

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

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Modern Endangered Archives Program (MEAP)

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"Afro-Indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: Videos & Photos 1980-2010"

A Project by Instituto Cultne

Ana Lúcia Nunes de Sousa

Victoria Birkbeck

Wesley Nascimento Oliveira



UCLA Library



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Guide to the archive

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1. Introduction

This document is a guide to the Project for the organization e digitization of the Collection "Afro-Indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: Videos & Photos 1980-2010", developed by Vik Birkbeck and Ana Lúcia Nunes de Sousa, with the support of the non-governmental organization Cultne Institute and Rio de Janeiro's Federal University. The Project's objective is to guarantee the preservation of the memory of decades of social, political and cultural struggles registered in video and photography by Vik Birkbeck and Ras Adaauto (Adaauto de Souza Santos), between 1980 and 2010, in order that it should be available for research, education and culture.

We hereby present something of the history of the independent audiovisual production company Enugbarijó Communications, founded by Vik Birkbeck and Ras Adaauto, in 1981. We shall also explain how the Collection is organized and offer a glossary with relevant information to understand the context of this Collection. We hope that this guide will enable a general vision of the archive in question.

2. Concerning Vik Birkbeck and Enugbarijó Communications – a first person account by Vik Birkbeck

I began filming in the streets of Rio de Janeiro in 1981. Ras Adauto, my partner, and I created a production company called Enúgbarijo, the name of Exú the messenger. You must remember that at this time there were no mobiles – it was difficult to obtain a residential telephone line and many people depended on public telephones or on their neighbor to make a telephone call. There were no personal computers – it was a luxury to have an electric typewriter. This was the beginning of the era of portable VHS cameras. Up till then people filming in the street were occasional TV crews with 16 mm cinema equipment and eventually big, heavy U-MATIC video. It was even quite rare to see photographic cameras. When we acquired a VHS edit suite in the mid 80s, we formed an association of all the VHS edit suites in the city: there were five. Social networks were unknown. The first protest we filmed in Rio was in Cinelândia in 1982. This demonstration was convened by the Institute for Research into Black Culture (IPCN), in response to the emblematic headline of the *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper with a photo of five black men bound with a rope round their necks and a “white” military policeman in the foreground.

At this time, the racial question was rarely brought into discussion. With no social networks the debate was practically restricted to the recently created Unified Black Movement (MNU) and the IPCN, which convened the demonstration. As the decade advanced, we witnessed a series of manifestations marking the return of citizens to the streets after the military dictatorship (1964-1984). In 1983-4, we accompanied the “Diretas Já” movement for direct elections; women once again processing on the 8th of March, and the big demonstrations of the Black Movement, protesting racism and especially marking the year of the centenary of Brazil's abolition of slavery, in 1988, both on the 13th de May, anniversary of the signing of the decree by the regent Princess Isabel and on the 20th of November, newly declared day of Black Consciousness denouncing the false abolition.

The Brazilian State's historical narrative has always been problematic. The official version maintains that the gracious Princess Isabel freed the

enslaved African people; while the indigenous peoples of Brazil are very lazy and live an aimless existence in the forest like wild animals. Much of the information about the struggles and rebellions throughout history has been passed on through oral traditions. The book “Rebellion in the Backlands” (Os Sertões) by Euclides da Cunha is one of the first accounts of an eye witness of one of the greatest popular rebellions of the 19th century. Photographs of Antônio Conselheiro, leader of the rebellion, and of the surviving women and children held captive, give an idea of the extraordinary brutality of the military repression, which led Euclides to transform himself from war reporter to social chronicler. It is also characteristic of this manner of relating Brazilian history that one of the first moving images of rebels: Lampião and his troupe filmed by Benjamin Abrahão Botto, in 1936, was apprehended by the censors of Getúlio Vargas’s government when the film came out in 1937. It is worth remembering that Getúlio also banned the political party of the Brazilian Black Front (Frente Negra Brasileira) in São Paulo.

In 1985, we made a documentary with the ancient participants of the Frente Negra and the black press of that era in São Paulo. With no access to the TV channels of the period – the hermetically sealed TV Globo, TV Manchete, TV Bandeirantes – we resorted to our own micro distribution, returning to communities we had filmed with our anarchic videos, devolving people their own image in a playful manner in chaotic projections subject to endless variations of colors from the NTSC video standard equipment subject to the more or less capable self-taught technicians who tried to adapt it to the hybrid Brazilian PAL-M system created during the Presidency of Geisel. Besides the color variations, there were the energy fluctuations resulting from improvised electricity connections. We registered peoples’ amazement on discovering that they too could appear on the TV screen. The chorus of children shouting “Film! Film!” wanting more images. Video as a mirror. We accompanied afro cultural movements: Olodum in Bahia, Agbara Dudu in Rio, the Feminist Movement, the Indigenous Movement. We also registered Lúcia Arruda, a feminist state deputy trying to introduce the Law to provide Abortion in cases of rape or fetal mal-formation in the State Parliament (ALERJ); a delegation of the indigenous Kaiapó people of Pára, who were invited to celebrate the 495 years of the

Tamoios' Confederation at the Island of Cunhambepe; the First National Congress of Black Women among many other events.

The dream of creating a network took time. Concerned with the lack of images of what was still known as the Third World, we instead created a film festival, "Black Eyes/Olhos Negros", in 1990, to bring Brazil images of Africa, the afro-diaspora and even the Latin-American cinema which did not yet circulate here. Our best session: the unforgettable image of an audience of street kids watching a film by the Senegalese director Diop Djibril Mambety, spoken in Wolof with French subtitles, projected onto a white sheet hung from the wall of the City Council building in Cinelândia. The children shouted "Show it again, show it again", to the astonishment of the city councillors leaving the building.

History taught in schools eliminates the struggles, revolts and insubordinations to the imposed order, apart for the conveniently white Tiradentes who, though executed for his plot against the existing order ended up being celebrated as a hero in the annals of official history and honored with a national holiday. Years of struggle and popular revolt led to eventual conquests, from the Maria da Penha Law protecting women from domestic violence to the recognition of indigenous and quilombola territories; the monument in honor of Zumbi of Palmares, leader of the first free republic of the Americas at the end of the 17th century, and the consecration of November 20th, anniversary of his death, as the Day of Black Consciousness; the always contested Law 10.639/2003 which guarantees teaching African and Afro-Brazilian history in schools; and racial quotas, guaranteeing the entrance of black and indigenous students to Brazilian universities. Years of demonstrations, crowds of people in the street, led to these changes, which never resulted from benevolence of the government, but rather were the conquests won in thousands of protests, public meetings, strikes and marches. The country's political agenda has been created by all these public manifestations. The digital era has radically transformed the communications scenario of political protests. These days any demonstration is registered in hundreds or thousands of mobiles. Simultaneously we have seen the emergence of media activists, who returned from the protests to stay up all night editing the images captured to be able to upload their visions of the event in the social networks

and media, like YouTube and/or Facebook. This velocity meant that the creators of the images themselves incentivized the agenda of the acts and protests. The concept of the witness became fundamental, not only to supply material which could be used in judicial enquiries, but also to disseminate events studiously ignored by the corporate press.

At the same time that the digital era offers the possibility of everyone becoming the witness of their surroundings by a judicial use of their mobile, it also facilitates mass manipulation, the flood of lies, de tendentious information and the formation of digital ghettos, the new voting fodder dominated by the new colonels of politics, the pastors, the judges, the new wolves dressed up as lambs. Media-activism is entering a new phase. I spent 2013/14 in the street again, camera in hand registering the colossal protests which took over the country. The triumph of the digital era is the possibility of instantaneously mobilizing thousands of young people.

It was also over this time that I realized that I was an eyewitness to a long period of Brazilian history, which I had registered with my camera. From then on I began the task of trying to organize and digitize my archive of almost 50 years of images, with the support and help of others. With the support of the Modern Endangered Archive Program, we have made a great initial step: we have managed to organize a large part of the archive and especially enumerate the part in risk of perishing. This is the material, which we present to you here. A guide to access this rich and unique archive, which narrates 50 years of Brazil's contemporary history, from the point of view of someone who has always accompanied and supported the country's popular struggles.

3. General information

Title of the Collection: "Afro-Indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: Videos & Photos 1980-2010"

Date of the research: 2023

Researchers: Ana Lúcia Nunes de Sousa, Vik Birkbeck, Wesley Oliveira do Nascimento.

Site of the collection: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Creators and owners of the collection: the Collection was created by Vik Birkbeck and Ras Adauto, who retain the copyright of the material. The organization of the archive is being developed with the supervision of Vik Birkbeck and the support of Cultne TV and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

The collection's state of conservation

Most of the archive is in a reasonable state of conservation. The archive is composed of 190 VHS tapes, 159 MiniDV tapes and 73 photographs both printed & in negatives, which have been cataloged. We are estimating another 150 recently encountered tapes (or maybe more) which have not yet been cataloged. We estimate that between these 340 tapes, 180 are in critical condition, with mold and fungi, needing urgent restoration. Being independent archives maintained without resources, vulnerable VHS tapes were stored in uncontrolled climatic environments. Exposure to moist heat in Rio has encouraged the growth of mold and fungus, meaning that tapes must be carefully hand-cleaned.

It is important to mention that most of the material is original work. Some of the material has been moved, from Vik Birkbeck's office to the Cultne Institute's headquarters.



(VHS; Mini Dv Tapes - Organized by subject-matter)

Progress of the Work

The work of organizing the archive began with the preparation of Vik Birkbeck's home office to accommodate the team and the research materials. We began by localizing the tapes, some of which were stored at the Culture Cultural Institute and some at Vik Birkbeck's office. Once identified, we separated the tapes between VHS and MiniDV and later by subject. There was no difficulty in identifying the MiniDV tapes, as being more recent, their labels are intact. However it was impossible to identify part of the VHS tapes. Some have no labels and others are illegible. They can only be identified by restoring and digitizing them. Simultaneously with the identification of the tapes, we created a series of codes (see in Collection organization) to categorize and organize them. Using these codes, all the material was organized in excel tables,

which can now be consulted. We discovered new boxes of VHS tapes, containing about 150 tapes, at the Cultne Cultural Institute, at the end of the preparation of the inventory in 2023. These tapes have yet to be identified and cataloged, but we estimate that 60% of this material is in poor condition, exhibiting mold or other damage.



(VHS TAPE - With Mold)



(VHS TAPE - With Mold)

Analysis of the results

- ❖ **Tapes (VHS):** 214
- ❖ **Tapes (MiniDV):** 159
- ❖ **Tapes with mold/damage (VHS):** 33¹
- ❖ **Photographs:** 73
- ❖ **Country of production:** Brazil
- ❖ **Date:** 1980-2010

¹ Among the 150 new tapes encountered, we estimate that 60% of this material is in poor condition, exhibiting mold or other damage.

❖ **Content:** Public demonstrations, anti-racism protests; international women's day and feminist movement, demonstrations for direct elections; various independent social movements, cultural and musical events in Rio and in Bahia, carnival, circus and theatrical presentations. There are also many specific events such as the 1st National Black Women's Encounter, other feminist encounters and meetings of the representatives of Afro-Brazilian orisha religions. Indigenous material includes the Kadiwéu, only horse-riding indians in Brazil, performing an ancient ritual, Etogo, the Ship Festival; Rio's 1992 World Ecology Conference; a 3000-strong gathering of indigenous peoples in Bahia in 2000 - Outros 500 - protesting Brazil's quincentenary celebrations. As well as the public ceremonies, almost all these events include interviews with important participants who continue to be active in Brazilian social movements.

4. Collection summary

Historical Context of Collection

The collection "Afro-Indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: Videos & Photos 1980-2010" addresses a period of the Brazilian people's intense social, cultural and political struggle. Vik Birkbeck and Adauto de Souza Santos filmed important social movements, whose main protagonists were afro-descendents and indigenous people, constituting, probably, the biggest private and independent archive concerning these movements in contemporary Brazil.

In the 1980s, Brazil saw the birth of the "Diretas Já" (Direct Elections Now!) movement, with millions of people taking to the streets to demand direct elections and the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil. This movement propelled a series of political changes, like the end of the military dictatorship in 1985; the approval of the new Constitution in 1988; and, finally, direct elections, in 1989. This was the political scenario which was captured by Enugbarijó Communications' lenses.

Between 1980 and 1990, Rio de Janeiro was the arena for a great many cultural and artistic manifestations of afro-descendents. Important events like the "Nights of Black Beauty", organized by clubs and associations of the black movement; "Encounters of black women", at a regional, national and international level; carnival processions; presentations of black cultural artistic groups, including music, theatre, circus and film festivals; the emergence of important black and indigenous leaderships, etc. were registered by Vik and Adauto over this period.

In the year 2000, celebrations were prepared for the quincentenary of the "discovery of Brazil". Once again the social movements, especially the indigenous movement, took to the streets to protest against the effects of the colonial invasion. The indigenous Manifesto convening people for a countrywide March affirmed that "the conquest of the Americas was not the beginning of history for the indigenous people as they had reached this continent

approximately 40 thousand years before”² (REF). The indigenous people demanded "Another 500" marching from all different states of the country to the South of Bahia, scene of the Brazilian government's official commemorations. After a week of meetings and rituals, the indigenous march was from marching towards the official celebrations of the presidents .

At the beginning of 2000, Brazil faced a severe economic crisis, reflecting, as ever, what was happening in the rest of the world. In the political arena, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected president, governing two terms from 2003 to 2011, before being succeeded by his political heir Dilma Rousseff. The country underwent some changes with policies of inclusion and diversity, more equitable income distribution and reduction of poverty. The social, cultural and political movements continued to thrive, but sought to negotiate changes with the State instead of direct confrontation.

The main theme of the 30 years of audiovisual production of this archive is the focus on the popular struggles which took place in Brazil, whose protagonists were afro-descendent and indigenous people. This is an archive with unique images of the principal struggles which took over the country, black and indigenous leaders in significant moments of Brazilian history and culture which need to be preserved for posterity, besides the images being made available to their subjects and disseminated to the general public.

Historical value and uniqueness of the collection

Our collection includes VHS Recordings, using the first portable video equipment, available in the early 1980's and Mini DV recordings from the late 1990s to 2010 and photographic material. Our collection includes unique tapes nearly 40 years old. Many cannot be identified until cleaned and digitized. It includes public demonstrations, anti-racism protests; international women's day and feminist movement, demonstrations for direct elections; various independent social movements, cultural and musical events in Rio and in Bahia, carnival, circus and theatrical presentations There are also many specific events

² <https://diplomatie.org.br/brasil-outros-500-a-marcha-dos-2000-vinte-anos-depois/>

such as the 1st National Black Women's Encounter, other feminist encounters and meetings of the representatives of Afro-Brazilian orisha religions.

Indigenous material includes the Kadiwéu, only horse-riding indians in Brazil, performing an ancient ritual, Etogo, the Ship Festival; Rio's 1992 world ecology conference; a 3000-strong gathering of indigenous peoples in Bahia in 2000 protesting Brazil's quinqucentenary celebrations. As well as the public ceremonies, almost all these events include interviews with important participants who continue to be active in Brazilian social movements.

Our material is absolutely unique, made at a time, and in situations where portable recording equipment was rare or inexistent.

Furthermore, we also need to consider that communications in Brazil have long been dominated by mass audience commercial TV. Even today so-called "minority" content is minimal - so-called because women and afro-descendent Brazilians are majorities. As independent creators using the first semi-professional portable video equipment, we had unique access to register images and events of no interest to mainstream media. We were thus able to record the resurgence of popular movements in the early 1980s in the wake of nearly 20 years of military dictatorship and the emergence of new voices and cultural movements which have played a fundamental role in Brazilian society over the last forty years.

We believe in the urgency of preserving this material, due to its political and historical importance. This archive contains an important part of the memory of the Brazilian Black and Indigenous movements. For this reason, teachers and researchers are interested in our archive which is cited in theses and articles about afro-brazilian culture. Images have been included in recent documentary films about racism, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement. Compulsory inclusion of afro-brazilian and indigenous history in the school curriculum, according to laws 10.639 of 2003 and 11.645 of 2008 increased the demand for this content. The videos and photos relating to the Kadiwéu people have been used by Idjahure Kadiwéu in his master's thesis. Although the 2022 election changed the tone of Brazil's government, massive agro-business and fundamentalist evangelical interests still dominate our Congress.

We risk losing 60% of our original material that has never been digitized. We need to complete digitization and organize the archive so it can

be seen, identified and made available to academics and researchers nationally and internationally. This material is a missing link in official Brazilian history.

5. Collection organization

The archive organized to this point contains 451 documents, 214 VHS tapes, 159 MiniDV tapes and 73 black and white photographs, covering 30 years of history of struggles of afro descendant and indigenous people in Brazil. The Collection contains audiovisual material filmed between 1980 and 2010, in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro but including Salvador, Bahia, São Paulo and the interior. During the process of organization, we are continually discovering more material, some of which we have not yet had time to process especially as we still have some tapes in other formats like u-Matic and Hi-8.

The Collection has maintained the original nomenclature given to the archives at the moment of their creation by the filmmakers. Part of the tapes cannot be identified, because their labels have fallen off or become illegible. It is important to point out that the order of the material always needs to be contextualized, as it contains images of specific moments of Brazilian History.

The archive system and inventory carried out by the team was based on the indications of MEAP/UCLA. The name of our Project for MEAP UCLA is *"Afro-indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: videos and photos 1980-2000s"*.

We have used a naming system - suggested by MEAP - with several levels.

The **first level** is the identification of the Project, as can be seen below:

project identifier:

Vik Birkbeck Film- Archive

vbfa

vbfa then becomes the abbreviation used for the general archive of all the material contained in the Vik Birkbeck Archive. All material, printed or audiovisual, carries this first level of naming.

The **second level** refers to the specific collection. Each collection has a name. Our first collection is that of the MEAP/UCLA Project, which includes material of afro descendant and indigenous people in Brazil, produced between 1980 and 2010. This collection is named as can be seen below

Specific identifier (sub-collection): Afro-indigenous Brazil struggles for recognition: videos and photos 1980-2000s collection

aic

aic is then the abbreviation used to name the whole collection of images which involve the Project "Afro-indigenous Brazil", meaning *afro indigenous collection*.

The **third level** of classification is the type of material: video (v) or photo (f):

object identifier level 1:

video: v

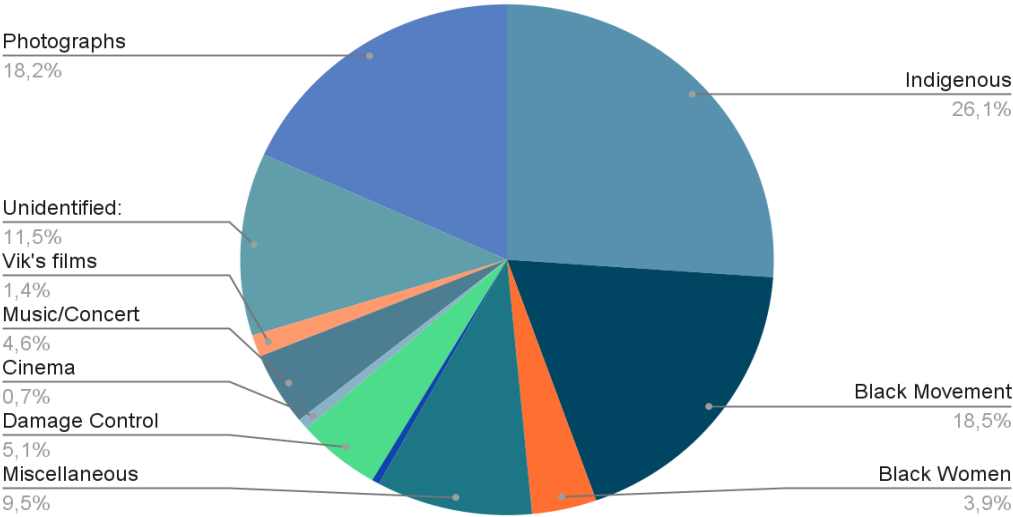
photo: f

The **fourth level** gives us the subject-matter category of each material in the collection:

object identifier level 2

1. Indígenas /Indigenous People: **i1**
2. Movimento negro/ Black Movement (Civil Rights): **i2**
3. Mulheres negras/ Black Women: **i3**
4. Miscelânea/ Miscellaneous: **i4**
5. Festival de circo/ International Circus Festival: **i9**
6. Teatro Oficina/Oficina Theatre Group: **i10**
7. Mulheres/ Women: **i12**
8. Controle de danos/ Damage Control: **i14**
9. Cia dos Mistérios e novidades/Company of Mysteries & Novelties: **i15**
10. Não Identificado/ Unidentified: **i16**
11. Música/Shows/ Music/concerts: **i17**
12. Filmes Vik/ Vik's Films : **i18**
13. Cinema: **i19**

object identifier



6. Glossary

1. **Carnival in the 1980s.** When the Sambadrome carnival parade ground was first built in Rio de Janeiro, it was easily accessible to photographers and filmmakers. We created some beautiful images at the time. Nowadays the rights are all sold to monopoly media groups. We also made images of the carnival of Salvador, Bahia whose majority afro population formed groups to celebrate black musical and religious culture, like Ilê Aiye, Filhos de Gandhi and Olodum.
2. **Agbara Dudu** was a group created in the suburbs of Rio following the lead of the groups in Bahia to fortify black culture and consciousness in a musical group, highlighted in a yearly Black Beauty Pageant.
3. A group of **black women** activists from favelas managed to get a bus to travel to the **3rd Latin American and Caribbean Feminists Encounter** in São Paulo State they were refused entry by the white feminist organizing committee because they could not pay the entry fees although they only wanted to take part in the discussions and debates. We interviewed many women at the event and accompanied this struggle
4. **1st National Encounter of Black Women**
Black Women in Brazil had been struggling with the agenda of the Feminist Movement for some time. As one activist pointed out “White women demand the right to work. Black women have been claiming the right to rest from work ever since the slavery regime.” This was the context, which brought together important activists from all over Brazil. Many of those interviewed continue active to this day
5. The **Kadiweu** indigenous people have the largest demarcated territory outside of the Amazon. We visited them in 1992 when everyone was still on horse-back . They took us to see some of their territory, invaded by ranchers and performed an ancient ritual in our honor, as this had not been performed in decades, the images are unique.
6. **“Painted Faces”**. The first elected president after Brazil’s Military dictatorship, Fernando Collor, was so corrupt that thousands of young people demonstrated in the streets demanding his impeachment. It became known as the “Painted Faces” movement.

7. The **Indigenous March of 2000** – “Outros Quinhentos /Another Five Hundred”. Organized by Cimi, a Catholic Organization which has long worked with Indigenous Peoples, this march united over 3000 indigenous people who traveled from all over Brazil to camp at the indigenous village of Coroa Vermelha a few miles from the spot where Cabral is traditionally considered to have “discovered” Brazil in 1500. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, then President of Brazil, was hosting events with the Portuguese president in the nearby town. When the indigenous peoples began a ceremonial march towards the town after days of discussions and rituals, the state police and army with dogs, cavalry, tear gas and flash bombs attacked them.
8. **Afro-Brazilian Cultural and Social events.** Throughout the eighties we registered many events in public spaces – streets, squares, favela community halls, Cultural Centres etc. There are many musical genres represented from more traditional Brazilian rhythms like Choro, Jongo and Samba to Hip Hop, Funk and Rock music. There are also parades and protests against police violence. We also accompanied many Afro-Brazilian religious meetings of the orishas.
9. Over the course of this work we have interviewed many important **Afro-Brazilian** personalities from the iconic intellectuals Abdias de Nascimento and Lélia Gonzales to important actresses Ruth de Souza, Lea Garcia and Zeze Motta; Politicians and activists Benedita da Silva Jurema Batista, and Sueli Carneiro among others.
10. We have also registered many important **indigenous leaders**. Ailton Krenak, Megaron, Paiakan, Davi Yanomami, Raoni among others and showed many different moments of the indigenous struggle.