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This particular diagram was developed as an effort to map the manifestations that took place in Brazil in 2013, when large groups of the population went out to the streets of some of the country’s largest cities to protest against the lack of representativity of the government and the current state of things. It seemed to us very necessary—in the light of the adverse and conservative political atmosphere of 2016—to produce the gesture of putting together some aspects of the significative series of multitudinous 2013 protests and organize them as a set of relations: not only so that some of the main agents of that moment could be registered and connected, but also to bring forward a multiple and plural image, emphasizing the manifestations’ heterogeneous and progressive characteristic. In this diagram, actors, organized groups, order words, refrains, locations, numbers, hashtags, and other elements are displayed side by side with dates and recent moments of Brazilian history, establishing a reading pattern that is triggered by the different featured types of lines and the words. Discourse drifts around in a fragmentary and dynamic mode, moving rhythmically throughout the drawing’s surface—resulting in a nonlinear apprehension of the events, as a sort of organic entity which unfolds thought production processes. Such approach prevents any analytical closure: there is a political attitude in the diagrammatic procedure, where the gaps and intervals function as devices for inconclusiveness, in the sense of engaging the viewer/reader in the activation of the diagram through the production of speech. Polyphony is expected, since new voices are continuously asked to contribute to the conversational process, eventually adding layers to the diagram. We propose an exercise of cartography, taking the diagram as a gesture of engagement, where new subjects are produced and a gesture of intervention is proposed.

A point of no return in Brazil’s recent political history, the “June 2013 manifestations” are taken here as a grid which allow readability for events which took place prior to and after them, as they provided a brief opening into unmediated, direct politics, though almost instantly translated back into representative, party politics, ultimately with dramatic, conservative results. The first mass street movement in Brazil after the introduction of social networks into politics, in the aftermath of other similar protests which spread out virally all over the world in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it was subsequently appropriated by every single, operative, political force in the spectrum, making it extremely hard to uncover its true sense at the time it happened. The fact that the protests were leveled against a Center–Left government, with historical ties to social movements, and that this government saw in them the “enemy,” proving itself to be entirely unable to hear and articulate any form of dialogue with them, to
the contrary, shutting them down through extreme police force and eventually criminalizing them, added an extra ironical twist to the events. The way of the street was very quickly paved by elite organized manifestations which mimicked their original, fundamentally ambiguous, non-hierarchical, multiple shape, and eventually at the height of an open dispute for street representativeness, by pro-government forces, providing ultimately the pretext that was needed for the “constitutional-media-parliamentary coup” that took place in August 2016, precisely at the moment we exhibited our diagram for the first time. The real-time media coverage of the debates which took place in the Congress, Senate, and Supreme Court, leading to the impeachment of a president elected by popular vote, replaced the focus entirely on the empty stage of political rationality and representativeness, with extraneous and long-drawn juridical arguments barely hiding the fact that the true negotiations were happening somewhere else, in a place where the cameras could not reach. Politics as unusual. The government now in place represents the interests of financial capital, and traditional oligarchic families, with their large share of congressional seats, and constitutes a vast setback in terms of cultural and social policies. The line of events opened up by the 2013 protests is very much alive though in the widespread high-school occupations (the “secundaristas”) that have been taking place nationwide, with often very articulate students questioning severe budget cuts in education, and occupations unfolding in colleges and universities as well.

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