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THE FIGURATIVE ART OF MASTER-ARTISANS FROM THE ALTO DO MOURA, CARUARU-PE, AND THE AESTHETIC AND SENSITIVE SEMANTICS ON GENDER ISSUES

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1 INTRODUCTION

> *"Women want to be the owners of their own lives, in the sense of the necessity of having the power of choice to exercise their vocation, whether as a professional, a mother, a researcher, housewife or even in the accumulation of all those functions simultaneously"* (ALMEIDA, 2010, p. 55).

The artistic production of women artisans from Alto do Moura, Caruaru, Pernambuco, has been presenting not only the visibility of the local art, but has been turned equally to the reflection of complex social issues. This way, simultaneously to the time the master-artisans have addressed in their pieces the disquietude of the fortification of their protagonism, they reveal the implicit messages on the imaginary surrounding them.

Considered the study of the production of handicraft in clay of three master artisans from the community of Alto do Moura, Caruaru-PE, while trailing about the symbolic representations of the 'gender' category present in this universe. It can be inferred that the construction of artistic-popular knowledge, from this feminine production can reaffirm the popular knowledge of the clay women artisans from the Alto do Moura community on the quotidian of the gender issues relating with the role of art in the significance of this subject.

It is taken in consideration that the understanding of the aesthetic, sensitive, symbolical and subjective recurrences present in the artistic production of women artisans can highlight the imaginary of sociocultural quotidian experiences on gender issues. This premise can be determinant in the construction of an updated schedule of studies concerning the appreciation of the aesthetic-sensitivity of approaching the relation between women, art and society. The imaginary is in the basis of the conceptions of time and space, basis, therefore, of all cultural construction, including gender. These are culturally constructed and mediated by quotidian - here exemplified in the productions of the chosen master-artisans.

Based on these premises, the following research approaches some issues, specifically: Do the symbols contained in the pieces produced by the master artisans of the Alto do Moura community, Caruaru-PE, allow to entertain the means by which those women represent the 'gender' category? What is the centrality of the aesthetic and sensitive elements in this artistic making? Which gender elements and connected to the community quotidian are materialized through the symbols present in the analyzed pieces? In this sense, and based on the theoretical discussions on Aesthetic, Sensibility and Gender, this research consists in rethinking the categorizations of gender based on non-reductive premises.

The master artisans chosen to this study were Ernestina Antônia, Rosário de Carvalho and Marliete Rodrigues, Nevertheless, due to the conditions imposed by the pandemic on the data collection of the other masters, the process of analysis and investigation was restricted only to the master Marliete Rodrigues. In order do so, the

objectives that north the following study are, specifically, to present an inventory of the craftsmanship in clay of master Marliete Rodrigues, that enables to reflect upon the symbolic representations of the "gender" category; to identify the main aesthetic, senses and sensitive present in this production; to analyse the symbolic representations of the "gender" category present in the artistic production of the master from the standpoint of Aesthetic and Sensibility.

From the research field, the cataloged pieces and based on the interview, it was observed to which extent the artistic production of a female artisan ressignfies the imposed social standards and, simultaneously, builds a differentiated aesthetic concerning the gender issues. The work of master Marliete Rodrigues was chosen for presenting a language that, at first, does not reinforce sexist, misogynistic and pornographic typically found in a heteronormative language. The implication of the question "why there were not great women artists?" (NOCHLIN, 2016), leads to analyze how the master, inside her social context breaks, even if intuitive and implicitly, with certain barriers of gender, making aesthetic (DURAND, 2001), sensitive (GOMES, CARVALHO, 2020; MAFFESOLI, 1996) and gender (BUTLER, 2003) representations echo throughout her pieces.

Taking the analysis of the production of master Marliete Rodrigues, strongly branded by the imaginary and the significance of the role of the art in quotidian subjects of the countryside of Pernambuco and that involve her as the core and main subject of the following research. From that, questions arose, such as: What is the centrality of the aesthetic and sensitive elements in the artisan's works? Which elements of gender linked to the daily life of the community are materialized through the symbols present in the analyzed works? Is it possible to characterize as a feminist the aesthetic that develops from the imaginary and is expressed in her works?

The methodologic path elapses from the phenomenology perspective (Carvalho; Cardoso, 2015). The phenomenology recurred is descriptive, philosophical and interpretative. The qualitative approach, understanding that deals with interpretation of social realities (Gil, 2008), is instrumentalized from the Theory of the Imaginary by Gilbert Durand (2001; 2004) and the observations upon aesthetic and sensibility of Michel Maffesoli (1996; 1998) of the gender category (Butler, 2003). The data collection happened parting from the realization of an interview, the non participant observation and the register of images that helped the construction of a field journal. In such a way, the analysis of images was organized from the image analysis technique proposed by Carvalho (2019).

2 ART OF WOMEN AND THE FEMINIST AESTHETIC

The way with which women were (and still are) portrayed in works of art and the massive amount of male artists that are known in comparison to the small amount of women recognized as artists, in History of Art, leads to reflect on how laborious was (and remains to be) the path that women trailed to occupy such spaces.

In order to rethink the place women have occupied, throughout time, in History, it must be considered that the majority of them, until the XVII century, were illiterate (ALMEIDA, 2010), which contributes for them to be taken as submissive and inferior. This fact highlights that the feminine education was thought from a masculine point of view, as affirms Almeida (2010). This way, ever since the feudal era to modern society, women were kept from developing other skills that are not related to the domestic environment, being limited to the home space. For being considered fragile and never autonomous, they needed to live under the vigilance of family and their husbands (ASSIS, 2012).

It is worth highlighting that, even if not portrayed as protagonists or main authors of the main pieces of art, women always had their bodies constantly exposed, partially or completely undressed, in uncountable artistic representations. (Almeida, 2010). During the whole Middle Age the female cloistresses, for example, developed a function fundamental to the art made by women, because only to them was allowed the development of the artistic, reading and writing skills (ALMEIDA, 2010 apud SENNA, 2007).

According to Assis (2012), the History of art, ever since the Ancient World to the Modern Age, failed to consider the artistic, intellectual and social feminine abilities. It was believed that the only gender capable of inheriting and transmitting the artistic knowledge was the male sex, as affirm Nochlin (2016) and Korsmeyer (2014). Both authors pinpoint the concept of 'The Great Artist', as being the one who, supposedly, deteins the geniality, regardless of the context that influences its success. Nochlin (2016) conducts to the comprehension that there exists an hegemonic and masculinist sense that women are devoid of talent enough to artistic production, once there are not, according to her, 'Great Women Artists' portrayed or valued by the classical History of art.

From the XIX century, despite so many difficulties that made impossible to ascend professionally, women resisted, subverting such patriarchal logic, and made themselves present in spaces before exclusives to people from the masculine sex. Assis (2012) argues that many of them made use of masculine pseudonyms to expose their works, revealing the difficulties they faced only for being women.

It is important to highlight that despite uncountable registers concerning the participation of women in History of Art, many voices remain silenced. A massive part of the 'History of the experience and expression of the feminine universe' are still hidden, which translates into an irreparable loss, once there is no more access to these productions (Assis, 2012).

Still, even living for so long strongly oppressed, women experienced great and expressive change in their behavior in the first decades of the XX century (ALMEIDA, 2010). The dominant discourses suffered deep alterations provoked by the change of perception of the feminine perspective. Significant changes were felt in every field of acting and human invention and consequently, in art, as affirms Assis (2012). During the 60s, for example, in United States, through the fortification of the

feminist critique and the first feminist parade demaning more visibility of female artists in the spaces of exposition, feminist artists launched what was called Feminist Art . From the 1970s, the Feminist Movement acted as a decisive mark to the emancipation of women (ASSIS, 2012). Such changes allowed, little by little, women to act and expand their horizons, whether in the labour market, intellectual life and arts (ALMEIDA, 2010).

Therefore, as highlights Bovenschen (1986), only through their autonomy, political participation, occupation of public spaces and decision spaces is that women could, minimally, conquer and ascend to new spaces, just as developing different aesthetic shapes. The permanent struggle for the emancipation of certain oppressive standards of gender can be read, certainly, as the main propellant element of the feminine artistic making recently.

3 FUNDAMENTS TO A FEMINIST AESTHETIC

By observing the trajectory of the women in the History of Art, it is possible to perceive that women were acceptable beings only while participating as an 'inspiring muse' when it comes to the great theme behind the canonical art. Facing this argument and context, the female artists were confronted with the difficult choice of living by their art or to restrict only to sex (Bovenschen, 1986).

In order to think about the recurrence of a feminist aesthetic , it must be taken into consideration that gender, identities and sexuality mix to the complexities of the process of representation of individual and collective character, not allowing generalizations concerning the artistic activity of women (Korsmeyer, 2014). In this matter, Meskimmon (2003) highlights that it is necessary to investigate the art made by women, aiming to understand how it brings together the sexual difference in its material specificity and its particular historical locus, avoiding to answer only questions such as "what is a female artist" or "what is the female art".

Korsmeyer (2014) reflects that studies in this sense must discover if in creative work women produce, it operates some kinds of feminist aesthetic that contradicts, even if clandestinely r implictly, a masculine and dominant normative in cultural terms, such as he problematizes in the extent of his work. To the author, the formation and application of ideas on works of art, creativity and aesthetic value must be formulated with the attention to the roles gender plays in the inventive process, understanding that images, representation and expressions that originate from ideas are indicators of social and power positions (KORSMEYER, 2014). However, such presupposed must not be restricted to refer, exclusively, to the existence of whichever simplistic and reductive relation between the sex of the creator and the work produced, much less to the argument that art made by women has some kind of perpetual "femininity" (MESKIMMON, 2003).

Bovenschen (1986) considers that the art with the feminist intention

refers to the aesthetic conscience and the forms of sensorial perception, having as a fundamental characteristic the liberation of the imagination of women and the rupture with the formal laws of a determined mean, always from masculine references. As such, one (other) tradition and rupture can be found in the works of artists that compose the feminist debate and movement. It is through a process of subversion, conquest, vindication, appropriation and formulation that the artistic production of women takes place (BOVENSCHEN, 1986).

The feminist aesthetic can be understood, then, as a "visual response to a very specific set of cultural and historic circunstances" (Raymond, 2019, p. 40). Here, the term 'feminist' is understood and assumed as a force of political action, that points the materialized political act in the form of image and that suggests an ethical compromise not only regerding the feelings of one concerning themselves, but also concerning the other, as points out Raymond (2019). The concern with questions regarding discussions on gender, class, ethnicity and race, the utilization of embroidery and sewing, the deconstruction of stereotype, the historical recovery of women in art are trends and ethical aspects that characterize the visual arts of feminist character, especially when considered the post-structuralist aspect they possess, as affirms Tvardovskas (2015). In general lines, they are productions branded by the experiences and not exclusively by technique.

Therefore, the feminist aesthetic captures and considers elements that are not connected to what is considered while standard or universal, or exclusively to the masculine figure, what does not necessarily imply that it is restricted only to the feminine universe. It brings an aesthetic as existence, capable of "generating new forms of seeing, feeling, signifying and existing" in the world (Stubs; Teixeira-Filho; Lessa, 2018).

Some artists, for instance, resort to the feminine nudity and materials and support connected to manual work and handicraft as a way of provocation (ALMEIDA, 2010). Other weave critics to traditional ideals of beauty, repudiating essentialistic aesthetic values by experimenting waking in expectators the disgust and other disturbing emotions, questioning, contradicting or unmasking the occidental stereotypes of feminine identity (KORSMEYER, 2014). In this way, the trace of the shape, the outline and the symbol that compose the image are the elements that mold the feminist aesthetic (RAYMOND, 2019), having as charactetistic "an inseparable link between art and life, art and experience, art and production of subjectivities" (STUBS; TEIXEIRA- FILHO; LESSA, 2018, p. 06).

In Brazil, the artist women reinvent, daily, the narratives on masculine and feminine, mocking the power practices and deconstructing misogynistic stereotypes, even if few the ones that self name, or that consider their works as genuinely feminist (TVARDOVSKAS, 2015). Even so, intuitive and politically, they create other representations for the body, the feminine and the subjectivities from an insurgent poetic and due to an ethical, aesthetical and gentrified posture of resistance and of

existence.

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4 DISCUSSION AND NOTES

4.1 GENDER AND LOCAL IMAGINARY: THE MEMORIES AND THE INVENTIVE SPIRIT OF MARLIETE RODRIGUES

The Alto do Moura and its artistic production in clay is an important diffusing center of the culture of Pernambuco. Families, through the commercialization of such production guarantee the local development and the promotion of the art of Pernambuco (Fonseca; Dias; Campos, 2017). In this sense, Maffesoli (1996) highlights that the culture of a society takes shape when it manifests itself exteriorly, that only this way it starts existing imagetically and materially. The artisan class of the community of the Alto do Moura, overall the women, contribute to developing, maintaining and diffusing the culture of the northeastern countryside. Art becomes a process of sensitive sharing of society.

Marliete was born in september 18 of 1957, in the city of Caruaru, Pernambuco. Daughter of artisan parents and grandparents, the master was in touch with art in clay ever since early. Even before going to school, she played with shaping the clay while creating her own toys. It is important to highlight that due to the socio economic vulnerability of the families in this community, children often needed to work to complement the family income. The production, according to Marliete, was commercialized at the Feira de Caruaru (Caruaru's fair), recognized as a cultural imaterial patrimony of Brazil in 2006. The confection of the pieces were made in serial form to fulfil the utilitarian necessities of the capitalist market that was developing in the region. With time, her oldest brother started accompanying their father at the fair to sell the clay toys resulting from the production of the children of the family. At that time, Marliete was already in school and narrated that waited anxiously to mold her toys in clay. In interview with the authors, the master tells:

> "When I was 8 years-old, I was already at school. I used to arrive and think about playing with clay and then I started selling some of my toys. There was my brother, who also made the little toys, José Antônio. He used to make little horses and go to the fair with dad to take care of our little toys to sell. Dad sold in a little stall and he used

to line paper on the floor to put our toys to sell. All of our brothers made toys to sell"

Marliete's discourse shows how the community through the repetition of heternormative patterns, kept the women restricted to the domestic spaces (Assis, 2012), which detained them from, many times, going to the city's fair and commercialize their own creations, contributing this way to their invisibilization as artists. Even if being participants of all the productive processes, women do not have, most times, their names associated with their pieces. This evidence points out that not always the feminine work is considered artistic, which keeps them from being recognized and invisibilise them. The subtle process of invisibilization, at this point, prevents the legitimization of the creativity of the women regarding the artistic production.

Parting from the observation of the pieces produced by her sister Socorro, who after their father's passing, assumes the role of artistic reference to the master, emerges in Marliete the will to develop pieces in miniature, named by the master as "ceninhas" . The ceninhas are the reproduction in clay of quotidian scenes that permeates the imaginary of the master. Many of these ceninhas involve the experiences she had with her mother and grandmother from her father's side:

"[...] I started to develop this side of miniature and creativity because I liked it a lot. Then, I came to be always creating and I started making these ceninhas, creating them. To observe the small scenarios of the family. I started imagining a little grandma telling a story to her grandchildren [...], the grandma playing with their hair, knitting. Many things with mothers and grandmothers."

In her work *Minha avó Tereza, com seus netos, vendendo seus produtos, na Feira de Caruaru* [fig 1], Marliete gives shape to a memory of her mother, already gone. In the piece, her great grandmother, Teresa, artisan of dishware, sells her production in clay (utilitarian pieces to domestic use and also in reduced size, sold as toys for kids) in the company of her three grandchildren (her mother and her siblings, the master's two relatives) whose raising she was responsible for.

Figure 1: Minha avó Teresa com seus netos, vendendo seus produtos, na Feira de Caruaru

Source: Archive Marliete Rodrigues

It is perceived how much the local imaginary is always associated with the familiar idea that feminine art is used to sustain the family and not understood as art in itself. The woman, in this social logic, is seen as caregiver and provider of her family, only.

In the work above, despite elements such as dressing, hair styling and posture of the characters reinforcing some gender stereotypes, seen as they portray the quotidian of a community in the countryside of Pernambuco strongly branded by sexism, it is possible to perceive some subtle subversion concerning masculinist art that acts on the referred context. Marliete portrays a kid in a pink dress, with characteristics that refer to the feminine, kneeled choosing her small clay pans, carefully painted and adorned, under the supervision of her parents. The women in the scene seem careful, the artisan, looking at the pieces being manipulated by the kid, since they depend on the sale of each one of them to survive; the mother with open arms suggests the intention of protecting the kid. In this gesture of the children's mother, it can be noticed a reference to the pieces that portray the Great Mother Mary, with open arms as a sign of protection, support and care for her children. By portraying the women's bodies, Marliete does it the way it is, the real body, not idealized to the masculine delight (Carvalho, 2019). The children that accompany the grandmother are quiet to not disturb the sale. The man present in the scene has a passive posture. Even if his hand resting on his hip indicates a certain degree of impatience, he remains waiting without interfering with the child's choice.

Besides the work presenting a child with said feminine elements as a protagonist of the scene, since on her choice relies the sale of the product, Marliete inserts the art of the dishware makers as a historical rescue of these artisans, highlighting the recurrence of a typical trend of a feminist aesthetic (Tvardovskas, 2015), reinforcing their relevance to the community where such art making is overlooked and invisibilized. By observing the work, the memory of a childhood emerges, since

it is a part of my anthropological trajectory. Born and raised in Caruaru, I was able to experience, by toying with those tiny clay pans and animals, the aesthetic experience produced by these artisans that demonstrates how much the art of these women permeates the local imaginary and constitutes the subjectivities of many people.

Another very memorable work from Marliete is *As lavadeiras* [fig 2]. It is possible to observe women washing clothes with the responsibility of taking care of children: a very common scene of populations in the dry lands of Pernambuco. It is captured to which extent the daily rituals crystallize gender (Butler, 2003; Nuñez, 2019), exemplified in the work by the act of washing the family's clothes and the feminine caregiving, domesticize the women and difficulting, many times, the exercise of functions other than the ones connected to housing. The work reveals a certain degree of disruption with art produced in the community of Alto do Moura, where the majority of the artisans portray quotidian scenes of the male universe, always mediated by the male protagonism of the scene.

Figure 2: As lavadeiras

Source: Archive Marliete Rodrigues

Linda Nochlin (2016) suggests that the artistic production demands a long period of experimenting and technique study, besides involving the search for a proper shape, coherent and sensitive language. Which means it is necessary affection and time to dedicate to the craft of the art. Could the women of this community have so much time available if to them it is imposed all the burden of domestic work, besides the responsibility of providing for the house? In this sense, how could a woman artisan, with the almost exclusive task of taking care of the children and domestic chores have the same condition of ascending to the point of recognition as an artist and own significant works?

Marliete trails a personal and artistic trajectory that distunes the experience of the majority of the women in her community and this fact reflects on the recognition of her art. Besides being a part of a family that values art in clay, her personal choices

always put their artistic making as a priority and this allowed her to perfect her work techniques. By portraying women acting in public and private spaces and incorporating elements that demarcate these experiences. Marliete shows herself immerse in an aesthetic-gestural dimension with typical characteristics of a feminist aesthetic (Tvardovskas, 2015), besides helping telling the story of women of her community, exalting their place in the world and the artistic work made by them that, to this day, remains invisibilized.

The pieces of the master demonstrate the presence of an inseparable bond between life, quotidian, art, experience and production of subjectivities when Marliete, using her perception of the world as a woman and artist, reports the experiences of the community in which she lives, emphasizing the experiences of women that were a part of her life (Meskimmon, 2003). The ceninhas present a sensitive narrative on the feminine quotidian of who needs to manage their time between the daily chores that domesticize them to be exclusively at home and the work of maintaining financially their families through their artistic works on clay.

4.2 MARLIETE AND THE AESTHETIC FEMINIST FIGURATIONS OF GENDER IN ART

The genealogical tree of Marliete has many more references of women than men, the matriarchs of the family were tableware makers. However, until certain point of her life, the artisan, even if implicitly, demonstrated to have on her father and uncle the only figures of creative reference, reinforcing how the masculine logic over the creative genius (Nochlin, 2016) operates in the maintenance of stereotypes of gender and maintaining the masters linked to the masculine 'creative genius'. Marliete's report gifts a certain dimension of how such perception is a part of her quotidian:

> "When I was about 11 years old I started making the small figures, the little dolls, always imitating what I saw daddy making [along with] my uncle Manoel Eudóxio who's my mother's brother. We always copy what we are seeing".

At 16, Marliete lost her father and consequently, the person responsible for the process of burning and selling the pieces in clay. In virtue of this loss, the family started developing, besides confectioning the pieces, the work of selling and burning as an alternative of not facing financial difficulties and in order to not be forgotten as artisans. Marlietes' memories reveal, even if implicitly, how the gender roles, until then, shaped her artistic making and her family's as a whole.

The loss of a masculine referencial and the dislocating look of Marliete to a feminine referencial starred by her sister, Socorro, can be understood as a milestone

to the (de)construction of Marliete's aesthetic identity. The master reveals she felt the need of experimenting, of making things differently than what she had done until then. She started producing bigger figures, similar to the ones her father used to make, allowing herself then, new discoveries in the search for her artistic identity and the distancing of the productive process based on mere reproduction. The artisan's artistic making demystifies the idea that the only being capable of possessing the inventive spirit is a man (Nochlin, 2016; Korsmeyer, 2014).

Pitta (2017) affirms that through the imagination we are able to make sense of the world. To the author, we understand, rationally, through the reason. Only by imagination is that we give meaning to what is surrounding us, meaning it is imagining that we understand and are able to interpret symbolisms. It is through the liberation of her imagination that Marliete allows herself to part from the formal laws of the environment in which she's inserted and experiences the production of an aesthetic parting from the union between emotion, knowledge, nature and imaginary. Her work is related to the plurality of existence and the sharing of emotions, of experiences and feelings (Carvalho; Cardoso, 2015).

Marliete's work also includes themes related to the pernambucanian imaginary. The master portrays the professions, the religious symbols and the folklorian manifestations, such as Maracatu, the Pífano Bands, the Reisado, the June celebrations, the children games and other themes belonging to the Pernambuco culture. Marliete, carefully compromises in portraying the presence of women and the culture in these events while plural forms of life.

Among the works of religious symbols, a specific one draws special attention. The work *Nossa Senhora, Mãe de Jesus, amamentando* [fig 3], portrays the couple Mary and Joseph while she, Mary, breastfeeds her child. In a sensitive representation and filled with meaning to Marliete, the work presents the Great Mother with a small part of her immaculate body partially on display. As opposed to the many and aforementioned representation of the women's body in art, this work relates, now, to the sensation of warmth (Pitta, 2017), of caring and sharing of motherly love.

Figura 3: Nossa Senhora, mãe de Jesus, amamentando

Fonte: Acervo Marliete Rodrigues

The Great Mother, maidenlike, full of modesty, allows herself to show her incorruptible body to give her child the nourishment she herself is capable of generating. Marliete, by shaping the holy woman that stars the scene, whose gestural helps molding the social moral marked by heteronormative notions above all regarding gender and the social part of women (Almeida, 2010), breaks with the masculinist laws of art by showing part of the feminine body, not to the delight of the spectator, eroticized or like an object to be consumed (Carvalho, 2019) but, revealing the delight of the moment the woman portrayed experiments while breastfeeding her child, at the same time it deconstructs mysoginistic stereotypes regarding breastfeeding. The aesthetic senses present in Marliete's work can be understood as elements of a feminist aesthetic when, besides bringing a new representation of the feminine body in art, promotes, even if subtly, a reflection on the gender stereotypes conected to women's experience.

It is evident, equally, that the master understands the importance of portraying what she names as 'Our Story', by referring to the aesthetic elements that compose and help her to narrate the History of Pernambuco, as she highlights:

> "I never considered portraying things that did not represent our Story. To me it is everything! I have passion, a very strong love for my state of Pernambuco, my city. I am really proud of coming from Caruaru, from Alto do Moura. To me it is a lot, mainly the Alto do Moura because I was born and raised here"".

The art produced by Marliete is a generified translation of her experiences. Even if her artistic making maintains a strong relationship with her family's, in which the production of pieces in clay has strict connection with masculine references. Her works present, subtly, a rupture not only with the behavior imposed to women, but mainly the artist women.

In the image below, Marliete portrays herself in a moment of creative process in a piece that's exposed in Museu do Barro in Caruaru. In the years 1980, the

master was hired by the then president of the Foundation of Culture of the city, Altair Porto, to produce pieces that helped tell the story of the art in clay of the Agreste (dry regions) of Pernambuco. During four months the production of the master was aimed to reproduce materialistically the subjectivities and experiences that were a part of her anthropological path and permeate her imaginary. The pieces then started to compose the permanent exposition of the museum. This fact reinforces what Nochlin (2016) comments regarding the importance of the role of institutions, whether concerning visibility, when they allow women to occupy those spaces, or to invisibility, when they overlook the inventive capacity of those women based on gender stereotypes, denying to open space to the artisans.

Figure 4: Marliete trabalhando

Source: Archive Marliete Rodrigues

By portraying herself in this work, Marliete subscribes in History not only herself but an entire class of artist women responsible for the creation and maintenance and diffusion of the culture of the rural area of Pernambuco. Her art might be understood as feminist (Bovenschen, 1986) when subverts the masculinist logic of art by representing the experience of women of her community, when it conquers spaces in expositions and events so far exclusive to male artisans, when claims her position of master-artisan, when deconstructs stereotypes connected to gender and when contributes to the emergence of new narratives on the feminine artistic making of the countryside of Pernambuco. Through her ceninhas, the women's history, continuously invisibilized, is told, breaking with dominant discourses that women do not possess the inventive spirit and are not able to create relevant works.

Beyond the production of the clay that reinforces the necessity of preserving everything that the master learned concerning the artistic making of her family and, particularly, her father and sister, Marliete aims to transmit the knowledge acquired through the years to the next generations, teaching techniques of the feminine (and feminist) artistic making in clay and exposing pieces of many members of the family in her studio, showing that the title of Master Artisan corresponds to the notion of Master as a person who is a guardian of the cultural traditions, preserving the collective knowledge (MELO, 2019).

5 FINAIL CONSIDERATIONS

In this research, the aim was to analyse the work of the master artisan Marliete Rodrigues, intending to identify the aesthetic recurrences present in her work. Even if at first sight, the work of the master may seem to be subscribed under some kind of compulsory femininity, exemplified in the research by the modesty of the pieces of clothing and the actions of the women portrayed in her ceninhas, the work of Marliete Rodrigues reveals itself dissident by proposing subtle ruptures with the structures under which art in clay of the community of the Alto do Moura is constituted.

In her work, the artist narrates the experience of the community in which she was born and grew up in, emphasizing those that, even though overwhelmed with chores and duties which purpose was their domestication, managed to create works that are a part of the local imaginary of many people in the rural area of Pernambuco. Such fact explicits the demarcation of gender roles present in the community in which the master is inserted. In this sense, Marliete might be understood as an artisan through whom the women, until then silenced, tell their stories, demonstrating how they were a part of the artistic and economic construction of the Alto do Moura community.

It is through the pieces made in clay by the master Marliete, the great mother of all of this inventory of pieces with significant aesthetic, historical and sensitive load, that the experiences of these women can be told. It is by the hands of Marliete, by shaping the clay and translating materialistically her memories and experiences, that their voices and of so many artisan women echo throughout time, breaking from the silencing to them imposed.

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