

# DEUS LUTA

## GOD FIGHTS

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### Abstract

A visual essay about the video art piece "Deus luta", or "God fights", in English, created by the Brazilian artist Lucas Gervilla in 2015. The work depicts images recorded on war monuments, memorials, and other belligerent contexts combined with an original soundtrack. The video proposes a critique of the presence of violence in contemporary society. This writing presents the origin, main characteristics, and developments of the artwork.

### Keywords:

Video Art; Violence; War Monuments;  
Anti-War Art; Military Imagery.

"Deus luta" is a 6:57-minute video created by the artist Lucas Gervilla in 2015. The art piece closes a trilogy of works related to the presence of violence in contemporary society. The first one is the short movie "Abrasive" (2012),<sup>2</sup> a documentary with veterans of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force in WWII commenting about their lives before the war. The second is the live cinema performance "War Games",<sup>3</sup> developed with the musician Paulo Gervilla; the presentation remixes fragments from more than 50 movies about wars with a live soundtrack. The closing artwork is inspired by a quote assigned to Napoleon Bonaparte: "God fights on the side with the best artillery".

The video - recorded in Germany, Finland, and Brazil - gathers images recorded on war monuments, memorials, toy stores, and during a visiting day at a military headquarters. The images had their pace slowed down and were

### Resumo

*Ensaio visual sobre o trabalho de videoarte "Deus luta", criado pelo artista brasileiro Lucas Gervilla, em 2015. O trabalho apresenta imagens gravadas em monumentos e memoriais de guerra, e em outros contextos beligerantes, combinados à trilha sonora original. O vídeo propõe uma crítica à presença da violência na sociedade contemporânea. O texto apresenta a origem do trabalho, suas principais características e desdobramentos.*

### Palavras-chave:

*Videoarte; Violência; Monumentos de Guerra; Arte Anti-Guerra; Imagética Militar.*

almost overlaid during almost all the video length, without a clear distinction from one to another, proposing a reverie between dream and reality. There are no apparent references to the places where it was shot, increasing this sense of dislocation.

During the nearly seven minutes, pictures from cannons and deactivated tanks are combined into statues and coats of arms. Children play cheerfully among long-range artillery pieces and heavy military trucks while it is possible to see stacks of plastic weapons in a store. The low-saturated images expose a combat narrative of a monument which depicts one conflict, and soon comes another sculpture with a different battle, as they were fighting each other. Proud fathers - no mothers - encourage their kids to touch real weapons. A dense soundtrack composed by the artist creates a dense atmosphere, which also brings



Figure 1 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015

mixed fragments of speeches by politicians like Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush. All evoking the name and help of god, the one with heavier firepower.

The first public exhibition of "God fights" was in 2016 on the occasion of the collective exhibition "Aparelhamento" at the FUNARTE Foundation in São Paulo, Brazil. One year later, the art piece was incorporated into the collection of the Centro Cultural São Paulo. In 2022, the creation became part of the "Antiwarcoalition. art"<sup>4</sup>, an online platform that collects, shares and distributes statements against war created by artists from all over the world. The platform presents an opportunity to protest against war, dictatorship, and authoritarianism. It is an opportunity to express solidarity with those resisting colonial, patriarchal, imperialistic, and political repressions and terror worldwide.

Being part of such a project amidst the Russian-Ukrainian war brought a new aspect to the work: images that seemed to belong to a distant past or a naive reality now look alive

again. By the end of 2022, "Deus luta" was presented at the "Split Videoart Festival" in Croatia. In 2023, it was part of the show "Are you here with us?" inside the programme of the "Dutch Media Week" in Hilversum, Netherlands. Being shown aside works conceived by artists from varied countries and backgrounds allows a different set of readings to "Deus luta", especially nowadays, when the barbarism and massacre of innocents are apparently normal again, as we see it daily and in Gaza. Meanwhile, the politicians pray to their gods to be blessed with better artillery than the enemy.

#### NOTAS

01. Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V72sqxDwOU>>.

02. Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqZ77eTCELO>>.

03. Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6GLFsUuJjE>>.

04. <<https://antiwarcoalition.art>>



Figure 2 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015



Figure 3 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015



Figure 4 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015



Figure 5 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015



Figure 6 - Still frame from "Deus Luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015



Figure 7 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015





Figure 8 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015

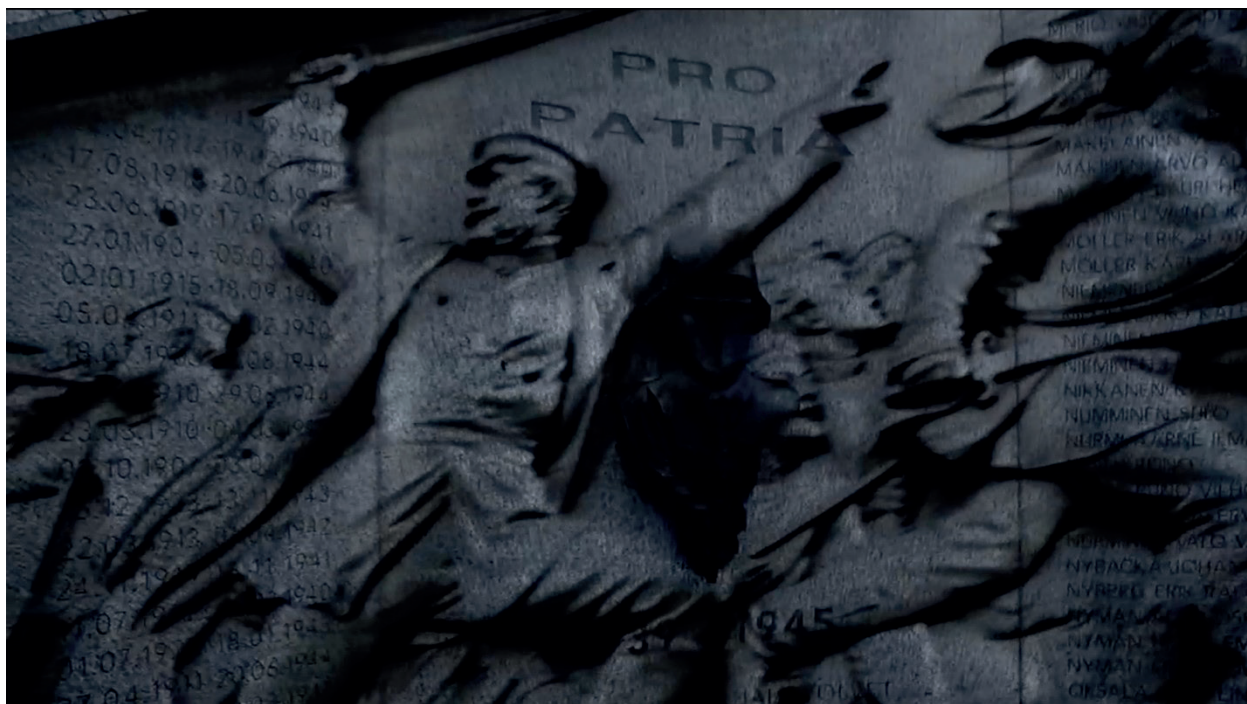


Figure 9 - Still frame from "Deus luta". Lucas Gervilla, 2015

#### SOBRE O AUTOR

*Lucas Gervilla* is Visual artist and filmmaker. Doctoral student and Master in Visual Arts with a period of studies at the University of Greifswald and UdK Berlin, bachelor in Multimedia Communication. In 2020, he directed his first full-length movie entitled *Ruinous*. Futura Channel commissioned him to produce the short film *Edmur* and his *Truck* (2018). He received grants offered by the Prince Claus Fund and DAAD. He was a resident artist at NES Artist Residency, Iceland; Residencia Epecuén, Argentina; ZK/U Berlin and Fabrika CCI Moscow. E-mail: lucas.gervilla@unesp.br

*Artista visual, trabalha com imagens desde 2005. Doutorando e mestre pelo Instituto de Artes da UNESP, com um período de estudos na UdK Berlin e Greifswald Universität, bacharel em Comunicação e Mídias pela PUC-SP. Dirigiu os longa-metragens "Ruinoso" e "Fora da Capital" (2020). Ministra cursos e oficinas audiovisuais. Foi bolsista do DAAD e Prince Claus Fund. Em 2018, foi comissionado pelo Canal Futura para a produção do curta-metragem "Edmur e o Caminhão".*