

A black and white photograph of a pair of scissors, a needle, and two fabric flowers on a patterned surface. The scissors are on the left, the needle is at the bottom, and the fabric flowers are on the right. The background is a dark, intricately patterned fabric.

FUXICO

artwork by **Julia Equi** and **Davi Leventhal**
curated by **Anna Pillow**

fuxicoproject.com

fuxico

Fuxico are flowers, made by hand out of fabric remnants. They often feature beads in their centers to disguise the rough edges, and are sometimes used individually to decorate pillows, or sewn together to create quilts. The word comes from the Portuguese word *fuxicar* (to gossip), and making them is a craft tradition kept alive by women who gather together around tables to talk about their lives as they work.

These are women from Brazil's *Nordeste*, who have left their homes to work for families not their own.

the *favelas*

Favelas got their name from a plant that grows on the hills in the northeast region of Brazil. Following Brazil's Canudos War (1892-1897), where the Brazilian Army fought and decimated a popular socio-religious group, the war veterans were promised land in the hills of Rio de Janeiro. While waiting for the government to fulfill its promise, they converged on the hills around Rio and built temporary shelters out of whatever materials they had on hand. Reminded of their wartime encampments in Bahia, where the thorny favela plant grows, the soldiers named their temporary settlements *favelas*, and the name stuck.

The story of Brazil's *favelas* is deeply connected to that of slavery within the country. After Brazil abolished slavery in the late 1800s, former African slaves gathered in settlements in Rio, the capital at the time, creating these cities within the city. Black Brazilians found themselves pushed further and further out of the city, while industrialization during the 1930s and '40s brought migrant workers to the city in droves. Unable to afford proper housing, they moved into the *favelas* instead.

Due to the dangerous conditions and proliferation of illegal activities within the *favelas*, the Brazilian government has attempted to control or demolish the *favelas* multiple times, leading to increased violence and distrust of the government within these communities. Without widespread, meaningful social change, the legacy of the *favelas* will continue to be unbridled gentrification, destruction, and exploitation.

the women

Artists Julia Equi and Davi Leventhal documented the stories of five women, four of whom lived in Rio's *favelas* at the time. In doing so, they explored issues of identity, especially during the buildup to the 2016 Olympics in Brazil, which dazzled viewers around the world but also displaced some of the city's most impoverished residents.

Beginning with Marinete, Leventhal's childhood nanny, the artists used their networks to reach women in two of Rio's *favelas*: Vidigal and Rocinha. The artists then visited each of the women in their homes, listened to their stories, and created *fuxico* with them.



Installation views: *FUXICO* at Plaxall Gallery, Long Island City, New York, 2019



Davi Leventhal

Dona Graça

Oil on panel

18 x 24 in (45.72 x 60.96 cm)



Julia Equi

Graça 01

Digital silver gelatin print
12 x 8 in (30.48 x 20.32 cm)
Edition of 5



Julia Equi

Graça 02

Digital silver gelatin print
12 x 8 in (30.48 x 20.32 cm)
Edition of 5



Julia Equi

Graça 03

Digital silver gelatin print
12 x 8 in (30.48 x 20.32 cm)
Edition of 5



Julia Equi

Graça 04

Digital silver gelatin print
12 x 8 in (30.48 x 20.32 cm)
Edition of 5



Julia Equi

Graça 05

Digital silver gelatin print
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Edition of 5



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Davi Leventhal

Dona Maria

Oil on panel

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Julia Equi

Maria 01

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Edition of 5



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Julia Equi

Maria 05

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Davi Leventhal

Dona Marinete

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Julia Equi

Marinete 05

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