

OTHER TECH WORLDS ARE POSSIBLE

VOL. 1



Other Tech Worlds Are Possible
Vol. 1, Homeless Workers' Movement in Brazil

ISBN (Print): 978-1-7389269-6-1
ISBN (Digital PDF): 978-1-7389269-7-8

© 2025 Natalia Rosa Muniz Sierpinski, Germana Viana, Rafael Grohmann, Alexandre Zago Boava, Gabriel Simeone, and Fernanda Souza. All rights reserved.

Credits

Writer: Natalia Rosa Muniz Sierpinski

Illustrator: Germana Viana

Coordinator: Rafael Grohmann

Contributors: Alexandre Zago Boava, Gabriel Simeone, Fernanda Souza

This publication was produced with the support of the University of Toronto and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the copyright holders, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

Printed and bound in Toronto, Canada.

First edition: August 2025

For permissions, contact:

DigiLabour

hello@digilabour.com.br

INTRODUCTION

by **RAFAEL GROHMANN**

What do technologies really mean? Too often, our imaginations are shaped by the visions of tech bros, a narrow perspective rooted in the worldview of wealthy white men from Silicon Valley. Yet this is far from the only way to think about or build technology. The project *Other Technological Worlds Are Possible* seeks to highlight, through artistic narratives in comic form, the stories of worker collectives across Latin America that expand the meaning of technology while fighting for social justice. These stories celebrate the power of political, social, technological, and artistic imagination to tell different stories about technology beyond Silicon Valley's ideology.

In this first volume, we explore how the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST) in Brazil has embraced technology both as a tool for organizing and as a practice rooted in territory. The story follows Carolina, an activist who finds work through Hire Those Who Struggle (Contrate Quem Luta), a worker-led platform that helps generate income for workers from the Homeless Workers' Movement. Her journey leads her to a programming course offered by the Tech Sector of the movement, right inside a housing occupation, where she and other residents learn to apply their knowledge to address concrete problems in their community. Within the occupation, she learns that understanding and reclaiming technology is a powerful force in the struggle. And that's just a glimpse of what they do!

Other Technological Worlds Are Possible is funded by the University of Toronto through the UTSC Departmental Research Fund, awarded to the Department of Arts, Culture & Media, and by the SSHRC Insight Development Grant through the Worker-Owned Intersectional Platforms (WOIP) project.

Enjoy your reading!

WHO MADE THIS COMIC



NATÁLIA SIERPINSKI
(Research and script- @n.sierpinski)

Natália is the writer of the comics Afeto and Panorama, which explore gender issues and the ethical use of technology. She researches gender, education, and narratives, and holds a Master's in Communication and a teaching degree in Educommunication from the University of São Paulo.



GERMANA VIANA
(Illustration, lettering, and layout - @germana_fazgibi)

Germana is a comic book artist and writer. Her indie and self-published works include Só Mais Uma História de uma Banda, Nós Quatro, and Gibi de Menininha. She's also adapted works by Jane Austen, Julia Lopes de Almeida, and Machado de Assis into comics.



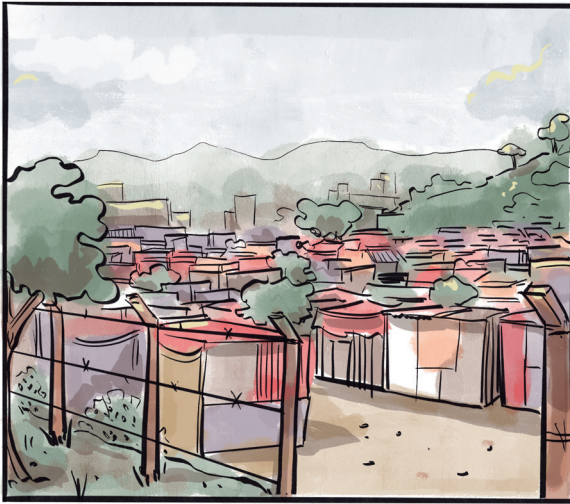
RAFAEL GROHMANN
(Coordination and editing - @grohmannrafael)

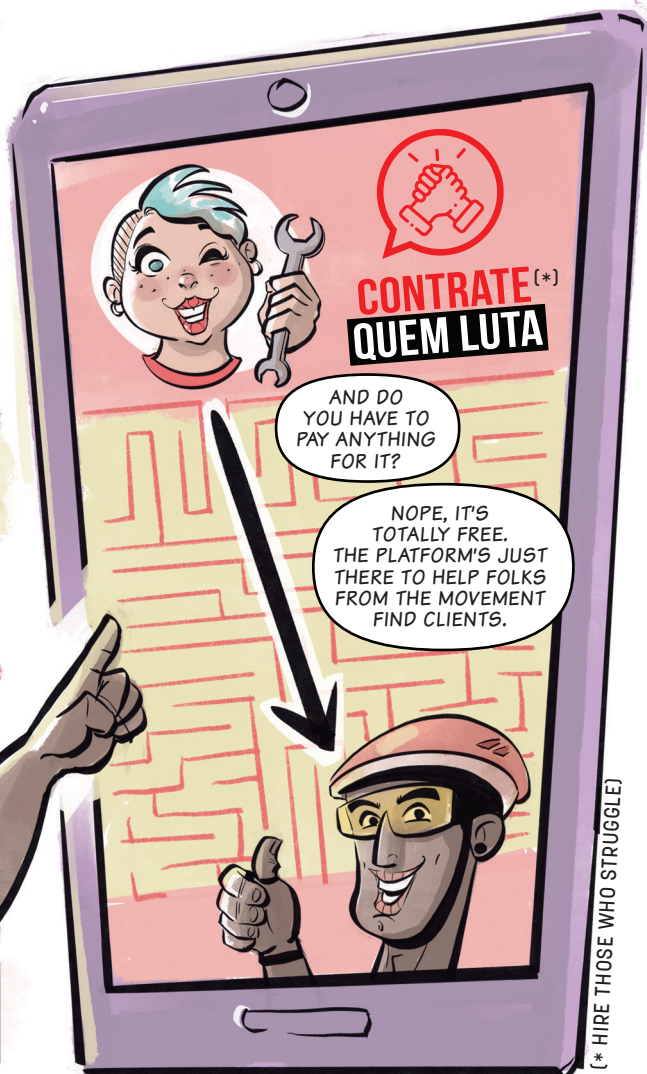
Rafael is an assistant professor of media studies (critical platform studies) at the University of Toronto and lead of DigiLabour. He leads the Other Technological Worlds Are Possible project.

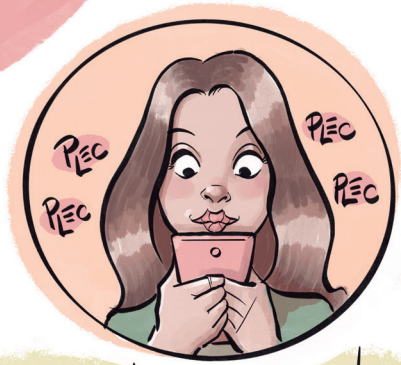
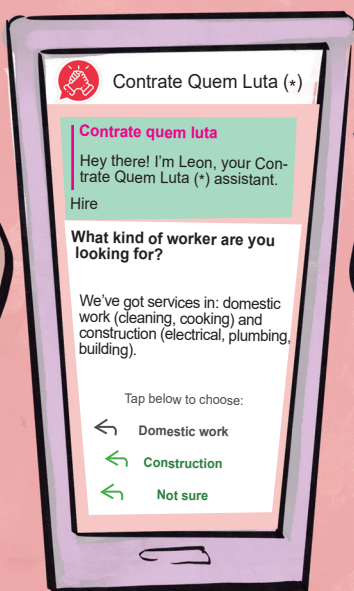
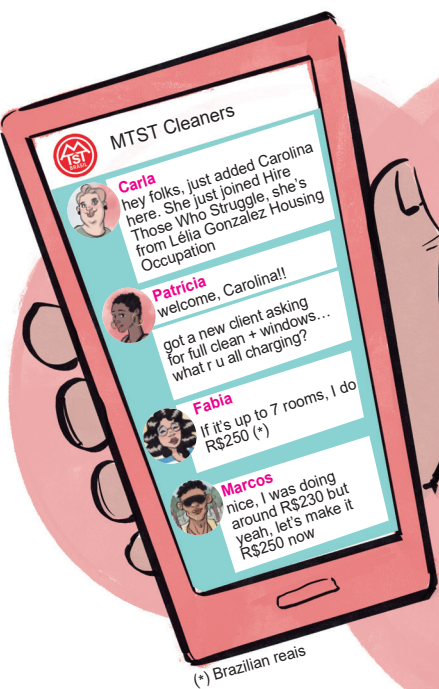


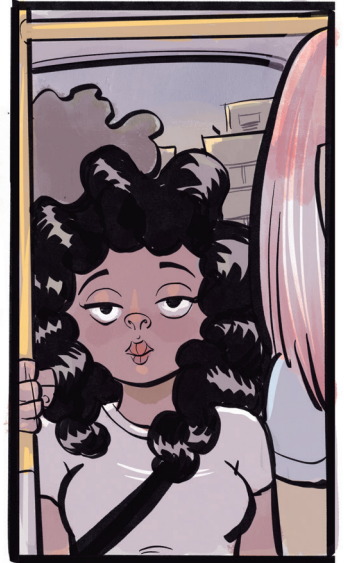
Co-production and review:
Tech Sector of the Homeless Workers' Movement - @tecnologia.mtst

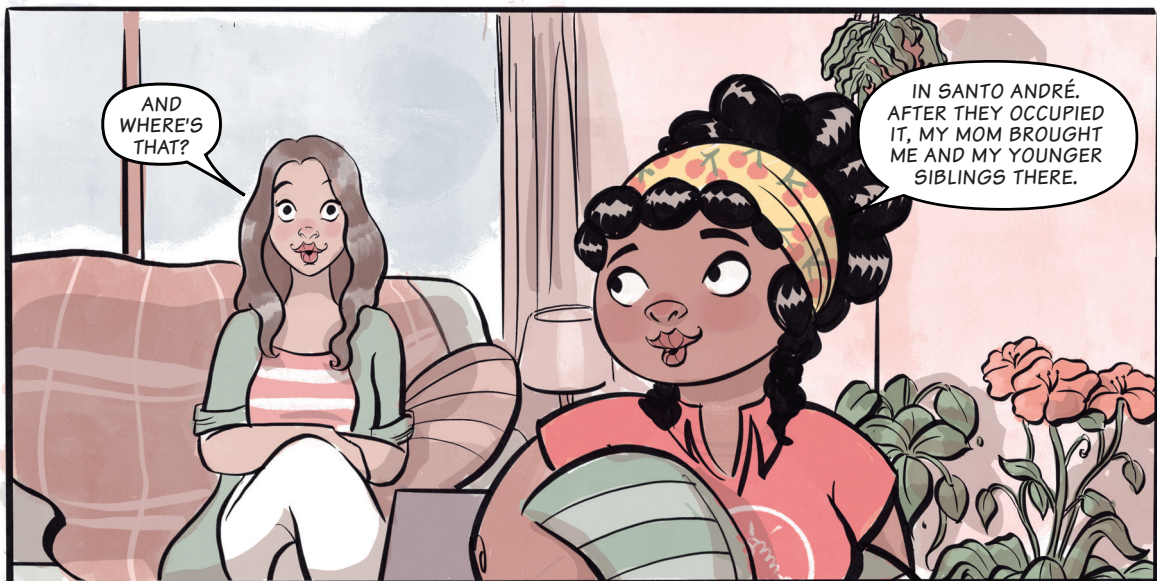
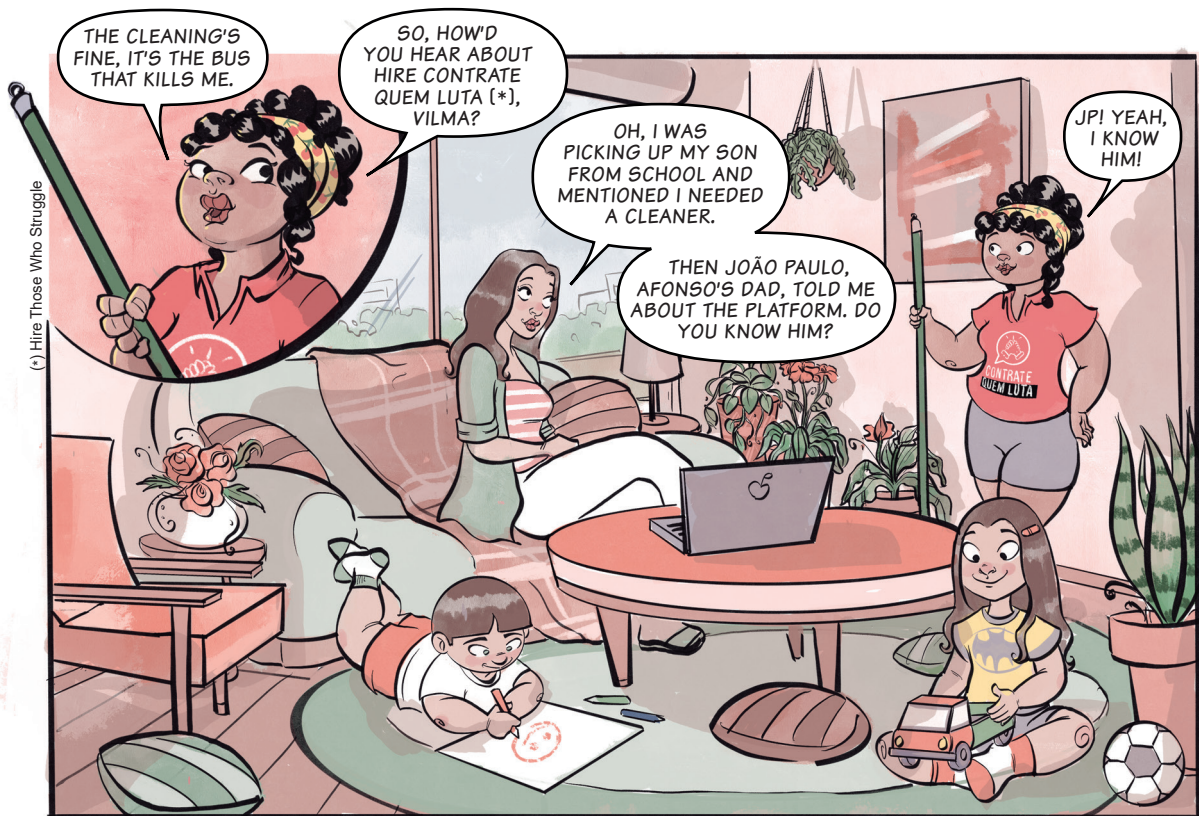
Acknowledgements:
Lélia Gonzalez Occupation - @ocupaleliagonzalez
Comrades from Hire Those Who Struggle - @contratequemluta











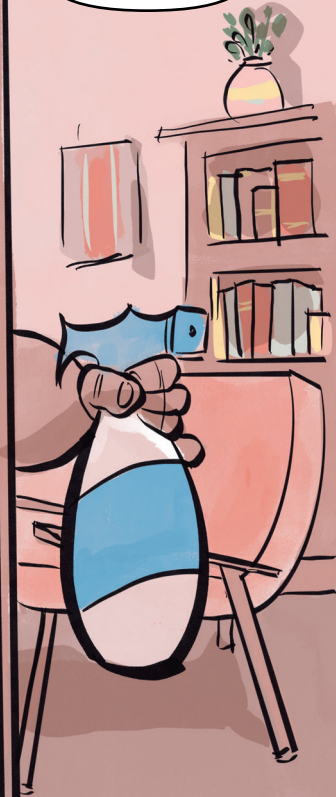
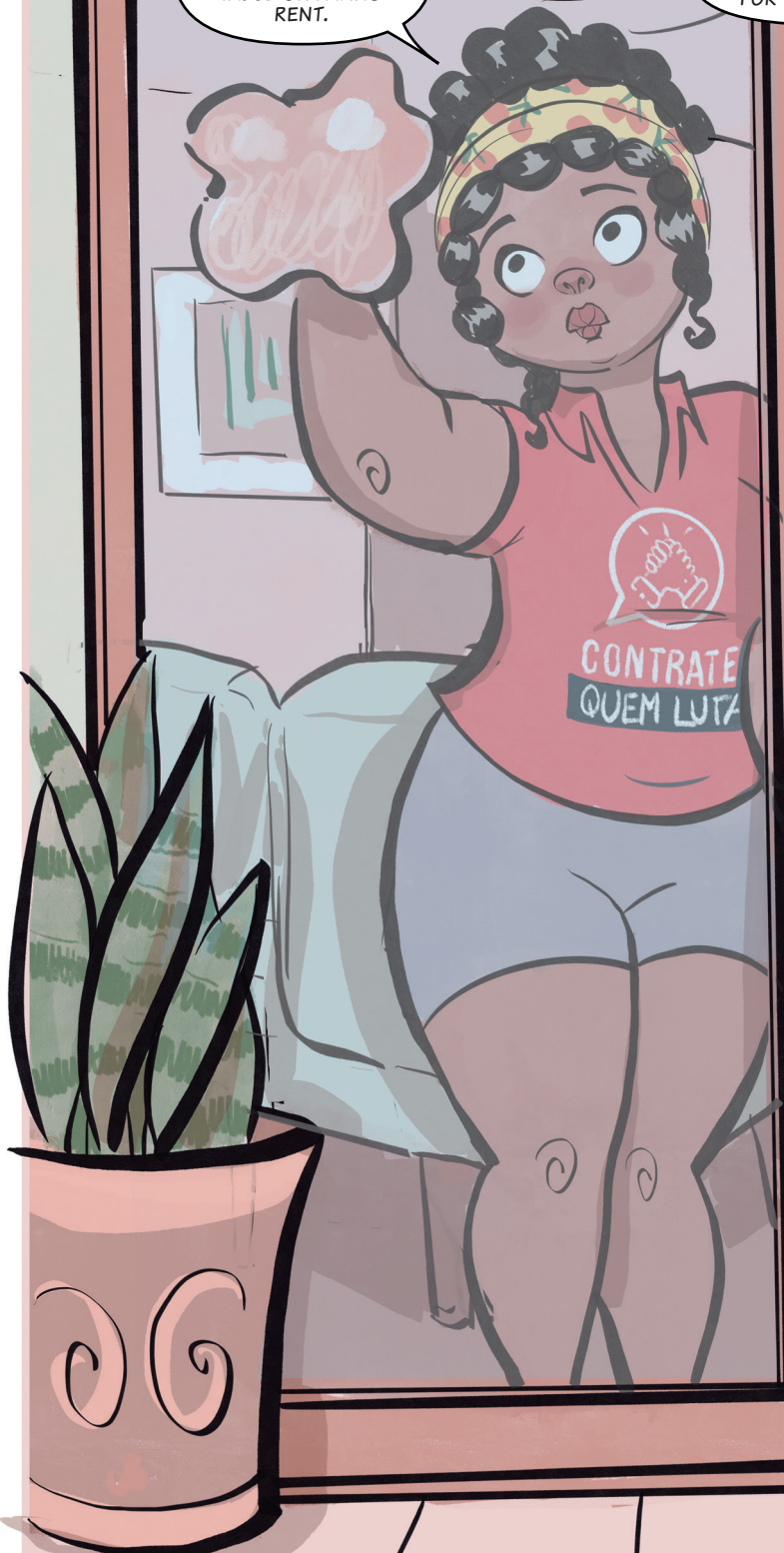
BEFORE, WE HAD
TO CHOOSE BETWEEN
PUTTING FOOD ON THE
TABLE OR PAYING
RENT.

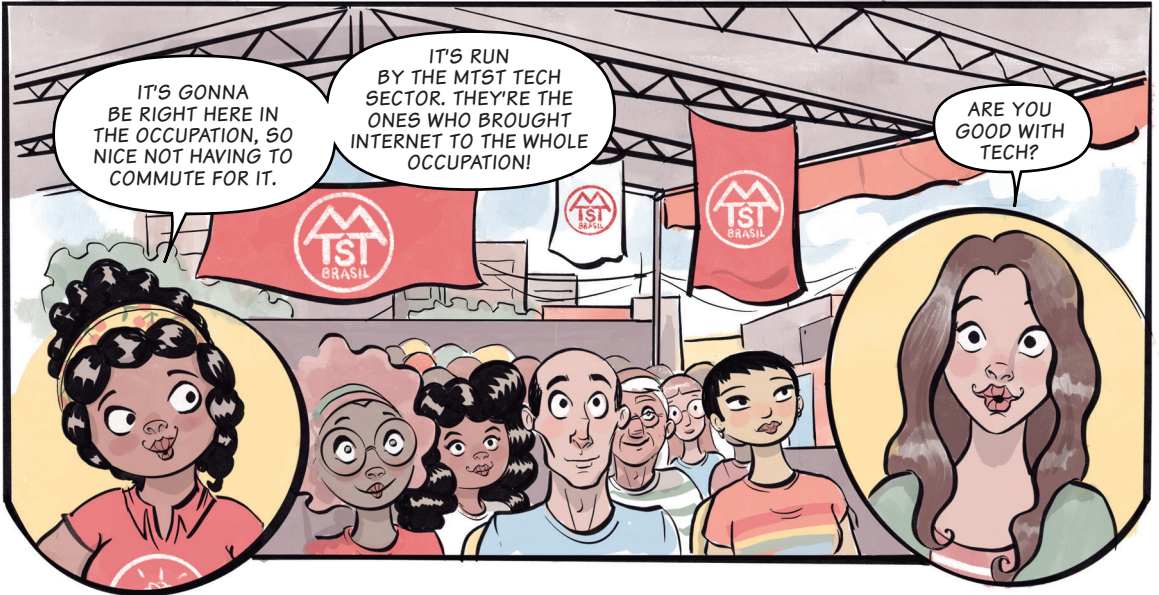
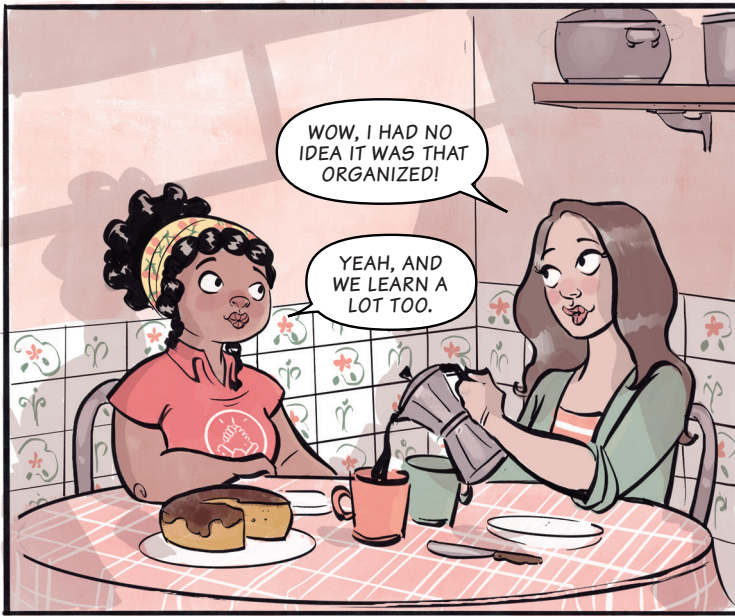
AT THE
OCCUPATION,
WE DON'T HAVE
TO MAKE THAT
CHOICE.

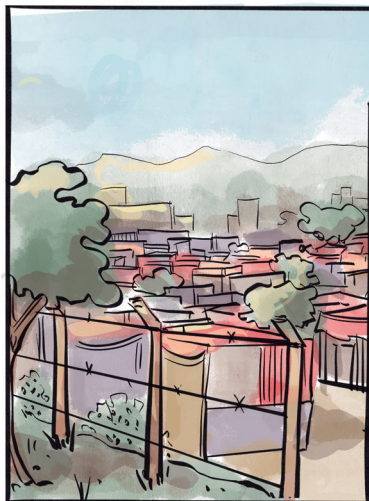
WE'VE KINDA
BECOME A FAMILY.
EVERYONE LOOKS OUT
FOR EACH OTHER.

EVERYONE'S
GOT TASKS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES HERE,
AND WE HAVE A WEEKLY
ASSEMBLY.

ALL OF US
UNITED IN THE
FIGHT FOR DECENT
HOUSING.







WELCOME,
EVERYONE! I'M PAULO,
FROM THE MTST TECH
SECTOR

THIS COMMUNITY
HALL IS THE OCUPALAB.
WE'LL BE HOLDING THE COURSE
HERE, AND IT'S ALSO YOUR SPACE
OUTSIDE OF CLASS. YOU CAN USE
THE COMPUTERS, PRINT A CV,
WHATEVER YOU NEED.



DID YOU HELP
BUILD THE OCCUPATION'S
ORGANIZING APP?



YEAH, ALAN, I DID.
AND IT MAKES ME REALLY
HAPPY TO SEE YOU ALL
USING IT EVERY DAY.



BUT CREATING
AN APP ISN'T AS HARD
AS IT MIGHT SEEM.

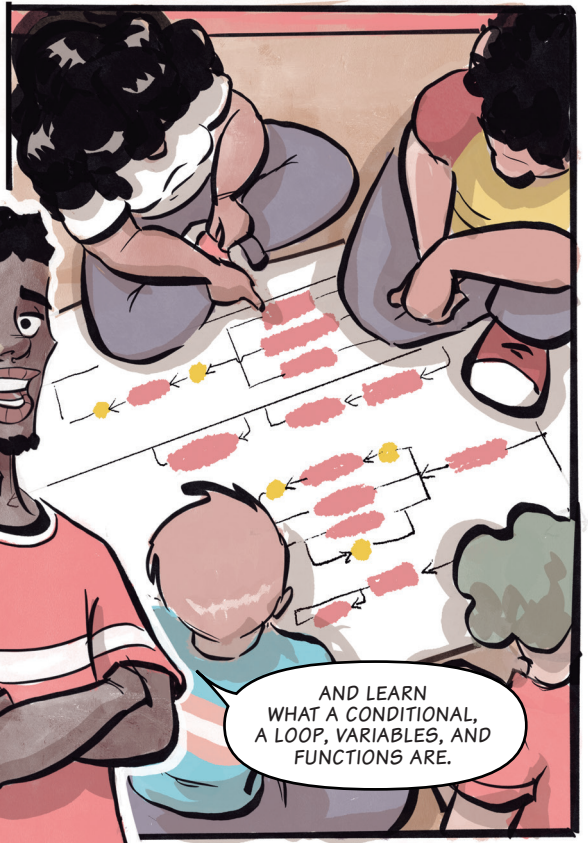
WHO KNOWS.
MAYBE SOON SOMEONE
IN THIS ROOM WILL CREATE
A NEW TECH FOR THE
OCCUPATION.





FIRST,
LET'S LOOK AT
HOW TECHNOLOGY
IS PART OF OUR DAILY
LIVES, IN A HANDS-
-ON WAY.

THEN
WE'LL GET INTO
UNDERSTANDING
THE LANGUAGE
OF CODE.



AND LEARN
WHAT A CONDITIONAL,
A LOOP, VARIABLES, AND
FUNCTIONS ARE.



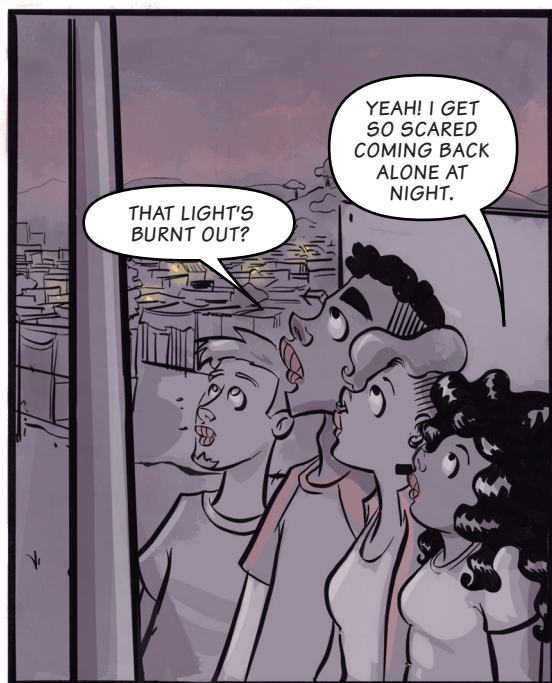
AND THEN WE'LL
START CODING.

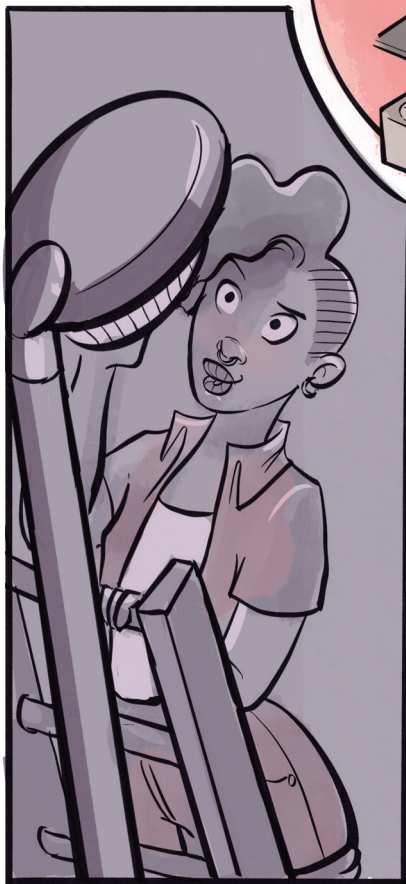
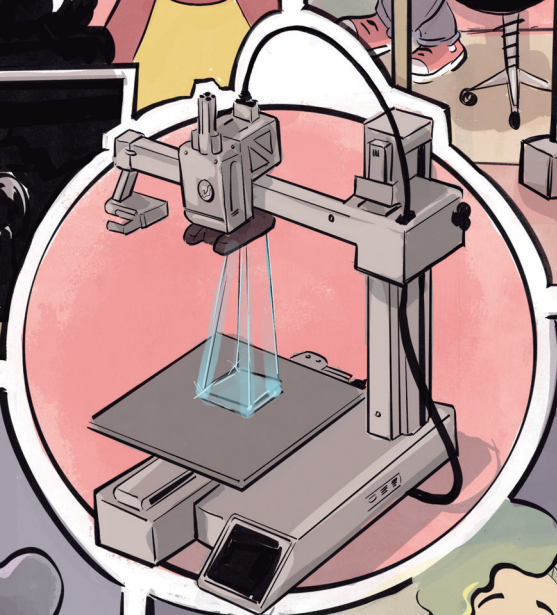
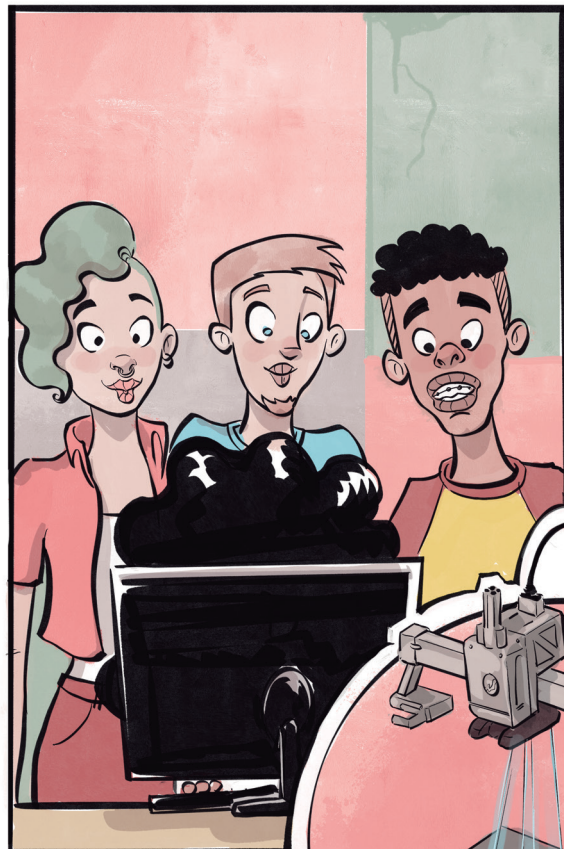
BECAUSE
HUMANS ARE
SMARTER THAN
MACHINES.

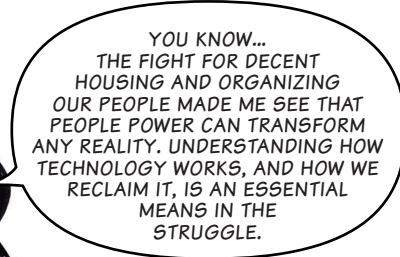


WE JUST NEED
TO KNOW WHAT TO
ASK FOR. AND HOW
TO ASK IT.

Reading the world always precedes
reading ~~the word~~ - Paulo Freire
↓
the code







CREATION PROCESS

It's not every day that an academic and a social movement come together to work on a comic project. And it's not every day that comic-making professionals get to collaborate with both academics and social movements at the same time!

The entire process of making this comic was highly collaborative, with the story shaped through plenty of dialogue. The research was the first stage of the process, carried out together with the MTST Tech Sector, where scriptwriter Natália Sierpinski held many conversations with members of the movement. With guidance and support from the Tech Sector, she interviewed a representative from Hire Those Who Struggle and visited the Lélia Gonzalez Occupation in person. She also drew on existing materials created by and/or about the movement.



From these conversations and lived experiences, we decided, together with the MTST Tech Sector, that the comic would take a realistic storytelling approach, with a script designed to show, through everyday actions, the kind of work the Tech Sector has been doing. Every stage of script development, from the overall concept down to the specific details of each page and panel, went through review and alignment with the Tech Sector. We were intentional about how we represented the Tech Sector, with many details of the comic's storyline even being voted on in assemblies. Workers from the MTST were compensated for the time they dedicated to the project.

For the illustration process, beyond working from the script itself, illustrator Germana Viana drew on a wide range of visual references provided both by the scriptwriter and by representatives from the Tech Sector. Every stage of the comic's graphic production, from sketching to final art to lettering, was also reviewed and approved by the MTST Tech Sector, the scriptwriter, and the project coordinator.



Under Rafael Grohmann's facilitation, the project's focus was shaped, the challenges of publishing a trilingual comic were navigated, and this specific story was connected to a broader context of earlier research on labor and technology, digital sovereignty, and digital solidarity economies. We knew from the start that a lot would have to be left out! Amid countless hours of content, interviews, and visits, the script helped guide what would be shown in the comic, and what wouldn't. That way, the comic format's language helped convey a lot of content and practices within just a few pages.

COMING UP NEXT:



In the second volume of the series
Other Technological Worlds Are Possible, we'll meet the
Argentine Federation of Worker Cooperatives in Technology,
Innovation, and Knowledge (FACTTIC) and explore how this
organization has been working to produce technology
cooperatively and collaboratively.



Follow Carolina's journey, a resident of a housing occupation in Brazil, and see how technology has transformed her life. In this first volume of the series *Other Technological Worlds Are Possible*, you'll get to know the work of the Tech Sector of the Homeless Workers' Movement, which has been creating new technologies rooted in the community, in critical, creative, and empowering ways.

FUNDING:



ARTS, CULTURE AND MEDIA

SSHRC  CRSH

/digi
labour