
Heritage Kinaesthetics: Local Constructivism and UNESCO's Intangible-Tangible Politics at a *Favela* Museum

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Abstract

In Providencia, Rio de Janeiro's oldest favela (shantytown), the Municipality created the "Open-Air/ Living Museum" to celebrate its history and link it to a larger infrastructure development project, within the agenda of Brazilian cultural policy to implement UNESCO's global recommendations on safeguarding local intangible heritage world-wide. How do local interpretations of cultural heritage affirm, modify, or enrich the institutional (municipality, state, and UNESCO) policies on tangible and intangible heritage? And how does tourism connect to the imagining of community cultural revival?

I develop the concept of heritage kinaesthetics as the moving bodily practices that people imagine and enact to enliven the built environment's static aesthetic looks, or the immobile quality usually ascribed to historic sites. The five main heritage kinaesthetics practiced by residents and visitors include: visual (photographing; seeing vs looking), ambulatory (walking around as

exploration), performative (enacting intangible cultural heritage such as samba, capoeira, football, and music; tour guides' performances), oral (telling stories/imagining history), and acoustic (re-creating place-specific sounds). Local heritage kinaesthetics practices are placed within the larger context of Brazilian and internationally UNESCO's cultural policy on heritage safeguarding conceptualized to enhance community quality of life. [Keywords: tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cultural policy, tourism, museum, space and place, social development]

Things tend toward the centre.
—Strabo

Uncentered Introduction

From far away, a visual pulsation seemed to envelop the *favela*,¹ the oldest shanty-town in Rio de Janeiro: vibrations, like dashing arrows of color, dancing above the outlines of slanted houses and intertwined electricity poles...the closer I get, the more clear the visual enigma becomes, and dozens of kites loom chasing one another, connecting rooftops to the sky.

The kite could well be the semiotic synthesis of the “centre” of the favela: the “centre,” which Cohen (1979) calls “the charismatic nexus of its [of a culture] supreme, ultimate morality” (1979:180). From here on, I will use the term “centre” with its British spelling when I refer to Cohen’s notion of the cultural “centre” of a community as its moral-ideological core of values and practices (see also Eliade 1954). On the other hand, “center” with its US English spelling will apply to the notion of “community cultural center” as an actual community building for artistic activities, which evolves as the focus of much negotiation and hope.

The “centre” of the multiple favela realities is intriguingly embodied in the kite, loved by the local children, for whom it signifies childhood, imagination, and happiness. I see in its material shape of two crossing poles a metaphor for the favela’s centre as intersecting opposites: vertical and horizontal, celestial and terrestrial, sacred and profane, calm and violent, creative and destructive. It is a centre of fragmented stories, where shades of laughter and misery overlap and deny the notions of the “centre” of a community as a homogenous entity.

This paper is a peripatetic enterprise, where walking with locals enabled me to explore the kinds of cultural “centres” and “centers” imagined and

lived by the dwellers of the oldest favela in Rio de Janeiro, Morro da Providencia (Providencia, from now on). In 2006, the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro declared the favela an “Open-air Museum” (*Museu ao Ceu Aberto*), also called “Living Museum” (*Museu Vivo*), by creating a “cultural corridor,” literally a well-asphalted pathway, winding through the main historic points. The corridor starts at the large staircase, built by the first slave fugitives to the *Morro* in the 1700s, arrives at the square in front of the 1860s Church of Our Lady of the Penha, then winds its way by three newly built view points (*mirantes*) overlooking the city, and arrives at the small 19th century *Canudos* Chapel and the elaborate 19th century water reservoir.

In the winter of 2006 and summer 2007, I conducted ethnographic research ranging from institutional interviews (Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, Ministry of Culture) to local participant observation of the life in and around Providencia’s Museum. The interactions led me to ask: How in the practice of institutionally-driven heritage-making do the “locals” imagine and (re-)construct the “local” cultural heritage? Precisely what embodied knowledges and practices do they enact in order to interact with their “newly recognized” ecology, and do these interactions produce a different kind of heritage? Do they affirm or modify the state (municipality, state, and UNESCO) conceptualizations of the difference between tangible and intangible patrimony? What kinds of tourism are Providencia’s residents expecting? And how does tourism connect to the conjuring of community cultural revival and economic improvements?

When dealing with heritage, I use two main terms, “tangible” and “intangible” heritage, to refer to the way these notions have been conceptualized at the supra-national level in the Conventions ratified by the United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization (UNESCO): (1) *intangible/immaterial* cultural heritage, or “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith” (2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity) and (2) *tangible/material* cultural heritage, which relates to “sites that bear witness to multiple cultural identities, are representative of minority cultural heritages, are of founding significance or are in imminent danger of destruction” (1973 Convention on Heritage Monuments and Sites). While in a previous article I have examined the *immaterialization* of heritage, or the departure from the old focus on sites and artifacts and shift toward the social meaning of places and practices, and the *materialization* of culture in its use as a resource for develop-

ment (Savova 2007), here I look at the *kinaesthetization* of heritage or the process of engaging the tangible and the intangible in a dialogue.

The term *heritage kinaesthetics* refers to the moving bodily *practices* that set the built environment alive and are a counterpart of *heritage aesthetics*, or the immobile *quality* usually ascribed to a historic site. I build my theory on the basis of the work of major phenomenologists, who have interrogated the connection between perception, movement, and conception, such as Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and Sartre's writings on the body in *Being and Nothingness*. The term *kinaesthetics* was perhaps first developed at the beginning of the 20th century by Husserl, who explored the "kinaesthetic sensations" as the subjective awareness of possible bodily positions and the continuous sequence of these perceptual appearances. *Kinaesthetics* has also recently been applied to learning in movement² to differentiate the "aesthetic"/*sensible* knowing from "epistemological"/*reasonable* knowing (Dixon 1986).

Recently, the term "kinaesthetic" has been applied to the ways modern traveling transforms "the passivity of visual tourism into *kinaesthetic* sense and flow" (see Thrift 1999 in Crang and Franklin 2001:13), and here I take such analyses one step further to understand how the recognition of a place as "heritage" transforms the previous passivity of inattentive daily inhabitation into a dynamic local construction of a "*kinaesthetic* sense and flow." My major theoretical analysis of these practices draws on de Certeau's (1988) idea of "kinaesthetic appropriation of space," which he sees realized mainly through the practices of walking and seeing (1988:98), not merely looking. De Certeau's emphasis on bodily movement in the reading and re-writing of space comes in the analytical stream of thought of the Situationists' and their development of the field of psychogeography (see Debord 1955).

Methodologically, I am guided by Csordas' (1993) work on "embodiment," where the sensory and psychological experience of the lived body is the "starting point for analyzing human participation in a cultural world" (1993:135). I focus particularly on the "lived" practices of intangible heritage in relation to the built environment that the body enacts in order to sculpt the tangible heritage into a "chronotope," a "space-time formation, through which contemporary dreams of national futures are imagined" (Till 2005:193). "Talking whilst walking" as an ethnographic methodology in Anderson (2004:254) constituted a major part of my peripatetic perception and analysis of a place, where walking and talking with the local tour-guide Diego disentangled key moments of the social fabric.

The word “kinaesthetics” denotes one’s sense of one’s own movement or the movement of others. While it has been excluded from the major five senses, “the living body is first and foremost the center of a tactile-kinesesthetic world, that unlike the visual world, rubs up directly against things outside it and reverberates directly with their sense [...] resounding with an intimate and immediate knowledge of the world about it” (Sheets-Johnstone 1990:16 in Sklar 2007:41). Arguing, like Sklar (2007) does, for the inclusion of kinaesthetics in the other five senses, I apply Hall’s (1977) concept that communication depends on the “synch” achieved between people’s speech and movement rhythms to the process of “synching” the body movement with its surrounding environment, natural and built, to communicate the sensation of a memory and of an imagined future.

Kinaesthetics derives from the mix of the Greek *kinetics*, the study of motion, and *aesthetics*, rooted in Aristotle’s studies of sensorial perceptions. In the 18th century, the term “aesthetics” was revived by philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten as “the science of how things are known via the senses,” and with Kant’s philosophy on evaluative judgments “aesthetics” came closer to the experience of beauty and finally narrowed down to the arts (Kivy 2004). Today, aesthetics may mean the study of aesthetic (sense-experienced) phenomena (including gastronomy, urban planning, and experience of space), the perception of the arts, and historical theater reenactment at heritage sites.

I use the term *kinaesthetics* in three ways. First, I use it in its general application of the human perception of one’s own movement and the movements of others in relation to the surrounding topography and architecture. This application creates particular experiences of the “tangible, immovable heritage”—or any other place, if we take “heritage” out of the equation. On the other hand, moving *kinaesthetics* from the human body to the architectural body, I use the term to show how “aesthetics,” the Kantian visual and static beauty of the place, is turned kinetic, or set in motion, by the external force of human movement (the sensible mode of knowing and enlivening the aesthetic space). Finally, “kinaesthetics” is pertinent in the discourse on heritage since it allows me to broaden the idea of “aesthetics” as tied to “high” arts, in particular visual art, and link it to the artistic in the “intangible heritage” practices that people perceive as vital to the social life of the heritage site: for example, “aesthetics” as applied to the local amateur dancing, singing, and music, as well as to phenomena typically not associated with art, such as walking and attentively looking around.

The five main *heritage kinaesthetics* approaches that residents and visitors of Providencia's Museum apply to shake and move the aesthetics of the tangible include: *visual* (photographing; *seeing*), *ambulant* (walking or moving from place to place [Greek], attentively and/or exploringly), *performative* (enacting intangible cultural heritage practices such as samba, capoeira, football, and music; tour guides' performances), *oral* (telling stories/discussing history), and *acoustic* (creating and *listening* to, as the active hearing of, place-specific sounds). Though this ethnographic study examines a heritage site and thus calls the processes *heritage kinaesthetics*, the analytical framework could be applied to other cases where human action, from story-telling to walking and dancing, suffuse spaces with the pulse of human practices that turns them into *kinaesthetic places*.

The interwoven forces I try to disentangle propel a *local constructivism* of various centre(s) of sociability within the heritage site: a community-based constructivism that "renounces the centred, the panoptic and the hierarchical" (Pinder 2005:402), as the "centred" here applies to the institutionally centralized heritage narratives that the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, perhaps unwittingly, even with the hope for "social development," conjured mostly in the offices far from the living centre(s) of the community. There are two intermingling processes of *heritage centralization*, or search for and construction of the heritage "centre" of the favela: one carried on by the public policy and one by various actor-residents of the favela, with their own multiple versions of the place's past, present, and future "centre" of culture that is often imagined as the physical building of a cultural center.

Though the municipality built a heritage trail in 2005, the lack of publicity and connection to a tourist agency, and fears after an unexpected violent outburst between the police forces and drug traffickers have impeded the planned regular flow of tourists.³ For these reasons, the research presented here does not examine the tourist experience in Providencia, but instead examines the main questions the community grapples with: what the Museum *could* and *should* become in order to reflect their vision of identity and carry out their hopes of economic development. This paper does not aim to offer precise historical accounts, but rather aims to voice the meanings that residents themselves assign to history: history from the grassroots up.

Writer and reader walking together, we meander through Providencia's back alleys of conflicts and imagination about a heritage site "under construction." Enjoy the walk!

Contested Histories: Between Heritage Aesthetics and Heritage Kinaesthetics

Lu Petersen welcomed me into her office on an early morning in January 2007. Lu is the person who has been implementing the Slum-Neighborhood Project (*Projeto Favela-Bairro*) since 1993. It is a 300 million-dollar project of the Municipality of Rio bringing infrastructure improvements to 160 favelas. As the first favela in Rio, Providencia inspired the municipality to mix the Project's infrastructure work with the construction of a historic trail to boost tourism-driven development. "We decided on an 'open-air museum,' because the community in itself, with its streets and churches, rather than a museum building, is the best expression of its cultural origins and its character as a living museum (*museu vivo*)," Lu told me. She believed Providencia's history has a predominantly *human value*, "because what matters is to see how a chapel survives since the 18th century in the midst of poverty and violence, and how people keep taking care of it!" The political imagination of "heritage," in this case, is quite unusual and artistic, with rich potential for a participatory incorporation of the notion of "heritage" as a living sensitivity, memory, and practice in the present dynamics of the community. But to what extent was the potential of a good, innovative idea fully realized?

The reality and the history of the favelas and the urban peripheries in Brazil has been mired in conflicts of power between ordinary citizens and the local administration, the police, and the drug lords that are the unofficially official administrators of the favelas (see Caldeira 1984, 2000). The density of the space of favela is the intersection of new tourism projects, but also the problem of the "spectacle" of poverty, of hopes for progress through education, but also of institutionalized exclusion, of individual aspirations and merit, and the curse of the favela address. In the midst of a seemingly impossible conundrum of poverty and violence that perpetuate themselves in vicious cycles, music and art have been powerful channels of social protest and attempts to offer alternatives (see Fryer 2000). Though most literature focuses on professional music and art, beyond this popular domain, in Brazil there has been a strong move on the part of NGOs and the government to address violence issues through the creation of favela community arts spaces/cultural centers, which in various cases have managed to bring members of feuding groups into a neutral space and transcend conflict through art and play. It is this recent creative trend

in social and cultural policy that this article addresses through an ethnographic study of one favela cultural initiative.

The idea of the *Living Museum* has ties to a larger municipal project launched in 2001 to build the first Guggenheim Museum in water, in the port area close to Providencia. In Lu's words, the *Living Museum* was conceptualized as a "counterpoint" (*contraponto*) to the planned Guggenheim Museum to be built in the waters of the nearby Port area, as the two spaces, quite distinct architecturally and topically, would have created a mix of history and modernity reflecting Rio's dynamic character. While the Municipality's creative idea fell through when the Guggenheim project was abandoned for lack of funding, the *Living Museum* was soon connected to yet another mega tourist project: the Samba City (*Cidade de Samba*), an enormous complex that would centralize the construction of Carnival floats, cars, and *fantasias* (festive clothing). The municipality had planned the Samba City for a different downtown area closer to the amphitheater of the Carnival (*Sambodromo*). However, Providencia Museum's proximity to the house of the most famous living samba "icon," Dona Dodô, led the municipality to switch the Samba City, or "Brazil's Disneyland" as Lu called it, closer to Providencia with the idea to connect the two structures as reflecting the variety of samba faces, from the small-scale local and personal to its evolution into a mass industry. The major goal in Lu's terms was to forge a samba tourist route that "can be a factor of sustainable economic development for Providencia."

However, the imagined route has not yet been established. Tourists travel by bus to the Samba City and leave right away, without even knowing to raise their eyes and look ahead, where Providencia, with its colorful buildings and historic chapels, hosts Dona Dodô, the oldest samba dancer of the *Portela* Samba School and the whole Carnival tradition. The innovative ideas remained in the minds of a few people at the Municipality and never materialized not only because of a lack of follow-up actions after the construction of the Living Museum, but also because the Municipality did not adequately engage the locals to discuss these ideas and inspire them to seek partnerships with the Samba City.

Some residents of Providencia—often people who have never been to the Samba City—criticize it for being a mega complex that "took away from samba's magic" by putting under government control what was once a community practice of making decorations (even if now the advantage was more municipal money for the floats). Yet *Portela's* Director argued that the Samba City made Carnival preparations more efficient by providing one unified

space for keeping all materials but also allowing the samba schools to become social projects for youth at risk. In the room filled with scraps of paper and cloth, glue, music, and a dozen of loud teenagers, the Director argued:

The efficiency of making the preparations allowed us to include disadvantaged youth from detention centers, orphanages, homeless shelters, and drug problem clinics, into a “Citizenship, Culture, and Art” workshop to help them earn points [*pontos*] to cut their penalty [*medida socio-educativa*], trying to take them on a new, better path [*encaminhamento*]. This better path happens as they start building higher self-esteem [*autoestima*] from their acquired artistic skills.

Talking to the psychologist Cristiana Ferreira who supervised the workshops, and to the young participants, some of whom were from Providencia, I found out that most adolescents “adored tons (*adoram um monte!*)” learning about Brazilian “root culture” (*cultura de raiz*), with notable expressions being *samba de roda* and *jongo*. The young people expressed amazement at their artistic potential, which already for one of them, once out of prison, resulted in a permanent job in the Carnival industry thanks to his certificate from the workshop.

Those adolescents from Providencia participating in the workshop thus had a vision of the Samba City quite different from that of many residents who had never stepped in. Their exclusion from and thus aversion to the place has multiple roots, but one I consistently observed in the ways people talked about or *looked* at the Samba City’s building was linked to the visual divide created by its enormous orange construction, rising incongruously at the foothill of Providencia as a dominant and closed (it was hard to locate its entrance) rather than an open, friendly space inviting interaction. All the good intentions germinating inside the walls of the Samba City could not plant seeds in more than a few adolescents from the surrounding community (invited through the schools) because of inadequate outreach but also a spatial and architectural schism unaccounted for in the building plans, where once again the Municipality had not realized the importance of consulting the hosting community about design, color, shape.

To some locals I talked with, the Samba City epitomizes what we could call institutional *heritage centralization*, since it concentrated former local practices scattered across Rio’s favelas into an all-in-one, state-supported but also state-controlled, tourist package. People worried this cen-

tralization could extinguish the “heart of samba,” or what I have been referring to as the cultural “centre” of communities and their cultural practices. It is something different, far more “local” and “authentic” from the Samba City performances, that two residents in particular were hoping to create within Providencia’s *Living Museum*.

The first one, professional photographer Mauricio Hora, shared with me in a conversation in January:

The municipality worked too much [for] the aesthetics of the place and not [for] the people...see, it moved the immovable property but did not try to move around the social...

I think that for the museum to be alive it has to engage the residents in cultural activities.

These two diverging images of heritage define the key difference between *heritage kinaesthetics* and *heritage aesthetics*, as the latter focuses on the architectural and material, and is unable to engage the human flow passing by and through it. Mauricio created the *Favelarte* Project (www.favelarte.com) as an alternative community development—development as “spiritual growth through the arts”—and a tentative response to the question “What does a heritage site need in order to work for the locals?”

Simply the presence of tourists would hardly increase the self-esteem of the favela residents, because the tourists have no contact with them...and in any case, self-esteem is something very deep and personal...This is why *Favelarte* is not only about the safeguarding of memory but the rescue of dignity through artistic activities.

The notion of “self-esteem” in Mauricio’s discourse is rooted in the cultural reality of discrimination against the favela residents for having a home address notorious for poverty and violence. In this inside-outside dichotomy, Mauricio’s words reveal why the tangible heritage would have value for the locals only when they can introduce themselves to the visitors with dignity as human beings. He believes tourists could engage in samba dances, *pagode* concerts, or *capoeira* (Brazilian dance/martial arts) performances, since those are interactions that do not require a common spoken language but rather speak through human touch, rhythm, color, and movement. Mauricio’s conceptualization of tourist-

local interactions as a meta-linguistic dialogue inverts the standard structured heritage experience at theme parks and museums (see Bruner 2005, Davis 1997). Community cultural performances in *Favelarte's* vision are not commodified “tourist productions” but ongoing leisure activities embedded in the local life-world while also participating in the community’s externally-oriented tourist experience.

Favelarte's concepts evolved out of Providencia’s 100th Anniversary in 1997, when Mauricio wondered how to awaken the local youth’s interest in history and transform it into pride. He organized a photography workshop, hoping it would do for them what it did for him:

Art literally saved me, it made me see things differently, focus on the details...my father was into drug trafficking, my friends too...but in my imagination, I could travel beyond that! I realized I had to leave the favela, because only from the outside you can see it in perspective, and then come back to try to change things.

It was through local photography workshops—the new visual concentration of energy on the human and architectural detail—that Mauricio activated to a certain degree a cycle of *visual heritage kinaesthetics* in which the residents started to *see* the aesthetics and value of their surroundings. “Inhabiting” became more like tourism: the “apotheosis of *looking around*” (Lippard 1999:13). “At first, the locals were wondering what the kids were taking pictures of, since to them all was old and poor, but then the pictures showed colorful details and close-ups of people’s faces that made them re-think things,” Mauricio told me.

Local amateur photography⁴ inverted Benjamin’s wariness toward the photographic “copy” as lacking the “aura” of the original, because photography in Providencia graphed an image that infused the familiar sites with a recharged “aura,” turning them into enlivened places, or what we could call a “living image,” *empsychos graphe* in Greek (“living painting”[Gr], denoting icons⁵). Providencia’s interactive *iconography of place*, as motivated by photography and by the municipal recognition of the neighborhood, is a process different from previous market and state development projects, such as the demolition works of modernization in the US from the 19th to the mid-20th century, where instead of the *iconography of place* we find what Nancy Munn observes as “the iconoclastic hand of improvement” (2004:5). As an iconographer, I find it illuminating to apply the concept of

iconography to the creation of place through photography: it is a resurrection of the “aura” by painting (*graph*) with light (*photos*) and bringing together the historic, architectural, and human detail.

Providencia’s “cultural corridor” has the potential to offer the locals not a new but a *re*-newed space for people to practice the *visual heritage kinaesthetics* of photography and to *see* with appreciation not the buildings’ aesthetics as in classical historic sites and museums, but at the socially constructed kinaesthetics of the heritage place, whose core lies in the human stories and sensations that dwell beyond the walls.

The *mirantes*, the only large open spaces on the hill, have provided spaces for peaceful contemplation of Rio’s beautiful topography, as well as for games, where the children’s kites *kinaesheticize* the surrounding urban texture. *Visual kinaesthetics* breathe life also into actual visual artworks such as the graffiti that Diego, my 16-year old local tour guide, and his friend Orfeo painted on some old houses and along the Staircase of the Slaves “to spread color and movement around.” *Visual kinaesthetics* propels the dream of Nelson, the Vice-President of the Residents Association, about bringing an artist to paint the houses in bright colors.

In 2007, without consulting the residents, and unaware of the *visual kinaesthetic* hopes for a richer architectural palette, a local politician started a project for a massive re-painting of the favela in uniform colors (fusing three shades of green): an idea that many residents called *esquisita* (weird) and *chata* ([colloquial] stupid, dull). To put it in the language I have been playing with in this paper, the political idea exposes unimaginative *visual aesthetics*, subject to what we can perhaps detect as the “refined” Western taste dominated by a *social chromophobia*, or a “fear of color” in anything from outfits to architecture. Such social *chromophobia* reflects a much deeper fear of visibility and difference in a society that explicitly cheers for individualism but implicitly applauds standardization and adherence to norm. In contrast, in Providencia (and Brazil in general), the residents prefer bright colors, challenging the imported dull aesthetics of a strategic political model.

The *Favelarte* website in itself performs *visual heritage kinaesthetics* through photographs of the interaction between people and place. Mauricio’s images of moving people and children’s games (kinaesthetic ones) contrast with the static panoramic views (aesthetic) used in the short promotional video and brochure created by the Municipality. The video sells an “out-view” version of the museum by depicting it as a site for

looking *outside* towards Rio's hills rather than looking *inside* to delve into the life of the favela. The commercial's opening presents images of the Sea Port looking down at the favela, but it does not interact with her in the same ways as the improvised, enthusiastic introduction Mauricio gave me as he weaved local stories into the Google Earth images all the way from outer space to his native hillside! The detailed satellite pictures produced a journey toward the "centre" of a small place that has been on the world map far longer than on Rio's political map, but whose political heritage recognition added to it the "value" that had lead me, the researcher, to sit down with Mauricio and be interested in how his locality struggles for a place in national and global grids of value.

Favelarte is still only an idea and a website, but provides intriguing insights into what is missing in the Municipality's practical approach, ironically distant from their innovative and socially engaging initial ideas. Mauricio hopes to find funding and develop *Favelarte* by establishing a permanent *nucleo cultural* (cultural nucleus) in many *favelas*, starting with Providencia. The program he envisions would include: a. local memory research; b. photography (archives and current image-making); c. access to information through 2-3 computers with Internet; d. promoting local creativity by offering workshops and space for rehearsal and performance. In Providencia, Mauricio's dream is to see the traditions of *samba*, *cavaquinho* (small guitar) and *mandolino* music revitalized.

Paradoxically though, he never mentioned the Cyber Café,⁶ which the municipality built as a research/information center in Providencia and which could become precisely the "nucleo" Mauricio envisions, and would be sustainable due to its regular municipal funding. Talking to other residents, however, it became clear that the Cyber is practically outside of the boundaries of the favela: a largely imagined, social map that is perceived in terms of security. In this sense, parents were afraid to let their children go to the Cyber for fear of violence between clashing gangs.

What *Favelarte* reveals, together with other ideas and negotiations among the residents, is how the idea of the museum motivated *local constructivism*,⁷ which embraces the ways in which the locals socially construct and perform memory, values, and senses of belonging. *Local constructivism* differs from Bruner's (2005) "tourism constructivism," which is the potential of the tourist demand (often negatively viewed) to pre-condition fabricated identity performances (also see Davis 1997). I argue that in many cases, and certainly in Providencia, "tourism constructivism" is

“productively” constructive because it has stimulated *local constructivism* of place, where the residents discuss ideas about development, identity, and the presentation of the community for visitors. In a sense, the residents in these negotiations are becoming “artists” constructing new worlds out of existing realities (Lippard 1999).

While there has been literature on nostalgia denoted as the “imperialist nostalgia” of elites infatuated with the lost roots eradicated precisely by the economic and political forces they have endorsed (see Davis 1997), Providencia and other communities I have visited and studied reveal a counterpoint phenomenon of what I would call *local heritage nostalgia*. *Local heritage nostalgia* is the rising sense of loss of tradition within the particular community where the tradition originated or was practiced for a long period—be it a neighborhood, village, city, region—and it is often produced by governmental initiatives like the Living Museum; NGO development projects as TAC in Chile which I researched for three months in 2006; or UNESCO’s messages of heritage safeguarding and programs like the Living Heritage Program implemented by governments, which have begun to recognize individuals and practices for their exceptional cultural importance. In a world system that makes people believe it is ever more globalized, global, and thus less and less local, Providencia and many other places building community museums I later discuss exhibit a palpable human need for senses of place and belonging. *Local heritage nostalgia* leads to *local constructivism* of past and present as we are to observe in the following episode: the two social phenomena are not necessarily the product of desires for marketability and profit from tourism, but, as in Eron’s case, express hopes for a cultural re-birth raised by the past.

Local Constructivism of an Intangible “Centre” and a Tangible Cultural Center

Eron is a colorful personality: a former secondary school biology teacher, now taking care of the Church of the Lady of Penha and residing in the rooms attached to it, he teaches *capoeira* and after-school classes to local kids as part of the *Germinal MEL* Project, which stands for *Movimento de Esporte e Lazer* (Movement for Sport and Leisure). The project is funded by the Municipal Department of Sport and Leisure and is intended to bring leisure activities to open spaces in communities lacking cultural infrastructure. When the Museum was being built, he had hoped there would

also be a Cultural Center in addition to the open space where locals could organize more activities. Eron was not alone in his aspirations, but it was only after talking to me that he learned that Dona Dodô also wanted to create a samba workshop space in her museum, and that Mauricio had the *Favelarte* Project. Clearly, ineffective communication among promoters of these scattered creative ideas was a persistent problem that impeded Providencia's social construction.

Eron's dream for a community cultural center comes in the footsteps of a historic entanglement between art and politics in Brazil. While the military regime built the *Casas de Cultura Popular* (houses of popular culture) as "easy unifiers" in a "genealogy of the nation that excluded all ruptures and conflicts" (Avelar 1999:42), more recently in Brazilian cultural policy there has been a move toward the "socially empowering" potential of popular music like samba and *capoeira*, re-conceptualized as practices for citizenship-building within the cultural spaces of museums, *casas de cultura*, and *pontos de cultura*, which we will explore further below.

When so much cultural richness—one of the oldest samba schools—was born *inside* Providencia, Eron dislikes when people search for "culture" and "fun" *outside*, even though he does acknowledge the additional importance of spaces such as the near-by Jose Bonifacio Cultural Center; the NGO Casa do Pequeno Jornaleiro offering to local youth a variety of activities, from creative and journalistic writing workshops to swimming; and the Vila Olímpica public sports center, which takes Providencia's handicapped residents for walks. Eron, however, insists on having an arts nucleus in the center of the Morro, because he believes it would create an artistic, participatory dynamic *within* the favela. At the center he could teach *capoeira* and local history workshops (including old games and medicinal plants); Diego's mother Marcia could teach artisan work made from recyclable materials; Marcio, a University journalism student, could teach English to the guides: another element that would facilitate the *oral kineasthetics* of unmediated interaction with visitors; and Diego could illustrate a book with local legends. The key to social development for Eron is a change in mentality built on *self-organization* and *self-sufficiency*:

Change needs to start in ourselves...Education is not really a virtue,
but a responsibility!

Eron's reinvigoration of "culture" makes an important social statement about the centrality of artistic practices of all kinds for the development of creative social interactions: a *per formative heritage kinesthetic* to turn the Living Museum into an interactive display of not only buildings but of rhythmic performances that are to become regular in local leisure. "Community is made real in performance" (Noyes 1995:468), Eron implicitly says, where politics and the many faces of development play their scripted parts. What Eron hoped for is a form of arts participation that would charge the "community spirit," as he kept referring, or what I have observed elsewhere in community centers in Bulgaria with mixed-generations' cultural activities and called *community creative capital*: the intersection between social and cultural capital at a community level where these "capitals" are not about profit or symbolic social benefits but about sociability and self-esteem particularly achieved through *the arts* (Savova 2007:199). *Community creative capital* in Providencia was, as it always is, being generated even in the imaginations and negotiations about the community center where the amateur arts could take place.

The social roles contested by the political authorities and civil society come to light in a community project that Eron and Diego's mother, Marcia, started two years ago. They managed to get funding from a local politician for a program that offered after-school lessons and leisure activities, since they planned to export the project to other favelas.⁸ However, the politician took the idea to the Municipality and then to the Ministry of Education, where it was institutionalized as the *Segundo Tempo* Program⁹ for after-school activities in low-income neighborhoods. "They stole our project and now the merits are all for the government!" Eron complained. His frustration highlights an interesting paradox, where what would be the ideal of a democratic system—a local initiative that gives birth to public policy for social development—is interpreted as unjust, confronted with local claims on the "cultural property rights" to a particular development notion that were never publicly recognized.¹⁰

Eron's project is juxtaposed with a different case of private-public relationships, perceived as successful bottom-up activism. MH20, a small NGO teaching hip-hop classes in Providencia since 1998, created a program for hip-hop cultural management. Then, after winning the "Ashoka" Foundation International Social Entrepreneurship award in 2004, their project was appropriated by the Ministry of Labor as the National Alternative Market Project, allocating funds for small-scale cultural indus-

try enterprises. Since the background of the project—indeed, its “heritage”—was recognized as related to the community work done in Providencia, the NGO took pride in having served as the foundation for national policies. These two similar cases with diverging interpretations reflect the ambivalences in the negotiations of agency between civil society and the State.

The Play of De-centralization: Earth—Asphalt and Sacred—Profane...

When I first arrived in Providencia, my “tour-guide” Diego took me up a large staircase, “which was built by our slave ancestors, who first settled the favela in the 1700s,” he explained. “It is the entrance to the favela ...but you can’t take pictures here!” In his wary expression, I quickly read that we were under the drug dealers’ observation and within the zone of their “trade” reach. The community’s *Dono* (literally “owner,” or the Head of a trafficking band and in a way “owner” of the favela) sent a clear message to any visitor. Diego’s and my behavior and experience of the place were to be choreographed by the contested interests of colliding forces—from the illicit drug traffic to the heritage intervention.

Once *inside* the symbolic boundaries of the favela above the staircase, the Church of Our Lady of Penha is the first building one comes to know on the heritage trail. The Church of the Lady of Penha used to be the community’s cultural “centre,” where sociability was generated not by the actual church building as a locus of ritual, but by two non-religious elements organized around it: ghost stories, and the soccer field in front that hosted games, gossip, and dancing. The residents told me they hoped the visitor would come out of Providencia with a “recreated understanding” of their world. The notion of “recreation” relates to “experimental traveling,” which internalizes each new encounter “away from the spiritual, cultural, or even religious centre of one’s world, into its periphery, towards the centres of other cultures and societies” (Cohen 1979:182-183). Here, “recreation” is incorporated differently than in the notion of “recreational” (purely entertaining) tourism and is finally coming close to its actual etymology in a “religious voyage to the sacred, life-endowing centre, which rejuvenates and ‘recreates’” (Cohen:183). In Providencia, the religious nature of the recreational tourism’s “voyage” is both implicit and explicit. The explicit element resides in the two old churches that con-

nect the two ends of the trail and thus turn the trail into a pilgrimage route of its own kind; and the implicit element lurks in the legends about the spirits of slave ancestors still inhabiting the Church of the Penha.

Eron, who takes care of the Church, shared:

There are stories about the White Bride and the ghosts of our ancestor slaves lamenting.... Everybody likes scary stories, because people feel closest together in fear...

But fear itself also has changed here, and now people fear the blindered police cars instead of the spirits.

When I returned in August 2007, Eron used the image of the police force again, this time to make a vivid illustration for his capoeira students for why the game traditionally ends with samba. "Imagine you are playing capoeira, but the police comes in...practicing self-defense is not allowed, so all immediately switch to samba, pretending all they do is dance ...when the police leaves, the real game starts again!"

Through the story, Eron made a painful reality speak to a related past, and the past itself became present in the movements of a politically charged dance. It is a dance with social significance in remembering struggles and ideals. In front of me, the children were training an identity that was to be performed before the visitors to follow. Yet, it was a performance that went much deeper than the tourist incentive or the playful *ginga* moves. Eron's capoeira classes mixed body discipline with lessons on discipline in education, teachings on civic rights and responsibilities, respect and mutual understanding. Each training opened and closed with a prayer, in which the gratitude to God for allowing the dancers perform on His ground and in His rhythm also evoked a commitment to social justice and love.

The first time the group performed before me (and before I joined them), Eron presented me to his students as the Museum "guest," emphasizing: "Kids, you all are now representing before our visitor not only the heritage of our favela but of all of Brazil! And then this heritage forms part of the diverse heritages [*patrimonios*] of all of humanity! Just imagine *how* important you are!"

Eron linked the group's cultural practice to the overall recognition bestowed to the locale by the government with its construction of the Living Museum, appropriating a policy oriented toward the aesthetic, historic buildings and applying it to a local heritage that was moving, intan-

gible, and totally kinaesthetic. Furthermore, he appropriated locally also the international discourses on intangible heritage, which he heard about when I described my research topic on UNESCO's policies on heritage. Though UNESCO and its concepts of "heritage of humanity"—*patrimónios*, or heritages as he called them—were unknown and distant to Eron, he was quick to locate on the body of the United Nations a site of recognition that added value to his work and which he hoped would help the children view themselves as global citizens, whose creative endeavors matter beyond Providencia and even beyond Brazil's frontiers. Eron defined their potential for such global citizenship through a system of artistic, social, and educational values. Returning to his words: "Change needs to start in ourselves... Education is not really a virtue, but a responsibility!," in our later conversations on the heritage of humanity, Eron expressed a view of the responsibility to education as similar to the responsibility to safeguard local heritages for their communities as much as for the rest of the world that can benefit from their beauty.

The official recognition of the favela as a topography and historiography re-charged Eron's capoeira not with another impetus for resistance, as the dance has traditionally been portrayed (Lewis 1992), but with the hope for equitable social inclusion and democratic participation in decision-making where the dancing body is above all a social agent.

While these aspirations still clash with the violent reality in Providencia, the figure of the policeman follows in the steps of the old-time female ghost believed to reside in the Church. The Lady of the Penha keeps the local fantasy agile with mythmaking as a practice of inter-generational communication. Piles argues that it takes "emotional work" to animate and appropriate urban reality by seeing "the phantasmagoric aspects of city life" (2005:3). It is, in fact, the literal "phantasmagoric" bricolage of ghost and police stories in Providencia through which locals perform *oral heritage kinaesthetics*. Through these performances, legends enliven the tangible heritage and enable a community to narrate itself to itself and to others, and to coexist with inexplicable apparitions and social injustices.

Myth-making also serves as a field of discussion and negotiation of current politics. One afternoon in Providencia, a lively debate was evolving between two of the oldest favela residents: Senhor Berner, who had helped draft Providencia's Residents Association's constitution in 1978, and Edilson, a *trabalhador comunitario* (public hygiene employee). Debating the history of the English Cemetery, both regularly inserted remarks such as "the

youth have no clue” and “no one cares about history anymore!.” “Why is that a problem?,” I asked them. Senhor Berner explained:

It is important to feel pride in your history, because this makes people understand we need to vote for *our own* local representatives in government and not leave it to people from the outside who know nothing about our community...

Oral heritage kinaesthetics—whether about the ghosts of a cemetery or of a church—is defined by knowledge of local history beyond amusing story-telling, rather as a fundamental cultural text about how the community understands and organizes its political structure and self imagination. Local history did matter, according to the two old men, for people to take wiser political decisions at present. And local history was, in fact, emphasized as an important component in the local tour guide workshops that the Municipality funded. However, the adolescents were trained to research history in the way most divergent from the local living tradition, by learning the “master narratives” on the Internet and in books. Diego realized this method was inadequate after hearing Dona Dodô’s stories *for the first time* only when he took me to visit her house. Diego exclaimed with amazement at all the history he had never learned and which he found worth to be proud of!

A significant downfall in the guide workshops was the lack of *oral heritage kinaesthetics*, and the lack of engagement with the most obvious local sources reveals the *de facto* lack of participatory dynamics in the Cyber Café’s conception—regardless of whether intentional or not on the part of the municipality. Still, Diego’s desire to incorporate Dodô’s anecdotes in his tours shows the importance of *oral heritage kinaesthetics* in enriching the Museum experience, which remains a work in progress.

Walter Benjamin suggests that the two groups of storytellers—residents and visitors—can be imagined through “their archaic representatives, one is embodied in the resident tiller of the soil, and the other in the trading seaman” (1968:82-83). The image of the local storyteller’s connection to the soil takes me to the second force that is at work in defining the Church, however, this time as a *de-centralized* “centre,” uprooted from its soil and displaced by layers of concrete. In the discussions on the *Living Museum*’s effects, the most negative one that people invariably mentioned (and usually mentioned first) was the destruction of the soccer (*futebol*) field in

front of the Church and the construction of a square with a concrete cross in the middle. The most positive effects also revolved around the Church: the construction of the lookout places that cleared a beautiful view behind the Church and the hope of some residents to receive Municipal support to open a community cultural center in a house by the Church (while the Church itself has already served for some of Eron's after-school classes).

One would ask "Didn't the municipality consult the community as to what was meaningful to them?" To a certain extent it did, but by conceptualizing heritage as linked mainly to the past and thus to the older residents, it had an intern from France conduct research on local history, interviewing only people above 50 years of age. Such a framing of heritage turns it into an artefact to be unearthed rather than a living and lived process by people of all ages, whose understandings of the past could have been engaged in reflexivity and participatory, creative incorporation within the discourse on social development. Orfeo, the "community artisan" who learned to make beaded jewelry in prison, expresses well what other interlocutors told me:

We grew up on the soccer field, and it was the joy of the community!...but now our kids will not be able to play...So what does this cross benefit us with? It belongs to the cemetery, it is a sign of death!

They [the Municipality] wanted to clean the place for tourists...but what they did is step on [*pisar*] our culture, *idealize* our community! [my italics]

The residents' indignation at the Municipality's static and conventionally staged performance of Providencia's "centre" enacts the dialectics between *idealized (aesthetic)* and *lived (kinaesthetic)* heritage, where the most dear and sacred to the neighborhood's centre was *de-centralized* and desecrated by, ironically, a sacred symbol (the concrete cross) alien to the local life-world. What, then, is the sacred and what the profane—and what is heritage and what is not? The crossing poles of the kites that kids once used to fly over the soccer field are now present in the shape of the cross, which I see as a metaphor of the crossroad of the distinct heritage logics lived by the *favela*: vertically institutional and horizontally informal and playful. The very real local *heritage kinaesthetics* thus tell us disorder and incompleteness—dusty earth and not the clean concrete—might be entry points into the *sensation* of a truly vibrant *Living Museum*.

It was the vibrant messiness that the officials failed to add to the Museum's mix, despite the initial hip idea of an "open-air museology." The urban renovation of Providencia, despite good intentions, partly uprooted the narratives from their *terroirs*—"speaking places" of origin in de Certeau's terms—and tried unsuccessfully to sow them in a new ground: unsuccessful because it was a ground "not composed of soil but of asphalt" (Tomasik 2002:527).

Currently, Providencia's square is not fit for soccer, and many parents, worried about police-gang shootings, do not let their children play in the field below the "slave staircase," since it lies symbolically and spatially outside of the "community," as the hill above delineates its boundaries. As the only wide open space in the *favela*, the field also served as a social haven for evening chats, but now that "it does not feel ours anymore," the square stays desolate even though architectonically fit for conversations (if not for soccer).

The *performative heritage kinaesthetics* of the soccer field was at its prime when it was the stage for famous *pagode* (a Rio-born samba variety) singers, like Beбето. The residents also remember with *saudade* (a term whose depth is only partially translated by "nostalgia") the soccer championships as the only time in the year when people from outside would come to Providencia. Soccer crossed spatial, ideological, and economic interest fences, bringing feuding *favelas* together without *tiroteos* (shootings) and into a new acoustic ecology of sport cheers (the analogy with the cease-fire during the Greek Olympics might be far-fetched, but the *favela* championships could still be an intriguing case of modern sport-peace phenomenon).

Since the built landscape can be listened to as a "soundscape" with any person being its composer and performer (Schafer 1994 [1977]:205), Providencia's "acoustic community" imagines rewriting its sonic script with pitches that include children's laughter, bouncing balls, gossip murmurs, and music. Unlike the shootings, these are "pleasant" sounds, in the residents' words, and, in Schafer's terms, are sounds people are more prone to "listen to" rather than passively "hear" within the routine of the *favela*. These merry sounds become the most immediately felt intangible heritage elements that people in Providencia try to recompose and tune. Whereas Schafer defines "acoustic space" as the space created by sounds (1994 [1977]:pp), *acoustic (heritage) kinaesthetics* denotes the process through which people produce sounds to create a different place. Reviving the sounds of the *de-centralized* soccer field and of the *pagode*

and *samba* activities could make these sounds more audible than the gang shootings currently defining the *favela*, even though replacing the negative sounds still seems improbable.

The “acoustic community” can also be delineated by the ways in which information from outside the *favela* reaches the ears of its inhabitants (Schafer 1994 [1977]:215). For example, Sidoca, also a *trabalhador social* like Edilson, hoped that the Residents’ Association would organize information campaigns with loudspeakers to inform the community about free cultural and educational events in the area. He believed cultural events participation was what was mostly missing and truly necessary for the process of “changing positively people’s everyday lives and their minds.”

Edilson’s words resonate with those of John Collins’ (2007) informants in Salvador, Bahia. In the case of UNESCO’s declaration of Salvador a World Heritage Site, Collins describes cultural agency in the “attunement” between people and the soundscape of their heritage when everyday sounds are prohibited (noise) or amplified (street musical performances) in the name of aesthetic—and auditory—taste. “Practices that once reverberated as private, non-state sanctioned, and corporealized techniques for resolving small issues or enjoying oneself in spaces like the Gueto [residential building] are now cultural heritage, or a ‘metacultural’ representation that stands in for the community and for the nation’s essence,” Collins notes (2007).

But what new meanings do “metacultural productions” (see Urry 1995) assume and in the process of creating these representations, what older values are resurrected or re-drawn? In Providencia, everyday familiar sounds were unwittingly muffled by the destruction of the soccer field. However, the new “metacultural” status of the *favela* and its *samba*, in the figure of Dona Dodô, provides a positive representation that the residents have embraced and are searching to promote as their unique performative heritage. The different forms of *heritage kinaesthetics* in Providencia - the dynamic incorporation of sustainable cultural activities and a cultural center, familiar sounds, stories, and back alleys explorations—offer insights into the questions of scholars and UNESCO on how to achieve a dialogue between the tangible and intangible heritage (Munjeri 2004, Smith 2006).

Moving beyond the highly sensitive issue of the soccer field, most residents of Providencia expressed content with the official visibility (*visibilidade*) granted to their previously forgotten and marginalized space. Such recognition materialized in the paving of streets, implementation of

drainage systems, and some façade work brought by the *Favela-Bairro* Project. As eloquently expressed by Dona Francisca, caretaker of the *Capela dos Canudos*, the second chapel on the tour:

Around here before the Municipality came all was only trash and holes in the streets...nobody ever took pictures of the Chapel or came from the outside...with the Museum, the community started having value...really, *we* started valuing it!

Apart from the concrete square, the overall new aesthetics that *Favela-Bairro* created are becoming increasingly kinetic, both in attracting the movement of visitors and in stimulating the locals' appreciation of place. The key word "value" in Dona Francisca's discourse resonates with the concept of "cultural value" (see Throsby 1999), or value added to places, things, and practices when declared "heritage" (see Savova 2007).

"Value" recognized by the "others" from the "outside" has a particular meaning in a community like Providencia (and most other *favelas*) for which the "inside-outside" dichotomy has traditionally served as a point of *antagonistic differentiation*. By *antagonistic differentiation*, I mean a way in which communities set themselves apart from the "Other," focusing on the difference and not the richness of cultural diversity. To a certain degree, the creation of the Museum inverted the *antagonistic* into *constructive differentiation* by bringing in some outsiders from neighboring *favelas* (thus not only foreign tourists), which is a dynamic reminiscent of the inter-favela "cease-fire" during championships. The current attraction, however, is "heritage" and thus perhaps a more sustainable way of strengthening *constructive differentiation* based on affirming the historic importance of the place for all of Rio.

In terms of tourism, the few groups that come to tour Providencia, led by a municipal official, confirm a reality of the "native" being "incarcerated" to a place, where the visitors are the "movers, the seers, the knowers" (Appadurai 1996:37). On the other hand, however, the tourists present the locals with a chance of breaking the cycle of immobility without actually moving out but rather *inside* and *around*, becoming "movers, seers, and knowers" themselves through the *heritage kinaesthetics* techniques. On the surface, the asymmetries in socio-economic status and mobility possibilities between the two groups are apparent, and many people I interviewed expressed a desire to leave the *favela*. At the same

time, though, the positive recognitions of the opportunity to, in their words, “open up” the *favela* to visitors, “show them our history” and “tell them people in the *favela* are just like any other people” brings excitement and a desire to interact with the visitors. Such hopes for interaction have, in fact, motivated some young people to begin to learn English.

Finally, a third notion of the “centre” emerges here and builds on Simmel’s “adventurer,” whose experience of space has twofold meaning: revolving about its own center during the immediate experience of the unknown; and becoming a segment of the totality of a lifetime—“not only a circumscribed entity, but also a component of an organism” (Simmel 1919:1). The idea of an extended “centre” beyond the circumference of adventure maps onto the hopes of many locals that the Museum tour would be more than a temporary entertainment and would shape a long-lasting appreciation of the *favela*’s convoluted histories, struggles, and dreams.

Performative Walking and Walking Performances

“They [footsteps] weave places together” (de Certeau 1988:97)

The *Canudos* Chapel signaled the formal end to my tour of the *Living Museum*. Diego and I started walking down the hill, along mazes of crowded streets, through colorful houses perched on top of one another, and under garlands of laundry and shoes hung on electric wires. The shoes, he explained, were the way kids here celebrated their favorite soccer team’s victory. But another interlocutor had once given me a different reason, the other extreme of happiness:

People take off their shoes when they are tired of the world...then you need to break free and the first thing that you can take off from that burden are the shoes pressing your feet tight...you need to break the rules...you need to walk barefoot and feel the earth on your skin.

The shoes narrated poignant stories of the *favela*. Different pairs, some cheering with children’s passion for football and some screaming with indignation and a call for freedom. It was as though some shoes had tried to escape—but got caught in the wires—from a *favela* that was declared a museum, but which shootings often made impossible to visit.

Shoeless footsteps in Providencia did “weave places together,” as de Certeau would say, but they were places of yearning for a better life under the crossing electric wires.

Diego and I kept walking down the street that some time ago had carried temporarily liberated feet. “It reminds me of the picturesque Medieval towns in Europe, I bet tourists love it!” I exclaimed, amused with the unexpected turns, twists, and glimpses of Rio’s landscapes. Diego smiled: “This is my favorite part of the favela, even though it is *not* on the Museum trail. Perhaps I should start bringing tourists here.”

The “even though” implied Diego’s understanding that the dirty back alleys were not the municipality’s cup of tea and most certainly did not have the same “value” as the Museum trail. Still, walking enabled Diego to rethink the experts’ judgment and conjure new routes that present and represent what he cherishes most about his neighborhood and not what is formally considered “heritage.” The practice of *ambulant heritage kinaesthetics* is thus defined as walking/moving *attentively*—“walking as a space of enunciation” (De Certeau 1988:98)—as well as *performatively*, in Diego’s acting as a tour guide.

Diego followed the Museum script while also opening niches for improvisation that kinaestheticized heritage not only with peripatetic narrations of “historic history” but, more importantly, of his personal, lived, and embodied history, turning the practice of tour-guiding into an *ambulant performative kinaesthetics*. Roberto Da Matta (1991:72), in his study of street performances during Carnival in Brazil, argues that *movement*, *process*, and *displacement* constitute the core of the ritualistic social construction of public and private spaces. Da Matta’s notion applies to Providencia’s reality, where young people like Diego begin to see their environment through the different perspectives of photography and walking tours, finding so many ways to perform an *ambulant heritage “consecration” (patrimônio consagrado)*, to use the sacred-secular term that Brazilian cultural policy links to heritage sites.

At the Jose Bonifacio Cultural Center, Diego and about twenty other teenagers from Providencia had attended a class on how to “act out” the repertoire of a tour guide, from hand motions to modes of smiling. Their instructor, Jorge, is an actor currently employed by the municipality as part of the *Agente Jovem* Program.¹¹ This program teaches local teens technical or artistic skills for alternative employment, and in Providencia, it took the shape of preparing local tour guides. *Ambulant kinaesthetics*

assumes a literal theatrical form of *performative heritage kinaesthetics*, as the guides “embody the culturally meaningful tourism product, and can act as exemplars of the bodily *habitus* expected of and desired by tourists” (Crang and Franklin 2001:151). The *ambulant performative kinaesthetics* of the tour builds on *performative kinaesthetics* as we visited it earlier in Eron’s dream of a cultural center for performances of intangible heritage: the former employing “somatic modes of attention,” “attending to and with one’s body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others,” and the latter revealing how “attending to others’ bodily movements is even more clear-cut in cases of dancing, [...] playing team sports” (Csordas 1993:138-139).

Walking as a mode of knowing space in the *Living Museum* is a fundamental prerequisite for a fuller, richer, more vibrant and, quite possibly, happier social life of people and dwellings. And walking has simultaneously become a key point in the controversies around the phenomenon of “favela tourism” in Rio de Janeiro. For example, in Providencia visitors employ a *centripetal* (tending towards the “centre”) and ambulant approach to learning, whereas in the favela of Rocinha *centrifugal* jeep tours confirm the “zoo-style” vehicle tourism as “the organization of universal isolation” (Kotanyi and Vaneigem 1961:16-17). *Ambulant, performative, visual, oral, and acoustic heritage kinaesthetics* all come together during the walking tour when both the visitor and the guide move, touch, see, talk about, and hear the place, which would otherwise remain an empty monument of no more than formalized *visual aesthetics*.

Like Diego, Mauricio in his *Favelarte Project* hopes to expand the current “cultural corridor” into a trail of social inclusion embracing Providencia’s poorest zone, Pedra Liza, whose pressing needs were somehow avoided by the *Favela-Bairro* Project. Pedra Liza has interesting stories to tell of the multiple migrations of its residents and their relation to the oldest NGO in Brazil (1906), the *Instituto Central do Povo*, which was never mentioned as a historic landmark. The municipality, for its part, plans on reconstructing the 19th century Water Reservoir in a way which will allow for display of old images and stories inside its walls. This time, would they consult the residents?

When I revisited Providencia in the summer of 2007, the municipality had partnered with the Ministry of Tourism to improve a local coffee shop/bar. The goal of this effort was to help people move, as Lu put it, towards local “economic and cultural sustainability” and independence from the municipal’s “initial push” once a regular tourist flow becomes

the “moving force.” Yet the vicious cycle has it that until violence abates, no real flow can be established. In addition, the official discourse on “development” remains mainly infrastructural; there is no mention of a cultural center to respond to Eron and Mauricio’s understandings of “development.” Nonetheless, at the national level, within the Department of Museums *and* Cultural Centers in the National Institute of Heritage (IPHAN) there is growing dialogue and strategizing about the importance of cultural spaces in an integral social policy.

(Department of) Museum(s) and Community Cultural Center(s): “Performing Museologies”

José Nascimento Junior, the Director of the Museums and Cultural Centers Department at the Brazilian Ministry of Culture, met me in his office one afternoon in January 2007, after attending a forum with cultural centers and museum representatives from the Rio de Janeiro area to discuss their most recent social projects. Attendees of the meeting circulated interesting ideas, excitement, and visions of the future. When everyone left, Nascimento turned to me and said, as if to conclude:

Museums are *always* cultural centers...built places for people to engage with memory and creativity, because tangible heritage cannot be isolated from the cultural context that created it: it is as if to artificially split the body from the soul, nature from culture...UNESCO has emphasized that museums and heritage are “universal” in the sense of being recognized as important to all countries, but we want to create a vision of universality in terms of the value of human creativity as having the same human value...what I mean is that anyone can be an artist and that a popular art statue has as much human value as one by Rodin.

Nascimento’s emphasis on “human value” resonated with the words of Lu Petersen. Though not entirely successful, the *Living Museum* project was an innovative way of understanding heritage and practice as an ecosystem of buildings, people, and memories. It was a project engaged in ongoing physical and social *local constructivism*. Providencia was similar to the first museum in a favela, *Museu da Maré*. There, I talked to Mario Chagas, a professor of Museology at UNIRIO and Project Coordinator at IPHAN, about his

vision of the community museum. “It is a ‘museum-pencil’ (*museu lapis*), a museum that constantly writes history, present, and future,” Chagas told me. For him, the “new museology” movement understands cultural development as an ecosystem where “museums, cultural centers, and libraries all serve as focal points of identity formation and tools for social intervention.” Elsewhere Chagas writes how memory should be understood as “a construction and is not imprisoned in objects but situated in the inter-relational space between beings” (Chagas 2006:31).

Such “inter-relational spaces” are created and expanded with the help of the Internet in the National Network of Public Libraries (5000 in total). The Director of the Network shared in my interview of her at the Ministry of Culture in January that the country is embracing the idea of the library as a community cultural center through a series of arts activities held at libraries and open to the general public, including story-telling and art events and workshops. Nascimento believes the National Network of Museums and Cultural Centers (2300 in total) with its electronic bulletin and virtual forum discussions could serve as a model for the Brazilian library network and for cultural networks nationally and internationally.

To the global phenomenon of “culturally specific museums,” Brazil contributes the notion of the museum-cultural center as a midpoint between the high art museum and the didactic ethnographic museum (Lippard 1999:82). Nascimento hopes to cooperate with MinC’s *Cultura Viva* (Living Culture) Program, inaugurated by Minister Gilberto Gil in 2004 to promote community museums as *pontos de cultura* (“points of culture”). *Ponto de cultura* is the title, accompanied by financial support for technological equipment, that MinC has given to hundreds of already existing non-governmental community centers or organizations across the country, and the cultural policy move has motivated the *pontos* to connect in a national network of exchange.

The recognition and physical construction of *pontos de cultura* in Brazil has sister models all across Spanish-speaking Latin America in the national networks of *casas de cultura* (houses of culture). In my other works, I trace how some of these models, notably the Cuban one, link to the Soviet houses of culture, but their historical inception goes back to a democratic, civil-society-driven engine found in the oldest (since 1856) such network in Europe, which is the Bulgarian network of 3500 community cultural centers called *chitalishte*. The organization of national networks of local arts spaces is not the focus of this article, yet it is impor-

tant to keep in mind as a concept that brings to the national level the issues of how art has a particular way of creating also particular kinds of community dynamics and social cohesion.

Nascimento laments that “modernity has confined people to corridors of microspaces (*corredores de microespaços*): home, work, home, school, etc. and we do not fully appropriate the city spaces” (2005:175-176). Nascimento believes that amateur arts can be a way to deconstruct the bounded social traffic in these micro corridors: this is, in fact, what the “cultural corridor” of the Living Museum of Providencia could have promoted with much more success had it conceptualized the need for a physical space dedicated to local creative activities for all ages. What was missing alongside the urban infrastructural construction was local participatory construction—physical and social—of a community cultural center to link place to creative practice.

Dona Dodô's museum in Providencia is an intriguing “cultural corridor” in itself. A *living museum* of a *living* samba icon, it is a micro-model of the development concepts of the Museum and Cultural Centers Department, since Dodô hopes to turn parts into a samba cultural center to take the local children away from the violence and drug problems in the zone. The Municipality forced Dodô to move out of the home she had inhabited for 84 years in order to host the museum (and live) in a more spacious house: the clash of institutional *heritage aesthetics* with what could have been local *heritage kinaesthetics*, had Dodô stayed in her “small and old” but very real house of origin, produced a painful situation, and she still vows with tears to never again pass by the ruins of her old dwelling. Indeed, her intense emotions regarding her former house impede her from attending the samba dance parties organized by the local third-age dance association “*Cascudos da Favela*” of which she is a formal member, because the venue, the Americo Brum Square, is across from the site of her old home.

Nevertheless, alongside the criticisms and complaints Dona Dodô also kept reiterating her appreciation of the Municipality for their support of the museum. Her ambiguity toward policy resonates with the polyphonic reality of any state-organized development project. The bottom-line in our conversations was that art had the highest priority when the state supported the cultural memory and the cultural practice of samba creativity.

Dodô has managed to make the most out of her new house and turn it into the home of the samba she knows and loves and can now share with visitors. Whoever comes to her house is a personal guest, not a tourist for-

mally visiting a museum, and she has at times rejected visits. Dodô holds a Guinness World Record for having participated in the highest number of Carnivals, over 70 years of successive *desfiles*, and being eighteen-time champion of the *Portela* Samba School. Her flamboyant life, told in personally collected and arranged costumes (*fantasias*), pictures, and trophies is an “auto-ethnography,” or a vivid text, “a culture produced about itself” (Dorst 1987:4). Through the tangible “auto-ethnography” written on objects, Dodô has moved away from the didactic and static exhibition-based “informing museology,” toward a kinetic “performative museology” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002:59) where she is the museum curator, story-teller, actress, dancer, and most of all, the host in her own house.

“Living history” has been used as a term to refer to actors performing historic re-enactments as characters from the past (Dicks 2003:122-123), but it acquires a new meaning in Providencia’s *Living Museum*. In UNESCO’s terms, performers of traditions like Dodô are referred to as “living archives”¹² and “cultural carriers/transmitters” (*detentores*, literally “keepers,” in Portuguese); yet, far more than a means of transmission, Dodô is an active “animator” and “enactor” of the samba. And the *Living Museum*’s residents become curators and artists, whose *kinaesthetic practices* mold the museum into a “social sculpture” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2000:1).

As I mentioned before, Dona Dodô is a member of the dance association *Cascudos da Favela*, which, together with the group *Felicidade da Providencia* for younger members, was founded just a few months before my second ethnographic trip in August 2007. The *Cascudos* was born out of the initiative of Rosiete and Glorinha, two mid-age residents who repainted the abandoned building of the old soccer team and called the space *Club Escolinha do Nova Aurora* (“Little School of the New Dawn”). Rosiete smiled with self-fulfillment:

We want to make visible our positive history [*historia positiva*], that which was beautiful, like the first samba school in Rio, *Fique Firme*¹³...I even remember vividly the time when the police would come to ban the dances, and the people would run and hide in the church...but continue dancing.

With Eron’s after-school lessons held along the pews inside, the church continues to be the favela’s symbolic and physical refuge for artistry and self-improvement. Currently, with Glorinha and Rosiete’s initiative, the

cultural “centre” is being de-centralized productively, but not in the sense of its *de-centralization* due to the destruction of the soccer field. Rather, it is being de-centralized in the sense that the centre is moving beyond the old favela limits, down the Slave Staircase, where people are constructing a revitalized place of sociability that is across another soccer field: the one to which most children moved to play on when the former field was buried under asphalt. The dynamic choreography of the favela’s cultural “centres” embodies the dances of *heritage kinaesthetics* and thus the lesson that the best survival skill of any culture is its ability to shift and innovate its content and locality.

Attached to the Church of the Penha is a small humid room, where Eron teaches *capoeira* and where locals do bodybuilding. One night, while locking the door, Eron said smiling that even that small place could be a cultural center:

The cultural center...it’s in people’s heads!

After all, it can be the tiniest room but when we take care of it together it is ours. It is just a matter of people embracing the idea and the Museum should have spurred that much more than it did!

Eron’s words contain the essence of the subtle game that is played between the cultural “centre” as an intangible sensation and morality and the cultural “center” as a physical place where *community creative capital* can be produced and circulated in regular activities and practices. With the creation of the Museum, different groups of residents became inspired in different ways to construct a cultural center—though as Eron notes the Museum should have emphasized cultural practices much more than it did—and then took it into their own hands to imagine alternative spaces for the arts, thus generating their own dispersed forms of *community creative capital*. There is not one cultural center, just like there is not one cultural “centre” of the favela, but multiple pockets of creativity. The favela keeps nurturing images about dignity and vitality, creativity and beauty, economic development and music. It is a heritage site where the institutionalized construction of the physical space failed to engage sufficient participation because of weak communication, yet it also motivated *local constructivisms* to imagine and nurture a more livable neighborhood. In the end, one thing most residents and cultural policy makers agreed on is that for a healthy community, the aesthetic must be thoroughly kinetic.

Conclusions to Begin With: The Social Birth of Alternative Cultural Centers

The *Living Museum* remains a work of art in progress, in the hands and minds of both residents and public officials. Would the locals finally connect with a tourist agency, as the Residents' Association keeps saying since April, and would the Museum help in dealing with the violence problem? Would the Municipality apply to the Ministry of Culture to declare the *Living Museum a ponto de cultura* and thus create in it a physical cultural center? Or would the Cyber Café become a self-sufficient cultural and social space? As Providencia prepares for its 110th Anniversary on November 15th, would the locals come together to push for a plebiscite—an idea circulating around the community—on whether to revert to the old name of the favela, *Morro da Favela*, artificially changed by the municipality in 1972 to “Providencia”?

All of these remain open questions to return to while its residents activate the sensorial social life of their place by writing senses of belonging on the buildings *visually, ambulantly, performatively, orally, and acoustically*. This is how the residents have attempted to recover the *de-centralized* “centre” of their neighborhood, alongside the hope that the museum will come together with a nice building for a cultural center. In the meantime, they have come up with other spaces for creative expression, from the tiny *capoeira/fitness* room attached to the Church, to Dodô's museum, to Glorinha and Rosiete's revival of mixed-age dance groups in the “new central square” below the Staircase, to Mauricio's virtual cultural space *Favelarte*. The Municipality's innovative heritage recognition sparked the idea of community cultural revival, and now the *kinaesthetics* of this idea is pushing heritage to move.

This micro-study of the *local constructivism* of a heritage site contributes to the discourses on tourism, heritage, performance, and museum studies by drawing on ethnographic data to demonstrate the importance of connecting tangible and intangible heritage. Such a connection animates the kinetic energies of a place: *heritage kinaesthetics* enriching the static *heritage aesthetics*.

Outside Brazil, the “community museum” is emerging around the globe. For example, in Mexico¹⁴ and in South Africa's townships, the museum becomes the “interactive public space” for opening debates and making the “real city” visible (Witz 2006:128, Rassool 2006). However, the research on community museums, as well as on “heritage centers” as ways

of “telling the people’s story, and of helping to make sure that it will be heard” (MacDonald 1997:175) thus far has centered on memory and trauma, and has often avoided what *cultural activities*, if any, accompany the museum and how these relate to the practice of values of civil society and coexistence. I propose based on my observations of Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Morocco, and Peru that community cultural centers can be various spaces, from state-funded buildings to community-organized rooms, where the main ethnographic question should be: How does the engagement with modern and traditional arts help people re-think and re-create their daily lives, not only in collective entertainment but also in negotiations over meaning and values?

Rosiete and Glorinha’s Dance Association of mixed-age groups, hosted in the re-painted soccer club, reveals how the *practice* of heritage is the necessary *kinaesthetics* to make a one-time “museumification” into an actual social praxis of re-living and reconstructing sociabilities. Such a concept is ultimately embodied in the very name of the Brazilian Ministry of Culture’s Department of Museums *and* Cultural Centers, but needs to be actively contemplated and applied on the ground within the local circles of public policy.

My final walk with Diego ended in front of two murals that were built by the French Cultural Center in Rio de Janeiro to honor the famous writer Machado do Assis, who was born in Providencia. His words—enscribed on a wall that, just like any other wall in the neighborhood, could at any moment be pierced by a bullet—carried a powerful hope. They read:

*“Freedom is neither deaf, nor paralyzed. She lives, talks, claps her hands, she laughs, she shouts, she lives because of life...”*¹⁵ (1892)

Above the mural, a few kites were flying freely, but the thin cord ultimately tied them to a time and space of multiple limitations. Still, nothing in Providencia is stagnant as long as it keeps evolving as a *kinaesthetic place* of artistic imagination, with each new history about its future and with each prediction of its past.

ENDNOTES

¹The term *favela* comes from *fava*, the name of a plant that grows in the State of Bahia and that the *Canudos*, former slaves who fought for Brazil's independence from the Portuguese in Bahia, found on one hill in Rio they named *Morro da Favela* upon settling there in 1898. *Favela* has come to denote the numerous slum-like (shantytown) neighborhoods scattered around Rio and other places in Brazil: places characterized by high levels of violence between local drug trafficking and the police, as well as poverty and outside prejudice and discrimination against its residents, pejoratively called *favelados*. In the 1920s, there was a street called *Caminho da Providencia* that led to the *Morro do Livramento*, which was the lower part of the *Morro da Favela*, and in 1972 the Municipality officially called it *Morro da Providencia*: a name that many residents still feel alien nowadays. For more on the history and daily life in the favelas read Teresa Caldeira (1984, 2000).

²I met a man, who was the first male kindergarten teacher in Oakland, California, at a backpackers hostel in Santa Fe on a camping trip through New Mexico. He told me that he started using movement and play to truly capture the children's participation in learning, so they would learn how to count through dribbling a ball and playing with loops. Later on, he started seeing the term "kinaesthetic learning" used to describe the approach he had found very engaging years before the concept became popular.

³So far, the sporadic visitors have been mainly organized groups of students, artists, politicians, and sometimes people who found about the museum on-line. However, all visitors have to contact the Municipality first, as there is no other contact available for the Living Museum, and even though the locals complain about the Municipality's monopoly over tourists, nothing has been done to change it. Once contacted, Lu's office calls the Cyber Café, built in Providencia as an information research hub and a tourist welcome center, checks on the violence situation in the favela on the particular day, and only then sends the tourists who are greeted by a local guide.

⁴The Brazilian movie "City of God" (*Cidade de Deus*) explores the idea of photography's transformative power in the character of Bota-pe, who lives in a favela and manages to escape the grip of drugs and violence when photography opens for him new ways of imagining and building his life (much like Mauricio's life history). Local amateur photography in Providencia and in *City of God* reminds me of Susan Sontag's analysis how "photographs do more than redefine the stuff of ordinary experience [...] and add vast amounts of material that we never see at all. Reality as such is redefined [...]" (Sontag 1989:154). Such socially transformative photography offers a distinct perspective from Benjamin and Fauerbach's criticisms on the "copy" (photograph) as lacking "aura," or the spirit of the original.

⁵*Empsychos graphe* is another way of calling a mural or an icon, the Eastern Orthodox Christian sacred images painted on wood.

⁶The Cyber Café is a two-storey building, where 25 adolescents take tour guide workshops funded by the Municipality. Though planned as a community information/social center, the Cyber Café has not been well integrated into the local social texture mainly because of its location outside of the symbolic *favela* limits "above the Staircase," and due to a social reality where those limits are rarely crossed for fear of clashes with neighboring favelas. The Municipality never thought of the Cyber Café as a cultural center but rather an information hub.

⁷The term "local constructivism" has so far been used in developmental psychology to account for the socially constructed human epistemologies (Jahoda 1986) and in science to argue that facts are socially constructed and not pre-given (Latour 1999). Latour argues that it is not a matter of absolute reality but of social choices about ways of knowing reality and thus constructing it through our interpretations and uses.

⁸The idea of cultural centers in the favelas has been evolving in the policies of the Municipality of Rio since 1992 with the construction of *lonas culturais* (literally, cultural

circus arenas) where all workshops and events are free of charge for locals of any age. The *lonas* have won a UNESCO award for cultural interventions for development; yet their number is still limited, with only eight lonas and dozens of favelas left without any access to the arts.

⁹The *Segundo Tempo* Program of after-class activities is closely related to another program called *Escola Aberta*, which I researched in its exemplary case in the Municipality of Nova Iguaçu. *Escola Aberta* was promoted by UNESCO in Brazil to encourage public schools to organize weekend workshops (from cooking to crafts and music) and cultural events open to anyone in the area, aiming the incorporation of adults since usually only students benefit from such activities. The large numbers of participants from all ages indicate the potential of *Escola Aberta*, which the Ministry of Education plans to spread nation-wide.

¹⁰For more on the “cunning of recognition” of cultural practices as a path toward granting land-ownership rights, see Elizabeth Povinelli’s ethnography on the Australian Aborigine, *The Cunning of Recognition*.

¹¹The *Gente Jovem* Program is a Municipal initiative, which works with children up to 18 years of age and then turns into the federal *Pro Jovem* National Program (ages 18-25). I observed the *Pro Jovem* Program operate at the *lona cultural* in the favela of Maré, where it funded young people’s training in circus performances. *Pro Jovem* started in 2005 with President Lula’s administration and was implemented by the Ministries of Culture, Education, and Labor to capacitate in workshops and with a monthly stipend young people both for work and as participative citizens.

¹²Stories have it that the first samba school in Rio was *Deixa Falar*, established in 1928 first as an informal *bloco* street group to parade in Carnival, soon given the name of “samba school.” However, in this research the inquiry is not on historical accuracy but on people’s own translations of history, tracing what meaning and purpose these patterns of imagining play in their daily lives.

¹³As part of a project for the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), I became familiar with the network of state-funded community museums in the state of Oaxaca during the summer of 2004. Also see Cuauhtemoc Camarena and Teresa Morales, “Community Museums and Global Connections: The Union of Community Museums of Oaxaca,” pp. 322-347 in *Museum Frictions* ed. by Karp, Ivan. Durham: Duke University Press.

¹⁴“*A liberdade não e surda-muda, nem paralítica. Ela vive, ela fala, ela bate as mãos, ela ri, ela assobia, ela clama, ela vive da vida*” (Machado do Assis, 1892).

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