

\* New writings and mediations in health

## **Here, it is not swept under the rug**

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"AQUI, DOIDO VARRIDO NÃO VAI PRA DEBAIXO DO TAPETE" (Here wackos are not swept under the rug) BRASIL, 2010. 81 minutos

Filme exibido na MOSTRA PREMIÈRE BRASIL NOVOS RUMOS – FESTIVAL DO RIO 2010

Direção: Rodrigo Selló e Rená Tardin

"AQUI, DOIDO VARRIDO NÃO VAI PRA DEBAIXO DO TAPETE" (*Here, wackos are not swept under the rug*) BRAZIL, 2010. 81 minutes.

Film exhibited at: *Première Brazil*, New Trends section, 2010 Rio International Film Festival

Directors: Rodrigo Selló and Rená Tardin

Rodrigo Séllos had just entered the undergraduate film program at the Fluminense Federal University (Universidade Federal Fluminense) when he decided to record the everyday user experience at the "Space Open to Time" daycare service. The facility is part of the Nise da Silveira Municipal Institute in the Engenho de Dentro neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Séllos visited the institute over a six-month period in 2005, and he filmed his conversations with the daycare users, their relatives, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other employees. He showed the films to a friend, Rená Tardin, who was a journalism student at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro). The two students agreed to set aside the film while they devoted their attention to their university studies. This delay allowed them to learn and mature.

We cannot speculate what the outcome might have been if Séllos and Tardin had edited and finished the documentary immediately after the films were made, but the waiting period

maintained the freshness and naivety of a first production. Between 2009 and 2010, Séllos and Tardin reviewed all of the films and tried to imagine the documentary that would arise from the images and interviews that had been dormant for four years.

The exquisite montage reflects the joviality of the captured images. The interviews alternate between the everyday activities that take place at the institute, including soccer games, music lessons, and preparing lunch in the cafeteria. These interruptions provide the audience time to reflect between the interviews, which are occasionally difficult to absorb because the content, albeit impressive, is different from our “normal” reality.

The images provide insight into an unfamiliar world. For example, when we witness how seriously a soccer match is played—goal-by-goal and play-by-play—we feel closer to these excluded individuals that society prefers to lock up and hide. The term “users” is just one strategy that was designed to fight exclusion. The term became the standard across the country after the Unified Health System (Sistema Único de Saúde) was established, and it paved the road for the health system members, the *users*, to participate. For individuals who had previously been known as psychiatric patients, this shift meant trading their passive roles (patients) for the opportunity to become protagonists (users). Nise da Silveira, the institution portrayed in the film, prefers the term *customers*, which denotes a market-based relationship.

The movie is an important indicator of the enthusiastic social and cultural process that is currently unfolding in the psychiatric reform movement. Initially, the goal of the movement was to combat the violence that is characteristic of isolated and segregated institutions, which are also known as psychiatric hospitals and madhouses. Thousands of individuals have lost their lives to this cruel violence. According to Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia, an international advocate for psychiatric reform, the violence represented a true crime against peace. After visiting the psychiatric hospital in Barbacena, which is located in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, Basaglia compared the conditions there to a concentration camp. Barbacena was also the site of one of the first important documentaries about mental institutions, Helvécio Ratton’s *In the Name of Reason*. One year later, in 1978, Paulo Amarante and Victor Hugo Luckás produced the video *Cronikós*, which earned an award at the first Brazilian Festival of Independent Video (MAS-USP). Many other films, documentaries, theater plays, CDs, and DVDs were later made on the subject of psychiatric violence and possible transformations. Eventually, instead of fighting institutional psychiatric violence, the primary goal of psychiatric reform became transforming the *social place* of madness. The new goal was changing the relationship between society and the individuals who were identified as having mental disorders. The immediate inference was clear; to change social mentalities, conceptions, imaginations, representations, and individual feelings, there was no better object of focus than culture itself because non-verbal language speaks directly to the heart through our deepest feelings. The focus on culture inspired several important productions, such as Laís Bodansky’s *Seven-headed Monster*, Leopoldo Nunes’s *Prophet of Waters* and *Prophet of Colors*, Júlio Nascimento’s never exhibited *Colors of Utopia*, and Roberto Berliner’s *Nise da Silveira: The Lady of Images*. In addition to these audiovisual productions, many other cultural initiatives would deserve mention were it not for space constraints.

In Sellós and Tardin’s film, the freedom that the filmmaking team found is extraordinary. The trust-based relationship that they established with the users is not only moving, but it leads one to reflect on the responsibility that was assumed by the young filmmakers during the

filming and editing of the documentary. At the beginning of the film, Séllos slowly earns the trust of Bruno, a young man who rarely speaks but always carries a drum. However, Bruno's shyness only masked his strong interest in the camera and the film. Soon after those early shots, Bruno obtains the camera and films while talking with other people. Eventually, he discovers that the interviewer role is more fun, thus he obtains a microphone and delights the audience with his witticisms and amusing questions. Bruno's interaction with the filmmaking team resolves any remaining resistance and allows the camera to become the center of attention and discussion.

***Here, Wackos Are Not Swept Under the Rug*** is a film that deserves a standing ovation. Séllos, Tardin, and Bruno to be sure, lead us on a fantastic journey where prejudice is discarded and humor prevails; the film's sensitive topics are dealt with directly, candidly, and respectfully. It is impossible to leave the theater until the final credits are complete.





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