

## **Deliberately Forgetting Metal Work Design: Amnesia for the Sake of Black Cosmopolitanism and Anti-Racism**

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**Date:** September 2022

**Transcription:** Josh Massey

The use of metal in the creation of the arts (in their broadest sense) in Africa has a storied history that is millennia old. Numerous kingdoms in the North, South, East, and West of the continent have created amulets, necklaces, elements of masquerades, realistic sculptures of ancestors and deities, and miniature objects that are proverbs in sculptural form. One should stress that this list is not exhaustive of the many ways that peoples of African descent have used metal in Africa and its diaspora. Yet the Atlantic Slave Trade introduced a scenario where people adept at metal work acquired new ways of working with metal from European and American traditions of wrought iron. Consequentially—through associations with Catholic brotherhoods and under the tutelage of European decorative traditions taught by former enslaved persons as well as colonial masters—artisans and designers of African descent, in some cases, willfully rejected the older design traditions for the sake of trying to rebuild their lives by adopting a cosmopolitan mindset. Three scholars of Afro-diasporic architectural history and cultural history of Africa and Latin America, Adedoyin Teriba, Cassandra Osei and Miguel Valerio, conduct a conversation about how such former enslaved persons developed a deliberate amnesia for African metal work traditions (in preference of European and Latin American ones) to recast themselves as cosmopolitan moderns. Additionally, the discussion will explore how former enslaved persons augmented their histories of metalwork design with carefully constructed histories of Afro-Brazilian designers and African deities to advance the work of anti-racism in the twentieth century.

—Adedoyin Teriba

**Adedoyin Teriba:** My name is Adedoyin Teriba. I am an assistant professor of architectural history at Dartmouth College. I have the privilege of welcoming my esteemed colleagues in this discussion about African metal work, design histories, and how things like generational memory, trauma, and slavery in places such as Brazil and other parts of the African diaspora are

intertwined. I want to welcome and introduce Cassie Osei, a scholar who focuses on the African diaspora in Latin America, as well as Miguel Valerio, a specialist of the study of the African diaspora in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula.

I want to start this conversation by pitching questions to you individually. Cassie, I will go with you first. In my own work on the architecture of Afro-Brazilian settlers in Southwest Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century, I encountered a family who were descendants of the goldsmith referred to as Senhor Vera Cruz. His status as an enslaved person was absent from the family's recollection of their ancestor. An interview I undertook eleven years ago made me think about how the history of African metal work, especially as it pertains to slavery, brings to the fore the idea of generational memory. In the case of the Vera Cruz family, the memory they retained of Vera Cruz, their ancestor, was more about his exploits and successes in his trade and life. They knew nothing about his status as an enslaved person who ultimately gained his freedom. Could you talk about what you see as the relationship between generational memory and the task of anti-racism in Brazil. Also, have you uncovered a similar willful amnesia in the subjects that you study?

**Cassandra Osei:** I think these are multifaceted questions, so I will give multifaceted answers. With regards to the question of "a deliberate amnesia," I think it's very complicated. Although most enslaved people, or formerly enslaved people, were manumitted by the late nineteenth century, Brazil only abolished slavery in 1888. So, Brazil's collective memory of slavery is more recent than other nations in Latin America (with the exclusion of Cuba, which abolished slavery in 1886).

I think that the question of amnesia is complicated because people can obscure certain facts for what they perceive to be the benefit of their family. They may obscure the memory because it may be too painful. But in my own research, which was conducted for the first centennial of the abolition of slavery in 1988, many of the descendants of these enslaved persons who participated in interviews would say, "Oh, you know, my grandmother and my mother were not enslaved, but my great-great-great grandmother or my great-great grandfather were because they had been manumitted earlier than 1888 through the 1871 Law of the Free Womb." The passage of a memory of enslavement is already tried by that substantial link.

Another thing is that in a lot of cases, some of the family members who were enslaved died earlier. In the case of the state of São Paulo, the area in which I am most familiar, there are enduring traditions of narratives about enslavement being passed down. Some of the respondents could give very detailed discussions about their families' past, and others stated, "I heard that my great-great grandmother was enslaved, but I don't know anything about it." On

the flip side, it's important to remember that a lot of people who did become free in São Paulo continued to live, by choice, on the same grounds of their ancestors who were enslaved, residing by force. Brazil is now predominantly urban, but in the early twentieth century, it was not. It wasn't until the 1940s that people started to move en masse to urban areas. For these descendants, there's a stronger memory of the post-abolition period as opposed to the slave period.

Regardless of this tendency within certain families, a collective memory of enslavement that is community-led endures. In Brazil, the memory of slavery is often commemorated culturally, through music, Carnival celebrations, memorials dedicated to abolitionists, Catholic and Afro-Atlantic derived religious traditions, as well as public disputes to preserve sites known to the community as areas significant to the slave trade and resistance against slavery. This is common in the Americas. These tendencies, I think, manifest more strongly through the public than perhaps through individual means.

Then, there's that link to anti-racism. The notion of anti-racism has changed within every decade of the twentieth century. It's different even now in the twenty-first century. Commemoration could be used as a way to articulate, at least in São Paulo, that Black Brazilians were part of the nation and deserved to be viewed as such. The case of São Paulo differs from the rest of Brazil because there was substantial immigration from Europe in order to replace slave labor. In the early part of the twentieth century, immigrants from Europe were perceived as having more legitimacy in that land than the Black people themselves. Once the notion of racial democracy starts taking place in the mid-twentieth century, there's more of a focus on how one could think of the enslaved past as a basis for Brazilian culture and society. That included romanticized notions of enslavement that now in the twenty-first century, many Black activists, scholars, or community members balk at.

I'll close to say that discussing slavery within generational memory is often utilized as a tool to make certain claims. When I was originally doing my research, I had no expectation to look at anything relating to the memory of slavery. I'm not a historian of slavery; my focus is twentieth-century Brazil, Black Brazil. But what I was noticing in these oral history projects is that the speakers had more to say about the contemporary moment in 1988 (which marked the first centennial of slavery's abolition in Brazil) than the post-abolition or even the pre-abolition periods. They were utilizing slavery as a way to say: "Look at what hasn't changed in Brazil since abolition has occurred. We don't have Black presidents. We don't have Black senators. We don't have Black people in prestigious positions." Or if somebody wanted to complain about the poor wages they were getting, the lack of infrastructure in their neighborhood, they'd say, "Oh, I'm being treated like a slave." Even though the public discourse was starting to change in

1988, it was still taboo to talk directly about racism. So, utilizing slavery as a tool to talk about anti-blackness, I see as a kind of move to navigate the pain of generational trauma that may have been inflicted and passed on. I interpret the topic of slavery as a kind of currency to discuss what happened in their present.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Thank you very much for a wide-ranging answer. Before I ask you, Miguel, a question, I wonder whether generational memory has reared its head, either by that phrase or any other phrase in any part of your work on Catholic brotherhoods? I just want to give you the opportunity to respond even before I ask you a question.

**Miguel Valerio:** I just came back from São Paulo. They're building a train station, and they found this train station is in what used to be a quilombo, which is a free Black community. Now there is a debate that the train station should honor the space, but the city doesn't want to. That's a whole other question of memory.

In terms of my research on Black brotherhoods in Brazil, I write about the churches they built, many of which have been turned over to the diocese because the brotherhood doesn't exist anymore. But there are a lot of churches in which the brotherhood still exists. For example, the most famous one is in Pelourinho, Salvador, at the very center of tourism. Pelourinho is a place where memory is played with for all kinds of commercial and aesthetic reasons. At the center of the space of memory is this church.

The Black brotherhood has its church and continues its annual traditions, which contributed in colonial times to the festive calendar of the city and still contributes today. When the members of the brotherhoods get all dressed up for their celebrations, there is a pride and a consciousness about wearing this tradition. So, memory is very much alive in different ways in these spaces.

When Cassie was speaking in terms of the erasure of memory, I was thinking that one of the problems in Brazil, especially in São Paulo, is the erasure of the spaces of memory. I focus mostly on Salvador and Minas Gerais, where most of the Black brotherhoods were and where they built their churches. If you go into the sacristy in the Black church in Pelourinho, there are all these portraits of all these Black holy people or Black leaders of the brotherhood. So, there's a conscious building and preserving of that memory. There's also tours of the church where they speak about history. Study of the brotherhood is a big area in Brazilian studies and of the Black experience. There is a Candomblé, a religious group with origins in Yoruba culture, that preserves that, but also the Catholic history is still very much alive and spoken about on those tours of those churches.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** I want to add to this discussion of the erasure of memory by returning to the biography and work of Senhor Vera Cruz in the Lagos colony at the end of the nineteenth century. Vera Cruz, like some of the formerly enslaved persons who settled in Lagos colony, had prior skills working in gold that we see in Bard Graduate Center's SIGHTLINES on Peace, Power & Prestige exhibition. Especially present in this exhibition is the gold casting tradition of the Akan peoples of Ghana among other ethnic groups. I do not think Vera Cruz was originally from southwest Nigeria; he may have been from Ghana. There were a lot of Afro-Brazilian settlers from Ghana and other parts of the continent who were resettling in the Lagos colony. Vera Cruz's work — speaking of memory and the erasure of memory — evokes the wrought iron designs that you see in Salvador, which were originally European wrought iron traditions translated and transplanted in Brazil. Vera Cruz, like many Afro-Brazilian artisans who settled in West Africa, appropriated European design traditions, visually erasing older West African traditions for many reasons.

I will just mention one of the bases for Vera Cruz's visual erasure. Some of the settlers, in the Lagos colony for instance, had harsh relationships with the locals. The locals attacked the Afro-Brazilian settlers as the latter disembarked in the Lagos colony. This made for a kind of nostalgic yearning for Brazil that you see in the metalwork that these Afro-Brazilian settlers are creating.

Erasure and generational memory, like Cassie said, are complicated in my work in the sense that one is consciously discarding one's ancestral iconographic traditions and constructing them with another to project what the Afro-Brazilians saw as a kind of Brazilianness in the Lagos colony. The irony is that their constructed memory is not only an architectural memory of the places in Brazil that surrounded them when they were enslaved, but an excised memory, stripped of the fact that Vera Cruz could not build his wrought iron designs for himself in Brazil. He only created them in that nation for others while he was enslaved. By now possessing the freedom in the Lagos colony to erect such designs for himself and other free diasporic settlers, the wrought designs in the Lagos Colony were shorn of their violent histories. That's how complicated generational memory is and that is one of the virtues of this current exhibition: to enlighten us about the histories of metal work in Africa that slavery partly erased. Afro-Brazilian settlers in the Lagos colony were conflicted, which is why slavery was partly successful in suppressing our knowledge of the rich traditions of metalwork design in Africa and its diaspora. Former enslaved persons fled Brazil to go to the "Motherland." As they get to the "Motherland," they are nostalgic for Brazil because they are attacked by locals. Who would still want to perpetuate older African traditions of metalwork after such encounters? That's how, in the metalwork of these Afro-Brazilian settlers, erasure and generational memory work out.

**Cassandra Osei:** How do the descendants in Lagos envision or describe their ancestors in Brazil and in Nigeria? There's a tension regarding the presentation of the memory of slavery in West Africa. I can speak at least to the Ghanaian experience, where many times Ghanaians will say, "Well, we never learned anything about slavery or the slave trade in school, so I don't feel very connected to it." My great-great grandmother came to Ghana as an enslaved person. But our family lore is a narrative where that element is under-emphasized or changed. So, I'm wondering if perhaps what you call the amnesia is part of not only Brazilians' nostalgia for their African ancestors, but also a question of how we understand identities like Yoruba or Asante in the present by romanticizing the past.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Touching upon what you said about ancestors in Brazil, let me try to answer by talking about a particular family. The patriarch of the family was a man by the name of João da Rocha; his Yoruba name was Esan. He was sold into slavery as a young boy in the southwestern region. At the age of 30, he had already acquired his freedom in Salvador, married a Bahian, they had a son Candido, and they went as a three-member family and settled in Lagos colony. He became very wealthy. João bequeathed his estate to his son, Candido. Candido died in 1960 and built a two-story house that's still there. It's called the Water House, Casa da Agua.

The da Rocha family never mention João's history as a slave. They only talk about his success; according to them, João was a very successful entrepreneur, pure and simple. The da Rocha family really embraced their Brazilian side. There are many examples of an excised, idealized portrait of Brazilian ancestors that become the narrative for many families in Lagos. In Brazil, whole temples are devoted to certain African kingdoms, Yoruba personalities, and Shango or Yoruba deities. Black Brazilians who are affiliated with those temples embrace all the histories of Yoruba kingdoms and their most successful monarchs and deities (like Eshu, a famous female trickster deity). In any case, there's this careful construction of stories or accounts of ancestors that sometimes eliminates or omits just part of the slavery angle.

**Cassandra Osei:** I think there are a couple of threads that bring all of us together. When you said that there's a careful construction to the Brazilian Nigerians in Lagos, I couldn't help but think about the careful construction of Candomblé communities and spiritual centers in Salvador. I think back to our dialogue on racial democracy and these different periods where Black visibility and Black history was repressed or where it was being carefully embraced. The Bahian Candomblés and terreiros, or churches, were persecuted. From the 1930s into the 1950s, there's this delicate embrace that the federal government was willing to offer. Black Brazilians were integrated into the construction of *brasilidade*, but not completely: the state

embraced African heritage that emphasized culture at the expense of Black agency or acknowledging the realities of anti-Blackness.

Zumbi dos Palmares was not valorized in Brazil until the 1970s because of the advances in the Black social movements. The racial democracy framing, which scholars Paulina Alberto and Jamie Andreson have shown, allowed non-Black people to attach themselves more comfortably to cultural expressions of Black history, which lent them social currency. Mãe Menininha do Gantois was one of the most famous Mãe de Santos in Salvador in the twentieth century. She received celebrities within Bahia who also went on to national renown: Jorge Amado, Pierre Verger, Maria Bethânia, and Caetano Veloso. Mãe Menininha followed in the footsteps of Mãe Aninha, who established and maintained ties with Africa. It was, as Andreson's scholarship argues, a way to articulate social currency through Africa that worked within the confines of Brazil's racial democracy framing. "These are our traditions, and this is what we have been doing." For some terreiros, there was a "Yoruba-fication" where they re-organized elements of the faith in order to be more like Ifá practitioners in Nigeria and Benin, to further their claim to authenticity. That's very different from what has happened in São Paulo, for example.

Unlike the majority-Black city of Salvador, São Paulo is a city where Black people are the minority. They were slow to stake large claims to Africa because the city government was hostile to sites valorizing Afro-Brazilian heritage. Additionally, São Paulo has a deep history of immigration from Europe, the Middle East, and Japan. Miguel referenced the question of Liberdade-Japão, the metro station in the neighborhood Liberdade, which is regarded as a Japanese or largely Asian neighborhood. But activists and historians have revealed that from the early 1700s to the post-abolition period, Liberdade had an active Black population residing there and the neighborhood was a site for the sale and punishment of enslaved people. As Andrew Britt's scholarship has shown, that history and memory has been repressed, largely through urban renewal projects targeting Black sections of central São Paulo.

Another example, where I can link to Miguel's work, was the the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos. Churches like this were subject to these attacks through urban renewal. Scholars such as Petrônio Domingues, Kim D. Butler, Renata Monteiro Siqueira, and Kat Cosby have all documented the pervasive anti-Blackness of São Paulo's Republican era (1889-1930), where city engineers, architects, and council people wanted to industrialize, Europeanize, and whiten the city. The city condemned the church for destruction in favor of their urban renewal projects. The Rosário dos Homens Pretos was rebuilt elsewhere but continued to face frequent demolition threats from the city. This was devastating to the Black community given that, before abolition, Black paulistanos gathered there for fellowship and the benefits the Brotherhood afforded them.

Urban renewal projects increased the property values in the central zone. As a consequence of this, land speculation, rural to urban migration from the interior, as well as the increasing cost of living, pushed Black populations towards the city's ever-moving periphery. This is why memorialization efforts to formalize Black heritage sites in the city have been slow and complicated. Many Black paulistanos lack access to these sites because they live far away from them. However, as Britt and Reighan Gillam's work attests, there have been efforts in the central zone and periphery to create tours and art and history projects that force paulistanos to reframe the memory of Black communities there. Among these projects include Sampa Negra, Revista Menelick 2o Ato, and the events sponsored by the Museu Afro-Brasil, to name a few.

**Miguel Valerio:** One of the problems for me is that there are too many memories. There's always a palimpsest of memory. One of the places that I went to in São Paulo is the Black church, which was one of the most beautiful churches in the city when it was rebuilt in the twentieth century. But now it's in a terrible state of disrepair. The inner city has become abandoned. Where this church is now, in 1935, they built this famous statue, which is a homage to Black mothers who took care of white babies. That monument is right next to the church.

São Paulo is full of unhoused individuals. Since COVID, homelessness has grown in Brazil, and this church is one of the places that people congregate around because the church provides food. The same thing is going on in the church in Rio de Janeiro, but sex workers also congregate around this church. This has become the place you avoid. Very close to Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Homens Pretos is Santa Ifigênia, which used to be a Black church, but at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Archbishop demolished it and he built this huge gothic church that is no longer Black. If you live in Sao Paulo, there is no way you're going to know. When I was in Sao Paulo, if I went to a fancy neighborhood, I hardly saw any Black people, so there's still segregation. It parallels the US and living in St. Louis, where these things are also present.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Miguel, let me stay with you and go onto your work on Catholic brotherhoods. Portuguese Catholic brotherhoods had influenced the institution of what some people like to call a master-protégé sort of relationship. One sees a parallel with the way that the knowledge of metalwork traditions among the Yoruba in West Africa, Ghana, and southwest Nigeria were passed down through many generations. In some parts of Africa, the profession of gold casting or bronze casting was passed down within the family. Have those categories, the master and protégé, appeared in your work? Are those categories helpful to what you have been studying?



**Miguel Valerio:** In colonial Brazil, the artists that are celebrated today were mixed race Black people; they were Afro-Brazilians: Aleijadinho and Mestre Valentim in Minas Gerais, and Francisco Xavier das Chagas, who was Black and enslaved, in Salvador. Many of these artists got their start as workshop apprentices and then they themselves would later have a whole set of apprentices, or protégés.

Nowadays, there's a big boom in people studying Black metalworkers in Brazil during the colonial period. There are a lot of articles about Black people in metal foundry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but to find metalworkers in the colonial period is even more extraordinary. For example, it was legal to be a metalworker in Bahia, but it was not allowed in Minas Gerais because the crown wanted people to buy from one place or another. So, there's some control of commerce. Even if there was a prohibition, you needed metalworkers for carriages, for mining, for daily life.

If you think of metalwork, art, and craft in terms of making tools that are useful, Black people ruled this field. When I was in São Paulo I visited the Afro-Brazilian Museum. One of the things that I saw was the huge section dedicated to tools associated with Black labor and slave labor. All these tools that had metal had to be worked into useful things. And then metals had to be made into pleasant things, into aesthetics for buildings, for churches. Many of these metalworkers were members of the brotherhood themselves.

In Bahia, the Black metalworkers and jewelers, especially those who worked with gold and silver, had to form a corporation, a guild more or less. This is true of the Portuguese Empire and the Spanish Empire: many white guilds would not let Black people be members, but a lot of white members of the guilds who were master goldsmiths would have Black apprentices and Black people doing the work. Once gold was discovered in Minas Gerais, Brazil became the largest slave society in the world. Black people outnumbered Europeans everywhere. So, it's a logical conclusion, backed by concrete examples, that they were involved in this work.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Miguel, as we were just talking, I was thinking about the Smithsonian African American History and Culture Museum in Washington, DC. David Adjaye designed the exterior. The wrought iron of the exterior was inspired by the tradition of Black wrought iron workers in this country. I was also thinking about Phillip Simmons, a celebrated wrought iron maker from South Carolina who died at the age of 97 in 2009. He was taught iron smithing by a former enslaved person. This tradition and Simmons's apprenticeship were references I wanted to insert into the conversation. It's rare, even in contemporary architecture, this idea of metalwork and African and African diasporic skilled metal workers.

**Miguel Valerio:** One of the things that I forgot to mention that I thought about when you were speaking about the Brazilians in Nigeria, doing what you can call Europeanized metal, is that metalwork was outlawed in some places in Brazil. What they're saying is that the people who are being enslaved in Africa and brought to Brazil, are bringing African metalwork skills with them. So how to work metal into Brazil? There was a German, Baron of Eshwege who opened a mine, a metallurgical foundry in Mina Gerais at the beginning of the nineteenth century. When he got there, he described all the rudimentary ways that people had to work metal. So, the scholarship has traced and compared, and found that in Brazil they were using African metalwork technology, not Portuguese.

This is an important point of comparison to understand what's going on. In Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century, you have huge metal foundries right outside of São Paulo. For the longest time, it was thought that only white Europeans worked in the foundries. There is a new book that discusses that Black people were working in the foundry, so this work is being vindicated in the scholarship at the moment.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** I have to hunt down that reference, because that really does bring into relief what was done in Brazil versus what was done later in the Lagos colony and parts of West Africa. Cassie, I want to go back to you, and I want to raise in this discussion the archives, just as a category. I realize you work in the twentieth century, but archives are very important to you. Can you talk about what archives you've used? Additionally, is the word "archive" as a concept relevant for your work or this subject because of the perennial problem of trying to uncover the excluded voices in institutional archives?

**Cassandra Osei:** I focused on local, municipal, state, and university archives in São Paulo. Some of my interviewees would show me their family effects. There's a huge politics around archives because of the way racial democracy as an ideology has framed Black people. Common archival subjects include Black football players, Carnival, samba, maybe art, cultural iterations of Blackness, or things related to slavery. Navigating the archives requires a lot of creativity. São Paulo is renowned for a rich history that's based on the Black newspaper tradition. There's a huge collection of Black newspapers created and organized by men who were prominent in the Black communities of São Paulo and who were literate.

I found the municipal archives very rich. The city government did commemorate certain dates related to ending slavery; the most obvious one is the 13th of May. But they also recognized celebrations for the 28th of September, which commemorates the signing of Brazil's Law of the Free Womb in 1871. There are a lot of sources on those celebrations. Black journalists were multi-located; they often wrote for the newspaper while also belonging to a Black brotherhood

or a Black recreative club. They participated or helped organize these celebrations and left some documentation that was later incorporated into the state and municipal archives (because the municipal and state governments sponsored the celebrations).

In the 1970s, Black social movements made a resurgence. Some activists later joined the academy and donated their papers to universities. I made use of several collections. At the Federal University of São Carlos, there was the collection of Eduardo de Oliveira e Oliveira as well as the collection of recreative and activist organization, the Associação Cultural do Negro. The resurgence of Black social movements coincides with the nearing of Brazil's first centennial marking the abolition of slavery. Historians in Brazil, such as Maria de Lourdes Monaco Janotti, began to document the memory of slavery among Black families. As I already said, I didn't intend to engage these slavery archives because I'm not a historian of slavery, but upon reading these oral history interviews I realized that the participants utilized slavery as a foundation to comment on their present conditions.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Yes, indeed. Miguel mentioned Aleijadinho, the eighteenth and nineteenth century sculptor and architect who looms very large, even in contemporary Afro-Brazilian culture. I remember watching a film on his life in the early 2000s in New York City. There was an African Diaspora film festival, and there was a film on his life. I almost want to wager that Aleijadinho is looked upon as a romantic figure, and I do not mean romantic in a fictitious sense, but, in a very ideal sense that he's almost like a hero in his representation. This is a question for either one of you; is Aleijadinho invoked as an icon for the work of anti-racism today in Brazil?

**Miguel Valerio:** I haven't seen the film on Aleijadinho, but I have at least twenty books on Aleijadinho. Everywhere you go in Minas Gerais, you can buy one of these books. Every church, every museum has one of these books on Aleijadinho. In terms of the history of scholarship, he has been studied the longest. Myriam de Oliveira, who has written twenty books about him, exploded the whole field. In terms of activism, what I have seen in Recife, Salvador, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro will be sculptures and urban designs by Mestre Valentim da Fonseca e Silva. A lot of people in Rio de Janeiro know the Paço Imperial, the Royal Palace, that Mestre Valentim built, as an important place. They don't know that it was built by a Black man.

There was an exhibit in the museum of art about Mestre Valentim and Black art in general. There was a huge section on Mestre Valentim, and there was also a lot of metal work in that exhibit as well. But, as you and Cassie know very well, Zumbi is the figure that emerges in the seventies as the symbol of resistance. One of the funny things is that there is a famous statue of Zumbi in Salvador, and then they put one in São Paulo, but it's not a very good copy. Although

there is National Day of Black Awareness, it is called Zumbi Day. One of my favorite writers at the moment, a graphic novelist Marcelo D'Saete, has been doing work about runaway slaves, and he wrote *Angola Janga*, which has been a great success. In this novel, he tries to kill the myth of Zumbi. Zumbi has been the figure for Black intellectuals, now they want to move beyond Zumbi, but in the popular imagination, in books, in movies, in songs, Zumbi is still present as a figure.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Miguel, how have you been able to do your work on Afro-Brazilian Catholic brotherhoods in terms of archives?

**Miguel Valerio:** As I said earlier, the brotherhoods are still active and have this continuity. Some of the brotherhoods have their own archives, which are very guarded. It's more difficult to get into a brotherhood archive than to get into a public archive. Some brotherhoods, especially in Recife and, in other places, didn't have the resources to maintain the documents. Brazil is a humid place and maintaining documents that are from the eighteenth century, early eighteenth century, and sometimes seventeenth century is difficult and requires a lot of technology. The brotherhoods have turned them over to the diocese or the state. In the last twenty years, dioceses and states have gotten resources to create good environments for those documents. It's one of the most joyous parts of my work—going to a church or going to the archive and looking at the archival records that the brotherhoods kept.

Brazil has the richest archives in terms of studying these brotherhoods. The brotherhoods were everywhere in the Iberian world, but in Mexico there are hardly any documents. There are some documents in Peru, but Brazil has the most documents.

I was just looking at a membership book that expanded fifty years and it would tell you whether a person was sold, whether a person got married, how long a person was a member, or if a person moved. One of the things that you could see in Recife in the mid-eighteenth century was a lot of Black people moving to Rio de Janeiro. So, the book says, "went to Rio, went to Rio, went to Rio." It's a rich source of information for the lives of people that otherwise didn't get recorded. There is that famous saying, "Thank God for the people that are not in the archives," because it usually means they were not in trouble. But, in the brotherhoods, being in the archives doesn't necessarily mean being in trouble; it means that they were a member of a community. It shows continuity. It tells you who they were, who their children were, if they paid for the festival, so then, you know they had economic power. Sometimes it tells you the profession. In Recife, there were a lot of people that were in the militia and the record shows that. If you know Recife and the history with the Dutch, there was a lot of military activities, and

it therefore makes sense that a lot of people were in the militia. So, it's a rich archive, not just for studying the brotherhood, but the Black presence in Brazil in colonial times.

**Adedoyin Teriba:** Our discussion has come to an end. I am immensely grateful for this enlightening conversation. I said in the beginning that the history of workers of metal of African descent both in Latin America and also in Africa as well touches upon many things, only some of which we were able to discuss today. Whether it's slavery, trauma, generational memory, or the careful construction of memories, just looking at the SIGHTLINES on Peace, Power & Prestige exhibition brings to the fore all of those issues.