

Gender, differences, identities and DIY cultures: Introduction

Paula Guerra¹ and Thiago Pereira Alberto²

*A feeling of being followed
A feeling of being watched
Isn't easy to define
So I won't trouble you*

She put her life on the line

*She kept trying
Trying to find
A place to hide
Somewhere inside
Somewhere where the air was hot
And her blood could rush
But she could not*

The Raincoats (1979). *Life on the Line*.

The fourth KISMIF International Conference “Keep It Simple, Make It Fast! (KISMIF) Gender, differences, identities and DIY cultures was held at Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto, Portugal, between 2-7 July, 2018. The scientific programme of KISMIF was once again be accompanied by a diverse social and cultural programme, characterised by a series of artistic events, with special focus on underground music and other artistic expressions. The highpoint was clearly the participation of Ana da Silva e Gina Birch, members of the world-renowned band *The Raincoats*, as key speakers of the Conference. The conference was also preceded by a summer school entitled “What difference do DIY cultures make?” on 3 July 2018 in Faculty of Arts and Humanities of University of Porto.

The KISMIF Conference offered a unique forum where participants could discuss and share information about underground cultures and DIY practices. Aligned with this is an anti-hegemonic ideology focused around aesthetic and lifestyle politics. KISMIF is the first and so far, only conference to examine the theory and practice of underground DIY cultures as an increasingly significant form of cultural practice in a global context. The was once again goal to discuss not only music but also other artistic fields such as film and video, graffiti and street art, theatre and the performing arts, literature and poetry, radio, programming and editing, graphic design, illustration, cartoon and comic fiction.

Thus, seeking to respond to the desire reiterated by researchers, artists and activists present at previous KISMIF conferences, the 4th edition of KISMIF was focused on “Gender, differences, identities and DIY cultures”, directing its attention on gender issues relating to underground scenes and DIY cultures, and their manifestation at local, translocal and virtual levels. Expressions of gender in local, translocal and virtual spaces constitute important variables to understand contemporary cultures, their sounds, their practices (artistic, cultural, economic and social), their actors and their contexts. From a

¹ University of Porto – Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Institute of Sociology – University of Porto. CE-GOT and CITCEM - Transdisciplinary Research Centre «Culture, Space and Memory». Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research. KISMIF Con-venor. E-mail: pguerra@letras.up.pt.

² Federal Fluminense University – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and University of Porto – Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Institute of Sociology. E-mail: thiagopereiraalberto@gmail.com.

postcolonial and glocalised perspective, it is important to consider the changes in artistic and musical practices with an underground nature to draw symbolic boundaries between their operating modalities and those of advanced capitalism.

Since the onset, punk claimed for himself some social causes: equality, especially gender equality, was on the top of the hierarchy. But, if that is true, where are all the women that participated in the scene since the first moment? Why the invisibility? Why the placing in inferior roles such as girlfriend or sexual object as we can see in several songs (Guerra, 2010, 2013; Guerra; Bittencourt & Gelain, 2018; Silva & Guerra, 2015; Garrigós, Guerra & Triana, 2019)? And although there have been women since the beginning of the punk movement, attracted by the alleged acceptance of a gender equality, what happened was that these women were usually denied leadership roles in the subculture and when they did get them, they were victims of physical and psychological violence (Guerra, 2013; Guerra & Oliveira, 2019; Guerra, Gelain & Moreira, 2017). Thus, in subcultural movements such as punk, in spite of the existing myth of gender equality in this movement, women remained in inferior positions. Especially when the visible internal contradictions between discourse and practice are exposed (Guerra, Bittencourt & Gelain, 2018; Bittencourt & Guerra, 2018; Bennett & Guerra, 2019).

One explanation for this can be found in the composition of Birmingham's CCCS, which was comprised mostly of men. Many times, their studies turn into a sort of heroic celebration of these groups. The media themselves played a role in women's depreciation (Guerra & Quintela, 2016). Analysing punk subculture, Reddington (2003), notes that several journalists referred to young punk women involved in bands as "punkette", that is, giving the impression of someone who is entering a territory just for men, and therefore diminishing women's involvement, characterizing it as something different, and subordinate, to what was done by boys and men.

Returning to the issues pointed out by McRobbie (2000), another refers to economics. That is, there was an increase in incomes available to individuals post-war, but the truth is that this increase was unevenly distributed, especially regarding gender, with women benefiting less by these increases. In fact, consumption patterns themselves are structurally different: girls focus much more than boys on things related to home and marriage. Thus, the issue is not so much the presence of girls in subcultures dominated by boys, but rather the way the girls interacted with each other in their own subcultures. An example is the *teenybopper* subculture, very focused on magazines, radio and television, and revolving around pop stars. Even in a completely manufactured culture like *teenybopper* you can find negotiation and resistance processes (Guerra & Straw, 2017). There are also some explanatory factors for the adoption of the *teenybopper* subculture by these young women: the existence of a double standard, in which the freedom given to boys was much greater than that given to girls. Participation in this culture did not require one to spend free time away from home; also, it did not require much money or entail many personal risks.

This subcultural invisibility is only part of a true invisibility at a musical level. Women are actually forgotten by the musical world. For some authors, one reason is that women are not involved in the preservation process (Kleinberg, 1988) and, another is their inability to control the language and symbols used to reproduce power structures. However, in the example analysed by Strong, grunge, this disappearance did not take place in the past, after the death of

the women, but while they were alive, which makes the case more complex. That is, each new female band that is successful is always seen as the first, which a perpetual novelty at the level of female bands (Guerra, 2017).

Reflecting the Programme of the Conference, this book is organized in eleven parts, or as we call it "Theme Tunes". Theme Tune 1 is named '*I can change the world: punk, history and contemporary readings*'. The first paper deals with the interaction between punk and social minorities, namely the Chinese diaspora in Italy; the second talks about punk's museumification and the tensions that could provoke; the third paper deals with the lack of female musicians and fanzine makers in 1970's Finish punk; the next paper talks about the musical career of the German singer Heino and how he managed to become the conservative opposition to the British Invasion during the 1960s in Germany. The last paper aims also at the process of museumification and heritage, with a translocal focus.

The second Theme Tune is called *(R)evolution in style now!: gender, scenes and DIY cultures*. We start with a paper dealing with a Viennese feminist hip hop duo that uses trap rap and a certain DIY ethic to reconstruct the sounds of feminism; the second paper deals with the place for women's in male-world of the reggaeton scene, based on the reproduction of the social symbolic violence; the third paper talks about the lack of a perfect female Hollywood character; the fourth one deals with the women's collective DJs emerging in Barcelona, and working on the idea to make visible women in electronic dance music scene; the last paper discuss the concept of solidarity economy is being adopted in the article in order to indicate these alternative economic practices, namely in Turkey.

The third Theme Tune is named 'Ask the angels': DIY cultures, underground music scenes and alternative lifestyles. The first paper shows how over the past ten years grassroots music production has been incentivized by an increasing number of web-platforms that allow to autonomously manage music promotion and distribution. The second one, investigate the concepts of DIY and independence as means of aesthetic and cultural production inscribed in historical libertarian conception of art and artists in society. The third paper offers an analysis of Istanbul based feminist punk acts, and how they not only seek to negate the prevalent misogyny sedimented in hardcore/punk culture and beyond, but they also seek to create new spaces where new values would take root. The fourth paper analysis fanzines as pedagogical devices that help developing horizontal relations between the professor and the students in a Colombian university. The last paper explores the influence of music in the fashion choices of the women that witnessed the changing (gender) roles in the Spanish society of the late 1970's.

The fourth Theme Tune is called *Tribulations and movements: hybridity and differences in postcolonial artistic and musical scenes*. The first paper reveal the ways by which the punk attitude and its D.I.Y. philosophy have influenced the 1980s Brazilian music scene by inspiring the emergence of a national rock style known as Brock. The second one, analysis the Media Animal and Movies in the Anthropocene through focusing ethics and values, modes and manners, in a study case of two videos about two animals of the same species, both published on a social network on same day. The third paper seeks to critically analyse the notion of musical scene using decolonialist theory. The fourth paper has the objective of producing initial notes for a historical perspective of the music scene in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil. The fifth paper seeks to

speculate how elements of economic and political order have the power to affect our modes of social interaction, aesthetic fruition and leisure.

The fifth Theme Tune is named 'Highly inflammable'. Ethnicity, cities, migrations and political mobilization. The first paper deals with the "I am Bilingual" Program and the "Paumari Language Championship", carried out by the Paumari People in Amazon region, Brazil, and how these experiences influence their political mobilization strategies. The second paper focuses on how German-Turks combined traditional musical elements with extreme postmodernist features in music videos, specially the most popular Germany born Turkish artist: İsmail YK. The third paper analyzes bajo sexto construction "field" and its main characteristics to understand and examine how newcomers and dominants take their position within the field. The fourth paper analyse how patriotism has been defined and how its significance has changed over the course of years through the examination of popular songs (including rock and rap music). The last paper aims to shed light on the relation between music and skating, particularly on how certain genres of music relate to skateboarders' urban daily practices.

The sixth Theme Tune is named 'In the beginning there was heart'. Liminality and ubiquity of contemporary artistic creations. The first paper investigates the use of emojis in texting as a Barthesian "second-order semiological system", in order to disclose their potential as a gender manoeuvring tool. The second paper looks for the social roots of artistic skills in the communication and attention patterns of dancers in the studio. The third paper analysis the artistic work of Shahzia Sikander, and how her work questions the issues of gender, religion, hierarchy, Western and Eastern culture, from a perspective of dialogue and numerous solutions. The fourth paper focuses on the changes that have taken place in the artistic world in Portugal, namely the new do-it-yourself logics and work practices, in which artists/creators take over the role of producers/managers. The last paper is to show how the religious sphere is being increasingly colonized by do-it-yourself cultures, that is, free from following traditional precepts, individuals find themselves in a position to distant from institutional belongingness and belief.

The seventh Theme Tune is named 'Man next door'. Queer studies and identities reconstructions. The first paper aims at analyzing how Madonna's career presents dialectical articulations with the postmodern period, emphasizing the strong relationship established between her performances and cultural identities of ghetto groups. The second paper proposes to study the queer zines produced in Madrid in the 1990's, namely two pioneer groups in queer activism in Spain: La Radical Gai and LSD. The third paper investigates the strategies that the independent artist Amanda Palmer uses in order to gain visibility and financial capital to promote her music. The fourth paper analysis, through the Sense Construction Analysis in Digital Networks methodology, the political confrontations and prejudices of Anitta's videoclip Vai Malandra. In the fifth paper, the author refers some of the strategies deployed by videogame artists in order to undermine game conventions, to provide unexpected game experiences and to put the player in someone else's shoes.

The eight Theme Tune is named *Mirrors and glasses: fashion, gender and artistic underground cultures*. The first paper presents an examination about the relationship between the English artist Grayson Perry and his alter-ego Claire, positioning them in the field of artistic creations that take the themes of the body and sexuality as expression and political practice. The next paper studies how,

drawing on a tactic of rapprochement with art, French couture, presenting itself as a new type of avant-garde, promoted a transformation of women's fashion in the early twentieth century, which affected the dressing of users in different parts of the world. The third paper analyzes the uses of photography in the image construction from and by Dener Pamplona Abreu as a "couturier" through his portraits published in the Brazilian press between 1957 and 1968. The fourth paper analyzes the opinions given by specialists on elegance and good taste who featured in the social gossip columns of the daily newspapers in Brazil during the 1960s. The last paper shows how, in the 90's England, the children of the working class saw in the arts a possible exit from their fixed social coordinates and how they will start a new countercultural aesthetic revolution.

The ninth Theme Tune is called '*Yours is mine: male dominations: reproductions and legitimations*'. The first paper addresses gangsta rap's problematic expression of machismo in relation to the negotiation of masculine identities and the challenge to authority. The next one will introduce key findings of the ethnographic case study 'Anti-fascist punk activism' conducted as part of the MYPLACE project. Through 21 in-depth interviews, the most common topics that arose were related to gender issues and perceptions of politics. The third paper how gender influences Brazilian funk music production strategies based on interviews with two female MCs and a funk music producer. The fourth paper discusses the gender issues in Portuguese rock music and look at women's role in this scene.

The tenth Theme Tune is called '*Contaminational demo(n)crats: for a new practice of (diverse) taste*'. The first paper aims to demonstrate that, while it is true that there are specific connections between punk-feminism, queer-feminism and anti-identity politics, it doesn't necessarily mean that material feminist analyzes and identity politics have completely been forgotten by the new feminist movements of the 2000s. The second paper examines Marcia Tucker's first three exhibitions which were held at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York during the 80's. The third paper work addresses conditions for women through a scenic creative process called "Ithaca revisited". The fourth paper examines the role of iconography, visual, performance and sound, as means or resistance and transgression. The fifth paper aims to show that artistic cinema should not be blamed for the sins of entertainment cinema and should not be assessed according to ethics.

The eleventh Theme Tune is named '*Living for a change: Cities, spaces, places of artistic renegotiation*'. The first paper tries to demonstrate how experimentalism in art, since the vanguards, overcomes semantic regimes, through the analysis of artists such as DJ Tudo, Mashrou' Leila, Tetine and Aíla. The second paper questions some of the "taken-for-granted" conceptions and consider an alternative to the existence and practices of Romani music (Finnish, Russian, migrants from Southeastern Europe, like Romania and Bulgaria) in Finland. The third paper is an account of an action research conducted during 2016 and 2017 in the Grande-Synthe camp for migrants near Dunkerque (France), in which the author and several Kurdish women tried to produce cultural and fragile "asylums" (De Nora, 2013), through listening activities. The fourth paper reflects on globalization and its aspects of internationalization, cosmopolitanism, hegemony, contributing to a debate in diverse contexts of cultural studies, from an analysis of the positions occupied by the Colombian singer living in Canada, Lido Pimienta. The last paper studies the vast work of Laura Costa (1910-1993), which represents today for Portugal an unparalleled historical document to reconstruct the visual system during the *Estado Novo*.

**It makes no difference
 Night or day
 No one teaches you how to live
 Cups of tea are a clock
 A clock, a clock, a clock
 The times I forgot but never forgot
 I don't know the books that you read
 But you don't say that
 Love never externalizes
 You're rereading a book
 To feel reassured
 By the life of your favorite hero
 But don't worry, honey don't worry
 This is just a fairytale
 Happening in the supermarket**

The Raincoats (1979). *Fairytale In The Supermarket*.

References

- Bennett, A. & Guerra, P. (Eds.) (2019). *DIY Cultures and Underground Music Scenes*. Abingdon/Oxford: Routledge.
- Bittencourt, L. & Guerra, P. (2018). Grrrlzines: Resistência e Pertencimento nos fanzines Riot Girls na cena punk portuguesa. *Revista Vozes e Diálogo*, 17(1), pp. 60-73.
- Garrigós, C.; Triana, N. & Guerra, P. (2019). *God Save the Queens. Pioneras del Punk*. Barcelona: 66 RPM EDICIONS.
- Guerra, P. & Bittencourt, L. & Gelain, G. (2018). "Punk Fairytale": Popular Music, Media, and the (Re)Production of Gender. In M. Texler Segal & V. Demos (Eds.), *Gender and the Media: Women's Places*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Guerra, P. & Oliveira, A. (2019). Heart of glass: Gender and domination in the early days of punk in Portugal. In D. Vilotijević & M. I. Medić (Eds.), *Contemporary Popular Music Studies* (pp. 127-136). Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Guerra, P. & Quintela, P. (2016). Culturas urbanas e sociabilidades juvenis contemporâneas: um (breve) roteiro teórico. *Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 47(1), 193-217.
- Guerra, P. & Straw, W. (2017). I wanna be your punk: o universo de possíveis do punk, do D.I.Y. e das culturas underground. *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, 6(1), pp. 5-16.
- Guerra, P. (2010). *A instável leveza do rock: gênese, dinâmica e consolidação do rock alternativo em Portugal* (Doctoral dissertation). Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, Porto.
- Guerra, P. (2013). *A instável leveza do rock. Gênese, dinâmica e consolidação do rock alternativo em Portugal (1980-2010)*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.
- Guerra, P. (2017). 'Just Can't Go to Sleep'. DIY cultures and alternative economies facing social theory. *Portuguese Journal of Social Sciences*, 16(3), pp. 283-303.
- Guerra, P.; Gelain, G. & Moreira, T. (2017). Collants, correntes e batons: género e diferença na cultura punk em Portugal e no Brasil. *Lectora: revista de dones i textualitat*, (23), pp. 13-34.
- McRobbie, A. (2000). *Feminism and youth culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reddington, H. (2003). 'Lady' punks in bands: A subculturette? In D. Muggleton & R. Weinzierl (Eds.), *The post-subcultures reader* (pp. 239-251). Oxford: Berg.
- Silva, A. S. & Guerra, P. (2015). *As palavras do punk*. Lisboa: Alêtheia.
- The Raincoats (1979). *The Raincoats*. London: Rough Trade Records.

www.kismifconference.com

www.punk.pt

GENDER IS ~~X~~ ~~DIY~~
DEAD,
PINK IS 4EVER



~~ADD~~
GIRLS
HATE FLOWERS
KISS MIF^T

