

THOUGHTS UPON BRAZILIAN ART IN THE YEARS 1960 AND 1970

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ABSTRACT: This article is a reflection upon art in Brazil during the years 1960 and 1970, from avant-garde and neo-avant-garde concepts in the art of the 20th century, with comments on the situation of Brazilian neo-avant-garde movements, especially the actions of militant critics and artists in the cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte.

KEYWORDS: Neo-avant-garde movements. Brazilian art. Contemporary art.

I — INTRODUCTION

My proposal is to reflect upon art in Brazil during the years 1960 and 1970, from a historiographic point of view as held by critics, philosophers and art historians. Firstly, I will discuss the concepts of avant-garde and neo-avant-garde in the art of the 20th century; then, I will map the situation of Brazilian neo-avant-garde movements in the years of 1960 and 1970, especially the actions of militant critics and artists in the cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte.

2 — AVANT-GARDES AND NEO-AVANT-GARDES: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

The discussion on neo-avant-gardes movements refers to the explanation of the concept of avant-garde, or “Vanguard”, a controversial term of military origin, which means being ahead of the troops on the battlefield and in alert for any surprise attack, thus discovering the unknown.

The poet and critic Augusto de Campos clarifies the term’s topological and militar meaning, and stresses its artistic sense, applying it to artists and inventors as well as to experimental artistic movements

that emerged in the early 20th century, called “historical avant-gardes”. It emphasizes the innovative and permanent nature of avant-gardes that is distinguished from the contingent aspect which shows itself through slogans, manifests and texts in order to spread new ideas and collective regimentation. Campos shows that the avant-gardes of the first decades of the 20th century created the assumptions of the artistic language of our age, and the neo-avant-garde movements, which emerged in the second half of the 20th century, resumed and developed the proposals of historical avant-gardes within a different context, after the catastrophe of two World Wars and the oppressive intervention of totalitarian regimes. The critic makes a cyclical interpretation of the innovation/assimilation process of the avant-gardes, which means that the death of an avant-garde encourages the birth of another, thus always letting innovative artistic manifestations emerge to give strenght to artistic languages. Campos’s reading presents a wide etymological concept of avant-gardes and situates the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde movements in the 20th century’s cultural context, but does not clarify the political and social direction of such movements (Campos, 1993). In 1974, Peter Bürger elaborated his more enlighteneing *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, guided by Marxist thoughts (Burger, 1984). He studies the origins as well as historical and social transformations of the bourgeois art in Europe since the end of the 18th century, right up to the historical avant-gardes of the 20th century. To sum up, Bürger points out three distinct avant-garde phases.

1. The first one corresponds to the introduction of the modern utopian project, guided by the questioning of the Academy and the aristocratic art of the courts and by the discussion of the concept of art autonomy through movements such as Romanticism and Realism. This period also saw the emergence of the industrial bourgeoisie and the rise of an anonymous capitalist market, responsible for the marginalisation of the artist (a self-proclaimed genius), combined with the utopian intellectuals and overlooking the construction of a new world centered on the harmony between individual and society.
2. The second one corresponds to the formulation of aestheticism, of formalism, of “art for art’s sake”, aimed at replacing the traditional forms of representation for an innovative and experimental artistic language that would unravel the internal structure of the work of art. For Bürger, aestheticism marked the moment of the bourgeois art’s self-reflection and became significant as the intensification of isolated and self-reflecting aesthetic experience, resulting in the emergence of Impressionism, Symbolism and Art Nouveau.
3. - The third one corresponds to the articulation of historical avant-gardes — Futurism, Constructivism, Dadaism and Surrealism —,

movements that have questioned the idea of autonomous art, the social status of art and the art market in a capitalist society. Avant-gardes questioned the current aestheticism of European bourgeois art, and sought a class-action lawsuit of artists, musicians and filmmakers, led by activist writers and critics who generally wrote radical manifestos, mobilizing the people to participate in the fight for political, social and aesthetic transformations. The avant-garde artists discussed the category of “work” using provocative procedures — shock, surprise, chance and allegory — to question the art circuit. For Bürger, avant-garde has overcome the moment of self-reflection and marked the moment of bourgeois art’s self-criticism, aiming to do “art in the practice of life and turn it into an instrument of utopian construction of a new social order”.

Although Bürger’s theory has contributed to a new interpretation of the avant-gardes in the sociopolitical context in modern Europe, it has been questioned by several scholars because it does not discuss the specificity of every avant-garde movement, seeking to group them in a single orientation, and also because it disqualifies the movements of new avant-gardes that emerged in the years 1950 and 1960, characterizing them as repetitive movements that make authentic avant-garde’s primordial gestures less effective.

Andreas Huyssen, a comparative literature scholar, is one of the first authors to retrieve the critical potential of new avant-gardes, naming them “postmodern avant-gardes”. In his book *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Theories of Representation and Difference) (1986), Huyssen studies the relationship between avant-garde, modernism and postmodernism, his axis being the mass culture and the emergence of Pop Art. He considers Bürger interpretations as well as avant-gardes as a new stage in the history of modernity, which evidences his revolutionary sense. The author testifies the crisis of historical avant-gardes in Europe after the rise of totalitarian regimes and the change of the cultural axis to the United States in 1950. At that time, late Modernism is consolidated, with functionalist architecture and abstract expressionist painting (action painting) to illustrate the movement. Huyssen criticises this modernism as an elitist project, which encouraged the great separation between classical and mass culture due to the bias in regards to the contamination of the artwork by industrial production. In contrast, the author indicates the importance of Pop Art as a movement that causes rupture with the modern elitist project and signals a kind of postmodern sensibility, in the sense of mass culture ownership, popular culture and icons of the consumer society. He puts Pop Art, New Realism, Fluxus, happenings and assemblages in the context of libertarian movements that occurred in Europe and the

United States during the years of 1960: counterculture and the new left, both guided by Herbert Marcuse’s philosophy. Huyssen refutes criticisms to postmodernism, which insist on situating the period as the decline of the Western culture, and situates the critical period of its emergence in the years of 1960, following the questioning of official culture and academic and artistic institutions. The scholar also distinguishes the “postmodern avant-garde” of the 60’s from the postmodernism of the 70’s and the 80’s. According to him, this postmodernism lost the transgressor potential of the avant-gardes, but created a reflective and alternative art, focused on the aspirations of ethnic minorities and social and on the retelling of previous artistic trends. Marked by the examination of cultural differences and of the postmodern paradigm, Huyssen’s theory paved the way for a more comprehensive reading of contemporary culture and critical potential of neo-avant-garde movements during the years of 1960 (Huyssen, 1986).

In the field of art history, Hal Foster was the one that began questioning Bürger’s theory and proposed a constructive interpretation that takes into account the innovative nature of neo-avant-garde movements. Foster considers these movements as they appropriate and give new meanings to the actions and strategies used by the historical avant-garde movements, like the resuming of Dada actions by American Pop Art artists. In his essay “Who’s Afraid of the Neo-Avant-Garde?” (1996), Foster considers the emergence of a new avant-garde in the years 1950 and 1960, after the oppression of totalitarian regimes, which didn’t take the “avant-garde” into consideration and labeled it as a “degenerate art”. This new avant-garde does not arrive as a diluted repetition of gestures of historical avant-gardes; on the contrary, it retrieves the potential of the first avant-gardes and recontextualizes them, placing them in a new historical moment. To show how they give new meanings to Duchamp’s and Schwitters’s Dadaist actions, we used examples such as Kaprow’s happenings and Rauschenberg’s *assemblages*. Foster points out that the criticism of historical avant-gardes fell upon traditional artistic conventions, and that the questioning of the neo-avant-garde movements faced artistic institutions, discussing their structural, discursive, cognitive and perceptive parameters. Foster’s theory justifies the emergence of neo-avant-garde movements in North America through the articulation of movements such as Pop Art and minimalism.

Dietrich Scheunemann, another art historian, also makes use of Foster’s questioning on Bürger’s theory to unravel the genealogy of avant-gardes, guided by Walter Benjamin’s ideas. In the essay “From Collage to the Multiple: On the Genealogy of Avant-Garde and

Neo-Avant-Garde” Scheunemann (2005) considers the challenge posed by the artists facing technological advances through the invention of photography and the new techniques of reproducibility. At first, this challenge questions painting’s mimetic and representative tradition and the search for new alternatives to make art, like Picasso’s and Braque’s experiments with cubist collages and questionings regarding Duchamp’s readymades. The historian considers the invention of photomontage by Dadaists and constructivists as avant-garde’s second stage. Photomontage is accomplished by incorporating readymade photography in art and questions the work’s uniqueness and originality. Finally, Scheunemann uses Benjamin’s thoughts on “exploding the continuum of history” to explain the reappearing of neo-avant-garde, insofar as they reinvent the actions and experiments of avant-garde within the specific context of the years 1950 and 1960. Scheunemann’s example is Andy Warhol’s “conceptual painting”, which appropriates icons from the consumerism society through the use of photography and silkscreen on canvas to emphasize one single image’s serialization and repetition. According to the historian, Warhol uses the concept of serialization to question the uniqueness of the work and uses the mechanical reproduction to question gestural painting; Therefore, he discusses the uniqueness and authorship of the work of art, redefining contemporary painting. Scheunemann’s theory is fit to explain the emergence of a new American avant-garde as the heir of European avant-gardes, in the context of postwar American art.

But, to what extent may these theories be used to explain the emergence of neo-avant-garde in Brazil?

I think that one of the most significant contributions to the study of this topic is Beatriz Otília Fiori Arantes’s essay (1983), “After avant-garde”, in which the author retells the artistic movements from the Rio-São Paulo axis in 1960 and in the first half of 1970. The philosopher discusses Neoconcretism, the New Objectivity and Conceptualism, remarking their critical and political dimensions. Arantes shows that the critics’s discourses and the artistic proposals are focused on the awareness of the contradictions which permeated Brazilian capitalist society, acted within the limits of complaints and revealed the desire to build a avant-garde that is specifically Brazilian. This one is different from the American neo-avant-garde because it radically questions repression, torture and the persecution of political prisoners during the military regime. Otília Arantes inserts these avant-gardes in the modernity project and emphasizes the opposition between avant-garde and post-modern, while recognizing the emergence of a new postmodern sensibility in artists of the time, considering previous quotes from the critic Mário Pedrosa.¹

I will use the term “neo-avant-garde” to designate the experimental artistic movements that emerged during the years 1950 and 1970, and materialize proposals from Pop Art, new realism, New Figuration, Situationism, Fluxus, the Neoconcretism and the new Objectivity. These are several movements that gave new meanings and new contexts to the proposals of the first avant-gardes within another historic moment, focusing on art-specific issues from a new geopolitical configuration. In the case of Brazil, it is important to highlight the example of new meanings given by tropicalism and the New Objectivity, in 1960, to the anthropophagic avant-garde of 1920.

I also consider the critical and political potential of neo-avant-garde that traced a straight relationship between art and life, art and society. The most radical neo-avant-garde manifestations set the straight relationship between art and politics, as was the case of Situationist artists and French new realists during the barricades of Paris, as well as the case of Argentine artists with trade unions in the *Tucuman Arde* manifestation, both carried out in 1968. In Brazil, the political actions of the neo-avant-garde, which occurred during the years of 1960, culminated in *Do Corpo à Terra*, a manifestation in Belo Horizonte, in 1970, curated by Frederick. These movements are relevant because they show the direct connection between art and politics by diluting the boundaries between the two fields and paving the way for the artists’s incisive role on emerging problems in the late capitalist society.

I consider Brazilian neo-avant-garde to be in the boundary between modern and post-modern, as a point of rupture with modern tradition and of opening to contemporary proposals, following the example of questionings made by Concretism, Neo-concretism and New Figuration artists towards the tradition of modern Brazilian painting.

3 — NEO-AVANT-GARDE’S ACTIVITIES IN BRAZIL AND THE FORMATION OF AN ARTISTIC CULTURE OF RESISTANCE TO THE MILITARY REGIME (1964-1970)

I will make a brief mapping of neo-avant-garde’s situation in Brazil, focusing on the actions of militant critics and artists in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais between 1964 and 1970, during the Brazilian military government. At this point, the debate around national popular issues that accompanied the nationalist government reforms by Goulart’s government (1962-1964) is replaced

¹ Mário Pedrosa (1981, p. 205-209) speaks of a post-modern sensibility present in Hélio Oiticica’s experimental art.

by the vindication of democratic freedoms opposed to the State's authoritarianism (1964-1985). Then, a radical antagonism between neo-avant-garde proposals and the military government's actions was established, thus resulting in the articulation of an alternative artistic culture of resistance to authoritarian regime. The new avant-garde put at risk not only the State's authoritarian policy, but also Brazilian modern design, restarting the connection between art and politics, marked by the deconstruction and reconstruction of new poetics which took the importance of the New Figuration, mass culture, popular culture and technological advances into consideration, and sought the insertion of art in the everyday life of large urban centers.

3.1 — The articulation of neo-avant-garde in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte

We point out groups of young artists in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro as the background of the great collective manifestations of avant-garde. The group *Realismo Mágico* [magical realism] from São Paulo proposed the renewal of fantastic roots in order to transform daily life through provocative actions that culminated in Wesley Duke Lee's exhibition/happening in John Sebastian Bar in 1963.² Also from São Paulo, the neo-realist group, formed by ex-concretistas, which proposed the displacement of optical research towards the city person's behavior. The group's more provocative action was *Espetáculo Pop-concreto* [Pop-concrete Show], by Waldemar Cordeiro, Augusto de Campos and Damiano Gazzella at the Atrium Gallery (1964). The Neorealist group was formed in Rio de Janeiro its actions took place at *Galeria G4*, joined by Rubens Gerchman, Roberto Magalhães, Carlos Vergara, Antônio Dias and Pedro Escosteguy (1966).

The big collective manifestations of new avant-garde were held by artists, critics and gallery owners at cultural institutions — universities, theaters, museums — directed by progressive intellectuals who allowed the occupation of these "territories of freedom" by the art of resistance.

The show, held at Teatro de Arena, in Rio de Janeiro, was considered the first cry for freedom of expression in Brazil and became the symbol of the artists' reaction against authoritarianism. The show moved critics, gallery owners and artists from Rio, who proceeded

to organize two collective exhibitions at MAM/RJ: *Opinion 65* and *opinion 66*. European, Argentine and Brazilian artists Hélio Oiticica, Antonio Davis, Rubens Gerchman, Pedro Escosteguy, Wesley Duke Lee and Waldemar Cordeiro also joined this show. Still at the exhibition, Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolés* were shown for the first time in an educational environment, causing an authoritarian reaction from the presidents of MAM. The exhibition *Opinião 66* in the following year did not have the same impact the first one had, but the debate between critics and artists — Frederico Morais, Pedro Escosteguy, Hélio Oiticica and Carlos Zílio —, who pointed out the urgency to reshape the face of Brazilian avant-garde foreign trends (Morais, 1985).

Following the organization of collective shows, two seminars were organized in São Paulo at FAAP, Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado: *Proposta 65* and *Proposta 66*. The seminars were coordinated by Waldemar Cordeiro and Mário Schemberg, with the participation of artists from Rio and São Paulo.³ In *Proposta 65*, the debate focused on the questions posed by new realism, a trend that presented itself in the work of the new generation of Brazilian artists which allowed for new iconographic and visual possibilities. The critic Mario Schemberg, a big supporter of this trend, allied the trend's emergence to the experiences of New International Realism, integrating these experiences to the specificity of Brazilian cultural context. The New Brazilian Realism overcame the Orthodox socialist realism statements, proposed by Popular Culture Centre's militants, and moved towards European innovative proposals, supported by Pierre Restany (Schenberg, 1988 p. 179-180).

Proposta 66 seminar, discussions focused on the new Brazilian avant-garde's situation, and the theses supported by Hélio Oiticica, Pedro Escosteguy and Frederico Morais converged for the formulation of the conceptual bases of an avant-garde critically inserted in urban life and open to collective experiences. Hélio Oiticica was to synthesize the discussions of the seminar, proposing the independence of Brazilian avant-garde in regards to foreign avant-garde, whilst giving it the sense of a "genuine search of a new object in Brazilian art". This new object, which referred to Ferreira Gullar's Non-Object, proposed not only a spectator/participant interaction with the work, but also claimed collective participation from the public through the radical questioning of conventional artistic categories and the establishment of experimental, sensory, conceptual and procedural proposals. In this seminar, Oiticica positioned the basic questions of the new

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The group was formed by artists Wesley Duke Lee, Maria Cecília Gismond, Otto Stupakoff, critic Pedro Manoel Gismond and writers Carlos Felipe Saldanha and Thomaz Souto Correa.

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The participating artists were Maurício Nogueira Lima, Sérgio Ferro, Flávio Império, Ubirajara Ribeiro, Samuel Spiegel and the Neorealista group from Rio de Janeiro.

avant-garde to face the formation of the Brazilian New Objectivity. *Proposta 66's* seminar triggered a series of artistic manifestations in several Brazilian cities. In São Paulo, various radical actions were organized by *Grupo Rex* at Rex Gallery & Sons, together with the newspaper *Rex Time's* release. They questioned the market institutions and art criticism.⁴ The group made some performances between 1966 and 1967, culminating in Nelson Leirner's exhibition/happening, with all the exhibited artwork being taken from the gallery, which was closed afterwards.

During that same period, the artists in Rio de Janeiro published the Declaration of Basic Principles of the Avant-Garde, which legitimized the proposals from artists, asking for freedom of expression and taking a revolutionary posture that "extended to all fields of man's sensation and consciousness" (Alvarado, 1978, p. 73). The collective movement of artists and critics faced towards the organization of the exhibition called *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* [New Brazilian Objectivity], which occurred at MAM/RJ in 1967.⁵ The exhibition brought together Brazilian artists from various regions. It summarized neo-avant-garde's proposals and became a milestone in the stating of a genuine Brazilian art.

In the catalog of the show, Oiticica's formulations were recorded. On these, Oiticica explained the ideology of this new avant-garde in the document named *Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade* [General Scheme of the New Objectivity]. In this document, Oiticica points out the following considerations: constructive will of concretist and neoconcretist inheritance; the overcoming of Visual Arts's traditional categories; a tendency towards the object; the abandonment of formalist aestheticism for a semantic approach focused on ethical, political and social problems; the emergence of anti-art issues, and the organization of collective manifestations, open to public participation. In the exhibition, the biggest impact proposal was Oiticica's *Tropicália*, which consisted in a room that was open to public participation. This installation was created with dirt, stones, plants and tropical animals against a TV set. The work dialogued directly with the issues proposed by the musical movement Tropicalismo, which emerged in 1967, launched by Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Rogério Duprat and Júlio Medaglia (Favaretto, 1979).

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The group was formed by Wesley Duke Lee, Nelson Leirner, Geraldo de Barros, José Resende, Carlos Fajardo and Frederico Nasser,

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New Brazilian Objectivity. Rio de Janeiro, MAM, April 6 to 30, 1967.

In 1966, the Brazilian Avant-garde exhibition [Vanguarda Brasileira, in portuguese] was held in Belo Horizonte at UFMG's Dean Office. The exhibition was coordinated by Frederico Morais and Celma Alvim. The show had the purpose of presenting avant-garde Rio de Janeiro artists to the people from Minas Gerais, establishing the first dialogue between young artists from Rio and Belo Horizonte.⁶ During the inauguration, the artists and critics staged a happening, throwing eggs from one of Oiticica's *Bolides* at the public. The exhibition had national repercussion and marked the presence of Frederico Morais as a Brazilian avant-garde militant critic. The exhibition had a catalog-poster with testimonials of artists and a critical reflection on the morals of the avant-garde, resuming the innovative moments of Brazilian art from the 1922 Modern Art Week to Oiticica's conceptual proposals.

With the resurgence of repression established by the AI-5 (Institutional Act No. 5) in 1968, the artists's performances became radical and kept going on until the 60's, with the organization of manifestations of rejection towards the military regime. From then on, there was only terror and the persecution of intellectuals and artists, followed by the closing of several educational institutes of progress such as UNITES, CPC, ISEB.⁷ The government prevented the opening of Brazil's representative exhibition at Paris Biennale, which was intended to be held at MAM/RJ, and canceled the Brazilian exhibition scheduled by critic Jorge Romero Brest, which was going to take place at *Instituto Torquato de Tella* in Buenos Aires.

Brazilian art critics protested publicly against such arbitrary actions, divulging the Declaration of the principles of Brazilian art critics [*Declaração dos princípios dos críticos de arte brasileiros*, in portuguese] (Alvarado, 1978, p. 43), which condemned the censorship, claimed the right of artistic creation freedom and of the inviolability of art exhibitions. The protests against the military repression in Brazil had international repercussions, promoting the international art community's boycott to the *X Bienal de São Paulo*, led by critic Pierre Restany (Amarante, 1989, p. 182-198).

At the turn of 1960, the fight of the artists and critics who remained in Brazil crystallized in ephemeral actions of protest, called "Guerrilla

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The exhibition presented works by Hélio Oiticica, Antônio Dias, Rubens Gerchman, Pedro Escosteguy, Ângelo Aquino, Dileny Campos and Maria do Carmo Secco,

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Respectively part of Brazil's National Student Union (*União Nacional dos Estudantes*, UNE), The Popular Culture Center (*Centro Popular de Cultura*, CPC) and The Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies (*Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros*, ISEB).

art” by Frederico Morais, since they were manifestations turned into paradigms of urban guerrillas fighting strategies. In the text “Against Affluent Art: The Body is the Motor of the Work” (Morais, 1986), the critic balances the situation of the new Brazilian avant-garde, urging artists and critics to radically oppose themselves to the conventional art imposed by hegemonic countries, acting in a “suddenly” and “unusual” manner in the process of artistic revolution.

The proposal of “Guerrilla Art” was released by Frederick Maurice at Salão da Bússola, at Rio’s Modern Art Museum in 1969, with the participation of emerging artists, such as Cildo Meireles, Artur Barrio and Antônio Manoel, among others. In the following year, Morais elaborated the New Criticism, demanding that the critics adopted a provoking, militant posture, in order to interact with the artists’s works. Within this proposal, Morais held an exhibition called *A Nova Crítica* [The new criticism], at Petite Galerie, located in Rio, which consisted in a critical commentary of the *Agnus Dei* exhibition, previously held in this gallery by Cildo Meireles, Thereza Simões and Guilherme Vaz (ibid.).

In Belo Horizonte, scenery of several neo-avant-garde manifestations during the years 1960-1970 in the halls and art festivals at the University and in the streets, the dawn of a new generation of artists was annouced, led by militant critics Frederico Morais and Marcio Sampaio.

The First Contemporary Art Exhibition in 1969, held at Museu de Arte da Pampulha, curated by Márcio Sampaio, instigated the debate about the basic assumptions of contemporary art and introduced radical changes of rules, abolishing the traditional categories of fine arts in favor of the conceptual, procedural and interdisciplinary proposals of the neo-avant-garde. The awarded artworks were *Conjuntos Visuais e Táteis*, by José Ronaldo Lima; *Territórios*, elaborated by the team made up of Luciano Gusmão, Lotus Lobo and Dilton Araújo; *Máquinas de Ninar*, by Jarbas Juarez; *Escavações*, by Dileny Campos, and *Objetos*, by Madu, Ana Amélia Lopes de Oliveira and José Alberto Nemer.⁸ However, the most significant event of the new avant-garde in Belo Horizonte was *Semana de Arte de Vanguarda* [avant-garde art week] (1970), coordinated by Frederick Maurice and Samantha Tristan to celebrate the inauguration of the Palace of Arts. The event was held during the *Semana da Inconfidência* in the month of April

in two moments: the exhibition *Objeto e Participação* [object and participation], held in the Palace of Arts, with the participation of artists Theresa Simões, George Helt, Orlando Castaño, Manoel Serpa, Manfredo Souza-netto e Terezinha Soares, and the manifestation *Do Corpo à Terra*, held at the Municipal Park, in the streets, in the mountains and in the streams of the city, with the participation of artists Cildo Meireles, Artur Barrio, Luciano Gusmão, Lotus Lobo, Dilton Araújo, Décio Novello, Eduardo Ângelo and Lee Jaffe, who ran Hélio Oiticica’s proposal.

In these events, the artists worked with conceptual, political, ecological and environmental proposals and symbolic rituals. Some aimed at messing up the daily life of the city, like the newspapers thrown in the park by Eduardo Ângelo. Other had ecological connotation, as well as the seeds planted by Lotus Lobo or Lee Jaffe and Hélio Oiticica’s sugar drawings at Serra do Curral. There have been propositions for social connotation, such as Dileny Campos’s *Subpaisagens* [sublandscapes]. This work offered a glimpse of the workers’s world in the cracks of the urban landscape; the lithographic footprints registered by George Helt at the entrance of the exhibition at Palace of Arts; José Ronaldo Lima’s tactile olfactory boxes, which invited the public to participate in new sensorial experiences.

There were also proposals of political connotation, as Dilton Araújo and Luciano Gusmão’s mapping of the Municipal Park, separating free areas from repression areas; Luiz Alphonsus’s plastics burned with napalm; the colorful grenades detonated by Décio Novello; the marks stamped with forbidden words, registered by Thereza Simões; José Ronaldo Lima’s *Gramática Amarela* [Yellow grammar], a tribute to the cultural revolution.

The more radical political propositions were Cildo Meireles’s *Tiradentes: Totem-Monumento*, a ritualization of the sacrifice of burnt animal, and *Situação T/TI* [T/TI Situation], which consisted of bags containing meat and bones released by Artur Barrio in the stream Ribeirão Arrudas. These bold proposals reaffirmed the emblem of death in Brazilian culture and symbolized the artists’s protest against the victims of terror human sacrifice and rejection towards the State’s paramilitary action against political militants who were tortured and killed in Brazilian prisons (Morais, 2002). Conceptual and ecological were also proposed, an example of that being the reflection and transpiration of earth experiences, elaborated by Luciano Gusmão, and Frederico Morais’s own work, which aimed at appropriating 15 areas within the city through photographs places in photographed places to be seen by passers-by as if paintings on canvases, thus inviting these passers-by to reconstruct that scenery’s memory.

Throughout the event, Morais launched a radical manifest, asking for freedom of expression in Brazil. The event was reevaluated by Morais as the last urban Brazilian avant-garde collective manifestation.

4 — CONCLUSION

From these preliminary theoretical considerations and first neo-avant-garde mapping of the years 1960-1970, I intend to widen the reflection and mapping of artists's actions in other Brazilian cities, showing the diversity of Brazilian artistic culture at that time.⁹ I consider this moment to be very important for the formation of contemporary art in Brazil and also for its international visibility. Today, artists Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, Cildo Meireles and Artur Barrio deserve to be recognized by the international artistic community as advocates of contemporary art (in Brett, 2005). I believe that a broader interpretation of this odd moment of Brazilian culture can contribute to enlarge the knowledge of artistic circuit in other Brazilian cities (Porto Alegre, Recife, Brasília, Cuiabá, Florianópolis, Vitória) and establish a dialogue with international artistic circuit.

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My intention is to insert in this research the following cities: Recife, Vitória, Salvador, Brasília, Cuiabá, Curitiba and Porto Alegre.

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