

# Unveiling the vibrant tapestry: Brazilian female voices in visual poetry on Instagram

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Article information	Abstract
DOI : 10.25077/jds.1.1.32-42.2024  Correspondence : <a href="mailto:anaameliarodrigues@hotmail.com">anaameliarodrigues@hotmail.com</a>	This article explores the presence of Brazilian women artists in visual poetry on Instagram. It highlights the historical decline in recognition of women artists and the perpetuation of stereotypes that undermine their work. The article also discusses the ongoing struggle faced by female writers for recognition in the literary field. It challenges the notion that women, especially those from diverse backgrounds, are not prolific producers of poetry. The author focuses on the work of Brazilian artist Heloísa Marques as an illustrative example. Marques, an architect and visual artist, uses embroidery and collage techniques in her visual poetic compositions. The article examines her background, techniques, approach to language, and the reception of her work on Instagram. It emphasizes how social media platforms like Instagram have become spaces where women can share their work and regain recognition as poets and artists. The article sheds light on Marques’s artistic contributions and the broader presence of women in visual poetry on Instagram.
Submission Track	
Submission : January 05, 2023 Final Review : February 07, 2024 Accepted : February 10, 2024 Available online : February 20, 2024	
Keywords	
Barazilian women artist, visual poetry, female voices, instagram	

## INTRODUCTION

The presence and recognition of women artists has undergone significant shifts throughout history. In the nineteenth century, women artists were widely acknowledged, and their work extensively studied. However, an unexpected decline in recognition occurred in the twentieth century, despite women’s advancements in social emancipation and education (Parker and Pollock, 2021, p.3). Parker and Pollock, authors of “Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology”, argue that this decline can be attributed to concepts that undermine and misrepresent women’s artistic work.

Related to this inconsistent pattern of recognition is the construction and constant reiteration of a fixed categorization - a ‘stereotype’ - for all that women artists have done. (2021, p. 3)

One key factor contributing to this decline is the perpetuation of fixed categorizations or stereotypes for women artists. Modern examinations of women’s artwork often revolve around the socially constructed concept of femininity, reducing its significance to biological attributes while assigning cultural creativity to men (Parker and Pollock, 2021, p. 10). Consequently, women’s creative expressions, often stemming from domestic contexts rather than professional settings, have been marginalised and dismissed as mere crafts instead of recognized as art. As a result, their work has been devalued, and its importance diminished. Unfortunately, this stereotype of women and their artistic output continues to persist even in the twenty-first century.

The disparities faced by women extend beyond the art world. In the literary field, female writers continue to struggle for recognition and legitimacy. Annie Ernaux, the recipient of the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature, highlighted during her acceptance speech at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm the ongoing challenges faced by female writers, emphasising that their works are often overlooked or ignored by influential male figures in the Western intellectual spheres. She emphasised the continuous struggle faced

by female writers, even in democratic nations, as they strive for recognition and a rightful place within a literary landscape that remains predominantly male-dominated:

Writing in a democratic country, however, I continue to wonder about the place women occupy in the literary field. They have not yet gained legitimacy as producers of written works. There are men in the world, including the Western intellectual spheres, for whom books written by women simply do not exist; they never cite them. The recognition of my work by the Swedish Academy is a sign of hope for all female writers. (para. 13)

Ernaux's speech illuminates the pervasive inequality faced by women in the literary field, a global issue that extends beyond any specific region. Similar disparities exist in the realm of poetry, particularly visual poetry. It is commonly believed that women, especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, are not prolific producers of poetry. However, the anthology "Judith: Women Making Visual Poetry", published in 2021, challenges this notion by featuring visual poems created by 36 women from 21 different countries. The foreword by Johanna Drucker underscores how these visual poems provide women with a platform to exercise control over their own language and representation (Earl, 2021).<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the anthology's uniqueness also sheds light on the limited attention given to the poetic production of women, particularly those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, when compared to the recognition afforded to white male poets. Amanda Earl, the editor of the anthology, notes that it is common to hear from editors, publishers, and male visual poets that there are few women engaged in visual poetry. However, this statement does not reflect reality, as Earl herself has compiled a list of over 1000 female visual poets, challenging the notion that women's contributions in this field are scarce (in McLennen, 2021, para. 2).

While visual poems created by women often receive less recognition from editors and publishers, social media platforms have emerged as a space where women can share their work and finally regain recognition as poets and artists. One such platform is Instagram, which has become a democratic medium for female writers to amplify the importance and visibility of their visual poetic production. Nowadays, it is possible to follow and witness the publication of numerous visual poets, including those from Brazil, and whose works are often regarded by traditional critics as artisanal and purely recreational rather than recognized as art. Some of these poets are: Heloísa Marques, Marcela Scheid, Ryane Leão, Laura Athayde, Cristina Pagnocelli, Pri Barbosa, Helô D'Angelo, Lela Brandão, and others (Pereda, 2021). Many of them have attained influencer status as a result of sharing their work, attracting thousands of followers who have become avid readers and occasional collaborators in their artistic endeavours.

This article delves into the challenges faced by women in their pursuit of artistic recognition, highlighting the more inclusive space they have found on digital platforms. The focus is on the presence of women on Instagram, using the work of Brazilian artist Heloísa Marques as an illustrative example. To achieve this, we will begin by providing a concise overview of her social and literary background. Subsequently, we will select specific pieces from her body of work to analyse the techniques she employs, her approach to language, the nature of discourse generated by her work, and the reception and response it elicits. Through this examination, we seek to shed light on Marques's artistic contributions and the broader female presence within the realm of Instagram.

## DISCUSSION

### Heloísa Marques (@heloisamarques \_\_) and her first steps into poetic production

Heloísa Marques is a 30-year-old visual artist and architect who is originally from Itapetim, in the Sertão do Pajeú, a region located in the hinterland of the state of Pernambuco in Brazil. Now, she is based in Recife, the capital of the state.

<sup>1</sup>The list of female visual poets is available at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/141FCIZNdTX9idv-3IAKL2w28k49BeDX-FUAzpTAWcfk/edit#gid=0> (Accessed: 28 March 2022).

The artist ventures into creating visual poetic compositions using the technique of embroidery and collage. Marques did not learn the former directly with her mother, who knew how to knit, crochet and sew, but thought embroidery was a very difficult technique, but later in her life. As for collage, she initially explored it as a form of childhood play and continued practising it during her teenage years as a means of expressing her identity (Machado, 2022, para. 03). Marques has also acknowledged the influence of the surrealism collage in her poetic production, to which she was introduced during her studies in architecture (Marques, cited in: Machado, 2022, para. 06, 08). According to Surrealists, collage was “a means to transform ordinary things, such as wallpaper, and turn them into points of entry to another world” (Cramer and Grant, n.d., para. 9). Like the avant-garde artists, Marques’s work explores familiar images and materials, inviting the reader to rethink their own reality. In this process, it also encourages a reflection of what art is and what it is made of.

In relation to Marques’s career, it is worth noting that during the early stages of her poetic endeavours she didn’t identify herself as an artist. This can be attributed to the nature of the two techniques she explores. Firstly, manual arts like embroidery are often overlooked as artistic expressions, being confined to women’s handiwork and sometimes used to confine them to domestic roles (Marques, cited in: Machado, 2022, para. 06). Secondly, collage is considered less intricate and technical in comparison to painting, which leads to it being undervalued as an art form. Consequently, influenced by these prevailing views, Marques believed that her creations were not “real” works of art, as well as felt the need to enhance her techniques and acquire more knowledge to develop them further. It was only after she devoted all her time to producing visual poetry, a year before the pandemic, following her departure from her work as an architect, that she became truly immersed in her own poetic production. Simultaneously, her Instagram page began garnering increased attention from the public, who became more interested in her artistic work (Machado, 2022, para. 11-12). This pivotal moment marked Marques’s realisation that she was indeed an artist and that her work was a form of art. Subsequently, her initially private Instagram page became open to the public, and she started publishing more of her production while becoming an influential figure in the realm of her visual artistic creations.

### **The art of collage in Marques’s early Instagram posts**

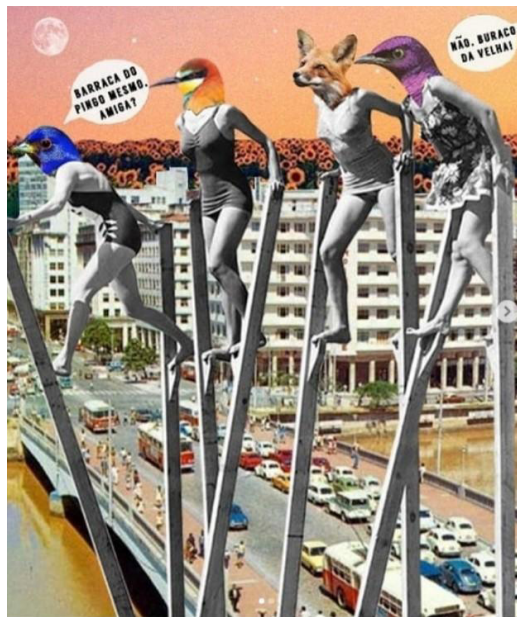
Marques boasts over 23 thousand followers on Instagram and a collection of more than 280 shared posts. Upon visiting her page, it becomes apparent that her initial posts trace back to July 2015, a pivotal year when Brazilians began to occupy a prominent position in Instagram’s user statistics.<sup>2</sup>

Her earliest posts predominantly feature images capturing herself, her dwelling, and various locations she had visited. The very first post presents a picture of Marques standing before a mirror, accompanied by the caption “cambitos.” In the image, she can be seen wearing a white t-shirt and shorts, holding a purse, and gazing directly at the camera. Notably, her legs are prominently displayed, invoking the term “cambitos,” which denotes slim legs. Friends’ comments on the post express how much they miss her, while others praise her beauty in the photograph.

In 2018, she began sharing her artistic creations, initially utilising the collage technique. The materials for her collages consist of images from photo magazines spanning from the 1950s to the 1990s, sourced from her friend’s father and her father-in-law’s belongings. In some of her work, she also employed photoshop to manipulate graphics and create digital artwork. Moreover, her creative process drew significant inspiration from the act of correspondence—writing, sending, receiving, and responding to letters. As a result, her work remained dynamic, constantly evolving, and open for public interpretation, appreciation, analysis, and inquiry, aligning with the typical characteristics offered by Instagram (Machado, 2022, para. 14, 28).

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<sup>2</sup>This and other information regarding the history of Instagram is available from Canaltech: <https://canaltech.com.br/empresa/instagram/> (Accessed: 18 May 2023).



**Figure 1. “recifenses indo à praia” (5 December 2018)**

The poem above, which was shared in December 2018, presents fragments composed of different elements. It incorporates an image, namely of downtown Recife, showcasing a bustling cityscape with a bridge crowded with pedestrians and cars (Figure 1)<sup>3</sup>. Against the backdrop of white apartment houses, a sunflower plantation comes into view. In the foreground, four female figures in black and white struggle to balance themselves on stilts while going to the beach. Interestingly, each of these figures possesses a distinct head - three of them have bird heads, while the fourth a fox head. They engage in conversation, deliberating on their destination and where to proceed next: “barraca do pingo mesmo, amiga?/ não, buraco da velha” (are we really going to pingo’s tend, my friend?/ no, to the old lady’s tend).<sup>4</sup> The heads are vibrant and harmoniously blend with the colours of the sunflower plantation, the sky, and the water encircling the bridge. These natural elements stand in stark contrast to the monochromatic nature of the concrete structures—the apartment house, the bridge, the stilts, and even the female bodies themselves. The presence of nature in vivid hues creates a striking juxtaposition against the black and white images, emphasising the vibrant and lively essence of the heads and their connection to the organic world.

The accompanying text on Instagram states, “recifenses indo à praia e uma dúvida: onde encontro mais fotos do centro/praias das décadas de 60/70/80? (:” (recifenses going to the beach and a question: where can I find more photos of downtown/beach from the 60s/70s/80s?).<sup>5</sup> The first part of the text, “recifenses indo à praia” has multiple interpretations. Firstly, it affirms the obvious and common action of people from Recife going to the beach. The images of the women depict a conversation among friends discussing their destination choices. “Barraca do pingo” refers to a food tent on the beach, while “buraco da velha” is a specific beach in Recife. However, also in dialogue with the image in the poem, it also implies criticism, since the people heading to the beach are women with black and white bodies on black and white stilts, and colourful and non-human heads. On the one hand, the black and white images suggest their disconnection from the surroundings, indicating that they don’t belong in that space. On the other hand, one can also consider the artificiality of the space itself: the sunflower plantation, the sunset sky, and the water’s colour appear exaggerated and/or out of place. In this case, the women, feeling like misplaced puzzle pieces in an unrelated picture, are trying to escape such an artificiality and disharmony, and for that reason they are eager to be disconnected and far from that space.

The second part of the text, “onde encontro mais fotos do centro/praias das décadas de 60/70/80?” (where can I find more photos of downtown/beach from the 60s/70s/80s?), points to a different meaning.

<sup>3</sup>This poem is available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BrAhsQGnpIb/> (Accessed: 19 December 2022).

<sup>4</sup>My own translation.

<sup>5</sup>My own translation.

It poses a question to Marques' followers, and it shows how the artist utilises social media as a means to gather additional material for her artwork. As previously mentioned, the images Marques incorporates into her collage pieces are sourced from magazines published during earlier periods. Consequently, these images often depict a dated representation of places, old-fashion clothes, and faded, muted colours. What we witness here is the intersection of social media and poetry production. Marques' inquiry highlights the expanded possibilities offered by platforms like Instagram, enabling the sharing of artworks, real-time feedback, and the ability to connect with individuals who may possess relevant materials for future projects. In other words, it underscores how social media has become a space where artists can engage with their audience, seek inspiration, and cultivate resources for their creative endeavours.

Still in terms of reception and response, it is interesting to mention that being Marques's first artistic post, it garnered approximately 211 likes and received several comments, primarily from the artist's friends and acquaintances. Among these comments, some individuals expressed a personal connection with the female images, while others admired Marques's work. It is worth noting that when one of Marques's followers inquired, "tu quem fez essa arte? (did you create this artwork?), she responded with a hesitant yet humorous affirmation of "'arte', hahaha sim!" ('art', hahaha yes!). This exchange, as previously discussed in this article, reveals Marques's uncertainty and self-doubt regarding her identity as an artist at that moment. In the present time, several challenges and societal factors contribute to the difficulty women face in seeing and identifying themselves as artists or poets. In addition to gender stereotypes and expectations, lack of portrayal further reinforces the underrepresentation of women in artistic and literary fields, both in terms of visibility and recognition. Furthermore, women often suffer from imposter syndrome, characterised by self-doubt and the fear of being exposed as a fraud despite accomplishments, and this affects individuals across various fields. Women may experience imposter syndrome due to societal messages that undermine their abilities and downplay their achievements. This psychological barrier can make it difficult for them to confidently embrace their artistic identities. For these reasons, it is conceivable that Marques experienced a sense of discomfort and unease when her initial Instagram post was labelled as art.

### Exploring Marques's later poetic evolution

Marques's early posts showcased her adeptness in utilising collage techniques and colours. As her artistic journey progressed, there is a notable increased focus on the female body and on themes surrounding sexuality. In February 2019, the artist shared a captivating visual poem (Figure 2), accompanied by the following text: "guardo inteira em mim a casa que mandei um dia, pelos ares. e a reconstruo em todos os



Figure 2. "guardo inteira em mim" (20 February 2019)

detalhes, intactos e implacáveis. eis aqui:/ bicicleta, planta, céu, estante, cama e eu” (I keep the house that I sent up in the air one day inside me, and I rebuild it in every detail, untouched and relentless. Here it is: bicycle, plant, sky, shelf, bed, and me)<sup>6</sup>.

This artwork features a collage of a cityscape, comprising buildings, a bridge, and vehicles. Atop the bridge, a partially naked woman rests on a blanket, transforming the bridge from a mere thoroughfare into a site of tranquillity and stillness. Vibrant, mannequin-like legs hover above her, entering and disappearing into dark voids in the sky and building windows. The night sky is filled with stars, planets, and comets, blurring the boundaries of reality and the imaginary, where the viewer is left to ponder whether they are witnessing a dream, immersed in the woman’s mind, observing her imaginative and fantastical world. The accompanying text offers deeper insight into the artwork’s symbolism. The poet metaphorically refers to a house as a sanctuary where one stores belongings, finds respite, and recharges energy, and it also represents a personal refuge and sacred space. The phrase “guardo inteira em mim a casa que mandei um dia, pelos ares. e a reconstruo em todos os detalhes, intactos e implacáveis. eis aqui:/ bicicleta, planta, céu, estante, cama e eu” underscores the importance of deconstructing what was once considered home in order to start anew. It also acknowledges that memories and the emotional essence of home persist within an individual, shaping their perceptions and connections with the world. The poet skilfully constructs a psychedelic realm, beckoning the reader to embark on a drug-induced, hallucinatory journey of self-reflection on their own sense of belonging.

On other hand, this visual poem introduces a new perspective that intimately and sexually portrays women as self-aware individuals with their own desires and needs. By sleeping nearly naked on the street, she both declares and challenges her presence in a world dominated by urbanisation and industrialization. Her near nudity signifies a deliberate attempt to shed societal expectations and find solace in moments of self-reflection and relaxation. She is alone, vulnerable but relaxed in the big city, and doesn’t show any sign of concern. Within this context, the poem places women not on the margins but at the centre of the narrative.

Marques’s subsequent poetic works, such as the poem below (figure 3), become more provocative, focusing extensively on the female body. This evolution in her poetry illustrates the poet’s growing comfort in exploring a style that may initially shock, but ultimately dismantles traditional notions of the body and predefined feminine roles and identity.



**Figure 3. “quem é livre à beira de galáxias” (13 March 2019)**

The poem above (Figure 3)<sup>7</sup> was published in March 2019 and made of collage. It portrays a woman seated with her legs open, revealing her genitals. Accompanying this image is a text that reads: “quem é livre à beira de galáxias/quem carrega universos entre às coxas:/ aqui, nosotras” (who is free on the edge

<sup>6</sup>This poem is available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BuHTPXCHgMj/> (Accessed: 16 December 2022).

<sup>7</sup>This poem is available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu89iuHJNH/> (Accessed: 01 June 2023).

of galaxies/ who carries universes between her thighs:/ here, nosotras)<sup>8</sup>. This visual poem unravels the mysterious nature of the female body, which is symbolized by the idea of a galaxy within both the image and the accompanying text. Through this symbolic connection, one can infer that the intimate body is akin to an immense and unknown space, whose meanings and knowledge are yet to be discovered. Additionally, the use of the galaxy's imagery and symbolism allows for further interpretations, suggesting that it represents a space of belonging, holding our origins, while remaining enigmatic and mystical. Ultimately, the image represents a gesture of openness and invitation to the other/reader. Through this transposition, the poem defies the constraints imposed on women when it comes to exploring and embracing their bodies and sexuality, empowering them to make autonomous decisions in this realm, such as the right for abortion, to use contraception, etc. According to Sabala and Gopal, “in the era of sexual liberation, feminists brought the body to the forefront in their analyses of power relations under patriarchy. The body became a political issue as feminists struggled to gain control over their fertility and sexuality” (2010, p. 44). Notably, this thought-provoking post has garnered over 500 likes and received 15 comments, predominantly expressed through emojis.

Marques continues to employ collage technique in the creation of her later visual poems. However, there is a notable introduction of embroidery, gradually assuming significant importance in the poet's artistic production. In the following analysis, we will delve into the poem “Tenho uma dor” to further examine Marques's use of embroidery and the societal discourses it unveils and dismantles.

### Unravelling the significance of embroidery in Marques's work

Marques's initial foray into embroidery art can be traced back to May 2020 when she published her first piece (figure 4)<sup>9</sup>. Not surprisingly, this post counted more than 900 likes and 51 comments of people praising her work.



Figure 4. “eu não ando só” (17 May 2020)

This remarkable creation features a collage of black and white images depicting women and girls. Marques skilfully embellished the images with colourful embroidered renditions of their attire, a plant, and hair accessories. Positioned in the upper right corner, one can find what becomes Marques's signature touch—an embroidered phrase in vibrant red thread proclaiming, “eu não ando só” (I don't walk alone/ I am not alone)<sup>10</sup>. This distinctive fusion of collage and red thread embroidery, employed to fashion phrases and verses, has since become a recurring structure of Marques' poetry. The accompanying text to this image features the poet's mention of it being her first embroidery art, along with a description of the process involved in creating it. Additionally, she reflects on the concept of art itself constructed with techniques like embroidery.

<sup>8</sup>My own translation.

<sup>9</sup>This poem is available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CATGAQene79/> (Accessed: 14 June 2023).

<sup>10</sup>My own translation.

o meu primeiro bordado da vida, finalizado hoje. olhei pra essa foto, lembrei do trecho da música, pensei que daria uma boa colagem, mas por que não um bordado?

enquanto bordava sem saber (e conseqüentemente me furava e errava bastante) fui atravessada por muitas coisas, principalmente pela nossa gradativa perda de memória tátil - achei aqui umas cartas da década de 70 e foi absurdo tocar nesses papéis, observar as expressões, as letras mais agressivas, a ansiedade pela resposta que demoraria a chegar - a gente não escreve mais cartas

e todo começou daí. pensei nas cartas que poderia escrever sem lápis e retratariam tão bem esses tempos: procurei linhas, achei umas fininhas que deram o triplo de trabalho. fiz questão de deixar todos os erros - como as últimas palavras quase coladas - porque eles me lembram o encantamento dos começos. enquanto furava o papel, pensava na herança do trabalho manual. principalmente em minha mãe, dona de casa que faz crochê, tricô, borda, pinta, costura um tantinho e ainda xerocava os paradidáticos em preto e branco pra pintar as figuras com a gente. eu sempre me perguntei de onde vinha minha pré-disposição pro que ela sempre fez, mas não conseguia associar (porque daqui de onde eu tô ela fazia tudo aquilo pro tempo passar, sem grandes pretensões). a resposta me veio violenta, na madrugada de ontem pensei bastante. tenho pensado muito nos últimos meses. hoje, olhando em perspectiva, eu acho incrível a resignificação desses “passatempos”, que compunham a rotina do trabalho invisível de muitas donas de casa e eram vistos como desimportantes. imagina o tanto de coisa preciosa que ficou sufocada por entre as paredes, mas que feitas na atualidade com a mesma técnica são valorizadas e legitimadas como arte. as vejo agora como métodos para não esquecer ou enlouquecer em meio a uma rotina de isolamento e - muitas vezes - solitária, andando só. tanto quanto neste momento, para nós, quando já não escrevemos mais cartas - mas ansiamos por respostas que se demoram -. pelo menos a gente entendeu que não anda mais só (e isso conforta um tanto, ainda bem)

(my first embroidery of my life, finished today. i looked at this photo, remembered the snippet of the song, thought it would make a good collage, but why not an embroidery?)

while I was embroidering without knowing it (and consequently piercing myself and making a lot of mistakes) my mind was crossed by many things, mainly by our gradual loss of tactile memory - I found here some letters from the 70's and it was absurd to touch these papers, observe the expressions, the more aggressive letters, the anxiety for the reply that would take a long time to arrive - we don't write letters anymore

and it all started from there. I thought about the letters that I could write without pencil and that would portray those times so well: I looked for threads, found some thin ones that took three times as much work. i made sure to leave all the mistakes - as the last words almost glued - because they remind me of the enchantment of the beginnings. while I was punching holes in the paper, I thought about the heritage of manual work. especially about my mother, a housewife who crochets, knits, embroiders, paints, sews a little, and even used to photocopy in black and white the paradidatics to paint pictures with us. I always wondered where my predisposition for what she always did came from, but I couldn't associate it (because from where I am she did all that just to pass the time, with no great pretensions). the answer came to me violently in the early hours of yesterday morning

I thought a lot. I have been thinking a lot in the last few months. today, looking at it in perspective, I find it incredible the resignification of these “hobbies”, which were part of the invisible work routine of many housewives and were seen as unimportant. imagine how many precious things were suffocated between the walls, but that made nowadays with the same technique are valued and legitimised as art. i now see them as methods for not forgetting or going crazy in the midst of an isolating and - many times - lonely routine, walking alone. as much as at this moment, for



us, when we don't write letters anymore - but we long for answers that take time to arrive -. at least we understood that we are no longer alone (and this comforts us a little, thank goodness) (In: Instagram, @heloisamarques\_\_, Heloisa Marques, 17 May 2020)<sup>11</sup>

In this text, Marques shares her inspiration from the image of women and girls, as well as the song “Eu não ando só” (I’m not alone), which portrays a woman’s daily struggle for belonging and emphasises the idea that she is not alone on this journey<sup>12</sup>. This inspiration made her first consider producing some work only with collage, but then she began to question whether embroidery could be a suitable technique to explore. This marked the start of Marques’ integration of embroidery alongside collage in her artistic endeavours.

Throughout the artistic process of the work above, the poet contemplates the meanings conveyed by the forms and colours found in the materials she uses, particularly images from the 70s, which carry in the fonts used and facial expressions ideas of aggressivity and anxiety. She also reflects on the loss experienced due to the decline of letter writing as a means of communication, of putting on paper feelings and thoughts, and the excitement of waiting for a letter as an answer. Furthermore, Marques draws a parallel between her own artwork and these letters, establishing a dialogue between the past and present. During Marques’s reflections, there is the realisation that she has found in her mother’s manual work a source of inspiration for the techniques she employs on her artistic expression. With surprise, the poet acknowledges that what she once considered a hobby practised by her mother, encompassing activities like crocheting, knitting, embroidering, and painting, is now viewed as art that she herself produces. The text also contains a direct critique to society, highlighting how manual arts like embroidery were often deemed unimportant and invisible, as they were frequently associated with the domestic routines and isolation experienced by housewives. In this sense, Marques’s poem invites reflection on the past, and a critical consideration towards the present time, which continues to resonate within countless households today the same idea on manual art. “Eu não ando sozinha” is an answer to the reality of many women and seeks to reassure that they are not alone in their experiences.

This poem operates on another level of analysis by placing black and indigenous women at the forefront of the image, occupying a significant portion of its space. By doing so, it aims to make them visible to the reader, bringing attention to a society and a particular period of time that continues to marginalise them. The embroidered clothing and head accessories featured in some of the images closely resemble those worn by indigenous individuals. Other collage images depict black women and girls adorned in “roupa de crioula” (creole clothing), which is a traditional white attire worn during candomblé rituals and festivals. These garments and accessories stand as a powerful testament to the resistance shown by marginalised groups, as they defy the pressure to conform to the traditional clothing, customs, and religious practices imposed by the colonisers. Even today, these constraints persist. The clothing and accessories serve as symbols of belonging, representing the Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous identities and memories that have endured throughout history. According to Monteiro, Ferreira, and Freitas, creole clothing, as well as its contemporary counterpart known as “traje de beca”, emphasises the relationship between afro descendants and society. In this context, the clothing this group wears is not only a fabric, but is transformed into a document, a symbol, and an emotion, creating a connection that spans across the past, present, and future (2010, p. 400). Marques’s poem reveals the image of women adorned in symbolic clothing and accessories, serving as a testament to their determination to preserve their traditions while actively combating subjugation, gender inequality, racial prejudice, and violence.

The colour red, which is already present in the poem “eu não ando só” (Figure 4), becomes even more pronounced in Marques’s subsequent poetic experiments<sup>13</sup>. This colour embodies the contrasting notions

<sup>11</sup> My own translation.

<sup>12</sup>The lyric and video of “Eu não ando só” is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaGqJRx6lrw> (Accessed: 14 June 2023)

<sup>13</sup>The symbolism of the colour red can also be related to both Greeks and Christians: “red is also a magical and religious color. It symbolized super-human heroism to the Greeks and is the color of the Christian crucifixion”. Para. 2. Available at: <https://www.colormatters.com/the-meanings-of-colors/red> (Accessed: 22 July 2020)

of passion and violence, intricately intertwined with the experiences of women. Collage, embroidery, and the utilisation of the colour red emerge as defining characteristics of Marques's poetry, enabling her to unveil the numerous obstacles faced by women, particularly black and indigenous women, in contemporary society.

This article has explored the presence of women on Instagram, using the artistic work of Brazilian artist Heloísa Marques as a prime example. By examining Marques's social and literary background, the article aimed to shed light on her artistic contributions and representation of Brazilian females on Instagram. Through an analysis of specific pieces from Marques's body of work, the article has delved into her evolving artistic techniques, her approach to language, and the discourse and responses her work elicits.

The article observed that Marques's artistic journey progressed from exclusively using collage in her earlier works, such as "recifences indo à praia," "guardo inteira em mim," and "quem é livre à beira de galáxias," to incorporating embroidery in "eu não ando só." Through an examination of the latter piece, it became evident how the artist subverts and redefines the use of embroidery and collage, giving verbal language a significant role and allowing it to engage in dialogue with images. While her main themes revolve around the female body, poetry, and freedom, her work also touches on political aspects, aiming to disrupt the balance and harmony of everyday life (Pereda, 2021, para. 15-16).

Additionally, Marques explores the use of colour in her art, particularly focusing on the colour red. The visual poem "eu não ando só" represents a substantial portion of her recent productions on Instagram, as she frequently incorporates red embroidery threads, images, and fabric. This intentional choice of colour enriches the themes present in her work, imbuing them with meanings associated with passion, seduction, blood, fire, anger, danger, and violence.

Furthermore, Marques consistently accompanies her artwork with text and engages in interactions with her readers. Instagram serves as a platform for her to share her work, connect with her followers, receive feedback, and gather information for her collage-visual poems. By doing so, Marques not only removes women from marginalised positions but also places them at the forefront of the discourse. Although collage remains present in her later works, the incorporation of embroidery and the utilisation of Instagram as a medium demonstrate Marques's evolving artistic exploration and her ability to create a dialogue between different forms of expression.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this article highlights the artistic contributions of Heloísa Marques and provides insights into the broader female presence on Instagram. Through her evolving techniques, thematic exploration, and engagement with her audience, Marques showcases the power of art in shaping narratives and challenging societal norms, making a significant impact within the realm of visual expression on social media platforms.

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