

Conjuring within a *Museum in Suspension*: Critical Fabulation, Spectral Technology, and Digital Insurgency

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Abstract

This article analyzes *Conjurados* (2025) by Marlus Araújo, a work of generative video art, developed for *Museu em Suspensão*, a project conceived for the Museu da Inconfidência that explores the potential of AI for digital actions in historical museums. The work stages a poetic fabulation on the implosion of the institution's colonial monumentality and the symbolic rebirths that emerge from ruins. Far from operating as a mere digital animation of the collection, the video mobilizes metaphors of collapse, recomposition, and emergence to question the museum as a device for the fixation of history. Articulating decolonial thought and critiques of digital colonialism, one argues that *Conjurados* employs artificial intelligence as a speculative technopoetics, exploring algorithmic hallucination as an aesthetic method capable of destabilizing archives. *Conjurados* operates as a counter-archive that reinscribes memory, tensions the colonial imaginary, and conjures decolonial futures through the entanglement of art, technology, and spectral agency.

Keywords: generative video art; artificial intelligence; online curating; decolonial thought; cosmotechnics.

The video *Conjurados* (Conspirators), created by the artist Marlus Araújo in 2025 for the project *Museu em Suspensão* (Museum in Suspension), proposes a poetic fabulation on the implosion of colonial monumentality and the possible symbolic rebirths that emerge from the ruins of one of Brazil's most emblematic historical museums – the Museu da Inconfidência (Inconfidence Museum), located in Ouro Preto. This article proposes a reading of *Conjurados* as an aesthetic intervention situated at the intersection of digital arts, colonial collections, and insurgent technologies. Far from functioning as a mere digital animation of a museum collection, the video mobilizes metaphors of collapse and recomposition to challenge the very notion of the museum as an apparatus for fixing history.

Inserted within the context of the *Museu em Suspensão* project, developed by the Academia de Curadoria Research Group with support from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq, which critically investigates the role of artificial intelligence and digital arts in the digital transformation of a historical museum, we propose to understand *Conjurados* as an experience of generative video art in which artificial intelligence does not operate as a tool for automation or illustration of the collection, but rather as a fabulatory agent capable of recombining data, producing deviations, and establishing unstable regimes of visibility. Drawing on contributions from decolonial thought (MIGNOLO, 2018), critiques of digital colonialism (FORNASIER; BRUM, 2024), and the notion of cosmotronics (HUI, 2017), among other references, we propose to read *Conjurados* as a gesture that operates simultaneously between ruin and germination, between the spectral and the insurgent¹.

***Conjurados*: Audiovisual Fabulation and Programmed Ruin**

In the video *Conjurados*, Araújo proposes an audiovisual fabulation that dramatizes the collapse of colonial monumentality and the emergence of a spectral and vegetal memory. In the artist's words, "The materiality of history refuses to remain intact"². By visually reimagining the Museu da Inconfidência as a living organism in a state of ruin and regeneration, the work mobilizes digital imagery to articulate what Saidiya Hartman (2020) defines as "critical fabulation": an aesthetic operation interrogates the historical archive, and also destabilizes, reimagines, and conjures its absences. Although Hartman develops the term to address the racial dimensions of absence and violence within the archive, in this article we employ the concept to analyze how the artist – assisted by, yet critical of, artificial intelligence – fabulates alternative histories for the museum's collection.

To construct this critical fabulation, Araújo works from a heterogeneous set of visual data drawn from different sources. He employs images from Google Street View and records generated by spatial modeling platforms such as Matterport³, in addition to institutional photographs and materials from the official collection database provided by the Museu da Inconfidência, the artist brings these elements together and inserts them into generative processes, composing a hybrid field in which documentary references, technical images, and visualities captured from urban space overlap. It is within this intersection—where museum-provided data encounters publicly circulating images and digital capture infrastructures—that

¹ To watch *Conjurados*, access: *MIN Museu em Suspensão – Marlus Araújo*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phn0bSWQVO4&t=378s>.

² Marlus Araújo's interview with the authors is available in the same link as his video.

³ Matterport is a leading spatial data company focused on the digitization and indexing of the built world. Its 3D data platform enables anyone to transform a physical space into an accurate and immersive digital twin, which can be used to design, construct, operate, market, and better understand any environment.

the work begins to produce its distortions, allowing the collection to be reconfigured beyond a stable set of objects and to operate instead as dynamic and remixable matter.

The narrative begins with recognizable images – the museum façade, the Baroque architecture of Ouro Preto, and Aleijadinho's sculptures in Congonhas do Campo – and gradually transforms into a ritual of unveiling. Like a symbolic Pandora's box, the video reveals the emotional and political undercurrents of colonial memory: ambiguous religious images, objects that break apart, disintegrate, and refuse to remain fixed. Here, the video performs a gesture of fabulatory implosion (Figure 1), in which the authority of the collection is disrupted by a poetics of collapse.

It is worth noting that the AI merges images of Aleijadinho's sculptures located in the city of Congonhas with the façade of the Museu da Inconfidência (Fig. 2). This can be read as a glitch deriving from human errors embedded in the available data, given that Ouro Preto is widely recognized as the symbolic city of this colonial artist's production, while his most celebrated work is located elsewhere, at the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos in Congonhas. In this sense, fabulation is intrinsic to the operation of AI itself, which fills gaps with images from other places and constructs narratives from fragments encountered across Internet mappings, effectively hallucinating.



Figure 1 – *Conjurados*, by Marlus Araujo, digital video, 2025
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRy4kXGOA8k>)

If the blending of images from Ouro Preto and Congonhas reveals the way artificial intelligence operates through imperfect approximations, this phenomenon leads us to a broader

debate concerning the very notion of hallucination within the field of generative models. In technical terms, “hallucination” in the context of information technology refers to the production of incorrect information by AI systems, resulting from mistaken associations, improper extrapolations, or inferences that fill gaps with unverified content (SUN et al., 2024). However, beyond being understood as a simple error, hallucination may also be interpreted as a productive failure – a point of friction that exposes the interpretive limits of the model while simultaneously opening spaces for alternative ways of reading the digital.



Figure 2 – Scene from *Conjurados*, Marlus Araújo, digital video, 2025
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phn0bSWQVO4&t=378s>)

In several scientific fields, such as computational chemistry, biomedicine, and physics, these deviations have already been deliberately explored as engines of discovery⁴. Algorithmic imagination, although imprecise, generates variations, hypotheses, and structures that do not exist in the known world, yet are plausible enough to be tested. It constitutes a speculative regime in which error is not merely a problem to be eliminated, but a field of possibility capable of accelerating cycles of invention by articulating proposal and verification within an expanded temporal framework. Through this speculative regime, in which algorithmic deviation becomes

⁴ The article “How Hallucinatory AI Helps Science Dream Up Big Breakthroughs” discusses how so-called AI hallucinations – typically regarded as serious errors because they generate false information – can, within scientific research, become valuable sources of innovation. Researchers across diverse fields have begun exploring the imaginative outputs of generative models as engines of creativity, capable of accelerating hypothesis formation, suggesting novel structures, and inspiring previously unthinkable solutions. Rather than being treated as mere noise, these hallucinations function as preliminary scientific conjectures that, when subjected to empirical testing, may lead to significant discoveries. See: “How Hallucinatory AI Helps Science Dream Up Big Breakthroughs.” Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/23/science/ai-hallucinations-science.html>. Accessed on December 15, 2025.

both a poetic and epistemological operator, it becomes possible to redirect attention to the ways in which institutions such as museums produce and administer authority. If hallucination exposes the instability of AI systems, it also reveals the fragility of curatorial devices themselves, which for centuries have presented themselves as unquestionable forms of stability.

At this point, the relationship between algorithmic hallucination and critical fabulation can be further developed through the reflections of Sidarta Ribeiro in *The Oracle of Night: The History and Science of Dreams*. The neuroscientist describes dreaming as an exercise in recombination, capable of reorganizing memories, affects, and images in order to produce new meanings, operating as a form of adaptive intelligence that simulates scenarios and anticipates possibilities. This conception offers a productive framework for understanding the deviations generated by AI in *Conjurados*: just as dreams are constituted from the dispersed material of human experience, generative models reorganize fragments drawn from vast cultural archives, producing unexpected correlations and visualities that did not previously exist. Both dreams and algorithms operate by recombining residues, gaps, and traces, albeit under radically different regimes. Dreams preserve layers of subjectivity and embodiment, whereas AI depends upon incomplete and biased datasets shaped by specific technical and political infrastructures. Nevertheless, this formal proximity allows us to recognize in algorithmic hallucination a speculative potential akin to that of dreaming. Rather than interpreting such deviations as failures, they may be read as opportunities to expand the interpretation of the collection and to create zones of critical fabulation.

Thus, it is precisely at this point that *Conjurados* shifts the axis of critique. By activating images that escape documentary conventions and expand the repertoire of the possible, the video challenges the mechanisms through which museums choose what to display, how to display it, and what to silence, thereby consolidating particular versions of the past and mediating ways of seeing. Marlus's imagined interventions interrogate this unspoken pact between institution and visitor, exposing the supposedly irrefutable image.

In *Conjurados*, the prompt diverts the logic of the traditional imaginary, allowing sacralized figures to cease performing their expected roles. The torch-bearing angels, which once functioned exclusively as collection objects and instruments of Catholic faith, become something unexpected: they kiss, embrace, and encounter one another (Fig. 3). This gesture, at once sensitive and transgressive, establishes a point of inflection that reveals a central contradiction of the Museu da Inconfidência—an institution that celebrates revolutionary ideals while remaining anchored in conservative structures⁵. The kiss between the angels does not merely unsettle the

⁵ These include linear accounts of the Inconfidência Mineira movement, a focus on canonized historical figures, and the preservation of exhibition standards that reinforce aesthetic, moral, and religious values. Although the museum's 2006 exhibition redesign modernized its presentation, it did not incorporate newer historiographical interpretations, resulting in a crystallized and insufficiently critical discourse. The study highlights the importance of fostering dialogue between historiography and exhibition design in order to enrich understandings of the past and promote broader, more reflective interpretations of history (Alves, 2014).

exhibition narrative; it directly confronts the limits historically imposed upon the religious imaginary. An apparently simple act is transformed into a symbolic insurgency. And when followed by the embrace, the gesture accumulates additional layers of meaning: it becomes a metaphor for a belated encounter, for an affection that had long remained latent but could not emerge within the institutional boundaries of the “sacred.”

Within this process of symbolic displacement, the figure of the torch-bearing angels comes into proximity with another guardian of light: Hecate, the Greek deity associated with crossroads, magic, and passages between worlds. Frequently depicted carrying two torches, Hecate illuminates liminal paths and guides transitions involving life, death, and rebirth. The association between these figures – one linked to the Christian-colonial imaginary and the other to a pagan and archaic universe – highlights the archetypal dimension of the torch as a symbol. More than an instrument of illumination, it functions as a technology of passage. In the context of *Conjurados*, this light reveals not only what had been physically concealed, but also social, moral, and affective dimensions that have been neglected over time. The angels, once subordinated to the altar, are transformed into agents of opening, radiating a luminosity that inaugurates pathways of deviation, desire, and symbolic subversion.

In another sequence of the video, the beams of the gallows used in the execution of Tiradentes appear to collapse, giving way upon the pedestal that identifies the object as a historical artifact. This scene destabilizes the materiality of the punitive device and extends the insurgent narrative initiated by the angels, suggesting the need to revisit and, in many cases, reconstruct the ways in which history is institutionalized. The collapse of the gallows calls for a reexamination of the narratives surrounding the Inconfidência Mineira, often presented as a masculine and heroic movement. Recent scholarship has highlighted the participation of women such as Hipólita Jacinta and Bárbara Heliodora⁶ in the political articulation and circulation of emancipatory ideas, while also revealing the trajectories of other historical agents who are beginning to emerge. By bringing these presences to the surface, *Conjurados* exposes historiographical gaps and expands the spectrum of voices that compose the narrative of the Conjuração Mineira (Minas Gerais Conspiracy), incorporating subjects and experiences that have remained silenced by both the museum and official historiography⁷.

⁶ Hipólita Jacinta Teixeira de Melo, recognized for her participation in the Inconfidência Mineira, financed part of the movement's activities, offered her residence as a meeting place for the conspirators, and maintained extensive correspondence among them. When the arrest of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (known as Tiradentes) became known, it was Hipólita who alerted the other members of the group, urging them to continue defending the cause despite the risk of retaliation. Bárbara Heliodora Guilhermina da Silveira, in turn, played a significant role in the social and symbolic dimensions of the Inconfidência Mineira. Her residence served as a gathering place for the conspirators, providing political and moral support to the movement, as well as sustaining resistance to the sanctions imposed upon her family after the repression of the uprising. These actions underpin her recognition as a heroine of the movement for having defied, within the context of the eighteenth century, the limitations imposed upon women by actively associating herself with a political movement. See: Gouvea, 2018.

⁷ The recognition of these female conspirators within the Pantheon of the Conspirators, located at the Museu da Inconfidência–Hipólita Jacinta in 2023 and Bárbara Heliodora in 2024—represents an important act of historical



Figure 3 – Scene from *Conjurados*, Marlus Araújo, digital video, 2025
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRy4kXGOA8k>)

This epistemological shift – from error and concealment toward the opening of the possible – is particularly fertile when applied to AI-assisted artistic and curatorial practices. As in the sciences, hallucination can operate as a rehearsal of possible worlds: it anticipates relationships, challenges classifications, creates unexpected proximities between images and documents, and invites the human gaze to engage critically with the unprecedented. When situated within a framework of ethical awareness and interpretive rigor, hallucination ceases to be merely a computational delirium and begins to function as a speculative tool for imagining regenerative and shared futures, in which ruin and recomposition, as in *Conjurados*, coexist as guiding forces for new museum fabulations.

Instead of an immobile ruin, a vegetal vitality emerges and spreads throughout the space: vines, fungi, plants, and butterflies occupy the scene. The architecture is transformed into an organic environment, as if nature itself were invoking new forms of presence and care (Fig. 4). This moment materializes what Donna Haraway terms “speculative fabulation,” a practice of imagining possible worlds through multispecies and affective relations, in which life erupts through the fissures of the monument.

reparation. By acknowledging their contributions, the museum highlights the role of women in the struggle against colonial rule, and expands the very notion of the national hero, recognizing that the pursuit of freedom was likewise shaped by women committed to emancipatory ideals.

A figure that recurs throughout this book is SF: science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism, scientific fact, and so far. This reiterated list whirls and loops through the pages that follow in words and visual images, braiding me and the reader together with beings and patterns at risk. Scientific fact and speculative fabulation require one another, and both require speculative feminism. I think of SF and string figures in a triple sense of figuration. First, by promiscuously pulling at practical fibers and dense, coagulated events, I try to trace the threads and follow them wherever they may lead, in order to find the crucial patterns and entanglements necessary for staying with the trouble in real and specific times and places. In this sense, SF is a tracing method for following a dark thread through a real and dangerous adventure story, where who lives and who dies (and in what ways) may become clearer for the cultivation of multispecies justice (Haraway, 2023, p. 12).

The reanimation of the museum through nature and spectral presences does not present itself as a solution, but rather as a fabulatory suspension—an interval in which historical time wavers and other ontologies begin to emerge. The love of the angels, the joy of the dead who dance, and the vegetation that overtakes the city function as figures that condense tensions between mourning and reinvention, between erasure and listening.



Figure 4 – Scene from *Conjurados*, Marlus Araújo, digital video, 2025
(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRy4kXGOA8k>)

Within the context of *Museu em Suspensão*, the video operates as a curatorial device that does not represent the collection, but rather dramatizes it. By appropriating digital resources to dismantle the colonial imaginary, *Conjurados* also interrogates the technical infrastructures of memory: who animates whom? What technologies are at work in the invocation of specters within the digital museum? In this sense, the video functions as a technopoetic essay on the role of the image in the reconfiguration of history.

AI, Hallucination, and Fabulation: Between Error and Potential

Within the field of generative video art, algorithmic hallucination ceases to be understood as a technical error and instead operates as an aesthetic procedure, articulating indeterminacy, recombination, and visual speculation. In proposing a critical reading of the video *Conjurados*, it is important to situate its image-making operations within contemporary debates on artificial intelligence and creativity. Far from functioning as a neutral tool for representing the collection, AI appears in the work as a speculative and fabulatory agent. Its function is not to reconstruct reality with precision, but rather to hallucinate the archive, operating at the boundary between memory and reverie, between technical error and aesthetic potential.

This approach resonates directly with the concept of “machine hallucination,” developed by artist and researcher Refik Anadol. In his installations, AI is activated not to reproduce existing images, but to generate visualities that “could have existed” through the recombination of vast archival datasets. Hallucination, in this context, is not a failure; it is a creative process. As Lane and Sethumadhavan (2024) explain, Anadol’s work proposes “speculative structures that suggest an unusual marriage between dynamic perception and static archives,” giving form to what they describe as latent cinema – an aesthetics of indeterminacy that transforms fixed data into a sensitive and unstable experience.

This logic becomes perceptible in *Conjurados* when artificial intelligence visually conflates the façade of the Museu da Inconfidência with Aleijadinho’s sculptures in Congonhas. What might initially appear to be a technical error, resulting from a geographical or historical inaccuracy, reveals itself instead as an automated fabulation: a form of emergent narrative produced through the biased reading of digital databases. The AI hallucinates images from imprecise statistical correlations that are nonetheless poetically fertile.

This gesture of archival disorganization also evokes Lev Manovich’s (2022) argument, which critiques the dominant expectation that AI must prove its creativity by imitating the visual traditions of Western art. For Manovich, this obsession with “style” overlooks the critical potential of AI as a situated cultural medium. Rather than demanding that the machine produce recognizable artworks, it may be more productive to investigate what happens when it fails – that is, when it breaks with representational logic and operates within the liminal zone of fabulation.

In *Conjurados*, this liminal zone is inhabited by vegetation emerging from ruins, specters that dance, and images that dissolve. AI operates as a fabulatory cosmotechnics that, rather than classifying or organizing, germinates. It enables us to think of memory as a field of symbolic recomposition, in which the past is reconfigured not through historical linearity but through its affective and speculative resonances. In this sense, Saidiya Hartman’s critical fabulation is amplified: it interrogates the human archive and the digital archive, placing in

suspension the colonial epistemologies that continue to orient our systems of knowledge organization.

Therefore, the “AI hallucination” in *Conjurados* does not represent a deviation from the artistic project; rather, it constitutes its poetic core. Algorithmic error ceases to be a failure to be corrected and instead functions as a vector of aesthetic and political reinvention. By embracing this logic, the video challenges the museum’s colonial collection and expands the debate on the criteria that define what art, memory, and technology are – or ought to be. In this context, artificial intelligence neither replaces nor represents the human; rather, it enters into fabulation with the institution and inscribes itself within the curatorial gesture as a spectral, insurgent, and vegetal presence.

Furthermore, we suggest that the artist employs what might be described as a “spectral” use of AI, in the sense of rendering visible what is absent, erased, or concealed within museum discourse—such as enslavement, colonization, and social inequalities. This approach activates memories, presences, and temporalities that are neither linear nor fully documented, while also promoting a technology of evocation capable of revealing silenced memories, unrecorded narratives, and repressed affects.

Inspired by the notion of “spectral technology” proposed by Terry Castle, we understand *Conjurados* as a device of evocation – a sensitive machinery capable of giving form to absent presences, activating interdicted memories, and summoning affects that escape the logic of the rational archive (CASTLE, 1988). Within this horizon, the video constitutes a technopoetic gesture that mobilizes digital resources not to reproduce reality faithfully, but to invoke absences and destabilize hegemonic narratives of the colonial past. Technologies such as 3D animation and artificial intelligence, by producing glitches, noise, and imprecise images, operate as spectral devices that activate embodied memories, bring forth ghostly presences, and reorganize temporalities linked to enslavement, colonization, and social inequalities. What is at stake is the activation of modes of remembering and feeling that do not follow historical linearities nor depend upon official documentation. In this way, the video functions as an insurgent counter-archive, aligned with the idea that the digital, when mobilized from the perspective of the Global South, can become a tool of critical evocation and resistance.

Colonial Technologies and Insurgent Cosmotechnics

By evoking the symbolic and affective layers of Brazilian colonial memory, the video *Conjurados* also exposes and challenges the technical infrastructures that sustain the digitization of the past. In its computational materiality – which encompasses digital animation, three-dimensional simulations, and image databases – the work does not align itself with a celebration of technology; rather, it performs a gesture that aesthetically destabilizes the very functioning of artificial intelligence. In this context, it becomes essential to approach the video through what

Fornasier and Brun (2024) describe as algorithmic coloniality, defined as the reproduction of Eurocentric epistemologies through digital technologies that reiterate racial, economic, and cognitive structures of domination characteristic of surveillance capitalism. As the authors remind us, “new technologies, however advanced they may be, are human constructions; therefore, they tend to reproduce aspects and characteristics present within humanity, perpetuated by those who have historically held power and control.” In *Conjurados*, these tensions are neither erased nor resolved. Instead, they are rendered visible and transformed into poetic material, composing the terrain upon which AI is summoned to dramatize its own limits.

Within the context of *Museu em Suspensão*, the use of artificial intelligence in *Conjurados* does not seek to classify the collection or to organize the visible. The work moves precisely in the opposite direction. Rather than adhering to the fluid, clean, and optimized narratives that typically accompany the promises of digital technologies, the animation embraces failures, glitches, and fabulations of a vegetal world. In this operation, opacity becomes a form of knowledge, noise is transformed into an aesthetic choice, and error assumes the condition of an insurgent gesture. This perspective resonates with the project of a decolonial turn in the age of AI, as advocated by Fornasier and Brun, who emphasize the need to recognize the Global South not merely as a target of technological systems, but as an active producer of visions, narratives, and practices capable of reconfiguring the digital future.

Fornasier and Brun further warn that most AI systems are developed under the control of Big Tech corporations headquartered in the Global North, reproducing – under a new guise – processes of data expropriation, epistemic invisibilization, and neocolonial experimentation upon peripheral populations. The case of *Conjurados* reveals an attempt at a counter-hegemonic operation: an image made with AI, yet against the grammar of hegemonic AI systems. This critical position stands in opposition to the systematic exclusion of the Global South from debates concerning the digital future, since, as the authors argue, “peoples of the Global South [...] are not included in discussions about the future of digital society” and are frequently treated as “testing grounds” for technologies designed to serve the interests of the Global North (Fornasier; Brun, 2024). The nature that erupts from the ruins in the video – vines, fungi, clouds – is not decorative but insurrectional, as if the earth itself were striking back, using the digital to re-enchant the specter of a collapsed museum.

In this direction, the fabulation produced by artificial intelligence—which conflates works attributed to Aleijadinho, displaces landscapes, and merges different cities—can be understood through Fornasier and Brun’s critique of the logic of technological universality, according to which digital systems tend to disregard cultural and epistemological differences by imposing a Western model of knowledge organization. *Conjurados* challenges this logic by producing fabulations that disobey technical taxonomies. Rather than preserving memory as archived

data, the video reinvents it as a creative and situated gesture—a memory of the Global South that does not remain fixed, but germinates through the work of artists.

This perspective is also articulated through the institutional context of the Museu da Inconfidência itself, which has recognized the need for renewal and is currently undergoing a broad process of repositioning and revision of its exhibition narrative. Among its recent initiatives, particular attention should be given to the Contemporary Art Interventions Program⁸. Created in 2022, the program introduced temporary contemporary art exhibitions in direct dialogue with both the museum's collection and the architecture of the building. Its proposal seeks to update interpretations of the colonial period by highlighting historical absences—particularly those of Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations, women, as well as broader social and political inequalities—while questioning enduring stereotypes about the cultural formation of Ouro Preto and Brazil. In this context, contemporary art becomes a device for resignifying historical traumas and reopening interpretive possibilities within history.

Inspired by the British organization Arts&Heritage⁹, which fosters collaborations among artists, communities, museums, and cultural heritage institutions, the Program is structured around an action-research methodology aimed at the critical renewal of institutionalized historical narratives. By challenging traditional models of heritage interpretation, it proposes a reflection on how different publics explore and relate to cultural narratives, demonstrating how artistic practices can generate new insights, initiate previously non-existent conversations, and engage broader communities. In this way, a new cycle is inaugurated, one in which absences that had previously been naturalized become visible and acquire the power to reconfigure the ways in which the past is imagined and interpreted.

From this perspective, the reading of the video allows us to recognize a curatorial practice aligned with what the authors describe as “decolonial AI” – that is, a technology resignified in the present through ethical and aesthetic principles that value diversity, opacity, pluriversality, and insurgency. This position stands in opposition to the dominant paradigm identified by the same authors, according to which the production of knowledge, rationalization, and critical thought associated with colonizing subjects are regarded as superior to those constructed by colonized peoples. Such a process constitutes a form of “digital epistemicide,”

⁸ The Contemporary Art Interventions Program seeks to update the historical narratives of the Museu da Inconfidência through artistic proposals that foster critical reflections on the colonial period, promoting a polyphonic approach aligned with contemporary social transformations. Inspired by international experiences that have impacted both audiences and the art system, the program encourages new interpretations of the museum's collection and historical legacy. For further information, see: Avelar, 2023.

⁹ Arts&Heritage (A&H) fosters collaborations among artists, communities, museums, and cultural heritage institutions. Founded in Northumberland, England, but operating nationally, the organization challenges the ways in which people explore and engage with heritage narratives, demonstrating to museums and heritage organizations how artists can generate new insights, initiate new conversations, and involve broader communities in their work. A&H also develops contemporary art programs across the country and shares knowledge through research, while acting as consultants, advisors, and mentors for the arts and heritage sectors.

one that eliminates alternative ways of knowing and reinforces the epistemic hegemony of the Global North. In *Conjurados*, the algorithm does not seek transparency or correction; rather, it fabulates discontinuities and produces symbiotic ecologies with the spectral. Artificial intelligence, in this case, becomes a terrain of dispute – both technical and cosmological.

It is within this framework that *Conjurados* operates as an action-metaphor for the museum structure itself. The work suggests that the hallucinations generated by AI may function as forms of emancipation, prompting the revision and re-examination of established narratives, questioning the criteria through which collections are selected, and challenging the discourses that organize the museum's exhibition narrative. By extending its effects onto the institution itself, the video points to the symbolic necessity of unmaking and rebuilding, of allowing a new space to emerge – one capable of accommodating cultures, knowledges, technologies, and testimonies that have historically been ignored.

Within this expanded framework, *Conjurados* asserts itself as an aesthetic practice that refuses technological neutrality and critically explores the limits and possibilities of the digital image as a site of both reparation and tension within the history of a colonial museum. The video does not offer a solution; rather, it generates a friction between collection and algorithm, between ruin and regeneration, between technique and insurgent memory. Instead of organizing the past, the work fabulates it, opening space for readings that escape universalizing logics and inviting the construction of other aesthetics, other politics, and other technopoetics.

This fabulatory and decolonial operation of the digital, strengthened by critical practices such as those developed within *Museu em Suspensão*, continues to resonate throughout the analysis of other dimensions of *Conjurados*, particularly in the ways narrative, aesthetics, and curatorial practice intertwine to generate new modes of imagining the museum, the archive, and time itself.

Symbolic and Technopolitical Layers of *Conjurados*

The video *Conjurados* condenses multiple symbolic and technopolitical layers that intersect at the crossroads of critical fabulation, digital art, and decolonial curatorship. Its force lies not only in the images it presents, but also in the ways these images operate to challenge historical narratives, destabilize technical conventions, and propose alternative ways of imagining the museum as a *dispositif*. This multiplicity can be observed through four analytical axes – narrative, aesthetics, technology, and curatorship – which together structure the work's critical gesture.

On the narrative level, *Conjurados* reenacts the symbolic collapse of the Museu da Inconfidência, summoning the specters of a past that remains unresolved. The institution's collection – notably marked by objects associated with colonial elites – reduces subalternized classes, particularly enslaved Black people, to the condition of objects: instruments of torture,

padlocks, chains, absent bodies. Against this museological violence, the video implodes the institution's monumentality and summons other presences: interdicted memories, buried affects, and spectral layers that continue to vibrate and resonate within the architecture of oppression.

This narrative operation resonates with Saidiya Hartman's (2020) notion of critical fabulation, understood as a method that works both with and against the limits of the historical archive. Rather than filling archival gaps with definitive answers or giving voice to silenced figures, critical fabulation operates through what might have been, treating absence as a fertile zone for imagination and ethical speculation. *Conjurados* shares this perspective by fabulating impossible presences, disrupting historical temporality, and challenging the authority of colonial records. As Hartman suggests, this narrative practice "illuminates the contested character of History, topples the hierarchy of discourse, and submerges authorized speech in a clash of voices." It is precisely this gesture that *Conjurados* reactivates in audiovisual form, interweaving specters, composite images, and echoes of the past into a narrative that challenges the transparency of the archive.

Aesthetically, the work is constructed through the decomposition and recomposition of natural elements – vegetation, fungi, roots, and vines – that overtake the museum's spaces and dissolve them into an environment where the digital and the organic become entangled. The digital image, far from faithfully representing the world, becomes here a field of speculative experimentation. This aesthetic resonates with Donna Haraway's notion of speculative fabulation, in which imagining possible futures requires the creation of multispecies, relational, and affective worlds. The vegetal presence that emerges through the cracks of the colonial monument is not allegorical; it is a form of symbiosis against the single story – a radical reconfiguration of the space of memory.

On the technological axis, *Conjurados* mobilizes resources such as 3D animation, computational modeling, and the manipulation of images and sound in order to destabilize the dominant visuality of the historical museum. Rather than privileging transparency, the video embraces noise and opacity as critical strategies. This practice aligns with Yuk Hui's notion of cosmotechnics, which proposes understanding technology as the expression of situated cosmologies.

I propose moving beyond the notion of cosmology; instead, it would be more productive to address what I call cosmotechnics. Let me offer a preliminary definition of cosmotechnics: it is the unification of the cosmos and morality through technical activities, whether artisanal or artistic. There has never been only one or two technologies, but many cosmotechnics. What kind of morality, which cosmos, whose cosmos, and how they are unified varies from one culture to another, according to different dynamics (Hui, 2017, our translation).

Thus, the use of digital technology is not intended to restore memory, but to disturb it: it does not classify, but fabulates; it does not organize the past, but renders it porous, unfinished,

and alive. Technology here is not a neutral medium, but a site of symbolic dispute and epistemological tension. This insurgent technopoetics of *Conjurados* can also be read in light of peripheral digital practices, in which technical failures and limitations are not treated as obstacles. In *Conjurados*, visual glitches, interruptions, and moments of latency are not regarded as defects, but as creative fields and aesthetic improvisations. In contexts marked by technological constraints, such as Cuba, digital artists and activists have transformed error into language and the virus into metaphor. Similarly, in *Conjurados*, the “errors” of AI – confused images, overlapping spaces, and the hallucination of anachronistic elements – are not corrected, but celebrated as speculative pathways that break with the logics of representation and transparency.

These gestures resonate with the notion of an aesthetics of failure as a critique of the totalizing promises of digital technology. By valuing incompleteness, opacity, and contamination, Araújo’s work aligns itself with a situated, precarious, and rebellious mode of digital creation – what Eduardo Ledesma identifies as a “computational culture of ruin” characteristic of the Global South. What is at stake here is not merely the aestheticization of failure, but the assumption of precarity as a political stance: a refusal of the perfection of code and a commitment to other rhythms, other forms of knowledge, and other computational cosmologies (Ledesma, 2023).

On the curatorial plane, *Conjurados* displaces traditional exhibition mediation, even within the digital environment. The video offers no captions, explanatory texts, or linear ordering of visual elements. Instead, it suspends the collection, allowing it to hover between the visible and the unsayable, between the sensible and the spectral. To curate, in this context, does not mean to organize, classify, or stabilize meanings, but rather to listen to what the museum does not say, to welcome presences that escape the colonial structures of knowledge, and to allow memory to operate as friction rather than consensus.

This conception of curatorship as an open and speculative gesture resonates with the formulations of Joasia Krysa (2006), for whom curatorship in the age of networked systems ceases to be a practice centered on human authority and becomes “a distributed process,” shared among humans, machines, platforms, databases, and invisible infrastructures. *Conjurados* embodies precisely this expanded model of curatorship-as-system. By co-producing with AI and integrating failures, noise, and fabulations as part of the process itself, the video transforms artificial intelligence into an active participant in the curatorial gesture. The instability of the algorithm, its propensity for error, and its mode of operating through imperfect approximations function as an additional layer of agency, distancing the video from documentary logic and bringing it closer to a technopoetic form of curatorship in which human and non-human decisions become entangled in the creation of possible worlds.

In this sense, curatorship does not emerge as an official narrative, but as fracture and reinvention. It is not concerned with stabilizing the past, but with rendering it porous, unfinished,

and speculative. By incorporating the aesthetics of failure and glitches, the project expands curatorial perspectives and liberates new forms of expression, fostering practices that do not conform to traditional models of museological validation. “Failure” ceases to be something to be corrected and becomes language, metaphor, and even method, thereby aligning itself with both peripheral digital practices and insurgent modes of creation in the Global South. For cultural institutions, this approach resonates directly with what Krysa identifies as the urgency of rethinking museums in the age of distributed systems. Integrating digital technologies is not merely a matter of following trends; rather, it requires the reformulation of ecologies of knowledge in order to maintain relevance, particularly among younger audiences whose concerns are shaped by issues of gender identity, inclusion, and social justice. Such an approach entails the incorporation of alternative epistemologies and the expansion of public engagement. Its importance for both scientific research and artistic practice cannot be overlooked, as it opens new possibilities for creative expression while fostering deeper and more meaningful forms of audience participation¹⁰.

By articulating the narrative, aesthetic, technological, and curatorial dimensions, *Conjurados* asserts itself as a critical work addressing the coloniality of both the collection and technology itself. Its digital language does not function as a tool of historical reenactment, but rather as a platform of insurgency, capable of displacing regimes of visibility, challenging the archive, and exposing the fissures that structure colonial memory. The video demonstrates that digital curatorship, when informed by critical fabulation, the aesthetics of failure, and the cosmotechnics of the Global South, ceases to operate as mere mediation and instead becomes a form of epistemological insurgency. It is an image that not only summons the specters of the past, but also projects possible futures in which the museum abandons its condition as a showcase of domination and is transformed into a territory of confrontation, reinvention, and multiplicity.

Final Considerations: Conjuring Decolonial Futures with AI

The video *Conjurados*, which we have analyzed throughout this article, not only dramatizes the collapse of colonial monumentality but also sketches, through critical fabulation, a vision of spectral technology and insurgent digital cosmologies as a gesture toward the reconfiguration of the collection. Its movement of rupture – narrative, aesthetic,

¹⁰ In “Digital Transformation in Culture and Art: Exploring the Challenges, Opportunities and Implications in Cultural Studies,” the authors discuss the principal challenges, opportunities, and implications of digital transformation in culture and the arts. They highlight how digital technologies have simultaneously expanded access, creative expression, and global collaboration, while also generating challenges related to cultural heritage preservation, copyright protection, and digital inequality. Based on a review of the literature, case studies, and interviews with cultural-sector professionals, the study underscores the need for strategies to preserve digital cultural heritage, address ethical and legal concerns, and harness the potential of digital technologies to strengthen cultural production and public engagement. See: Koshelieva *et al.*, 2023.

technical, and curatorial – makes it possible to challenge both the colonial foundations of the museum and the universalizing promises of digital technology.

Within this horizon of practices that mobilize technology as a tool of epistemological friction, *Conjurados* may be brought into dialogue with projects such as PigeonBlog¹¹ (2006), by Beatriz da Costa, which activated speculative and insurgent methodologies in order to reconfigure the ways knowledge is produced. In PigeonBlog, pigeons equipped with pollution sensors became epistemic agents, revealing environmental inequalities concealed by official narratives and destabilizing technoscientific authority. In doing so, the artist enacted a gesture deeply aligned with what Donna Haraway describes as SF practices – a weaving together of science fiction, scientific fact, speculative fabulation, and string figures, capable of articulating alternative relationships among worlds, species, and technologies.

The project (PigeonBlog) sought to connect low-cost, ingenious, and do-it-yourself technology with citizen science, art, and knowledge co-produced across species “in search of resistant action.” The data collected were intended to provoke, motivate, amplify, inspire, and illustrate—not to replace or surpass professional and scientific monitoring of air pollution. These data were produced to generate more imaginative and better-informed action across multiple domains of practice. Beatriz da Costa did not intend to become an expert scientist in air pollution; rather, she sought to foster collaborations in a very different field: multispecies art in action for worldly worlds in need of—and capable of—recovery amid consequential differences. (Haraway, 2023, p. 42)

In light of Walter Mignolo’s decolonial thought, *Conjurados* may be interpreted as a critical performance of what the author calls “epistemic disobedience”—a gesture that departs from the logics of Western modern reason in order to open pluriversal pathways of knowledge. Within the horizon of colonial modernity, the museum is not merely a space for cultural preservation but also a device of epistemic control: it fixes narratives, organizes the past, and hierarchizes cultures. It is, as Mignolo argues, an institution that participates in the “long process of epistemicide” promoted by the coloniality of knowledge.

Against this diagnosis, the digital fabulation enacted by *Conjurados* functions as a counter-archive: it does not represent, but rather re-enchants; it does not classify, but conjures. It does so, moreover, through a tool profoundly marked by algorithmic coloniality – artificial intelligence – which is here resignified as a fabulatory and cosmopolitical technology. The video thus embodies what Fornasier and Brun (2024) describe as a decolonial AI, reinscribing the digital as a terrain of symbolic and political struggle.

Within this process, AI “hallucination”—its errors, confusions, and distortions—ceases to be a technical failure and becomes a critical method. It operates as what Mignolo would call

¹¹ *PigeonBlog* (2006) is an art-and-technology project created by artist and researcher Beatriz da Costa, in collaboration with Anda Baharav and Brooke Singer, which used homing pigeons equipped with electronic sensors to measure levels of air pollution in urban regions of California.

border thinking: it does not reproduce the logic of Western truth, but instead flirts with the unknown, the uncertain, and the spectral. By conjuring deviant images, AI destabilizes the museum's visual taxonomies and opens space for other regimes of sensibility and memory rooted in the Global South.

To conjure, therefore, is more than to fabulate. It is to confront the coloniality of memory through insurgent curatorial practices that integrate critique, speculation, and technology. It is to transform the museum from a showcase of domination into a space of ontological friction. It is to activate digital art not as a tool of mediation, but as an instrument of cosmopolitical reinvention. It is to activate digital art not as a tool of mediation, but as an instrument of cosmopolitical reinvention. And, above all, it is to recognize that every fabulation is also a dispute over worlds. If, as Mignolo reminds us,

The decolonial option is not proposed as a totalitarian project that would immediately replace everything that is currently being done. The decolonial option is an option and, as such, it makes evident that there is no single correct or natural way of defining what museums should do. Museums should provide spaces for many kinds of interpretive activity (dialoguing with or contesting one another). (Mignolo, 2018, p. 323).

Thus, *Conjurados* offers us not merely images of a Museum in Suspension, but a landscape of symbolic struggle—where the past is revisited, the present is reimagined, and the future is summoned through other codes, other affects, and other technopoetics (Mignolo, 2018). Within this movement, AI ceases to function as a technocratic promise and instead becomes a speculative force capable of imagining worlds that escape the colonial grammars of memory.

By articulating critical fabulation, an aesthetics of failure, and insurgent cosmotechnics, *Conjurados* asserts itself as a situated practice of generative video art, in which AI is mobilized to challenge archives, disrupt colonial narratives, and imagine pluriversal futures.

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