoods, reinforcing their social and economic limitations, since these beaches are in more affluent areas of Rio. The perception was that it was permissible for the poor to pass through these areas if they were

heading to work, but disapproved for leisure activities. Despite this, the beach remains one of Rio's most accessible forms of entertainment.³¹ "The history of funk carioca consummates the brutal disruption of the mystique of joyous interaction between masters and slaves, the slum and the beachfront, the living room and the kitchen, the modinha and the lundu".³²

FUNK GOES THROUGH ANOTHER CHANGE

Nevertheless, the popularity of the *bailes* did not decrease; the opposite occurred. Street fights and conflicts had existed before the creation of funk; however, such conflicts could affect the rentability of the events. Despite funk's growing popularity as well as the genre becoming profitable, these conflicts continued and so did negative attention from the media. Rio's mass media linked funk events with gang violence despite the efforts of funk musicians to write lyrics that would encourage peace and a more pacifist approach to resolving conflicts. This coincided with Brazil's complicated political scenario in the early 1980s, which was intensified by the arrival of large quantities of cocaine during that period.³³ Increased cocaine trafficking and use changed the dynamics of the drug scene in the state of Rio. *Facções* (criminal organizations) took control of local organizations and the population. They slowly expanded their control of the favelas and became the community leaders, able to create rules for the favelas they controlled. The fights hurt profits so the *facções* forbade them inside the *bailes*, which were slowly shifting their locations to the favelas of Rio, moving away from the clubs outside of the favelas. Now there were no "enemies" attending the *bailes* and these events became peaceful entertainment for people in the favela.

With this social and geographical shift, funk carioca incorporated new lyrics. New songs included stories of the criminal *facções* and their endeavors. But this did not make the *bailes* any less popular. There are hundreds of *bailes* happening every week in Rio de Janeiro and the "*baile* funk circuit is one of the most important components of the city's creative industry".³⁴ The *bailes* are the first place to get your music played and that is where artists can find out if they have a hit or not. If the song is good, it will later be played outside of the *bailes* and become mainstream. With this, the favela becomes inserted in a new cultural debate.

IMPACT OF FUNK AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS

Despite being one of the most persecuted musical genres in Brazil and stigmatized by the media, funk has become one of the most important developments of the city's creative industry. "Funk has created a sustainable independent and pioneering circuit in relation to the major label model".³⁵

The *baile* became a place for people from diverse social backgrounds to come together, a way for the upper-middle-class and upper-class youth to get to know the favela.³⁶ They also foster informal employment by creating a place for street vendors to sell their products, providing income for numerous individuals involved in organizing the events, including those responsible for sound setup, event logistics, and the performing musicians. "When you see an artist on stage, it's not just them, there's a team behind them... there are families that depend on that".³⁷

It is intriguing to observe the genre's positive economic influence on both the communities surrounding the *bailes* and those directly engaged in funk production. Yet, despite its economic benefits, funk still grapples with prejudice, highlighting the myriad contradictions within the genre. It is a highly successful musical genre,

embraced with tensions by the mainstream media, generating financial resources and jobs directly and indirectly, and admired abroad, while also being strongly linked with the favela and associated with criminality, making it a target of police repression.³⁸

The contradictions continue, as stated by Cymot: "In March 2019, funk singer Anitta became the most listened-to Latin artist in the world on the Spotify platform... In the same month, the funk channel Kondzilla reached 50 million subscribers on YouTube, becoming the fifth largest in the world and the only Brazilian to have a video with 1 billion views. DJ Rennan da Penha and Nego do Borel were nominated for the Latin Grammy for the music video *Me Solta* in September of that year... In the same year of 2019, in March, the court had ordered the arrest of DJ Renan da Penha and ten others involved in the *Baile da Gaiola*..."³⁹ (italics added).

ACCESSIBILITY OF FUNK

Many factors have contributed to the popularity of funk carioca, such as the incorporation of instruments commonly used in Samba and football teams such as Flamengo using adapted versions of funk songs in their repertoire. Funk did not ask the artist to have a formal music education and this accessibility helped funk increase in popularity even further. However, along with increased popularity, the funk scene began to attract negative attention. Not everyone was happy that marginalized, poor, and black people were enjoying themselves. "When consumed by middle-class youth, funk ceases to represent the sound of the "public enemy number one" but becomes the rhythm of the "golden youth" of the South Zone, according to Adriana Lopes Carvalho. It is implicit, therefore, that the major issue is not the musical genre, funk, but rather its consumers."⁴⁰

It is interesting to see how funk transits through a diverse range of spaces, like the Grammys, Netflix series, *bailes* inside favelas, the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020, YouTube, drug dens, TV shows, and more.⁴¹

The democratic way that funk can be produced is what makes it so diverse and organic. "Funk carioca results from the creative appropriation of cheap technology by non-musicians to produce music for segregated segments of the population". In this case, a parallel can be created with the funk produced in Sao Paulo, which was initially considered⁴² "playboy funk" for being more commercial and super-produced.

FUNK ABROAD/TRANSLATION

Thanks to influential artists such as Ludmilla and Anitta, who began their careers as MCs, funk music is gaining international recognition. Social media has also played a significant role in exporting funk music, with artists like Beyoncé and Kanye West incorporating funk samples into their latest tracks, further boosting its popularity worldwide.

As funk music reaches new audiences, we may witness the emergence of new styles and influences within the genre. Every country and culture has its own political, economic and cultural factors, thus making it difficult to predict how funk will be received outside of its home, but it is fascinating to observe how funk is interpreted by diverse audiences. In Mexico, for example, funk arrived as a genre for the elites.⁴³ This is interesting when we compare to how the trajectory of funk manifested in Brazil. Funk has been exported and is now produced in Finland, England, and Japan.⁴⁴ This marks a reversal of the historical process through

which funk originated in Brazil and is now being exported globally.

The reception of funk in additional countries and cultures remains uncertain, and this uncertainty is at the heart of this thesis, which serves as an exploration to assess how funk might be perceived in Qatar. This work examines whether funk can/will assimilate and reinterpret elements of local culture to forge something novel. This aligns with the ongoing process observed in other cultures where funk has taken root. While there are glimpses of people enjoying and dancing to funk in the Gulf region, this movement is relatively slow compared to the rapid spread of funk in Latin America, for instance.

“Funk carioca then opens itself to hybridizations with other genres thus conquering new audiences and spaces. Beat morphing therefore a sonic manifestation of the survival nature of funk carioca culture”⁴⁵.

⁸ Fornaciari, “Funk da Gema: De Apropriação a Invenção, Por Uma Estética Popular Brasileira.”

⁹ Fornaciari, “Funk da Gema: De Apropriação a Invenção, Por Uma Estética Popular Brasileira.”

¹⁰ Bezerra and Reginato, “Funk: A Batida Eletrônica dos Bailes Cariocas que Contagiou o Brasil”

¹¹ Cymrot, O funk na batida.

¹² “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

¹³ “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

¹⁴ Bezerra and Reginato, “Funk: A Batida Eletrônica dos Bailes Cariocas que Contagiou o Brasil”

¹⁵ Bezerra and Reginato, “Funk: A Batida Eletrônica dos Bailes Cariocas que Contagiou o Brasil”

¹⁶ “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

¹⁷ Cymrot, O funk na batida.

¹⁸ “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

¹⁹ Palombini, “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca.”

²⁰ Palombini. “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca.”

²¹ “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

²² Palombini. “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca.”

²³ “(PDF) A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

²⁴ “Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca’ | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

²⁵ Cymrot, O funk na batida.

²⁶ Cymrot, O funk na batida.

²⁷ “(PDF) A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu.”

- ²⁸ "(PDF) A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu."
- ²⁹ Arruda et al., "De Pivete a Funqueiro: Genealogia de Uma Alteridade."
- ³⁰ Arruda et al. "De Pivete a Funqueiro: Genealogia de Uma Alteridade."
- ³¹ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ³² "Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca' | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu."
- ³³ Arruda et al. "De Pivete a Funqueiro: Genealogia de Uma Alteridade."
- ³⁴ Sá and Miranda, "Economic Aspects of Brazilian Popular Music."
- ³⁵ Sá and Miranda. "Economic Aspects of Brazilian Popular Music."
- ³⁶ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ³⁷ Alan, Funk das Galaxias (Interview)
- ³⁸ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ³⁹ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ⁴⁰ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ⁴¹ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ⁴² "Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca' | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu."
- ⁴³ Cymrot, O funk na batida.
- ⁴⁴ Fornaciari, "Funk da Gema: De Apropriação a Invenção, Por Uma Estética Popular Brasileira."
- ⁴⁵ "(PDF) A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu."



PRECEDENTS



ALBERTO PEREIRA

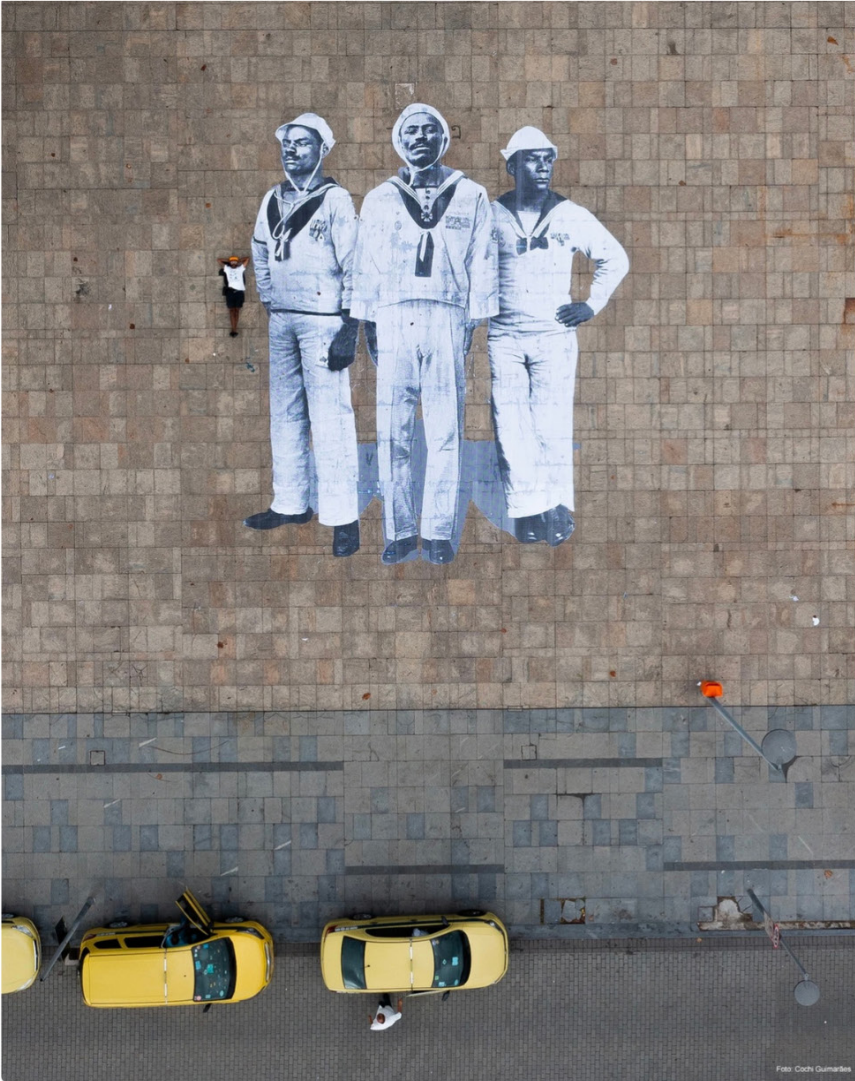


Figure 1

Alberto Pereira is a visual artist whose artistic exploration centers on collage and semiotics. Utilizing digital compositions, words, and paste-ups, he navigates urban art, employing paper as a medium of expression. His work has graced solo and group exhibitions and digital and urban art festivals worldwide. Notably, he founded the Lambes Brasil network in 2016, championing street artists nationally and internationally. Pereira's journey into urban art began in 2011, sparked by soaring metro fares in Rio, and fostering interventions within stations and train cars during his daily commute.

Paper-based art is inherently accessible, utilizing a democratic resource that can infuse other materials and surfaces with new significance, engaging with familiar elements in novel ways. This form of expression maintains a deep connection to the streets, aligning with the grassroots nature of funk culture that thrives in Rio's urban landscape.

What I find inspiring about his work is the utilization of accessible materials. Moreover, his decision to display his work outdoors in public spaces enhances its accessibility to a broader audience. In bypassing institutional confines, he fosters a more democratic access to his art. This aspect resonates deeply with the essence of funk music, mirroring its grassroots origins and inclusive nature.

MC DADINHO



MC Dadinho who is from Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro, started his musical journey as a funk MC. Influenced by his father's deep-rooted love for music, Dadinho's career in funk was nurtured by paternal guidance and support. His father, a fellow musician, played a pivotal role in advising and mentoring him along his path in the funk genre.

In 2014, a dancer called Fezinho Patatyy uploaded a video dancing to MC Dadinho's song, called Passinho do Romano. This video became very popular on YouTube and contributed to the growth of MC Dadinho's career as well as Fezinho Patatyy. However, this euphoria was short-lived, when MC Dadinho became "the centerpiece of a legal action in which the Muslim Beneficent Society (SBM) demands the immediate removal of five music clips from the air."⁴⁶

What MC Dadinho did not know is that when searching for sounds online to sample for his new track, he ended up selecting the voice of a Sheikh reading the Holy Qur'an and got backlash from the national and international Muslim community.

Dadinho did not know what these words meant until he started receiving death threats, hate comments, and legal action. The video was removed from his platform, and he changed the song and deleted the original. But the video, having reached 35 million views online, became so popular that it started getting reshared, so it was not the only video on the platform anymore.

Other users continued uploading the video and it was out of his control. Mc Dadinho continues to suffer the consequences of choosing to create a track with a language he did not understand.

"We didn't even know it was a Muslim prayer. We didn't mean to offend anyone."⁴⁷

MC Dadinho's career changed after this, as well as his health and the promise of a better financial future for him and his family, something that funk has provided for many.

His experience illustrates the potential pitfalls of cultural translation, even with the purest intentions. Embracing the playful and liberating spirit of funk as an artist, he encountered a stark reality and faced criticism and negative feedback. That could also be possible reaction to this thesis in which I am merging such different cultures and being able to reach people with different backgrounds. There is always a chance that someone will perceive it negatively.

PAREDÃO DE SOM



Figure 2

“Paredão de Som” means “big wall of sound”. This is very important to funk culture.

The parties of the 1970s featured large sound systems brought in by the musicians to pump the music to the crowds. This culture continued growing until many local sound system teams developed, groups bringing their own massive walls of speakers, and there was a rush to create more potent sound and to cover as many events as possible. The Soul Grand Prix was the first sound system team in Rio.

An example of sound system equipment is, “Two speaker boxes with four 12-inch woofers each, a Pro 2000 amplifier, and some strobe lights were enough to popularize the flag they waved”.⁴⁸

“It’s worth noting, by the way, that this culture of sound systems dates back to a tradition present in other parts of Brazil and the world, such as the sound system parties in Pará, the wall of sound in the Northeast forró, reggae sound systems in Jamaica, Kuduro parties in the streets of Angola, among others”.⁴⁹

Despite the fact that the sound system culture is not exclusively from Rio, it became an integral part of the *bailes*.

This precedent is selected as the central object of the exhibition, emphasizing the significance of the *paredão* culture and the pivotal role of powerful sound systems in the *bailes*.

⁴⁸ “Funk com trechos do Alcorão gera briga na Justiça: ‘Não quis ofender’, diz MC Dadinho.”

⁴⁷ “Funk com trechos do Alcorão gera briga na Justiça: ‘Não quis ofender’, diz MC Dadinho.”

⁴⁸ Bezerra and Reginato, Funk.

⁴⁹ Cymrot, O funk na batida.



INVESTIGATIONS



Throughout my life, I have moved back and forth between Brazil and the various destinations my father led us to, due to his career in football. While each move has been enriching, our relocation to the Middle East marks the furthest we have ever lived from our homeland. Consequently, I feel a separation from my culture, yearning daily not only for my family but also for the food, music, noisy streets, and chaotic energy of Brazil.

Every day, I strive to infuse a piece of my country into my current surroundings. Conversations with cousins and friends often revolve around music, as we bond over shared memories and new funk tracks. Given that funk embodies a lively and playful essence, we also connect through the exploration of new lyrics and inventive expressions. Thus, I have chosen to explore the connection to my roots through the lens of funk music.

INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENTATION

During the initial phase of my project, I returned home to Duque de Caxias/RJ and engaged with individuals from my city. I sought out those who either earn a living from funk music or aspire to do so. Despite growing up surrounded by funk lovers, I wanted to explore further and hear from the creators themselves.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, fueled by the shared connection of our hometown and the opportunity to showcase our culture to a country largely unfamiliar with it, although slightly more acquainted in recent years due to the World Cup. Messages flooded in, inviting me to meetings, photo sessions, and events; though time constraints limited my interactions.

A common thread ran through all their narratives: funk served as a lifeline, particularly financially. Accessible equipment enabled dreams of supporting families and achieving stability. Some, like MC Beatriz, turned to funk as a means of healing after a personal loss.

While funk may face prejudice in Brazil, seen by some as lacking artistic merit, conversations with MCs and producers affirmed their passion and artistry. They are unquestionably artists. After my trip home, I came back with a wealth of content: interviews, photos, videos, and newfound friendships.





"I lost my brother... couldn't get out of bed anymore... didn't want to live... he really liked funk, and I think I found a way to connect, to want to live again, to come back to life. So funk did that to me. I didn't have the will to get out of bed, and as I chose it (funk) to live from, it forced me to get up and fight." (MC Beatriz)

Upon returning to Qatar, I made the decision not to include the interview videos in my exhibition. Instead, I planned to edit and return them to the individuals who generously shared their time and stories. However, during this process, I experienced a setback—I lost all of my video footage and some of the photos. It was deeply disappointing, as I had inadvertently raised expectations that I could not fulfill. Despite this setback, I persevered with the material I still possessed. Fortunately, I had the voice recordings saved on my phone, along with some of the previously edited images, thereby allowing me to salvage what remained of my project.

THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Returning to Qatar always involves a period of adjustment for me, as the mentality here differs greatly from that of the people surrounding me back home. Additionally, transitioning from the spontaneous and organic nature of funk to an academic and institutional setting posed one of the most mentally and emotionally challenging aspects of my journey.

The conversations I had with the ones who make funk happen were always a reminder of home and what is important to me; however, articulating the significance of funk to me and my community, and conveying its relevance to others, proved to be a challenging task. Trying to put into words what funk means and how it shapes our identity was a difficult and frustrating process. However, once I managed to describe and translate the essence of funk, the focus shifted to constructing a reality where funk could thrive in Qatar.

Although the documentation work I conducted wasn't directly utilized in the exhibition, it served as a grounding reminder of the roots of funk and its importance to my community. Despite this, the footage was not incorporated into the translation process as I had anticipated.

Instead, I explored the use of materials and visuals closely associated with Rio de Janeiro. Hollow clay bricks emerged as a prominent material, symbolizing the visual identity of Rio's less affluent areas. As these types of bricks are not as prevalent in Qatar, I experimented with transferring images onto alternative materials, ultimately deciding to recreate a significant object from Rio's *bailé* funk events using locally available materials.

Initially, I considered incorporating materials like tarp and fabric, as they are commonly found in *baiões*. However, I gradually shifted my focus toward using concrete blocks as the primary medium. Despite exploring various options, the concept of image transfer remained consistent from the outset.

WORK DIRECTION

What served as the project's anchor were the recollections of my own encounters and the insights gained from interviews with the artists. Amidst the potential distractions of differing opinions and expectations, I felt it was crucial to maintain focus and prevent straying off course. I constantly reminded myself of my initial drive, ensuring that my message remained true and aligned with my perception of funk, as well as the sentiments expressed by those I had engaged with.

Viewing this entire process as a means of self-expression, I continually remind myself that I must follow my own path for articulating my thoughts and emotions. This is a personal odyssey and a unique art form through which I translate my experiences and perceptions.



"Funk, for me, has always been like family, as I mentioned with my father... My uncle also worked with funk... When I fell ill, it was because of funk, I almost died... Funk was everything in my life and funk motivated me to return." (MC Dadinho)



“The first time I went (to a *baile*), I didn't understand anything, I just felt the sound... after that, I started to enjoy it and like it” (Mano Thoy)

The more I immersed myself in the interviews and people's journeys, the more I understood that this was a personal experience and I had to accept that I could not take full control of the outcome.

CHOICE OF TITLE



Figure 3

Mr. Catra was an iconic figure originating from Rio, renowned as both a singer and an actor, with a very recognizable laugh. His larger-than-life persona and innate ability to captivate audiences propelled him to immense popularity. His life diverged significantly from the typical Brazilian narrative, with a remarkable personal story featuring 32 children and 3 wives.

Born to a domestic worker in Rio de Janeiro, Mr. Catra's life took an unexpected turn when the family's employers provided him with extraordinary opportunities. They facilitated his education in private schools and offered financial support. His mother's employer became his "adopted" father, granting him access to privileges far beyond the reach of his peers in the Borel neighborhood, providing opportunities that had once been unimaginable to him.

For titling this thesis, I selected a pivotal moment of Mr. Catra's career that significantly impacted the history of funk. It occurred when faced with sound equipment issues during a performance, Mr. Catra improvised beats through beatboxing, a spontaneous creation that garnered immense popularity and served as the foundation for numerous future tracks by other artists. While the sound itself preexisted, Mr. Catra's ability to beatbox transformed them into a cultural phenomenon, famously known as the "tchu tcha tcha".



OUTCOME



This research is fueled by a will to create my interpretation of a translation of a small part of my life in Brazil transported to the context of Qatar. The outcome of this thesis is based on my intention to explore and share a cultural experience that I see as a potential connection bonding of my two homes, Doha, Qatar, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. These two places have been integral in the construction of my identity; however, I will always feel a deeper connection with Brazil because it is my home country. This connection is made even stronger each time I go back. When in Brazil, I speak to loved ones and I listen to music and it is that music that provides the core of this thesis. In this work, I focused on the nature and experience of music that is unique to and in many ways, synonymous with, Brazil and Brazilian culture, funk music. I blended that with soundtracks that are present daily in my life both in Doha to create a musical experience that is intended to highlight the everyday lived existence of both of my homes.

The thesis outcome resulted in four parts: Big Wall, Boom Block, Sample, and Transfusion. All of these outcomes were inspired by the visuals and sounds that surround Brazilian funk culture as well as the visuals and sounds that have marked my experience in Qatar.

BIG WALL

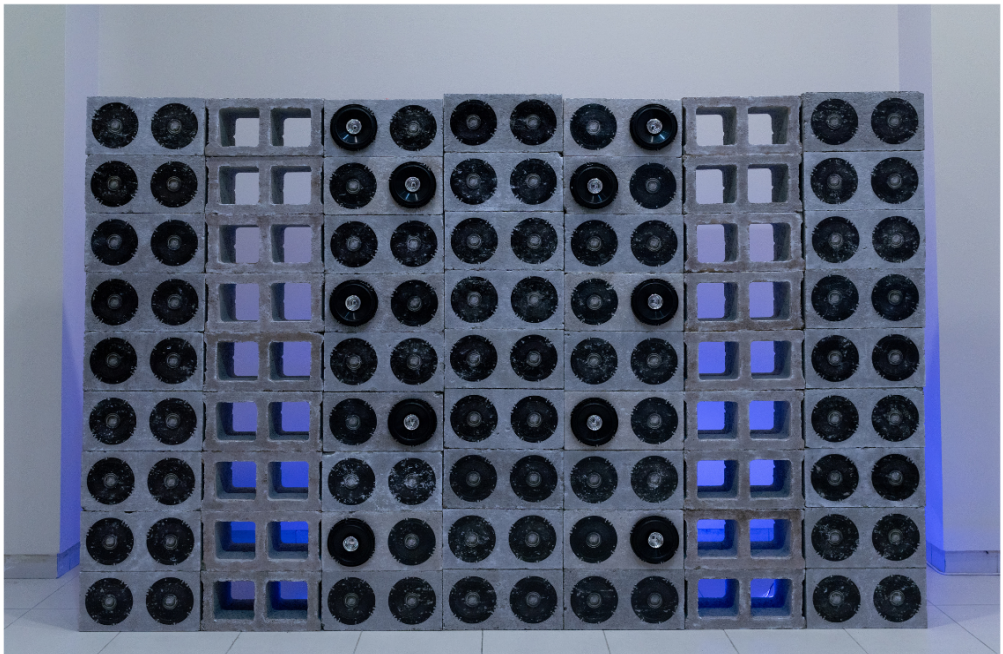
This object is inspired by the *paredões* (big walls), which are important to funk culture in Brazil. When funk was in its early stages, there were competitions where the Sound Teams would compete to see who could create the most powerful sound. To this day, the *paredão* (big wall) is a core component of sound competitions, or battles, and has become a part of the visual identity of funk.

Rather than trying to replicate the typical sound wall using wood materials, I decided to represent Brazilian culture visually with cinder blocks. The reason I chose this material is because in Rio de Janeiro, many of the houses on the peripheries are made with hollow clay blocks which remain exposed. Houses like this are so common that they have become a part of the visual identity of Rio's periphery, especially when funk became heavily linked to the *favelas/comunidades* since many of the favela houses have exposed bricks.



These types of bricks are more commonly used in Rio because they are cheap and easy to find. This is not the case in Qatar, however. Also, although there is an obvious material similarity, the cinder blocks used for construction in Qatar are substantively different from those used in Brazil. Plus, the blocks used in Qatar are not left exposed. If I imagine what Qatar might look like if the houses did not have exterior finishing, they would look gray because of the color of the cinder blocks. Nevertheless, the use of cinder blocks for construction in Doha and Rio provides a strong rationale for choosing this material. These cinder blocks provide a connection in the construction narrative of these two cultures.

Another thing to consider is the word *paredão*. Besides the interest in the material and the experimentation with image transfer and speaker installation, I also decided to use the term *paredão* as its literal translation, “big wall,” which creates a parallel to what a *paredão* means in the context of *baile funk*. The *paredão* is still intrinsic to the *bailes* since it shows how powerful the sound system is. To present the look of the *paredão*, I chose to use image transfers of photos taken of a speaker on each cinder block. Transferring the image is a way to use the photographs as a tool to change the perception of objects. Some blocks have a real speaker and some have just the image of the speaker transferred on the surface. The blocks are tiled until they create the *paredão*.



The image transfers are a time-consuming process, and incompatible with achieving a uniform result or a polished appearance. This suited my intentions perfectly, as I aimed to showcase work that embraced spontaneity, imperfection, and originality, mirroring the creative process of funk production.

The selection of materials presented logistical challenges, particularly due to their weight, which complicated transportation. I found this aspect intriguing, as it parallels the experience of adaptation and relocation to a new country. From my own journey, I have found that this transition can sometimes feel burdensome. Additionally, the process of leaving behind family in one's home country adds to the complexity and emotional weight of the experience.

The wall consists of 70 pieces of cinder blocks, image transfers, and 10 speakers.

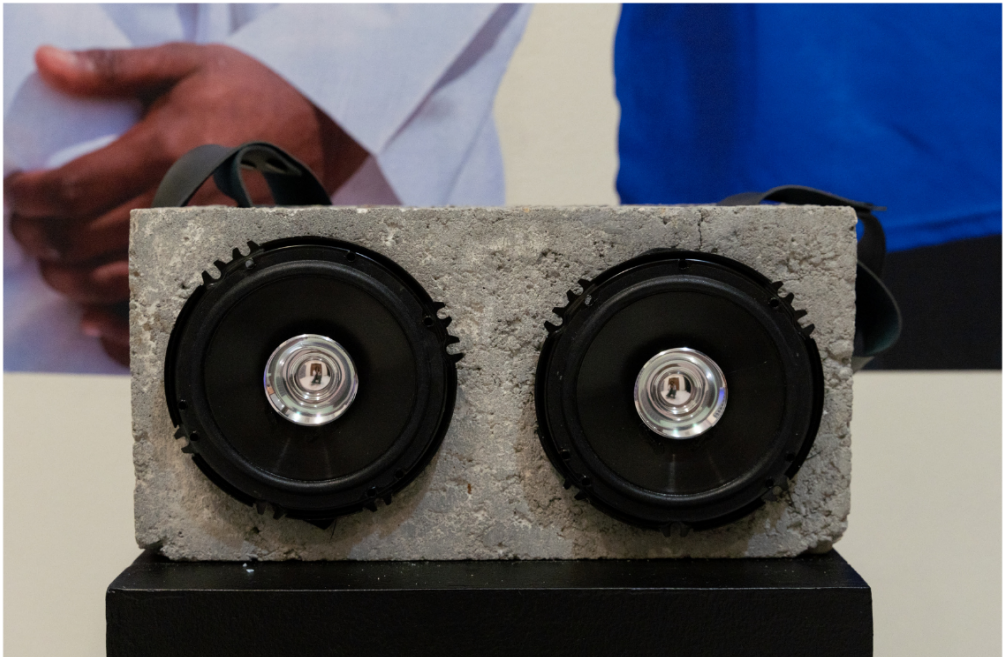




BOOM BLOCK

The Boom Block serves as a compact and functional boom box, offering a stark contrast to the larger and heavier Big Wall while still possessing significant weight. Its cinder block design features two larger holes for speaker installation and smaller rear holes for wiring, with a leather strap enhancing portability. Compatible with mobile phones, tablets, or any device equipped with an auxiliary audio port, it provides versatility in connectivity.

This object serves as a complement to the Big Wall. The choice of cinder block material reflects the prevalent construction material in Qatar, deliberately left exposed to create a parallel with the hollow clay bricks commonly found in Rio. In repurposing this widely encountered material, two speakers are integrated into the design, offering a unique variation on a familiar object.



SAMPLE



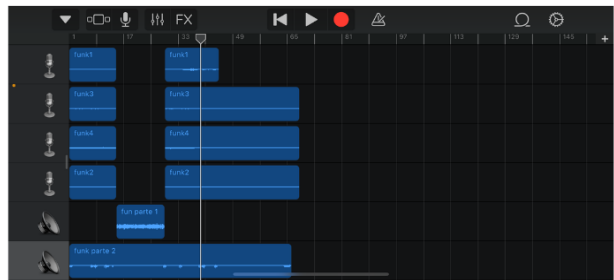
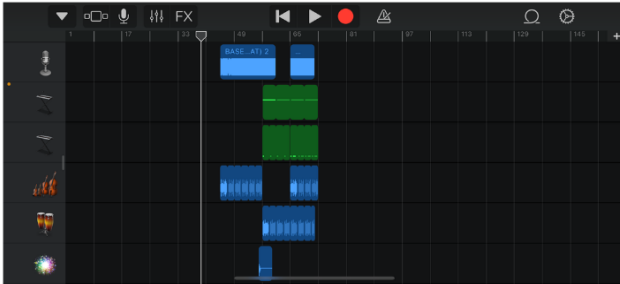
Sampling a song involves cutting desired parts to incorporate (paste) into a new creation, a common practice in funk production. This process involves blending different elements and experimenting with sounds.

In this image, I applied this same concept. I cut and pasted an image I captured onto the gallery wall. It represents my vision of how funk could influence the spaces in Doha. I played with visual parallels, such as the covered face using different pieces of garment, that could connect the Rio and Doha characters. In Rio, the *bailes* happen outdoors, as well as other events, inspiring my choice of an outdoor location to simulate this hypothetical scenario.

Another significant aspect of this shoot is the Boom Block, highlighting its potential usability.



TRANSFUSION



"Transfusion" contributes another layer to the collection, exploring cultural translation through sound. This track was crafted using principles of funk accessibility, utilizing free software on my mobile phone.

The process involved blending Brazilian and Qatari sounds into a single track. I chose the *tamborão* beat as a base because it is an important beat of funk and has witnessed a resurgence by new funk MCs, making it popular once more. I mixed this beat with parts of a very important folklore artist in Qatar, Fatma Shadad, who founded the first all-female band in Qatar. I also decided to add sounds that are present in the outdoor life of Doha, such as the sound of the metro. However, this proved to be more difficult than I thought, as the soundscape of Doha is far more subtle than that of Rio. The track also includes clapping sounds from the pearl divers and oud samples.

Rio buzzes with incessant noise. Almost 24 hours a day one hears an ongoing cacophony in the streets with music, people talking, loud bikes, kids playing, car horns honking, mobile street vendors in cars announcing their products with loud microphones, and much, much more. So much is happening at once in Rio and it all adds to the soundscape. Doha, in contrast, is much quieter. I don't hear vendors walking on the street and yelling about their products, there are no people yelling on the streets and it is also not common to play music outdoors. Walking around Doha streets is very different from walking in Rio streets, even on the busiest streets in Doha you are more likely to hear cars honking than anything else. Initially challenged to identify distinctly Qatari sounds, I drew inspiration from my commute on the metro, capturing and integrating its ambient sounds into the soundtrack of my work.



EXHIBITION



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

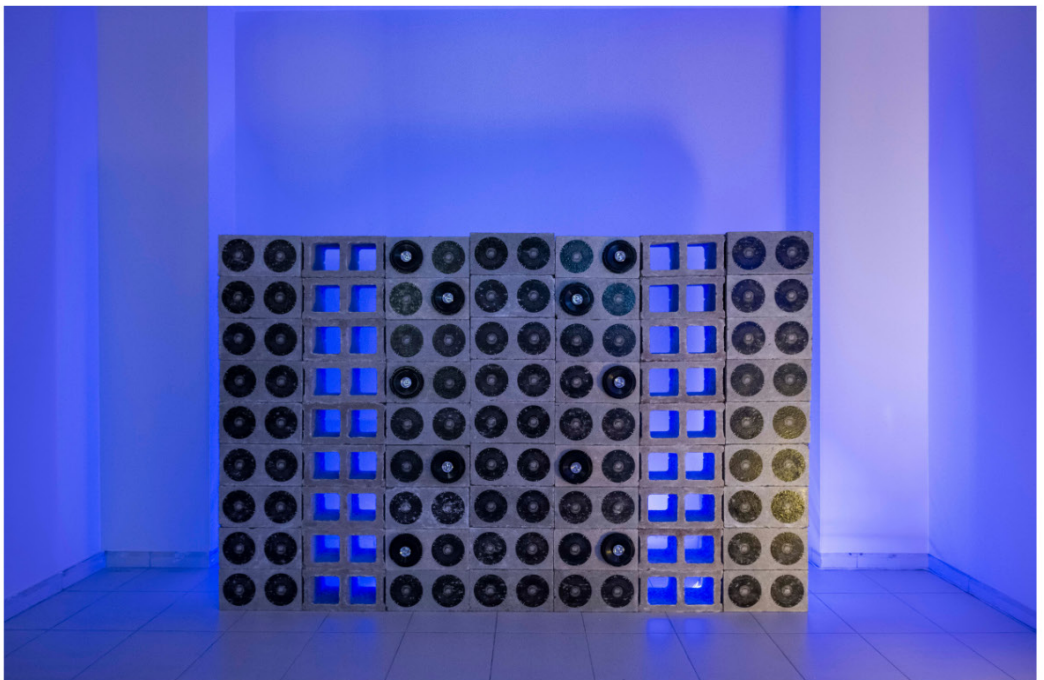





Figure 8



Figure 9



CONCLUSION



Through the creation of this exhibition and the extensive preparation involved, I discovered a deeper connection to my roots and cultural heritage. A significant aspect of this translation process was grappling with my own identity amid the backdrop of being distanced from my homeland and having spent many years in the Middle East.

Navigating this sense of disconnection while being immersed in a culture rich with its own references has posed its challenges. However, I recognize that this experience is an integral part of my journey. In this exhibition, I sought to portray not only the trajectory of my cultural exploration but also to express my own personal narrative - that of a Brazilian with traces of Qatar in her story.

My personal journey has undoubtedly shaped my perspective and creative process. It is inevitable that the nearly two decades I have spent in Qatar will leave their mark on my life, my work, my art, and my identity.

The fusion of cultures has opened doors to engaging conversations and enriching exchanges between Brazil and Qatar. This journey of discovery began with my initial relocation to Qatar and continued throughout the discussions surrounding my thesis. As we explored deeper into the exploration of funk and its cultural significance, a newfound space for dialogue emerged, offering fertile ground for cross-cultural interactions and mutual understanding.

Amidst this cultural exchange, the popularity of funk continues to rise. This is particularly evident in the growing presence of funk-related content on social media platforms. Individuals are embracing the genre with enthusiasm and infusing it with their unique dances and musical expressions. This grassroots movement not only adds depth to funk's cultural tapestry but also underscores its universal appeal and capacity to transcend geographical boundaries.

LIST OF FIGURES



[All Images belong to the author, unless otherwise stated]

Figure 1 - Cochi Guimaraes - Alberto Pereira- <https://www.albertopereira.com.br/rua?lang=en>

Figure 2 - Carol Nunes - Rio Parada Funk 2022 - <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=573429221457098&set=a.573431101456910>

Figure 3 - Allana Amorim - Rio Parada Funk 2013 - <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=592559474143671&set=a.592553224144296>

Figure 4 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition

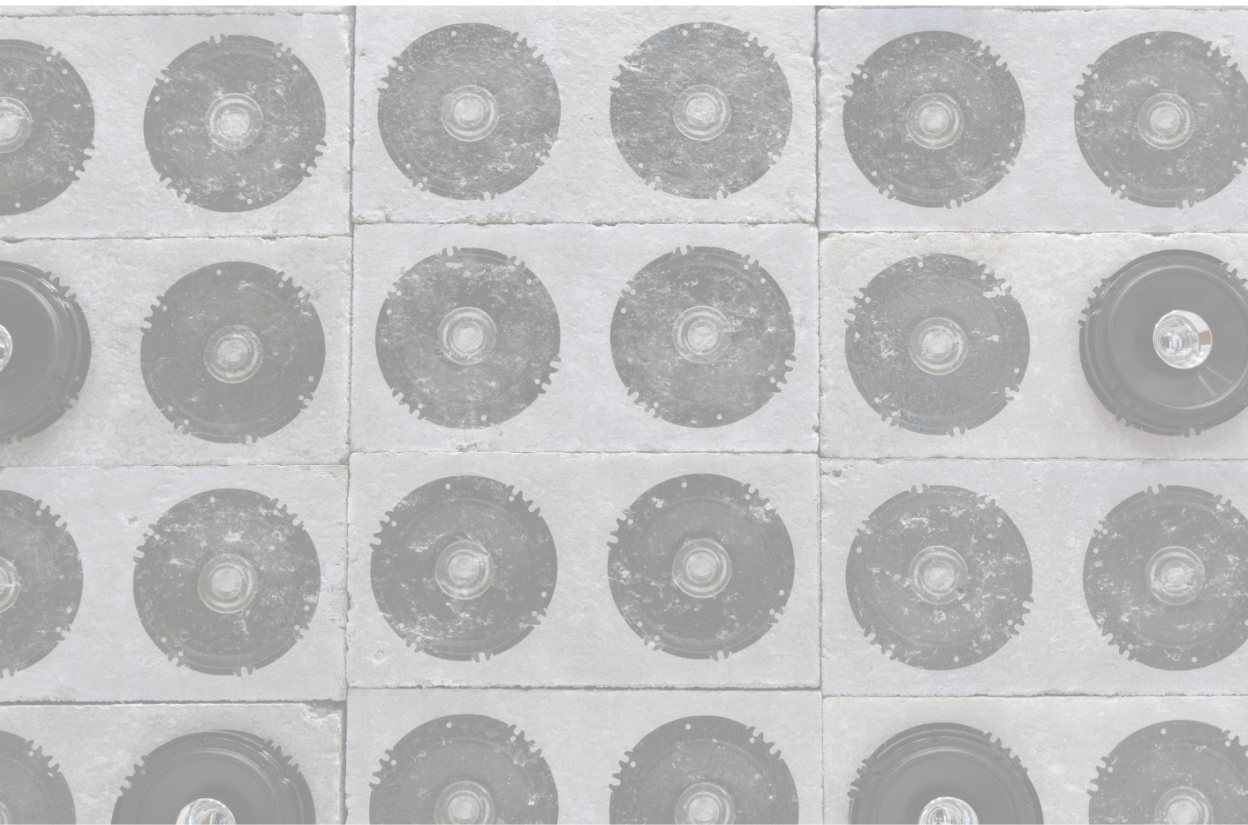
Figure 5 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition

Figure 6 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition

Figure 7 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition

Figure 8 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition

Figure 9 - Raviv Cohen - MFA 2024 Exhibition



BIBLIOGRAPHY



Lopes, Adriana Carvalho. "Funk-Se Quem Quiser: No Batidão Negro Da Cidade Carioca. 1st edition. Bom Texto. 2011.

Arruda, Angela, Marilena Jamur, Thiago Melicio, and Felipe Barroso. "De Pivete a Funqueiro: Genealogia de Uma Alteridade" *Cadernos de Pesquisa* 40, no. 140 (August 1, 2010): 407-25. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0100-15742010000200006>.

Bezerra, Julia, and Lucas Reginato. *Funk: A batida eletrônica dos bailes cariocas que contagiou o Brasil*. Panda Books, 2017.

Bragança, Juliana. *Preso na Gaiola: A Criminalização do Funk Carioca nas Páginas do Jornal do Brasil*. 1st edition. Editora Appris, 2020.

Cymrot, Danilo. *O funk na batida: Baile, rua e parlamento*. 1st edition. Edições Sesc SP, 2022.

Fornaciari, Christina. "FUNK DA GEMA: De Apropriação a Invenção, Por Uma Estética Popular Brasileira (Ebook)." Accessed February 18, 2024.

https://www.academia.edu/4130279/FUNK_DA_GEMA_de_apropri%C3%A7%C3%A3o_a_inven%C3%A7%C3%A3o_por_uma_est%C3%A9tica_popular_brasileira_ebook.

Mattos, Carla dos Santos. "Da Valentia à Neurose: Criminalização Das Galeras Funk, 'Paz' e (Auto)Regulação Das Condutas Nas Favelas." *Dilemas: Revista de Estudos de Conflito e Controle Social* 5, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 653-80.

Mizrahi, Milene. "Figurino Funk: Roupas, corpo e dança em um baile carioca." 1st edition. 7 letras. 2019

"Notes on the Historiography of Música Soul and Funk Carioca' | Carlos Palombini - Academia.Edu." Accessed October 4, 2023.

https://www.academia.edu/2532921/Notes_on_the_Historiography_of_M%C3%BAsica_Soul_and_Funk_Carioca.

O Globo. "Funk com trechos do Alcorão gera briga na Justiça: 'Não quis ofender', diz MC Dadinho." April 16, 2015. <https://oglobo.globo.com/brasil/religiao/funk-com-trechos-do-alcorao-gera-briga-na-justica-nao-quis-ofender-diz-mc-dadinho-15885643>.

Palombini, Carlos. "A Danceable Shower of Bullets: Sound Morphologies, Concrecence and Neurosis in the Genesis of an EDM Beat" 11 (November 11, 2019): 72-96. <https://doi.org/10.12801/1947-5403.2019.11.01.05>.

"Funk Carioca and Música Soul." *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, May 13, 2012. https://www.academia.edu/6923743/Funk_Carioca_and_M%C3%BAsica_Soul.

"(PDF) A Era Lula/Tamborão: Política e Sonoridade." Accessed February 18, 2024.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263618473_A_Era_LulaTamborao_politica_e_sonoridade.

ACKNO



WLEDGE

MENTS



This achievement is a culmination of collective effort and support from a diverse group of individuals, each contributing in their own way. I am deeply grateful to everyone who has been part of my journey, whether for a day or throughout the entire process.

I extend my sincere appreciation to my esteemed committee members: Marco Bruno, Byradley Yyelland, and Hadeer Omar, whose active involvement and guidance were invaluable during the development of this thesis. Special thanks to Robert Bianchi for his insightful discussions and clarifications throughout the writing process, and to Joshua Rodenberg for his constant support and for supplying me with essential information and equipment for the installation of my outcome.

The success of this project also owes much to the contributions of a larger community. I am profoundly thankful to my partner, brothers, and parents for their unwavering support and encouragement. When one of us succeeds we all succeed.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals whose support and encouragement have been instrumental: Mc Dadinho, Mc Beatriz, Mano Thoy, Funk das Galáxias, Dj Samrio, Mc Bala7, GB do Dick, Mc FZ, Alaan from Funk das Galáxias, Mc Duzinho, Xandiin from Funk das Galáxias, TH de SJM, Kaio Soares, Dj Kaio da VO, Wendrel de Souza, Larisa de Souza, Shamsudin Sheikh, Jessica Pereira, and Generose Paras. Each of you has played a significant role in this achievement, and I am deeply grateful for your support and encouragement.

