

neoliberal subjects, also brought a form of localized politicization” (49).

The volume also explores the pedagogical potential of film in and from the Arab world. In its opening chapter, Hadi Gharabaghi looks at the intriguing story of US documentary diplomacy in the Middle East through American declassified archives. As part of the cultural Cold War effort, the American government launched a campaign of “media diplomacy [which] operated more diffusely under the façade of an apolitical campaign of modernization as a new propaganda strategy” (5). The blunt dialectics of political proselytism were replaced by a more insidious approach that, while still aimed at the “immunization of the masses against the potential impact of Communist propaganda,” was ostensibly devoid of any doctrinal message (12). Gharabaghi reveals that it was none other than famed German cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer who, in 1952, wrote a fifty-seven-page report, “Appeals to the Near and Middle East: Implications of the Communications Studies along the Soviet Periphery,” in which he “synthesized the findings into a workable manual of mass media diplomacy for the Department of State” (13).

Mass-mediated persuasion is by no means the only pedagogical use cinema served in the region. In his chapter, Jeremy Randall illustrates how film—the documentaries of Maroun Baghdadi, in this case—can be used to counter the official histories of Lebanon and its methodical reduction to a country characterized exclusively by sectarianism (and not, for instance, by class inequality). The historical function of cinema in a country like Lebanon, where there is no unified history (or textbook), is all the more cogent. Films can in fact debunk official versions as well as sectarian fabrications, rendering reality, however fictionally, in all its complexity.

Making this complexity visible is the role that *Cinema of the Arab World* also plays. The contributions in this collection present a series of possibilities and case studies in how to approach a field that remains both understudied and oversimplified, not least owing to the extreme difficulties caused by limited access to films from the region.

BOOK DATA Terri Ginsberg and Chris Lippard, eds., *Cinema of the Arab World: Contemporary Directions in Theory and Practice*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. \$119.99 cloth; \$89.00 e-book. 422 pages.

GIOVANNI VIMERCATI is a graduate student and researcher at the American University of Beirut who is also (ir)responsible for the failed attempt at multidirectional criticism (un)known as the Celluloid Liberation Front. His writing, which is visible to the naked eye from outer space, has appeared in *Cinema Scope*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Film Comment*, *New Statesman*, *Sight & Sound*, and *Notebook*, MUBI's daily film publication.

NOTE: To accompany this issue's dossier on Brazilian cinema, this edition of the Book Review section includes Livia Perez's review of three books on Brazilian women filmmakers that have not yet been translated into English. At this time of discussions and fresh thinking regarding commitments to diversity, equity, and true inclusion, it is important to remember how much language opens a door to other worlds (to paraphrase a dear friend). The commissioning of Perez's review responds to a critical need to decenter scholarship if US film studies is to take a serious approach to encompassing global perspectives. These three books give long-overdue recognition to filmmakers and film scholars whose work—abounding with artistry and insights—remains little known within Anglophone film studies. An ongoing commitment to translation will be necessary for the field of cinema and media studies to become one that genuinely encompasses a multiplicity of voice and perspectives.

—Carla Marcantonio, Editor, Book Reviews

LÍVIA PEREZ

Feminino e plural: Mulheres no cinema brasileiro
(Female and Plural: Women on Brazilian Cinema)
edited by Karla Holanda and Marina Cavalcanti Tedesco

Mulheres atrás das câmeras: As cineastas brasileiras de 1930 a 2018 (Women behind the Camera: Brazilian Filmmakers, 1930–2018) edited by Luiza Lusvarghi and Camila Vieira da Silva

Mulheres de cinema (Women of Cinema) edited by Karla Holanda

Until 2017, feminist approaches to cinema were almost entirely unexplored in academic literature in Brazil, and women directors received little recognition as well. Even when a professor, usually female herself, chose to show a film by a female director, the class discussion would be accompanied by texts that only tangentially touched upon the director or the film; scholarship published in Portuguese about Brazilian women's cinema was minimal relative to the real participation of women in the history of Brazilian cinema.

As in most of Latin America, the number of female film directors has been growing in Brazil since the 1970s—especially in the 1980s, when a survey reported that 195 women directors had been engaged in making films by the end of the decade. In the 1990s, this growing trend continued, in effect leading to a boom of women filmmakers. Since 2000, women directors have reached unprecedented prominence in Brazil. Yet, shockingly, there have been no books published on the subject since the end of the 1980s; the legion of scholars invested in the topic had to be

satisfied with just a smattering of articles and references or had to settle for international accounts about Brazilian cinema. This (shameful) situation finally changed when women scholars and university students, studying in the context of a new feminist wave in the 2010s, took it upon themselves to redress this absence. This more recent scholarship brought to an end nearly thirty years of silence on the subject and the absence of book-length studies that addressed the presence of women in Brazilian cinema.

Such is the significance of three new anthologies, which allow multiple voices to contribute, collectively, to their shared goal of making the participation of women in cinema visible. These three books not only fill a lacuna of much-needed information regarding women filmmakers; they also contribute significantly to the field at large, particularly regarding new directives and approaches for a feminist decolonizing of film theory. One of their collective strengths is how each of the authors addresses the topic of intersectionality. Karla Holanda and Marina Cavalcanti Tedesco's collection, *Feminino e plural: Mulheres no cinema brasileiro* (Female and Plural: Women on Brazilian Cinema), contains essays that survey the territory of Brazilian women's filmmaking from a historical framework that also centers on gender analysis. In *Mulheres atrás das câmeras: As cineastas brasileiras de 1930 a 2018* (Women behind the Camera: Brazilian Filmmakers, 1930–2018), Luiza Lusvarghi and Camila Vieira da Silva, in turn, offer essays focused on specific filmmakers, and include a small dictionary of Brazilian women filmmakers. The most recent collection, *Mulheres de cinema* (Women of Cinema), an anthology edited by Karla Holanda, expands the reach of Brazilian critics' contributions to world cinema, though it retains an emphasis on Brazil and Latin America; this final collection is important in that it conceives film studies from the perspective of Brazilian scholars.

The essays in all three collections seek to create a place for these women filmmakers and their work—directors such as Helena Solberg, Tereza Trautman, Ana Carolina, Tizuka Yamasaki, Adélia Sampaio, and Lúcia Murat. The goal of inscribing these filmmakers within today's collective cinematic memory goes far beyond simply wishing to rebut or complement the history that has, in essence, been erased by the white, male, middle-class, and heterosexual version of Brazilian cinema that has long dominated the discourse in the field. The authors that have been assembled across these collections bring a fresh voice to their unencumbered investigation of Brazil's female directors in order to allow them to claim a place, once and for all, within the filmographies and narratives of official

cinematic history. Without relativizing the historical erasure of women, then, the essays seek to rescue the stories that have been repressed and to analyze them with perspectives that refuse the logics that once excluded them. Thus, these three volumes establish a new substratum that instigates new paths for future research.

Two particular theoretical directions stand out in *Feminino e plural*. First, the determination to shed light on directors previously ignored. *Feminino e plural* includes essays on Cleo de Verberena—possibly the first Brazilian female director—and on Helena Solberg, whose work has remained little known in Brazil despite its visibility on the international scene; Mariana Ribeiro Tavares addresses Solberg's work in chapter 6. Essays in this volume base their research on primary sources and interviews, and they explore how certain groups of filmmakers emerged in particular contexts or historical moments. Alcilene Cavalcante surveys the Brazilian women engaged in filmmaking during the harsh years of the dictatorship (chapter 4); Érica Sarmet and Marina Cavalcanti Tedesco (chapter 8) instead examine the feminist articulations in Brazilian cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, where they track the political efforts of directors to form associations to strengthen their work, “encouraging us to reflect on the current demands of women working in the field” (127).

Beyond the important work it accomplishes in filling a concrete historical gap, *Feminino e plural* also offers a new theoretical direction in terms of the kind of contribution that the study of cinema by women can add to the discipline as a whole. The essays deliver new theories of authorship that rethink historical, formal, and thematic analyses. In chapter 3, Karla Holanda focuses on female directors in modern Brazilian cinema, neglected even though part of this movement has already been studied in the context of Cinema Novo. She demonstrates that women filmmakers didn't fit the Cinema Novo label under which they were long classified (nor did they want to be). She reveals the extent to which these women filmmakers employed feminist themes and new aesthetics, as Helena Solberg did in *A entrevista* (*The Interview*, 1966). Holanda also exposes how other female directors suffered direct interference in their career trajectories due to the gendered division of domestic responsibilities. Extending gender as a category of analysis, Ana Maria Veiga's essay in chapter 5 addresses the aesthetics and politics of films directed by women under the military dictatorship, revealing the unique and brave “aesthetics-politics-emotion” that the directors Tereza Trautman and Ana Carolina created to face the gender censorship aimed at women's cinema at that time (85).

The collection also establishes how the study of this history expands the possibilities for how to rethink, for today's context, the comprehensive concepts that permeate cinema studies. Addressing the notion of authorship, Alessandra Soares Brandão and Ramayana Lira de Sousa devote chapter 9 to the Brazilian erotic cinema and examine films inspired by the very popular books of the lesbian writer Cassandra Rios. In chapter 12, Ceíça Ferreira and Edileuza Penha de Souza read the work of two prominent directors, Renata Martins and Viviane Ferreira, to survey the aesthetics of resistance of Black women directors, encouraging readers to be attentive to recent Black women's work and thus to prevent another erasure from official history.

In sum, *Feminino e plural* constitutes a new starting point that establishes the value of a feminist perspective for film studies in Brazil. Consisting of a multiplicity of voices, informed by the most current conceptual approaches to feminism, the collection fills important gaps in the broader history of Brazilian audiovisual production and posits gender and race as central categories of analysis. It should prove to be of great inspiration, pushing researchers to shift their theoretical perspectives and expand the horizons of their academic work and curricula.

Mulheres atrás das câmeras endeavors to focus on filmmakers, including prominent names that emerged in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. In addition to texts by scholars, the editors have included essays by female film critics working outside of academia; this is a strategic and laudable choice given that criticism remains a realm where deep gender inequality also prevails in Brazil. This volume's overview approach provides quick and accessible reading to the general public.

The collection is divided into three sections. The first contains eight essays on contemporary topics found in Brazilian feature films by women directors, such as women pioneers of Brazilian cinema, lesbian cinema, Black women's cinema, women in documentary, comedy, horror, experimental work—even women filming revolutions. One of the highlights is the chapter titled “Por um cinema negro no feminino” (Standing for a Black Cinema in the Feminine), by Janaína Oliveira. In the essay, she points to the invisibility of Black Brazilian women filmmakers while she delves into the trajectory of Adélia Sampaio, the first Black Brazilian woman to direct a feature film in Brazil. An important part of her discussion is *Amor maldito* (Adélia Sampaio, 1984), a result of Sampaio's supreme production effort. Oliveira illuminates the cooperative way in which the film was made and the prejudices faced by Sampaio and her crew in the making

of the film, which features a lesbian couple as protagonists. She also highlights the rise of a new generation of women filmmakers in African and African diasporic cinema associating “this presence with the formative dimension” (45). In the chapter titled “Documentário (e afins) feito por elas: Um painel” (Documentary Made by Her: A Panorama), Karla Holanda recovers Brazilian female documentary filmmakers who have ventured into different formats, languages, and themes. She also criticizes Brazilian film theory itself, demonstrating how Helena Solberg's and Ana Carolina's short films of in the 1970s and 1980s foreshadow the “intention to break traditional documentary models and [suggest] that the documentary doesn't have to be informative” (70)—a stance that would only later become prevalent in widely recognized, male-directed works.

The nineteen essays that make up the collection's second section are dedicated to women directors who released at least three feature films. Some of these essays take a biographical approach; others are based on interviews with the filmmakers themselves, a few conducted by the editors of the volume. It is the first time that these directors, whose work has been fundamental to Brazilian cinema, have had chapter-length work dedicated exclusively to their films. This is the case even for the most experienced filmmakers, like Helena Solberg, Tereza Trautman, Helena Ignez, Ana Carolina, Tizuka Yamasaki, and Lúcia Murat; it also includes filmmakers who emerged in the 1990s, such as Tata Amaral, Anna Muylaert, and Eliane Caffé, and even some who emerged later, in the 2000s, such as Laís Bodanzky, Maria Augusta Ramos, and Marília Rocha.

The third and last section of the volume is titled “Pequeno dicionário das cineastas brasileiras (1930–2018)” (A Small Dictionary of Brazilian Women Filmmakers (1930–2018)), with entries that span 265 filmmakers who have had at least one feature film released in commercial circuits or at major festivals in Brazil. Even if the criteria restrict its scope (since women still face many barriers to launching their films commercially or being selected for festivals), this information on filmmakers who have otherwise remained invisible is an important first step: only by becoming aware of the names that were left out can more research be done to establish women in the field of genre and film studies in Brazilian cinema.

The third edited collection, Karla Holanda's *Mulheres de cinema*, consists of twenty-two essays on filmmakers or key moments in Brazilian, Latin American, and world cinema. Its function is twofold. On the one hand, it introduces new perspectives from feminist film theory to Brazilian readers, while on the other hand, it places Brazilian

and Latin American women filmmakers on equal footing with other international filmmakers on the world cinema stage. Furthermore, the very fact that these are essays authored by Brazilians who get to claim their own viewpoints on global cinema constitutes a radical—and welcome—change of perspective with regards to the existing scholarship. Authors from the Global South are hereby finally given a space to both comment on and respond to filmmakers from the Global North, while the occasion also opens the possibility for dialogue between scholars and filmmakers within the Global South itself.

The authors aim toward a shared, decolonizing horizon. The anthology has two thematic concerns that recur in discussions of a wide range of Amerindian, Vietnamese, French, Indian, Chinese, Iranian, and Latin American women directors (with an emphasis on those in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil itself). The first area of interest, and the most prevalent thematic vein in the collection, has to do with introducing many women directors whose work circulates globally to new, local readers in Brazil. Highlights include Janaína Oliveira's essay on women filmmakers in Africa and the diaspora, which includes directors Pascale Obolo, Safi Faye, and the recently mourned Sarah Maldoror; Juily Manghirmalani's essay surveying women filmmakers in Indian cinema; Alessandra Meleiro's essay about Iranian women filmmakers and their relations with state policies for film production; and Marina Tedesco's panoramic view of the pioneering women directors of Latin America.

The authors that are included in *Mulheres de cinema* approach these works from creatively distinct perspectives. Ana Paula Alves Ribeiro's fascinating chapter explores how Afro-Brazilian women directors are resignifying the public and symbolic spaces of Rio de Janeiro in their films. Clarissa Alvarenga offers evidence for women's agency in the works of non-Indigenous filmmakers. She also reconceptualizes the category of first-contact films in relation to those directed by Amerindian women filmmakers such as Arlene Bowman, Ayani Huni Kuin, and Patrícia Ferreira Pará Yxapy. Carla Maia's essay addresses the method of "speak nearby" instead of "speak for" or "given the voice to" in the films of Trinh T. Minh-ha.

The second focus of the collection looks into strands of feminist film theory still underutilized in Brazil; the authors thus introduce precious references that are not

accessible in Portuguese translation. Alessandra Brandão and Ramayana Lira, for example, are among those to propose new, sophisticated perspectives: their essay discusses lesbian (in)visibility in cinema; the essay by Mariana Baltar introduces the field of pornography as regards cinema directed by women. Other essays—by Leticia Moreira, Regina Gomes, and Ana Maria Veiga—center on other theoretical subjects, such as spectatorship. The manner in which they draw from feminist film theory is particularly valuable and relevant given a context in which many of the works of European and Anglo-Saxon feminism have not been translated into Portuguese.

Mulheres no cinema brasileiro, *Mulheres atrás das câmeras*, and *Mulheres de cinema* contain chapters from some of the same authors, which creates an important dialogue and ensures that progress in the field maintains momentum. The publication of these three edited collections is wrapped in palpable urgency, perhaps because their subjects and themes have been so flagrantly ignored in the history and study of cinema in Brazil. Now it is more evident than ever that continued scholarship is essential in keeping the history of these filmmakers and their filmographies alive.

The editors and authors of these three books are voices that belong to a new generation of critics and theorists who are doing the hard work of analysis and research in order to carve out a field where works by Brazilian women filmmakers are central. The authors in these three volumes analyze cinematic and digital texts, probe the underlying conditions for their production, and elaborate upon the films' implications and therefore their consequences. Happily, thanks to these three collections, the status of these female filmmakers (and the essays' authors) may now be declared forever changed.

LÍVIA PEREZ is a PhD candidate at the University of Sao Paulo, where she is completing a dissertation on Brazilian women filmmakers of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In 2020, she was a research scholar at UC Santa Cruz. She is also a producer and filmmaker whose films have been screened at Locarno, IDFA, and Hot Docs.

BOOK DATA Karla Holanda and Marina Cavalcanti Tedesco, eds., *Feminino e plural: Mulheres no cinema brasileiro*. Campinas: Papirus, 2017. \$56.00 paper; \$7.43 e-book. 240 pages.

Luiza Lusvarghi and Camila Vieira da Silva, eds., *Mulheres atrás das câmeras: As cineastas brasileiras de 1930 a 2018*. São Paulo: Editora Estação Liberdade, 2019. \$60.00 paper; \$8.99 e-book. 368 pages.

Karla Holanda, ed., *Mulheres de cinema*. Rio de Janeiro: Numa Editora, 2019. \$72.00 paper. 412 pages.