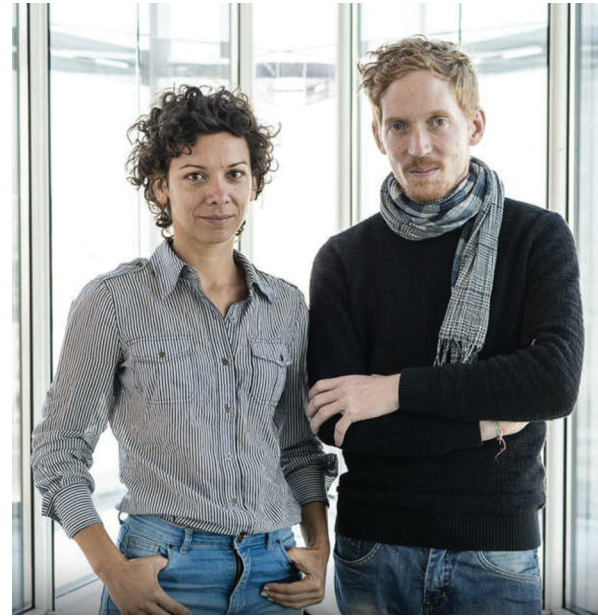


ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Working together for a decade, Bárbara Wagner (b. 1980, Brasília, Brazil) and Benjamin de Burca (b. 1975, Munich, Germany) produce films and video installations that feature protagonists engaged in cultural production. The duo typically collaborates with non-actors to make their films, from writing scripts to staging performances on camera. The resulting works are marked by economic conditions and social tensions present in the contexts in which they are filmed, giving urgency to new forms of self-representation through voice, movement, and drama.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Swinguerra, 2019. Two-channel video (color, sound; 21:16 minutes), dimensions variable. Courtesy Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo, Brazil



Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca
Courtesy of the artists and Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel

GALLERY GUIDE

JUL 14 - OCT 1, 2023

In a collaborative practice begun in 2013, Brazilian photojournalist Bárbara Wagner and German-born Irish artist Benjamin de Burca create video and installation works that explore contemporary histories of underground dance and musical genres. Initially trained in journalism and fine arts, respectively, their prolific moving image works have centered on urban subcultures in the South Atlantic diaspora, from the Franco-Indo creole musical genre maloya to frevo dancers and Brega singers in Recife, Brazil, where the artists live and work. Their approach merges the cinematic with the fictional, documentary, and ethnographic to address questions of surveillance, visibility, and creativity in an increasingly connected, postcolonial world.

A representative example of their acclaimed collaborative approach, *Swinguerra* focuses on disadvantaged queer communities of color in Recife, emphasizing transgender and nonbinary performers. The film features three contemporary dance styles—swingueira, Brega funk, and passinho da maloca—as performed by the competitive dance groups Cia; Extremo; Grupo La Mafia; and Bonde do Passinho/As do Passinho S.A. These mixed dance styles recall Brazil's colonial history and the slave trade, where music and dance functioned as discreet methods of organizing politically under an oppressive state.

With a nod to this history, the film, which takes its title from a blending of the words “*swingueira*” (the dance style) and “*guerra*” (“war” in both Portuguese and Spanish), frames its subjects and its viewers in opposing yet not antagonistic positions. Rather, the film echoes the dance

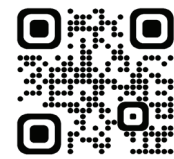
BÁRBARA WAGNER & BENJAMIN DE BURCA: *Swinguerra*

THE JACK W. AND SALLY D. EICHELBERGER FOUNDATION VIDEO GALLERY

battle's call-and-response form of public address, set to the rhythmic stylings of Brazilian hip-hop. Fast-paced, athletic, sexy, dreamlike, and aggressive, the dance styles, like the music, make *Swinguerra* an exhilarating and unforgettable viewing experience and illustrates how dance and music offer rich sources of agency, resistance, and community for marginalized subjects.

Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca are a contemporary collaborative duo known for their photographic series, video installations, and short films. Their work often explores the economics, race, and gender in Brazilian popular music. “The artists present in our films are people we know well and with whom we collaborate to design scenarios,” says Wagner. “In filming, before the camera, they are themselves because it is this kind of knowledge carried by and within the body that we seek to analyze together with them.”

Wagner was born in 1980 in Brasilia, Brazil, while de Burca was born in 1975 in Munich, Germany. The two met in Europe at the end of 2009 while Wagner was pursuing her masters in visual arts in the Netherlands. They married in Berlin in 2010 and then moved to Recife, Brazil, where they began documenting the culture of the city's poorer communities. Since the duo started working together, they have produced works such as 2018's short film *RISE*, which gained recognition at the Berlin Film Festival. Their 2019 film, *Swinguerra*, was featured in the Brazilian pavilion at the 2019 Venice Biennale.



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BÁRBARA WAGNER and BENJANON DE BURCA
Swingerra (video still), 2019
single channel video with sound
Courtesy of the artists and
Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, São Paulo, Brazil