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## PABLO VITAR, GLORIA GROOVE AND THEIR PERFORMANCES: Audio-visual flows and temporalities in pop culture<sup>1</sup>

JORGE CARDOSO FILHO

Lecturer at the Graduate Program in Contemporary Communication and Culture at UFBA and at the UFRB Communication Masters, Cruz das Almas, Bahia, Brazil. PhD in Communication from UFMG.  
E-mail: cardosofilho.jorge@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4276-934X.

RAFAEL JOSÉ AZEVEDO

PhD student at the Graduate Program in Communication of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.  
Email: rafaeljoseazevedo@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0002-5125-5957.

THIAGO EMANOEL FERREIRA DOS SANTOS

PhD student at the Graduate Program in Communication from the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.  
E-mail: thiagoemanoel87@gmail.com

EDINALDO ARAUJO MOTA JUNIOR

PhD student at the Graduate Program in Communication from the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.  
E-mail: eamotajr@gmail.com  
ORCID: 0000-0002-4022-6106.

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## Abstract

This article proposes an analysis that understands the relationship between audio-visual and cultural flows as vectors that operate the political, aesthetic and social configurations of the experience, as from the drag performances of Pablló Vittar and Gloria Groove. The YouTube platform is taken as a dispositive that, by positioning the bodies of the artists, opens up possibilities of subjectivation processes that cross the identities of gender, media genres and the very temporality of experience. From the videoclips, we articulate the notions of performance and dispositive to search crossings of gender identities, media genres and audiovisual and space-time streams in dispute. About the songs music, we follow the relationship between consumption and production that projects itself into a queer segmentation, but at the same time transcends its limits.

### Keywords

Audio-visual Flows; Temporalities; Performance; Pablló Vittar; Gloria Groove.

## Temporal dynamics in a present in extension

Current digital repositories hold a significant amount of the world's cultural production, especially in societies which take scripting as a fundamental activity. Whether they are centenarian or are very recent, these expressions become objects of binary codification available on servers for people with variable interests: dance, writing, architecture, music, film, photography, etc. Such great availability promotes interesting rearrangements in the cultural, aesthetic and political fields, making experiences more fluid regardless of the moment in time each of these expressions emerge.

In the specific case we are interested in, gender performances expressed in contemporary pop songs indicate important complexities that need further analysis. Because in a context where the discussions about misogyny, feminism, LGBTfobia<sup>1</sup>, racism and so many other forms of discriminatory actions are coming to surface, it is a common feeling that there has never been so many conditions of emancipation and empowerment. However, cultural expressions emerging in this configuration need to ensure some level of repetition of the established experience in order to gain an emergency condition. These are the internal conflicts that interest us.

In an interview granted to Rolling Stone Brazil in January 2018, Pablio Vittar, a drag queen singer from the Brazilian state of Maranhão, drawn attention to the fact that she is "a drag queen on the spotlight in a country that has the world's highest rate of murder of LGBT people" (Brêda, 2018, p.42). When asked about the lack of political content in her lyrics, she continues: "I think it's great when people create lyrics that bring up issues and controversies. But me, as an artist, I want to talk about ordinary stuff, of my daily life, about an argument I had with a friend, you know" (Brêda, 2018, p.42). Gloria Groove, a famous Brazilian drag queen who is also a rapper, in an interview to *Veja* magazine, comments about her identification with "rap music and hip hop, music genres always associated with men" and how she decided to invest in high-quality music videos aiming to reach the public beyond the LGBT universe (Batista Jr, 2018). Such characterizations are indicative of the powers and the limits inherent to the ways in which these cultural expressions are manifested in Brazilian society.

We agree with Raymond Williams (1979) about his indication that cultural analyses need to comprehend not only a period of time, but also the "internal dynamic relations of any actual process" (Williams, 1979, p.125). Thus, the author introduces a fundamental issue for Communication and Cultural Studies: the multiplicity and simultaneity of experience regimes in the everyday life. The observation of the coexistence of different temporalities at the same historical time, marked by archaic (past/past), residual (past/present), dominant (present/present) and emergent (present/future)<sup>2</sup> elements interests us in particular for the observation of phenomena in which sensitive experiences point to a dispute about body constructions and hegemonic dominant gender identities.

The performances<sup>3</sup> we observed especially in the work of these two drag queen artists are

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<sup>1</sup> "LGBTfobia" is the term that designates embarrassment, discrimination or any type of violence suffered by the population whose gender identities and sexualities are considered dissidents. LGBTQ is the acronym adopted by international human rights defense bodies such as the UN and the Amnesty International. The acronym represents the following gender identities and sexualities: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgender and queer. The term also refers to the performativities not framed by cisgender logic, that is, the identity of a cisgender subject is respected and legitimated by society and the government since birth, while trans subjects have distinct identities from heterosexual cisgender normativity naturalized by society standards.

<sup>2</sup> We use the approaches of different temporalities, proposed by Raymond Williams, by Itania Gomes (2011) followed by the Cultural Studies and Transformation in Communication Research Center (TRACC).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Zumthor (2000) approaches performance to a strength-form that holds the status of a rule and develops four aspects of it: the performance implies the recognition of certain characteristic features, it draws attention to itself while projecting the audience to another context, promotes non-redundant repetitions and modifies knowledge as it marks the communication.

organized according to pop culture<sup>4</sup> audiovisual standards, and they address everyday events, such as love, celebrations, seduction, inebriation and so many others. They also present bodies — many of them considered abject<sup>5</sup>, others within the hegemonic pattern — that, while performing, can dialogue with already consolidated, but segmented, traditions; break hegemonic expectations and point out elements not yet available in the cultural context; and even reproduce hegemonic parameters, intending or not to ensure their insertion into contemporary pop culture. Hence, they allow an analysis of how these audiovisual and cultural flows are capable of configuring aesthetic, political and cultural practices.

Such settings do not follow a linear approach and often require/impose an anachronic reading<sup>6</sup> perspective before their expressions. The surprise of seeing singer from Pernambuco state Johnny Hooker performing in a sequence of the movie *Tattoo* (2013), by director Hilton Lacerda, can be explained by the expectation (dominant in Brazilian patriarchal culture) that this kind of manhood does not fit according to established standards. However, it is possible to question whether this pattern fits the discussions promoted by social movements concerned with the strong binary demarcations of gender performances (male/female), mainly from a political LGBTQ minorities perspective.

Even if it is not reflected or addressed directly in their lyrics, the performances of the drag queen singers Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove can demonstrate resistance processes, in some extent, if we take into consideration misogynistic and patriarchal elements that characterize the political, cultural and aesthetic hegemonic practices in Brazil. By making their drag queen identities visible, Vittar and Groove enter the dispute of meanings around femininities and masculinities, challenging subjectivation devices as regards sexual conducts understood as the only ones possible in society. These disputes are even more evident in conducts such as the action of crackers who crashed Pablo Vittar's YouTube channel on August 28th 2017, deleting the most viewed music video, "K.O.", and posting in its place messages supporting the presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro, known for his homophobic and misogynistic statements, and against the extension of minority rights, such as the racial and or social quotas in public universities.

This article is an exercise that departs from the articulation of different temporalities in pop culture analysis based on three axes, considering as objects the music videos produced by artists Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove. We are interested in the disputes around the dissident gender identities (drag queens in particular), in the articulation between pop music, mediatic genera and performances displayed in digital platforms, and in the subjectivation processes in different experiences of aesthetic and political quality that conform our relationship with time. What intrigues us is the problematization of these communicational products and the interpellation of the subjects – of both who produces and who watches the videos, understanding pop temporalities and its valuations that "assume cosmopolitan forms of inhabiting and 'un-inhabiting' the world, projecting informational territories where the local roots become diffuse" (Janotti Jr, 2015, p. 46).

For these observations, our theoretical-methodological proposal aims to articulate the concepts of performance and device, searching for the multiplicity of gender identities, media genres and audiovisual flows, and space-time disputes. We comprehend the videos with their aesthetic and poetic

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<sup>4</sup> We agree with Janotti Jr (2015) on the understanding of pop culture as a place of different experiences through media, marked by the transformations caused by the encounters and tensions of media cultures modernities.

<sup>5</sup> "Abject means here precisely those "inhospitable" and "uninhabitable" areas of social life, which are, however, densely populated by those who do not hold the status of subject, but inhabit forms under the sign of "uninhabitable" is necessary to ensure that the domain of the subject is circumscribed (Butler, 2000, p. 155).

<sup>6</sup> Historians claim that anachronism is the action of placing a fact in a different era of the age it belongs or suits and it is considered a serious method problem. In our perspective, anachronism is an appropriate process to understand the dynamic relationships of cultural processes, as indicated by Raymond Williams (2013).

nuances based on Soares (2012)<sup>7</sup>, with the intention of articulating the inherent aspects of the pieces to the contemporary context.

To analyse the vocal gestures we resort to the albums and songs released by the artists<sup>8</sup>, seeking to highlight the relationship between consumption and production projected in the queer<sup>9</sup> segment but which also transcends its limits. We understand the concepts of gesture in the perspective of performances studies articulated with the contributions of Tatit (2002) to reflect on the effects of presence through singing and voice, under the angle of the interaction between the audience and their expertise, between the singers and their gestures.

Finally, these findings are contextualized based on the discussions of Martín-Barbero (2009) and the reflective experiments of the idea of techno-communicative environment, updating the meanings of mediations to cultural mutations. As we analyse the products of Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove based on the author's concepts, we want to approach what characterizes the hodiernal mediatic context marked by the existence of audiovisual flows, migration and the compression of time and space. Therefore, we seek to observe how the performances materialize the space of pop culture articulating different temporalities, and the cultural expressions – videos and songs – as collective transtemporal forms of activity..

## Networks, discursive formations and textualities

To interpret the different temporalities in the performances of Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove we built a specific contextualization network, mobilizing documental aspects (such as interviews and statements) and fictional productions (such as songs and videos) (Cardoso Filho, Gutmann & Azevedo, 2017). The heterogeneity of the materials is anchored in the concepts of Jason Mittel (2004) and Itania Gomes (2011) about the problematization of the media genre as cultural categories<sup>10</sup>.

We propose to understand the relationship between the audiovisual and temporal flows around drag queen identities found on Vittar and Groove's performances. These relationships materialize in specific performances, which reveal particular, unstable, strength-forms, that are transformed each time they are accessed: "Between the suffix designating an action on course that will never be finished and the globalizing prefix, which refers to an inaccessible totality, if non-existent, performance establishes the "form" improbable" (Zumthor, 2000, p. 38).

By considering this approach, we highlight a way of understanding performances as interactions between subject and object that have their own determined reiterabilities. In this regard, Zumthor (2000) states the existence of performance "levels", - the fact that there is no co-presence does not imply a lack of

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<sup>7</sup> Soares (2012) considers music videos as a place of creative shock and takes three vectors and their intersections to the analytical process: music, image and montage. In the analysis of the products, Soares observes how certain videos display, in their imagery nuances, a polyphonia from performatic aspects, scenic elements, cultural signs, narratives, territorialities as the production of meanings. He uses the term "sound landscape" to comprehend the reification of music in images, "generating a virtual effect of hearing something and 'being' on music. Or 'being' in sound", the sound landscape puts music videos 'within an optics naturally imbricated with the very origin of the song' (SOARES, 2012, p. 43).

<sup>8</sup> Pablo Vittar launched, in January 2017, the album "Vai Passar Mal" on the digital platforms Spotify, Deezer and iTunes, with 10 tracks (Nêga, K.O, Irregular, Corpo Sensual, Tara, Todo Dia, Então Vai, Ele é o Tal, Pode Aprontar e Indestrutível) Gloria Groove launched the album "O Proceder" in February of 2017 on the same platforms. The album contains 8 tracks (Império, O Proceder, Muleke Brasileiro, Problema, Gay (Interlúdio), Gloriosa, Madrugada and Dona).

<sup>9</sup> We use the term from Queer Studies, which considers the diversity of sexual, gender, identity constructions and erotic expressions, as building methods of one self and community practices (Halperin, 2007, p. 83).

<sup>10</sup> Considering media as cultural categories, as Mittel (2004) and Gomes (2011) state, means to understand them in the relations with the industry, audience, critic and academia discourses, that is, to comprehend them in the relationship established between mediatic texts and other texts that circumscribe them, dispute them and put them in tension.

interaction - then it is possible to establish the principals of performance, even in the context of mediatic products.

We analyze YouTube, in Agamben's terms<sup>11</sup>, as a dispositive that constructs certain process of subjectivation, such as gender identities, media genres and temporalities. In other words, Vittar and Groove's performances incite us to observe how drag queen identities inflect in the present when articulated to the ways of watching and producing of these platforms. Elements from the past and from the past in the present are overlapped in the present suggesting problematizations in the present/future.

We bring up the discussions of Martín-Barbero (2009)<sup>12</sup> about his concept of techno-communicative environment which characterizes the contemporary mediatic context. This context is marked by the existence of audiovisual flows and populational migrations, as well as by the compression of time and space<sup>13</sup>.

In the analysis of the performances of Vittar and Groove we identify that, in addition to the recurring discourse of acceleration and consequent temporal restriction and the fact that they also aim towards the future, there is a relation between the matrices and the references from different places and historical times pointing to the importance of the past to the understanding of phenomena in the present. And, in addition, for an intrinsic relationship between times and spaces.

It is important to say that both drag queens, their performances conception and their appeal to gender performances point to complex cognitive relationships, marked by hypertextual associations, in which elements of different temporalities are articulated. Finding out which hipertextualities, however, depends on who consumes them and, in the specific case of this article, on who analyses them. When looking at the objects, we establish these articulations, building our own networks. Therefore, this analysis considers the performances in context as important historical figures (Goulart, Leal, Gomes, 2017)..

## Pop performances and their marks: Vittar and Groove

Pablo Vittar is the drag queen persona of Phabullo Rodrigues da Silva, a 23-year-old gay boy born in the state of Maranhão in the North of Brazil. She He thrived in Brazilian pop scene, articulating typical

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<sup>11</sup> To Agamben, device is "[...] anything that has in any way the ability to capture, guide, determine, intercept, model, control and ensure the gestures, the conducts, the opinions and the discourses of the living beings. Therefore, not only prisons, asylums, the panopticon, schools, confessions, factories, disciplines, legal measures, etc, of which connection with power is in a clear sense, but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, the cigarette, navigation, computers, cell phones and - why not - language itself, that is perhaps the oldest of devices, which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate - probably without realizing the consequences of being followed - had the unconsciousness of letting himself capture" (Agamben, 2005, p. 13). Still according to him, in the current stage of capitalism, we see several processes of subjectivation, caused by devices such as YouTube, that overlap in a same living being.

<sup>12</sup> We use the interview of Jesús Martín-Barbero to the magazine Fapesp because the author proposes a articulation between the map of cultural media (Martin-Barbero, 2008) and what he will call a map of cultural mutations. In the interview, the author reflects on the reinvention of media and genera on the interface of television with the internet, producing what he calls "hybrid communication forms" (Martin-Barbero, 2009, p. 2). These forms work "transversally" in all means, and the genera would be broken in this relationship. Martín-Barbero questions the technological transformations in the contemporary context, which leads him to reflect on mediations in the articulation with time and space. From this perspective, he prefers to think in terms of cultural mutations.

<sup>13</sup> Martín-Barbero presents the techno-communicative environment in as interview to Pesquisa Fapesp magazine: "The important idea then is "environment", the new ecosystem. We can no longer talk about communication as a set of media, they don't last 10 years as they are. It's a change of time. [...] There is a liberation of time, and, simultaneously, a mobility that compress time - each day we have less time. Indeed, if capitalism hadn't gone mad when the Berlin Wall fell, if it had got a little historical vision, instead of producing the crisis we are in, it would have created a model on which humanity would work four hours, not eight. But it produces money with money, without producing anything. So, there is a radical transformation of time and working time" (Martin-Barbero apud Moura, 2009, p. 15). It is also in this interview that Martín-Barbero presents its map of cultural mutations, established between times, spaces, migrations and flows. Technology, ritualities, cognitivities and identities are the mutations proposed by the author. To read more about the map in a close construction that we propose in this article see Gomes et al (2017).

and foreign music genera and highlighting discussions about drag queen identities performances. Vittar has a YouTube channel<sup>14</sup> with 4.25 million subscribers<sup>15</sup>. On her channel, the music video *K.O.*<sup>16</sup>, one of her most popular songs, has around 292 million views. In July, the video *Sua Cara*<sup>17</sup> featuring Anitta and Major Lazer had 17,4 million views<sup>18</sup> on the day of its release. Before becoming a well-known artist, Vittar hosted a vlog in her YouTube channel, on which she commented on music, mentioned her other social networks, such as Twitter, and posted cover performances based on American pop artists, like Ariana Grande.

Daniel Garcia Felicione Napoleão, also known as Gloria Groove, is a 23-year-old gay boy from São Paulo. Her career is strongly bound to black music, rap, hip hop, and, as well as Vittar, pop. Groove decided to be a drag queen after featuring many musical groups and shows, such as the children's group *Balão Mágico* in 2002, and the popular TV show *Raul Gil*. She was also influenced by the reality drag competition *RuPaul's Drag Race* (Batista Jr, 2018). Her first popular song was *Dona* in 2016. Its video<sup>19</sup> has around 4.3 million YouTube views. After that, she was the opening act for two former participants of Rupaul's reality show - Adore Delano and Sharon Needles, winner of season four - presenting the show Donatour. Among the videos available on her channel, Groove posts compilations of this tour, in addition to cover performances of Erykah Badu and Beyoncé, American R&B and pop references.

*Open Bar*, the first video by Pablllo Vittar launched in 2015 on her YouTube channel is a version of the song *Lean On*, of the group Major Lazer featuring DJ Snake and singer MØ. The Brazilian version reached 59 million views on the platform<sup>20</sup> and, with the success of the video, gained popularity at LGBTQ parties. In *Open Bar*, the body emerges exactly as the feminized aspects of the act of "montação". Wig, make up, the focus on nail painting, the beach wear costume choice and her body's sensuality mark a specific form of that singer being drag. The video explores the proximity-impersonation of hegemonic femininity traces in Pablllo's drag queen identity. In the scenes, there is a differentiation of Pablllo's body, that brings together hegemonically female elements and other bodies present, such as cis-male men and perfectly shaved sparkling drag queens. There is a celebration atmosphere among the bodies and, in some way, they all come to peace in their differences, circumscribed to the domestic environment. On the other hand, we can see in the video's comment section on Youtube negative critics to Pablllo's version, like the ideia that Major Lazer's song was ruined. Some people defined it as "a poor version", others criticized the female body performed by a gay man, whether than a cis female body ("you look like one of the White Chicks; Pablllo Vittar, if you're a fag why don't you have boobs?"<sup>21</sup>).

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<sup>14</sup> We draw attention to the fact that YouTube keeps the vocable channel from broadcasting systems.

<sup>15</sup> Number observed on February 26th, 2018.

<sup>16</sup> The music video *K.O.* can be seen in <<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=3L5D8by1AtI>>. Access on: February 26th 2018.

<sup>17</sup> The music video *Sua Cara* can be seen in <<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=omzk3klIy0E>>. Access on: February 26th 2018.

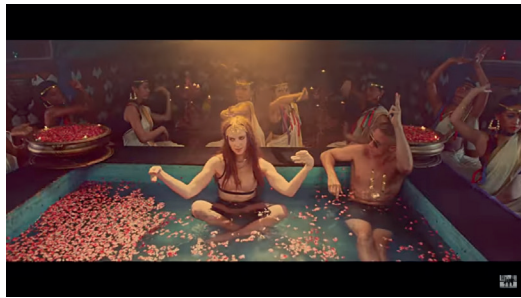
<sup>18</sup> Even though Pablllo Vittar collaborated, *Sua Cara* is not available on her channel, but only on Major Lazer's. Today, the video has 355 million views. We can see other Vittar's videos on other channels beside hers. It is also the case of the videos *Minaj* - written as the last name of the singer "Nicki Minaj" with a reference to the "butt" - and *Lover* videos. Both available on fans' channels. Number of views verified on February 26th, 2018. Information available on <<http://jconline.ne10.uol.com.br/canal/culture/noticia/2017/07/31/clip-de-anitta-e-pablllo-tar-tas-best-testre-in--2017-298518.ph>> Access on: September 12th 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Number observed on February 26th 2018. The music video *Sua Cara* can be seen in <<https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=BPFOFO6Wkr8fs>>.

<sup>20</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYuepseCRGY>>. Access on: February 26th, 2018. The number of views was also verified on that day.

<sup>21</sup> Excerpts from the comment section available on the video's page available on YouTube. To see these and other comments, access <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYuepseCRGY>>.

Pablo's performance makes us wonder about the position of cis women in international pop music in the latest years. The similarity to singers Britney Spears, Beyoncé, Rihanna and Nick Minaj is evident by the explicit gesture and body language performed on the video. In this sense, we can understand that Pablo's body is crossed by musical consumption attributed to certain specificities in gay culture, but then, when building a distinct version, it presents various tensions in relation to the background, sound and cultural elements. In Major Lazer's version, there is a typically Indian environment very different from the celebration atmosphere we see in *Open Bar*. In fact, the only elements appearing on both videos are a bed and a pool, which in *Lean On* is a Jacuzzi (see Figures 1 and 2).



Figures 1 and 2: frames captured from Major Lazer's *Lean On*<sup>22</sup> and Pablo Vittar's *Open Bar*<sup>23</sup>

In the video, the drag queen elements appear in several scenes from the first take and highlight accessories of the female universe. In the context of visibility, Pablo's body performs towards the camera, inviting the viewer to the experience of the pool party. The brazilianess of this version appears in the music arrangements, in a reference to samba and the barbecue ambience. All of these aspects create a party mood in the video where local and global elements are in a tension brought up through these sounds - even though we recognize the determination processes involving the music industry and that extend the range of products to a global scale.

When we reflect on this body suffused by global features we can understand that these marks are inscribed in the artist's own body and are not displayed as mere publicity. In the *K.O.*<sup>24</sup> video, we see a drag queen's body performing among commercial possibilities, with the publicities of the Absolut Vodka and Adidas. In the case of Adidas' publicity, we note two issues: the first is the displacement of an exclusive historically established relationship between the brand and hip hop; the second is the deconstruction of the gender segmentation in clothing. According to Silva (2017), Vittar attracts brands because in her videos it is possible to use product placement strategies, "a format that makes the brand tangible to the public inside a piece that will be consumed countless times. It is like propaganda within a content that, in addition to being consumed in a moment of joy, focuses on image and actual viewing" (Silva, 2017).

In the *K.O.* video, cinematography focuses on a dark atmosphere with beams of light that enter the gym through windows, and the direction uses neutral colors, such as black, grey and white, aspects that build up an aesthetic culturally referred to a hegemonic masculinity. We see the presence of a boxing ring, boxing clothes, trophies, bandages involving the hands of the "rival", elements referring to physical strength, in a song about a love knockout. In the scene, we also see that this love "hit" involves two men, in this case Pablo and the actor who plays the other part in the relationship. The video's narrative underestimate the relationship between violence and homophobia, while connecting the body of a homosexual to a knockout victim. And there is also a built-up expectation inside the video when the kiss

<sup>22</sup> Available in <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqeW9\\_5kURI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqeW9_5kURI)>. Access on: September 17th 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYuepseCRGY>>. Access on: September 17th 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Abbreviation of the word "knockout" which means the action in boxing where the fighter remains unconscious for ten seconds. The knockout means a moment of defeat, according to the rules of the fight.



in the end does not happen, symbolizing an interdiction of the love potency.

Groove's body presents itself in the videos in another way. In *Dona*, the night club ambience and its light effects creates an atmosphere of sociality, with the presence of other drag queen artists who perform the song with their bodies. There is a striking presence of red lights and light beams interacting in the image, creating this futuristic visuality and, in some way, it symbolizes the transformations in Brazilian pop culture brought by Groove in the song: "Oh, Jesus/ What the hell is that? / Is it a woman? / What is it? / Nice to meet you, I am art, my dear/ So, applaud me." In *Dona*, we see visual effects similar to those present in several pop music videos, and, in particular, scenes of the video in *Your Eyes*, from singer Kylie Minogue (see figures 3 and 4).



Figures 3 and 4: Frames captured from *Dona*<sup>25</sup> by Gloria Groove and *In Your Eyes*<sup>26</sup> by Kylie Minogue

This futuristic style is articulated with Gloria Groove's combative performance as a new moment in pop music in Brazil, with the presence of non-binary singers. The gestures are the tools of the body that creates tensions: she performs for the camera, using hip hop gestures in a body filled with non-hegemonic female elements. She is not concerned with specific standards, like a thin waist, a feature of the transition between being in drag and not. In *Império*, these signs anticipated in *Dona* are even more incisive. We note this in the lyrics, where she claims the construction of an empire, a drag queen empire. There is also the presence of this non-hegemonic female body with heavy make-up, way too long finger nails, a horn replica in the place of a wig, all of which creates a dreamlike atmosphere (see Figure 5). In the context of the universe created through the images in this song, it appears to us that she uses this dream aspect to indicate that the drag queen empire is something to be built.

<sup>25</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPFOFO6Wkr8fs>>. Access on: September 17th 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjETIBEMbJY>>. Access on: September 17th 2018.



Figure 5: Gloria Groove's captured image in the Empire video<sup>27</sup>

In the video, there are still other bodies appearing, such as black people or other drag queen identities distinct from Groove's, and they are an integral part of this diversity, which is the drag queen culture. It all performs in the light of hip hop culture, such as the flow, the spoken excerpts of the song referring to the MCs and the hip hop battles, the improv and the narratives about race, social class and urban conflicts. She explicitly marks this dispute in the excerpt when she says: "The specialist of destruction/Examine this! (Hmm)/ Heading the revolution/ Here's the girl!"<sup>28</sup> Here, for instance, we highlight some possible interpretive keys in the last verse. The Portuguese slang "mina" means "girl" but also means "mine", the object of destruction. This relates to Groove's statement on Trip magazine<sup>29</sup>: "You don't know the difference it makes for a black kid, a gay from poor urban outskirts, [...] to look at my work and think 'it could be me', thinking that people can see themselves in me", she says.

The excerpt from the song above shows that, instead of exploring the proximity with hegemonic femininities, Gloria explores the performance of the body and of "montação"<sup>30</sup> through rap and hip hop culture. Her body represents a double resistance as a drag queen and as a minority inside this particular music scene, where historically minorities such as women and gay people are less visible. It is in this sort of unfitness that Gloria Groove creates the possibility of a drag queen in hip hop and the tensions inside a music genre of which social conventions operate from a hegemonic masculinity perspective.

In Pablo's and Gloria's performances we understand there is a drag queen identity affirmation even if they work in different ways. Unlike Pablo, who appears in a polish and peaceful body that dialogues with the hegemonic signs of femininity, Gloria Groove appears in a more direct and incisive way appropriating the lyrics and the videos as dispute elements. These differences relate to the fact that Pablo Vittar places herself in pop culture and seeks a clearer position in mainstream music industry, while Gloria Groove articulates with hip hop, which has different market strategies from pop. The two of them, however, have in common the choice of not "ghettoize"<sup>31</sup> their bodies, rather than making them public, to

<sup>27</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYU-oXjIlus>>. Access on: September 18th 2018.

<sup>28</sup> In the original: "Especialista em destruição/ Examina! (Hmm)/ Encabeçando a revolução/ Eis a mina!". The verses "Examina!" and "Eis a mina" in Portuguese sound the same.

<sup>29</sup> Available < <http://revistatrip.uol.com.br/trip-tv/gloria-groove-a-dona-da-porra-toda>>. Access on: September 17th 2018.

<sup>30</sup> The term "montação" is used by gender and sexuality researchers to refer to the ritual performances of the drag queen universe and is related to body and personality modifications. For more examples of the use of the term, see Amanajás (2015), Gadelha (2008), Jordão & Soares (2016).

<sup>31</sup> The terms "gueto" and "ghettoization" refer to urban experiences such as the economic exploitation of lower classes, their reinventions because of segregation dynamics and urban poverty. In Sociology, the term address to the meaning of violent areas, social encapsulation and the search for territory references

be seen in broader scales and not only in specific spaces.

The visibility achieved by them has caused various reactions. For example, in the 2017 edition of Rock in Rio, after Pablo Vittar's presentation with singer Fergie, the idea of that edition being the gayest one in history began to circulate on social media. In response, those critics were considered homophobic. And the counter argument used was the low-quality of the music. This argument shows that, from the perspective of "musical taste", LGBTQ singers who participated in the latest edition - Johnny Hooker, Liniker, Almerio and even Ney Matogrosso - were classified as artists of questionable quality. We can also identify a relation with how these bodies occupy the public scene today. If we look to other festival editions, the performances of homosexual artists such as Fred Mercury, Cazusa and Cassia Eller, became examples of "high-quality" attractions. The question we must ask is whether this legitimized place is built by a relationship with rock, as a musical genre of reference and critic valorization..

## Drag queen voices: from singing in falsetto to speak-singing

When we deal with pop music performances, we are already using valorative parameters that anchor our experiences. Such parameters can vary according to the pop universe in question. In this article, we highlight the consumption and production projected in the queer segment, but that also transcend its limits. From this perspective, it was essential to build context and intertextual networks to deal with the voices of Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove, focusing on the vocal performances of these drag queen singers.

The singing voice, we highlight, is the projection of a body in the world. It is the affirmation of its presence in space-time and, in addition, the element that sensually interpellates us. With the invention of phonographic record techniques, this presence could be shifted by the possibility of a virtual sensory experience with a performance (Zumthor, 2010). This leads us to reaffirm a potential model of spreading the singing voice that always refers to the body that emits it.

We get to know this queer universe when we listen to the voices of Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove; not only through what is said in the lyrics, but also by how they transform their voice in a space to imprint gestures, to act in the world in a certain way. Luiz Tatit reminds us that "canting is an oral gesture, at the same time continuous, articulated, tense and natural, that requires a permanent balance between the melodic and linguistic elements, the musical parameters and the colloquial intonation." (Tatit, 2002, p.9)<sup>32</sup>. More than that, affirming the world's presence through singing involves the interaction between the audience and their expertise, and between the singer and his/her gestures. After listening to the singers' albums, we wonder what is projected from the vocal gestures of each one.

Pablo's work was surrounded by expectations that involved a previous record with Portuguese

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of alterity (ethnic, gender, social minorities). Ghetto as a sociological concept can be found in Wacquant (2004). These ideas are related to the work of Stuart Hall (2009) about black culture, which addresses the field of popular culture as a space of intense disputes for hegemony, such as a resistance and consent arena in opposition to dominant culture. "Popular culture, especially, organizes itself around contradictions: popular forces versus the bloc of power. This grants the Cultural fight field their own specificity" (Hall, 2009, p. 245).

<sup>32</sup> Luiz Tatit (2002) says that the oral gestures of songs refers to the balance between the different dimensions that involve the melody, the voice and the word. The author states the gesture of the singer as creation of "a perpetual piece with the resources used for the ephemeral production of the daily speech" (Tatit, 2002, p. 11). Despite the author's perspective of textual centrality, we use Tatit's oral gesture of the song to articulate the observation with the corporalities (which is in this case the body of the voice). In this sense, Zunthor (2005) states that the voice needs to be linked to the body to constitute a performance. The body is the living conductor of all the gestures that make part of the daily life. "The performance is a complete poetic achievement: the words are transformed into a single group of gestures, sounds and circumstances so consistent (in principle) that the words and sentences are barely distinguished" (Zumthor, 2005, p. 86-87). Galard (2008) seeks to understand the conventions and institutionalized elements that regulate our body language. From the perspective of gestures, the author proposes to consider them as aesthetic objects that reveal the sign development strategies in constant negotiation with our cultural contexts (Galard, 2008, p. 29). Therefore, the articulation of performance and voice we propose in this article is to reflect on another corporally imprinted element in the singing moment of the performance.

versions of songs already established in the pop and gay universe. *Todo Dia*, the first single of the record *Vai Passar Mal* (2017), seemed to have accomplished that: in the opening lines of the track, she proudly announces: "I don't wait until Carnaval to be a slut" and complements, "I am one every day"<sup>33</sup>. Falsetto singing was already Vittar's style before launching her album and in almost every track that is the main characteristic of her vocal performance. In general, this voice still reaffirms relations to mainstream pop artists such as Katy Perry, Lady Gaga and Shakira, even though Pablló Vittar is influenced by local musical universes like "arrocha" and "farró".

She clearly imprints what she intends to be: a drag queen singer who consolidates her position while using the language of "lacrção"<sup>34</sup>. Her performance is marked by profound vocal placement and her voice is intense. There is little space for whispers in the self-affirmation of verses like "Everyone wants me, but what can I do?" in the song *Nêga*, "You already lost me" in *Irregular*, "You'll go crazy, I will play with your mind with my sensual body" in *Corpo Sensual* (featuring singer Mateus Carrilho from the group *Banda Uó*). This "lacrção" goes very well together with the intense vocality of falsetto singing, that itself already clearly defines Pablló's queer performativity. In other situations, she sings in lower pitches that provides sensuality, like in the song *Tara*, or even gives more seriousness to the work, such as the case of the self-help tone in *Indestrutível*, the album's final track, where we hear only piano and voice arrangements.

The voice in *K.O.* gets closer to this less intense and weaker vocal gestures; she admits: "Your love got me/ You hit me so hard with your love/ It came out, knocked me out". This is, in general, the tone of the song: her singing is a sort of confusion or weakness of someone who seems to have lost control while experiencing a romance. We consider these verses as a singing-confession: "I was always a fighter, but it was on the first strike / I was helpless, the heart lost the fight, yeah/ Goodbye party life, single life, I want Friday night / Being with you in my bed, together, closer". This variation of tones shows the artist's cleverness: the voice changes according to what is said and the softer singing suggests the weakness of the character played by the singer.

Gloria Groove uses the same language strategy of "lacrção" operating from other vocal gestures related to distinct universes: her relationship with rap is probably the most striking aspect of her work. Right on the opening of the album *O Proceder* (2017), the voice names who is singing "Uh, Gloria Groove/ Hold it" and follows "Living in the world, you know this sh\*t is serious/ Putting yourself out here sometimes with no criteria/ Taking the legacy as part of the mystery/ Working to thrive the Empire!". Several songs of the album start with this announcement, this type of signature is one of the most common marks in the world of rap. In addition, her vocality works in a more spoken kind of singing and reveals other characteristics of this universe as we see in the constant use of slangs - many of them part of the queer dialect: for example, in *O Proceder*, the verses: "You can badmouth me, hunty/ Get a beef with these hoes is trouble / Ask for a stage, girl, this is what you want/ I'll expose her on the internet"<sup>35</sup>. Another aspect is the mention of autobiographical elements as we see in *Dona*: "So one day tell the story/ of the girl that changed everything/ That came from the east side of São Paulo/ To become the owner of the world". Even a obvious mention of Jay-Z's song "99 problems" from *The Black Album* (2004) states: "Don't be sad, no, hon/ 'Cause I will be fine without you / 99 problems in my hands and of course /You're not gonna be number 100".

While Pablló Vittar uses predominantly the falsetto - which etymologically means dissimulation

<sup>33</sup> The song was taken off the album on streaming platforms after copyright conflicts between Pablló Vittar and the collaborator Rico Dalasan.

<sup>34</sup> "Lacrção" is a slang used by the LGBTQ community to designate a successful attitude, behavior or performance. In this context, the verb "lacrar" is commonly used in expressions such as "lacrou com as inimigas"(translated to "you finished your enemies") that means a compliment to a behavior that is capable to silence anyone involved.

<sup>35</sup> In the original: "Pode falar mal de mim, monete/ arranjar paju com essas gayzinha é bad/ De um palco era o que tu queria, fia, pede/ 'Eu vou expor ela na internet"

and distortion -, Groove's performance alternates from singing to speak-singing (the latest being the main element on her performances), which we can observe in the chorus of different tracks from the album and in the entire song *Madrugada*. For Tatit (2002), there is a presence dynamics between the voice singing and the voice that speaks in vocal gestures. When the speak-singing (intonation) tends to be predominant in a performance, it is as if the singer reveals him/herself in the presence of their interlocutors, stablishing complicity and trust as possible effects of enunciation.

Ideas such as dissimulation, artificiality and vocal placement should not point to any pejorative meaning: they have to be taken as characteristics related to the aspects of which the singers perform to the public<sup>36</sup>. The perceptions we are pointing out from vocal gestures tend to reaffirm impressions that we also have in observing how they behave in other devices as we can see in the videos. We find similarities on Instagram while observing that Gloria Groove is a low-key drag queen in comparison to Pablo Vittar, which are their strategies towards the public.

## Audiovisual flows in context

The numbers of views presented by the two drag queens indicate changes in the forms of production, consumption and circulation of videos in Brazil and in the world. In 2005, YouTube was created to be a repository – the slogan was *Your Digital Video Repository* (Burgess, Green, 2009, p.20). However, the access to cameras that were very easy to use allowed a higher number of recordings of the daily life. In time, people were using YouTube to make visible their home productions and to cease the curiosity about others' lives. The slogan became *Broadcast Yourself* (Burgess, Green, 2009, p. 20). The artists analyzed, at the start of their careers, present these characteristics from the beginning of YouTube.

In Pablo's channel, we find videos in which she performs international pop songs, using only a guitar in a visibly domestic environment. In that image, we notice the use of two cameras, but the quality difference of the images between cuts, the poor quality of sound and the frames that do not exactly capture the whole scene demonstrate how amateur the footage was (see Figure 6). On the other hand, Gloria Groove uses a better resolution image, even though it is placed in a domestic environment with the presence of a couch, a table and light strings as decorative objects. It also uses an unique and shaky shot (see Figure 7) that reinforces the homemade video.



Figure 6: Image captured<sup>37</sup> from a Pablo Vittar's homemade footage from her performance in the beginning of her career.

<sup>36</sup> As approached by Cardoso Filho (2014), indicating how pop music "grows" a kind of sound perception on the listeners linked to dominant semiotic standards in a specific technical, social and cultural context.

<sup>37</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLrW3zEMhA4>>. Access on: September 18th 2018.

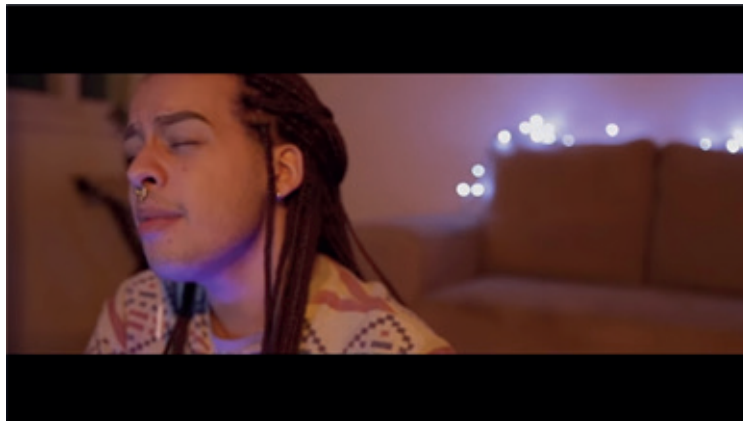


Figure 7: Image captured from a video of Gloria Groove's performance available on the artist's YouTube channel<sup>38</sup>

Since Google's purchase, the number of artists using YouTube to release their music videos increased, which led to a process of professionalization of the products made for the platform followed by the consumers. Some small producers emerged on the market and are specialized in music video productions for artists in the funk, pagode and sertanejo<sup>39</sup> segments, and they have accumulated a good number of viewers of their products.

The production and consumption of music videos in Brazil started in the 1960s and 1970s in exhibitions on Rede Globo's TV show *Fantástico* and reached their peak when they were exclusively broadcast by MTV in the years 1990-2000. From these moments, it remains the public's behavior of watching music videos of their favorite artists several times. By comparing past decades consumption and the way we do nowadays we see a great difference: today it is no longer necessary to record VHS tapes to repeat the reproduction. With an internet connection, it is possible to watch high quality videos anytime.

Another important transformation is that, instead of creating a music video list from the interaction with the audience by phone or the internet, Youtube, through its codes, operates as a music video curator and creates lists of videos related to one another. So, Pablllo Vittar's *K.O.* leads to other videos from her like *Corpo Sensual*, *Open Bar* and other artists like Rico Dalasam (*Fogo em Mim*), Emicida and Miguel (*Oásis*), Karol Conka (*Lala*), Liniker (*Zero*), among others. Similarly, *Dona* of Gloria Groove leads to her videos *Império* and *Gloriosa*, and to other singers like some already cited among Linn da Quebrada (*Enviadescer*), Chico Buarque (*As Caravanas*) and MC Queer (*Fiscal*).

This list curated by Youtube can be consumed in automatic reproduction, through a button that can be triggered by the user and it is created from artists that are co-related and the consumption habits of each person. In Martín-Barbero's terms, it means to perceive how technicities and ritualities can explain specific ways of watching and doing, and the forms they are consumed in a cultural context. As Martín-Barbero states (2009), technicity is not only a matter of technology, and rituality is about rhythm, memory, how production logics and reception skills relate to the format.

Observing the centrality of audiovisual flows in the current media context leads us to look beyond the channels of the analysed artists. It is not possible to understand the phenomenon Pablllo Vittar without

<sup>38</sup> Available in <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvvhBifuoSU>>. Access on: September 18th 2018.

<sup>39</sup> According to the article of the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo: "At least three video producers are on this market: Kondzilla, Tom Produções and P.drão, which, added together, have 86 million views on the website. The first two are among Brazil's 50 largest channels as far as subscribers numbers". Available in: <<http://classificados.folha.uol.com.br/negocios/2015/03/1604597-crecimento-do-funk-cria-negocio-para-produtoras-de-clipes-assista.shtml>>. Access on: September 31st 2018.

considering her collaborations: Rico Dalasam (*Todo Dia*<sup>40</sup>), Mateus Carrilho (*Corpo Sensual*) from the group *Banda Uó*, and her presence in other artists' channels, like Major Lazer's, on the already mentioned *Sua Cara* featuring Anitta, and collaborations with Gloria Groove and Aretuza Lovi (*Joga Bunda*). The so-called "feats" - an abbreviation of "featuring" - are important strategies in current music production, vastly used in American Rap and Hip Hop since the 90s<sup>41</sup>, incorporated by Brazilian artists. They see in these collaborations ways to access different audiences, expanding the circulation of their products, becoming more visible. *K.O.*, Vittar's most seen solo video, has around 20 million views less than *Sua Cara*.

If we take the legitimation of Pablo Vittar's career from the perspective of journalism and the critics<sup>42</sup>, we can understand that she gets the celebrity status after the release of the video with Anitta, which reinforces our comprehension on the importance of the "feats" to the phonographic industry. On the other hand, considering the formation of collaboration networks in Brazil, we see that other elements appear in the configuration of this strategy, like in the same example of *K.O.* which is directed by João Monteiro, who is responsible for "discovering" Gloria Groove. He is also the director of *Dona*, Gloria's first music video.

Other platforms are important for the circulation of audiovisual content and for placing these artists in the present time. Both Pablo Vittar and Gloria Groove have profiles on Instagram<sup>43</sup>. In them, the artists disclose their performances, concerts, shows, music videos and explain their relationship networks with other artists, fans and advertisers. We understand that various flows are constructed, and we believe that in each of these communicative processes the body of a character is created, not only as a mere character but as a double-subject, in and out of drag. It was also by the "stories" on Instagram that Vittar announced she was producing a new music video featuring sertanejo singer Lucas Lucco, launched in January 29th, 2018. And she displayed backstage scenes from the launch of *Corpo Sensual* on the cable TV channel Multishow. It is also using "stories" that Groove exposes gifts received by sponsors and fans, discloses music videos from other artists, like drag queen Sabrina Sister, who she calls her "funk blonde sister".

## Final considerations

Both Vittar and Groove use the strategies of YouTube, Instagram and other platforms to make their products visible and consumed in the current context. In comparison to Groove's, Vittar's moderate

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<sup>40</sup> After a controversy on copyright involving Gorky, Pablo Vittar's manager and musician from the group "Bonde do Rolê", the hit song "Todo Dia" featuring Rico Dalasam was taken from all audio and video platforms. More information on <<https://www.facebook.com/Farofafa/videos/vb.184095238306516/1338259812890047/?type=2&theater>>. Access on: September 12th 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Information available on <<http://www.state.com/culture/2018/01/why-camila-cabello-habello-jababella-is-novana-no-1-on-the-hot-100.html>>. Access on: September 17th 2018.

<sup>42</sup> The newspaper articles about Pablo Vittar published in 2017 are mostly about her career after two events occurred from July to September: the launch of the music video "Sua Cara" featuring singer Anitta and the American group Major Lazer (which had more than 20 million views in 24 hours); and her participation in Fergie's concert on Rock in Rio. The article from *Folha de São Paulo*, published on August 6th, a week after the launch of "Sua Cara" holds the headline "Fantastic Girl" and reinforces the impulse on Pablo's career after the partnership: "The singer saw her fee jump from R\$ 2,000 to R\$ 50,000 and her persona became a LGBTQ symbol" (Do Carmo, 2017, p. C1). The newspaper doesn't question the fact that Pablo gained popularity by non-professional means almost immediately in 2015, with almost 1 million views four months after the launch of the video "Open Bar", a parody of the song "Lean On" from the group Major Lazer. This shows how the critic creates the ascension of the "Fantastic Girl" through collaborations with other successful pop artists.

<sup>43</sup> Gloria Groove has 264,000 followers on Instagram. Pablo Vittar has 6.6 million, being the world's most followed drag queen and overtaking RuPaul (1.8 million), the American hostess of the famous reality show that takes her name in the title and a reference to Vittar, who talks about her in the first video of his vlog because she has a masculine drag queen name. The profiles can be seen on <<https://www.instagram.com/gloriagroove/>>, <<https://www.instagram.com/pablovittar/>> and <<https://www.instagram.com/ru-paulofficial/>>. Access on: February 26th 2018.

performance is more easily absorbed by the regulatory codes of the devices of capitalism. On the other hand, Groove has a more aggressive tone, as seen in *Dona*, and disputes the hegemonic performances of drag queen identities in Brazil. The presence of these two artists on these platforms makes possible for us to understand these platforms as devices that have a very complex form of operation, articulating drag queen identities while disclosing them. These new forms of production and interpellation that are explained through technicalities and ritualities articulated on the techno-communicative environment show us the modernization of capturing processes.

However, as we distinguish the appropriation of musical genera, production and consumption methods among the two artists, we see differences in these subjectivation processes. While Vittar performs using aspects of a hegemonic femininity - with a high vocal range, a body that moves sensual referring to other sexy women performances (as we can see in *Corpo Sensual*) -, Groove builds a more androgynous performance adjoining hegemonic masculinities and femininities. Groove appears in the music video *Império*, for example, with an extravagant and exaggerated look intending, in some extent, to build a persona that expresses herself through costumes and make up. At the same time, she appears in the video without her drag queen elements, as a means of ensuring fluidity in what we recognize as been drag queen, showing herself without the aspects that build her drag persona.

We understand that the drag queen identity in these two artists show the possibilities of cultural exchanges through different performativities that are crossed by images flow and segmented experiences amplified globally. Therefore, we see how the dynamics of pop culture and their values of using, sharing and also their aesthetic values articulate and associate bodies, objects and the way they inhabit the contemporary world (Janotti Jr, 2015, p.51). The experiences in pop culture are related to the way we conceive a kind of pop temporality, that is, the understanding that pop brings time to the present and constitutes an eternal "new". But, in fact, it can put in evidence different temporalities that conform our daily relations.

When we put into the contemporary context the way drag queen artists have found specific forms to potentialize their gender identities aesthetically and politically through digital culture, we understand how these meanings are anchored in historical aspects of music genera. They indicate aesthetic confrontations, subjects constitution forms, the way pop culture works in the domain of affection and in market strategies, and also how it implants cultural expressions in everyday practices - such as albums and music videos (Janotti Jr, 2015, p. 54). As Soares (2012) affirms, music videos are deliberately transtemporal, that is, they provide to the spectator different temporal experiences. In this article, we attempted to foster discussion about pop culture's potentialities and the dispute for visibility through dissident gender performances, through movements of continuous transitions, the repetition of experiences and emergency attempts that articulate communicational products and everyday practices.

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