

**CURATING PUBLICS IN BRAZIL: EXPERIMENT, CONSTRUCT, CARE**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2016

Grounded in case studies at the nexus of socially engaged art, curatorship and education, each anchored in a Brazilian art institution and framework/practice pairing – lab/experiment, school/construct, clinic/care – this dissertation explores the artist-work-public relation as a complex and generative site requiring multifaceted and complicit curatorial approaches. Lab/experiment explores the mythic participatory happenings *Domingos da Criação* (Creation Sundays) organized by Frederico Moraes at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro in 1971 at the height of the military dictatorship and their legacy via the minor work of the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art (2010 – 2013). School/construct examines modalities of social learning via the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial *Ensaio de Geopoética* (Geopoetic Essays), 2011. Led by chief curator José Roca and Pablo Helguera as pedagogic curator, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition’s regional artist residencies, neighborhood cultural center, and mediator team brought an expanded pedagogy to the center of the curatorial project. Clinic/care explores transdisciplinary practices in art and health via the *Farmácia Baldia de Boa Viagem* (Baldia Pharmacy of Boa Viagem) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói, focusing on the use and study of medicinal plants featured as part of Carlos Vergara’s exhibition *Sudário* (Shroud) in 2013-2014. Amidst the complexities of each situation a set of contingent, relational and contextual “lessons” emerge as a possible fount for imagining a socially engaged curatorship grounded in a praxis of experiment, construct, care. One shaped by the legacies of post Neoconcrete art practices, decolonial pedagogies, Joaquin Torres García’s famous upturned map of the Americas as a gesture of radical locality, and the vital anti-colonial tradition of Oswald de Andrade’s anthropophagy. Drawing on its etymological roots of *curare* – to care – here curating affects a network of molecular learning and activism derived from a poetic and political contagion of encounters – of ideas, practices, people and contexts – and an ethical commitment to place.

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## PREFACE

I have been immensely privileged over many years to have worked at a variety of art institutions both large and small in Canada, USA and Brazil and this writing reflects those histories, the joys and challenges of numerous projects and collaborations as well as multiple conversations and debates with professional colleagues, artists, critics, scholars, educators, community groups and many others that have shaped my thinking and made the journey incredibly rich. While this dissertation focuses on recent experiences in Brazil, I am indebted to the insights and collaborations with former colleagues at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada especially Matthew Teitelbaum, Cathy Jonasson, Jim Shedden, Kelly McKinley, Douglas Worts and David Wistow and The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, USA especially Thomas Sokolowski, John W. Smith, Tresa Varner, Maritza Mosquera, Abby Sheehan, and Nicole Dezelon as well as Colleen Criste, Margery King, Geralyn Huxley and Greg Burchard. I am also grateful to all those with whom I have come in contact in the ongoing critical and generative search for the experimental, constructive and caring possibilities of art, curatorship and education in contemporary contexts, in particular to Mary Jane Jacob, Sarah Schultz, Wendy Woon, Nuno Sacramento, Claudia Zeiske and Katie Bruce.

This particular journey would never have begun, let alone been realized, without the vital encouragement of my advisor Terry Smith whose ongoing faith in the project, intellectual guidance, support and patience have been absolutely essential. I am truly grateful and indebted to him. My special thanks also to my esteemed committee members John Beverley, Jennifer Josten, Barbara McCloskey and Kirk Savage whose thoughtful suggestions, observations and constructive criticism energized and focused my writing at key junctures in the process. I am also very appreciative of the Frick Fine Arts Department support and administrative assistance and the Center for Latin American Studies throughout my doctoral program.

As this dissertation is built around case studies of projects at the nexus of socially-engaged art, curatorship and education in three distinct Brazilian art institutional contexts – Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (MAM), Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande de Sul, Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói (MAC) – I have been extremely fortunate to have been able to engage directly with and interview many of the individuals who have vitally shaped their histories and programs. For this essential access I am immensely grateful.



As a vital force in MAM's experimental palimpsest, a particular thanks to Frederico Morais, whose persona and inspirational work and writings are a constant delight to revisit, for his generosity of time and acumen in reviewing the history of *Domingos da Criação*, 1971, as well as for providing access to his archive. Other crucial voices in MAM's richly experimental epoch also generously offered their time, memories and insights and I am especially grateful to Anna Bella Geiger, Amir Haddad and Carlos Vergara. In addition, special thanks to Lula Wanderley, Maria Tornaghi, Luiz Pizarro and Fernando Cocchiarale each of whom shed light on key moments in the evolution of the experimental in art and education and the relation of the museum and the public at MAM at different time periods. In addition, my thanks to Elizabeth Varela and Aline Siqueira at MAM's Research and Documentation Center who were most helpful throughout my research.

My involvement with MAM and its history started via the work of the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art that began in late 2009 at the invitation of curator Luiz Camillo Osorio. I am extremely thankful for his support, critical input and graciousness over the three-year life of the Nucleus and his always simultaneously open and pointedly focused curatorial practice. I am also immensely grateful to assistant curator Marta Mestre and professor Virgínia Kastrup and the special collaboration with Nucleus of Cognition and Collective Research at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and to those there who were able find the time amidst their busy schedules to be interviewed and collaboratively reflect on the completed project's significance: Ana Chaves, Anita Sobar, Bianca Bernardo, Elielton Queiroz Rocha, Mara Pereira and Virgínia Mota. I am also indebted to Gabi Gusmão, Sabrina Curi and Mara Pereira for their essays and many engaging conversations exploring their work with the Nucleus. In addition, many others, who were not able to be interviewed due to time constraints but whose work and texts on aspects of the Nucleus were most useful, are owed thanks: Bebel Kastrup, Bernardo Zabalaga and Gleyce Kelly Heitor. It is also important to thank the entire team of artists, educators, researchers and cultural producers, who at different times and ways, contributed to the project: Adriana Fontes, Ana Chaves, Ana Clarissa Fernandes, Anderson Araújo, Anita Sobar, Beatriz Lahora, Bebel Kastrup, Bernardo Zabalaga, Bianca Bernardo, Eduardo Machado, Elielton Rocha, Felisa Perez, Gabriela Guzman, Gleyce Kelly Heitor, Graziela Mello, Hugo Richard, Ignes Albuquerque, Jessica Gogan, Keyna Eleison, Leonardo Campos (AoLeo), Luiz Guilherme Vergara, Luna Leal, Maíra Dias, Mara Pereira, Renata Montechiare, Sabrina Curi, Sabrina Rosas, Taisa Moreno, Thiago Ortiz and Virgínia Mota.

For the invitation to be part of and to accompany the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial as a researcher/evaluator I am thankful to Pablo Helguera, and together with chief curator José Roca,

for the wonderful curatorial vision for this vitally geopoetic regional and local biennial and to Mônica Hoff's dynamic role as pedagogic coordinator. It was a blessing just to be part of this truly energizing moment of transpedagogy and poetic contamination between art and education and art and life amidst a vibrant wave of affection, let alone have the privilege of interviewing many of those involved. I am immensely grateful to each of them and especially appreciative of the spirit of critical sensitivity and experimental openness that they bring to their work. For our ongoing rich and evolving discussion on art and mediation and special friendship many thanks to Diana Kolker and Rafa Silveira, and also to Julia Coelho, Lianne Strapazon, Gabriela Silva for production assistance, embracing energy and great conversations, as well as to Renata Montechiare for the collaboration on the interviews and related research. In addition, I would also like to individually thank all those we interviewed for their time and interest in the project: André da Rocha, Diana Kolker, Ethiene Nachtigall, Gabriela Silva, José Roca, Liane Strapazzo, Mônica Hoff, Pablo Helguera, Rafael Silveira, Fernanda Albuquerque, Fernanda Ott, Paula Krause, Gabriel Bartz, Luiza Mendonça, Michele Zgiet, Rodrigo Nunes, Tatiana Rosa, Tiago Giora, Alexia Tala, André Vilmar Mers, Lucas Brolese, Márcia Tomaseli, Marlene Montagner, Marizangela Secco, Mateo Lopez, Oliver Kochta, Alissa Gottfried, Andréa Paiva Nunes, Andressa Argenta, Denis Fromer Nicola, Emanuel Silveira Alves, Márcia Wander, Maria Aparecida Aliano Marques, Maria Helena Gaidzinski, Marilia Schmitt Fernandes, Paula Cristina Luersen and Roger Kichalowsky.

Carlos Vergara has described the potential of art as a form of making visible and as a driving force in trying to answer the question “how to live together?” The medicinal plant art and health initiative *Farmácia Baldia da Boa Viagem* at Museu of Contemporary Art, Niterói and surrounding neighborhood was grounded in just this impetus to explore the potential of art in the world and its collective possibilities. For the invitation to coordinate and reflect on this fascinating and challenging endeavor I am immensely grateful to the artist and for his ideas and ways of making, wonderful persona and many conversations. Much gratitude is also owed to curator/director of MAC Luiz Guilherme Vergara and former staff, in particular Joana Mazza, Daniel Whitacker, Kátia Alves Duarte, and Eduardo Macado as well as veterans of the museum's Art and Environmental Action initiative: Eielton Queiroz Rocha, Douglas Araújo da Fonseca and Josemias Moreira Filho. Special thanks to Erika Venancio Niches, Fábio Carlos de Sousa, Maria Angelica Duarte Silva, Maria Celia Vasconcelas, Josan de Oliveira Domingues and the entire medical time at the Morro do Palácio Family Doctor outpost clinic. I am also indebted to the project's academic collaborators and our many rich cross-disciplinary conversations: Bettina Monika Ruppelt, Luiz José Soares Pinto, Marcelo Guerra Santos in particular, as well as Luiz

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And most of all I thank and dedicate this to Luiz Guilherme Vergara whose love, companionship, collaboration, and unending conversations mean absolutely everything.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The picture is, in fact, very simple;

*We had*

Epics

Representation

Monuments

Histories

Nations

Groups and Themes

Large and Expensive

*We need*

Novels

Expression

Homes

Stories

Persons

Individuals

Small and Cheap

Orhan Pamuk, “Modest Manifesto for Museums”<sup>1</sup>

September 2013, Rio de Janeiro – a wave of protests had hit Brazil since June. Millions had taken to the streets in major cities throughout the country. Propelled initially by a twenty centavos increase in bus fare, the increasingly vocal and creative placard-bearing crowds protested against governmental expenses for the mega events of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, the absence of state services and presence of state violence, and screamed, sloganeered, and sang for education, health and new ways of thinking about the body politic.<sup>2</sup> The whole country was riveted to the flow of the multitude. Debates proliferated. Police aggression was alarming. Media conglomerates skewed reporting. Social media was the only place to go to grapple with what was happening. Things were on edge. It was unclear what new possibilities were being sketched but

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<sup>1</sup> The Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk was awarded the Noble Prize for literature in 2006. His novel *The Museum of Innocence* set in Istanbul from 1975 to the present day tells the story of a rich heir who falls in love and begins to obsessively collect memorabilia connected to his affair. Published in 2008 and translated into English in 2009 the novel became an international bestseller. From the outset Pamuk developed the idea for the novel and the museum together and The Museum of Innocence that was inaugurated in Istanbul in 2013. The museum lobby and website feature the author’s “Modest Manifesto for Museums.” <http://en.masumiyetmuzesi.org/page/a-modest-manifesto-for-museums>

<sup>2</sup> The street protests were known as *jornadas de junho* (days of June) but actually kept going through October of 2013 and then sporadically until the 2014 World Cup. The Movimento Passe Livre (Free Transit Movement) active for some years prior to the protests coalesced countrywide energies following a planned 20 centavo bus fare increase in the city of São Paulo. Notable features were the multiple and creative placards protesting for better education, healthcare and new forms of politics, along with the direct action tactics of the black blocks, independent media collectives such as Ninja that ensured minute-by-minute reporting especially on police violence against the protesters, and collectives such as Coletivo Projetação projecting political and activist messages on buildings during protests.

the very public sense of political participation, not seen since the impeachment protests against President Fernando Collor in the 1990s, captivated everyone.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier that year in March of 2013 two major new art institutions were inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte de Rio (Museum of Art of Rio known as MAR) supported by the municipal government and the Roberto Marinho Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the *O Globo* media network, and one of several linchpins in the mayor Eduardo Pães revitalization of the city's port area (one of the issues behind the protests) and Casa Daros, a private institution supported by the Zurich based art collection Daros Latin America, intended as a continent-wide focal point for the display, research and interpretation of Latin American art.<sup>4</sup> Both institutions positioned themselves as embracing innovative and expansive curatorial education programs. The latter choose to particularly focus on an integrated model of art, education and communication inspired in Latin American alternative pedagogies and critical art practices.

In September that same year Casa Daros participated in the project *Publicness in Art*, a series of three regional encounters of which I was co-organizer, that aimed to reflect on questions of public engagement and contemporary artistic production within three distinct Brazilian contexts: Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil and Juazeiro de Norte in the country's northeast.<sup>5</sup> Each encounter was tailored in collaboration with local partners. Eugenio Valdés Figueroa, former director of art and education at Daros had long wanted to host a performative crab dinner of art, education and politics – the best way he conjectured to counter retrogressive thinking symbolized by the Portuguese expression “quem anda para tras é caranguejo” (he who walks backwards is a crab) and to catalyze lively debate and generate new ideas, yielding hammers and immersed in flying crab shells and sauce.<sup>6</sup> Various things got in the way of the performance not the least of which was a ban on crab fishing during certain times of the year. But in the research process I had come across a rather curious image in a 1954 issue of

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<sup>3</sup> In 1994, a popular mobilization with great appeal amongst Brazilian youth - known as “caras pintadas” (painted faces) - took to the streets to demand the impeachment of the president Fernando Collor de Mello. Due to the strong evidence of corruption the Associação Brasileira de Imprensa (Brazilian Press Association), the Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil (Order of Brazilian Lawyers), the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (Workers Center), and the União Nacional dos Estudantes (National Students Union) made an official request asking for the removal of Collor from the presidency. The congress organized a parliamentary committee of inquiry to review the facts. The impeachment was passed. However, in order not to lose his political rights, Fernando Collor resigned from his position.

<sup>4</sup> For information on MAR see their website: <http://www.museudeartedorio.org.br/en> Casa Daros unfortunately closed its doors in December 2015 after being open for less than two years. I will discuss this briefly in chapter three.

<sup>5</sup> *Publicness in Art* was a series of regional seminars coordinated by Instituto MESA (institute of which I am director and co-founded with my collaborator and partner Luiz Guilherme Vergara) and was funded by the 10th edition of the Brazilian National Art Foundation's (Funarte) grant initiative, Redes de Encontros nas Artes Visuais (Networks of Encounters in the Visual Arts). For more information on the series and related case studies see *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/?lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> Felipe Moreno, “Crabs, Butterflies, Enigmas, and Banquets: A Conversation with Eugenio Valdés Figueroa,” *Revista MESA* no.3 (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/portfolio/casa-daros-caranguejos-e-borboletas-03/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/portfolio/casa-daros-caranguejos-e-borboletas-03/?lang=en)

*Journal of the Warburg Institute* of a crab holding a butterfly.<sup>7</sup> Ancient Roman coins at the time of Augustus, most likely commemorative ones, featured this rather enigmatic juxtaposition of lepidoptera and crustacean thought to be an interpretation of the adage “festina lente” – careful advance or make haste slowly.<sup>8</sup> The image and adage also appear together in printers’ watermarks in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup>

Poetic convergence, impossible coupling or (dis)ingenuous complicity, the image became the catalyst for a discussion on questions of publicness, institutions, and art and education. A diverse group of artists, educators, curators and critics were each invited to bring a reference to the encounter inspired by the image (poetry, critical text, artwork, fiction, non-fiction, found object etc). The ensuing discussion – a mix of the lively, awkward, staid and generative – seemed to reflect the interregnum moment. At first, the crab was immediately associated with the institution, the butterfly was the artist or the youthful multitude menaced by the police. But then, new associations began to emerge, breaking down rigid dichotomies with observations such as the police are also youth or a reflection on the delicacy of the crab’s clasping gesture. Engaging with the crab and butterfly not as separate entities but rather as states of being in the process of becoming – a butterfly crabness and crab butterflyness - opened up the potential of new understandings, hybrids and asymmetries that might emerge via such improbable encounters.<sup>10</sup> Things are this *and* that. We are situated, subject to the flip of a coin and the roll of an emperor’s head but not beholden. As actors and agents within institutions what becomings can we imagine? What criticality can be construed from within? At the crux of the artist-work-public relation where art, curatorship and education intersect what instituent practices are possible?

These questions have guided and shaped the evolution of my practice as an educator and curator in art institutions over the past twenty five years, in Canada, the USA and the last eight in Brazil, and are the engine behind this research. A project I began to gain critical perspective regarding the dilemmas I was facing, over time evolved as an investigative tool to deepen my understanding of the precarious and contingent realities of art institutions in my new found home. As both insider and outsider, struggling with Portuguese and territories and practices that were at once familiar and wholly unknown, I was, and still am acutely aware, as Jacques Rancière noted,

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<sup>7</sup> W. Deonna, “The Crab and the Butterfly: A Study in Animal Symbolism” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 17, No. 1/2 (1954): 47-86. Published by: The Warburg Institute.

<sup>8</sup> See example in the collection of the British Museum:

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1216283&partId=1&people=68587&peoA=68587-1-8&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1216283&partId=1&people=68587&peoA=68587-1-8&page=1)

<sup>9</sup> W. Deonna. “The Crab and the Butterfly,” 49.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Szaniecki, “Insertions: Multitudes in the Metropolises and ... our Museums,” *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/portfolio/casa-daros-caranguejos-e-borboletas-02/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/portfolio/casa-daros-caranguejos-e-borboletas-02/?lang=en)

“of the poetic labor of translation” that is “at the heart of all learning.”<sup>11</sup> And it is this immersive journey with its evolutions, possibilities, questions and frustrations that guide this writing.

What follows is an introduction to critical themes preceded by three in-depth chapter case studies, each at the nexus of socially engaged art, curatorship and education and anchored in a contemporary Brazilian art institution and a particular framework/practice pairing – lab/experiment, school/construct, clinic/care – each of which I was involved as a coordinator, researcher, or curator in collaboration with curator/art professor Luiz Guilherme Vergara. The conclusion posits an inventory of practices, emerging amidst the complex challenges of each situation, as a set of contingent, relational and contextual “lessons” and a possible fount for imagining a socially engaged curatorship grounded in a praxis of experiment, construct, care. One that would also be shaped by the legacies of post Neoconcrete art practices, decolonial pedagogies, artist Joaquin Torres García’s famous upturned map of the Americas, as a geopolitical and constructive gesture of inversion and radical locality, and the vital anti-colonial tradition of modernist writer Oswald de Andrade’s anthropophagy. These synergies propose an idea of curating drawing on its etymological roots of *curare* – to care – as a generative and critical network of molecular learning and activism derived from a poetic and political contagion of encounters – of ideas, practices, people and contexts – and an ethical commitment to place.

The case studies that are the basis of each chapter and inform this proposed praxis are not high profile or glamorous projects. They are rather the B-side of institutional speech, existing (at times barely) and formed within democratic cracks or institutional shadows or as future potential. This writing is not an attempt to claim front of stage but is rather a refusal to allow such work to be pushed into mere sidelines.<sup>12</sup> It is an insistence on the artist/work/public relation as a complex entanglement and generative site that requires multifaceted, collaborative and complicit curatorial approaches and on the importance of narratives that reflect on these complexities and (im)possibilities from within institutional contexts. It is this ground with which I hope to make contact – its site specificity, context and body – to contribute a voice to the evolving discourses

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<sup>11</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London/New York: Verso, 2009, (First published in French as *Le spectateur émancipé*. Editions La Fabrique, 2008)) 10.

<sup>12</sup> Paulo Freire spoke of the critical importance of refusing to sideline education. “One of the forms of struggle against the lack of respect for education on the part of the constituted authorities is, on the one hand, our own refusal to transform our teaching into a mere sideline and, on the other hand, our rejection of a domesticating, paternal attitude towards the students.” Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom. Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998) 65.

on institutional practices infused with what poet Seamus Heaney described in his artful recalibration of turf digger's spade and writer's pen as a "clean rasping sound."<sup>13</sup>

## 1.1 RECONFIGURING THE PUBLIC/IN PUBLIC

[...] art's politics – and thus power to reinvent or redistribute public space – lies precisely in its ability to formally refigure such relations rather than become workers that render them complete.

Andrea Phillips<sup>14</sup>

In 1971, responding to what he saw as "schizophrenic" practices in museums and art galleries in the late 1960s, Duncan Cameron, then director of the Brooklyn Museum, published an influential article "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum" in *Curator: The Museum Journal*.<sup>15</sup> Cameron weighed the choices and concluded that bringing the forum inside the temple would detract from the revered symbolic status of the temple as taste-maker and that, simultaneously, the forum would lose its edge of experimental freedom from needing to deal with the requisites of the temple. Both were vital, but collapsing them was not a viable model. Perhaps, revealing, what theorist Slavoj Žižek more recently described as an "insurmountable *parallax gap*," that is "the confrontation of two closely linked perspectives between which no neutral common ground is possible."<sup>16</sup> Yet, despite insurmountabilities it seems that institutional practices are impelled, even if proven continually unviable, by the attractive pull of this (im)possible union. Indeed, as curator and critic Maurice Berger remarked at the 2004 symposium and publication *Museums of Tomorrow*, it is noteworthy the extent to which arguments about the museum, whatever model maybe purported, are markedly energized by the forum and social concerns.<sup>17</sup> More recently the 2016 symposium *How Institutions Think*, co-presented by CCS Bard and the Luma Foundation, proposing to explore how "to conceptualize and build possible institutions/anti-institutions of the future" suggests that the play of temple-forum is both central to and wholly contemporary (maybe

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<sup>13</sup> Seamus Heaney, "Digging", 1966, *Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966 – 1996* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1998) 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Andrea Phillips, "Too Careful: Contemporary Art's Public Making," in *Actors, Agents and Attendants. Caring Culture: Art, Architecture and the Politics of Public Health*, eds. Andrea Phillips and Markus Miessen (Amsterdam/Berlin: SKOR Foundation for Art and Public Domain/Sternberg Press, 2011) 35-56, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Duncan F. Cameron, "Museum, a Temple or the Fórum," *Curator: The Museum Journal*, volume 14, issue 1 (March 1971): 11-24.

<sup>16</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 2006) 4.

<sup>17</sup> Maurice Berger ed. *Museums of Tomorrow: A Virtual Discussion* (Sante Fe/Baltimore: George O'Keefe Museums/University of Maryland Center for Art and Visual Culture, 2004) 13.



necessarily so) to institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> The trick seems, as Žižek notes, to replace the yin-yang discourse of the “polarity of opposites” with the concept of inherent ‘tension,’ gap, noncoincidence.” Or perhaps, narratives of becoming crab and butterfly.<sup>19</sup>

At once bastions of elitism and promoters of all things “anti”, edgy and innovative, contemporary art museums are uniquely positioned to plumb these possibilities. As artist Vito Acconci has noted art is perhaps the only word/field that simultaneously designates a category and a value.<sup>20</sup> Using and abusing this has been *sine qua non* of the last few decades’ embrace of spectacle and entertainment but also of significant programmatic innovation. The latter is marked by substantive paradigm shifts in curatorial, education and artistic practices coupled with the emergence of so-called “critical” curating, new institutionalism, radical education, social art practices, and museum ethics studies. All of which, while not necessarily in dialogue with one another, are, in varying degrees, informed by feminism, critical pedagogy, queer theory, postcolonialism, psychoanalysis, performance and social studies, new genre public art, collective activism, and the emergence of social media. Here the universal museum, morphed through a contemporary prism, is refashioned to embrace an ethical worldliness, beyond encyclopedic representation, toward the creation of worldly encounters.

Having absorbed the lessons of institutional critique a new generation of practitioners position themselves both within and outside of institutions, or, rather as micro modalities of countering within the larger institution of art in what scholar Gerald Raunig has described as “*instituent practices*” – a means of working that thwarts the logics of institutionalization but embraces a permanent process of *constitution* (building on Antonio Negri’s notion of constituent power).<sup>21</sup> Curator Maria Lind describes such work under the concept of what she terms “the curatorial” that is, curating that seeks to differentiate itself from “business as usual” and constitutes a form of making that challenges the status quo and may incorporate or mobilize multiple formats beyond that of the exhibition (e.g. seminars, off-site commissions, publications, education) and be performed from various positions within the ecosystem of art (e.g. curator,

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<sup>18</sup> CCS Bard and the LUMA Foundation, *How Institutions Think*, February 24<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Arles, France. <http://www.bard.edu/ccs/how-institutions-think-symposium/> Similar variants can be seen to permeate the texts/talks from many such conferences over the past decade: Peter Noever. *The Discursive Museum*. Vienna: MAK/Hatje Cantz, 2001; Helen O’Donoghue ed. *Access All Areas*. Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2009; Tone Hansen ed. *(Re)staging The Art Museum*. Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2011 and *Now Museum: Contemporary Art, Curating History, Alternative Models*, March 2011 co-organized by graduate program at CUNY, New York, New Museum, and Independent Curators International [http://curatorsintl.org/events/the\\_now\\_museum](http://curatorsintl.org/events/the_now_museum)

<sup>19</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Vito Acconci and Hans Ulrich Obrist, “Museums: The Mausoleum, the Laboratorium, the Meditation Chamber and the Rave,” in *The Discursive Museum*, ed. Peter Noever (Vienna: MAK/Hatje Cantz, 2001) 142-156, 156.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray eds. *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique* (London: MayFlyBooks, 2009) xvii. Maria Lind cites Raunig and the instituent practice of “thwarting” in her essay in *(Re)staging The Art Museum*.

editor, communication officer, educator).<sup>22</sup> A similar refusal to be bound by tradition, format or genre is shared by the discourse on new institutionalism, a term borrowed from social science and applied as a concept and praxis that, as curator Sally Tallant notes, “places equal emphasis on all programs and creates spaces and modes of display that reflect this, including archives, reading rooms, residency schemes, talks and events as well as exhibitions.”<sup>23</sup> Working within these possibilities, radical education, according to the Ljubljana based Radical Education Collective, not only adopts the practices of progressive educators, artists, and curators to realize “new spaces of micropolitics, encounter, and intermediate spaces” within institutions, but also, to “chang[e] the ideological, economic and cultural perspectives of these institutions.”<sup>24</sup>

Emancipatory. But no small order. Such critical turns must also be constantly vigilant of their discourse and to whom it serves. As Žižek’s parallax suggests the revolutionary interests of the forum may not be those of the temple or at least when in service to the forum. A generative expansiveness of the curatorial may too readily become the manifest destiny of the temple or the radicality of education too wrapped up in its own “heterotopic performance.”<sup>25</sup> The “anti”, if not actively restaging its “anti-ness” in new instituent and vibrant ways, may also find itself seamlessly absorbed as representation, a kind of “sacralization of the dessacralized,” a concern noted by architect Francesco Perrotta-Bosch in relation to Museu de Arte de São Paulo’s (São Paulo Museum of Art - MASP) recent reinstallation of architect Lina Bo Bardi’s innovative 1968 free standing glass easel-style artwork display designs.<sup>26</sup>

Yet despite these dangers an array of multifaceted curatorial and education practices has emerged running parallel to the emergence of social art practices where the production of rarefied objects has given way to the relational, the experiential, the social, and the contextual. They share a search for forms of connectivity, conviviality, collectivity and ethical and political action, often in small-scale gestures. Their co-produced, collaborative and contextual processes point to a complicit *with* rather than an *about*. In the late 1990s museum scholar Stephen E. Weil saw this shift in relation to the American museum as a gradual turn, beginning Post World War II, “from being *about* something to being *for* somebody” where an “institution focused primarily on the growth, care and study of its collection” has turned, in recent decades, to a more outward interest

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<sup>22</sup> Maria Lind in Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind, “To Show or Not to Show,” *Mousse Magazine*, no. 31 (November 2011), <http://www.moussemagazine.it/articolo.mm?id=759#top>

<sup>23</sup> Sally Tallant, “Experiments in Integrated Programming,” in *Curating and the Educational Turn* eds. Mick Wilson and Paul O’Neill (London: Open Editions, 2010) 186-194, 187.

<sup>24</sup> Bojana Piškur, “Radical Education in a Museum,” Talk at the Museo de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, February 10th, 2011 <http://radical.tmp.si/2011/02/radical-education-in-a-museum-by-bojana-piskur-rec/> The collective no longer exists but for archived information, blog posts and transcripts of talks and texts see: <http://radical.tmp.si>

<sup>25</sup> Andrea Phillips, “Education Aesthetics,” *Curating and the Educational Turn*, 83-96, 96.

<sup>26</sup> Francesco Perrotta-Bosch, “O risco de sacrilizar o museu dessacralizado,” Instituto Morreira Salles blogpost, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

in “primarily educational services to the public.”<sup>27</sup> Even though Weil sought to point toward ways of rethinking the binary nature of such a shift, his emphasis on service situates the dialogue in terms of accountabilities, while not in itself something to be ignored, in order to truly reconfigure practices this “for” needs to be recast in terms of possibilities.<sup>28</sup> More recent studies on museum ethics seems to be moving in this direction, as scholar Janet Marstine suggests, where practitioners are rather seeking to renegotiate relationships configured in binary positions to embrace more contingent approaches to collections and displays and, in particular, a feminist practice of guardianship that foregrounds collaborative relationships with multiple stakeholders.<sup>29</sup> Expertise is here re-imagined in terms of reciprocity or as art museum director Manuel Borja-Villel provocatively offered “education is the encounter between someone who knows something and someone who knows something else.”<sup>30</sup>

Reciprocity clearly implies that generic notions of the public are no longer tenable. Such practices recognize the fragmented nature of the public sphere and that, as critic Simon Sheik notes, “making things public is also an attempt to make a public.”<sup>31</sup> If we then construe, as art historian Terry Smith suggests, curating as a practice of “mak[ing] public,” Shreik’s statement and Lind’s diversity of format open up the possibilities for a practice of curating that radically reconfigures approaches to content and modes of address.<sup>32</sup> Here, instead of projects that are made, vetted and readied for a public to be convoked, “making public” is constitutively made with (potentially multiple) publics – instead of a linear model, a generative tangle or knot.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen E. Weil, “From Being *About* Something to Being *For* Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” *Daedalus*, vol 128, no 3 (Summer 1999): 229-258, 229.

<sup>28</sup> “Museums must not only educate themselves as to how their impact can be captured and described; they must also educate those to whom they are accountable as to what may and may not be possible in rendering their accounts.” *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>29</sup> Janet Marstine, “The Contingent Nature of the New Museum Ethics,” in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum* ed. Janet Marstine (London/New York: Routledge, 2011) 3-25, 8 & 18.

<sup>30</sup> Borja-Villel made this comment during his lecture at the Now Museum conference in New York in 2011. Dominic Willsdon curator of education at SF MoMA was in attendance and took the statement as a title for a seminar for the 9<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial for which he was also part of the curatorial team. Mônica Hoff & Dominic Willsdon, “Someone who knows something and someone who knows something else,” in *Weather Permitting: 9<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial*, eds. Luiza Proença, Sarah Demeuse and Sofia Hernández Chong Cuy (Porto Alegre: Fundação da Bienal do Mercosul, 2013) 119-135, 133.

<sup>31</sup> Simon Sheikh, “On the Production of Publics Or, Art and the Political in a World in Fragments,” in *Educação para a arte/Arte para a educação*, eds. Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and Luis Camnitzer (Porto Alegre: Fundação Bienal do Mercosul, 2009) 326-334, 329.

<sup>32</sup> Terry Smith, “The Discourse,” *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015) 13-36, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Mick Wilson makes the point about not a linear construct but rather a tangle in the panel discussion: “Artists, Institutions and the Public Sphere,” Mick Wilson, Ernesto Neto, Eugenio Valdés Figueroa, Ricardo Basbaum, Moderator: Luiz Guilherme Vergara, *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, November 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Mick Wilson’s presentation is in English. Others in Portuguese and Spanish:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuXIIkUUyhs&list=PLO-GRBBQZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m&index=4>

In Brazil questions of curating as a “making public” and the possibilities, as literary scholar Michael Warner proffers in *Publics and Counterpublics*, of the construction of a public as a form of “poetic world making” turn on a particularly complex set of dynamics.<sup>34</sup> Politics and culture are inextricably interlinked. The archaic and the contemporary co-exist. Boundaries of public and private are pervasively porous, mediated by the “cordiality” historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda so famously described, where everything is filtered through the intimate and affective.<sup>35</sup> The “public” is here often mobilized as a platform for personal and political favors and simultaneously abandoned as a sphere of communal and political investment, mired in pejorative connotations of the dysfunctional – public health, public transport, public education etc. Governments and publics alike use the term “public” and “state” as interchangeable. Institutions are young. Their fragility renders the practices of institutional critique relatively blunt in contrast to the formal structures of Euro-American power and stability, against which the critical blade is more readily sharpened. To rephrase anthropologist Néstor García Canclini’s comment on Latin America’s exuberant modernity and deficient modernization, in Brazil the waves of enthusiastic institutionality whether in the 1940s and 50s with the emergence of Museums of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo or the 1990s urban regeneration initiatives whether via renovations of historic buildings in the city’s center such as Hélio Oiticica Art Center or signature architecture in peripheries such Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói, were almost never met with effective institutionalization.<sup>36</sup> Critique then finds its edges in the street and at different moments deployed as a more constructive gesture from within.

As a means of bringing some of these debates into critical focus, it is perhaps useful to briefly review issues raised during the panel discussion, “Artists, Institutions and the Public Sphere” held as part of the international seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* at Museum of Modern Art Rio de Janeiro in November, 2011.<sup>37</sup> The seminar aimed to explore the potency of a public praxis that necessarily engages with the artistic, the curatorial and the educational. Here, artist, curator and co-editor of *Curating and the Educational Turn*, Mick Wilson, brought examples of what he and fellow co-editor Paul O’Neill had recently named as the educational turn in contemporary art and curating, that is, where traditionally seen as peripheral programs, such as talks and discussions or educational formats such as schools, were

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics (abbreviated version), *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 88, No.4, (November 2002): 413-425, 422.

<sup>35</sup> Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil*, 1936, 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Edition, eds. Ricardo Benzaquen de Araújo and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006) 160-166.

<sup>36</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 41.

<sup>37</sup> For more information: <http://institutomesa.org/projects/international-seminars-reconfiguring-the-public-art-pedagogy-participation-i-ii/?lang=en> (Accessed February 2016)

now being embraced as the central curatorial/artistic concept, not as educational add-ons but where artmaking and curating are in and of themselves seen and understood as acts of education. Wilson suggested that in their instituent practices of creating micro public spheres whether via art schools or discursive events these works were grappling with the dangerous evacuation of meaning and the “loss of our understanding of what is at stake in the notion of the public.”<sup>38</sup> As a way of conceiving such a practice he offered the term *publicness* to describe the ongoing construction of a public as rather a qualitative and contingent ethical endeavor.

Artist Ernesto Neto countered that the “turn’s” desire (read Euro-American) to subvert the formal structures of the education comes from the very strength and privilege of those said structures. In Brazil, the public is the street; it’s all there. “We were born into informality.” For Neto institutions perhaps reflect most their Brazilianness and attitudes toward the public in their structural fragility rather than their displays, due to what he sees as a lack of public conscience and love for institutions. (It might be worthwhile opening a parenthesis here just to emphasize that while informality and the streets may reign, political, social and cultural processes are often subject to a range of distorted and at times debilitating institutional formalities.) Eugenio Valdés brought another perspective, of the double-edge sword of state involvement in the public realm, drawing on his own education in Cuba, of critical investment and oppressive control, in turn creating a complex set of interchangeable associations between the state and the public sphere. He argued that the potential of the art/education relationship was the role art could play in education and in so doing affect art. He cited functional illiteracy figures of 30 million, poor public education, and the lack of knowledge amongst many artists who profess to work with education of experimental pedagogic practices such as the child-centered approaches of José Pacheco and Escola Ponte in Portugal or Reggio Emilia in Italy and similarly how teachers were unfamiliar with artists working with experimental pedagogic practices in art. He argued, “If we’re going to speak about education in this country, let’s really speak about education.” Artist Ricardo Basbaum drew attention to the generosity of the work of art as an instituent tool that, in and of itself, implies a relational dimension as a kind of provocation of contact. The challenge for institutions to relate to publics is not only of audiences but also one of relating to artworks. As a last question he wondered why these debates resonate within art, might they not have more traction say in a discussion on sociology?

Art as instituent tool, curating as making public and an attempt to make a public, publicness, informality and the street rules, lack of love (and investment) in public institutions, an

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<sup>38</sup> Panel discussion: “Artists, Institutions and the Public Sphere,” *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*.

educational turn must turn to education, why art? The topics that emerged suggest some of the challenging contours of any kind of public praxis that attempts to integrate art, curatorship and education, particularly in Brazil. They outline the constraints and possibilities of what it might mean to reconfigure the public and potentially ourselves: our practices, formats, and ways of working – themes that will re-emerge in various aspects in the chapters that follow.

## 1.2 CONSTITUTIVE FRAGILITY: THE POLITICS OF ACCESS<sup>39</sup>

Art. 215. The State guarantees to all the full exercise of cultural rights and access to the resources of national culture, and supports and incentivizes the valorization and diffusion of cultural events.

Art. 216. Brazilian cultural heritage may be of a material or immaterial nature, taken individually or together, understood as carriers of identity, action and memory of the various groups of Brazilian society that may include:

I - forms of expression;

II - ways of creating, making and living;

III - scientific, artistic and technological creations;

IV - works, objects, documents, buildings and other spaces intended for artistic and cultural events;

V - urban complexes and sites of historical, natural, artistic, archaeological, paleontological, ecological and scientific value.

1988 Brazilian Constitution<sup>40</sup>

There are many Brazils, beginnings, unfolding histories, and fragile presents. The most recent ebullient wave of growth and possibility, part of the so-called Latin American pink tide, was spawned simultaneously by economic growth and the victories of the Workers Party (PT) and successive administrations of Presidents Lula de Silva and Dilma Rousseff (2002 – 2014).

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<sup>39</sup> The term “constitutive fragility” I draw from Peter Pál Pelbart a full quote of which I present in the conclusion. Peter Pál Pelbart, “Notes on the Contemporary.” *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/think-piece/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/think-piece/?lang=en)

<sup>40</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “Art. 215. O Estado garantirá a todos o pleno exercício dos direitos culturais e acesso às fontes da cultura nacional, e apoiará e incentivará a valorização e a difusão das manifestações culturais. Art. 216. Constituem patrimônio cultural brasileiro os bens de natureza material e imaterial, tomados individualmente ou em conjunto, portadores de referência à identidade, à ação, à memória dos diferentes grupos formadores da sociedade brasileira, nos quais se incluem: I - as formas de expressão; II - os modos de criar, fazer e viver; III - as criações científicas, artísticas e tecnológicas; IV - as obras, objetos, documentos, edificações e demais espaços destinados às manifestações artístico-culturais; V - os conjuntos urbanos e sítios de valor histórico, paisagístico, artístico, arqueológico, paleontológico, ecológico e científico.”

However, writing in 2016, amidst a punishing economic downturn, corruption scandals, a surreal end-of-year political theatre replete with cries of impeachment, a major environmental disaster and the fatal police shooting of five unarmed black teenagers, not to mention Zika, the once confident promise has turned to widespread cynicism and disillusionment.

It is a cycle many have seen before. One which there is perhaps no better illustration than artist Francis Alÿs' video *El Ensayo* (Rehearsal), 1999-2001, set in the outskirts of Tijuana featuring a dynamo red Volkswagen Beetle repeatedly attempting to scale a hill – now it's going, yes, yes, it'll get there, no, no, back again, its stops and starts all the while accompanied by a brass band rehearsal.<sup>41</sup> Education scholar Danilo Streck commented at the *Reconfiguring the Public* seminar on the striking double sense of rehearsal in the very public “first world” stage of the work's viewing – for him a crowded gallery at MoMA in New York, a rehearsal repeated at Tate Modern, ironies of Volkswagen sponsorship notwithstanding.<sup>42</sup> As curator Gerardo Mosquera has remarked Latin America is a “forum for every hope and every failure.”<sup>43</sup>

For many in Brazil, what seems to be a failure writ large in this current downturn is the sense that after four successive PT administrations, the promise of structural transformation with which they swept into power now seems further away rather than closer.<sup>44</sup> Yet despite the failed sense of the PT project, Brazil's pink tide would not have been possible without its pluralizing politicized movements fighting for democracy in the 1980s, constructing and endorsing Brazil's 1988 constitution, after twenty-three years of military dictatorship. Amongst the many advancements and pronouncements of this utopian document, access to culture was inscribed as a right. Constitutional articles 215 and 216 would catalyze a vital period of micro cultural initiatives and projects seeking to recognize, register and re-activate traditions of immaterial patrimony and pave the way for large-scale temporary spectacle events fostering broad public access with a stress on social inclusion.<sup>45</sup>

If the temple and forum parallax is part of institutional DNA, in Brazil, a particular iteration of that plays itself out as a complex set of global, national, regional and local questions

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<sup>41</sup> For a video clip see: Francis Alÿs, *El Ensayo*, 1999-2001:

<http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/francisalys/>

<sup>42</sup> Panel discussion: “Publicness: Exchanges between Art and Pedagogy,” Danilo Streck and Pablo Helguera and moderator: Jessica Gogan, *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*.

<sup>43</sup> Gerardo Mosquera, “Introduction,” in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America* ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London: Iniva, 1995) 10-17, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Rodrigo Nunes, “Learning to No End: Tension and Telos in Pedagogy and Politics,” *Lápiz no.2*, “Post Neoliberal Latin American Philosophy of Education: An Education Always Already Present, Or An Education Yet to Come.” Proceeding from the LAPES (Latin American Philosophy of Education Society) symposium, New York: Lapes, 2015, 3-20, 6.

<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to Marta Abreu whose lecture exploring the impact of the 1988 constitution on issues of immaterial patrimony, popular culture and folk traditions throughout the country suggested a parallel with issues of access in relation to art institutions, biennials etc. Marta Abreu, “Desdobramentos da cultura popular a partir da Constituição de 1988,” Seminar: *Arte Popular Contemporânea: Desafios e Horizontes*, Museu de Ingá, Niterói, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



of center and periphery, politics of access, and (re)stagings of the temporal and (im)possible permanence, hope and failure. To anchor the discussion on these tensions I will take a hopefully useful and symbolic detour to explore two historic touchstones involving key Brazilian figures both coincidentally involved in the founding of the PT in the 1980s – educator Paulo Freire and art critic Mário Pedrosa. In May 1972 in Santiago, Chile, while in exile from Brazil’s military dictatorship (1964 – 1985) yet, operating in totally different social circles, both contributed to significant and distinct cultural events that can be seen as provocative harbingers and parallax questions for contemporary practices.

What has come to be called new or social museology evolved out of the late 1960s counterculture seeking to challenge hegemonic narratives and traditional institutional practices and to embrace more community-based participative practices grounded in particular locales. Eco or open air, neighborhood and community museums began to emerge embracing cultural and environmental specificity, personal narratives and memories, participatory management of cultural heritage, and a politicized investment in local knowledge and activism.<sup>46</sup> Both reflecting this trend and reinforcing its radical potential, particularly from a Latin American perspective, what would become known as the Carta de Santiago (Letter from Santiago) was published based on resolutions derived from a round table discussion on the role of Latin American museums held on May 30<sup>th</sup> in Santiago, Chile in 1972, organized by UNESCO for a conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The document advocated a socially oriented museological practice and the role of the museum as one that formed and reflected “the conscience” of the communities they served.<sup>47</sup> Hugues de Varine, then director of ICOM (1971 – 1974), notes that he first asked Freire to play a lead role in the round table, but this was formally opposed by the official UNESCO Brazilian delegation (Freire was in exile).<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless de

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<sup>46</sup> Stephen Weil briefly discusses these trends and the evolution of the Anacostia neighborhood museum opened by Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC in 1967 in “From Being *About* Something to Being *For* Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” 248-249. For an essay on the ecomuseum movement emerging in France in the late 1960s see Dominique Poulot, “Identity as Self-Discovery: The Ecomuseum in France,” in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, eds. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 66-84. For an interesting example of street/neighborhood museum collaboration with a more mainstream museum also in the late 1960s, in this case the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, see Rebecca Zorach, “Art & Soul: An Experimental Friendship Between the Street and a Museum,” in *Institutions and Imaginaries*, ed. Stephanie Smith, Chicago Social Practice History Series eds. Mary Jane Jacob and Kate Zeller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) 159-179.

<sup>47</sup> “Carta de Santiago” (Santiago Letter). UNESCO/ICOM, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1972

[www.revistamuseu.com.br/legislacao/museologia/mesa\\_chile.htm](http://www.revistamuseu.com.br/legislacao/museologia/mesa_chile.htm)

<sup>48</sup> Hugues de Varine, “Témoignages: Autour de La Table Ronde de Santiago,” in “L’ecomusée: rêve ou réalité,” *Publics et Musées* ed. André Desvallées, vol.17, issue 1, 180-183, 181.

[http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/pumus\\_1164-5385\\_2000\\_num\\_17\\_1\\_1325](http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/pumus_1164-5385_2000_num_17_1_1325)



Varine acknowledges the educator's influence in shaping the Carta's core principles:<sup>49</sup>

[...] it's not just immaterial patrimony! Each one of us has a knowledge of life that is necessary to use otherwise we are victims of the knowledge of others. It's about one of the principles of Paulo Freire. [...] Freire said – each one of us knows a lot and if we value the knowledge of each person we have an enormous richness of knowledge/skills that can be used for local development, for politics and for everything, including the administration of patrimony, the creation of educational institutions and institutions like museums. On the one hand, we have a political principle that is, the principle of social foundation, on the other, the empirical principle that is to use the knowledge of people. And it is when these two concepts unite in a project that we have participation.<sup>50</sup>

While certainly much has evolved in the ensuing decades, critical questions of community participation, a greater environmental-city awareness, the possibilities of an “integral museum” that reflects social issues and problems, and the notion of the museum as “action” and an instrument of social change can be seen as vital legacies of the Carta de Santiago.<sup>51</sup>

A few weeks prior to the ground-breaking round table, on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1972, the official inauguration ceremony for the Museo de La Solidaridad Salvador Allende (Salvador Allende Museum of Solidarity) was held at the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo (Museum of Contemporary Art) at Quinta Normal, in conjunction with the Encuentro de Artistas Plasticas del Cono Sur (Meeting of Visual Artists of the Southern Cone) organized by Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano (Institute of Latin American Art).<sup>52</sup> Allende himself made the opening remarks. Claudia Zaldivar, the museum's current director, reflects on its historical beginnings:

The idea of creating the Museo de la Solidaridad was born in the course of what was called Operación Verdad (Operation Truth, Santiago, March 1971) just a few months after the government of the Unidad Popular took power. President Salvador Allende invited different international figures – intellectuals, journalists and artists – to observe the transformations that the country was experiencing in the “Chilean road to socialism.” The Spanish art critic José María Moreno

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<sup>49</sup> I am grateful to Luiz Guilherme Vergara for drawing my attention to Freire's influence on the Carta de Santiago.

Luiz Guilherme Vergara. “Florestas e escolas contemporâneas: Terapêuticas antropofágicas entre arte, museus e sociedade.” (Forthcoming publication edited by Mário Chegas, *Museums Studies*, Universidade de Rio de Janeiro)

<sup>50</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “[...] não é só o património imaterial! Cada um de nós tem um saber de vida e que é necessário utilizar senão somos vítimas do saber dos outros. Trata-se de um princípio de Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire dizia – cada um de nós sabe muito e se valorizarmos o saber de cada pessoa temos uma riqueza enorme de saberes que podem ser utilizados para o desenvolvimento local, para a política e para tudo, inclusive para a gestão do património, para a criação de instituições educativas e instituições do tipo museu. Por um lado, temos um princípio político, que é o princípio da função social e, por outro lado, o princípio empírico, que é a utilização dos saberes das pessoas. E se estes dois conceitos se unirem num projecto então temos participação.”] Ana Carvalho, “Entrevista com Hugues de Varine. No Mundo dos Museus,” Interview held at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Universidade Nova, Lisbon, Portugal, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 <http://nomundodosmuseus.hypotheses.org/5585>

<sup>51</sup> Hugues de Varine. “Témoignages: Autour de La Table Ronde de Santiago,” 182.

<sup>52</sup> Claudia Zaldivar, “An Unprecedented History: Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende,” *Revista MESA* no.4: Past as Blueprint: Hybrid Practices and Limit Zones (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/museu-solidariedade-2/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/museu-solidariedade-2/?lang=en)

Galván and the Italian senator Carlo Levi, among others, participated, proposing the initiative as a means of promoting within European artistic circles donations of artworks that would allow the Allende government to create a museum for the people of Chile and in this way, coordinate a united mobilization of the world's artists to express their support for this political process.<sup>53</sup>

Mário Pedrosa was appointed Chairman of the initiative's Executive Committee and became the main administrator and founder of the museum. A renowned critic Pedrosa had been actively involved with the foundation of Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro and participated on the organizing committees of several São Paulo Biennials including acting as general director in 1961 as well as serving as director of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo from 1961 - 1963.<sup>54</sup> He had also organized an International Association of Art Critics conference in Brasilia in 1959 entitled "Cidade nova: Síntese das artes" (New City: Synthesis in the Arts) using the city as a case study.<sup>55</sup> Needless to say he had many connections with prominent international art world figures.<sup>56</sup> Pedrosa worked tirelessly to secure donations and, following the overthrow of Allende's populist government in 1973, continued in exile in Mexico and then Paris to ensure that planned donations were relocated to the Museo de Arte Moderno de México (Museum of Modern Art of Mexico) until the Museo de la Solidaridad could find a definitive solution. However, it would take almost twenty years before the works would be displayed in a Chilean museum.<sup>57</sup> The bureaucratic and legal journey of the collection and the efforts of numerous key (and lesser known) players acting in solidarity to ensure its future tells a rich story of institution-building and survival as well as the vitality of artistic/activist networks amidst Latin American political dictatorships and Cold War era politics. Allende's inaugural speech in 1972 artfully positions the potential of the museum as an institution representing the imagination of a new social order. Here the notion of the museum as a center in a periphery, as a singular collection (both in its making and as a set of objects) and as symbolic site are powerfully mobilized:

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Kaira M. Cabañas, "A Strategic Universalist," in *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents*, eds. Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, trans. Stephen Berg (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2015) 23-35, 24.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> The renowned curator Harald Szeeman is one. See his postcard to Mário Pedrosa illustrated in Isabel García Pérez de Arce, "The Polyphonic Museum of Salvador Allende, Museo de Solidaridad," *Latin America Perspectives*. Guggenheim Museum blog, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://blogs.guggenheim.org/map/the-polyphonic-museum-of-salvador-allende-museo-de-solidaridad/>

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Zaldivar notes that it was not until the return to democracy under the government of President Patricio Aylwin in 1991, that the works began to be transferred to Chile. An exhibition was held at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Museum of Fine Arts) in 1991 and the museum was based there until 2005 when it officially inaugurated in its own space. <http://www.mssa.cl/el-museo/> Also for online publication on detailing the museum's history (Spanish only) *40 Años Museo de la Solidaridad por Chile: Fraternidade, Arte-Y-Politica 1971 - 1973* [http://issuu.com/claudia.zaldivar/docs/catalogo\\_mssa\\_issu/1](http://issuu.com/claudia.zaldivar/docs/catalogo_mssa_issu/1)

The artists around the world know how to interpret this profound Chilean-style sense of struggle for national liberation and, in a unique gesture in cultural history, decided to spontaneously offer their art as a gift for a magnificent collection of masterpieces to the delight of citizens from a distant country that otherwise would hardly have access to these works. How not to feel, along with a deep emotion and profound gratitude, that we are taking on a solemn commitment, the obligation to respond to this solidarity?<sup>58</sup>

However, even in its worldwide gesture of solidarity, the project also sketches a curious picture. It might have been easier to imagine the spirit of Allende's *Unidade Popular* more readily supporting the emerging "new museology" based on Freirean principles of community participation rather than turning to international avant-garde art elites. Despite political sympathies it appears there was no dialogue between the respective museological projects' interests, no cultural or social circle that brought Freire and Pedrosa together.<sup>59</sup> For Allende and Pedrosa socialist sympathies needed a symbolic (read elite) stage. Pedrosa's letters suggest that the donations were understood as "propaganda for the museum" (political, artistic, international) as a means to foster a praxis of solidarity that would be followed by, for example, a collaboration with union workers in Chilean copper mines and assemblies of "new artists, non-artists and anti-artists that would discuss contemporary social aesthetics."<sup>60</sup>

In their respective models of museum as a dispersed tool of social conscience and museum as center and symbolic commons of solidarity, the *Carta de Santiago* and the *Museo de la Solidaridad* offer interesting points of historical reference for contemporary practice and read as a tale of two cities – revolutionary museology/education and revolutionary art. Žižek suggests that revolutionary art and politics move in different temporalities, although linked, as they are two sides of the same phenomenon that they never meet.<sup>61</sup> Yet Allende's and Pedrosa's project seem to both prove and disprove this impossible meeting in its politico-artistic gesture and ultimately unrealized set of utopian mergings. In subsequent decades debates about cultural access will increasingly pivot around models of distributed practices and centralizing possibilities and continue such "revolutionary" divisions as well as the potential promise of their merging. The

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<sup>58</sup> Catálogo de la Primera Inauguración del Museo de la Solidaridad, ed, Quimantú, April 1972, 1-2, in Claudia Zaldivar, *Revista MESA*.

<sup>59</sup> Vera Pedrosa, the critic's daughter when asked recently, noted there was no connection. Question raised by Luiz Guilherme Vergara at the Seminar: *O Percorso Crítico de Mário Pedrosa*, presented by Museu de Arte Moderna de Rio de Janeiro and Núcleo de Pesquisa em Sociologia da Cultura UFRJ, (Nucleus of Research in Sociology of Culture Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)) at Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences) UFRJ, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Mário Pedrosa, Letter to Hélio Oiticica, Santiago, Chile, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1972 and Dore Ashton, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1973. Private archives, cited in Vera Lucia Pletitsch, "A força transformadora da arte: as contribuições de Mário Pedrosa para a arte/educação," Masters thesis, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Centro de Educação e Humanidades Instituto de Arte, 2010, 88.

<sup>61</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 4.

impact of Brazil's 1988 constitution coupled with the implementation of neoliberal cultural policies in the 1990s will embody these debates and possibilities and similarly tell an ironic tale of a two-sided coin, but of a different character, the public acceleration and proliferation of cultural activities and the private control of funding. A story that also engages differing modes of democratic cultural politics, recently characterized by scholars Cayo Honorato and Diogo Moraes in an editorial on the emerging practices of "cultural mediation" as: forms of cultural democratization that imply the distribution for the many that which is produced by the few and those of cultural democracy that imply the articulation between the many that which is also produced by many.<sup>62</sup> Any social engaged cultural praxis must negotiate these tensions.

An example that posits a network "amongst many" model to navigate these challenges is what is known as the Pontos de cultura (Culture Points) initiated under the administration of the musician Gilberto Gil when he was Brazil's Minister of Culture from 2003 – 2008. The aim was to shift the focus from ideas of culture that stress equality and totality and models of "democratization for the many of that which is produced by the few" to ones that emphasize diversity and difference. Gil poetically and provocatively described this as an application of "acupressure, massaging vital points, but ones that are momentarily undervalued or dormant, of the cultural body of the country."<sup>63</sup> The idea was to counterbalance the notion that culture must be brought to the peripheries with one that recognized and potentialized what was actually already there.<sup>64</sup> Activist, geographer and director of the umbrella organization Observatório de Favelas (Favela Observatory) based in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro, Jailson de Souza e Silva is a vocal critic of this oft repeated (and continuing) tendency of the center to view the periphery within a paradigm of "absence" and construe social, cultural and educational policies accordingly.<sup>65</sup> Gil aimed to calibrate a different paradigm. There are now thousands of "pontos de cultura" all over the country including a range of cultural community-based activities such as samba schools, rap music, theater, dance, museums, neighborhood associations, indigenous villages, quilombolas etc.<sup>66</sup> The focus is simply to be "a locale open to the artistic and cultural

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<sup>62</sup> Cayo Honorato and Diogo de Moraes, "Editorial," *Periódico Permanente* # 6: Mediação Cultural (March 2016) <http://www.forumpermanente.org/revista/numero-6-1/sumario/editorial-periodico-permanente-6-mediacao-cultural>

<sup>63</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: "Para fazer uma espécie de *do-in* antropológico, massageando pontos vitais, mas momentaneamente desprezados ou adormecidos, do corpo cultura do país"] Gilberto Gil, *Discursos do Ministro da Cultura Gilberto Gil*, Brasília: Ministério da Cultura, 2003, 3, cited in Ariel F. Nunes, "Pontos de cultura e os novos paradigmas das políticas públicas culturais: reflexões macro e micro políticas," Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa [http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/dados/DOC/palestras/Políticas\\_Culturais/II\\_Seminario\\_Internacional/FCRB\\_ArielNunes\\_Pontos\\_de\\_cultura\\_e\\_os\\_novos\\_paradigmas\\_das\\_políticas\\_publicas\\_culturais.pdf](http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/dados/DOC/palestras/Políticas_Culturais/II_Seminario_Internacional/FCRB_ArielNunes_Pontos_de_cultura_e_os_novos_paradigmas_das_políticas_publicas_culturais.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Jailson de Souza e Silva, "As periferias roubam a cena cultural carioca," in *De baixo para cima*, eds. Eliane Costa e Gabriela Agustini (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2014) 55-78, 59.

<sup>66</sup> Quilombolas are communities formed by Afro-Brazilian slaves that escaped the plantations.

manifestations of a locality.”<sup>67</sup> Each “ponto” has its own singularity and as a network forms a national cultural policy linked with initiatives of Cultura Viva (Living Culture) and citizenship.<sup>68</sup>

Within the field of museums, also under former President Lula’s administrations, the Instituto Brasileiro de Museus (Institute of Brazilian Museums – IBRAM) was officially formed in 2009 having held its first national meeting in 2006. While the Associação Brasileira de Museologia (Brazilian Museums Association – ABM) has been active since 1963, along with various art museum specific colloquiums, indeed the VII Colóquio de Museus de Arte de Brasil (7<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of Brazilian Art Museums) held in 1973 featured a report on the Santiago meeting, PT administrations were anxious to consolidate various strands of museum practice and in particular set national policy.<sup>69</sup> Much of the so-called “new museology” embraced by the Carta de Santiago was high on their agenda. Museologist and poet Mário Chagas and colleagues, seeing themselves as inheritors of Santiago’s call, continue to stress the social role of the museum as “a strategic apparatus for the defense of social dignity, citizenship and the right to creativity and memory.” They imagine a social museology as one that is “sensible, comprehensive and libertarian” and “constituted with new forms of affectivity, mutual respect and indignation.”<sup>70</sup> Exploring this in relation to the monstrosity of the multitude, a coinage that draws on Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s deployment of the term “monstrosity” to emphasize deviance rather than the cohesiveness or conformity suggested by notions of the masses or the public, scholar Vladimir Sibylla Pires takes this a step further to wonder: what might be a museum of the multitude?<sup>71</sup> He suggests that it would have to be a museum of museality itself, one of praxis and poesis, and citing sociologist Giuseppe Cocco’s determination that “the media of the multitude is

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<sup>67</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “trata se de um local aberto as manifestações artísticos-culturais de uma localidade.”] Ariel Nunes, “Pontos de cultura e os novos paradigmas das políticas públicas culturais: reflexões macro e micro políticas.”

<sup>68</sup> A Ministry of Culture statement dated April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 notes the desire to create 15,000 “pontos” by 2020. <http://www.cultura.gov.br/pontos-de-cultural>

<sup>69</sup> Report in MAM’s administrative files by curator/critic Frederico Morais (at the time director of courses) addressed to the museum’s director Heloisa Lustosa on the 7<sup>th</sup> colloquium of Brazilian art museums notes that a significant part of the meeting was devoted to a report from Santiago by Lygia Martins Costa, the Brazilian delegate. Frederico Morais, D.Heloisa Relatório sobre a participação do MAM no VII Colóquio de Museus de Arte de Brasil, February 27<sup>th</sup> 1973, Typed report, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>70</sup> Mário Chagas, Paula Assunção, Tamara Glas. “Museologia Social em Movimento.” *Cadernos do CEOM*, Ano 27, n. 41 (2013): 429-435, 429 & 430 <http://bell.unochapeco.edu.br/revistas/index.php/rcc/article/view/2618/1517> The article was written as a summary of and response to the ICOM conference in Rio de Janeiro in August 2013 with theme of “Museums (memory + creativity) = social change.” For an example of such social museology work in Brazil see Museu da Maré (Museum of the Maré favela) in Rio de Janeiro <http://www.museudamare.org.br/joomla/>

<sup>71</sup> “It should come as no surprise, then, that vampires have become so prevalent in recent years in novels, film and television. Our contemporary vampires turn out to be different. The vampires are still social outsiders, but their monstrosity helps others to recognize we are all monsters – high school outcasts, sexual deviants, freaks, survivors of pathological families and so forth. And more important, the monsters begin to form new, alternative networks of affection and social organization. The vampire, its monstrous life, and its insatiable desire has become symptomatic not only of the dissolution of an old society but also the formation of a new.” Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2004) 193.

a multitude of medias,” he offers that the museum of the multitude “could only be a multitude of museums.”<sup>72</sup> Amidst such focus on social protagonism and the multitude and considering the proliferation of cultural practices and NGOs emerging from within favelas themselves in the last decade, as de Silva notes, it can be argued that, “the periphery has stolen the cultural scene.” Indeed, other participatory experiments in “peripheries” could also be listed as piloting new socio-cultural alternatives such as participatory budgeting engaging a broad cross-representation in the municipality of the city of Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil or the World Social Forums and the Intercontinental Youth Camp operating as part of the forums, a deliberate counterpoint to global economic ones and a vital engine for social movements (such as the 2013 protests), also in Porto Alegre, particularly from 2001 – 2003.<sup>73</sup>

Where one might ask are the visual arts in all this? The late 1980s and 90s saw a wave of new institutions, many emerging as renovation projects of old landmark cultural buildings, for example the Bank of Brazil Cultural Centers in various cities and in Rio de Janeiro: Hélio Oiticica Center (already mentioned), Paço Imperial and Casa França Brasil. Yet perhaps the strongest forces of cultural access and participation have been instantiations of the worldwide biennial phenomenon. Key harbingers in this vein were: the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial known as the anthropophagy biennial in 1998 and the far less discussed but regionally significant Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande de Sul inaugurated in 1997.

Curator Paulo Herkenhoff described the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial co-curated with Adriano Pedrosa as a “collective social project.”<sup>74</sup> Working with educator Evelyn Ioschpe the biennial was designed as a museum style educational machine, one that would mobilize a school audience the size of a small city.<sup>75</sup> Herkenhoff would later read this as a “Brazilian curatorial difference,” an approach that is not “an absolute requirement, [but is] part of a social conscience that

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<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Sibylla Pires, “Para o levante da multidão, uma museologia da monstrosidade?” *Cadernos do CEOM*, Ano 27 n.41, Museologia Social, (2014): 225-238, 235.

<sup>73</sup> Jailson de Souza e Silva, *De baixo para cima*. The title of his essay is “As periferias roubam a cena cultural carioca.” (The Peripheries steal the Carioca (someone from Rio de Janeiro) Cultural Scene). For a brief discussion of participatory budgeting and world social forums see. “Reconfiguring the Public: The Place of the Popular in Reconfiguring the Public: Interview with Educator Danilo Streck,” *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/danilo-streck/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/danilo-streck/?lang=en) For a more detailed overview of participatory budgeting see Leonardo Avritzer, *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2002). For a review of the genealogy and impact of the first World Social Forums see Rodrigo Nunes, “The Intercontinental Youth Camp as the Unthought of the World Social Forum,” *Ephemera forum: theory and politics in organization*. Vol 5 (2): 277-296, available online <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/sites/default/files/5-2nunes1.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> Lisette Lagnado, “Anthropophagy as Cultural Strategy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” in *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, Exhibition Histories, eds. Lisette Lagnado and Pablo Lafuente (London: Afterall Books, 2015), 8-62, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Ioschpe remarks: “The educational Project of the Bienal is held to be the largest art education programme associated with an art event anywhere in the world. It is tantamount to mobilising a medium-sized city for an art exhibition.” Fax to Cynthia [surname missing], a member of the Fundação Bienal, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998, Arquivo Histórico Wanda Svevo/Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, in Carmen Mörsch and Catrin Seefranz, “Out of the *cantinho* – Art Education at the 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” in *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, 188-204, 191.



characterizes Brazil, in the sense that an art exhibition is the construction of citizenship, in which education is fundamental and the curator is an agent in that process.”<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the large-scale exhibition as event with an expected heavy agenda of school group visits became the default option for institutions and temporary exhibition projects. More recently this mobilization has been coupled with an attempt to recalibrate the one directional periphery to center modality.<sup>77</sup> The challenge here, as Cayo Honorato has pointed out, is that education is shouldered with the bean counting responsibility of stacking up “children, young people, those who are excluded [...] everyone who can be counted in the balance sheet – as part of the social responsibility of foundations and sponsors.”<sup>78</sup> However, in a country the size of Brazil with sweeping inequalities of access to education and culture it is impossible, indeed perhaps ethically irresponsible, not to engage with questions of scale. Pointing to questions of corporate or state marketeering and bean counting are important but also aim for somewhat of an easy target. Are there less reifying critiques or sets of questions that might direct us to the experience on the ground? Yet, while Herkenhoff’s model set an unprecedented and truly stellar example of financial and curatorial investment in education for a temporary exhibition (and indeed institutionally as few permanent programs outside of São Paulo existed at the time), its legacy of mass mobilization is for the most part unrealistic for the vast majority of under-resourced institutions and one that inadvertently creates a specter of expectation that without an ample infrastructure impedes the exploration of other educational possibilities and practices. Institutions must grapple with their own equities of scale and perhaps more critically their own accountings. If education becomes an attachment to check inclusion boxes or an afterthought, it has lost critical traction. A more useful reading of Herkenhoff’s tripartite biennial model – exhibition, publication, education<sup>79</sup> – might be that it critically advocates that the political implications of what’s attached, whatever the models or practices embraced, are fully assumed as part of any curatorial endeavor.

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<sup>76</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “Dez anos depois: um debate com Paulo Herkenhoff,” *Trópico*, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 <http://www.revistatropico.com.br/tropico/html/textos/2972,1.shl> This interview is also cited in Mörsch and Catrin Seefranz, “Out of the *cantinho* – Art Education at the 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” 191. However there seems to have been some slightly mistranslations e.g. “o curador é um agente desse processo” (literally curator is an agent in this process) is translated at “a process driven ahead by the curator as agent” and “exposição de arte é construção de cidadania” (literally an art exhibition is the construction of citizenship) as “an art exhibition can contribute to creating citizenship.” While maybe less elegant I choose here to translate as literally as possible.

<sup>77</sup> For Lisette Lagnado’s 26<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial “How to Live Together” she invited curator and educator Denise Grinspum to act as education curator who developed an accompanying project, in addition to school visits, featuring artistic education projects in the peripheries of São Paulo. Artist and educator Stella Barberi assumed the role of curator of education for the 28<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> biennials, significantly securing the education program as a permanent initiative (after the 29<sup>th</sup> biennial) and continuing to explore and test the center/periphery pendulum.

<sup>78</sup> Cayo Honorato, “Expondo a mediação educacional: Questões sobre educação, arte contemporânea e política.” *ars*, vol.9 (2007): 116-127, 119 & 122 <http://www.revistas.usp.br/ars/article/view/2989/3679> Also cited in “Out of the *cantinho*,” 201.

<sup>79</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “Bienal 1998: princípios e processos,” *Trópico*, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 <http://www.revistatropico.com.br/tropico/html/textos/2973,1.shl>

However, it is often the numbers that stick. Countering this is a challenge and cultural funding models also reinforce exhibition and education as mass event. While, as a result of the proliferation of cultural activities, the last few decades have seen significant advances in professionalization in the cultural field, there has been almost none on the level of structural problems.<sup>80</sup> Most funding operates via state and federal cultural laws that allow sponsors to redirect their tax dollars to specific projects and to fulfill social inclusion responsibilities. In line with global appetites for spectacularization, these laws and a culture of “editais” (grants for specific projects), coupled with Brazilians’ own taste for the temporally carnivalesque, in all its rich possibilities and strategic refusals, create a neoliberal event-based culture on steroids. While it is important to point out that the impetus behind many of the cultural laws and editais was precisely to create a more open and fair system both to diversify “producers” and to ensure a critically juried selection process, in the absence of a rich infrastructural eco-system the temporary often becomes permanent and institutions do not necessarily benefit from (or rather manage) the results. In comments at a panel discussion in 2004 curator Moacir dos Anjos criticized the temporary event focus and neoliberal market driven policy use of public monies of Lei Rouanet (Brazilian Ministry of Culture’s Rouanet Law which pre-approves projects for sponsorship) noting that: “In order for museums to play an active role in the system, it would be fundamental for them to acquire or recover the ability to formulate an institutional project.”<sup>81</sup>

Over a decade later, little has changed. While the law has been expanded for institutions to apply for funding for annual running expenses, the take up is limited and many barely survive in a perverse dynamic that privileges private mediators who in turn need institutional structures and venues to present their projects.<sup>82</sup> To add to this, the majority of institutions are public – municipal, state and federal – whose directorships and even senior staff are political appointments and as such subject to the shifts and changes of four-year election cycles. Salaries even of senior staff are mostly abysmally low, many work several jobs. Planning in this context is a luxury. Focus is a significant challenge. Finding time for “institutions to think” almost impossible. The kind of iterative, modular and distributed practices embraced by many socially driven curatorial initiatives in Europe and the US are extremely difficult to mobilize and sustain.

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<sup>80</sup> Marcelo Araujo [former director Pinacoteca, São Paulo and currently Secretary of Culture for the state of São Paulo], “Ideal Museum: Jean Galar, Paulo Sérgio Duarte, Marcelo Araujo and Fernando Cocchiarale: Interviews conducted by Martin Grossmann,” in *Museum Art Today*, Fórum Permanente Series, eds. Martin Grossmann and Gilberto Mariotti (São Paulo: Hedra, 2011) 25-40, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Moacir dos Anjos [at the time curator/director of Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM) in Recife, curator of the 30th São Paulo Biennial and currently curator at the Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife], “Challenges for Art Museum in Brazil in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Paulo Herkenhoff, Moacir dos Anjos, Paulo Sérgio Duarte and Marcelo Araujo, Roundtable chaired by Martin Grossman,” in *Museum Art Today*, 41-65, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Moacir dos Anjos mentions the issue about the Rouanet law privileging private mediators. *Ibid.*, 46.



Exceptions to this dynamic could include the privately run Inhotim in Belo Horizonte and several art museums in São Paulo such as Pinocoteca and MASP, the directorship of which was recently assumed by Adriano Pedrosa. In Rio significant investment has been directed at the regeneration of the city's port area known as Porto Maravilha (Marvelous Port after Rio's moniker of Marvelous City) featuring the already mentioned MAR and the recently opened Santiago Calatrava designed Museu de Amanhã (Museum of Tomorrow). The capital investment in the port region including museums, office towers and hotels, as writer Guilherme Wisknik noted recently, seems to have turned the city into a lab for capital.<sup>83</sup> Both MAR and Amanhã (and the soon to open Museu de Imagem e Som (Sound and Image Museum)) are supported by the municipal administration of mayor Eduardo Paes (2009 – 2012 and 2013 – 2016) and conceived by the Roberto Marinho Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the *O Globo* media conglomerate.

Now as MAR's director Paulo Herkenhoff insists that museums "need to produce forces of inclusion."<sup>84</sup> In addition to thematic exhibitions addressing the history of the city or the recent *Tarsila e Mulheres Modernas no Rio* (Tarsila [Amaral] and Rio's Modern Women) April 12<sup>th</sup> – November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015, core to these forces is a fundamental emphasis on building a collection and an accompanying education program via the Escola de Olhar (School of Vision) focusing on working with the city's department of education offering teacher workshops, school visits, courses etc as well as debates, lectures, university collaborations and performance events such as the hip hop star MC Marechal. As Sérgio B. Martins notes in his *Artforum* review of MAR in 2014, just one year after its inauguration, amidst challenging questions of political ideology and media affiliations and the disturbing dynamics of the port area's gentrification: "[o]ne should give credit where it is due: MAR offers a robust program of talks and symposia and few Brazilian institutions have the means to assemble a show such as *Experimental Pernambuco* which included an outstanding display of artistic experimentation in Recife since the 1920s."<sup>85</sup> Like the multitude of museums here the model seems to stress polyphony and excess – an operative modality that can simultaneously play to the market, critical innovation and the forces of "inclusion." In the context of Rio de Janeiro's burgeoning investments, urban design scholar Barbara Szaniecki sees this as a complex set of tensions of how such cultural endeavors can situate themselves as part of a revitalization rather than falling prey to gentrification.

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<sup>83</sup> Guilherme Wisknik, "Invisible City: On Radical Redevelopment in Rio," Dispatch, *Artforum*, May 2014.

<sup>84</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: "[...] museus precisam produzir esforços de inclusão."] Eron Rezende, "Museu fechado à elite não serve ao Brasil" diz Herkenhoff," (Interview Paulo Herkenhoff) *A Tarde.com.br*, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://atarde.uol.com.br/muito/noticias/1726923-museu-fechado-a-elite-nao-serve-ao-brasil>

<sup>85</sup> Sérgio B. Martins, "Port of Call: On the Museu de Arte do Rio," Dispatch, *Artforum*, May 2014.

These functions can of course be assumed uncritically or, conversely, be problematized collectively. Creative-cultural spectacularization, real estate speculation, local development, and urban regeneration are not new phenomena, but rather they indicate a new cycle within which institutions and artistic movements are operating and, as such, need to be critically conscious of, so that they can position themselves to act with consequence.<sup>86</sup>

Amidst these challenges MAR has already become a key cultural venue and education machine akin to Herkenhoff's 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, with all the rich possibilities and problems that implies. There is no doubt that each of the Roberto Marinho Foundation's new museums – MAR, Amanhã and Museu de Imagem e Som – will seek in varying ways to play the temple/forum parallax and imagine themselves both as a center/commons of solidarity and as a dispersed tool of social conscience. Lessons now already well absorbed by the neoliberal cultural juggernaut. On the one hand, they actively demonstrate what it really requires and means to be/run an institution, particular in the Brazilian context of such institutional precariousness. On the other, amidst innumerable unattended to socio-cultural and museological crises, they point to a host of questions regarding basic maintenance or small-scale possibilities that these large investments leave in their wake. True, there is a certain Darwinesque inevitability here, yet one to be mindful of. For those working within and without the quest is to examine what creative and critical cultural practices might work with, within and against these macro models.

### **1.3 READING THE WORLD BEFORE THE WORD: POST NEOCONCRETE LEGACIES AND DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGIES**

[...] the matrix of popular education is not built on the principal of excluding the different, but on the radicality of the affirmation of the place from which one speaks.

Danilo Streck<sup>87</sup>

Artist and critic Luis Camnitzer has suggested that, in Latin America “Freire’s belief that the reading of the world precedes the reading of the word could be taken as a paradigm for both

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<sup>86</sup> Barbara Szaniecki, “Insertions: Multitudes in the Metropolises and...our Museums,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>87</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “A matriz pedagógica popular [...] não se constrói pelo princípio da exclusão do diferente, mas pela radicalidade da afirmação do lugar de onde se fala.”] Danilo Streck, “A educação popular e a (re) construção do público: Há fogo sob as brasas?” *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, v. 11. n. 32 (2006): 272-284, 281.

conceptualist art and the new progressive teaching.”<sup>88</sup> Literacy begins with the context of the learner. So would art. Indeed, as philosopher Enrique Dussel notes of liberation theology, this paradigm is a radically political praxis, one that deliberately chooses not to start with a body of critical discourse (art, education, literature, theology) but “from the state of affairs as they actually exist.”<sup>89</sup> In a similar decolonial rejection of traditional academic methodologies, sociologist Orlando Fals Borda’s pioneered participatory action research in the 1960s, flipping hierarchical models and proposing a horizontal dynamic where subjects, researchers and teachers alike can become “sentipensante” (feeling/thinking) affecting what he called a “symmetrical reciprocity.”<sup>90</sup> Research is engaged with collectively and results are socialized.

Within such paradigms of reading the world, Freire, like Cuban philosopher and writer José Martí before him, embraced a practice of “andarilagem” (andar in Portuguese = to walk) – literally walking around, a nomadic dwelling with otherness and oneself, an active praxis of encounter, a listening that engages and responds to people, contexts and situations.<sup>91</sup> Pedagogy, for Freire, is movement – a constant *lived* peregrination. It is also a movement in the world of ideas challenging assumptions and schools of thought, a political and deliberate act of dislocation and of opening up to time and the other. Such “walking,” as literary scholar John Beverley noted in relation to subaltern studies, is not only an option akin to liberation theology’s “listening to the poor” but also of dismantling “the relationships that construct the elite/subaltern distinction in the first place.”<sup>92</sup> An option for the everyday, the world, and “to see via the cracks” can also be read into various artistic practices in 1960s and 70s whether Cinema Novo filmmaker Glauber Rocha’s aesthetic of hunger or the artists Lygia Pape and Hélio Oiticica casting aside museums and galleries and launching themselves into the city in *Delírios ambulatórios* (Walking deliriums).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007) 112.

<sup>89</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism and Liberation Theology* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) 21.

<sup>90</sup> Orlando Fals Borda. “Pesquisa-Ação, ciência e educação popular nos anos 90.” In Danilo R. Streck ed. *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americano: Uma antologia*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010, pp.358 – 370, p.366 and Alfonso Torres Carrilo. “Orlando Fals Borda e a pedagogia da práxis.” In *Fontes da Pedagogia* op.cit, pp.355-358, p. 357

<sup>91</sup> Danilo R. Streck, Telmo Adams, Cheron Zanini Moretti, “Pensamento pedagógico em nossa América: uma introdução,” in *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americano: Uma antologia*, ed. Danilo R. Streck (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010) 19-35, 28; Danilo R. Streck, “José Martí e a formação de nossa América,” *ibid.*, 135-147, 136. Also see Carlos Rodriguez Brandão, “Andarilagem,” in *Dicionário de Paulo Freire*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, eds. Danilo Streck, Euclides Rede and Jaime José Zitzoski (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010) 41-42.

<sup>92</sup> John Beverley, “Pedagogy and Subalternity: Mapping the Limits of Academic Knowledge,” in *Social Cartography: Mapping Ways of Seeing Social and Educational Change*, ed. Rolland G. Paulston (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 2000) 347-356, 352.

<sup>93</sup> Lygia Pape describes her interest in the fairs, streets, and favelas as “what I want is the other side” and to “see via the cracks and make discoveries.” [Author translation. Portuguese original: “O que quero é o outro lado. É ver pelas frestas e fazer descobertas.”] Statement by Lygia Pape in Marcio Doctors, “A arte de ver pelas frestas,” in *Lygia Pape: Espaço Imantado*, eds. Manuel J. Borjas-Villel and Teresa Velázquez (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado, 2012) 373-375, 374. Reminiscent of Debord’s “dérive” the “delírios ambulatórios” were early morning wanderings throughout the city. Pape describes them: “Hélio and I would often go out to walk in the early morning around the city. He would say: let’s

Such existential practices permeate Oiticica's work as well as that of Lygia Clark. For psychoanalyst and critic Suely Rolnik the artist's shift into space, process and experience, marks a drive to liberate art from its confinement to a specialized field, to maximize its transformative potential, to make of life a work of art and in this way to "contaminate art, social space and the life of citizens."<sup>94</sup> For both artists, the concrete here and now of the world was a live canvas and each proposed a conscious awareness of being/making/experiencing within it.

For Clark the double- yet single-sided surface of the Moebius strip anchored an image/process for a systemic thinking grounded in experience and subverting dichotomies: inside and outside; subject and object; private and public. She used the strip for her piece *Caminhando* (Walking) 1963, creating a "new concrete space time" by inviting viewer/participants to cut along the strip, making their own choices of direction, speed, width, time etc.<sup>95</sup> As a counterpoint to Žižek's parallax, who uses the Moebius strip as an example of where there is "no rapport between two levels, no shared space, although connected," Clark offers momentum as a form of mediation between the two.<sup>96</sup> For Oiticica, his *Parangolés*, 1964, featuring wearable capes, standards and samba performers from Mangueira favela in Rio de Janeiro, similarly deploy momentum as he inverts an individual contemplative art experience to a collective participatory one of wearing *and* watching.<sup>97</sup> Art here generates, as Augusto Boal suggested in *Theatre for the Oppressed*, the "capacity to observe ourselves in action."<sup>98</sup>

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enjoy it. The delirium ambulatorium was this: you went out wandering about the entire city, it wasn't dangerous at all, and there discovered things, seeing and living." [Author translation. Portuguese original: "Hélio e eu saíamos muito para andar de madrugada pela cidade. Ele me dizia: vamos curtir. O delírio ambulatório era isso: você saía pela cidade toda, que não tinha perigo nenhuma, e ia descobrindo as coisas, vendo e vivendo."] Lygia Pape in Denise Mattar, *Lygia Pape* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2003) 75. *Delirium Ambulatorium* is also a text by Oiticica and a performance with the soundtrack by the Rolling Stones created for the event "Mitos Vadios" (Wandering Myths) organized by Ivald Granto in São Paulo in 1978, in *Hélio Oiticica* eds. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, and Lygia Pape (Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica 1992) 215.

<sup>94</sup> Suely Rolnik, "Molda-se uma alma contemporânea: o vazio-pleno de Lygia Clark," in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goertiz, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999). PDF Version referenced available online in Portuguese 1-37, 2.

<http://www4.pucsp.br/nucleodesubjetividade/Textos/SUELY/Molda.pdf> (Accessed March 2016)

<sup>95</sup> Lygia Clark, "Caminhando 1964," *Caminhando – Livro – Obra*. Clark wrote *Livro-Obra* (Book Work) in 1964 (hence the date deference of *Caminhando*). It was published in 1983 by Luciano Figueiredo and Ana Maria Arújo in a limited edition of 24 issues. Rolnik "Molda-se uma alma contemporânea: o vazio-pleno de Lygia Clark," footnote 41. *Livro-Obra* is now digitized and available on The World of Lygia Clark website developed by the Lygia Clark Foundation: [http://www.lygiac Clark.org.br/arquivo\\_detPT.asp?idarquivo=17](http://www.lygiac Clark.org.br/arquivo_detPT.asp?idarquivo=17)

<sup>96</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Parangolé is a term used by Oiticica to describe his works with capes, standards and performance inspired by his engagement with the Mangueira and samba. Writing in 1964 Oiticica described *Parangolé* as an "idiomatic expression, slang from Rio de Janeiro that has several meanings: sudden agitation, animation, happiness, and unexpected situations among people." Hélio Oiticica, "Bases fundamentais para uma definição do Parangolé," in *Hélio Oiticica*, 88.

<sup>98</sup> Augusto Boal, cited in Suzanne Lac, *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics and Publics 1974 – 2007* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2010) 267.

It is in this respect that art has the potential to affect a kind of ontological education. “Art,” the philosopher Fernando Pessoa proffers, “educates humans to, in caring for the word, bring being into speech.”<sup>99</sup> In a climate of censorship and dictatorship, there is a political urgency to such art and education. Dictatorships insidiously operate through the control of the body and internalized oppressions. It is on the “micro” level where the political is felt and oppressions are experienced and in turn where micropolitical actions inscribe themselves within a performative plane.<sup>100</sup> In this context Mário Pedrosa’s oft repeated “experimental exercise of freedom” is primary, but so too is connecting with others.<sup>101</sup> As Camnitzer notes of Latin American conceptualism, art was also about organizing a receptive community. Here art, politics, pedagogy and poetry could overlap, integrate and cross-pollinate into a whole.<sup>102</sup> Critic and curator (although at the time the term was not in parlance) Frederico Morais as director of courses at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro (1969 – 1973) together with artists teaching at the museum created experimental courses and propositions explored the city as an active terrain of art and education, and touted the idea of art as activity that culminated in six participatory happenings called *Domingos da Criação* (Creation Sundays) in 1971, held at the height of the military dictatorship, attracting thousands. He understood these events as a type of mass sensory re-education. Collaborators such as theater director Amir Haddad and choreographer Klauss Vianna, not unlike recent contemporary initiatives espousing practices of “de-skilling” and “unlearning” as being both generatively creative and politically necessary, embraced in their use of street theater and dance movements a kind of active process they called de-education.<sup>103</sup> Haddad would later joke that the “roda de conversa” (circle of conversation) would become just as much an oppressive tradition as the talking head but at the time it was all part of a series of formats, attitudes and practices that aimed to de-construct hegemonic narratives and modalities.<sup>104</sup>

Yet despite these synergies, the worlds of Freire’s politicized grassroots education and Pedrosa’s experimental artistic liberty would not meet. The 1950s and early 60s in Brazil saw

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<sup>99</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “A arte educa o homem a, cuidando da palavra, trazer o ser à fala.”] Fernando Pessoa draws on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to explore a conception of art as education where art awakens man to and intensifies being. Fernando Pessoa, “A educação ontológica: uma possível relação entre educação e arte a partir do pensamento de Martin Heidegger,” in *O Educar Poético*, eds. Manuel Antônio de Castro, Igor Fagundes, Antônio Máximo Ferraz (Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 2014) 53-79, 78.

<sup>100</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Desentranhando futuros,” in *Conceptualismos Del Sur/Sul*, eds. Cristina Freire & Ana Longoni (São Paulo: Annablume editora, 2009) 155-163, 157.

<sup>101</sup> Mário Pedrosa, “The Silkworm in Mass Production,” originally published “O bicho da seda na produção em massa,” *Correio de manhã*, August 14th, 1967, in *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents*, 147-150, 148. Also see footnote no.105 in Chapter 1.

<sup>102</sup> Camnitzer, *Latin American Conceptualism*, 21.

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Amir Haddad, September 2015, Rio de Janeiro. Klauss Vianna together with Paulo Afonso Grisolli and Sidney Miller, coordinator of the Sala de Corpo e Som (Gallery of Body and Sound) active in the 1970s at MAM would develop courses promoting “de-education” cited in Giselle Ruiz, *Arte/Cultura em Trânsito O MAM/RJ na Década de 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X FAPERJ, 2013) 90.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Amir Haddad.

significant divisions between those bearing the flags of socialist realism and popular cultural movements and the elite intellectual left – a rift that continues but that has also become an increasingly fertile ground for cross pollination and new artistic, curatorial, educational and scholarly possibilities. Regarding the latter, art historian Irene Small, in her analysis of the praxes of Freire and Oiticica, recently parsed the parallels and contrasts of experimental art and alternative education.<sup>105</sup> Both artist and educator aimed at the “liberation” of the subject through notions of participation, Freire, saw creative practice as a means to literacy and political and existential freedom. Oiticica was more interested in open structures allowing for creative possibility that while they may change behavior and prompt action, they can only do so by their phenomenological sense of suspended openness. This parallax territory of the open-ended and the consequential and how that might be understood, facilitated and navigated, like Clark’s use of the Moebius strip, as a consciously engaged practice of momentum, a journey that is both artistic and pedagogic, and the ultimately ephemeral dimension of those practices, are the ground of the projects explored in these chapters.

#### 1.4 ANTHROPOPHAGY: THE FOREST AND THE SCHOOL

Tupinambá philosophy affirmed an essential ontological incompleteness: the incompleteness of sociality, and, in general, of humanity. It was, in other words, an order where interiority and identity were encompassed by exteriority and difference, where becoming and relationship prevailed over being and substance. For this type of cosmology, others are a solution, before being – as they were for the European invaders – a problem.

Eduardo Viveiro de Castros<sup>106</sup>

In 1924 modernist writer Oswald de Andrade published “Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil,” (Brazilwood Poetry Manifesto) named after the tree that gave Brazil its name.<sup>107</sup> The manifesto is structured around the binary tension between “the forest and the school” in the genesis of

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<sup>105</sup> Irene V. Small, “Toward a Deliterate Cinema: Hélio Oiticica and Neville D’Almeida’s *Block-Experiences Cosmoca in Progress*,” On Performativity: Walker Living Collections Catalogue, Walker Art Center, 2014 <http://www.walkerart.org/collections/publications/performativity/deliterate-cinema/>

<sup>106</sup> Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul. The Encounter of Catholics and Cannibals in 16th Century Brazil*, trans. Gregory Duff Morton (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2011) 46-47.

<sup>107</sup> Oswald de Andrade, “Manifesto Pau-Brasil” (The Brazilwood Manifesto), originally published in *Correio da Manhã*, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1924, excerpts published in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, eds. Mari Carmen Ramírez and Héctor Olea (New Haven/London: Yale University Press in association with The Museum of Fine Arts Houston) 465.

Brazilian culture – a tension that in its putative polarities seems initially far from Žižek’s parallax of similarities. Literary scholar Christopher Dunn suggests:

[...] the school connotes lettered society, with its formal institutions and technological resources, and the forest serves as a natural metaphor for that which was excluded or marginalized from economic, political and cultural centers of power and prestige.<sup>108</sup>

The forest and school, is however, not fixed a binary. Instead, as Dunn notes, the tension operatively generates “a poetics of playful contradiction.”<sup>109</sup> Brazilian popular culture and festivities such as Carnival are central to this poetics. Rather than poles that never meet, the forest and the school are qualitatively mutable properties; a shifting binary ground that may be read as the legacy of the encounter between indigenous “inconstancy,” a trait that anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has richly analyzed, and the colonial other, a kind of anthropophagic appetite for “what isn’t mine” mixed with a relational disregard for categorization, the fixed, stable, or constant.<sup>110</sup> It is not either/or but this and that, no promise of transcendent dialectical synthesis, only a potentially generative (always shifting) tension.

The forest and school relation would become the figure-ground backdrop, when four years later in 1928, Andrade published the “Manifesto Antropófago” (Anthropophagic Manifesto) in the first issue of the magazine *Revista da antropofagia* together with a drawing by the painter Tarsila Amaral (his then wife) of her famous *Abaporú* to illustrate it: a large stylized figure amidst a tropical backdrop, its enormous foot planted on the ground to, as Jacqueline Barnitz suggests, indicate the figure’s grounding in Brazilian soil.<sup>111</sup> This immersion in the anthropophagic soil was not the search for the Other as the primitive had been for European modernism but rather, as Herkenhoff has suggested, a search for self, the native Indian self who was until then Other, the self as the Brazilian self.<sup>112</sup> If for Hegel “the jungle was a space outside of history,” Herkenhoff also notes, “for Brazilian artists it was the only way to stress an autochthonous history, prior to colonization, in their modern political project of cultural

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<sup>108</sup> Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 15-16.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> Viveiros de Castro explored the notion of indigenous inconstancy where Indian and forest were as Pedro Neves Marques notes “the reciprocal, environmentally produced figure-ground of one another.” Castro describes the Indian as “a people receptive to any shape but impossible to keep in one shape.” Cited in Pedro Neves Marques, “Introduction: The Forest and the School,” in *The Forest and the School: Where to Sit at the Dinner Table?* ed. Pedro Neves Marques (Berlin /Cologne: Archive Books and Academy of Arts of the World, 2014-2015) 27-56 & 298-312, 27. In his “Anthropophagic Manifesto” Oswald de Andrade writes of the anthropophagous desire that “only what isn’t mine interests me.” Oswald de Andrade, “Manifesto Antropófago,” *Revista de Antropofagia*, no.1 (São Paulo May 1928), English translation in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, 466-467, 466.

<sup>111</sup> Barnitz, Jacqueline, *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001) 13-143.

<sup>112</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “The Void and the Dialogue in the Western Hemisphere,” in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London: Iniva, 1995) 69-73, 69.

emancipation.”<sup>113</sup> To wit a cohort of artists, poets, intellectuals coalesced around anthropophagy as the “master trope for an anticolonialist project”<sup>114</sup> – a veritable school of thought *and* practice. As scholar Benedict Nunes observes, as a symbol of the act of devouring, anthropophagy worked simultaneously as “metaphor, diagnosis and therapy.”<sup>115</sup>

For Viveiros de Castro, it is not so much a physical substance that is consumed but rather the Other’s perspective and position. Amerindian perspectivism asserts that the perspective creates the subject, not the other way around.<sup>116</sup> Accumulating perspectives then actively shapes and reshapes the subject. It is in this sense that Castro sees “anthrophophagy as the production of time; one eats not to avenge the past but to produce the future.”<sup>117</sup> For Andrade, anthropophagy was a potential “program of re-education of sensibilities” that could function as “social therapy for the modern world.”<sup>118</sup> If we imagine this statement as a utopian provocation – a concept that for Andrade was also always a reclamation<sup>119</sup> – we might ask: What then is the potential of the forest deployed within the school and vice versa? What sensible becomings might be catalyzed if institutions “read the world before the word”? Might anthropophagy be a tool of exchange, a therapeutic means of transforming perspectives and as Neves Marques suggests “a model of *crossing ontological frontiers*”?<sup>120</sup>

Re-discovering its protean potential in the 1960s the Tropicalists drew on the anthropophagic as an operative tool – disobediently mixing worlds, combining the popular and the erudite, cross-breeding formats and media. Oiticica would assert in his influential 1967 manifesto, known as “General Scheme of New Objectivity,” that anthropophagy was Brazil’s

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<sup>113</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “A cor no modernismo brasileiro – a navegação com muitas bússolas” (Color in Brazilian modernism – navigating with many compasses), in *XXIV Biena de São Paulo, Núcleo Histórico: Anthropolofagia e Histórias de Canibalismos*, Adriano Pedrosa ed. (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal, 1998) 348. Translation revised in Lisette Lignado, “Anthropophagy as Cultural Strategy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” in *Cultural Anthropology: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, 22.

<sup>114</sup> Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*, 18.

<sup>115</sup> Benedict Nunes, “Anthropohagic Utopia: Barbarian Metaphysics,” in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, eds. Mari Carmen Ramírez, and Hector Olea (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 57-61, 57.

<sup>116</sup> Pedro Neves Marques, “Introduction: The Forest and the School,” 55 & 298-299; Viveiros de Castro describes this aspect of Amerindian thought as “the conception, common to many peoples of the continent, according to which the world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view.” Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cosmological perspectivism in Amazonia and elsewhere*, Masterclass. Series 1 (Manchester: HAU Network of Ethnographic Theory, 2012) 45-81, 45.

<sup>117</sup> Pedro Neves Marques, *The Forest and the School*, 32.

<sup>118</sup> Oswald de Andrade, “A marcha das utopias,” in “A Utopia Antropofágica,” *Obras Completas de Oswald de Andrade* (São Paulo: Globo, 1990).

<sup>119</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Obras completas*, v. 6 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira) 1972, 194.

<sup>120</sup> Pedro Neves Marques, “Why the Forest is the School,” short version of introduction to *The Forest and the School*, available online, 63-75, 70 [Italics Neves Marques].

[https://www.academia.edu/12205890/Why\\_The\\_Forest\\_Is\\_The\\_School](https://www.academia.edu/12205890/Why_The_Forest_Is_The_School)



“defense [...] against such external dominance, and this constructive will, our main “creative weapon.”<sup>121</sup> Suely Rolnik outlined anthropophagic features as the following:

[...] the absence of an absolute and stable identification with any particular repertory and the non-existence of any blind obedience to established rules, generating a plasticity in the contours of subjectivity (instead of identities); an opening to the incorporation of new universes, accompanied by a freedom of hybridization (instead of a truth-value assigned to a particular repertory); an agility of experimentation and improvisation to create territories and their respective cartographies (instead of fixed territories authorized by stable and predetermined languages) – all of this carried out with grace, joy and spontaneity.<sup>122</sup>

It was these characteristics as a set of curatorial possibilities and as an operative framework that vitally shaped Herkenhoff and Pedrosa’s “Anthropophagy” Biennial in 1998. In his catalogue essay “To Come and Go” Herkenhoff evokes an ebb and flow curatorial method of complementarity, counterpoints, confrontations and demarcation.<sup>123</sup> In her recent essay analyzing the biennial curator Lisette Lagnado suggests that the approach of “opposing chronological histories of genres [...] deliberately spread anachronisms across the show like a virus.”<sup>124</sup> The metaphor of contagion was equally deployed by the education mediation project conceived by Luiz Guilherme Vergara where a vast team of mediators actively “devour[ed] and digest[ed] the curatorial agenda in an act of (art) pedagogical anthropophagy.”<sup>125</sup>

And yet, as Suely Rolnik’s essay “Geopolitics of Pimping” reminds us, in its resurgence with the multiculturalism of the 1990s, the anthropophagic has been readily redeployed and marketed as a trope of hybridity, syncretism and all things Brazilian. Its shape-shifting nod to the relational has created “anthropophagic zombies” and art practices that are mere clones of the experiments of the 1960s and 70s.<sup>126</sup> Similarly troubling is the parallel to the neoliberal social paradigm of the desired flexible personality – to 24 hour connected casual labor or consumerism embracing spontaneity, creativity, cooperativity, mobility, peer-to-peer relations, and openness. As critic and activist Brian Holmes notes, “if you feel close to the counter-culture of the sixties-seventies, then you can say that these are our creations, but caught in the distorting mirror of a

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<sup>121</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “Esquema geral de nova objetividade” (General Scheme of The New Objectivity), 1967. In *Hélio Oiticica*. Rio de Janeiro: Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica, 1992, 110 -120.

<sup>122</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Geopolitics of Pimping,” trans. Brian Holmes, European Institute for Progressive Culture Policies, (October, 2006) [http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base\\_edit](http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base_edit)

<sup>123</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “To Come and Go” in *XXIV Bienal de São Paulo: Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros*. Roteiros, Adriano Pedrosa ed. (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal, 1998) 22-29, 26.

<sup>124</sup> Lisette Lagnado, “Anthropophagy as Cultural Strategy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” in *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, 19.

<sup>125</sup> Mörsch and See Franz, 195.

<sup>126</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Geopolitics of Pimping.”

new hegemony.”<sup>127</sup> So, are we already anthropophagized out then? With all its clever contagion how is the biennial more than a machine mobilized by corporate and state power equally as an operative tool to market the “tropical” uniqueness of Brazilian art and convey feel-good messages of social inclusion?

There are, I believe, a number of, if not way outs, creative redeployments and possible counterpositionings to this impasse. The first draws on the polyphonic modalities of biennial itself.<sup>128</sup> Always invest in and multiply – voices, ideas, responses, complicities, permissions, autonomies. It is, to use a Tropicália era speech by musician Caetano Veloso, “prohibited to prohibit.”<sup>129</sup> The risk of dilution (and it can be argued that this may in and of itself be generative) is far less than static self-absorption. Productive asymmetry between emission and reception, as García Canclini argues.<sup>130</sup>

A second redeployment draws on Rolnik’s notion of the *corpo vibrátil* (resonant body), a communicative and contaminated state of embrace, of subjectivity and collectivity, literally the body’s capacity to resonate with the world. To resist bought/busy time, we must open up textured time and “construct territories with a basis in the urgencies indicated by the sensations – that is, by the signs of the presence of the other in our resonant body.”<sup>131</sup> Encounters that reverberate, collective spectatorship possibilities, and “subjectivities that breathe the same air” as Rolnik provocatively suggests, open up the possibility for what geographer Milton Santos described as an “acontecer solidário” (an event/happening of solidarity).<sup>132</sup>

A third is philosopher and activist Rodrigo Nunes’ notion of “counterpimping,” a cogent response to Rolnik’s essay regarding ways to imagine a socially engaged – artistic, curatorial, educational, institutional – practice amidst wholly compromised times. Not to be understood merely as “anti-pimping,” in its use of the prefix “counter,” the practice of “counterpimping” is “closer to *counterespionage* or *contraband*.” Immersed in complex power relations, situations,

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<sup>127</sup> Brian Holmes, “The Flexible Personality: For a New Cultural Critique,” European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (January, 2002) <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/holmes/en>

<sup>128</sup> Lisette Lignado notes: “The open and collective approach to curatorial design led to dozens of interlocutors being asked to update the modernist manifesto, and a list of 165 definitions was produced for the catalogue. This list – deliberately open-ended, as stated in the catalogue – produced a polysemy of concepts and took anthropophagy in countless contradictory directions.” Here Lignado wonders whether this scope prompted an excessive use of metaphors or even an entropic loss of meaning and/or if launching such multiple meanings beyond those that Andrade originally anticipated productively raises ways we might consider “how polyphony and dilution can be combined?” Lignado. “Anthropophagy as Cultural Strategy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” 27.

<sup>129</sup> Caetano Veloso, speech made at the Teatro Tuca, São Paulo, 1968, in Fred Coelho and Sergio Cohn eds. *Tropicália*, Coleção Encontros (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2012) 168-169.

<sup>130</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, 101.

<sup>131</sup> Rolnik, “Geopolitics of Pimping.”

<sup>132</sup> Milton Santos, “O Processo Espacial: O Acontecer Solidário,” *A Natureza do Espaço* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2002) 165.

and encounters, “counterpimping” assumes that “some degree of capture is always necessarily as part of the interventions it examines.” As is “the potential for going beyond mere pimping.”

Thus, rather than establishing absolute oppositions or seeking to preserve purity from contamination, it deals with matters of measure, it is an “art of dosages” whose purpose is to find solutions that can strengthen *transformation over reproduction*. Not a matter of *good* and *evil*, but *better* or *worse*. Given that these encounters exist and are, in a certain way, necessary – potentially useful for political processes and often sought after by institutions – , the issue becomes a pragmatic one: how to establish transversal relations where the composition between the two sides serves to transform them, increasing the power to act in both?<sup>133</sup>

Nunes language of “contraband” and “measure” situates a transversal practice as necessarily illicit and diplomatic, disobedient and constructive – an appropriate and potent offspring of the forest and school.

### 1.5 A PRAXIS APPROACH: LABS, SCHOOLS, CLINICS

To stress *being* as verb rather than noun is, at bottom, to say that being is only ever to be found in its taking-place; it is to say that being is an incessant emergence.

Yve Lomax<sup>134</sup>

“Laboratorium is the answer. What is the question?”<sup>135</sup> quipped the tongue-in-cheek maxim of curators’ Hans Ulrich Obrist and Barbara Vanderlinden’s 1999 exhibition project in Antwerp called *Laboratorium*. School is the answer, if you’re looking for a non-exhibition format, might have been the maxim of the last decade and a half’s plethora of artist run school projects, curatorial exhibition-as-school propositions and use of pedagogical formats.<sup>136</sup> Clinic, responding

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<sup>133</sup> Rodrigo Nunes, “For a Politics of Counterpimping,” *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en) Nunes use of “art of dosages” is from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Minuit, 2003) 198.

<sup>134</sup> Yve Lomax, *Passionate Being: Language, Singularity, Perseverance* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2009) 15.

<sup>135</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist/Barbara Vanderlinden eds. *Laboratorium* (Antwerp: DuMont, 2001) preface no page number. Also see Hans Ulrich Obrist, “Installations are the answer, what is the question?” *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 2, (November 2001): 93-101.

<sup>136</sup> A selection of these will be explored in chapter two. There are extensive examples, the following is list excerpted from *Curating and the Educational Turn*: “Projects which manifest this engagement with educational and pedagogical formats and motifs have been divergent in terms of scale, purpose, modus operandi, value, visibility, reputational status and degree of actualization. They include Daniel Buren and Pontus Hultén’s *Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques*, 1996; the ‘Platforms’ of *Documenta* 11 in 2002; the educational leitmotif of *Documenta* 12 in 2007; the unrealized *Manifesta 6* experimental art school as exhibition and the associated volume *Notes for an Artschool*; the subsequent *unitednationsplaza* and *Night School* projects; *proto-academy*; *Cork Caucus*; *Future Academy*; The Para-

to the emerging interest in affective practices of care and co-authorship within a reinvigorated return to curatorship's etymological roots *curare* – to care – might be next.<sup>137</sup> Each, of course, is not an answer but rather a framework that sanctions and connotes a particular set of practices and socio-cultural givens: experimentation, inquiry, testing; knowledge, learning, collective instruction; and care, cure, diagnosis; among other possibilities.

These concepts and practices and their potential relevance for the museum are certainly not new. The lab as model has emerged and re-emerged throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century with, for example, Alexander Dorner's *The Way Beyond Art* in the 1920s, and his ideas of the museum as *kraftwerk*, a "living machine" and a "laboratory," or curator Walter Zanini's experiments with young artists at MASP in the 1970s.<sup>138</sup> Museums and schools have often been conceived as co-partners, mostly, however as distinct entities, the school in many cases giving birth to the museum or institute – the School of the Art Institute and the Art Institute of Chicago in the USA or Escola de Belas Artes (Fine Arts School) and Museu Nacional das Belas Artes (National Fine Arts Museum) in Brazil come to mind. But occasionally, models are mixed, such as John Cotton Dana's Newark Museum, founded in 1909, as a kind of museum cum-library cum-school cum-community center.<sup>139</sup> Museums were also re-imagined as schools in and of themselves, such as the vision of architect Lina Bo Bardi, as director of the new Modern Art Museum of Bahia, who would note in 1960: "museums conserve and our collection does not yet exist. This "ours" [Museum] should be called Center, Movement, School."<sup>140</sup>

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education Department; 'Copenhagen Free University'; *A-C-A-D-E-M-Y*; Hidden Curriculum; Tania Bruguera's *Arte de Conducta* in Havana; *ArtSchool Palestine*; Brown Mountain College; Manoa Free University and *School of Missing Studies*, Belgrade." Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson, "Introduction," in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, eds. Paul O'Neil & Mick Wilson (London: Open Editions, 2010), 11-22, 13.

<sup>137</sup> In her essay in her essay on the work of Scottish art and disability organization Artlink scholar Kirsten Lloyd explores the "care" ethos and practice that underpins their work drawing on the roots of *curare* and also predicts "care" and "love" as emerging art world topics, Kirsten Lloyd, *Uncommon Ground: Radical Approaches to Artistic Practice* Edinburgh: Artlink, 2014, 17 <https://issuu.com/artlinkedinburgh/docs/artlink-annual-review-2014-v9-webup>; the Serpentine Gallery Project *Skills Exchange: Urban Transformation and the Politics of Care 2007 – 2012* and the subsequent publication *Art + Care = A future* ed. Janna Graham (London: Serpentine Gallery/Koenig Books, 2013); and curator Anthony Huberman's manifesto-like essay pointing to an emergent interest in durational, processual and "careful" curatorial projects. Huberman draws on Fischli and Weiss' famous *How to Work Better*, 1991, a ten point manifesto that the artists found then enlarged and had painted on a side of a building in Zurich, comprising a series of instructions both for their own process as artists and as a propositional code of conduct, Anthony Huberman. "Take Care," in *Circular Facts*, eds. Mai Abu ElDahab, Binna Choi, Emily Pethick (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011) 11-17.

<sup>138</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist in Vito Acconci and Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Museums: The Mausoleum, the Laboratorium, the Meditation Chamber and the Rave," 150-151 and Martin Grossman, "Museum as Interface," in *Museum Art Today*, 89-115, 104-107.

<sup>139</sup> Carol G. Duncan, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana. Progressive Reform and the Newark Museum* (Periscope, 2008).

<sup>140</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: Este nosso não é um Museu, o termo é impróprio: o Museu conserva e a nossa pinacoteca ainda não existe. Este nosso deveria se chamar Centro, Movimento, Escola e a futura coleção, bem program Segundo critérios didáticos e não ocasionais, deveria chamar-se: Coleção Permanente. É neste sentido que adotamos a palavra Museu." ] Lina Bo Bardi, Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, January 1960, document in Museum archives, cited in Juliano Aparecido Pereira, "A Didática dos Museus de Lina Bo Bardi na Bahia e os conteúdos da Modernidade e da Identidade Local (1960 – 1964)," in *Docomomo 5<sup>th</sup> Seminar*, São Carlos, São

As a form of anthropophagic perspective-digestion, the lab, school or clinic model has the potential to energize the institution via the incorporation of another system of languages and practices being brought from one milieu to another. Like Nunes's "counterpimping" they may enter as effective "countering" forces either smuggled in or on diplomatic mission. Wherever possible, naming is key. Dussel points to "the political importance of the theology of liberation as a narrative that provides a basis for praxis," as such the connotative force of another system's method can inaugurate new cross-border permission-giving agency where transit across modes of established practice or traditional territorial fiefdoms is often hard to institute.<sup>141</sup> While certainly there is a rich array of current museum initiatives that may draw on laboratory-, school- or clinic-like practices such as experimental performances in the galleries, long-term school partnerships or programs for Alzheimer patients and their caregivers, I would argue that it is palpably different to reimagine the museum as lab, as school, as clinic than to provide a service as if. For example, what internal reconfiguring would be required if an institutional mission was understood as a laboratory of question-generating? Or, recalling Joseph Beuys, if we were to turn "museums into universities with a department for objects"?<sup>142</sup> Or, imagine a praxis geared to a kind of ethical caring for a specific locality?

Of course, lab, school and clinic models can be intermixed and/or co-exist. As methods there can be a considerable degree of porosity. Perhaps, in their shared genealogy of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialization and the disciplinary practices that Michel Foucault so rigorously analyzed, countering one disciplinary framework with another is a way to diffuse or rework their rigidity and accepted norms. The increased interest in more process-based models is also part of the last few decades' social, relational and contextual shift in art practices that, as theorist Irit Rogoff notes, have created new possibilities to "inhabit" such contexts as a means to explore different ways of making and thinking about art, curating and education.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps the interest is also driven by contemporaneity's polyphonic and antagonistic appetite that so usefully thrives on ontological frontiers, new becomings and events, as artist and writer Yve Lomax suggests, of "taking place." Amidst the contingent shifts of such "taking place" and their parallax tensions it seems the only possible thread of continuity is woven through praxis – the actuality of being-in-the-world and the potential of free, human sensuous activity and concrete political action.<sup>144</sup> As

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Paulo, Brazil, 2003 <http://www.docomomo.org.br> search "seminários 2003" search "autores" PDF 1-13, 3.

<sup>141</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2008) 49.

<sup>142</sup> Joseph Beuys, 1975, cited in Clémentine Deliss, "Collective Life's Unknowns," *L'Internationale* [http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/decolonising\\_practices/27\\_collecting\\_lifes\\_unknowns](http://www.internationaleonline.org/research/decolonising_practices/27_collecting_lifes_unknowns)

<sup>143</sup> Irit Rogoff, "Smuggling – An Embodied Criticality," European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, August, 2008 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/rogoff1/en> (PDF pp 1-7, p.1)

<sup>144</sup> Here I loosely draw on several cross continental and historical definitions of praxis, the first is Aristotle's as "free activity in the polis" understood as part of a truly human and free life, the second as "human sensuous activity" from

the work of Hannah Arendt, Freire or Foucault attests, praxis is both a lens through which social-cultural values, ideologies, and relationships may be exposed, and a means of emancipatory action in the world. Recalling Rolnik's resonant body, we might then imagine a resonant praxis grounded in as Dewey would say *the* work rather than *a* work of art.<sup>145</sup> One that enables "lines of flight" from the confines of the museum, lab, school and clinic to embrace a mutually contaminating free, sensuous and political praxis of, what might be understood as communally instituent practices, of experimenting, constructing and caring.<sup>146</sup>

An emphasis on praxis is also useful to both sidestep and dynamically re-imagine binaries and is particularly relevant to postcolonial contexts where scholars and activists alike stress the vital role of creative, critical, and participatory cultural practices that recover and reclaim situated knowledge, rework colonialist legacies, and promote transformative action.<sup>147</sup> As such, experiment, construct, care is a praxis that works anthropophagically, that is, it accumulates perspectives, produces futures, and becomes what it eats. In so doing it operates like an outside/inside Moebius praxis of reading the world before the word, folding itself into and out of the forest/school, the forum/museum, the periphery/center, and education/art. It is constitutively fragile and, as the philosopher Peter Pál Pelbart has reflected in relation to the contemporary, fundamentally a praxis of "trial and error, experimentation, failures, re-assembly, re-collages from former debris."<sup>148</sup>

As a means of exploring this resonant, always fragile, praxis in 21<sup>st</sup> century postcolonial realities, this writing is built around case studies of projects at the nexus of socially engaged art, curatorship and education in three distinct Brazilian art institutional contexts – Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (city of Rio de Janeiro), Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande de Sul (city and region south of Brazil), Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói (peripheral city to Rio de Janeiro). To explore this lens of praxis, each study is anchored in a different framework/practice pairing: lab/experiment, school/construct, clinic/care. While immersed in the

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Marx's first thesis from "Theses on Feuerbach" and the third "concrete political action" is Enrique Dussel's understanding of what constitutes liberation praxis. See Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971) xiv & 11; Dussel, *Twenty Theses*, 63.

<sup>145</sup> John Dewey draws the distinction between *a* work of art and *the* work of art in *Art as Experience*. "[...] The first is physical and potential; the later is active and experienced. It is what the product does, its working." John Dewey. *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books, 1934, p.162

<sup>146</sup> "Lines of flight" or "deterritorializations" are key Guattari and Deleuze's concepts articulated in *A Thousand Plateaus*. They are disruptions from planes of consistency, escape routes, flows and leakages from, across and between territories and disciplines that, in the context of clinical situations, may, as therapist Elizabeth Lima notes, "extrapolate the dominium of pathology." Elizabeth Maria Freire de Araújo Lima. "For a minor art: resonances between art, clinical practice and madness nowadays." *Interface* vol.3 no.se Botucatu 2007, PDF, p.8 trans. Liliana Lopez from *Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*, Botucatu, v.10, n.20 (July/December 2006): 317-329 [http://www.scielo.br/pdf/icse/v10n20/en\\_04.pdf](http://www.scielo.br/pdf/icse/v10n20/en_04.pdf)

<sup>147</sup> Various already cited such as Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, Danilo Streck, Milton Santos and many others.

<sup>148</sup> Peter Pál Pelbart, "Notes on the Contemporary" *Revista MESA* no 3: Publicness in Art.

specificities of institutional contexts, the chapters also briefly situate and contrast the framework/practice pairing within national and global trends. Each can be read as a coming of age narrative of sorts, of the possibilities and pitfalls of a still emergent integrated praxis of art, curatorship and education in Brazil, interwoven with the voices of many of those involved.

In 1960, astutely prescient of the radical artistic gestures that would burst on the scene post the experiments of the Neoconcrete movement and the military coup of 1964, Mário Pedrosa called for museums to be “houses of experience [...] para-laboratories.”<sup>149</sup> The first chapter “Past as Blueprint: Paralaboratories and Conductive Threads of Experimental Education and Art at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro (MAM)” focuses on two distinct experimental “paralaboratories”, one historical, one contemporary: *Domingos da Criação* in 1971 and Núcleo Experimental de Educação e Arte (Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art) from 2010 – 2013. Conceived in 1948, MAM was part of a major city transformation in the 1950s. The idea was to construct a museum, garden, school and theatre. Affonso Eduardo Reidy designed MAM in line with Brazilian modernist architecture’s love of suspended pillars and openness to the outside. The experimental happenings *Domingos da Criação*, curated by Frederico Moraes, emerged from the department of courses at MAM. Yet, while part of institutional mythology, their vitality is poorly analyzed in art and socio-cultural history, their quasi education, quasi art, and carnivalesque collectivity making it hard to critically champion them for alternative pedagogy or avant-garde art. Revisiting past histories has become a vital element of contemporary practice in the last few decades and the second paralaboratory to be examined in this chapter is the recent much more low key Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art that nevertheless set itself in synergetic dialogue with museum’s experimental histories, aiming to see the past, as Freire once noted, as a possibility.<sup>150</sup> Quasi education department and quasi collective the Nucleus strove to engage diverse publics in the museum and experiment with new and hybrid practices of art and education. The chapter weaves together historical and recent narratives interspersed with different perspectives of those involved. The liminal frontiers of art and education and museum and city charged the experiments of each paralaboratory and their limit zones – of method and institution.

The second chapter “A Sense of Constructivity: Forest Schools and Social Learning at the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2011” explores the project of “expanded pedagogy” of the contemporary art biennial, *Ensaio de Geopoética* (Geopoetic Essays).

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<sup>149</sup> Mário Pedrosa, “Arte experimental e museus,” *Jornal do Brasil*, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1960, in *Mário Pedrosa: política das artes*, ed. Otilia Arantes (São Paulo: Edusp, 1995) 295-296.

<sup>150</sup> “[...] a melhor maneira de alguém assumir o seu tempo, e assumir também com lucidez, é entender a historia como possibilidade.” “[...] the best way for someone to assume his time, and assume it with lucidity, is to understand history as a possibility.” Paulo Freire, *A educação na cidade* (São Paulo: Cortez, 1991) 89.

Beginning with a series of detours that draws on different time periods and practices in art, education and psychology, the chapter deploys the constructive as a quality – a sense of constructivity – as a methodological lens. Here the constructive and, in particular, art’s relationship to education via the school is seen as a generative model. The spirit of the artist Torres García’s constructivist School of the South and his inverted map of the Americas and Oswald de Andrade’s “Anthropophagic Manifesto” are vital touchstones. In addition, the use of the constructive is not only a methodological lens but also an operative critical gesture. As a co-researcher/evaluator for the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial I was privileged to engage first hand with its “school” at varying moments, participating in events and interviewing curators, artists, teachers, mediators, producers, and diverse professional and community members. Not unlike Torres García’s School of the South and other Latin American artists’ subversion of the pure and objective organizational principles of constructivism to ones that, as characterized by Mari Carmen Ramírez, were active, contaminated and subjective, this yields a different kind of criticism.<sup>151</sup> Inaugurated in 1997, the Mercosul Biennial can be read as in itself a constructive gesture, aspiring to look to the Latin American region as a counterpoint to the internationalism of the São Paulo Biennial. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> editions invited artists to act as pedagogic curators, Luis Camnitzer and Marina de Caro respectively, giving often seen as peripheral educational work a vital visibility. For the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, José Roca as chief curator and artist and educator Pablo Helguera as pedagogic curator brought an understanding of an expanded field of pedagogy to the center of the curatorial project featuring, for example, regional artist residencies; a neighborhood house turned cultural center; and 200 mediators, encouraged to assume propositional roles in working with diverse publics. In the context of debates regarding biennials and recent calls, such as in Terry Smith’s *Think Contemporary Curating*, for new curatorial approaches to infrastructure, the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s investment in regional and local geopoetics suggests possibilities for what an infrastructural forest school biennial might be.<sup>152</sup>

Anchored in a project with which I was involved as curator, the third chapter “Megafones, Ants, Archives and Clinics: Radical Locality and Complicities of Care” explores transdisciplinary practices in art and health. Grounded in work at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói (MAC), the chapter anchors its explorations in the collective art and health initiative *Farmácia Baldia de Boa Viagem* (Baldia Pharmacy of Boa Viagem) focusing on the use and study of medicinal plants that emerged as part of the artist Carlos Vergara’s exhibition *Sudário*

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<sup>151</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Vital Structures: The Constructive Nexus in South America,” in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, eds. Mari Carmen Ramírez and Hector Olea (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 191-201, 193.

<sup>152</sup> Terry Smith, *Think Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012) 249-258.



(Shroud), held from December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014.<sup>153</sup> MAC, designed by the renowned Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, is perched on a small peninsula in the peripheral city of Niterói overlooking Rio de Janeiro's stunning Guanabara Bay. Inaugurated in 1996, MAC was part of a worldwide museum building boom in the 1990s connected with urban regeneration projects, signature architects, and peripheries. Yet, while effective city poster child, MAC is also prey to the vagaries of municipal politics and challenged by its contrasting surroundings of luxury condos, favela community, and polluted ocean. Responding to its environment necessitates a more socially engaged form of museum practice. The *Farmácia* project re-energized such work in particular MAC's Art and Environmental Action initiative, a longstanding collaboration with the neighboring favela, Morro do Palácio, the Federal Fluminense University and the city of Niterói's Family Doctor Program (a Cuban inspired preventive health initiative where doctors, nurses and health agents are resident in low income communities) and MACquinho (little MAC) a cultural community center at the top of the Morro do Palácio favela, also designed by Neimeyer. Taking the name of Boa Viagem from the region surrounding the museum, an area that also includes the historic island of Boa Viagem, registered on Portuguese maps since the 1500s, and the Morro do Palácio favela, the project enacted a poetic political botany, a living clinical archive, drawing on both scientific expertise and popular know-how by mapping, creating inventories and identifying therapeutic uses of the unseen and unrecognized medicinal resource at our doorstep.

## 1.6 A CRITICAL BESIDE

It is this consolation, someone walking part of the way by your side, that means almost everything. Everything.

Edmundo de Waal<sup>154</sup>

In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick examines what she calls the "drama of exposure" that is the staple of much critical work.<sup>155</sup> In a striving for a critical approach of "reparative reading" that avoids the detective mode of uncovering or

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<sup>153</sup> The Portuguese word *baldio* generally refers to primarily urban unused or abandoned land. In this case *Farmácia Balida* means a pharmacy made from things growing wild in unused city lots or land areas. This will be explored in the third chapter.

<sup>154</sup> Edmund de Waal, *The White Road*, cited in Sam Anderson, "Edmund de Waal and the Strange Alchemy of Porcelain." *New York Times*, Nov 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/29/magazine/edmund-de-waal-and-the-strange-alchemy-of-porcelain.html?emc=edit\\_th\\_20151129&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=39436101](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/29/magazine/edmund-de-waal-and-the-strange-alchemy-of-porcelain.html?emc=edit_th_20151129&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=39436101)

<sup>155</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Introduction," *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003) 1-25, 8. Also, in particular, her essay in this volume: "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay is About You." 123-152.

revealing what is “beneath” or “behind,” or positions itself as a “beyond” in a kind of “bossy gesture” of calling for, she suggests that perhaps a notion of “beside” might be the most “salient preposition” to describe her search for a different kind of critical practice.

*Beside* permits a spacious agnosticism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking: noncontradiction or the law of the excluded middle, cause versus effect, subject versus object. Its interest does not, however, depend on a fantasy of metonymically egalitarian or even pacific relations, as any child knows who’s shared a bed with siblings. *Beside* comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivaling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations.<sup>156</sup>

Sedgwick’s notion of the “irreducibly spatial postionality” of beside is extremely useful as a provocation to reconfigure ways of thinking, acting and being in socially engaged art, curatorship and education and related critical practices. While it clearly allows for the kind of inside/outside Moebius flexibility that challenges dichotomous modalities and reinforces the kind of horizontality and practice of working *with* that has increasingly been emphasized as key in any kind of socially engaged process, the physical position of “beside” additionally qualifies these aspects in three important ways.

Firstly, there is no vanguard or rearguard. We are beside – always in close relation to a set of issues, individuals and contexts and all the phenomenological, experiential and collaborative proximity and possible frictions that this implies. It asks us to de-center our gaze and attend to our blind spots. It also asks us to speak to the complexity of what distance allows us to too readily reify and to engage with the multifaceted heterogeneity of *the* work of art as a network of relations, not just as part of, but fundamental to, both how we work and what we do. A practice of beside could be said to de-center and reposition us as critical and, hopefully, generative co-workers investing in localities, building/contributing to constituencies, and socializing processes and research (i.e. where said localities and constituents engage with and participate in the stakes of a project, its questions, processes and outcomes).

Secondly, “beside” enables a critical sidestepping around the problem of the middle in relation to the question of mediation. For psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whose theories influenced the field, mediation is both how we alter and interact with the world via culture, history, their signs and symbols, and those around us. Yet, contemporary usage whether within mediation conflict or curatorial and educational fields seems to leave us with a defined sense of some kind of in-between individual mediator-type that negotiates and facilitates and, particularly in the case

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

of the curator as middleman between artist and institution or educator as interpreter between artworks and publics, it is a role plagued by the specter of someone that, as curator Lars Bang Larsen notes, “short-circuit[s] authenticity” and is “haunted by an aura of mediocrity.”<sup>157</sup> Various scholars and educators such as Carmen Mörsch and Nora Sternfeld have, however, in relation to gallery education, cogently argued for exactly the possibility of this middle as a potent hinge position of agency.<sup>158</sup> Yet, despite such efforts, there is a critical danger, particularly in precarious temporary situations and postcolonial contexts, in fostering an understanding of mediation as one of brokering, where publics are consumers to be persuaded, mostly in response to a curatorial or institutional discourse and neoliberal accountability pressures. Even in the most creative applications (and indeed subversions of this position) as can be seen in the chapter on the Mercosul Biennial it seems it is extremely difficult to shake this perception and indeed institutional demand. Emerging concepts of “cultural mediation” are seeking to expand notions of “publics” to embrace multiple possibilities i.e. the institution itself as a public, conceptions of art, cultural politics, social imaginary, historical-cultural processes.<sup>159</sup> The desire is clearly to enable the autonomy of mediation practices, ones hopefully less beholden to institutional pre-requisites whether quantitative numbers or specific discourses. For me this autonomy does not mean the “paracuratorial” as it has been framed in various recent art world discussions which is understood as practices that have “shifted away from conventional exhibition formats and refuse to be contained” – which I see as a concept that still asserts a center/peripheral curatorial/education relation.<sup>160</sup> Beside is a parallel practice, call it expanded pedagogy, cultural mediation or curating in public, that fosters a vital, complicit, ongoing and proximal practice of working *with* artists, publics and contexts. It also, drawing on Herkenhoff’s anthropophagic polyphony and Nunes’ counterpimping, is a practice that experiments with more textured (or thickened) experiential forms of mediation, akin to what Luis Camnitzer recently thoughtfully characterized as not looking at, or through art, but looking around art.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Lars Bang Larsen, “The Middleman: Beginning to Talk about Mediation,” in *Curating Subjects*, ed. Paul O’Neill (London: Open Editions, 2007) 20-30, 21.

<sup>158</sup> Nora Sternfeld, “That Certain Savoir/Pouvoir. Gallery Education as a Field of Possibility,” in *It’s all Mediating: Outlining and Incorporating the Roles of Curating and Education in the Exhibition Context*, eds. Kaija Kaitavuori, Laura Kokkonen and Nora Sternfeld (Newcastle upon Tyne/England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013) 1-7 and Carmen Mörsch, “Alliances for Unlearning: On Gallery Education and Institutions of Critique,” *Afterall*, no 26, (Spring 2011) <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.26/alliances-for-unlearning-on-the-possibility-of-future-collaborations-between-gallery-educa>

<sup>159</sup> Cayo Honorato, “Mediação para a autonomia?” in *Reflexões e Experiências: 1º Seminário Oi Futuro: Mediação em Museus, Arte e Tecnologia* eds. Adriana Fontes and Rita Gama (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro/Livre Expressão, 2012) 48-59, 52.

<sup>160</sup> Emily Pethick, “The Dog that Barked at the Elephant in the Room,” in *The Exhibitionist. Journal on Exhibition Making*, “La Critique”, no.4, Berlin/Turin: Archives Books (June 2011): 77-82, 81.

<sup>161</sup> Luis Camnitzer, “Thinking About Art Thinking,” *e-flux journal* 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale: Supercommunity, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/thinking-about-art-thinking/>

Thirdly, “beside” seems to richly parallel Rogoff’s notion of producing criticality through “inhabiting” a problem rather than by analyzing it, where “the experiential of what we are living out [is] brought into contact with the analytical.”<sup>162</sup> For Rogoff:

[...] a notion of criticality [...] does not allow for either cynicism or sarcasm which are the ultimate expressions of knowing outsidership. Instead the need to navigate the terrain at levels of analysis, feeling and mutuality emerge in what Arendt has so beautifully termed ‘we, fellow sufferers.’<sup>163</sup>

As part of being beside, this criticality must somehow be made visible, as a kind of mirror inside a process so that this “we” is recognized and collectively shared. However, this cannot be too rigid or pre-determined, we need methods as open-ended, proximal and phenomenological as being beside. Here, the research-intervention strategies of cartography, a method deployed by psychology scholars Eduardo Passos, Virgínia Kastrup, and Liliana Escóssia, as a means of engaging with processes from the inside as they are unfolding, offer useful tools of a sort of non-method method where the cartographer rather than being focused on something is open to the unexpected.<sup>164</sup> It is constructed collectively and, as psychologist Angela Carneiro points out, “dissolves the notion of the observers’ points of view in order to highlight the implications of their presence in the field, and employs a narrative approach, resulting from taking a position where one faces oneself and the world, a talking “with” and not “about” events.”<sup>165</sup>

Writing in 1999 in his introduction to *Subalternity and Representation* John Beverley wondered: “Would it be possible to have a work of theory that would be composed entirely of stories?”<sup>166</sup> Perhaps Rogoff’s “inhabited criticality” and the method of cartography may chart a new terrain of critical besides that can open up much needed possibilities, particularly in postcolonial contexts, for new integrated forms of narrating and criticism. The chapters that follow are three reports “from” Brazil, reflections “with” integrated praxes of art, curatorship and education.<sup>167</sup> An understanding of “a critical beside” embraces, both the voice with which I hope

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<sup>162</sup> Irit Rogoff, “Exhausted Geographies,” September 2013, Ateccarem  
<http://ateccarem.tumblr.com/exhaustedgeographies>

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Eduardo Passos, Virgínia Kastrup, and Liliana Escóssia eds. *Pistas do Método da Cartografia: Pesquisa-intervenção e produção de subjetividade* (Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2011)

<sup>165</sup> Angela Carneiro, “Encounters and Detours: Affective Cartographies of University of Quebradas,” *Revista MESA*, no.2: Poetic Spaces = Ethical Languages: Diverse Practices in Latin America (April 2015)  
[http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_2/encounters-and-detours-affective-cartographies-of-the-university-of-quebradas/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_2/encounters-and-detours-affective-cartographies-of-the-university-of-quebradas/?lang=en)

<sup>166</sup> John Beverley, *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 24.

<sup>167</sup> Questions of “from” and “about” raise a set of complex issues regarding the politics of location of any critical writing in relation to postcolonial contexts, where on the one hand it seems necessary to assume a culturally specific geopolitical positioning and on the other to critique such positions as inadvertently supporting essentialist readings and in turn how each is problematically often filtered through the lens of North American and European academies. See

to infuse my writing and my physical position in these projects' unfoldings. They are written from the perspective of a foreigner who has in turn been shaped by a multiplicity of perspectives and being beside – an embedded critical position and narrative voice with all the compromises, complicities and challenges that entails. They are less a work of theory and more of what the artist Magnus Bårtås has suggested, drawing on the original Greek understanding of “theoria”, as a journey, a witnessing and report of events brought to a social situation.<sup>168</sup> To be refracted and hopefully, to contribute to an ongoing dialogue on thinking and making in public.

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John Beverley, “Between Ariel and Caliban: The Politics of Location of Latinamericanism and the Question of Solidarity,” *Latinamericanism After 9/11* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011) 60-71. I choose to use “from” to emphasize both the case study/travelogue notion of “reports from the field” and my literal position of “critical beside.” It also cautions, particularly as a foreigner writing from the field, against assuming any kind of mantle of writing “about.” The emphasis is rather “from,” “with,” and “in” a set of perspectives. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro offers a useful framing: “You think *in* Brazil, you are here, there’s no way not to not think in Brazil, but you don’t need to *think Brazil*, thinking in Brazil’s enough.” [Author translation. Portuguese original: “Você pensa *no* Brasil, você está aqui, não tem como não pensar no Brasil, mas você não precisa pensar *o* Brasil, pensar no Brasil já basta.” Sergio Cohn, Pedro Cesarino and Renato Rezende eds. *Azougue edição especial 2006 – 2008* (Rio de Janeiro: Beco do Azougue, 2008) 23-36, 26.

<sup>168</sup> Magnus Bårtås, *Miracle at Tensta* (Theoria) 2014 [http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/uploads/124-miracle\\_en.pdf](http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/uploads/124-miracle_en.pdf)

**2.0 PAST AS BLUEPRINT: PARALABORATORIES AND CONDUCTIVE THREADS  
OF EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATION AND ART AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,  
RIO DE JANEIRO: DOMINGOS DE CRIAÇÃO (1971) AND NÚCLEO  
EXPERIMENTAL DE EDUCAÇÃO E ARTE (2010 – 2013)**

[...] in Brazil there are loose threads in a field of possibilities: why not work them out.

Hélio Oiticica<sup>1</sup>

Invoking the philosopher Giorgio Agamben in a seminar that opened the 2014 São Paulo biennial, curator Charles Esche described the contemporary as “living in historical times,” noting that “rewriting the common sense of our historical understanding is the only way we can be contemporary.”<sup>2</sup> For Brazil, notoriously positioned by outsiders and, indeed, self-ironized as the land of the future to the point of worn clichê, a critical insistence on memory may assume the radicality of a political vector for the present.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps even more so when delving into lesser known, critically examined or championed, or even mythic, institutional histories. What might we as contemporary curators, educators and artists learn or rather unlearn from revisiting such histories, particularly those experimental pasts that seem to have (momentarily at least) traversed worlds, merged art and life, and contaminated fields of knowledge and practices? Does recuperating or, as Esche suggests, “rewriting,” such liminal histories have some new common sense to offer us, particularly amidst territories like those of experimental art and education that seem to reveal what theorist Slavoj Žižek described as “parallax gap” that is “the confrontation of two closely linked perspectives between which no neutral common ground is possible”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hélio Oiticica. “Attempt, Try To Experiment the Experimental”. In Paula Braga ed. *Loose Threads: The Art of Hélio Oiticica*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2008, pp 347 - 351, p.351 [N.T. This text was actually originally written in Portuguese in 1972 and translated by Oiticica to English in 1973. In Oiticica’s version “fios soltos” (loose threads) is translated as “loosen threads” which appears to be an error. Given that I am using a quotation from the text it seemed appropriate to translate it here as “loose threads.”]

<sup>2</sup> Charles Esche, “What does it mean to be contemporary?” III International Seminar ARTE! Brasileiros – Contemporary Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, São Paulo Bienal, September 4th, 2014

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Zweig, *Brazil, Land of the Future* (New York: Viking Press, 1941).

<sup>4</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 2006) 4.

Such liminal experimental territories, parallax tensions and hybrid practices mixing art and education are richly woven into the historical fabric of the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), Rio de Janeiro, from the studio workshops of the artist Ivan Serpa teaching creative freedom in the 1950s to the participatory happenings *Domingos da Criação* (Creation Sundays) organized by Frederico Morais in 1971. The latter, in particular, situated at the critical juncture of the epistemic shift of vanguard art practices of the 1960s and 70s and held at the height of the Brazilian military dictatorship radicalized the art/education relationship with the creative attitudes of the anthropophagic.

More than forty years later, at a distinctly different socio-cultural juncture, active between 2010 and 2013, the Núcleo Experimental de Educação e Arte (The Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art) at MAM was a group of artists, educators, researchers and cultural producers co-coordinated by curator/art professor Luiz Guilherme Vergara and myself that strove to engage diverse publics in the museum and experiment with new and hybrid practices.<sup>5</sup> Part of this meant constructing a dialogue with the museum's context, geography and history. Here reconnecting with past moments of experimental art and education was a tool of alternative imagination, as if to say the world could be this way, not to repeat or re-enact but rather to ground, challenge and rethink contemporary practices. Embracing the possibilities of inhabiting these liminal histories and hybrid zones might push toward new understandings. What follows takes MAM's experimental interactions of art and education focusing on *Domingos da Criação* and their rich moments of horizontal encounters between art and public and in turn on the Experimental Nucleus, as provocative talking sticks to (re) tell stories, bring together different voices, and reflect on the critical and generative possibilities of experimental art and education and its potential place within the 21<sup>st</sup> century institution.

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<sup>5</sup> After assuming the position of curator at MAM in September 2009 Luiz Camillo Osorio invited Luiz Guilherme Vergara to create an educational program for the museum, which at the time had gone for several years without any activity and had no permanent education division or staff. There were however no resources allocated for such an initiative and as such funds would need to be raised. The Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art began working at MAM via a grant from Vale de Rio Doce focusing specifically on an exhibition by the artist Carlos Vergara, from November 13th 2009 to March 14th, 2010. The Nucleus then returned in September of 2010 with a broader and continuous focus (hence my use of the dates 2010 – 2013) with the sponsorship of Petrobras and in 2011 Unimed lasting until the end of April 2013. During its activities at MAM, the Nucleus comprised a team of artists, educators, researchers and cultural producers, who at different times and ways, contributed to the project: Adriana Fontes, Ana Chaves, Ana Clarissa Fernandes, Anderson Araújo, Anita Sobar, Beatriz Lahora, Bebel Kastrup, Bernardo Zabalaga, Bianca Bernardo, Eduardo Machado, Elielton Rocha, Felisa Perez, Gabriela Guzman, Gleyce Kelly Heitor, Graziela Mello, Hugo Richard, Igenes Albuquerque, Jessica Gogan, Keyna Eleison, Leonardo Campos (AoLeo), Luiz Guilherme Vergara, Luna Leal, Maíra Dias, Mara Pereira, Renata Montechiare, Sabrina Curi, Sabrina Rosas, Taisa Moreno, Thiago Ortiz and Virginia Mota.

## 2.1 “TRANSFORMING THE OLD CONCEPT OF MUSEUMS:”

Inspired by the model of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, MAM Rio was inaugurated in 1948. In 1952 the museum’s central location was chosen on reclaimed harbor land with stunning views. The idea was to construct a museum, garden, school and theatre.<sup>6</sup> Affonso Eduardo Reidy designed MAM in line with Brazilian modernist architecture’s love of suspended pillars and openness to the outside – throughout glass windows invite visitors to engage with the views of mountains, sea, city and world. As an artful counterbalance to Rio de Janeiro’s spectacular setting and the hills of Pão da Açúcar (Sugarloaf) and Corcovado, the new institution was rather conceived as a horizontal campus of “blocks” – School Block, Exhibitions Block and Theatre Block – amidst landscaped tropical gardens designed by Roberto Burle Marx.<sup>7</sup> Reidy stressed his concern that the building should not conflict with nature. At every turn, the building’s angles, glass windows and views foreground the landscape and invite and educate perception, providing a constant stimulus to framing/reframing ways of seeing.<sup>8</sup> Reidy saw his project as both “transforming an old concept of the museum” and “architectural space.”<sup>9</sup> As Carmen Portinho, project engineer, Reidy’s partner and executive director of MAM until 1966, later commented:

The idea was to turn MAM into a dynamic cultural center, a place totally dedicated to artistic activities. We wanted to make sure that it didn’t have the dead feeling of other museums – or the conception people have of them – seen as something static, anachronic without their own dynamic.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Reidy’s plan for the museum was completed in 1953. The first phase (the school block) was completed and opened in 1958. The exhibitions block was completed only in 1967 (several years after Reidy’s death in 1964). The theatre block was never completed to Reidy’s design but after the disastrous fire in 1978 and as part of the renovations through the 80s the original plan was adapted and opened in 1990 as Galpão das Artes – a one storey open barn like structure for performance and education. In 2006 following Reidy’s design a two storey structure was built in the same location and reopened as Theatre Vivo – now an autonomous event platform for music concerts.

<sup>7</sup> Aleca Le Blanc, “Palmeiras and Pilotis: Promoting Brazil with Modern Architecture,” in *Third Text*: “Brazilian Art: Bursting on the Scene” ed. Sérgio B. Martins, Vol. 26, Issue 1 (January 2012): 103 – 116, 106

<sup>8</sup> Roberto Conduru notes Reidy’s modernist utopian belief in “the capacity of buildings to re-educate habits and people’s perception, instituting new ways of seeing and living.” [Author translation, Portuguese original “[...] na capacidade dos edifícios de re-educar os hábitos e a percepção da população, institutindo novos modos de ver e viver.”] Roberto Conduru, “Razão em forma: Affonso Eduardo Reidy e o espaço arquitetônico moderno,” in *Risco: Revista de Pesquisa em Arquitetura e Urbanismo*, Universidade de São Paulo, no.2 (2005): 24 – 37, 35. <http://www.revistas.usp.br/risco/article/view/44627>

<sup>9</sup> Affonso E.Reidy, “Program for the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, 1953,” in *Affonso Eduardo Reidy* ed. Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, Series Brazilian Architects (Lisboa/Portugal: Blau, 2000) 164 – 181, 164

<sup>10</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “A ideia era tornar o MAM um centro cultural dinâmico, um local voltando inteiramente para as realizações artísticas. Queríamos que ele não possuísse o ranço comum aos demais museus – ou a concepção que se tem sobre eles – visto como algo estático, anacrônico, sem dinâmica própria.” Celina Karam, “Carmen Portinho acusa diretoria de destruir o museum que ela ajudou a criar.” (Carmen Portinho Accuses the Museum’s Directorship of Destroying the Museum that She Helped to Create), *Jornal do Comércio* (June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1985)



A multipurpose institutional model embracing a wide range of events including art exhibitions, film screenings, lectures, studio courses, and performances was vital to Reidy's design.<sup>11</sup> Architectural horizontality projected the desire to assume a non-hierarchical program, an embodiment of democratic aspirations that as critic/curator Frederico Morais has observed has always "functioned in contradistinction to the museum's inherent cultural and social verticalization."<sup>12</sup> The play of horizontal/vertical, democratic possibility/functional elitism and inside/outside recall modernist writer Oswald de Andrade's shaping forces of "forest and school" at the heart of Brazilian identity.<sup>13</sup> These tensions, at once generative and disabling, frame MAM's past and present.

## 2.2 MADNESS, GEOMETRY AND EDUCATION

In the 1950s the role of education was repeatedly emphasized at MAM where abstract geometric experimentation, creativity and discovery were central tenets of a modernist ideology that was seen to position Brazil for the future. At the museum's inauguration ceremony on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1952, Brazil's Minister of Education, Ernesto Simões Filho, noted that the museum would act as "an agent of democratic education for the masses."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, as historian Aleca Leblanc suggests the vital importance of education and the work of the future museum's school was clearly demonstrated when the "Bloco Escola" (School Block) was the first phase of the building to be completed in 1958.<sup>15</sup> In addition to the general museum-as-school mission, from its early inception, the "Bloco Escola" had also been imagined to house a Bauhaus influenced technical design school - Escola Técnica da Criação (Technical School of Creation).<sup>16</sup> Ulm School founder,

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<sup>11</sup> LeBlanc, "Palmeiras and Pilotis," 108

<sup>12</sup> Critic Frederico Morais in Irene Small, "Ped-a-gog-y: How to do things with words," Commissioned essay for the seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, MAM RJ, March 2012 (currently unavailable)

<sup>13</sup> Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto Pau-Brasil" (The Brazilwood Manifesto), originally published in *Correio da Manhã*, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1924. Excerpts in English published in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* eds. Mari Carmen Ramirez and Héctor Olea. (New Haven/London: Yale University Press in association with The Museum of Fine Arts Houston) 465

<sup>14</sup> Aleca Le Blanc, "A Democratic Education for the Masses: Ivan Serpa at the Museu de Arte Moderna," in *Ivan Serpa: Pioneering Abstraction in Brazil* (New York: Dickinson, 2012) 9 – 21, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Swiss artist Max Bill, whose sculpture *Tripartite Unity* won the main prize at the first São Paulo Biennial in 1951 and was a vital influence on the Concrete/Neo-concrete movements in Brazil, was a frequent visitor/lecturer in Brazil in the early 1950s where he outlined his plans for the Ulm School which opened in 1953 and was the critical inspiration for MAM's technical school project. Frequent references to Bill appear in MAM newsletters of the time period. See "Apêndice: Sobre Ulm" in Sabrina Marques Parracho Sant'anna, *Construindo a memória do futuro: Uma análise da fundação do Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV editora, 2011) 256 - 263

sculptor and former Bauhaus student Max Bill had apparently suggested the idea to Reidy.<sup>17</sup> While the project was never realized at MAM the questions of form, technique, and the pedagogical practices of Bauhaus and Ulm remained in the air.<sup>18</sup>

While the grand plans for an integrated technical school were being hatched, the young artist Ivan Serpa was brought on to teach studio art classes at the new museum beginning in 1952. For president/director Niomar Moniz Sodré (1951–61) art was key to shaping the creative minds of future generations.<sup>19</sup> Serpa had no formal training as an art teacher. At the time he had been exploring the therapeutic potential of art with schizophrenic patients at the National Psychiatric Hospital Dom Pedro II alongside fellow artists Almir Mavignier and Abraham Palatnik and the psychiatrist Dr. Nise da Silveira, closely observed and encouraged by the tour de force art critic Mário Pedrosa.<sup>20</sup> It was Pedrosa, a personal friend of Niomar who recommended Serpa.<sup>21</sup>

A fascination with the creative process, both its spontaneity and irrationality, as in the art of children or the insane, was pervasive amidst artistic and intellectual climates post World War I. This fascination found particularly fertile ground in Brazil as a contagion between reason and emotion, Bauhaus pedagogical principles of method and intuition, and concrete form and affective experimentation.<sup>22</sup> Serpa drew on these contagious relations in his classes and

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<sup>17</sup> According to Carmen Portinho, Max Bill was so enthused by Reidy's project that he proposed to MAM's directors the creation of a design school for the School Block based on the Ulm School model. Maria del Carmen Zílio, "O Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro," *Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Banco Safra 1999) 7 - 18, 9. Argentinian artist and designer, Tomás Maldonado, and professor at the Ulm School, created the plan. Also a fully designed fundraising promotional brochure in English clearly aimed at attracting US interest was produced in 1957. LeBlanc suggests that the brochure's abstract design and sober layout were intended "to convey a rigorous ordered mentality, ideally reflective of the administration of the museum." Leblanc, "Palmeiras and Pilotis," 110.

<sup>18</sup> The school, as Escola Superior de Design Industrial (ESDI – Superior School of Industrial Design) was ultimately integrated into the state university of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) in 1963.

<sup>19</sup> Niomar Moniz Sodré Bittencourt was director from 1952 – 1958 and President through 1961 whereupon she became honorary president and continued to be involved in various capacities.

<sup>20</sup> Inaugurated in 1946 and known as the atelier Engenho do Dentro after the neighborhood where the hospital is situated, the art workshops were part of the Sector of Occupational Therapy and Recreation run by Dr. Nise da Silveira (1905 – 1999). In 1952 Silveira founded the Museu de Imagem do Inconsciente (Museum of the Images of the Unconscious) to house and study the artworks resulting from the workshops.

<sup>21</sup> Leblanc, "A Democratic Education for the Masses," 9

<sup>22</sup> The first example of this "contagion" appears to have been the event/exhibition "Mês das crianças e loucas" (Month of the Children and the Insane) organized by the artist Flavio Carvalho and psychologist Osório Cesar in 1933 at the Clube dos Artistas Modernos in São Paulo featuring an exhibition and a series of talks. In their article on the exhibition Raquel Carneiro Amin and Lucia Reily note that "repercussions in the media showed that this encounter between visual arts, education and psychology had significant impact in São Paulo's cultural life." Raquel Carneiro Amin and Lucia Reily, "O 'Mês das Crianças e dos Loucos': um olhar sobre a exposição paulista de 1933," *Ars*, ano 11, n.22. , (2013). Marta D'Angelo notes the importance of the ideas of Herbert Read following a British Council supported exhibition of childrens' drawings and paintings in Rio de Janeiro in 1941 which seemed to have had significant repercussion in the press and amongst artists and educators. Pedrosa also commented on how Read influenced the creation and philosophy of Augusto Rodriguez's Escolhinha de Arte (Art school for children). Martha D'Angelo, *Educação estética e crítica de arte na obra de Mário Pedrosa* (Rio de Janeiro: Nau Editora, 2011) 50 & 58. Paulo Herkenhoff notes that "In Rio the first experiences of rational images of Concrete form occurred in a mental hospital. This was the contagion between reason and emotion, which found a place between the distant sources of tension within the offerings of Neo-Concrete art." Paulo Herkenhoff, "Rio de Janeiro: A Necessary City," in *The Geometry of Hope: Latin American Abstract Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection* ed. Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro Blanton (Museum of Art/The University of Texas at Austin, 2007) 50 – 61, 55; On Bauhaus education see: "The pedagogical

particularly, on the potential of what Dr. Nise da Silveira had observed as the vital role of affective relationships with patients in nurturing freedom of expression and creative discovery.<sup>23</sup>

Demonstrating the value MAM placed on education in the first decade of the museum's history annual children's art exhibitions of Serpa's classes were held, featuring small catalogues with short essays by major art writers of the time period such as Pedrosa, Carlos Drummond de Andrade and Ferreira Gullar. Pedrosa, as LeBlanc notes, would use the opportunity to deliver an international art education lesson on the most innovative and emerging practices situating MAM and Ivan Serpa as their logical inheritors.<sup>24</sup> The engagement of such key figures to address children's work speaks volumes to the museum's vested interest at the time and also to the critics' own fascination with questions of perception, learning and affect, particularly Pedrosa whose 1949 dissertation, deeply informed by Gestalt theory, "Da natureza afetiva da forma na obra de arte" (On the Affective Nature of Form in the Work of Art) and subsequent articles would prove richly influential. Gullar's reflection in MAM's 1958 children's exhibition catalogue points to the collectively shared understanding of the sensibilizing role that art could play in education:

When one leaves the idea of teaching art to one side – as is the case in children's art – to teach through art, one recognizes before anything else that true education consists in stimulating the innate qualities of the individual and that art, far from being the application of artisanal formulas, is an instrument and product of profound education. In fact, one can never separate art from education, taking both in their essential meaning, since even in the adult artist, the creative work is, at the same time, the process and the result of an inner coherence.<sup>25</sup>

Influenced by the ideas of British anarchist and poet Herbert Read's *Education Through Art*, Serpa and these critics emphasized the role of art in education as vital to nurturing the child (and

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principle on which [Jonathen] Itten's teaching was based can be summarized in a pair of opposites: 'intuition and method' or 'subjective experience and objective recognition.'" Magdalena Droste, *Bauhaus: Bauhaus archiv 1919 – 1933* (Taschen, 2002) 25; Clara Gerchman, daughter of 1960s and 70s vanguard artist Rubens Gerchman who directed the Rio de Janeiro School of Visual Arts Parque Lage during one of its most experimental periods from 1975 - 1979 noted the importance of the mix of method and intuition to Gerchman and other teachers and to what he called the "communicating network" of collaborators and students in relation to the experimental practices at Parque Lage at the time. Panel discussion at the launch of the online magazine issues 3 and 4 of *Revista MESA*, Casa Daros, Rio de Janeiro, May 16th, 2015. Also see "Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro 1975 – 79: An Experimental Art School and Its Contemporary Resonance," *Revista MESA* no 4: Past as Blueprint: Hybrid Practices and Limit Zones (May, 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/portfolio/gerchman/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/portfolio/gerchman/?lang=en)

<sup>23</sup> Nise da Silveira, "O mundo dos imagens," in *Mostra do redescobrimento, Imagens do inconsciente* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2000) 47. In Adriano Pedrosa, "Histórias da loucura: desenhos do Juquery," exhibition catalogue. *Histórias da loucura: desenhos do Juquery* (Museu da Art de São Paulo. São Paulo; MASP, 2015) 3-5, 4

<sup>24</sup> Leblanc, "Democratic Education for Masses," 14.

<sup>25</sup> [Author translation, original Portuguese: "Quando se deixa de ensinar arte - como é o caso dos cursos de arte infantil - para ensinar pela arte, reconhece-se antes de mais nada que a verdadeira educação consiste em estimular as qualidades inatas do indivíduo e que a arte, longe de ser a aplicação de fórmulas artesanais, é o instrumento e produto dessa educação em profundidade. De fato, não se pode jamais separar arte de educação, tomadas ambas em seu sentido essencial, uma vez que mesmo no artista adulto, o trabalho criador é, a um só tempo, o processo e o resultado de uma coerência interior."] Ferreira Gullar, Preface, Catalogue Children's Art Exhibition/Students of Ivan Serpa at MAM, 1958. Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ

future adult's) innate sense of creativity. Poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade in his 1956 essay described Serpa's methods as those of an "anti-school;" the artist did not promote a particular order but rather "a liberation of natural instincts."<sup>26</sup> Art historian Adele Nelson argues that this rhetoric has tended to overshadow the more systematic influences of Bauhaus color and material experimentation that were also part of his classes for young adults on Saturdays.<sup>27</sup> As one of Serpa's most well known students, Hélio Oiticica's concrete geometric paintings of the 1950s could be seen as a confirmation of this kind of experimentation. Indeed, the free-for-all spirit is countered, albeit humourously, by various students commenting on Serpa being, at times, somewhat of a tyrant. Yet the artist Waltercio Caldas, among others, would value most this mix of studio and critique.<sup>28</sup> Serpa's studios' contagion of affectivity, critique and experimentation reinforced MAM as an active center of education, gathering place for young artists, and springboard for the Grupo Frente (1954 – 1956) and Neoconcrete (1959 – 1961) art movements.

This spirit of embracing the experimental was also to position MAM as an institutional generator of modernity.<sup>29</sup> Here the equation museum = memory is not a place where memory is housed but vitally produced. This sense of the museum as a site of creation and reception was to inform a distinct current of MAM's experimental DNA, a spirit that became central to the hybrid practices mixing art, education and participation that emerged in the late 1960s and early 70s.

### 2.3 LABORATORIES AND PARALABORATORIES

'Museums' of contemporary art – or those dedicated to the myth called of so-called modern art – cannot be confined to traditional activities of storing and exhibiting masterpieces. Their functions are much more complex. Intrinsically, they are houses, laboratories of cultural experiments – instantly unbiased laboratories of an aesthetic order [...] Thus conceived, the museum is the elastic glove into which the free creator may fit his hand.

Mário Pedrosa<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Carlos Drummond de Andrade, *5ª exposição de pintura de crianças* (Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro) 1956.

<sup>27</sup> Adele Nelson, "The Transformation of Artistic Education in Brazil after World War II," International Museum Education Institute: Focus on Brazil, MoMA (July 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011)

[http://original.livestream.com/museummodernart/video?clipId=pla\\_3439ca9d-51b6-496c-9b6e-0c7c4285f1ed](http://original.livestream.com/museummodernart/video?clipId=pla_3439ca9d-51b6-496c-9b6e-0c7c4285f1ed)

<sup>28</sup> Hélio Márcio Dias Ferreira, ed., *Ivan Serpa. Coleção Fala do Artista* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte) 81- 83

<sup>29</sup> Sabrina Marques Parracho Sant'anna. *Construindo a memória do futuro: Uma análise da fundação do Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro*, 321.

<sup>30</sup> Mário Pedrosa, "Hélio Oiticica's Projects," originally published as "Os projetos de Hélio Oiticica," in *Catálogo exposição Projeto cães de caça* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna, 1961) in *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents* eds. Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff. Trans Stephen Berg (New York: MoMA, 2015) 308 – 310, 308.

Serpa's open-ended laboratory practice, inspired by Pedrosa, was of course far from a wholly "unbiased" exercise – Niomar and a significant cadre of Brazilian entrepreneurs were vested in nurturing an image of MAM as free-spirited and creative, distinct from academic models. The moderns would "pull up their sleeves" and create a new art, society and future.<sup>31</sup> Sabrina Sant'Anna in her meticulous study of MAM's foundation notes that it is precisely this orientation to the future that will distinguish the museum from MoMA and a model that sought to broker a pedagogic relationship between art and the public in the present, where the educational vector moves from the present to the recent past and is primarily one of art appreciation.<sup>32</sup> For Victor D'Amico, MoMA's influential founding director of education (1937 – 1969) the museum was understood as a "laboratory for creative teaching practices," where art education was primarily envisioned as a tool to "develop more aesthetically sensitive individuals" where appreciation of modern art is linked to self development.<sup>33</sup>

At MAM, temporarily at least, one could say that the museum/school hierarchy and appreciation/development model were inverted, where rather than the school serving the museum it was the other way around. Writing in *The School and Society* about his laboratory school model in Chicago, active from 1896 – 1903, John Dewey conceptualized this potential suggesting that, "in the ideal school the art work might be considered to be that of the [work]shops, passed through the alembic of the library and museum into action again."<sup>34</sup> This is an apt description of the vital role MAM played in the passage of Concrete to Neoconcrete art and the experimentation of the 1960s. Even more so considering that until 1967 and the opening of the Exhibitions Block, all exhibitions were held in the School Block, including the famous *Opinião 65* where Hélio Oiticica burst on the scene at the opening with his *Parangolés* featuring wearable capes, standards and samba performers from Mangueira, a dynamic artistic and socio-political gesture post the 1964 military coup. In an *O Globo* review collector and critic Jean Boghici wittily described this now mythic history as "Hélio Oiticica: our national Flash Gordon" not "flying through space, but social layers."<sup>35</sup> It is a key moment where the experimental moves out of the

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<sup>31</sup> Glauca Villas Boas, Preface, *Construindo a memoria do futuro: Uma análise da fundação do Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro*, 13

<sup>32</sup> Sabrina Sant'ana, *Construindo a memoria do futuro*, 176-177.

<sup>33</sup> Briley Rasmussen, "Art—A Human Necessity: Victor D'Amico and The Museum of Modern Art, 1937–1969," MoMA: Mining Modern Museum Education: Briley Rasmussen on Victor D'Amico (June 25<sup>th</sup> 2010) [http://www.moma.org/explore/inside\\_out/2010/06/25/mining-modern-museum-education-briley-rasmussen-on-victor-d-amico](http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2010/06/25/mining-modern-museum-education-briley-rasmussen-on-victor-d-amico) and Victor D'Amico, *Experiments in Creative Art Teaching. A Progress Report on the Department of Education 1937 – 1960* (New York: Museum of Modern Art/Doubleday) 29 cited in Carol Morgan, "From Modernist Utopia to Cold-War Reality: A Critical Moment in Museum Education," in *Studies in Modern Art, The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century: Continuity and Change* ed. John Elderfield. Vol 5 (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1995) 150-173.

<sup>34</sup> John Dewey, *The School and Society* (New York: Cosimo, 2007, originally published in 1899) 104.

<sup>35</sup> "O que é o Parangolé?"

laboratory-school-studio and into the world. It is also where an individual and contemplative art experience is inverted to a collective and participatory one of wearing and watching.<sup>36</sup>

The *Parangolés* can also be seen as Oiticica's subterranean flip of modern ideas of scientific experimentality – a testing of facts about the world that only become scientific, as art historian Terry Smith notes, if “other rational men witness the demonstration [...] where in order to be “scientific” observation must observe itself observing.”<sup>37</sup> Donning a cape, joining in the fray, the subject both participates in *and* observes the collectivity of participating. Here the experimental is immersive, experiential, durational, spatial, and collective – a constant folding into and out of subjectivity and objectivity and back again, a relational tuning into what Oiticica called the “inter-corporal space created by the world upon its unfolding.” Here, it is not scientific laboratory, nor Dewey's experimental school, but rather the body – individual and collective – that is the “alembic” site of the experimental. It is a gesture that can also be said to have absorbed and to literally embody key experimental artistic practices of the time. Ones that, drawing on art historian Eva Díaz's analysis of the “experimenters” of Black Mountain College, pivoted around questions of control and improvisation: Joseph Albers testing of perceptual understandings in art against deceptive optical stimuli where the experiment is rather a means to “oppose disorder;” John Cage's focus on indeterminacy where the experiment is “simply an act the outcome of which is unknown;” and Buckminster Fuller's notion of the experiment as a form of collecting/organizing “valid data” of what is really going on in nature to both formulate conceptually and experientially test in order “to expose convention.”<sup>38</sup> The *Parangolés* may

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*Parangolé é o que é,  
É o mito.*

*Hélio Oiticica, Flash Gordon nacional,  
Não voa nos espaços siderais.*

*Voa através das camadas sociais.*” Jean Boghici cited in “Ainda o *Parangolé*,” *Artes Plásticas, O Globo* (August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1965). [English Translation: “What is *Parangolé*? *Parangolé* is what it is. It is pure myth. Hélio Oiticica: our national Flash Gordon. He does not fly through outer space. He flies through social layers.” In Victor Manuel Rodríguez-Sarmiento, *Cold War Legacies Otherwise: Latin American Art and Art History in Colonial Times*, PhD Dissertation, Department of Art and Art History (University of Rochester, 2009) 149]

<sup>36</sup> Hélio Oiticica. “My entire evolution, leading up to the formulation of the *Parangolé*, aims at this magical incorporation of the elements of the world as such, in the whole life-experience of the spectator, whom I now call ‘participator.’ It is as if there were an ‘establishment’ and a ‘recognition’ of an inter-corporal space created by the world upon its unfolding. The work is made for this space, and no sense of totality can be demanded from it as simply a work located in an ideal space-time, whether or not requiring the spectator's participation. ‘Wearing, in its larger and total sense, counterpoints ‘watching’, a secondary feeling, thus closing the wearing-watching cycle.” Notes on the *Parangolé*. In *Hélio Oiticica*, eds., Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape (Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica, 1992) 93. Various critics have remarked on the importance of the wearing/watching dynamic as central to understanding Oiticica's practice. See Jordan Crandal, “Notes on the *Parangolé*” in *Fios Soltos: A Arte de Hélio Oiticica* ed. Paula Braga (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2008) 150-151, 150 and Irene Small in “Morphology in the Studio: Hélio Oiticica at the Museu Nacional,” *Getty Research Journal* no. 1 (2009): 107-126, 118

<sup>37</sup> Terry Smith, “Experimentality: Theories and Practices,” *Studies in Material Thinking*, volume 08 (2011), issue on Experimental Arts edited by Jill Bennett, posted May 2012 at <http://www.materialthinking.org>

<sup>38</sup> Eva Díaz, *The Experimenters: Chance and Design at Black Mountain College* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2015) 5.

embrace a seemingly improvisational disorder, but they also oppose entropic chaos via creating a new affective spatio-temporal order, one that conceptually and corporally turns on momentum itself – that is the very unfolding/folding into and out of binary tensions of inside/outside, individual/collective, and subjectivity/objectivity. In the process this unfolding/folding exposes the untraversability of certain conventions of art, society and institution.

As a structuring tool of affectivity, action and participation, sense of event and dynamic tensions, the *Parangolés* will play a key role in unleashing the experimental spirit that will permeate much of MAM's activities for the subsequent decade. For if the art workshops with schizophrenic patients and Serpa's studio classes could be seen as key harbingers for Neoconcrete's affective tuning into the other and subsequent artistic experiments, Oiticica's inter-corporal folding out into the world was also already prefigured in MAM's fluent and transparent architecture. Beyond the infamous individual artistic gesture, the institution itself assumed a mantle of experimentalism, becoming what Pedrosa presciently called in 1960 a "house of experiments [...] a para-laboratory."<sup>39</sup> In a manner similar to Lygia Clark's "o corpo é a casa" (the body is the house) the institution literally becomes a body of experience and a shelter/house/body for multiple forms of expression.<sup>40</sup> Legendary curator and director Pontus Hultén reflected on the vitality of such an institutional role in relation to Stockholm's Moderna Museet in the 1960s, where the museum became a home and laboratory for those in art, music, theater, and dance, representing the only available space for "experimental" work and "the meeting ground for an entire generation."<sup>41</sup> Like the architect Cedric Price's visionary idea of the "fun palace" embracing a notion of a flexible, mutable and dynamic cultural center, here museum architecture would "not determine human behaviour but rather enable possibility."<sup>42</sup> Other Brazilian examples beside MAM of such institutional housing of experimentality at the time is the work of curator Walter Zanini while director of Museu de arte contemporânea de Universidade de São Paulo (Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo) and in particular his establishment of a group of young artists called Jovem Arte Contemporânea (Young

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<sup>39</sup> The full citation: "Unlike traditional museums, whose rooms contain the masterworks of the past, the museum of today is, above all, a house of experiments. It is a para-laboratory. Inside it one may understand what is called experimental art – inventive art." Mário Pedrosa, "Experimental Art and Museums," originally published as "Arte experimental e museus," *Jornal do Brasil* (December 12th, 1960). In *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents*, 142-143, 142.

<sup>40</sup> Lygia Clark, "O homem, estrutura viva de uma arquitetura biológica e celular," in *Lygia Clark: superfícies moduladas / Bichos / Manifestações* (São Paulo: Galeria Ralph Camargo, 1971).

<sup>41</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Interview Pontus Hultén," *A Brief History of Curating* (Zurich/Dijon: JRP Ringier/Les presses du reel, 2008) 32-50, 37.

<sup>42</sup> "'Anti-building' for the future: the world of Cedric Price." St John's College Cambridge, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014 <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/anti-building-future-world-cedric-price#sthash.LZaNw27t.dpuf>



Contemporary Art) which as noted by curator Cristiana Tejo would open “the way for research in all sort of media and with a strong emphasis on experimentation.”<sup>43</sup>

Post Brazil’s military coup in 1964 and the installation of the dictatorship (1964 – 1985) and in particular amidst the 1968 imposition of constitutional restrictions, this sense of an experimental and enabling home would become particularly important. Known as AI-5 (Ato Institucional 5/Institutional Act no 5) these restrictions included the suspension of parliament and constitutional guarantees, paving the way for censorship, arrest and torture.<sup>44</sup> In such a climate of censure, as critic Fernanda Lopes notes, experimental rupture relocated itself to other contexts, ones that incorporated the discussion of artistic limits and categories, the role of the artist, the critic, and of institutions.<sup>45</sup> MAM here becomes “para” in multiple ways – from vital social network, as the artist Cildo Meireles remarked the museum bar was facebook of their generation, to experimental school.<sup>46</sup> The latter was part of what artist Anna Bella Geiger, who began teaching at the museum in 1968, called the “extra-artistic” interest in education, which she suggests was due to the spirit of the times but also to the decision to boycott the São Paulo Biennial as a response to the AI 5 restrictions, thus severely limiting exhibition options.<sup>47</sup>

The interest in education was also grounded in international artistic shifts already emerging in the 1950s. If, as critic Brandon Joseph suggests, John Cage’s experimental music can be conceived “at its most radical, as a death of the composer that was also a liberating birth of the listener,” this in turn opens up rich experimental possibilities for the artist as teacher.<sup>48</sup> Allan

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<sup>43</sup> Cristiana Tejo, “On limits and experimentations: Walter Zanini and the invention of the curatorial,” *Terremoto*, Issue 4: Wild Researchers (November 30, 2015) <http://terremoto.mx/article/walter-zanini/>

<sup>44</sup> Issued by military President Artur da Costa e Silva on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1968, the decree was the military’s response to the increased political resistance to the dictatorship throughout 1968 evidenced by a public march and demonstration protesting the murder of a student Edson Luís de Lima Souto by the police and the parliament’s refusal to grant the prosecution of one of its members Márcio Moreira Alves who gave a speech urging Brazilians to boycott the September 7<sup>th</sup> Independence Day celebrations. These events enabled the military hardliners to consolidate power and avert returning to civilian rule. AI-5 continued until 1978 when habeus corpus was restored as part of the military détente under President Ernesto Giesel.

<sup>45</sup> Fernanda Lopes, *Área Experimental: Lugar, Espaço e Dimensão do Experimental na Arte Brasileira dos anos 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Prestigio Editorial, 2013) 29.

<sup>46</sup> Comment cited by Fernanda Lopes at the panel discussion “Práticas Curatorias no Brasil,” 19<sup>a</sup> EEA/PPGAV e EBA/UFRJ *Encontros em Arte: Lugares, Ações Processos*, 19<sup>th</sup> Encontro of Graduate Students in Visual Arts/ PPGAV e Escola de Belas Artes / EBA Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro / UFRJ, Centro Municipal Hélio Oiticica, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Havia, porém, uma forte reação aquele modo experimental, “extra-artístico” de lidar como o ensino de arte... Quando começo a ensinar no MAM-RJ, em 1968, sinto a necessidade de falar da situação política do momento, e também porque naquele mesmo momento tínhamos decidido pelo boicote à Bienal. Esta decisão, porém, não deixava de causar um profundo vazio para as perspectivas do artista. É nesse período, devido às circunstancia do momento que irei desenvolver muita essa área pedagógica, aqui nos cursos do MAM e em seguida na USP no Departamento de Artes.”] “Não tem nada a ver, mas... :Entrevista com Anna Bella Geiger,” in *Anna Bella Geiger. Territórios, Passagens, Situações*, ed. Adolfo Montejo Navas (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2007) 81-105, 84.

<sup>48</sup> Brandon W. Joseph, “The Social Turn,” extract from *Beyond The Dream Syndicate: Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage* (New York: Zone Books, 2008) 76-82, in *Chance. The Whitechapel Gallery. Documents of Contemporary Art* Margaret Iversen ed. (London/Cambridge Massachusetts: Whitechapel Gallery, The MIT Press, 2010) 85-91, 88



Kaprow saw Cage's influence as being key in this regard, particularly as to how notions of play and experimentation could be seen as conduits to participation:

[...] one of the implications of Cage's experimental approach to composing and thus to teaching was that educational experiences might turn on forms of improvisational play – that play, instead of work, was perhaps a better motivation and method for learning.<sup>49</sup>

Kaprow himself deployed such strategies finding radical possibilities for both art and education in his collaborations in California's Berkeley schools in 1969 working with Herbert Kohl, the father of the open schools movement in the USA.<sup>50</sup> As a parallel to Clark and Oiticica's notion of the "proposition" and "artist as proposer," Kaprow based his curriculum, developed with Kohl, on the notion of "suppose."<sup>51</sup> The idea here was that each "suppose" could be a curriculum in and of itself, a sort of event plan replacing the traditional lesson plan. For example, using such instigations as "suppose you couldn't write and could only take pictures" or "suppose you used graffiti as a text book."<sup>52</sup> Oiticica himself, while living in New York in the early 1970s would develop a course/curriculum called "Experimentation," which he taught at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Y.<sup>53</sup> The title, a perfect neologism, a practice of which the artist was fond, of the experimental and the tactile, literally and conceptually connects the notion of testing with embodied experience. The curriculum is a veritable inventory of the artist's key ideas. Like the *Parangolés* vested experience of wearing/watching, notions of "play" are deployed as a means to raise consciousness and materials and structures such as capes, nests, labyrinths, and sacks, among others, are used as phenomenological devices where experience becomes a "behavioral extension" of each structure, as art historian Irene Small notes in relation to the artist's work, "much as an organism's movement is contingent on its skeletal frame."<sup>54</sup>

The potential of such tactile, proximal and playful experiential possibilities and the "extra-artistic" interest in education would, in the context of the military dictatorship, assume a political dimension. Literary critic Roberto Schwarz in his essay "Culture and Politics in Brazil,

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<sup>49</sup> Allan Kaprow in Jeff Kelley, *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow* (University of California Press, 2004) 142

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>51</sup> Oiticica writes in "The Senses Pointing Towards a New Transformation" written in English based on a paper the artist gave at the Touch Art symposium in Los Angeles in 1969 that he was not interested in the "experimental show" dynamic but rather "the internal growing proposing experience." Hélio Oiticica, "The Senses Pointing Toward a New Transformation" Hélio Oiticica Project # 0468/69 typed document 1-7, 4. Text can be accessed via <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/programaho/>

<sup>52</sup> *Childsplay: The Art of Allan Kaprow*, 143.

<sup>53</sup> The flyer for Oiticica's 1972 *Experimentation* course reads: "An anti-course which deals with direct environmental and sensorial activities free from canvas and bi-dimensional space e.g. the construction of labyrinths, cabins, boxes and nests for the purpose of increasing the individual's perceptive field and his essential participation in it." Flyer 92nd St Y for *Experimentation*, Hélio Oiticica Project #0507/72 [616]. Text can be accessed via <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/programaho/>

<sup>54</sup> Irene Small, "Material Remains: The Afterlife of Hélio Oiticica's Work," *Artforum* (February 2010): 95-96.

1964-1969” remarked that this “gesture toward instruction or education [...] gave value to what was not permitted in a culture that was hemmed in: political contact with the people.”<sup>55</sup> In this sense the experimental became palpably site specific, public, collective, and pedagogic – a practice that embraced the radical processual gestures of the Neoconcrete non-object – the olfactory, the sensual, the tactile, the participatory – and also attempted to critically collapse, expose and cross boundaries.<sup>56</sup> In so doing the experimental would also force new ways of thinking about art and institutions out in the world. Tapping into this zeitgeist critic Frederico Morais emerged as a key player.

A talented journalist and writer Morais moved to Rio in 1966 from Minas Gerais where he had already organized art happenings to write an art column for one of the city’s newspapers *Diário de Notícias*. In 1968 Morais organized *Arte no Aterro: um mês de arte pública* (Art on the Embankment: A Month of Public Art) with the newspaper as media partner. Part of reclaimed harbor land and central to the city’s modernist expansion in the 1950s, the Aterro was adjoined to the site of MAM and considered by many as an extension of the museum. Intended to bring art to the people, demystify it and promote collective creativity, the popular *Arte no Aterro* became synonymous with a spirit of freedom that several months later would be indefinitely challenged by the implementation of the AI-5 constitutional restrictions. While many artists and intellectuals went into exile, for those who stayed, MAM would assume a key role as experimental beacon. Subsequent “happening” style events such as *Orgamurbana*, 1970 for which Oiticica created *Área Agua* (Water Area), a large shallow open pool in the museum’s gardens, proved vital to continuing to foster a spirit of openness in the midst of the dictatorship. For Morais, as MAM’s director of courses (1969 - 1973) the museum became a context for experimenting not only with new forms of art but also, education, as a form of revolutionizing sensibility.<sup>57</sup>

From 1969, as a professor and director of courses at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, I developed a series of educational practices based on two principles: 1) at present, more than a building or defined space, indeed, more than a depository of a collection, the art museum is a programmer of activities that can

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<sup>55</sup> While Schwarz was referring more specifically to the theatrical innovations of the time and Augusto Boal’s *Opinião 64* in particular, the gesture can equally be applied to MAM at the time. Roberto Schwarz, “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969” in *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture* (London/New York: Verso, 1992) 126-159, 145

<sup>56</sup> Critic and poet Ferreira Gullar’s article “Manifesto Neoconcreto” (Neoconcrete Manifesto), *Jornal do Brasil*, Sunday Supplement, March 21-22, 1959 co-signed with Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape and others followed by “Teoria do não objeto” (Theory of the Non-Object), *Jornal do Brasil*, Sunday Supplement, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960 became manifestos of the Neo-Concrete movement. Although Gullar would eventually reject these ideas to embrace more recognized popular art forms as the only possibility for truly political art. For English translations: excerpts of the Neo-Concrete Manifesto. In Ramirez and Olea *Inverted Utopias*, 496 – 497; Theory of the Non-Object and commentary see Michael Asbury, “Neoconcretism and Minimalism: On Ferreira Gullar’s Theory of the Non-Object” in *Cosmopolitan Modernisms* ed Kobena Mercer (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006) 168-189.

<sup>57</sup> Morais draws here on Mário Pedrosa’s advocating that the biggest revolution would be a revolution of sensibility. Interview with the author, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

be performed throughout the city; and 2) teaching art is no longer based on learning specific techniques, which age quickly. The concept of workshop is more extensive, and now refers to any place in the city where teachers and students gather, and where the technique to be used in making the works is appropriate to the materials available at the time.<sup>58</sup>

In tandem with rethinking the museum's courses in 1969, shortly after starting at MAM, Morais also co-founded the group Unidade Experimental (Experimental Unit) together with the artists Luiz Alphonsus, Guilherme Vaz and Cildo Meireles, as a kind of research laboratory for new expressive languages and situations geared to activating the senses and stimulating new perceptions.<sup>59</sup> Also beginning in 1969, MAM started to offer a free Art Course for the General Public (Curso popular de arte) on Sundays that became increasingly popular.<sup>60</sup> Experimentation with new courses and models that embraced horizontal relationships between teacher/student, dematerialized art forms, and the city itself as creative context were also underway. Morais talks of taking students to supermarkets to explore ideas about pop art and making trips to construction sites to discuss/make earth art.<sup>61</sup> Geiger was engaged in various initiatives such as the course Atividade/Criatividade (Activity/Creativity) comprising process-based creative activities and the use of the outside of the museum which she described as affecting "a community of creation" with students.<sup>62</sup> Morais also stressed the importance of courses not isolating aesthetic problems from the everyday and the political moment. The important thing was to "act" in the world.<sup>63</sup> It was this experimental mix of artists' engagement with questions of participation, materials, education, and the city and the museum as creative situations that spawned what would become known as *Domingos da Criação* (Creation Sundays), a series of six participatory art happenings held from January to August at MAM at the height of Brazil's military repression in 1971.

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<sup>58</sup> Frederico Morais, "Chronocollage:" Rio de Janeiro, 1967 – 1972 in *Río Experimental: Más allá del arte, el poem y la acción* (Fundacion Botin, 2010) 293-309, 303.

<sup>59</sup> Fernanda Lopes, *Área Experimental*, 28.

<sup>60</sup> The translation of the Portuguese "popular" is rendered here as "general public." The term in Portuguese implies more the notion "of the people" and less the English/USA usage of popular as well liked etc.

<sup>61</sup> Frederico Morais: Interview with Renata Wilner, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1997. In Renata Wilner, "A experiência dos domingos da criação no museu de arte moderna do Rio de Janeiro," Unpublished masters' dissertation in art history (Centro de letras e artes, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1997) 64. Frederico Morais Archive. Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ and interview with the author, May 11<sup>th</sup> 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>62</sup> The course Atividade/Criatividade is referred to in the artist's timeline published in *Anna Bella Geiger: Constelações* (Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, 1996) 71. However, the date in this publication notes 1972 which is incorrect given other journal articles noting the course took place in 1971 and MAM's Research center confirmation of this date. For Geiger's comment regarding students as a "community of creation" see "Arte sem bloqueio em curso de férias," *Jornal do Brasil*, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>63</sup> An article from early January 1971 notes that MAM would offer summer pilot courses – an introduction to theory and practice (Introdução a Técnica, Linguagem e História das Artes Plásticas) and an experimental course taught by the artists Anna Bella Geiger, Lygia Pape and Cildo Meireles (note article says Meireles but it was actually taught by Antonio Manuel) called Atividade/Criatividade (Activity/Creativity). This was announced simultaneously with the new series of "manifestações de arte pública" (demonstrations of public art). "Arte sem bloqueio em curso de férias." Op cit

## 2.4 DOMINGOS DA CRIAÇÃO: “THE MUSEUM & THE RE-EDUCATION OF MAN”<sup>64</sup>

[...] what is poetic and alive today is the struggle against capitalism and imperialism. That was the reason for the importance of public genres, of theatre, advertisements, popular music, cinema and journalism, which transformed this climate into something like a demonstration or a party, while literature proper left the center of the stage.

Roberto Schwarz, 1970<sup>65</sup>

I believe that what you are proposing here is something that we can't account for in today's terms. It is a proposal for the future.

Participant, *Domingos da Criação*, 1971<sup>66</sup>

New museum architecture [...] can not do without large spaces in which every sense can be mobilized, as well as the basic elements - earth, water, fire, air - can be revived and relearned in a new sensory primer. It's only in this way that the museum can re-educate the sensitivity of man, redirect it towards their creativity and spontaneity, lost because of a castrating and repressive education and the constraints of modern life - that massify and alienate man.

Frederico Morais, 1971<sup>67</sup>

Organized by Morais, the six happenings that comprised the series *Domingos da Criação* involved now well-known Brazilian artists such as Antonio Manuel and Carlos Vergara as well as many others working in various creative modalities at the time such as theatre director Amir Haddad and the dancers/choreographers Klauss and Angel Vianna.<sup>68</sup> Morais saw *Domingos* as an

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<sup>64</sup> “The Museum and the Re-education of Man” was the title of one of Morais’ columns after the 3<sup>rd</sup> event in the series *Domingo de tecido* (Material Sunday). Frederico Morais, “O museu é a reeducação do homem,” *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971.

<sup>65</sup> Roberto Schwarz. “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969,” 146.

<sup>66</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Creio mesmo que o que vocês estão propondo é algo que não se pode contar em termos de hoje. É uma proposta para o futuro”]. Morais regularly interviewed and recorded participants and in some of his columns included short quotations. Here he cites a teacher from Niterói (city just outside Rio de Janeiro). Frederico Morais. “O Repórter da Criação.” *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>67</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “A nova arquitetura museológica, portanto, não pode prescindir de espaços amplos, nos quais todos os sentidos possam ser mobilizados, da mesma forma como os elementos básicos – a terra, a água, o fogo, o ar – possam ser revividos e reaprendidos em uma nova cartilha sensorial. Só assim o museu poderá reeducar a sensibilidade do homem, reorientá-lo no sentido de sua criatividade e espontaneidade, perdidas devido a uma educação castradora e repressiva e aos condicionamentos da vida moderna – que massifica e aliena o homem.”] Frederico Morais, “O museu é a reeducação do homem,” *Diário de Notícias*.

<sup>68</sup> Artists mentioned in Morais’s columns, news reports and interviews: 1) Domingo de papel (Morais column January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1971): Carlos Vergara, Paulo Roberto Leal, Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, Lygia Pape, Franz Weissmann, Eduardo Ângelo. Professors: Ivan Serpa, Valter Marques, João Carlos Goldberg, Joaquim Marianno Bellez; Obs: in a recent interview with the author (May 2015) Morais notes that Pape and Serpa did not participate. Pape however is mentioned in various news articles and was involved in a course at the museum at the time. Serpa’s name may have automatically appeared as one of the museum’s professors. 2) O domingo por um fio (Morais column March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1971): Pedro Correia de Araujo, Umberto Costa Barros, Ascanio MMM, Carlos Vergara, Paulo Roberto Leal, Sérgio Campos Mello, João Carlos Goldberg, Joaquim Mariano Bellez, Cildo Meireles, Guilherme Vaz, Artur Barrio, Eduardo Ângelo, Sônia Von Brusky, Marília Kranz; 3) O tecido do domingo: Amir Haddad and his theater group A Comunidade and an

opportunity to level a Marxist critique of the Bourgeois notion of Sunday entertainment and to reconfigure leisure and non-activity, drawing on Oiticica's ideas, as an open-ended experience of "crelazer" (creleisure: crer = believe and lazer = leisure).<sup>69</sup> Vitrally each Sunday's themes emphasized the simplicity of materials, the tactile, and the corporal. The idea was to demonstrate that any material could be used to make art, but also to position an anthropophagic subversion. Using so-called waste as creative material both critiqued industrialization and countered the unstable image of a developing nation in an actual promotion of the precarious.<sup>70</sup> Arthur Barrio's 1969 Manifesto had pointedly shown how choice of material could be politically informed:

[...] expensive materials are being imposed by an aesthetic thought of an elite that thinks from the top to the bottom, I cast in confrontation momentary situations with the use of perishable materials, in a concept from the bottom to the top.<sup>71</sup>

The focus of the events was on art as an activity not as an object. In terms of art-education what mattered most, Morais noted, was the process.<sup>72</sup> As art critic for *Diário de Notícias*, Morais actively promoted the Sundays through his column, educating readers on emerging art forms, relationships between artists and the public, and new ways of understanding museums as well as promoting MAM's courses. Within the first quarter of the year alone, he published a stunning 9 columns and 1 feature article directly discussing *Domingos* in *Diário de Notícias*, not to mention pieces he wrote for *Jornal do Brasil* and the numerous articles in other newspapers and magazines that cite Morais in their reports. His dual role as critic and organizer, almost unimaginable given today's hyper mediated press relationships, cannot be underestimated in shaping the media discourse on and perceptions of *Domingos* and MAM at that time period:

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exhibition of posters by Sami Mattar (Renata Wilner, masters thesis, 8-9). 4) Domingo terra-a-terra: Osmar Dillon and Paulo Fogaça and the critic Roberto Puntual and poet Flávio Nascimento (Exhibition wall text *Domingos da Criação*, MAM-RJ, October 2010 [http://encontros.art.br/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/DSC\\_0258.jpg](http://encontros.art.br/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/DSC_0258.jpg)); 5) O som de domingo: Nana Vasconcelos (Interview with Renata Wilner, 70), Maurício Salgueiro and Jaceguaf Lins (Exhibition wall text *Domingos da Criação*, MAM-RJ) Corpo o corpo de domingo: various groups of theatre, dance, corporal expression, contortionists, practitioners of Ai-Kido and yoga, professors and students from Escola Nacional de Educação Física (National Physical Education School), Grupo Rio Antigo of capoeira, Amir Haddad and A Comunidade; Vera Azevedo with Modern Jazz Dance, Klauss and Angel Vianna, Maria Pompeu, Cecília Conde, Eduardo Ângelo, Judith Zoningein, Ivan Albuquerque (Exhibition wall text and "Leve seu corpo ao domingo da criação," *Última Hora*, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1971).

<sup>69</sup> Hélio Oiticica, "Crelazer" (Creleisure) in *Hélio Oiticica*, 132-133 and 136-138, 119.

<sup>70</sup> "Todo e qualquer material, mesmos os mais prosaicos e pobres, inclusive a sucata e/ou lixo, pode servir à realização de trabalhos artísticos – e o uso de materiais precários ou de sobras ganha sentido sobretudo em países subdesenvolvidos ou em desenvolvimento, como o nosso." (Author translation: All and any type of material, prosaic or poor including waste and garbage can serve for making artwork – and the use of precarious materials or leftovers takes on a special meaning in underdeveloped or developing countries like ours.) Frederico Morais, "Um domingo de papel," *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1971.

<sup>71</sup> Artur Barrio. "Manifesto," 1969. In: *Artur Barrio: Barrio – Beuys....* (Gent: Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, 2005) no page numbers.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 65.

[...] the museum of today cannot limit itself to the conservation of original artworks, seen by a restricted public, but should, in parallel, create spaces (and a new museological architecture) for the development of open proposals, of collective participation. And more: the museum, simultaneously in its marketing of the art-thing, of consecrated works, should concern itself in bringing the larger public to the very creative act, seeding conditions that everyone can freely exercise their creativity.<sup>73</sup>

The Sundays also dovetailed with Rio's summer and outdoor spirit. Reidy's architectural design had positioned the outside as vital to the art experience. Here the museum's gardens became town squares and giant canvases for art activities. There were six Sundays. Opening from 9 am to 7pm (closing earlier in the Winter) each was based on a particular material that determined the nature of the activities (paper, thread/wire, material, earth, sound and body) and engaged contemporary artists (those already giving courses at MAM as well as other collaborators and groups).

#### **2.4.1 Domingo de papel (January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971)**

*Domingo de papel* (Paper Sunday) featured hundreds of children and adults swimming in reams of paper. Over 250 kilos of old shredded magazines and newspapers donated by local media outlets and industries filled the decorative lake fountain of the School Block and without needed encouragement participants dove in.<sup>74</sup> Morais enthusiastically describes the organic spilling over of paper shreds which started to contagiously emerge everywhere around the landscaped trees and rocks of the museum's gardens.<sup>75</sup> Using a 150 kilo paper bobbin Carlos Vergara engaged a group in a collaborative exercise of enwrapping and unwrapping. Filmed by the artist in Super 8mm the collective human paper maze wrapping around trees, bushes and people, everyone running in different directions searching for a way out, is a frenetic and delightful theatre of participation. Taking up the idea of Oiticica's "ninhos" or nests, made of found materials such as wood, straw, shredded paper, as temporary homes to climb into and rest in, Antonio Manuel, with the collaboration of students at MAM, made large improvised "ninhos" and tunnels using cardboard and recycled packaging.<sup>76</sup> This in turn inspired other collective structures. Following the success

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<sup>73</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: "O museu de hoje não pode limitar-ser mais à guarda e conserva de obras originais, vistas por um público restrito, mas paralelamente, deve criar espaços (é a nova arquitetura museológica) para o desenvolvimento de propostas abertas, de participação coletiva. E mais: o museu, simultaneamente à divulgação da arte-coisa, das obras consagradas, deve preocupar-se em trazer ao grande público o próprio ato criador, semeando condições para que todos possam exercitar livremente a sua criatividade."] Frederico Morais cited in "O domingo tecido a fio," Segundo Caderno, *Diário de Notícias*, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>74</sup> Industries mentioned by Morais and thanked in his column: Klabin, Mecano-Pack, Bloch Editores, *O Globo*, Casa Sendas, ContiGráfica and *Diário de Notícias*. Frederico Morais, "Papel: Ninho e Teatro," *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>75</sup> Frederico Morais, "Papel e Criatividade," *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>76</sup> Morais "Papel: Ninho e Teatro." *Diário de Notícias*.

of the event Vergara and Paulo Roberto Leal offered a course at MAM entitled “Paper and Creativity.” Manuel at the time was involved in the course Atividade/Criatividade with Anna Bella Geiger and Lygia Pape.<sup>77</sup> Morais stressed this experimental synergy between MAM’s courses and *Domingos* in various interviews at the time.<sup>78</sup>

#### 2.4.2 O domingo por um fio (March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1971)

The next Sunday *O domingo por um fio* (Sunday by a thread) featured participative installations and sculptures using tens of thousands of meters of wire and thread donated by industries in Rio and even São Paulo, weighing over 1 ton.<sup>79</sup> Similar to the previous Sunday, artists explored structuring creative situations, this time using everything from steel cables to copper wire and paper tape to plastic cords, aimed at engaging public participation. In his review, Morais evaluates the varying practices and responses such as Paulo Fogaça webs of thread around the museum gardens, the beautiful yet less participatory sculpture of Ascanio MMM made with copper wire and linen thread, and Eduardo Ângelo’s hanging cords that promoted total involvement. Vergara once again filmed the event. Morais himself contributed an installation featuring a 750 kilo reel of steel wire positioned in the School Block patio with a taut wire extending to the side of the building. He also placed nylon threads of different colors around the gardens for people to find and use, creating rich contrasts such as lilac thread against green grass or yellow against the ochre of the stones that Morais called a “type of tactile poetry.”<sup>80</sup> At 6pm in the Cinemateque a slide show and films of the previous Sunday by Vergara and José Carlos Avellar (at the time coordinating MAM’s film program and teaching courses) were presented. Showing documentation from the previous *Domingos* at each subsequent event would become a regular feature of the series. Morais notes that 2000 people participated throughout the day.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Antonio Manuel and Lygia Pape are listed as Geiger’s collaborators for this course in *Anna Bella Geiger: Constelações*. However, news articles referring to the course do not list Manuel but Cildo Meirelles. It seems that Meirelles was to participate and was listed as a collaborating artist on the museum’s release but was ultimately substituted by Manuel. Consultation with Research and Documentation Center MAM-RJ, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

<sup>78</sup> “MAM,” *Jornal de Tarde/O Estado de São Paulo*, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1971.

<sup>79</sup> Industries listed by Morais: FICAP (fios e cabos plásticos, condutores de eletricidade), Belatex e Passanamarina (elásticos), Monoplás (fios de nylon), Vulcan (fios plásticos), Cyclop (fios de aço para embalagem), Quinal (fios de lá e seda), Criações Deeli (sobras de tecidos) e o Lloyd Brasileiro (cordas e cabos). Frederico Morais, “O domingo por um fio,” *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>80</sup> Morais, “O domingo por um fio.”

<sup>81</sup> Frederico Morais, “Fio: Fiador da criação,” *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1971. There are no official documents to confirm or disprove these numbers.

### 2.4.3 O tecido de domingo (March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1971)

*O tecido de domingo* (Material Sunday) marks the moment when the series begins to be called *Domingos da Criação*. Prior to that internal documents and Morais own columns refer to “Arte no Domingo” (Art on Sunday). Letters to industries signed by MAM’s executive director Maurico Roberto note the term “aulas manifestações” (lesson demonstrations) and Morais’s columns refer to “manifestação de livre criação” (demonstration of free creation).<sup>82</sup> The use of the term “manifestação” meaning protest and demonstration in such an open manner (writing to industries or widely using it in the media) during the dictatorship that had banned political gatherings as part of the AI-5 constitutional restrictions could be seen as deliberate risk taking and/or that MAM enjoyed (or imagined) creative immunity. Yet, previous incidents such as the military closing down the Pre-Paris Biennial exhibition scheduled to open at MAM in May 1969 where troops had literally entered the galleries, contradicts such a reading. In fact, Roberto was later to reflect that after this moment “the museum started having a subversive connotation and from then on a military patrol was always parked in front of it.”<sup>83</sup> How then, in plain daylight, as it were, was it possible to present art “manifestações” so openly? Indeed, while Morais mentions a few incidents, there is nothing that suggests that the *Domingos* at any moment were threatened in terms of censorship or closure.<sup>84</sup> It may be, as Schwarz suggested of Augusto Boal’s theatre at the time, that it is in “hide and seek” open playfulness where the political can reside.<sup>85</sup> In this way, educational activities may have created the veneer of safety that, at the time, both wittingly and unwittingly created the ground for playful subversion and collective expression. In this sense *O tecido de Domingo* would perhaps be the most ritualistically communal of the series.<sup>86</sup>

In the previous *Domingos* Morais had noted that the most open-ended creative structures were the ones that engaged public participation. Individually inscribed artistic proposals seemed less important than simply providing material, a few participatory catalysts, and seeing what would happen. So while once again reams of different types of material would be donated

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<sup>82</sup> Documentation file on *Domingos da Criação*. Research and Documentation Center, MAM RJ. See also Morais columns for *Diário de Notícias* for the first two *Domingos*.

<sup>83</sup> Statement by Maurico Roberto to the staff of Arte Banerj Gallery (Rio de Janeiro 14 May 1986) in Frederico Morais ed, *Depoimento de uma geração 1969 – 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Arte Banerj Gallery, 1986) cited in Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art Under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio and Cildo Meireles* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) 24.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 67

<sup>85</sup> Roberto Schwarz, “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969,” 149.

<sup>86</sup> “Se no domingo do papel houve um comportamento mais coletivo, se no domingo do fio as propostas foram mais individualizadas o domingo do tecido devido a musica e a participation do grupo teatral ‘A Comunidade’ transformou-se em um espetáculo ritualístico e corografico de grande beleza visual.” (“If in domingo do papel there was more of a collective behaviour, and in domingo do fio the proposals were more individual, the domingo do tecido owing to the music and participation of the theater group A Comunidade transformed into a ritualistic and choreographed spectacle of great visual beauty.”) Frederico Morais, “A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra,” Segundo Caderno, *Diário de Notícias*, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1971.



everything from flaps and silk burrs, jersey, mesh, denim, wool, canvas and burlap sacks and even Singer providing sewing machines, the presence of noted visual artists as primary proposer/facilitators was no longer necessary. Morais argued that while it is rich and vital to engage artists to freely make and do things in front of the public, what is more revolutionary, and here he draws on the work of French activist/theater director Jean Jacques Lebel and his Living Theatre, is when culture is dynamically and collectively created by human energy immersed in free creation, noting that “activities have meaning when not privileging a person or class.”<sup>87</sup> In this way for *O tecido de domingo* performative, communal and corporal expression would assume a greater role. Morais would increasingly see the most interesting possibilities of the “tessitura do Domingo” (texture of Sunday) as plastic and theatrical.<sup>88</sup> A key collaborator here was theatre director Amir Haddad, who with his group, A comunidade (The community), had been performing and rehearsing at MAM since the late 1960s. Haddad’s ideas about street theater, collectivity and public art reflected Morais own. Mixing ritualistically choreographed movements and music, from Jimmi Hendrix to the Argentine folk mass Misa Criola, and recalling Oiticica’s *Parangolés* and Lygia Pape’s *Divisor*, (a large white sheet with slits engaging a collective body of more than 100 people) performed at MAM in 1968, Haddad’s group dynamically orchestrated collective and spontaneous corporal performances around MAM’s patios and gardens.<sup>89</sup>

#### **2.4.4 Domingo terra a terra (April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1971)**

Despite the festive atmosphere of the Sundays, Morais noted that some critiqued what they saw as a waste of wire, thread and materials (especially MAM cleaning and security staff). *Domingo terra a terra* (Earth to Earth Sunday) and its foregrounding of the more basic materials of sand, earth, and clay would assuage such concerns – if not the problems of clean up. One reporter arriving at MAM describes finding the words “Art-Freedom” written in sand on the main patio.<sup>90</sup> Another points to an instructional poster stuck to the wall by the restaurant:

Manifest(a)ction  
Extinct Action  
Work of art = thought  
Thought = action  
Work of art = clarification and initiate action<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Morais. “A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra.”

<sup>88</sup> Typed document appears to be a museum release draft in *Domingos da Criação* file Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>89</sup> “Som de Hendrix faz domingo do Museu virar happening.” *O Globo*, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>90</sup> “Domingo Terra a Terra leva muita gente ao MAM.” *O Globo*, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>91</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original:

While the various creative sculptures and installations seem to have been more discrete and distributed than the communal collectivity of the previous Sunday, the spirit of creative anonymity was maintained. On the day, Morais published feature articles both in *Diário de Notícias* and *Jornal do Brasil* Sunday supplements exploring artistic antecedents from arte povera to earthworks as well as critical questions of art/life synergies. The articles also note Brazilian artistic influences, highlighting, for example, Oiticica's penetrable installation *Tropicália*, 1967 featuring favela-inspired makeshift structures of wood and found materials such as sand, charcoal, and sea shells and Nelson Leirner's participatory piece entitled *Playground* which had brought play and sand to MAM's patios in 1969.<sup>92</sup> While later Morais notes the participation of the artists and critics Osmar Dillon, Roberto Pontual and Paulo Fogaça among others, in these articles he does not highlight the participation of any specific artist.<sup>93</sup> Instead the series is presented as an expanded form of pedagogy:

The series *Domingos da Criação* is not a new "ism", school or movement. Being a proposal of the department of courses at MAM it has a didactic and pedagogic character, educational in an expanded sense. The demonstrations aim to liberate in each participant their own creativity, to develop the imagination from the starting point of artworking, of activity.<sup>94</sup>

Other reports note the participation of the poet Flávio Nascimento whose poem *Apologia do Buraco* (Apology of the Hole) written in sand was a pun on buraco (hole) and burocracia (bureaucracy) transformed into a philosophy of creating and taking advantage of holes – a veritable "buracologia."<sup>95</sup> Still others note the inclement weather but that eventhough the rain turned everything into mud it did not deter the creative spirit.<sup>96</sup>

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Manifest(a)ção  
Ação extinta  
Obra de arte = pensamento  
Pensamento = ação  
Obra de arte = esclarecimento e iniciar à ação]

"Um domingo terra-a-terra," *Correio da Manhã*, April 27<sup>th</sup> 1971.

<sup>92</sup> Morais, "A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra" and "A terra da criação," Caderno B, *Jornal do Brasil*, April 25/26<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>93</sup> Exhibition wall text, *Domingos da Criação*, October 2010.

<sup>94</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: "A serie "Domingos da Criação" não constitui um novo ismo, escola ou movimento. Sendo uma proposta da coordenação de cursos do MAM tem um caráter mais didático e pedagógico, educativo no sentido mais amplo. As manifestações visam liberar em cada um sua própria criatividade, desenvolver a imaginação a partir do obrar, da atividade"] N.T. Morais uses "obrar" instead of the word "obra" the Portuguese noun meaning "artwork" or "trabalhar" the verb meaning "to work." He uses "obrar" to emphasize the processual element. Translated here as "artworking"] Morais, "A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra."

<sup>95</sup> "Domingo terra a terra" and "Domingo Terra a Terra leva muita gente ao MAM."

<sup>96</sup> Renata Wilner, 10.

#### 2.4.5 O som de domingo (May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971)

For *O som do domingo* (The Sound of Sunday) instead of providing material – paper, wire or cloth – as in the previous events, the public was asked via the media to bring percussion, string instruments, tamborines, rattles, whistles or some object that can make a sound such as beer cans, gasoline drums, bottles, matchboxes or tin sheets. Morais notes the participation of the artist Mauricio Salgueiro whose sculpture comprising a large steel blade attached to a motor was installed on the external patio. By working the motor the sculpture made an ululating sound that like a synthesizer was produced with the help of the echo that formed in the hollow space of the patio while music composer Jaceguai Lins improvised instrumental or corporal sound with the public in the stone garden.<sup>97</sup> However, the emphasis was more on anonymous spontaneous participation. One matter-of-fact article announcing the day's events captured the critical participatory shift present in this and the final *Domingo* where, in contrast to the previous four events, where material was provided, now the museum would only offer the locale, space and time for the public to exercise their creativity.<sup>98</sup> In responding to this free-form environment activities seem to have become even more distributed with groups clustering in pockets throughout the patios and gardens. One account points to emerging tensions between groups striving for musical rhythm and those more tribally inclined to unleashing primitive sound (or what they thought was such). The cacophony both festive and therapeutic was even described by one participant as “releasing tensions or a sedative for neuroses.”<sup>99</sup> In a recent conversation Morais reflected on this reactive and often guttural dimension of the individual and collective use of sound during this *Domingo* as form of political angst and critical voicing due to the restraint of the time.<sup>100</sup> Amidst these tensions and sonic preferences, this Sunday appears to have been the best attended. One journalistic account suggests an attendance of more than 6,000 and Morais in various interviews reports an attendance of approximately 10,000 visitors throughout the course of the day.<sup>101</sup> This number, however, even imagining an overflowing Cinemateca and museum gardens does seem rather inflated but Morais is definitely consistent in reporting this figure.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Exhibition wall text, *Domingos da Criação*, 2010.

<sup>98</sup> “O domingo de som no MAM vai lá, bicho,” *Correio da Manhã*, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>99</sup> “MAM fez “domingo de som” com latas, apito e tamancos,” *O Globo*, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1971.

<sup>100</sup> Conversation with the author, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>101</sup> This news article suggests that the attendance registered by MAM's turnstiles “with a frequency of approximately 10,000 and never less than 6,000” counters the conservative voices that don't appreciate the potential consequences of these ludic events. Paulo Fernando Figueiredo, “Quando se brinca om a arte,” *Escolar JS*, Domingo, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 76. In the interview Morais notes the last Sunday, *O som de domingo* as having almost 10,000 throughout the day. Given that the last Sunday was *Corpo o corpo domingo* and not *O som de domingo* it is unclear which Sunday Morais meant. However, in recent conversation with the author (May 11<sup>th</sup> 2015 and March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016) Morais reasserts this number referring specifically to *O som de domingo*. In his interviews he notes that he measured this via the turnstiles for the Cinemateca that throughout the day presented slide shows of the previous

#### 2.4.6 Domingo corpo o corpo (August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1971)

*Domingo corpo o corpo* (Body to Body Sunday) embraced corporal expression, dance, body awareness, and physical training. Diverse groups were invited as facilitators to work with the public: boxers, professors and students from the National School of Physical Education, capoeira, and ai-kido groups as well as modern jazz dance and sensitivity training with dancers Klaus and Angel Vianna. Avellar's film that day captures an evanescent theatrical trust game where people jump from a height and are bounced along a human chain.<sup>103</sup> Morais also describes spontaneous soapbox speeches popping up throughout the day.<sup>104</sup> Another report notes an eclectic mix of improvisation, mimicry, modern ballet, yoga, capoeira, kids playing, and a rather game Argentine tourist who embraced the crown of being the “kitsch” guy of the day and launched into singing and dancing tangos and boleros.<sup>105</sup>

Throughout the series, images from *Domingos* regularly appeared on newspaper frontpages and in feature articles and reports. Most of the major newspapers' photojournalists took photos of the events as well as many enthusiastic amateur photographers. So in keeping with Morais's practice of presenting documentation from the previous events on each subsequent *Domingo* an exhibition was planned for *Corpo o corpo domingo*. All the main photojournalists participated. A selection of amateur photographs was also included following submissions call.

#### 2.4.7 The Series Ends

While Morais had plans for at least two more *Domingos*, following a change in MAM's directorship, *Corpo o corpo domingo* would turn out to be the last. Two future events in the series were to take place in September and October respectively: *É de lei: Domingo de madeira* (It's the Law: Sunday of Wood) and *Texto e contexto do domingo* (Text and Context of Sunday). *Domingo de caixa de fosforus* (Matchbox Sunday) – a truly odd event particularly read retrospectively post the museum's disastrous fire in 1978 – occurred in December 1971 which, eventhough involved, Morais does not include in the *Domingos* series as he saw it as someone

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Sundays. There are no official records to confirm or disprove these numbers. Wilner herself notes a news article in *Ultima Hora* that suggests the last *Domingo* had less than 2000 (Renata Wilner, 12). Using Morais account of the Cinemateca turnstiles and given that the auditorium seats a maximum of 188 meaning that completely filling the space on the half hour from 10 am to 7 pm would only yield 3,600 the high number does seem unlikely, even accounting for Morais saying people were sitting on the floor in the auditorium for the Curso Popular de Arte noting that 300 attended (Interview with the author, May 2015) which may indeed have happened during the *Domingos*.

<sup>103</sup> José Carlos Avellar and Fernando Silva, *Domingos da Criação*, various unedited shots digitized and compiled. MAM 01091. Cinemateca Documentation and Research Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 70.

<sup>105</sup> “Domingo da Criação chegou ao “Corpo a Corpo” no MAM,” August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

else's idea which he did not support.<sup>106</sup> Morais asserts that the plans, particularly for *Texto e contexto do domingo* were to engage a much more overt political dimension within the series as the "idea was to produce posters and banners."<sup>107</sup>

However, in September of 1971 Pedro Pereira Filho with Heloisa Lustosa as adjunct (who shortly took over due to the latter stepping down for health reasons) took the helm and it appears the climate was not as favorable to continuing such experimentation.<sup>108</sup> Over the course of 1971 the *Domingos* were attacked by various critics. Judging by the praise of one of these critics for Lustosa's directorship noting her "sincere intention" to free the museum from "the sad destiny of being a stage for personal promotion," it seems she may have held a similar perspective.<sup>109</sup> However, eventhough the broad public participatory style of *Domingos* was no longer in play, innovations continued in the museum's courses and in other areas with, for example, the *Sala Corpo Som* (Body Sound Gallery) 1972 - 1978 featuring laboratories of sonic research, experimental concerts and performances as well as more popular musical and theatrical ones or the *Área Experimental* (Experimental Area) presenting experimental projects by diverse artists on the museum's 3rd floor galleries active from 1975 - 78.<sup>110</sup> Resulting in a rich array of exhibitions, the predetermined space for experimentation was nevertheless criticized by the artists involved at the time, coupled with, what can be read as a broader institutional critique, whether the museum's attitude was one of "support for experimentation or a tentative to recuperate and neutralize contemporary activity."<sup>111</sup> However, the work and projects of the *Área Experimental* are both touted and remembered as an experimentally vital artistic period.

Morais continued as director of courses until 1973 when it appears differences with Lustosa were no longer tenable. Anna Bella Geiger notes that she and Morais where involved in a cultural commission established post Lustosa's arrival.<sup>112</sup> She suggests that the experimental

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<sup>106</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 70.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Report, 1972, Administration files, Research and Documentation Center MAM-RJ.

<sup>109</sup> Walmir Ayala, "O leme em boa mãos," Artes Plásticas, *Jornal do Brasil*, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1972, where he notes: "In the person of Heloisa Lustosa we welcome this director who has already made clear her abilities and the sincere intention of freeing the museum from the sad destiny of being a stage for personal promotion" [Author translation, Portuguese original: "Na pessoa de Heloisa Lustosa saudamos esta diretoria que já deixa evidenciada sua capacidade e sincera intenção de livrar o Museu de seu triste destino de palco de promoções pessoais."]

<sup>110</sup> File on *Sala Corpo Som*, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ. For information on *Área Experimental* see Fernanda Lopes, *Área Experimental: Lugar, Espaço e Dimensão do Experimental na Arte Brasileira dos anos 1970s*.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Lygia Pape organized by Marcio Doctors cited in João Ricardo Moderno, "Museu de arte moderna em debate," *Tribuna da Imprensa*, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1980 and Paulo Herkenhoff, "Sala Experimental," *malasartes*, no 3, (April/May/June, 1976): 26-27.

<sup>112</sup> Report 1972 Administration files, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ. The document lists the new directorships desire to affect a cultural policy that integrated all sectors. A committee was created with the coordinators of each program sector of the museum. Carl Heimz Bergmiller (Instituto de Desenho Industrial/Exposições); Cosme Alvos Neto (Cinematoteca); José Carlos Avellar (Curso de Cinema); Sidney Miller (Corpo/Som); Frederico Morais (Unidade Experimental); Anna Bella Geiger (Integração Cultural); Lygia Dantas Leite (Biblioteca); Isaura Carvalho (Acervo); Aluisio Carvão (Artes Plásticas); Lael Barbosa Soares (Divulgação).

nature of the courses and their involvement in the commission fostered desires to influence the museum's exhibitions and programs that was ultimately deemed as interference.<sup>113</sup> Morais has also suggested that the research he conducted on MAM's visitation under the auspices of the Unidade Experimental together with the museum's monitors in 1972-73 interviewing users/visitors from the business men who just came for lunch to the late night drug underworlds revealed other forms of engaging with the museum and a marginality that alarmed authorities.<sup>114</sup>

#### 2.4.8 Domingos and “The Experimental Exercise of Freedom”

In a spirit of anti-establishment and radical politics, dematerialized and collective art practices emerged worldwide in the 1960s and 70s. As critic Lucy Lippard notes in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object 1966 - 1972*, “the art object was denied and converted into a concept or transformed into energy or time-motion.”<sup>115</sup> At the time education was similarly being radicalized with, for example, philosopher and educator Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society*, published in 1971, an early harbinger of social media, critiquing the ineffectual nature of institutionalized education, advocating self-directed social learning supported by informal learning groups and “webs” of peers.<sup>116</sup> Landmark exhibitions such as Harald Szeeman's 1969 *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at Kunsthalle Bern in Switzerland would also emphasize more processual and expanded art making practices that would later be categorized as key late 20<sup>th</sup> century movements such as: conceptualism, arte povera, land art, and installation art.

In Latin America, as psychoanalyst and critic Suely Rolnik notes, dictatorships insidiously operated through internalized oppressions. It is on the “micro” level of the body where the political is felt and in turn where the potential of resistance inscribes itself.<sup>117</sup> In this oppressive context the very act of creating became primary and necessary. Art was no longer an object, but an attitude, a political practice that Pedrosa famously described as “the experimental exercise of freedom.”<sup>118</sup> The artist Antonio Manuel's *Corpo Obra* (Body Work(s)) performed at

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<sup>113</sup> Interview with Anna Bella Geiger, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 77-78.

<sup>115</sup> “The visual arts at the moment seem to hover at a crossroad that may well turn out to be two roads to one place, though they appear to have come from two sources: art as idea and art as action. In the first case, matter is denied, as sensation has been converted into concept; in the second case, matter has been transformed into energy and time-motion.” Lippard, Lucy, *Six Years: The dematerializing of the art object 1966 – 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) 43.

<sup>116</sup> Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), available online:

[http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970\\_deschooling.html](http://ournature.org/~novembre/illich/1970_deschooling.html)

<sup>117</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Desentranhando futuros,” in *Conceptualismos Del Sur/Sul* eds. Cristina Freire & Ana Longoni (São Paulo: Annablume editora, 2009) 155-163, 157.

<sup>118</sup> Mário Pedrosa's famous expression seems to have various origins. In *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents*, Glória Ferreira points to Pedrosa's attention to capitalism's influence on art when he analyzes the artist's dilemma as producing works amidst the productive/unproductive binary of labor that can only be resolved by being an independent

the opening of the XIX National Salon in 1970 at MAM, transforming his own body into a political and artistic tool by stripping naked and standing on the third floor balcony, is the epitomy of Pedrosa's expression and the countering corporal desire the dictatorship unleashed.

Experimental, dematerialized, attitudinal, freeform, hippie haven, stage, and playground – *Domingos* may not have made overt political gestures but it seemed to have operated as a vital “exercise” of “creleisure” at a key moment offering different models of artmaking, of museums, of collectivity, of education, and of just hanging out in public space. One year prior to the first *Domingo* Morais, assessing the Brazilian vanguard of the time, noted that “the body is the engine of the work.” He later edited this piece in what could be seen as a manifesto of that time period:

Situations, events, rituals or celebrations – art no longer clearly distinguishes itself from life and the everyday [...] the life that beats in your body – that's art. In your environment – that's art. Pyschophysical rhythms – that's art. Intra-uterine life – that's art. Suprasensoriality – that's is art. To imagine – that's art. The lung – that's art. The appropriation of objects and areas – that's art. The pure gesture appropriated from human situations or poetic experiences – that's art.<sup>119</sup>

The same article would inaugurate what would be called new criticism embracing a more creative and artistic form of writing and critical response of which, for Morais, the audio-visual would also prove a vital expression. *Domingos* might be read as a similar kind of creative hybrid.

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producer thus characterizing artistic behaviour as one of freedom (Glória Ferreira, “The Permanent Revolution of the Critic,” 14-23, 20). Kaira M Cabañas suggests that, in parallel with Ferreira Gullar's exiting of avant-garde circles to endorse realist aesthetics, Pedrosa first articulated the expression, one that importantly needs to be contextualized both within the rise of mass media and the increased repression of the military regime (Kaira M Cabañas, “A Strategic Universalist,” 23-35, 28). Both site the essay “The Silkworm in Mass Production,” orginially published “O bicho da seda na produção em massa,” *Correio da manhã*, August 14th, 1967 as the first usage. Pedrosa writes: “I do not believe it to be an exaggeration to declare that the decisive trait that characterizes the artistic behavior of now is freedom, or the sense of a new freedom. A long time ago, in attempting to analyze the phenomenon, I defined the art of our days as the experimental exercise of freedom. The later development recorded in artistic investigations since Abstractionism seems to me to have confirmed that conceptualization.” *Mário Pedrosa Primary Documents*, 147-150, 148. Here the critic's use of “a long time ago” suggests however a use of the expression at least several years prior to 1967. First usage requires further research. The saying is also famously connected with Manuel's *Corpo Obra*. “O que Antônio está fazendo é o exercício experimental de liberdade. Ele não está querendo dominar os outros. Ele está dizendo: É assim é que é.” [What Antonio is doing is the experimental exercise of freedom. He doesn't want to dominate others. He is saying: That's how it is.” ] Text transcribed by Lygia Pape in May 1970 of a conversation with Mário Pedrosa, Antonio Manuel, Hugo Denizart and Alex Varela regarding Manuel's performance, in *Mário Pedrosa. Encontros* ed. César Oiticica Filho (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2014) 92.

<sup>119</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Situações, eventos, rituais ou celebrações – a arte não se distingue mais, nitidamente, da vida e do cotidiano [...] a vida que bate no seu corpo – eis a arte. O seu ambiente – eis a arte. Os ritmos psicofísicos - eis a arte. A vida intra-uterine – eis a arte. A suprasensorialidade – eis a arte. Imaginar – eis a arte. O pneuma – eis a arte. A apropriação de objetos e de áreas – eis a arte. O puro gesto apropriativo de situações humanas ou vivências poéticas – eis a arte.” Frederico Morais, “Do Corpo a Terra”, 2001, in *Frederico Morais*, ed. Silvana Seffrin (Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE) 115 -123, 118.

#### 2.4.9 Domingos da Criação - Public Art, Education, Activism?

As an artist I'm concerned with happenings because of their pointlessness. As an educator, I recognize the point.

Allan Kaprow<sup>120</sup>

We become hybrid when we work in spaces determined by decreed ordinances, theater you do here, cinema there, music over there [...] this is hybrid, it's mixed with architecture and ideology, it isn't freedom [...] when I am in open space I am not hybrid, I am free, I am everything, it wasn't me who divided things [...].

Amir Haddad<sup>121</sup>

An artwork should produce an effect similar to that of political action.

Juan Pablo Renzi<sup>122</sup>

Morais has suggested that *Domingos* was a “crowning” of the Tropicalist posture.<sup>123</sup> In a more recent interview, he described them as “quasi an education program.”<sup>124</sup> As Schwarz suggested Tropicalism got its “demythifying, leftist energy” from submitting “one system of private, prestigious notions to the language of another milieu and another time.”<sup>125</sup> Art energizes education and vice versa. Yet, while similar participatory practices reverberated in alternative education in Brazil and Latin America at the time, there is little evidence of any direct dialogue between *Domingos* and these emerging models. Moraes drew more from situationism, happenings and art povera as a means to challenge traditional notions of artmaking.<sup>126</sup> Pedrosa's notion of museums as “laboratories of cultural experiences,” the Neoconcrete and post neoconcrete exploration of the sensorial and the participatory, in particular the work and writings of Hélio Oiticica, and the radical theater of Amir Haddad were key Brazilian influences. He also mined an

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<sup>120</sup> Allan Kaprow. *Childsplay*, 145.

<sup>121</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “a gente vai ficando híbrido quando trabalha nos espaços determinados pelo as ordinações viéticas, teatro você faz aqui, cinema faz ali, musica você faz aqui, isso é híbrido é misturado com arquitetura e ideologia não é liberdade [...] quando estou no espaço aberto não estou híbrido, estou livre, sou tudo, não foi eu que dividi as coisas...”] Amir Haddad. Interview with the author, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>122</sup> Juan Pablo Renzi. “The Work of Art as Product of the Ethical Consciousness-Aesthetic Consciousness Relationship,” in *Listen Here Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant Garde*, ed. Inés Katzenstein (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004) 306-311, 311.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 66.

<sup>124</sup> Guilherme Coelho, *Um domingo com Frederico Moraes* (Rio de Janeiro: Matizar, 2011).

<sup>125</sup> Roberto Schwarz. “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964-1969,” 141.

<sup>126</sup> Márcio Sampaio, “Pai, me leva no museu, ah me leva pai, me leva.” Literary supplement to *Minais Gerais* newspaper, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1971 and Frederico Moraes, “A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra,” *Diário de Notícias*.



eclectic range of aesthetic, philosophical, art historical, and sociological references from John Dewey and Gaston Bachelard to Wilhelm Worringer and Alfred Willener.<sup>127</sup>

It was in this cross-disciplinary spirit that critic Mario Barata described *Domingos* as a “new interdisciplinary artistic pedagogy.”<sup>128</sup> However, although hugely popular and regularly appearing on the front pages of local newspapers, conservative art critics such as Walmir Ayala and Jacob Klinowitz convinced that Morais was holding MAM hostage for his own self-instituted vanguardism neither engaged with the critical, artistic, or pedagogic possibilities of the series.<sup>129</sup> Beyond Morais’ own columns and articles, critic Roberto Pontual’s “Quando a vida inventa arte” (When Life Invents Art) is one of the most insightful pieces written on *Domingos* at the time. Drawing analogies with popular festivals, particularly the neighborhood party celebrations during Brazil’s 1970 World cup win, as well as with creative impulses and inventiveness such as those present in ex-votos, Pontual contextualizes *Domingos* within these phenomena as well as artistic antecedents and current trends. He writes, after experiencing five of the Sundays, of the need to suspend critical judgement, that there were no good or bad works, there was simply activity:

[...] there was always a concentrated interest in the pure act of playing, inventing, creating, transfiguring materials and the daily landscape of reality, desinhibiting oneself, dialoguing, producing together, completing or undoing the work of others, discovering oneself as important amidst the general anonymity of so much activity.<sup>130</sup>

Subsequent critical interest, however, has tended to explore Morais’s involvement in other more definitively “artistic” happenings such as the already mentioned *Arte no Aterro*, 1968 or *Do corpo à terra* (From Body to Earth) 1970 in Belo Horizonte where, as Pontual pointed out, the

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<sup>127</sup> In an interview with the author in May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Morais noted Bachelard, Worringer and Francastel as key influences. In the 1971 feature article on *Domingos* “A criatividade liberada: domingo, terra-a-terra,” Morais also notes Dewey, Willener, and Lebel. Here is a brief sketch of his interests and particular references: John Dewey’s focus on the experimental as a vital life process; Gaston Bachelard’s poetics of space and his exploration of the core elements of fire, water, earth and air; German art historian Wilhelm Worringer whose early 20<sup>th</sup> century works *Abstraction and Empathy* and *Egyptian Art* drew connections between abstraction (and the impulse behind it) and social questions of anxiety and notions of will and capacity; French sociologist of art Pierre Francastel and his understanding of art as a system embedded in and productive of social relations; Swiss sociologist Alfred Willener’s *The Action-Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization* published in 1970 drawing on the events of May 68 and advocating action-research methodologies, social improvisation, and an understanding of imagina(c)tion as the potential of culture as an everyday lived creation even amidst failed political revolution; and as already mentioned Jean Jacques Lebel’s Living Theater.

<sup>128</sup> Mario Barata, “Carta do Rio de Janeiro,” *Revista Colóquio*, Portugal, no. 8 (Junho 1971) 55.

<sup>129</sup> Jacob Klintowitz, “O museu por um fio,” *Coluna Aberta, Tribuna da Imprensa*, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971 and Walmir Ayala, “O leme em boas mãos,” *Artes Plásticas, Jornal do Brasil*, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1972.

<sup>130</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “[...] ocorreu sempre uma concentração de interesse no puro gesto de brincar, inventar, criar, transfigurar os materiais e a realidade da paisagem diária, desinibir-se, dialogar, produzir em conjunto, completar ou desfazer o trabalho alheio, descobrir-se importante no anonimato geral de tanta atividade”]. Roberto Pontual, “Quando a vida inventa a arte,” *Caderno B, Jornal do Brasil*, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971.

involvement of “artists” and their “works” were more prominent.<sup>131</sup> Art needs artists. Yet it is nonetheless surprising, given the worldwide critical interest over the past few decades in participatory practices of Oiticica and Clark and the resurgence of interest in the time period, including a certain mythical reknown of the series, just how little has actually been published.<sup>132</sup>

One exception is the 2011 film documentary *Um domingo com Frederico* (A Sunday with Frederico) by Guilherme Coelho. The director’s description of seeing photographs of *Domingos* at a meeting at Morais’s home points to one of the core reasons little has emerged and, at the same time, touches on a particularly complex set of issues in Brazil regarding institutional and private archives: lack of resources and/or investment/interest in institutional memory, insufficient trust in institutional capacity, and concerns during the dictatorship of leaving records in public hands.<sup>133</sup> This gives a political dimension to any act of recuperating historical narratives. For Coelho, *Domingos* and MAM at the time represented what he calls “republican spaces,” a creative and political context merging the exchange of ideas, parades, biopolitics, and public theater that Rio de Janeiro seems to be both particularly drawn to and readily facilitate.<sup>134</sup> Here, it is impossible not to draw an analogy with the recent creative outpouring mixing protest, aesthetics and activism in the ebullient collective manifestations that swarmed Brazilian streets in 2013-2014. Paulo Herkenhoff, however, who participated in *Domingos*, questioned their political role, finding fault with the events’ lack of critique against the dictatorship.<sup>135</sup> For Carlos Vergara, who was fully involved and engaged in the first two *Domingos* and participated in others, he has pointed to the collectivity at the time of the dictatorship as in and of itself significant as well as the series example of a more open dynamic for museums. Yet from a critical standpoint he also

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Giselle Ruiz briefly discusses *Domingos* in her Phd dissertation on MAM in the 1970s published as *Arte/Cultura em transito: MAM/RJ na década de 70* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad Editora/Faperj, 2013). Dária Jaremtchuk also cites *Domingos* briefly in “Espaços de resistência: MAM do Rio de Janeiro, MAC/USP e Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo.” [http://www.iar.unicamp.br/dap/vanguarda/artigos\\_pdf/daria\\_jaremtchuk.pdf](http://www.iar.unicamp.br/dap/vanguarda/artigos_pdf/daria_jaremtchuk.pdf) Various articles on Morais as critic and curator or on his happenings cite or explore *Domingos* briefly. However there is little that examines the events in depth. While statements such as: “Até hoje sua fama ecoa entre novos artistas e interessados na arte brasileira em geral” (Even today its fame echos amongst new artists and those interested in Brazilian art in general) made at the launch of the 2010 series of encounters with contemporary artists revisiting the legacy of *Domingos* this is not necessarily reflected in critical interest or publications (<http://encontros.art.br/domingos-no-mam> - Portuguese only (Accessed October 2015). Staff at MAM’s Research and Documentation Center, however, note the interest in the *Domingos* archive which would suggest that we may expect publications in the near future.

<sup>133</sup> Research and Documentation Center files on *Domingos* include news articles and various internal documents – releases along with some of Morais’ transcribed interviews – as well as a selection of slides. In 2010 Morais donated a copy of his archive of news articles and reports relating to *Domingos*, a more comprehensive archive of material that what had been on file. Photos and other material remain in Morais’ private archive.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with the author, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>135</sup> Comment made by Paulo Herkenhoff at the panel *Vida e Ficção/Arte e Fricção* (Life and Fiction/Art and Friction), Anpap (Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Arte Plásticas), 21<sup>st</sup> National Meeting, September 25<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Universidade Estadual de Rio de Janeiro.

suggested there was also a lot of mere fooling around.<sup>136</sup> Amir Haddad counters that once a non-participatory stance is assumed everything may appear as just fooling around.<sup>137</sup> It is perhaps this mereness, in its non-judgmental openness that may best enable an embrace of free expression. This argument, however, struggles with both aesthetically and sociologically oriented perspectives. Is free play enough of an aesthetic criteria here? Pontual's description seems to suggest yes. Although a lack of a subsequent body of criticism might suggest no. Or is this rather a question of the critical apparatus, its tools and language, being illequipped to discuss such projects? From a sociological perspective anthropologist Néstor García Canclini has argued that experimental forms of art practice are not enough and that a socialized art practice needs to be "an instrument to stir conscience and revolutionary action." This is not something that is instantaneous. It is about developing new publics and new systems of distribution and education as much as forms.<sup>138</sup>

From the vantage point of forming new publics (assuming here a diversity of class, income, geography etc) news reports suggest that the majority of *Domingos* audiences were middle class and from the more affluent "south" of the city.<sup>139</sup> However, if not in socio-economic diversity, *Domingos* and their extensive media coverage may have contributed to a 150% increase in museum attendance from 1969 to 1972.<sup>140</sup> Yet due to inconsistencies of such reporting archived at MAM's Research and Documentation Center it is difficult to confidently confirm these numbers let alone attribute increases to *Domingos*. But their popularity, however, was undeniable, and must have certainly contributed to greater awareness of the institution. They also spawned various *Domingos*-style events, some of which Morais coordinated both during and post the series in other contexts including *Sábado da criação* (Saturday of Creation) at PUC Rio in 1971 and a similar event that closed the Encontro de Arte Moderna (Encounter of Modern Art) in Curitiba in 1972. Other *Domingo* spin-offs took place in various locales including child-focused events at MAM in the mid 1970s.<sup>141</sup> Even, a mass protest of artists, intellectuals, diverse groups

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<sup>136</sup> Comments regarding the political dimension of such collectivity are drawn from the film *Um domingo com Frederico*. Other comments are from an interview with the author, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>137</sup> Interview with the author, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>138</sup> Néstor García Canclini, "La participación social del arte: El porvenir de una ilusión," in *Hueso Húmero*, Lima (5/6): 60-74, abr/set, 1980, cited in Amaral Aracy Amaral, *Arte para quê? A preocupação social na arte brasileira 1930 -1970* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1984) 26

<sup>139</sup> Teresa Barros, "Com papel, do jeito que a gente quer," *Mulher, Jornal do Brasil*, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1971 and Morais interview with Renata Wilner, 77.

<sup>140</sup> Annual reports 1969 and 1972 list attendance respectively as 101,262 and 259,315. There are no reports for other years of the time period in the administrative files available at MAM's Research and Documentation Center.

<sup>141</sup> Morais wrote a column "Dois anos depois" (Two Years Afterwards) revisiting *Domingos* suggesting that after this time period he still asserts that *Domingos* was one of the most avant-garde expressions of the decade. He briefly describes the two events he ran in Curitiba and notes that Museu de Campina Grande in the state of Paraíba presented a series of *Domingos*-style events as well as an artist-led student group in Porto Alegre. He also describes international interest expressed verbally or in letters. Frederico Morais, "Dois anos depois," *Artes Plásticas, Diário de Notícias*,

and individuals including neighborhood associations, dancers and drummers from samba schools that was mobilized at MAM the first Sunday post the 1978 fire was given the epithet “Domingo de cinzas” (Sunday of ashes).<sup>142</sup>

But it is perhaps an initiative’s ability to multiply and be refracted not as a model but as a generative fragment that carries within it the potential of new systems of distribution. Haddad’s evolution of his public art/street theater is one. Another is the subsequent experimental project at MAM, the *Sala Corpo Som* that had its beginnings in a course taught by Morais’ collaborators Klaus Vianna, Sidney Miller and Paulo Afonso Grisolli where they embraced a similar spirit to *Domingos* multisensorial expression and foregrounded ideas of “de-education” to “demystif[y] the usual concept of artistic creativity.”<sup>143</sup> A more contemporary example is the series *Encontros com os Domingos da Criação* (Encounters with Domingos da Criação) co-organized by Coelho’s production company Matizar and contemporary art producers Automatica in 2010, featuring a small exhibition by Morais at MAM in the School Block and a series of three “Sunday” events with contemporary artists curated by Fred Coelho. The documentary was released a year later.<sup>144</sup>

Yet while Morais would claim two years post the events that *Domingos* were still one of the most “avant-garde” expressions in the past decade, they seem to sit uneasily amidst historical narratives, as if without a critical home.<sup>145</sup> Two divergent examples here are: Maria del Carmen Zilio’s introductory history for MAM’s 1999 collection catalogue where *Domingos* are described as “manifestações artísticas” (artistic demonstrations) with no mention of their interconnection with the department of courses or education and Martin Grossmann’s article “A importância de (outras) imagens no ensino da arte” (The Importance of (Other) Images in the Teaching of Art) where they are described as “educational activities.”<sup>146</sup> For Coelho they were definitively “public art.” Morais, reflecting recently on the film director’s political take on *Domingos*, while

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December 23rd, 1972; “PUC recebe até sexta-feira trabalhos para mostra de seu trigésimo aniversário,” *Jornal do Brasil*, April 10th, 1971; Adalace Araújo, “O Happening do Ano,” *Diário do Paraná*, Curitiba, January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1972; Renata Wilner also mentions other spin-offs particularly focused on children such as “Domingo da Fantasia” (Costume Sunday) at MAM, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1974 sponsored by the Fundação nacional do livro infantil e juvenil (National Foundation for Children and Adolescent Reading) organized by Regina Leite Garcia, Augusto Rodrigues and Regina Yolanda who repeated the experience in April 1975 in Paquetá (island in the Guanabara Bay region of Rio de Janeiro).

<sup>142</sup> Maria del Carmen Zílio, “O Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro,” 14.

<sup>143</sup> For example the course Body-sound-word proposed by Sidney Miller (coordinator of the Sala corpo/som), Klaus Vianna and theater collaborator in 1972 which they collectively described as “deseducação” (de-education) cited in Giselle Ruiz, *Arte/Cultura em Trânsito O MAM/RJ na Década de 1970* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X FAPERJ, 2013) 90.

<sup>144</sup> <http://encontros.art.br/domingos-no-mam>

<sup>145</sup> Frederico Morais, “Dois anos depois,” *Diário de Notícias*.

<sup>146</sup> Martin Grossman’s article responds to the well-known Brazilian art educator Ana Mae Barbosa’s publication *A imagem no ensino da arte: anos oitenta e novos tempos* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1991). Here she deploys the art education model developed by the Getty in the 1980s of DBAE (Discipline Based Art Education). Grossman critiques the application of foreign models in favor of more plural ones that draw on what he sees as Brazilian “difference” in relation to imported models. *Porto Arte*, Porto Alegre, v.3, n.5 (May 1992).

acknowledging their political dimension would still nevertheless insist on the events' origins in a spirit of expanded education.<sup>147</sup> Whatever the lens few contemporary art critics address them.

Why this lack of attention? Does the public success of *Domingos* render them critically suspect? In not assuming a particular position or pushing the limits of art and politics, even though they could be interpreted as surreptitiously doing so under the auspices of education activities, did *Domingos* lose an important political and artistic opportunity? Certainly other mass events at the time, similarly under the strain of a military dictatorship, were inflected by a significantly more visible political edge. For example *Tucumán Arde* (Tucumán is Burning), 1968, organized by artists and activists from both Rosario and Buenos Aires aiming to counter state publicity about Argentina's northern province of Tucumán and reveal the poverty that had been exacerbated by the government's closing of the sugar refineries. The project was part of the Ciclo de Arte Experimental (Experimental Art Series) that included various experiments at a storefront gallery in Rosario such as Graciela Carnevale organizing a show then locking the visitors inside and leaving or Eduardo Favario's action which consisted in closing down the gallery replete with directions for visitors to find the art elsewhere. With *Tucumán Arde* these artists strove to push the limit-situation of art and politics in order to "plot the development of a form of art which was totally new ethically, aesthetically, and ideologically."<sup>148</sup> The group organized two "exhibition-condemnations." Announced via a campaign of street graffiti, one exhibition opened at the union headquarters in Rosario with films, photographs, posters, and interviews countering official versions of life in Tucumán.<sup>149</sup> A manifesto called for a "total, transforming and social art."<sup>150</sup> In Buenos Aires the second exhibition barely opened for a day due to government warning and threats. The edge of such limit zones propelled those involved to make choices – some went underground and joined the guerrilla movement, some were "disappeared," at least one, Eduardo Favario, died in action after joining the Revolutionary Army of the People, others such as Roberto Jacoby or Leon Ferrari are still active but the Tucumán project effectively silenced much experimental and political art practice for years afterwards.<sup>151</sup>

Against this backdrop of risky artistic liminality and political stakes, *Domingos*, may seem frivolous. Their "quasiness," collective and carnivalesque nature may render them hard to categorize or champion either for experimental education or art. But, arguably, their richness lies

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<sup>147</sup> Interview with the author, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>148</sup> Introductory text to First National Meeting on Avant-Garde art in *Listen Here Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant Garde*, 305

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 306

<sup>150</sup> Maria Teresa Gramuglio and Nicolas Rosa, "Tucumán is Burning: Statement of the Exhibition in Rosário." *Ibid.*, 319 – 323, 319.

<sup>151</sup> Luis Camnitzer, "Art and Politics: The Aesthetics of Resistance," 1994, in *Luis Camnitzer. On Art, Artists, Latin America and Other Utopias*, ed. Rachel Weiss (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009) 65

in this quasi dimension – a sort of chameleon screen for critical projection. As critic Lars Bang Larsen has reflected in relation to *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society*, 1968, a project that turned the Moderna Museet’s main gallery into a playground for three weeks, returning to these happenings can offer new ways of thinking about institutional critique, art activism, and the tug of war of art/anti-art (and I would add art and education). *The Model* was a collective project by the artist Palle Nielsen, writer/editor Gunilla Lundahl and collaborators that aimed to use the museum as a staging ground for a radical pedagogical project to protest encroaching urbanism that denied public spaces, particularly for children and to spark debate about the artist’s role in society. Larsen describes the *Model* as “nothing short of a mass utopia of art activism, aimed at applying an anti-elitist concept of art for the creation of a collectivist human being.”<sup>152</sup>

While the *Model* “unleashed raw energy inside the museum,” *Domingos* channeled this energy to the edges of the “temple” where the “forum” pulsates with the liminality of the forest/school. For Morais, “Rio is all outside.”<sup>153</sup> *Domingos* took advantage of this and pushed at many limit zones. Yet their utopian instrumental collectivity was short lived. Haddad went to the street where he saw and still sees his work as interwoven with pedagogy – one of demonstration, the street and “de-education.”<sup>154</sup> Morais turned to focus on criticism and more traditional forms of curatorial work, although was briefly director of the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts in the 1980s.<sup>155</sup> MAM’s experimental spirit continued until the 1978 fire. Morais later argued that by then Brazilian art had already changed.<sup>156</sup> *Domingos* is a (now) mythic series of a particular time, unrepeatable. But, as Graciela Carnevale reflects in relation to the Tucumán archive, revisiting their liminality offers “the possibility to construct readings and critical recuperations drawing on different viewpoints” and to engage with “potencies and energies that are still latent.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Lars Bang Larsen, “The Mass Utopia of Art Activism: Palle Nielsen’s *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society*,” in *Palle Nielsen: The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society (1968)* ed. Lars Bang Larsen (Barcelona: Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona, 2009) 29-112, 31-32

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Renata Wilner, 64.

<sup>154</sup> Interview with the author, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

<sup>155</sup> Post his work as art critic for *Diário de Notícias* (1966 – 197?) Morais worked for *O Globo* (197? -1987). Curator of various short and long term projects, he returned to give courses at MAM in the 1980s and was director of Parque Lage 1983-84. See his project statement in Lisette Lagnado ed. *O que é uma escola livre* (Rio de Janeiro: 2015).

<sup>156</sup> Frederico Morais, “Balanços e equívocos – 3 O avanço da província,” *Artes Plásticas, O Globo*, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1980.

<sup>157</sup> Graciela Carnevale, “Vectors,” *Revista MESA*, no.4: Past as Blueprint: Hybrid Practices/Limit Zones (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/graciela-carnevale/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/graciela-carnevale/?lang=en)

## 2.5 THE EXPERIMENTAL NUCLEUS OF EDUCATION & ART (2010-2013)

Affection, as an artistic gesture is always “in-between,” in the gap, [and] at the same time, in anticipation of danger, risking what can not be controlled, realizing a web in which beings circulate, albeit unconsciously. There is an interest in making this fabric, visible or sensible [...]

Virginia Mota, artist / educator, Experimental Nucleus<sup>158</sup>

What relationships can exist between an art museum and communities who experience conflicts between the police and drug traffickers and / or are occupied by a UPP (Police Pacification Units)? And between a museum of art and residents of a social housing complex that for decades has been crying out for renovation, the building itself a symbol of an ideal desire for society and a way of life? And more, what have the children and youth of the favelas of Nova Holanda, Mangueira, Morro dos Macacos, the Terreirão and de Caxias, communities with similar precarious ways of life and challenges, to do with the museum? And what will a group of skateboarders do in that place where it is prohibited to skate? What could be the meaning of going to a museum during school hours? What makes a family go to the museum and not go to the mall, the movies, or the beach? And why would university groups, artists, art critics, architects participate in a visit to the museum since they seem to have learned ‘everything’ in their courses and professional experiences?

Mara Pereira, educator, Experimental Nucleus<sup>159</sup>

[For us] art was a duration to be experimented and not a space to be traversed.

Anita Sobra, artist/educator, Experimental Nucleus<sup>160</sup>

A sense of the contagious poetic and political frontiers between art and education in their creative potentialities and risky pitfalls were ever-present for the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art. While the mythic dimension, creative socio-political synergies and mass mobilization of

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<sup>158</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “O afeto, como o gesto artístico, está sempre no “entre”, na brecha, ao mesmo tempo, na iminência do perigo, no risco daquilo que não se controla, dando conta de uma teia em que os seres circulam, ainda que inconscientemente. Há interesse em tornar visível, ou sensível [...] esse tecido.”] Interview with Virgínia Mota by Jean D. Soares on her project *Biblioteca de Afetos* (Library of Affections) also one of her proposals for the Nucleus and “affect” as key to her practice. <http://www.bibliotecadeafectos.blogspot.com>

<sup>159</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Que relações podem existir entre um museu de arte e comunidades que vivenciam os conflitos entre policiais e o tráfico de drogas e/ou ocupadas por uma UPP? E entre um museu de arte e moradores de um conjunto habitacional que há décadas imploram reforma, sendo o prédio um símbolo do desejo de uma sociedade e de um modo de vida ideais? Mais ainda: o que crianças e jovens da Nova Holanda, da Mangueira, do Morro dos Macacos, do Terreirão e de comunidades de Caxias, com modos de vida semelhantes/discrepantes, podem ter a ver com o lugar museu? E o que um grupo de skatistas vai fazer nesse lugar em que é proibido andar de skate? Qual sentido pode existir em ir a um museu durante o horário das aulas de um curso técnico? O que faz uma família sair de casa para ir ao museu e não ir ao shopping, ao cinema, à praia? E por que grupos de universitários, artistas, críticos de arte, arquitetos vão participar de uma visita ao museu se já aprenderam “tudo” em seus cursos e experiências profissionais?”] In Luiz Guilherme Vergara, “Escola pública da arte x escola de arte pública – irradiações e acolhimento,” *Concinnitas*, Rio de Janeiro: Impreso, year 12, vol. 1, number 18 (June 2011): 99-111, 110

<sup>160</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Arte como uma duração a ser experimentado e não como um espaço a ser percorrido.”] Interview with the author, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.



*Domingos* were clearly unrepeatable was there something to be learned looking back to that utopian liminal history? How might the events' legacy of "quasi" education leverage new experimentations in art and education? Would structuring a dialogue with these histories lend a permissive sense of creative possibility to contemporary experiments? Or might the specter of a mythic past cast a shadow over any attempt to imagine creative or critical (re) interpretations?

As the Nucleus began its work various international initiatives at the time were revisiting and recuperating past histories of significant educational projects. Curators Lars Bang Larsen and Maria Lind's *The New Model*, 2011-2015, a project of Tensta konsthall in Stockholm, investigated the legacy of Palle Nielsen and collaborators' radical 1968 playground project with a series of seminars, exhibitions and artist commissions.<sup>161</sup> In 2010 MoMA's director of education, Wendy Woon, hosted the conference "Mining Museum Education" as part of an initiative to reconnect with influential, experimental and yet, often unrecognized, histories of the profession, in particular with the work of the museum's first education director Victor D'Amico.<sup>162</sup> Curator Sofia Olascoaga's *Entre Utopía y Desencanto* (Between Utopia and Disenchantment) 2010 – 2014 sought to recover and explore models of community life and social action influenced by psychoanalysis, feminism, alternative education and social movements from the 1950s to 1980s in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in particular, the work of Ivan Illich and the cultural center known as CIDOC (Centro Intercultural de Documentación) that he established there from 1961 – 1976.<sup>163</sup>

All these projects share a desire to connect with radical histories, to learn from the utopian possibilities they espoused as well as their failures and to both recuperate and critically examine the common ground these experimental moments strove to construct as a means of re-imagining and questioning contemporary practices. As the Nucleus' task was to fulfil and inaugurate a broader educational role akin to establishing a museum education department yet at the same time was third party project that had to fully fund itself, it did not have the institutional infrastructure, independent (or iterative) mobility or focus of these projects. However, while not conceived as a specific response to *Domingos* and certainly not with the impossible ambition of trying to repeating such events, the Nucleus would nevertheless set itself in dialogue with the democratic impulse and experimental mix of art and education that imbued those events, and in its own quasi-manner strove to find a means of reconnecting with MAM's experimental

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<sup>161</sup> *The New Model* investigated the heritage of *The Model: A model for a qualitative society* via a number of projects, seminars, workshops and exhibitions. Curated by Lars Bang Larsen and Maria Lind with the artists Magnus Bærtås, Ane Hjorth Guttu, Dave Hullfish Bailey and Hito Steyerl. For more information <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/?the-new-model-1>

<sup>162</sup> [http://www.moma.org/explore/inside\\_out/2010/06/10/wendy-on-mining-modern-museum-ed](http://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2010/06/10/wendy-on-mining-modern-museum-ed)

<sup>163</sup> <http://entretopiaydesencanto.tumblr.com>



palimpsest, energized by practices that, as Morais noted, in relation to how he understood the educational dimension of *Domingos* would “not orient but [rather] initiate certain processes.”<sup>164</sup>

### **2.5.1 Experimental Education: An Incomplete Snapshot From Domingos to the Nucleus**

Not only that of only *Domingos* but also, MAM’s rich institutional history was inescapable. A lot had been said, felt, and battled within and without the museum’s walls. Ongoing financial troubles, critiques of administration and debates about institutional direction post the 1978 fire were all publically played out in newspapers of the time. From the vantage point of an experimental mix of art and education institutional histories seem to oscillate between priority and afterthought, myth and frustration. There is much to recover.

Emerging in a very different socio-cultural and economic context, the Nucleus grappled with these oscillations. Serpa and *Domingos* had represented two vital chapters in the museum’s history where education was considered, as one journalist commented, a key philosophical “girder” for the institution, “its reason for being.”<sup>165</sup> Subsequent decades would reveal different histories. Yet there is little published information. Over the course of the past few years MAM’s Research and Documentation Center has undertaken a vital cataloguing of all the museum’s courses and events, an inventory that will become shortly available to researchers and will hopefully be the focus of much future research. During my time of research this material was unavailable, so beyond the publications cited previously in this chapter, the only institutional sources of information are museum program brochures and news reports. Administration files occasionally reveal a treasure or two but there appears to be no standardization in what was kept. In addition the brochures were only published from 1952 – 59 returning in 1975 – 78 and then again in 1983. Apart from recent decades, they have very different approaches to content, format and design, ranging from newsletter style to straightforward programmatic information, some including staff names, others not and they were not always regular. There are many narratives to reconstruct. I present here a very schematic outline focusing on three programmatic phases that seem to have particularly impacted educational direction and investment and related experimentation. It is very preliminary and serves primarily to offer some brief context of the evolving history of the museum’s relationship to education prior to the Nucleus beginning.

The reconstruction and disastrous loss of more than 1000 works due to the 1978 fire would mark the first important programmatic turning point. After various stops, starts and crises,

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<sup>164</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “Não para orientar mas para iniciar determinados processos.”] Frederico Morais in Guilherme Coelho, *Um domingo com Frederico*.

<sup>165</sup> Victor Zappi, “MAM: o futuro no presente,” *Jornal do comércio*, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1974.

Paulo Herkenhoff was invited to assume the role of arts coordinator (1985 – 1990) where he would critically emphasize museological standards, rebuilding the collection and documentation amidst the post fire restoration work. In a news article entitled “Um novo MAM para um novo década” (A New MAM for a New Decade), published in January 1990, only months before a public financial crisis, staff layoffs and change in administration, Herkenhoff discusses his vision of the museum as a “Brazilian visual encyclopedia.” He underlines a museological institution as one that collects, studies and exhibits, highlighting the task of reconstituting MAM’s collection along with various initiatives such as Projeto Fênix (Phoenix Project) engaging contemporary artists to create works in MAM’s spaces to donate to the museum and the role of the library and the documentation center which had recently begun work on the Lygia Clark archive.<sup>166</sup>

Critically, with the opening of the Parque Lage School of the Visual Arts in 1975 and its increasing prominence for young artists, the “school” dimension of the original museum plan may have seemed less and less relevant. While in the early 1980s various courses continued to be offered (including a brief return of Morais), the formerly active program was considerably diminished. From museum information bulletins in 1985/87 following President Manoel Francisco do Nascimento Brito (1985 – 2002) assuming leadership there was a clear desire to rethink institutional direction and in addition to Herkenhoff as art coordinator, Luis Paulo Horta was hired as music coordinator and the two realms seem to have been equally weighted, one focused more on internal museum infrastructure and collections and the other on public programs. According to Herkenhoff when he arrived as coordinator he was told by Brito of the decision to stop the educational courses, news the curator would have to communicate to the teachers, a move that effectively closed the School Block (although the print studio returned in the 1990s for a period) to never be re-opened.<sup>167</sup> Herkenhoff locates responsibility within the confines of formalist generation whom he cites as associating education with Ivan Serpa and children’s art classes, one imagines at that juncture to have well lost their initial luster, asserting that art is a science and not for children.<sup>168</sup> It seems the closure took place in 1987 as the museum bulletin

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<sup>166</sup> Arthur Araújo, “Uma nova MAM para uma nova década,” *Uh Revista*, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1990.

<sup>167</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff, “Dilemmas sociais na esfera pública da arte,” panel discussion: Paulo Herkenhoff. Responder: Márcia Ferran. Moderator: Fred Coelho, *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art at MAM – RJ, November 2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6XdjYlcJMs&index=1&list=PLO-GRBBoQZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m> Program brochures (or rather in the case of these years more like an information bulletin) There is no documentation in MAM’s files that would confirm Herkenhoff’s version or indeed if it was Parque Lage’s active presence that influenced such a decision. Clearly more research needs to be done to historicize the School Block itself, its ultimate closure and implications.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* Stating this more than 25 years later with clear distaste suggests this was and is still a sore point for Herkenhoff. Certainly subsequent projects point to his commitment to education such as the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Bienal and his current artistic directorship of MAR (Museu de Arte do Rio). Interestingly, throughout Herkenhoff’s time at MAM there was an active music program coordinated by Luiz Paulo Horta curiously, at least from program brochures, an

announces the suspension of the “department of educational activities” citing the overall restoration work and especially the needed expansion of the Cinemateca but also noting that the museum plans to devote significant energy to reformulating MAM’s role “in the education field, a sector of major importance to a center of art and culture.”<sup>169</sup> The School Block now houses a small exhibition gallery currently featuring a timeline of the museum’s history organized by Elizabeth Varela, curator of MAM’s Research and Documentation Center, their offices and archives as well as those of the Cinemateca, replete with old canisters and obsolete editing stations lining the hallways itself an archaeology of the modern.

The increasing violence in the 1980s and 90s turning the once dynamic area of MAM and the Aterro into a graveyard coupled with attempts to revitalize these same locales and the emergence of new cultural institutions in the city center resulted in another critical shift. The “new” MAM of the 1990s under Marcus Lontra (1990 – 1997), at the time former director of the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts, sought to reestablish “the cosmopolitan, active, provocative, and intelligent relationship between the museum and the city.”<sup>170</sup> A thread of experimental art and education resonant of Morais and the Neoconcrete interest in the sensorial re-emerged here with the Galpão das artes (Art Shed). Built on the site of the Theatre Block and part of Reidy’s original plan, the “Galpão” was an open space for workshops and performances aimed at awakening “the critical sensible perception of the collective.”<sup>171</sup> Coordinated initially by the artist Luiz Pizarro (now currently MAM’s curator of education) and then Valerio Rodrigues and assisted by Marcia Waitz together with various course coordinators of music, dance, cinema and literature, the “Galpão” was an “open school” that “privileged processes of creation.”<sup>172</sup> Along with a rich array of courses and laboratory-style workshops for teachers, the Galpão also programmed events. One series called “anthropophagy week” featured everything from readings/performances with poet Haroldo de Campos, musician Caetano Veloso and theater director Gerald Thomas to a drag show for children.<sup>173</sup> Other events even included a “Domingo da criação” in July 1993 in the museum’s gardens with various artists such as Jorge Duarte and Paulo Paes, performers and workshops.<sup>174</sup> The barn was later closed and a new two storey structure built in the same location following Reidy’s design reopened in 2006 as an autonomous event platform for music concerts.

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initiative that seemed almost equal to the importance of the visual arts. Once again clearly more research needs to be done to contextualize these histories.

<sup>169</sup> Report on “Departamento de Atividades Educativas” in the 1987 Program bulletin. Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>170</sup> MAM program brochure, August 1990, Research and Documentation Center, MAM- RJ.

<sup>171</sup> Luiz Pizarro, coordinator Galpão das artes. Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Interview with Luiz Pizarro, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>173</sup> Events held as part of “Semana de Antropofagia” (Anthropophagic Week) at MAM in 1991. Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Renata Wilner notes that this event was coordinated by Marcia Waitz featuring: the children’s theater piece *O Conquistador*; Camera Obscura with Regina Alvarez; workshops coordinated by Angela Freiberger and Gustavo Braga;

Another programmatic phase manifests itself under Agnaldo Farias (1998 – 2000). One initiative, a project of documentation that had begun under Herkenhoff with the psychologist and artist Lula Wanderley, inaugurated a rich and potentially fascinating experiment which was to be a “Permanent Lygia Clark” gallery presenting the artist’s work and opportunities to engage directly in her participatory proposals, unfortunately shortlived due to problems with the Clark family.<sup>175</sup> Another shift assumed a particular focus on education. Curiously, while the notion of “monitors” and guided tours appears sporadically within MAM’s program brochures from the 1970s through the 2000s, it is only starting in 1999 that the museum had anything akin to a standard EuroAmerican model of a museum education department featuring school and family programs coordinated by the art educator Maria Tornaghi. Guided tours and multiple visit programs in collaboration with local schools were offered. Indeed some students who participated in these initiatives became “auxiliaries” working with educators briefly in Permanent Lygia Clark gallery. Other highlights included cross-institutional city-wide collaborations called “Construindo Elos” (Building Links) with the Planetarium, Museu de Acude, and Museu da Vida. Tornaghi’s project continued as a permanent education program during the curatorship of Fernando Cocchiarella (2001 – 2007) and amidst various changes in president/directors until 2005, then on an intermittent basis dependent on specific exhibitions.<sup>176</sup> When the Nucleus began at the invitation of Luiz Camillo Osorio (2009 – 2016) at the end of 2009 and more substantively in September 2010 there had been no permanent education program or staff for several years.

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live statue performance by Iumar Júnior; collective creation with garbage with Jorge Duarte; clay workshops with Carmen Sodré; inflatable ballons with Paulo Paes; and the circus group Grande Circo Popular do Brasil. Wilner sees the event’s more programmed and structured aspects as presenting a more hierarchical relationship between artist and public and less freedom than was present in the original *Domingos*. Renata Wilner, 13 – 14.

<sup>175</sup> Lula Wanderley began a detailed cataloguing project of Lygia Clark’s archival files at the invitation of Paulo Herkenhoff shortly after the artist’s death in 1987 (indeed Clark’s wake was actually held at MAM). The family had the intention to donate her works and archives to the museum. Lula would critically piece together several boxes of letters and proposals that would ultimately be later presented as key works by Clark. Coordinator of Visual Arts Denise Mattar, following an exhibition of Clark and Oiticica organized for the 22<sup>nd</sup> São Paulo Biennial that was also presented at MAM (January 19<sup>th</sup> – February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995) invited Lula to develop various experiments with the public as part of the exhibition. Agnaldo Farias later continued the idea of the experimental gallery with a view to making it permanent focusing more on Clark’s *Bichos* and relational objects. Interview with Lula Wanderley, Rio de Janeiro, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016. However, in 2002, the Clark family began a judicial process against the museum to recover the archives and works that had been housed at MAM on long-term loan. The entire archive was returned to the family after the museum lost the process in 2006. Conversation with Elizabeth Varela, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2016.

<sup>176</sup> Tornaghi began her work at MAM at the invitation of Farias who she notes was very supportive of education. A key project at this time was a hugely popular Picasso exhibition for which Tornaghi created an “interactive space” that effectively inaugurated the “education room” for activities on the museum’s ground level. Interview with the author, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

## 2.5.2 The Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art: A Contemporary Paralaboratory

The socio-cultural context had set significant challenges. With the arrival of new cultural institutions emerging in Rio and nationally in the 1990s, experimental art and education would struggle to find a place amidst the demands and rhetoric of accountability and rights of access. Education became about scale, not as an organic outgrowth of an artistic guerrilha-like expansiveness, but rather often framed as a necessary add on and as such often seen through a more negative lens, rephrasing Goddard's famous line, of "[education] as rule and art as exception."<sup>177</sup> As a useful illustration of this it is interesting to review comments made by MAM's recently reappointed curator Fernando Cocchiarale. In 1990 as part of a working group to rethink MAM's future Lontra would cite Cocchiarale in various publications saying that it was necessary to "publicar MAM" (creating a verb of the word "public" meaning to make MAM public, to publicize, publish and implied to populate). A decade or so later, in a debate on museums in 2004, Cocchiarale will comment that he does not believe in "leveling down" and that there is too much worrying "about creating educational programmes" where a critical public – artists – was being neglected.<sup>178</sup> One can read here a range of factors influencing such shifts: the socio-economic impact of the 1988 Constitution inscribing access to culture as a right coupled with neoliberal policies and expectations that seems to path the way for blockbuster exhibitions and notions of mobilizing a mass public with a stress on social inclusion as well as the explosion of cultural centers run by banks (e.g. Bank of Brazil Cultural Center in Rio opened in 1989). All had left their mark. Didactic, diluted, dumbed-down, explicative... expressed the concerns of many art world figures when talking about education and notions of the public.

How to navigate such perceptions and realities? Was there a way, instead of a mass notion of "the public," to rather emphasize diverse publics, specificities over generalities? Could we think about numbers and intimacy? Could we think about "big school" approaches, such as the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, mobilizing thousands of school children to visit the exhibition, and "minor" ones?<sup>179</sup> The Nucleus strove to respond to this challenge. One critical strategy was to counterbalance the "monitor" model of the junior intern or undergrad seeing their sojourn as a stepping stone or training ground to rather embrace a collective model of artists, educators and cultural producers vested in exploring and producing knowledge about the experimental possibilities of art and education in a museum context. An illustration of that collective utopian

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<sup>177</sup> "Culture is the rule, art the exception." Jean Luc Goddard. *Je vou salue Saravejo*, film, 1993.

<sup>178</sup> "Ideal Museum: Jean Galar, Paulo Sérgio Duarte, Marcelo Araujo and Fernando Cocchiarale interviews conducted by Martin Grossmann," in *Museum Art Today*, eds. Martin Grossmann and Gilberto Mariotti (Fórum Permanente Series. São Paulo: Hedra, 2011) 25-40, 33

<sup>179</sup> See the discussion on Constitutive Fragility: Centers, Peripheries and Politics of Access in the introduction.

possibility and its inevitable impossibility was the artist/designer Vitor Cesar's logo for the Nucleus featuring arrows shooting off in all directions. For a moment, like John Cage, we fully embraced that, "[g]oing in different directions we get, instead of separation, a sense of space."

Interestingly, in 1972 Anna Bella Geiger gave a talk at the VI National Colloquium of Brazilian Art Museums where she addressed MAM's potential as an ideal "total environment" for experimenting "the artist-work-public relation" by way of an experimental laboratory with "artists, art professors, psychologists, educators and sociologists" as a balance to the museum-as-collection model.<sup>180</sup> Part laboratory, part museum education department, part collective all the while precarious, during its three year existence, the Nucleus constantly strove to experiment the "artist-work-public relation" and, as MAM curator Luis Camillo Osorio suggested, to open "democratic cracks" in the institution.<sup>181</sup> If *Domingos* "quasi" practices had sought to level a Marxist critique of leisure through events of mass creative participation, in a contemporary context, navigating the expectations of neoliberalism, the Nucleus would have to discover its own political praxis, as philosopher and activist Rodrigo Nunes suggests, of "counterpimping," that is, finding "solutions that can strengthen *transformation over reproduction*."<sup>182</sup>

Lygia Clark's intimate sensoriality and Oiticica's social, structural and environmental experimentation would be vital references. In 1966 Pedrosa had described the museum as the elastic glove for the creator's hand. Clark would later suggest that Oiticica was the outside of the glove and she the inside and that the two exist "from the moment there is a hand which puts on the glove."<sup>183</sup> The museum-as-glove then might be understood as the museum as a context for subjective and social experimentation worked both from within and without. The Nucleus was inspired by these dynamics as well as by MAM's architecture and gardens, the museum/city relation, critical pedagogy, contemporary art practices and social museology. We developed two central programmatic strands aimed at folding out into the city (*Irradiations*) and welcoming into the museum (*Acolhimento*). While an experimental spirit imbued all of our work including more traditionally understood "education" practices such as school visits and family workshops, where artists and educators sought to experiment with multiple forms and formats of interpretation, I

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<sup>180</sup> Anna Bella Geiger. "Museu de arte diante do artista: problema de ordem conceitual." (The Art Museum Faced with the Artist: Problem of a Conceptual Order), 1972. Talk given at the VI Colóquio de Muses de aArtes de Brasil Programação Organizata pela AMAB Associação de Museus de Arte do Brasil. (VI Colloquium of Brazilian Art Museums organized by AMAB – Association of Brazilian Art Museums. Typed document in administration files, 1972, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>181</sup> Interview with the author, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>182</sup> Rodrigo Nunes, "Toward a Politics of Counterpimping," *Revista MESA*, no.3: Publicness in Art (May, 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en)

<sup>183</sup> "Hélio and I are like a glove. He is the outside of the glove, very much linked to the exterior world. I am the inside. And the two of us exist from the moment there is a hand which puts on the glove." Lygia Clark, 1966 cited in *Veja* magazine, Rio de Janeiro, 1986, in Guy Bret, *Transcontinental An Investigation of Reality: Nine Latin American Artists* (London/New York: Verso and Ikon Gallery, 1990) 30

have chosen to focus here on aspects of those “foldings” that usefully open up both experimental possibilities and critical challenges for the “artist-work-public relation” in the museum context.

### 2.5.3 Public School of Art and a School of Public Art

The mix of voices led me to a parallel inner dialogue: reflections on the project, the community, the place of education within the museum, the fear of being shot, the role of the artwork, role of the alleyways, art in the alleyways, Avenida Brazil, the young people’s expectations, and mine.

Gabi Gusmão, artist/educator Núcleo Experimental<sup>184</sup>

In 1970 Morais published his vision for a Museum of Postmodern Art as a “Pilot Plan of the Future Ludic City” that would have as its central focus the creative act and not the work of art in itself. Vital to this new museum would be an active presence in the city that would not only propose creative actions but also modify the very nature of the museum function:

[...] Guided tours of collections and exhibitions [...] could be transformed into expeditions into the city [...] integrat[ing] within the very incessant flow of everyday life. Classes and conferences could be equally brought to the street as well as all other ‘complementary activities.’ In the process of the renovation of museology, there is an inversion of values: exhibition and conservation give way to complementary activities that become the primary and basic activities.<sup>185</sup>

While this vision may seem quaint seen against the comeback roar of what Terry Smith has called spectacle art and architecture, whose every flesh and bone celebrates signature architect buildings, highbrow collections, art stars and objects, the shinier the better, Morais’ manifesto still resonates a radical conductive energy.<sup>186</sup> In tune with this spirit, *Irradiations* was a series of experimental projects with diverse groups and contexts in the city. These experiences aimed to inaugurate a kind of ground zero between educator/learner/artist/public. Nucleus coordinator Luiz

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<sup>184</sup> Gabriela Gusmão, “Contagious Empathy: Freedom is Painting the Wall of Life,” *Revista MESA*, no.4: Past as Blueprint: Hybrid Practices and Limit Zones (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/portfolio/arte-mam-02/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/portfolio/arte-mam-02/?lang=en)

<sup>185</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “As visitas guiadas as exposições e acervo, por exemplo, poderão ser transformadas em expedições na cidade, buscando-se com isso uma integração como o próprio fluir incessante da vida diária. As aulas e conferências poderão ser levadas igualmente a rua bem como todo as demais “atividades complementares.” No processo de renovação da museologia, há uma inversão de valores: expor e conservar cedem lugar às atividades complementares que passam a ser atividades primeiras e básicas.”] The title “plano piloto” recalls the famous title for Brasília given by the architect Lucio Costa. It is an impressive manifesto for a new kind of art museum. Originally given as a talk at the IV Colloquium of Brazilian art museums in 1969 Morais published it as an article in *Correio da Manhã* with an introduction that lists the various symposia occurring at the time exploring the relationship of art and public and the need to rethink museological theory considering the evolution of art of the time. Frederico Morais, “Plano piloto da futura cidade ludica,” *Correio da Manhã*, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1970 (Also in Frederico Morais, *Artes plasticas: A crise da hora atual* (Rio de Janeiro: Paze e Terra, 1975) 60-62).

<sup>186</sup> Terry Smith, *The Architecture of Aftermath* (University of Chicago Press, 2006)

Guilherme Vergara suggested that this process was a two-way street of existential learning – artists and publics – calling the initiative a “Public School of Art and a School of Public Art.”<sup>187</sup>

Over the course of the three years of the Nucleus existence, five artists were involved: Anita Sobar, Bianca Bernardo, Gabriela Guzmão, Ao Leo (Leo Campos), and Virgínia Mota. Each developed projects with particular communities including NGOs, neighborhood associations, collectives, and other various organizations, experimenting with different forms and modes of approach. In addition, the educator Inês Guimarães together with Virgínia Mota also developed a distinctive collaboration opening up new experimental in-between territories of art, education and social justice via a partnership with the Penalty and Alternative Measures Court of Niterói (CPMA – central de penas e medidas alternativas).<sup>188</sup> Each project embraced a striving towards mutuality, discovery and literacy of the artist/educators’ and participants’ worlds. Bianca Bernardo worked with schizophrenic patients from Papel Pinel, a therapeutic workshop that is part of the psychiatric hospital Instituto Municipal Philippe Pinel, deploying the possibilities of “situ-ações” (situ-actions) that fostered a kind of commarderie of listening, a relational mobilization of collaborations that strove to “establish movements of mutual belonging.”<sup>189</sup> Attuned to the critical dangers of this kind of work being tokenistic, the focus was to intervene in social contexts to contradict messages of exclusion at a personal, (and where possible) societal and institutional level. Here, for example, hope, affection and invention were mobilized as operative artistic-pedagogic practices. In her street poster project *Procure-se uma utopia* (Find yourself a utopia) Anita Sobar facilitated discussions about hope and utopia with youth from the NGO art and technology school Specatulu and the skateboarding collective Briza. Freire often linked his sense of hope and utopia with an ethico-political choice of consciously intervening in the world.<sup>190</sup> Andrade had also stressed: “behind every utopia there is not only a dream, there is also a protest.”<sup>191</sup> It was connecting with groups that had come together over some kind of social protest and revindication that interested Sobar.<sup>192</sup> Collectively they wheatpasted the words “find yourself a utopia” together with odd image juxtapositions in various places in the city aimed at provoking discussion amongst the group and passer-bys.

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<sup>187</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara, “Escola pública da arte x escola de arte pública – irradiações e acolhimento,” *Concinnitas*.

<sup>188</sup> For more information (Portuguese only) see blog <https://nucleoexperimental.wordpress.com/irradiacao/>

<sup>189</sup> Bianca Bernardo, “Reconfigurando o papel do artista na sociedade e relações,” Report on Study Group of the conference *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*, November 2011 at MAM Rio, Seminar publication 2012 (currently unavailable)

<sup>190</sup> Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of Freedom. Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998) 122.

<sup>191</sup> Oswald de Andrade, *Obras completas*, vol 6 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira/MEC, 1972) 194.

<sup>192</sup> Interview with the artist, June 2013.



Virgínia Mota's affective video *O que significa cuidar de um lugar?* (What does it mean to care for a place?) featured interviews with residents from the 1940s social housing project Pedregulho (also designed by MAM's architect Reidy) and workers affiliated with a company restoring the building. Years of disrepair and negligence meant that residents had absorbed societal devaluing of the housing project and questioned any "clean-up" or renovation efforts. Workers in turn complained that garbage was simply left or thrown out of windows. Mota's video captured divergent perspectives and hopes for a new future.

Drawing on her work *Rua dos inventos* (Street of Inventions) Gabriela Gusmão initiated a collaboration with youth from the NGO Luta Pela Paz (Fight for Peace) based in the Maré favela. Conversations and observations about everyday street life resulted in an exploration of the concept of freedom. After intense exchanges, an idea emerged "Liberdade é pintar o muro da vida." (Freedom is to paint the wall of life.)<sup>193</sup> Descending on a prime community site with paint in hand they promptly painted the sentence on a wall next to the football field.

For each project the affective relationship initiated through a Freirean understanding of "reading the world before the word," that is responsively engaging with groups in their locales, collectively identifying issues, (re)valorizing their surroundings through observation exercises, critical discussion and affective trust, became a vital method.<sup>194</sup> Whether talking about utopia while wheatpasting posters in underground highways, discussing garbage and what it means to care for a place, or making lists about favela street markets – once established, each projects' affective dynamic was breezily transferred to the museum, architecture and artworks. Gusmão's description of a two-way communication could be applied to all of the *Irradiações* projects:

What excited me most in this contact was that we managed to positively walk through the [favela] fair with the attention of someone who walks in an art space, attentively observing the elements present in the environment, talking about color, analyzing the structures of the tents, valuing the space, criticizing or praising the forms of objects. Later, we walked through the museum with the naturalness of one who walks at the fair where works of art are shown and reveal themselves unceremoniously, allowing spontaneous speech and a keen perception of the relationship between concepts and images. It was a spontaneous dialectical exercise.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Gabriela Gusmão Project with NGO Luta Pela Paz for Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro. Email communication, November 14, 2010.

<sup>194</sup> Reading the world before the word was a common refrain in many of Freire's writings where he stressed a process of literacy combining an understanding of text and context. See following publications available in English: the entry on "reading" in *Paulo Freire Encyclopedia*, eds., Danilo R. Streck, Euclides Redin and Jaime José Zitzoski (New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012); Paulo Freire, "The Importance of the Act of Reading," *Journal of Education*, v.165, n1 (Winter 1983): 5-11 and "Reading the World and Reading the Word: An Interview with Paulo Freire," *Language Arts*, vol 62, n1 (January 1985): 15-21.

<sup>195</sup> Gabriela Gusmão, "Contagious Empathy: Freedom is Painting the Wall of Life," *Revista MESA*.

Here, a way of seeing, observing a street fair, once fostered is brought to the museum where everything from works of art to elevators become part of the environment to be observed and explored. In each project, the ease with which favela youth, construction worker or skateboarder questioned and shared their perspective was grounded in an affective relationship that smoothed the way for such an openness to take place. As Freire suggested, true solidarity is found “[...] in its existentiality in its praxis.”<sup>196</sup> Indeed, the *Irradiations* resonated with core tenets associated with critical pedagogy: “Participatory, situated, critical, dialogic, multicultural, research-oriented, activist, affective.”<sup>197</sup> They were also grounded in collective practices that mobilize art’s ability, as Esche has noted, “as [a] synthesizing agent crossing and combining fields of mutually ignorant fields of specialization.”<sup>198</sup> Similar to Lygia Clark’s formulation of her participatory practices as a “lung,” initiatives such as *Irradiations* enable the museum to anchor the possibility of an encounter that can only be realized in a mutual affective relation of dislocation.<sup>199</sup>

This is a scale of working that is micro, organic and 1:1. It is anti-event, the inside/out of *Domingos* and from an accountability perspective, highly vulnerable and questionable. Yet, by deploying the authenticity of the art process to the educational encounter and vice versa, this 1:1 relation can realize a strategy that may seem counter-intuitive – that individuals are larger than groups, where the emphasis is on each person’s many regimes of belonging e.g. a woman, carioca, photographer, mother, etc., and as such, if deeply impacted may ultimately have a wider reach.<sup>200</sup> As historian David Thelen suggests:

By placing individuals at the center as both actors in and observers of history, we can build a historical culture around participation. Individuals, after all, experience, interpret, revisit, reinterpret – in short, they remember and forget. Nations, cultures, and institutions can’t, even though politicians and pundits pretend they can.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th edition, Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York/London: Continuum, 2007 (first published 1970)) 50

<sup>197</sup> Ira Shor, “Education is Politics: Paulo Freire’s Critical Pedagogy” in *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, eds. Peter McLaren and Peter Leonard (London/New York: Routledge, 1993) 25-35, 33-34

<sup>198</sup> Charles Esche, “Include Me Out: Helping Artists to Undo the Art World,” in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge Massachusetts/London England: MIT Press, 2009) 101-112.

<sup>199</sup> Lygia Clark, *Do Ato (The Act)* 1965, *Livro Obra*, 1983. “What really touches me in the sculpture “Inside and outside” is the fact that it change[s] the knowledge I have of myself, of my own body. It change[s] me, I have no form, shape or defined features. Its lungs are the same as mine. It is the introjections of the cosmos and at the same time it is my own being crystallized in an object in spa[c]e. [...] Completeness. I am overwhelmed by senses. Each time I breathe [I become] aware of my ‘cosmic lung.’ I enter the total rhythm of the action. I became aware of my cosmic lung. I enter in the total rhythm of the world. The world is my lung.” For the complete text see:

[http://www.lygiaclark.org.br/arquivo\\_detING.asp?idarquivo=18](http://www.lygiaclark.org.br/arquivo_detING.asp?idarquivo=18) [OBS: The translation is from The World of Lygia Clark web site, however mistakes in the translations and misspellings have been corrected and placed in parenthesis]

<sup>200</sup> Norbert Elias saw individuals as being larger than groups in *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, eds. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 199.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

Like the “acupressure points” of the country-wide micro cultural center initiative Pontos de Cultura (Points of Culture), the idea was to create a network of micro actions. However, *Irradiations*, never got into a stride, as resources diminished, faith faltered. But the program sketched a possibility of imagining a figure of scale that operates on a molecular level, what Maria Lind has called “dandelion art”, an irradiating network of relational impact, multiple voices, and distributed sensibilities in constant dialogue with the museum.<sup>202</sup>

#### **2.5.4 DouAções (Gift Actions)**

Recalling *Domingos*’ synergies of creativity and reception and in particular the use of the museum’s gardens, the series of projects *DouAções* (a neologism of douar – to give and ação – action) engaged artists, often those exhibiting at the museum, to “gift” an action as a performance, event, workshop, or artwork in creative complicity with diverse publics. Projects varied in format and publics depending on the artist and context: a workshop in the exhibition galleries where the Portuguese artist Manuel Caeiro opened up and explored his painting process creating a work in situ; a fantastical decoration of a Volkswagen Beetle for Carnival with the artists Marcus Cardoso and Edmilson Nunes; a moveable table/workspace designed by the artists Vitor Cesar and Enrico Rocha created as a conceptual and practical tool to facilitate interactive workshops/conversations in the museum galleries and outside in the grounds; two Hélio Oiticica inspired events from a “do-it-yourself” *Parangolé* extravangza with the colorful collective music orchestra Orquestra Voador and dance group Galpão Aplauso to a series of discrete experimental actions and artistic responses ranging from a collective cape bike ride (Ciclorangolé) to makeshift carboard “Penetrables” by the young artist André Renaud and an interactive performance with huge swaths of colored fabric interwoven with the museum’s external architecture by the artist Gabi Gusmão. In many ways each of the artists involved in the Nucleus “gifted” their practice as a kind of instituent tool, one in particular that influence a range of experimental pedagogies was that artist/educator AoLeo of his photographic process of using empty frames as a form of “(re)framing” and “displacing” landscapes and desires as part of experiments in MAM’s gardens and exhibition galleries.

Other DouAções engaged diverse institutional and individual collaborations such with Casa Daros and the artist Carlos Cruz Diez’s workshop/event making colorful paper kinetic kites to fly in the museums gardens; and an interdisciplinary event of performances, readings, and improvisations in response to the sculptures of José Bechara with a special performance of John

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<sup>202</sup> Maria Lind, “Made to Fit, or the Gathering of Balloons,” *Supercommunity: e-flux Journal 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial*, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://supercommunity.e-flux.com/texts/made-to-fit-or-the-gathering-of-the-balloons/>

Cage's *Suite for Toy Piano* (composed in 1948) by Vera Terra and participatory workshops with Leonardo Stefano (musician), Madalena Vaz Pinto (literary scholar), Andreza Bittencourt (actress), Anita Sobar and Leonardo Campos (visual artists and artists/educators Experimental Nucleus visuais). A truly communitarian spirit permeated the giant collective canvas with adults and children alike literally swimming in paint held in the museum's gardens in honor of Ivan Serpa; or the deep simplicity of Guilherme Vaz's experimental gestures of moving furniture, assembling rocks, drawing and their relation to perception as he shared memories of the Unidade Experimental from the 1960s.<sup>203</sup> Each of these *DouAções* gifted artistic gestures that in turn contain their own pedagogy – a distinctly individual creative process, an open-ended, experimental and relational connection with the world.

### 2.5.5 Reading Looking Up from Your Book: Passionate Insolence / Troubled Complicities

The potency of opening up and deploying a creative process as a form of pedagogy whether an artwork in and of itself (like many of the *DouAções*) or as a means of poetic response to the artworks was embraced as a vital part of the Nucleus' practice, understood as a kind of complicity *with artists and publics*.<sup>204</sup> Complicity here could be said to look to the artist's practice, process and ways of making as a means of grounding an experimental and associative process of re-meaning and making, akin to what Roland Barthes called "reading while looking up from your book" – a kind of insolence that interrupts and a smitten passion that returns and feeds from the text.<sup>205</sup> In the context of the "artist-work-public relation" this complicity also simultaneously looks to the worlds of the artist and diverse publics, contexts and realities. Bringing these together is a kind of liminal art/education practice akin to what curator Luiz Camillo Osorio described as the "tight rope" at play in the act of exhibiting and negotiating the versatility of MAM's galleries and their institutional limits.<sup>206</sup> A series of exhibitions in 2011 - 2012 by Elisa Bracher, Fernanda Gomes and Nan Goldin offered distinctly different situational responses to these tensions.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> For descriptions see Nucleus blog <https://nucleoexperimental.wordpress.com/category/douacoes/> (Portuguese only) and also Sabrina Curi. "DouAções: Sharing the State of Creation." *Revista MESA* no 4: Past as Blueprint/Hybrid Practices and Limit Zones (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/portfolio/arte-mam-04/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/portfolio/arte-mam-04/?lang=en)

<sup>204</sup> The idea of the critical accomplice I take from Frederico Coelho's work on Hélio Oiticica. Frederico Coelho, *Livro ou livro-me: os escritos Babilônicos de Helio Oiticica (1971-1978)* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed UERJ, 2010) 24.

<sup>205</sup> "Has it never happened, as you were reading a book, that you kept stopping as you read, not because you weren't interested, but because you were: because of a flow of ideas, stimuli, associations? In a word, haven't you ever happened to read while looking up from your book? It is such reading, at once insolent in that it interrupts the text, and smitten in that it keeps returning to it and feeding on it, which I tried to describe." Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986) 29. Coelho also provocatively uses Barthes to describe Oiticica's engagement with multiple texts, readings, notetaking. *Livro ou livro-me* p.21

<sup>206</sup> Interview with the author, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>207</sup> Elisa Bracher and Fernanda Gomes exhibitions were both curated by Luiz Camillo Osorio. Nan Goldin was curated by Lígia Canongia and Adon Peres.

Elisa Bracher works with printmaking, drawing and sculpture and is known for her large-scale installations and public works featuring wood, metal and lead. She is also founder and director of the Instituto Acaia in São Paulo that works with youth from favelas teaching carpentry and other technical and artistic skills. The installation at MAM was presented in what is known as the Monumental Gallery – a vast open space designed by Reidy to have maximum flexibility and featuring the rough exposed concrete of the museum’s external wall, itself an artwork of surface, stains and joints. Bracher’s piece *Ponto final sem pausas* (Final Point Without Pauses) installed from October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012 comprised a large “floating” lead sphere weighing approximately eight tons suspended by steel cables with a backdrop of three thin 8 x 10 metre lead sheets that the artist winsomely called “hankerchiefs.”<sup>208</sup> Describing her work as being about “weight and equilibrium” Bracher draws a parallel between the physical installation challenges she sets for herself and by consequence, the taught relationship of artist and institution, with the struggle for life equilibrium of the youth with whom she works.<sup>209</sup> This tension became openly pedagogic in the twenty day installation process, where innumerable engineering feats and institutional limits had to be faced, indeed at the opening, due to technical difficulties, the as yet un-installed piece replete with scaffolding in a rare revelation of process, exposed that struggle. The suspended sphere would ultimately hang as a metaphor of the possible. In a description of a more recent piece, but equally applicable here, curator Rodrigo Naves notes that these “sculptures at the limit of instability, allow the spectator to find their lost equilibrium as they circulate the work.”<sup>210</sup> This search for equilibrium was richly manifested by one of the Nucleus’ artist/educators, Bernardo Zabalaga, a dancer, who created a performative response to Bracher’s installation entitled *Escalas em equilibrio* (Scales in Equilibrium). Zabalaga’s description of seeking to relate and construct a dialogue with this piece both reflects Bracher’s challenge to spectators to find their lost equilibrium and the younger artist’s own tentative to carve out a role in the Nucleus and in turn within the “artist-work-public” context of the museum.

The resulting performance is less a convoking to assist an interpretation or enhancement of a particular exhibition, than an opening up of a creative process and state of relation. Not being explanatory or informative, wearing white in contrast to the solid led gray of Bracher’s installation, Zabalaga composed a ritual performance using a light transparent cloth and sphere,

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<sup>208</sup> “Elisa Bracher: Ponto final sem pausas,” *Wall Street International*, October 15th, 2011

<http://wsimag.com/pt/arte/730-elisa-bracher-ponto-final-sem-pausas>

<sup>209</sup> Elisa Bracher presentation and video entitled “Espaço de construir: meninos e esculturas” (Space of Construction: Youth and Sculpture) at the seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy and Participation*, November 2011

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVtoaMOoqGo&index=7&list=PLO-GRBB0QZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m>

<sup>210</sup> Antonio Gonçalves Filho, “Na mostra de Elisa Bracher, artista ergue labirinto de taipa que fala de luto e mistério,” *O Estadão de São Paulo*, August 21st, 2015 <http://cultura.estadao.com.br/noticias/artes.na-mostra-de-elisa-bracher-a-artista-ergue-labirinto-de-taipa-que-fala-de-luto-e-misterio,1747916>

responding to the monumental weight of the artwork, with the lightness of small bodily gestures. The juxtaposition effectively was able to catalyze rich responses with participants/spectators – the contrast heightening viewer/participant perceptions and opening up a dialogue, intuitively grounded in the force mobilized by Bracher in her installation. Complicit readings multiply and re-distribute rather than explain.

Embracing an “insolent” even if passionate complicity, however, was not always well received. As a counterpoint to Bracher’s weighty singular suspension, Fernanda Gomes offered the poetry of the dispersed. Known for conceptual installations and interventions drawing attention to and transforming commonplace things or situations, Gomes’ exhibition, held from December 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 – April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, turned MAM’s large light filled gallery into an airy but tightly choreographed sculptural canvas of insignificant objects. The long gallery with a solid black floor elegantly sits on a set of concrete pilotis, at once overlooking and seamlessly integrating with the views of the Pão de Açucar on one side and the city on the other – a context that heightened the installation’s simultaneous play of the everyday and the numinous. In contrast to Bracher’s construction zone of scaffolding, pullies, engineers, and heavy lifting, yet in no less time, Gomes spent weeks installing alone, bringing personal and found objects, positioning and repositioning objects and details - white painted drawers and bases, pieces of wood, string and material, a pair of knives hung as if delicate wind chimes, oddly positioned chairs, bottles, and jugs of water. Intimate, precarious and singular, the installation ambiguously hovered amidst a matter-of-fact invitation to recognize the commonplace and an aura of potential alchemical transformation. While committed to multiple readings, Gomes was fiercely against any form of interpretative mediation. She refused to have any curatorial wall text or “educational talking” in the installation. Caught between complicities of sympathy and the passionate insolence the installation inspired, and, of course, desiring to tension their own creative agency, two of the Nucleus artists/educators experimented a new path – an impromptu walking silent performance followed by a discussion outside the gallery. Observed by a monitor who in turn reported the “insolence” to Gomes, the incident opened up a quagmire of critical limit zones of public/private, artist/institution and art/mediation. In a context of disavowal rather than productive tension, the complicit tightrope collapses. Or rather things return to as they were. Yet amidst our overly mediated and determined contemporary life one cannot deny Gomes’ caustic refusal to be a “text” or a “stage” or, for that matter, that of younger artists or educators to limit their agency. It is the kind of *Huis Clos* situation of contemporaneity where although we may have assumed plural values collectively we do not yet have the habits of practice or language with which to find a way out.

Pedrosa's "paralaboratory" may suggest an alternate path via a "para" practice of detours, parallels or *dérive* where the critical and creative accomplice can both look to the world of the artist and simultaneously embrace a notion of a multi-voiced publicness. For this to be taken on institutionally there often needs to be a risk in play. This was the case with exhibition of the contemporary photographer Nan Goldin, *Heartbeat*, February 9<sup>th</sup> – April 8<sup>th</sup> 2012. In December 2011 her exhibition was cancelled by the Rio de Janeiro cultural art center Oi Futuro based on the premise that an educational institution could not exhibit risqué photographs of minors. Brazilian law is particularly strict with regards to the photographing of children, so Goldin's images of sexual and drug undergrounds involving friends and occasionally children, while not overtly violent or (debatably) pornographic, could nevertheless be in a position to be judicially questioned. MAM under the leadership of Luiz Camillo Osorio decided to take the exhibition with the exact opposite position that, in fact, the educational work of the institution is in exhibiting such challenging material. In response to the situation, as an "Ação conjunta" (Action together) in collaboration with Osorio and assistant curator Marta Mestre, the Nucleus held a series of internal conversations together with lawyers, psychoanalysts, artists, educators, and curators, in turn recording various points of view and organizing a series of forums exploring the question "what does it mean to exhibit?" and Nan Goldin specifically.<sup>211</sup> Audio recordings were presented in the museum lobby and the forums in the exhibition itself. The process affected a responsive cross-institutional complicity, suggesting the strategic potential of a "para" complicit model that detours rather than interprets, setting itself up as a parallel of practice collecting multiple perspectives.

### **2.5.6 Poetic Collections and Multisensorial Repertoires**

Seeking out such complicity, as Marta Mestre observed, often employed the construction of new vocabularies and repertoires, where "language" might serve "as a means to create a common ground."<sup>212</sup> A similar search for new vocabularies to sketch, respond and embody different approaches to curating, artmaking and education can be seen in various other contexts internationally. In Europe, for example, the project/publication *Vocabulaboratories* aimed via collective laboratories and text invitations to create a kind of inventory/dictionary that might bring together "words that act as slides or doors" that can open up and connect and "make

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<sup>211</sup> The audio points of view are available (Portuguese only) on the Nucleus blog: <https://nucleoexperimental.wordpress.com/category/acao-conjunta-2/>

<sup>212</sup> Interview with the author, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

concepts become a/effective for what we do.”<sup>213</sup> In Brazil in 2014 artist Cristina Ribas’s initiated a similar lab and publication project, made all the more potent given the recent context street protests. The book and website *Vocabulário Político para Processos Estéticos* (Political Vocabulary for Aesthetic Processes) was created via a series of encounters with a broad cross-section of artists, activists and researchers to develop a compilation of entries that could enable contagious intersections across political, artistic and social practices.<sup>214</sup>

For the Nucleus, attempts to structure new vocabularies were modest but also vital collaborative and hopeful gestures. Program titles formulated word-concepts that embodied notions of action, dialogue and mutuality such as “irradiation,” “acolhimento,” “ação conjunto” (action together), “DouAções,” museu/escola (museum/school) or emphasized the sensorial such as “encontros multissenoriais” (multi-sensorial encounters). The latter, as a monthly series, recalled *Domingos* use of titles as word-theme-material concepts for example: “O museu vivo” (Living Museum) “O museu à escuta” (Museum to Listening); or “Paro-penso-olho-movimento” (I stop, I think, I see, I move). It was as if in creating “words with ears,” as Mestre suggests, that perhaps critical and affective bridges might be constructed.

Like the marginalia of medieval texts, these listening-word-actions operated in marginal relation to the museum-text.<sup>215</sup> But also, critically beside, productively experimenting, constructing and cultivating other possibilities to the “centrality” of the museum as a collection of objects. Morais was already arguing for such possibilities, in connection with *Domingos* in 1971:

The new museum doesn’t have to store paintings or have a physical site. What it needs to do is propose situations. The collection will be only documentations of things presented, films, slides, photos, recordings, because the object (art work) can be a situation, an event, a happening.<sup>216</sup>

Later in 1973, as part of the research conducted by the Unidade Experimental on publics visiting MAM, particularly to the gardens, Morais would further emphasize new ways of thinking about

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<sup>213</sup> Paz Rojo, Manuela Zechner and Anja Kangieser eds, *Vocabulaboratories* (Amsterdam: Lisa Stichting, 2008) Available online [https://archive.org/stream/VOCABULABORATORIES/VOCABULABORATORIES\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/VOCABULABORATORIES/VOCABULABORATORIES_djvu.txt)

<sup>214</sup> Cristina Ribas, *Vocabulário Político para Processos Estéticos* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Aplicação, 2014) Available online <http://vocabpol.cristinaribas.org>

<sup>215</sup> Curator and educator Veronica Sekules uses the metaphor of marginalia in medieval texts to discuss the relationships between the worlds of contemporary art and education (and the latter in particular) in relation to institutions. Veronica Sekules, “The Edge is not the Margin,” in *Access all areas* ed. Helen O’Donoghue (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2009) 232 -253, 246-249.

<sup>216</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “O novo museu não tem que guardar quadros, nem ter sede O que tem que fazer é propor situações. O acervo seria somente de documentos das coisas realizadas, filmes, slides, fotos, gravações, porque o objeto (obra de arte) pode ser uma situação, um acontecimento, um happening.”] Interview with Frederico Morais in Célia Teixeira, “Livresom do domingo,” Unknown journal, May 29th, 1971, Frederico Morais Archive, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.



museums and collections when his research suggested that for those visiting MAM there exists another collection – a “poetic collection” that is the “silence, noise, breeze, stones, vegetation.”<sup>217</sup>

The Nucleus attempted to expand this “poetic collection” to an ongoing praxis of researching, documenting and collecting experiences of artist-work-public relations. One important initiative in this vein was a program called “encontros multissensoriais” (multisensory encounters) that explored the museum, its architecture, gardens, collection, and exhibitions through the sharing of experiences between the blind and seeing. This project was developed in collaboration with the Nucleus of Cognition and Collective Research (NUCC) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and had the goal of experimenting with the boundaries and perceptions of accessibility – the tactile, the sensible, the auditory, the verbal, the visual, and the olfactory. Naturally, as MAM itself was key to the Brazilian vanguard’s phenomenological and sensorial leap into space and time, these sensibilities interwove with the multisensorial choreography of these encounters. Each, in turn, challenged the retinal primacy of the aesthetic experience within the museum. A slower more tactile rhythm was adopted. Franz Weissman’s Neoconcrete geometric sculptures embracing and (re)tracing the fullness of empty space, shifting from inside to outside, in a manner similar to Clark’s *Caminhando*, became literally embodied temporal transitions. Tunga’s anthropomorphic comb with a flowing gold mane of copper wires became a talisman of palpable sensorial strangeness. While there was often discussion of issues of access and creating “a route” of “touchable” works, the focus was not on experimenting toward a future applicable model; the experimental was rather embraced as both method and content.

Various artists with works on display at the museum (such as Tatiana Greenberg, Ricardo Ventura, Claudia Baker, Cabelo, and Laura Erber) participated in the encounters facilitating new perceptions of their works. Ricardo Ventura was fascinated when one of the blind participants recognized the wood he had used to create his sculpture *Dois sobre dois* (Two on Two) as jatobá saying it’s a kind of wood that makes your skin hairs stand up. This led to in depth exchange on materials and process while other participants explored their perceptions of the work’s shape,

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<sup>217</sup> *O Jornal*, March 11th, 1973. Discusses the “Laboratório de Criatividade (Unidade Experimental)” Creative Laboratory (Experimental Unit) under the direction of Frederico Morais. [“The research aimed to expand the notion of the collection, moving beyond a traditional idea of how a collection is understood – as paintings, sculptures, books, furniture – that there exists a poetic collection: the silence, noise, breeze, stones and vegetation. The material resulted in research, more than 30 tapes, photography, reports were incorporated into the museum’s collection, which in practice is an expansion of the notion of a collection.” Author translation, Portuguese original: “A pesquisa procurou ampliar o conceito de acervo, partindo da idéia de que além do que tradicionalmente se concebe como acervo – quadros, esculturas, livros, moveis – existe um acervo poético: o silêncio, o barulho, a brisa, a pedra, a vegetação. O material resultante da pesquisa, mais de 30 fitas gravadas, fotografias, relatórios, foram incorporados ao acervo do Museu, o que é na prática, a ampliação da noção do acervo.”] Morais also discusses the Unidade’s research in his interview with Renata Wilner, 77-78; and Frederico Morais, “Dimensionar o Museu,” in “O Museu em questão.” Caderno B, *Jornal do Brasil*, August 30th, 1975, in *Roberto Pontual Obra Crítica*, eds. Izabela Pucu and Jacqueline Medeiros (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2013) 279-286, 284-286.

temperature, form, and equilibrium. The sculpture comprises two beautifully curved pieces of wood, reminiscent of dumbbells but also of embryonic-like forms. Many drew analogies with the curvature of the spine and one person, who particularly touched Ventura, described the piece as reminding them of their mother's cheekbone.<sup>218</sup> The encounter opened up radically different forms of aesthetic judgement, accessible only through an expanded sensorial temporality.

Professor of psychology and coordinator of NUCC, Virginia Kastrup, identifies as key aspects of the program: working with artists, adopting the experimental as method, willingness to divest prior knowledge, exchange between research groups, and what she described as access to the "noble" part of the museum.<sup>219</sup> The latter distinction emphasizes that it is not only about providing the possibility to touch original artworks but also to qualitatively access artistic forms of thinking and making together with artists, curators, and educators. Artist/educator Bianca Bernado, who along with Bernardo Zabalaga co-led the monthly series for the Nucleus in 2012 – 2013, describes a particularly rich encounter titled "O eco do meu corpo no mundo" (The Echo of My Body in the World) that opened up new ways of thinking about access beyond the tactile, challenging touch as a necessity and pointing to other possibilities.<sup>220</sup> This furthered the program's experimental method as a series of horizontal encounters between research groups, artists and participants.<sup>221</sup> Domingos Guimaraens presented his work *Risco* (Risk) featuring a video of the artist amidst approaching traffic writing the word "risk" on the road. The artist's narration of the making the piece coupled with the sound of oncoming traffic, soliciting cries of "Be careful" and "Watch out!" together with the participation of flautist Guilherme de Carvalho, gave the encounter a richly textured and embodied quality achieved through voice and sound.

This experimental mutuality shifted the encounters from being perceived as about/for those with "deficiencies" to a genuine exchange of other sensory "efficiencies."<sup>222</sup> Recalling Oiticica's *Parangolés*, this experimentality was enabled by collective wearing *and* watching (here

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<sup>218</sup> Bebel Kastrup and Virginia Mota, "Um encontro com a obra dois sobre dois de Ricardo Ventura," 2012, Blog, Nucleo Experimental de Educação e Arte, PDF 1-5, 3 [https://nucleoexperimental.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/um-encontro-com-a-obra-dois-sobre-dois-de-ricardo-ventura\\_bebelvirginia\\_ok.pdf](https://nucleoexperimental.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/um-encontro-com-a-obra-dois-sobre-dois-de-ricardo-ventura_bebelvirginia_ok.pdf)

<sup>219</sup> When interviewed Kastrup had recently returned from a conference at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London on questions of accessibility and the blind. After experiencing a mediation for the blind at the museum, while acknowledging the competency of the educator, she noted that the "access" seemed to be to secondary objects or objects "like" those on display rather than the artworks/primary objects themselves. For Kastrup MAM rather offered access to what she describes as the "noble" part of the museum. Interview with the author, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>220</sup> Educator/researcher Ana Chaves lead the multisensorial encounters program for the Nucleus in its first year of experimentation in 2011. In 2012 -2013 artist/educators Bianca Bernado and Bernardo Zabalaga co-coordinated the encounters. All the Nucleus' artists, educators, researchers and cultural producers collaborated with the program.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with the author, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>222</sup> The idea of efficiency and deficiency comes from the observations of Camilla Alves and Virginia Menezes de Souza, both blind, who acted as mediators for the exhibition *Hélio Oiticica: Museum is the World* in 2010 at Casa França Brasil. Their work for the exhibition was developed in collaboration with myself and Luiz Guilherme Vergara and the educators Ana Chaves and Maira Dias, both of whom were part of the Nucleus and were supervisors of the mediator team for the Oiticica exhibition as well as Virginia Kastrup, her student Juliana Moura and the NUCC team who stress the importance of conducting research *with* rather than for blind people.

what might be called a tactile conviviality) not only of those participating, but also as a kind of happening observed by other museum visitors. Vital to this process was the presence of trust – between research groups, the institution, participants, and artists – curiously facilitated by blindness itself. As philosopher Peter Pál Pelbart has noted when habit gives no guarantees trust is vital – indetermination, trust, experimentation, creation go together.<sup>223</sup> Here the figure of the blind person, one that historically conjures necessities of dependence and intellectual fascination, mobilized both a literal and metamorphic feeling one’s way in the dark, opening up fissures between institutional habits and emergent possibilities where, like Jacques Derrida writes in *Memoirs of the Blind*, the body proper – here understood as both individual and collective – is an instrument, the drawer of the drawing.<sup>224</sup> A process that affects a kind of multisensorial invasion and expansion of the scopic margins of vision to give us, both the blind and seeing, back our eyes; that is a more textured, slowed down, open, readied, and willing mode of experiencing.

Another encounter began with us sitting on small stools in MAM’s gardens. We must have been about twenty, maybe not even. In a small gesture of welcome, Bianca and Bernardo invited us to simply breathe, corporally listen to the space, time and moment. A light breeze enfolded us and we all began to gently sway. Lula Wanderley described to me that he “learned to come and cry in MAM’s gardens.”<sup>225</sup> There is something magical, affective, wholly singular in those spaces, that breeze...This breeze, affectivity, and openness became sensible instruments, tools of practice, a resonant body instinctively and expansively drawing itself. As Virginia Kastrup remarked on a subsequent experience with Israel, one of blind people involved in the encounters, who in the midst of a workshop and thoroughly immersed in the moment turned to her and said “MAM is with us.”<sup>226</sup>

Affectivity and relaxed openness, is how Morais described the key essentials of MAM as a space of Carioca art.<sup>227</sup> Writing in 1980 and lamenting the institutional crisis post the 1978 fire, he argued that a certain joyfulness and involving generosity that engaged the public in the artists’ creative process characterized the institution’s programming at its most expressive.<sup>228</sup> A legacy of which imbued the multisensorial encounters. Experiencing, experimenting, touching were all

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<sup>223</sup> Pelbart’s essay “Acreditar no mundo” explores the work of William James particularly through the lens of the philosopher David Lapoujade and the place of trust as a necessary resource to inhabit risk and foster creativity. Peter Pál Pelbart. “Acreditar no mundo.” *O avesso do nilismo: Cartografias do esgotamento*. São Paulo: N 1 edições, 2013, pp. 305 – 324, p.319

<sup>224</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self Portrait and Other Ruins*, Trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993/Paperback edition 2007), 4-5

<sup>225</sup> Interview with the author, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Frederico Morais. “Balanço /.80 – 2 A crise do MAM e a vanguarda carioca.” *O Globo*, December, 1980. Administrative files, Research and Documentation Center, MAM-RJ.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

simultaneously interwoven, tentatively seeking out new territories where, as Derrida notes, “[t]he *experience* or *experimenting* of drawing (and experimenting, as its name indicates, always consists in journeying beyond limits), at once crosses and institutes these borders.”<sup>229</sup>

### 2.5.7 Tactical Museology: The Museum Insideout

Marginal and experimental the Nucleus was also tactical. As already noted, Morais argued in the late 1960s for a museum to be “a programmer of activities throughout the city” where “the concept of workshop is more extensive” and can refer to “any place in the city where teachers and students gather.”<sup>230</sup> This sense of the museum as proposition out in the world can also be redeployed back into the site-specific context of the museum itself. Here the institution – exhibits, collections, context etc – is understood as material to be “used” that is read, explored, and reconfigured by publics themselves. The notion of users rather than publics is a key observation in diverse critical analyses. Librarian David Carr draws a parallel between museums and libraries and invokes Umberto Eco when he says that the museum is an “open work created only in the play of its users.”<sup>231</sup> More recently, critic Stephen Wright has provocatively written about the “offline 3.0 museum” that would be like a kind of “walk-in toolbox for usership.”<sup>232</sup>

Understanding the museum as a toolbox out in the world and in situ was usefully deployed by another program of the Nucleus led by the educators Ana Paula Chaves and Gleyce Kelly Heitor that aimed to explore new ways of thinking about the museum/school relationship where all involved – museum educator, teacher, student, school, museum – were seen as creative agents and authors. One pilot initiative, developed in partnership with the city’s Secretary of Education and the Emílio Carlos School in the north of the city, fostered affective links and experimental practices by working with teachers and classes in a truly transdisciplinary manner across subject areas: English, Portuguese, Geography, Science, Music, History, Maths and Art. One of these projects, called “The Museum Insideout,” deconstructed the museum and its context via engaging directly with the diverse professionals that make up the institution’s day-to-day life:

Using the interview format and documentation in video and photography, we created an investigative route where the internal and external structures of MAM were approached “inside/out,” via statements of diverse professionals – exhibition guards, curators, educators, cinemateque technician, research and documentation assistants, cleaners, administrators – sharing different perceptions

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<sup>229</sup> Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, 54.

<sup>230</sup> Morais. “Chronocollage: Rio de Janeiro, 1967 – 1972,” in *Río Experimental*.

<sup>231</sup> David Carr, *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (Walnut Creek/California: Altamira Press, 2003) 11

<sup>232</sup> Stephen Wright, “Museum 3.0.” *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013) 39-40, 40 <http://museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf>

about the museum, their professional roles, and the context of work. Reflections generated in this encounter were then in turn applied in the school context and we proposed the same route/strategy where students and educators would present the school, drawing on their own stories and perceptions of the locale including the school garden, classrooms, library, courtyard, dining hall, parking area etc., and we saw many points of convergence between the two institutions.

Ana Chaves, educator, Núcleo Experimental<sup>233</sup>

In a manner similar to the *Irradiações* program, the idea was to create a two-way engagement rendered possible by a mutual dislocation, a sort of “happening between” entities, as Ana Chaves suggested. A practice that favored co-produced creative interventions in the daily experiential life of the school and museum, effectively deconstructing traditional curricular and reception models that, as Gleyce Kelly Heitor noted, sought to find their own form and produce desire amongst those involved.<sup>234</sup> A testimony to this process is the English teacher Jorge Luiz Peçanha’s reflection on his own shift from estrangement to amazement in the evolution of the project. His collaboration with the school’s Music teacher and students produced “raps” about the museum from the youth perspective. The day of their visit to MAM they met the artist Cabelo whose exhibition *Humúsica* (October 18<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012) – a play on humus and music – was on view at MAM at the time, mixing poetry, music, drawing, sculpture, and performance. The artist listened to their raps, sung with them, affirming a kind of micro revolutionary sensibility, as Peçanha notes “showing that it is possible for all of us to see life with the eyes of an artist.”<sup>235</sup>

Another aspect of the museum/school initiative was to foster a network of educators, university researchers and schools public (state and municipal) and private, as well as NGOs engaged with youth education. As a means of inaugurating this process a series of study groups was developed as a method to create links and to debate critical issues and new possibilities for museum/school relationships via overarching themes: “Museum-School-City” – exploring where does the museum and the school begin and the city as a territory of learning;

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<sup>233</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “No planejamento, criamos conjuntamente com os professores um percurso em que os alunos fariam um reconhecimento do museu pelos profissionais. Por meio de entrevistas e registros em vídeo e fotografia, criamos um percurso investigativo, em que as estruturas internas e externas do MAM foram reconhecidas pelo seu ‘avesso’, ou seja, identificamos através do depoimento de diversos profissionais – salão de exposição, curadoria, educação, cinemateca, documentação, setor de limpeza, administração – diferentes percepções sobre seu local de trabalho e sua relação com o museu. A partir das reflexões geradas nesse encontro, para a ação na escola, propomos o mesmo percurso: alunos e educadores nos apresentaram a escola a partir das histórias que compõem os espaços do jardim, quadra, estacionamento, sala de leitura, sala de aula, e refeitório e foram percebidos muitos pontos convergentes entre as duas instituições.”] Ana Chaves. Report on the Museum/School initiative, Nucleus Blog: <https://nucleoexperimental.wordpress.com/category/colaboracoes/>

<sup>234</sup> “Museu/Escola aprendizagens em rede.” *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation II*. Panel discussion: Gleyce Kelly Heitor, Ana Chaves, Anita Sobar, Jorge Luiz Peçanha, Luiz Lima, Teresa Cristina, Moderator: Mara Pereira, November 2012, organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, MAM-RJ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4JK7S2hdHE&list=PLO-GRBBoQZriGcpgVzQM\\_TNalnDm3kG3K&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4JK7S2hdHE&list=PLO-GRBBoQZriGcpgVzQM_TNalnDm3kG3K&index=3)

<sup>235</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “mostrando que é possível para todos nós ver a vida com olhos do artista.”] Jorge Luiz Peçanha. *Ibid.*

“Transdisciplinarity;” and “Artistic Practices as Learning Practices.” The study groups worked both in the museum’s gardens and galleries featuring the reading of texts in small groups and creative lab workshops. Educator Mara Pereira notes that the groups were a micro collective action, an attempt, not to deny, but rather to propose a different model from the traditional teacher training sessions offered by museums with the intention of generating student publics for the institution. Recalling education philosopher Silvo Gallo’s notion of “minor” education, in her essay on the groups Pereira suggests they were a form of micro militant activism. That is, a practice immersed in everyday life, micropolitics, de-schooling, and resistance to established flows, but also one that embraces a search for common ground and direct action.<sup>236</sup> As a form of “minor” agency, the study group model potentializes new critical readings and awareness. Pereira draws an analogy with site-specific pieces by Richard Serra at the Municipal Hélio Oiticica Art Center in Rio de Janeiro, 1997, featuring large black circles drawn on the ceilings and arched hallways, clearly visible yet strangely easily missed, where such “minor” presence affects “the impression of a movement that did not exist, but was there. A discrete and potent subversion.”<sup>237</sup>

The embrace of the “minor” as distinct from *Domingos* mass scale events is a distinctly contemporary turn. Occupying institutional site specificities – place, collection, history, and human relations – as experimentally “minor” possibilities in all their diversity and transversality, with criticality and affection, may offer the most radical of political pedagogic praxes. As education scholar Teresa Esteban noted in relation to the study groups, it is not where the school or the museum begins but rather “that is it possible for the experience to go beyond in a process of multiple weaving encounters with the other.”<sup>238</sup> Yet discontinuity and necessary scalability jeopardize such “going beyond.” Like the exhibition “tight rope” the tensions of quantitative reach and qualitative depth challenge one another but also must be in play as dimensions that simultaneously enable the other. The experimental counterpimper needs to work both sides. Links, affections, networks require time. Events, numbers, scale requires resources. Increasingly for the Nucleus these struggles seemed to create impasses rather than “cracks.”

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<sup>236</sup> Silvo Gallo, “Em torno de uma educação menor,” *Educação & Realidade* (July/December, 2002): 169-178.

<sup>237</sup> Mara Pereira, “A Minor Education, A Minor Art, A Minor Museum: The Study Groups Run by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art at MAM-RJ,” *Revista MESA* no 4: Past as Blueprint: Hybrid Practices/Limit Zones (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_4/portfolio/arte-mam-03/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_4/portfolio/arte-mam-03/?lang=en)

<sup>238</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “[...] mas saber ser possível a experiência de ir além em processos múltiplos tecidos nos encontros com o outro.”] Maria Teresa Esteban. Statement via email to the author. April 2015.

### 2.5.8 Critical Liminality: Post Neoconcrete Curatorship and Education

In November 2011, a little over a year into its operation, the Nucleus presented the international seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*.<sup>239</sup> The seminar drew on various synergies at the time: the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial's concept of expanded pedagogy; Casa Daros and their focus on artistic-pedagogic practices; an international education institute at MoMA on a similar topic that had engaged the Nucleus' coordinators; and the work of the Nucleus itself. It was a rich opportunity to examine international debates around the educational turn in art and curatorial practice and explore its potential relevance from a Brazilian perspective and vitally look toward connecting with existing networks and building a critical infrastructure of artists, educators, researchers and NGOs interested in such work. *Domingos* were featured as a provocative catalyst for the seminar's debates via a special showing of the documentary *Um domingo com Frederico* followed by a roundtable with Moraes, Carlos Vergara and Luiz Camillo Osorio. As curator Clarissa Diniz offered in her commissioned essay on the seminar:

If, especially in Europe, this 'educational turn' addresses the sharing of ethical and political intentions/methods in education and art – repositioning the social nature of art – experiences like *Domingos* could be Brazil's contribution to the debate. In the wake of the internationalization of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, might there not also be a post-neoconcrete curatorship and education?<sup>240</sup>

Indeed, Oiticica's 1967 "General Scheme of New Objectivity" could be seen to speculate on forms of socially engaged praxis that may foster "new experimental conditions where the artist takes on the role of proposer or entrepreneur or even educator."<sup>241</sup> Diniz, however, questioned the value of drawing on these possibilities. Although, on the one hand it may appear to be an important opportunity to nurture practices and ideas that given the social political climate of the military dictatorship did not have the chance to mature, on the other hand, more than forty years since the publication of Oiticica's text, in a wholly different socio-cultural and economic context, maybe this should beg another critical analysis. Perhaps she asks "we need a set of questions where there is no potential "equivalence" where the: "proposer ≠ entrepreneur ≠ educator? Or, in a different and perhaps more explicit sense, are not the proposer-educator, the entrepreneur-educator and the artist-educator different from each other?"<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> For more information on the conference see: <http://institutomesa.org/projects/international-seminars-reconfiguring-the-public-art-pedagogy-participation-i-ii/?lang=en>

<sup>240</sup> Clarissa Diniz, "Rewards and Breezes: Reflections and Questions from the seminar, *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*," commissioned essay on the occasion of the seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*, organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, November 2011. (Currently unavailable)

<sup>241</sup> Hélio Oiticica, "General Scheme for New Objectivity," in *Hélio Oiticica*, 110-120, 119.

<sup>242</sup> Diniz, "Rewards and Breezes."

Yet, Oiticica's "ors" are not so much equivalences but rather contemplated turns, musings about new possible territories and roles. Drawing on the artist's provocation, decades later, is not to recuperate it as some kind of birthright, but rather to investigate the potential of such "turnings" or indeed refusals as Diniz seems to suggest via leveraging poetic precedent. (Re) connecting to both lesser known and received histories – as in Foucault's sense of genealogy as an experimental investigative tool – re-imagines past visions as future possibilities. This should never be a revival as Oiticica said of the experimental but a kind of "retaking."<sup>243</sup> While recuperating these histories of quasi education or Oiticica's "artist-as-even-educator" projection, may not lead to shifting established modalities, they can however, by their very existence and insistence, destabilize and counter normalized practices, instigating a kind of productive unlearning and what if. Here, the artist as educator or educator as artist or indeed hyphenated artist-educator or curator-educator may assume an experimental potency in occupying "the artist-work-public relation" as a critical space of liminality. Yet, this hybrid or hyphenated state is not an easily assumed, comfortable or stable identitarian construct. Indeed, art and education, while embraced by the artist Luis Camnitzer as two sides of the same practice, are nevertheless highly stratified worlds."<sup>244</sup> Here hybridity may not be a solution to a problem or possibility, as Homi K. Bhabha pointed out in relation to culture in the early 1990s, but rather an effect of colonial power and its interpellation.<sup>245</sup> Art may be seen here to instrumentalize education, overshadowing, rather than bringing needed new perspectives or criticality to the mostly invisible practices and struggles of mediation within existing social contexts.<sup>246</sup> Judith Butler's probing of the notion of the hyphen in her critique of nation-state, may also be redirected to question hybrid or hyphenated position or roles, even that of the artist-educator:

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<sup>243</sup> Hélio Oiticica, "Experimentar o Experimental" (Attempt, Try To Experiment the Experimental), in *Fios soltos: A arte de Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Paula Braga (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2008) 347-351, 350.

<sup>244</sup> Camnitzer suggests that: "Art and Education are not different things, they are different features of a single activity." Luis Camnitzer, "Introduction," in *Education for Art; Art for Education* eds. Luis Camnitzer & Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro (Porto Alegre: Bienal Mercosul, 2009) 287-304, 291

<sup>245</sup> Drawing on Homi Bhabha's analysis in *Location of Culture*, 1994, Simon Sheikh points out that hybridity is thus not a celebratory concept, as opposed to the way in which it is often employed in biennial culture and major art events, but rather, it is an ambivalent state of being in-between powers of authority, the authenticity of authorship, and the (im)possibility of cultural translation. Simon Sheikh, "None of the Above: From Hybridity to Hyphenation. The Artist as Model Subject, and the Biennial Model as Apparatus of Subjectivity," *Futures of Co-Habitation. Manifesta Journal* # 17, 2013 <http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/futures-cohabitation-0#page-issuesfuturescohabitationnoneabovehybridityhyphenationartistmodelssubjectandbiennialmodel>

<sup>246</sup> Nora Sternfeld explores the critical question of a certain colonization of education in her excellent article "Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?" *e-flux Journal* # 14: Education Actualized (February 2010) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/unglamorous-tasks-what-can-education-learn-from-its-political-traditions/>



[...] but what work does the hyphen do? Does the hyphen finesse the relation that needs to be done? Does it mark a certain soldering that has taken place historically? Does it suggest a fallibility at the heart of the relation?<sup>247</sup>

The Nucleus definitely lived that fallibility in its operations. Its institutionally liminal position i.e. not staff but fully outsourced, yet dependent entity, meant a limbo of quasiness where we were neither this nor that, not quite an education department, nor an experimental collective, neither insider nor outsider. Amidst institutional fragilities – few resources, stretched staff etc - this laid the groundwork for a schewed relationship that unfortunately neither the Nucleus nor the museum managed to revert paving the way for varying (mis) readings of hyphenated artist-educator or educator-researcher roles seen, for example, as an inappropriate quest for visibility or simply disregarded as not officially sanctioned or rejected as not conforming to expectations of education service models. Within the group itself fault lines emerged often positioning and aligning practices along territorial lines where, for example, performativity or criticality were alternately claimed for art or education. Such shifting territorialities amidst uncertain institutional liminality and the highly unstable financial reality of the Nucleus together with each individual's experience and ambitions within the field, meant a dissensus of hyphenated practice often imploded internally rather than being effectively wielded as a critical or performative blade – a reminder, in these days of “dissensus” and conversational turns, of the potentially entropic nature of dialogue. When we emphasize “listening” and “dialogue” in the context of the liminal relation of education and art, as Gleyce Kelly Heitor asks: “What is, really, the dialogical dimension of this place? What do we do with what we listen? What do we want with the forums that we create?”<sup>248</sup>

As theorist Leonidas Donskis has remarked, “humanity’s true hell always resides not in failed social visions and dreams, nor in paroxysms of violence and brutality, but in our impaired powers of community [...]”<sup>249</sup> The Nucleus was an attempt to create a community or at least new commonalities, an educational program, a vital “artist-work-public” relation at MAM, a dialogue, a space to try out different modes of public address. The liminal relation of education and art was both a potent experiential possibility and impossibility. Anthropologist Victor Turner characterized liminality as a “betwixt and between” ritualized state that draws on symbolic

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<sup>247</sup> Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?* (London: Seagull Books, 2007) 2-3.

<sup>248</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “Qual é, realmente, a dimensão dialógica deste lugar? O que fazemos com o que escutamos? O que queremos com os fóruns que criamos?”] Gleyce Kelly Heitor, “O que estamos fazendo aqui? Insisto!” Report on Study Group of the conference *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* at MAM Rio, Seminar publication 2012 (currently unavailable)

<sup>249</sup> Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge UK/Malden USA: Polity Press, 2013) 195

oscillations between structured and unstructured society, hierarchy and *communitas*.<sup>250</sup> Curiously, this liminality carries a “blend of lowliness and sacredness,” where one is at once reduced and ground down to be (hopefully) fashioned anew while also being exposed to a certain magico-religious aura of openness.<sup>251</sup> For Turner these oscillations represent a pedagogics of liminality.<sup>252</sup> The liminal may not be a place to stay, but it is, as Virgínia Mota noted of the Nucleus, a context where you “encounter the limitations of your own method.” For Ana Chaves, the Nucleus was a career “watershed.”<sup>253</sup> Certainly, for all involved it was a kind of critically embodied sharpening stone of practice.

The constant (re) absorption of the marginal and interstitial is part of the ritualized symbolic role of the liminal in society, as is the eternal ebb and flow flux of the fate of the experimental in art and education. The question is to what degree in subtle or more visible ways does this inhabiting of the liminal and its subsequent co-option lead to any kind of socio-cultural reclassification or critical intervention? In the context of the art/education divide does the largely feminized segment of education gain any symbolic capital?<sup>254</sup> Can inhabiting different roles enable a kind of bait and switch practice as a double-agent or does this ultimately rather reinforce a status of disempowerment? Can such liminal privileges of transit be rather re-channeled from hierarchical worlds in order to strengthen those more often than not positioned at their edges?

It is perhaps by the very inhabiting of the liminal with its pitfalls and possibilities that we might begin to sketch practices that strengthen edges. Here a post neoconcrete curatorship and education may emerge as an experimental method – vested in subjectivity, sociality, openness, performativity, destabilization, marginality, critical (in)visibilities, and anti-art and anti-education where the anti, drawing on Oiticica and Clark, is not so much a negation but rather a constant instigation to reframe practice. Oiticica reflected as much after the experience of his installation *Eden* at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 1969, rejecting “objectal representation” to embrace “a new experimental world” which demanded, with urgency, “complete new ways of

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<sup>250</sup> Renata Wilner in her unpublished master’s dissertation on *Domingos* draws on Turner’s notion of *communitas* exploring how and if these ritual moments of *communitas* impact the institution suggesting that the series’ “carnivalization” may have disturbed more conservative forces who often fail to realize how such libertarian moments can also revitalize the institution. For my purposes here I am more interested in Turner’s discussion of liminality but I am grateful to her discussion and to pointing to the usefulness of the anthropologist’s work. Wilner, 20-21.

<sup>251</sup> Victor Turner, “Liminality and *Communitas*,” in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969) 94-113, 125-30. Abridged version PDF available online, 358-374, 359

<http://www.sjsu.edu/people/annapurna.pandey/courses/MSR122/s0/Victor-Turner-Liminality-and-Communitas.pdf>

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

<sup>253</sup> Interview with the author, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>254</sup> I am deploying a question used by Nora Sternfeld in referring to the art/education relation in the recent international debates around the educational turn in art and curatorship: “does the largely feminized segment of mediators and educators as well as the knowledge from schools, [...] youth groups, and so on, really belong to it? And are these elements in turn provided with symbolic capital?” Nora Sternfeld, “Unglamorous Tasks: What Can Education Learn from its Political Traditions?” *e-flux journal* (February 2010) 1- 13, 7

communication.<sup>255</sup> How to understand this in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context? Might we, as Irene Small suggests, rearticulate “the epistemic shift of advanced art of the 1960s and 70s, by way of an alternate model of a museum, one that does not stand polemically between art and anti-art, or more crudely, art and life, but functions as a space for the investigation of living things.”<sup>256</sup> Also, how might we take up the gauntlet of “complete new ways of communication” particularly in the context of Latin American art, education and institutions with a certain, as critic Walter Mignolo suggests, “epistemic disobedience”? That is, in what ways might this post neoconcrete curatorship and education delink and decolonize practices, both in their content and ways of doing, from traditional Western macro-narratives and points of reference?<sup>257</sup>

Revisiting the world of 1960s and 70s hybrid practices and limit zones may offer some guideposts. As Turner has described: “Liminality, marginality, and structural inferiority are conditions in which are frequently generated myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art.”<sup>258</sup> These “liminal” states and cultural forms offer potential models and generative guides that enable us, not only to revisit histories and rethink our understanding of the world around us, but also to intervene within it and learn from failure.

It is in this sense that the past can be a blueprint. Oiticica’s and Clark’s participative works, Freire’s alternative pedagogies, the art critical embrace of Serpa’s children’s art classes in the 1950s or the quasi education of *Domingos* point to models of practice that embrace a process of experimentation and construction, a working with and a horizontal artist-work-public relation, not of the highfaluting technological variety, but of the ad hoc, presencial, critically aware, politically committed, sensorial, and therapeutic variety. The Experimental Nucleus drew on these histories, to re-imagine new practices in the present, at times falling prey to fallibility of the liminal, the quasi, and the hyphenated, at others touching a spirit of contagious poetics.

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<sup>255</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “The Senses Pointing to a New Transformation,” 4

<sup>256</sup> Irene Small, “Morphology in the Studio: Hélio Oiticica at the Museu Nacional,” *Getty Research Journal* no. 1 (2009): 107-26, 118

<sup>257</sup> Walter Mignolo, “Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De) Coloniality, Border Thinking, and Epistemic Disobedience,” European Institute for Progressive Cultural Practices. *Journal* (September, 2011).

<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0112/mignolo/en>

<sup>258</sup> Victor Turner. “Liminality and Communitas,” 373.

### 3.0 A SENSE OF CONSTRUCTIVITY: FOREST SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL LEARNING AT THE 8TH MERCOSUL BIENNIAL, 2011

We can see as an astrologist [...] with his lenses, the sketchy images of the cosmic plan: the micro-cosmic. The same is, in essence, Constructive Art [...] It can no longer be considered painting: not even art [...] Indeed it goes beyond art. For this reason, I would call it a human act.

Joaquin Torres García<sup>1</sup>

A soft click marked the presentation of one abstract construction after another: angular jointed colors, bursting shapes, flying lines, empty space, ritualistic markings. Everything seemed to want to fold into or shoot out of itself. The whirring slide projector, a veritable audio-visual anachronism, reinforced the sense that we were somehow witnessing an archaeology of the present. Almost eighty years old and sharp as a whip, curator/critic Frederico Moraes and chief curator of the 1<sup>st</sup> Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1997 was lecturing on its three organizational themes: the political, the cartographic and the constructive. He particularly focused on the later. Another construction and another: palpable projections waiting to escape. Then he paused to reflect on an image of the table and chair from the artist Joaquin Torres García's universal constructivism workshop. They were included in an adjunct exhibition of the Biennial honoring the artist and his students. Torres García's famous upended map of the Americas was first published in a 1935 article promoting his Escuela del Sur (School of the South) and his particular brand of constructivism mixing universal abstraction with nationalist intention and indigenous symbols. The map is a potent symbol of an inverted order – not only a new way of seeing geopolitical and colonialist legacies but also of assuming a position of difference.

Inaugurated in 1991 with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay and later including Chile and Bolivia, Mercosul stands for Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the South) and was the Southern Cone's response to NAFTA. Strange as it seems to have a contemporary art biennial named after a free-trade agreement, it is perhaps a more honest reflection of the origins

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<sup>1</sup> Joaquín Torres García, *La recuperación del objeto* (Montevideo, 1952) 88-89, in Mari Carmen Ramirez, "Vital Structures: The Constructive Nexus in South America," in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, eds. Mari Carmen and Hector Olea (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) 198.

of most biennials as political and economic operations. Like many biennials situated in peripheries, the Mercosul Biennial emerged in the midst of geopolitical shifts and postcolonial turns of the 1980s and 1990s as a means of promoting economic regeneration, cultural tourism and geopolitical positioning of the host city/country on the regional and international cultural map. The center/periphery framing is of course like a set of Russian dolls. The Mercosul Biennial is also “south” to the São Paulo-Rio de Janeiro axis and in varying degrees posits itself as a counterpoint to the internationalism of the São Paulo Biennial. With this 1<sup>st</sup> Mercosul Biennial Morais aimed to “rewrite the story of Latin American art.”<sup>2</sup> Yet curiously, in art world where not only international, but also national, center/periphery inferiority complexes are at play, it was the first time in the ensuing seventeen years he had been invited to talk publicly on the biennial.<sup>3</sup>

Mônica Hoff, former coordinator of the biennial’s pedagogic program (2006 – 2014) and one of the 9<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial’s curators, followed Morais’ presentation. One image after another portrayed a rich array of social gatherings, beach parties, street improvisations and parades, star-gazing campers, group discussions, expeditions visiting mines and forests, all with much merriment and quizzical engagement; the constructivist Pandora had well and truly left out of its box. Here was a new form of collective spectatorship, re-calling the collective models of the Russian constructivists, where art, process, public, and mediation merged into life as a social act.

My interest here, however, is not the 1<sup>st</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> editions, but rather the geopoetical hinge event of the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, held in 2011. In capturing the seed thoughts of Morais’ political, cartographic and constructive gestures and in building on the macro and micro curatorial pedagogy of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> editions, the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, entitled *Geopoetic Essays*, with José Roca as chief curator and Pablo Helguera as pedagogic curator, offers a rich lens through which to explore the constructive as a practice – its heritage and potential legacy. To set the stage the chapter begins with a series of “constructive detours” drawing on different time periods, geographies, and fields of practice in art, education and psychology. In a similar vein to critic Claire Bishop’s aspiration in *Artificial Hells* to “give momentum to rethinking the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century art through the lens of theater,” I see the constructive, in particular, art’s relationship to education via the school, understood in its most open-ended possibilities as a laboratory for experimentation, a place of encounter, and perhaps, most importantly, a phenomenological and social relation of learning, as a generative and symbiotic dimension of avant-garde art practice.<sup>4</sup> Indeed in many

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<sup>2</sup> Frederico Morais, 1st Biennial Mercosul catalogue (Porto Alegre: Fundação da Bienal do Mercosul, 1997) no page nos.

<sup>3</sup> Seminar, *O Sentido de Publico na Arte* (Publicness in Art), Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói, Brazil, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014,

<sup>4</sup> In addition to rethinking through the lens of “theatre” Bishop also notes: “Further sub-themes include education and therapy: both are process-based experiences that rely on intersubjective exchange, and indeed converge with theatre

instances, such experimental learning is foreseen by early 20<sup>th</sup> century alternative education from John Dewey's Laboratory School to anarchist inspired Free Popular Universities.

Another "detour" briefly reviews current international discourse regarding biennials and the so-called "educational turn" in art and curating where, previously seen as peripheral programs, such as talks or schools are no longer understood as add-ons but are seen as core to the artistic or curatorial endeavor. Both in dialogue with and as a counterpoint to this "turn," *Geopoetic Essays* enthusiastically embraced art and pedagogy as mutually contagious practices and tools with which to engage the world. In the process the biennial inaugurated a vital field of experimental and constructive possibilities. Read through Torres García's inverted map, the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial's investment in regional and local geopoetics – artist residencies, a neighborhood cultural center, and a team of 200 mediators involved in all aspects of the biennial – infused with Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagic poetics of forest and school, sketches a possibility of what a reworked school of the south might be – a "forest school" – that is an agile, affective, experimental, constructive, environmental and locally vested dynamic relation of learning.

As a means of engaging with this dynamic as it was unfolding, I was invited together with curator/art professor Luiz Guilherme Vergara by Pablo Helguera and Mônica Hoff to develop a research/evaluation initiative that might be able to accompany the unfolding geopoetic synergies and contagious energies and explore their potential legacies. Here the constructive was deployed as an operative critical gesture of being beside. Literally, as a mirror inside a process, we engaged first hand with the biennial's "school" at varying moments, participating in events and conducting interviews inviting curators, artists, teachers, mediators, producers, and diverse professional and community members to reflect on their experience. Not unlike Torres García's subversion of the pure and objective organizational principles of constructivism, as Mari Carmen Ramírez notes, to ones that were active, contaminated and subjective, this yields a different kind of criticism.<sup>5</sup> Complicit, embodied, and partial, it is a critical practice that, as theorist Irit Rogoff suggests, is more akin to "inhabiting", a constructive sensibility of being with, that in its very proximity, its "besideness" translates into other critical formats and ways of working.<sup>6</sup>

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and performance [...]." Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London/New York: Verso, 2012) 3.

<sup>5</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Vital Structures: The Constructive Nexus in South America," 193.

<sup>6</sup> Irit Rogoff, "Smuggling – an embodied criticality." European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies. August, 2008 <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/rogoff1/en> PDF pp 1-7, p.1

### 3.1 DETOURS: ORGANIC LINES, SOCIAL LEARNING AND FOREST SCHOOLS

In a 1962 essay “The Transition of Color from the Painting into Space and the Sense of Constructivity” Hélio Oiticica emphasizes the constructive as a sensibility, a tendency that is structural rather than formal and one that is not necessarily geometric.<sup>7</sup> Bringing together artists as diverse as Kandinsky, Mondrian, Schwitters, Calder, Malevitch and Pollock, he argues that constructive artists are “those who establish new structural relations in painting (color) and in sculpture, and open up new perceptions of time and space, [...] add new perspectives and modify the ways we see and feel.”<sup>8</sup> He advocates a reconsideration of the term “constructivism” or “constructive art.” A sense of the constructive permeates “our epoch”; it is not the formal qualities that define the constructive but “the general spirit that since the emergence of Cubism and abstract art (via Kandinsky) animates the creators of our century.”<sup>9</sup> Oiticica reads this constructive spirit as a natural evolution to the preceding generation’s deconstruction of the image and naturalistic sense of space, structure, time and perception.<sup>10</sup>

While previous English translations of Oiticica’s essay have rendered “o sentido de construtividade” as “the meaning of construction,” the “sense of constructivity” is deliberately deployed to address, as critic Sérgio Martins notes, the substantive quality of “construtividade” that construction misses.<sup>11</sup> The “sense of constructivity” enables an avoidance of “isms” and, as Martins suggests, points to a founding attitude rather than a telos, an operation rather than a movement.<sup>12</sup> It also, I would argue, suggests a tentative feeling one’s way into the future, a directional, indeed potentially multidirectional, yet open-ended process, one that aspires to consequential meaning, sense, structure, language – something to be constructed – but is, as yet, undetermined – to be created in the process of its construction.

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<sup>7</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “A transição da cor do quadro para o espaço e o sentido de construtividade,” (The Transition of Color from the Painting into Space and the Meaning of Construction, 1962), Trans. Stephen Berg, in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, ed. Mari Carmen Ramírez Houston/London: Tate Publishing in Association with The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 2007) 222-227, 224.

<sup>8</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “Transition of Color”, 224.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>11</sup> Martins argues: “The translation of sentido de construtividade into ‘meaning of construction’ is misleading in that it loses the polysemy of the word sentido, in Portuguese, which can mean ‘sense’ ‘meaning’ or ‘direction.’ Besides ‘construtividade’ denotes a substantive quality, which ‘construction’ largely misses. A better translation alternative would have been therefore ‘sense of constructivity.’” His English translation reference is “The Transition of Color from the Painting into Space and the Meaning of Construction” in Mari Carmen Ramírez ed *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*; Sérgio Bruno Martins, “Phenomenological Openness,” in “Bursting on the Scene: Looking back at Brazilian Art,” *Third Text*, ed. Sérgio Bruno Martins, Vol. 26, Issue 1, (January 2012): 79-90, 87-88.

<sup>12</sup> Sérgio B. Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde: Art in Brazil, 1949 - 1979* (Cambridge, Mass/London: The MIT Press, 2013) 60-61.

Almost a decade prior to Oiticica's constructive musings, in 1954, Lygia Clark "discovered" what she called the "organic line"—the line that appears when two flat surfaces of the same color are laid touching and that disappears, absorbed by the contrast of other colors, when removed.<sup>13</sup> In her paintings of the time period this line appears where the canvas has the same color as the frame. She writes "I did no work for two years, not knowing what to do with this discovery."<sup>14</sup> This interest in the border, the threshold, and the proximal will shape much of Clark's work, as the organic line increasingly becomes organic space where the artist is a proposer and the relation of work to spectator, a situation. Artist Ricardo Basbaum suggests that it "is interesting to think of the organic line as a construction progressively gaining "thickness," as it involves more and more spaces, issues, elements and concepts, becoming a "membrane."<sup>15</sup> This notion of "membrane" is fundamentally proximal, relational, liminal, and organic – a space of micro-perception and politics, of contact, and also of productive emptiness.<sup>16</sup>

A distinctly more projective, less organic, but no less experimental line permeated the work of the Russian Constructivists.<sup>17</sup> Emerging in Russia in 1921 as a means of aligning the organizational and productive drive of a new society with avant-garde art practice, Constructivism invented and reinvented itself, as scholar Maria Gough notes in *The Artist as Producer*, within the "protean policies and machineries of the fledgling Russian republic."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.lygiaclark.org.br/arquivo\\_detING.asp?idarquivo=6](http://www.lygiaclark.org.br/arquivo_detING.asp?idarquivo=6)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. N.T author retranslation of the current English translation in Lygia Clark site which is somewhat misleading.

<sup>15</sup> Ricardo Basbaum, "Within the Organic Line and After," in *Art after Conceptual Art*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann (Vienna and Cambridge, MA and London: Generali Foundation and The MIT Press, 2006) 87-99 available online: <http://www.ludlow38.org/files/conceptualartorganicline.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Ricardo Basbaum, "Quem é que vê nossos trabalhos," *Seminários Internacionais Museu Vale—Criação e Crítica* (2009) 200 – 209, 206-207 available online <http://www.seminariosmv.org.br/2009/?target=textos>

<sup>17</sup> The First Working Group of Constructivists comprising Aleksei Gan, Varvara Stepanova, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Karl Ioganson, Konstantin Medunetskii, and the brothers Georgii and Vladimir Stenberg formed in March of that year having come together via theoretical discussions at Inkhuk (Institute of Artistic Culture) addressing distinctions between composition and construction as principles of artistic organization. Vital forces, events and discussions shaping the emergence of the movement include: members involvement in agitational projects in 1918 particularly the decoration of Moscow streets for revolutionary festivals; a debate in the same year at the Winter Palace over the question of art as "A temple or a factory"; the influential Narkompros (the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment and the hub of new Soviet initiatives in art, culture and education) led by Anatolii Lunacharskii and its commitment to "art's penetration into industrial production"; the establishing of state-run art school Vkhutemas (Higher Artistic Technical Workshops) in Moscow in December, 1920; the influence of Malevitch and his group/school Unovis (Affirmers of the New Art) in Vitebsk; Tatlin's State Free Art Workshops in Petrograd (the Workshop of Material, Volume and Construction) and of course his Monument to the Third International. Christina Lodder, "The Transition to Constructivism," in *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932* (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1992) 267-281, 267

<sup>18</sup> Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) 2



Over the course of the early 1920s, it puts on the laboratory table one problem after another – composition, construction, excess, *faktura*, tectonics, economy, modularity, purpose, structure, function, production, process, the object and most fundamentally of all, the artist’s right to exist [...]”<sup>19</sup>

Oiticica, like the Russian Constructivists before him, systematically engaged in his own laboratory of making and reflection. His investigations of the structural possibilities of color, time, and space began to increasingly expand beyond the confines of the studio to embrace a notion of the constructive as both structural and experiential, such as, how color might be deployed as movement or in what ways might it be possible to temporalize space.<sup>20</sup> Similar to Constructivism’s synergy with post-revolutionary Russia, this sense of constructivity can be seen as an extension of and in dialogue with a Brazilian socio-cultural context where as Morais noted, “everything was to be done.”<sup>21</sup> In his 1967 manifesto “General Scheme of the New Objectivity” Oiticica remarks that in Brazil “innovative movements demonstrate this unique characteristic – a striking constructive will.”<sup>22</sup> The artist sees this “will” as a “general constructive will,” one that, Oiticica notes, was present in the Brazilian modernists’ movement in the 1920s and Oswald de Andrade’s influential 1928 “Anthropophagic Manifesto.” It is a will governed by social conditions where, the artist suggests, anthropophagy is the only defense against external dominance and the compulsive exportation of Euro-American models. This “constructive will,” Oiticica notes, is “our main creative weapon.”<sup>23</sup>

Travel back in time to 1913 Moscow. The influential Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky arrives in the city amidst the fervent experimentation of the pre-revolution years first to study medicine and then simultaneously law and the humanities. Drawing on diverse philosophical, psychological and sociological sources and interests such as Baruch Spinoza, Sigmund Freud, William James, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim and keenly interested in the emerging structuralist revolution in linguistics and literary theory, Vygotsky would revolutionize psychology with his theory of the social construction of knowledge.<sup>24</sup> For Vygotsky transactional,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1-2

<sup>20</sup> Michael Ashbury notes: “With regards to his neoconcrete paintings, Oiticica equated metaphysics with the silence that emanated from within the work. Since silence can only be perceived as time, the work of art became inescapably associated with duration: in this view, it became duration. He argued, in contrast yet not entirely in opposition to Gullar, that although the work inevitably related to space, the artist’s task was to temporalize space.” Michael Ashbury, “Hélio Couldn’t Dance,” in *Fios Soltos: A Arte de Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Paul Braga (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2008) 52-65, 55-56.

<sup>21</sup> Frederico Morais, “A vocação constructiva da arte latino-americana,” In *Frederico Morais: Coleção Pensamento Crítico* ed. Seffrin, Silvana (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 2004) 166-181, 166.

<sup>22</sup> Hélio Oiticica. “General Scheme for New Objectivity,” in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds. Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape (Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica, 1992)110-120, p.110.

<sup>23</sup> Oiticica. “General Scheme,” 111.

<sup>24</sup> Alex Kozulin, “Vygotsky in Context,” in Lev Vygotsky. *Thought and Language*. Trans. and ed. Alex Kozulin (Cambridge/Massachusetts & London/England: MIT Press, 1986 (first published 1934)) xiii-xv.

dialogical, collective, and mediated processes are at the core of sense making.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to Jean Piaget's constructivist learning model where sequential cognitive developmental stages are necessary to enable learning, Vygotsky argued that learning precedes development: "the true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual."<sup>26</sup> This meant that the immediate learning environment – socio-cultural context, available tools and the people within it – was key to development. Vygotsky called this environment the zone of proximal development. This notion and the key concept of mediation are central to the foundation of cultural-historical psychology and to socio constructivist theories of education.<sup>27</sup> American educator and psychologist Jerome Bruner reviewing Vygotsky's work usefully conceptualized the zone of proximal development as a process of scaffolding – an evocative metaphor suggestive of self and society under construction and of the vital role of proximal others, structures, tools, and contexts.<sup>28</sup>

Membrane, scaffolding, zone of proximal development, general constructive will, laboratory – all suggestive of states of becoming, ground an understanding and practice of a sense of constructivity as thinking/creating/building within and out of conditions. It is in this way that the possibility of the school as proximal environment and testing ground becomes a key element of avant-garde practice, its zone of proximal development as it were. For example, the laboratory of Russian Constructivism was intimately bound up with the practical, theoretical and educational work that took place at the art school known as Vkhutemas (Higher Artistic Technical Workshops).<sup>29</sup> Its prominence, as scholar Natal'ia Adaskina notes, was not solely due to the presence of many of the avant-garde's leading members but vitally that it was in the workshops "that the principles of avant-garde artistic culture were forcefully revealed."<sup>30</sup> Vygotsky, in *Thought and Language*, published posthumously in 1934, remarked on how "becoming conscious

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<sup>25</sup> Susan Pass, *Parallel Paths to Constructivism: Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky* (Information Age Publishing Inc., 2004) 113; For an exploration of Vygotsky's ideas and cultural historical activity theory and learning and development Anna Stetsenko and Eduardo Vianna, "Vygotsky and Cultural Historical Activity Theory: Re-Imagining Methodologies and Critical Perspectives on Learning and Development in Communities." Lectures, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, published June 28th, 2013:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqIvmnm-098>

<sup>26</sup> Lev Vygotsky. *Thought and Language*, 36.

<sup>27</sup> On Vygotsky's influence on Cultural Historical Activity Theory see:

<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/pages/chatanddwr/influences/> and

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/vygotsky/index.htm>

<sup>28</sup> Susan Pass, *Parallel Paths to Constructivism*, 118.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Harrison and Paul Wood eds. *Art in Theory, 1900-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) 341.

<sup>30</sup> Vkhutemas workshops were born out of post revolutionary reforms in art education and a desire to collapse old art academies and artist-industrial technical schools and put them on equal footing. The model replicated the master-apprentice relationship of the Renaissance studio yet, simultaneously and democratically, students were also allowed to choose their workshop supervisors, indeed at times organize "workshops without a supervisor." Rodchenko, Popova, Kandinskii, Tatlin, Lissitzky and Stepanova were among the workshops many avant-garde master teachers. Natal'ia Adaskina. "The Place of Vkhutemas in the Russian Avant-Garde," in *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932*, 283-293, 283 & 287.

of our operations and viewing each as a process of a certain kind – such as remembering or imagining – lead to their mastery.”<sup>31</sup> Years later in his work on the psychology of optimal experience psychologist Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi will make similar observations regarding the critical role of immediate feedback in learning and mastery.<sup>32</sup> The “school” environment effectively facilitates this feedback fostering a consciousness of learning as a process of collective creative production – a collective learning experience that importantly mirrors itself back to the collective. This process, effusive, at times manic, and often short-lived, seems to be key to many of the great schools of experimental art or alternative education.

Education scholar George Hein has observed that constructive learning is about experiments: “An experiment, as distinct from a demonstration, is a situation in which a range of results are possible *and acceptable*.”<sup>33</sup> The emphasis on action, possibility, temporality but also seriality, also gives the experiment an inherently constructive potential. Gough notes of the Constructivists that their experiments eventually led to a shift of interest from the product to the process of production – “art of production as opposed [...] to production art” – to the invention of apparatus, systems, and methods.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Oiticica will increasingly stress his disinterest in what he called the “experiment show” dynamic preferring an “internal growing proposing experience.”<sup>35</sup> This kind of constructive experimentality and experimental constructivity mark much alternative education and vanguard art programs. Curator Charles Esche has pointed out that, despite differences, noted experimental art schools seem to share agreement on key fundamentals: “anti-specialization, anti-isolation/anti-autonomy, and anti-hierarchy.”<sup>36</sup> By reaching out to dialogue with non-art constituencies, the school becomes a place of encounter and, in so doing, strengthens its own sense of community.<sup>37</sup> Horizontality between teacher and learner also drives creative learning. This is less Rancière’s ignorant schoolmaster and more a role of cognizant ignorance, one who offers tools, conditions and contexts, as Paulo Freire

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<sup>31</sup> Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, 171.

<sup>32</sup> Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi, *Flow and the Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990); Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi & Kim Hermason, “Intrinsic Motivation in Museums: What Makes a Visitor Want to Learn?” in *Public Institutions for Personal Learning: Establishing a Research Agenda*, eds. John Falk and Lynn Dierking (America Association of Museums, 1995). Also see Ted Talk: [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/por\\_br/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_on\\_flow.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/por_br/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html).

<sup>33</sup> George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998) 34 [Italics are Hein’s].

<sup>34</sup> Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer*, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “The Senses Pointing Toward a New Transformation.” Archives. Hélio Oiticica Project. # 0468/69 p.5-6.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Esche, “Include Me Out: Helping Artists to Undo the Art World,” in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge Massachusetts/London England: MIT Press, 2009) 101-112.

<sup>37</sup> Brazilian Sociology scholar Glaucia Villas Boas notes the key role of a social network (and I would add a place of encounter understood here as studio-school-bar) in her critique of analyses that overly focus on geopolitical terms “as if actions and interactions between individuals and groups played no fundamental role in artistic creation.” Glaucia Villas Boas, “Geopolitical Criteria and the Classification of Art,” in *Third Text*, ed. Sérgio Bruno Martins, Vol. 26, Issue 1, (January 2012): 41-52, 52

suggests, in solidarity *with* learners to facilitate self-authoring of their own knowledge and practices.<sup>38</sup> This kind of constructive “knowing to not know” is interestingly reflected in diverse examples of contemporary philosophical, artistic and educational thought and practices from Rancière’s aesthetic unconscious as a form of “knowing what you are doing without knowing what you are doing” to founder/director of The Afrikan Freedom Station in Johannesburg, Steve Kwena Mokwena’s practice of “angazi” (I don’t know) to imbue an unwavering spirit of creation at his center.<sup>39</sup> “No one ever learns anything,” as museum scholar David Carr notes, without “walking to an edge of something and then moving beyond the edge – perhaps by falling over it accidentally.” Learning “requires us all, teachers and learners, to construct and occupy a temporary architecture of risks and possibilities.”<sup>40</sup>

Travel back in time to Chicago and Barcelona at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. John Dewey inaugurated his Laboratory School (1896 – 1903) based at the University of Chicago focusing on the whole child, cooperative and hands-on learning, and the bringing together of art and science. Schools, for Dewey, were failing to engage the fundamentally human constructive impulse to make. His interest is amusingly reflected in an anecdote he recounts trying to find desks for his experimental school. Consistently coming up short, one astute vendor offers: “I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening.”<sup>41</sup> For Dewey the school as laboratory held the key to a program of remediation where an individual school or classroom might transform itself into a “miniature community, an embryonic society.”<sup>42</sup> Formed and supported by a community of friends and researchers in Chicago whom as parents were eager to engage with new models of learning, the idea of the school as an articulating hub fully integrated with and a catalyst for community life was fundamental to the founding ideas and practices of the Lab School.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991 (first published 1969)) xx. Rancière’s book is a provocative account of the exiled French school teacher Joseph Jacotot, who in 1818, discovered an unconventional teaching method centered on subverting the traditional master/pupil relationship. Knowledge, he concluded, following an experiment where he found himself able to teach in French to Flemish students who knew no French, was not necessary to teach nor explication to learn; Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (London/New York: Continuum, 2007 (first published 1974)) 9 & 11.

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious* (Malden/Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2009) 31 and Steve Kwena Mokwena cited in k!kollage (excerpts, revisions and citations from texts written by/about/for Keleketla!), “After School Program (2008–Present) Access to the use of literature, arts and media tools for education & life,” in *Revista MESA* no 3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/portfolio/keleketla-library-02/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/portfolio/keleketla-library-02/?lang=en)

<sup>40</sup> David Carr, *The Promise of Cultural Institutions* (Walnut Creek/California: Altamira Press, 2003) 69.

<sup>41</sup> John Dewey, *The School and Society*. New York: Cosimo, 2007 (Originally published in 1899) 48.

<sup>42</sup> Philip W. Jackson, “John Dewey’s School and Society Revisited,” *The Elementary School Journal*, vol 98, number 5 (University of Chicago, May 1998): 415-426, 417.

<sup>43</sup> Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, 1896 – 1903*. New Brunswick/London: Aldine Transaction, 1965 (Originally published 1936. Second printing 2009) 5

Francisco Ferrer's Escuela Moderna in Barcelona (1901 – 1909) focused on child-centered and uncompetitive learning, co-education of the sexes and social classes, and a curriculum based on the natural sciences and moral rationalism that aimed to be free of all religious dogma and political bias. Ferrer emphatically rejected the traditional school, which he saw as a tool of domestication and domination, and strove to promote an experimental model of the school as instrument of self-development and social regeneration.<sup>44</sup> The school could not be entrusted to the State or other official organisms that simply “maintain existing privileges.”<sup>45</sup> Where Dewey had trouble finding desks at which his students could work, Ferrer complained of books that merely replaced God with the State and promoted untruths that reinforced social inequalities.<sup>46</sup> Publishing, student material in particular in community newsletters for example, was an essential tool in documenting the experimental and political ethos of the school that, in its very practice of registering and valuing what was produced, emphasized the school’s place in community. Another dimension was the use of the school on evenings and Sundays for lectures, talks and programs. Like the Laboratory School, the school as a vital community hub was key.

In Brazil, a similar wave of reactionary alternative education would, for example, between 1885 and 1925 establish almost 40 anarchist schools in different states throughout the country. The first, interestingly, was Escola União Operária (The Union Operator School) in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande de Sul, established in 1895.<sup>47</sup> Concomittant with these anarchist schools, a radical trend of establishing free popular universities emerged that focused on “deacademizing” university education.<sup>48</sup> While many of these universities were short lived, their practices offer vital legacies for critical pedagogies: ensuring access to knowledge, social relevance and student involvement from popular classes, a focus on popular struggles, highlighting popular content and issues within the hegemonic system of education, radicalizing

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<sup>44</sup> Francisco Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, Trans. Joseph McCabe (London: Watt’s & Co, 1913) 12. Digital copy available at Anarchy Archives

[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bright/ferrer/origin.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/ferrer/origin.html). See also <http://themodernschools.wordpress.com/philosophy-and-origins/>

<sup>45</sup> Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, 21.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Sérgio Cohn, “Universidades Livres,” *Cultura Pensamento*. No 5 (December, 2013): 2-13, 3.

<sup>48</sup> In 1904 the short-lived Free Popular University of Rio de Janeiro was launched with a manifesto of “deacademizing and debachelorizing” university education and aiming to make graduate-level instruction and social education available for the proletariat. (“Universidades Livres”). Other more long-lasting popular universities were also established throughout Latin America such as: González Prada Popular University, Peru; Lastarria Popular University, Chile; José Martí Popular University, Cuba; and others in Mexico, Argentina and Uruguay. Few lasted into the 1930s as many initiatives were absorbed into the university reforms as a result of 1918 Cordoba student protests emphasizing co-government, scientific modernization, no tuition, autonomy within state-run systems, or alternatively, were curtailed by conservative governmental forces. Yet, the popular universities not only influenced new university reforms but also future popular movements. Luiz Bernardo Percás, “José Carlos Mariátegui: educação e cultura na construção do socialismo,” in *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americano: Uma antologia*, ed. Danilo R. Streck (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010) 247-257 and José Damiro Moraes, “Anarquismo no currículo,” *Revista de História.com.br* (August 2009) <http://www.revistadehistoria.com.br/secao/educacao/anarquismo-no-curriculo>

outreach practice and stressing the importance of socializing research, and supporting alternative models where the “school” comprises “free intellectuals,” activists, and workers connected to popular culture and also coming from the working class.<sup>49</sup>

Now to Rio de Janeiro in 1928: The stage was set for an even more radical kind of school. In “Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil” (Brazilwood Poetry Manifesto) named after the tree that gave Brazil its name, Oswald de Andrade relishes the mutable tension of “the forest and the school” and its “poetics of playful contradiction” as the genesis of Brazilian culture.<sup>50</sup> Popular culture and festivities such as Carnival were central to this poetics. Andrade writes:

“Carnival in Rio is the religious event of our race. Pau-Brasil. Wagner is submerged under the carnival groups of Botafogo. Barbarous and ours. Rich ethnic formation. Vegetal riches. Ore. Cuisine. *Vatapá* [Afro-Brazilian dish], gold and dance.”<sup>51</sup>

Four years later Andrade published his “Anthropophagic Manifesto.” Catalyzing a veritable school of thought *and* of practice, the manifesto playfully offered symbolic acts of devouring and perspective-eating as a vital anticolonial project, functioning simultaneously, as scholar Benedict Nunes has remarked, as “metaphor, diagnosis and therapy.”<sup>52</sup> It seems then highly appropriate that, just three months after the publication of Andrade’s famous manifesto, on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1928, a Rio de Janeiro carnival bloco became the first to use the term “escola de samba” (samba school) calling themselves, *Deixa Falar* (Let us/me speak). The “blocos” were informal parties and music sessions held during carnival mostly in the poorer classes and favelas. The *Deixa Falar* “bloco” rehearsed near the Escola Normal de Professores (Vocational Teacher Training School) in the neighborhood of Estácio de Sá in Rio de Janeiro, giving the samba musician, Ismael Silva, and school co-founder, the idea to baptize the “bloco” as a “escola de samba.” The way he saw it, the well-known samba musicians and masters practicing and playing in the vicinity of the Escola Normal were teachers too.<sup>53</sup> A samba written to honor the first school affirms this story,

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<sup>49</sup> Ricardo Prestes Pazello. Assessoria Jurídica Popular, blogpost, 21st November, 2010. <http://assessoriajuridicapopular.blogspot.com.br/2010/10/universidade-popular-na-america-latina.html> (Accessed October 2014)

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 17.

<sup>51</sup> Oswald de Andrade, Manifesto Pau-Brasil” (The Brazilwood Manifesto), originally published in *Correio da Manhã*, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1924, in Dunn, *Brutality Garden*, 16.

<sup>52</sup> Benedito Nunes, “Anthropophagic Utopia: Barbarian Metaphysics,” in *Inverted Utopias*, 57-61, 57.

<sup>53</sup> Depending on the source consulted different dates – 1928 or 1929 and some suggest even earlier, however for the most part 1928 is the agreed date. Ruy Castro, *Rio de Janeiro: Carnival Under Fire*, Trans. John Gledson (New York: Bloomsbury, 2004 (originally *Rio de Janeiro: Carnaval no fogo*. Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras, 2003)) 99-100; André Diniz, *Almanaque do Samba: A história do samba, o que ouvir, o que ler, onde curtir* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2006) 95; André Carvalho. “O samba de terreiro.”

<http://www.academiasamba.com.br/memoriasamba/artigos/artigo-220.htm>; An interview with Ismael Silva cited in Sérgio Cabral’s *Escolas de Samba* confirms the name story: “Fui eu. É capaz de você encontrar quem diga o contrário. Mas fui eu, por causa da escola normal que havia no Estácio. A gente falava assim: ‘É daqui que saem os professores.’”

interestingly conjuring the idea of a teacher as being wedded to a sense of place – a pedagogy born out of and realized in situ.<sup>54</sup>

In its merging of urban “blocos” and upper and middle class Carnival celebrations, the samba school is a product of the encounter between the favela and the city.<sup>55</sup> Taking the name of school was also a means of adding an aura of organization and respectability, not one imagines without a suitable dose of irony. Writer Sérgio Cabral notes that officializing the “blocos” with an address and documentation was a way for the musicians to avoid police raids and to organize “rodas” (samba gatherings) in public places like Praça Onze. It also provided “a new form with which to play carnival.”<sup>56</sup> A mere coincidence, perhaps; however, it is a delightful serendipity that Andrade’s “Carnival in Rio... Pau-Brasil” would inaugurate their own anthropophagic gesture, opting to call themselves a school and wittily inverting the European “norms” of teacher training, concomitant with the launch of the poet’s manifesto. That they chose to name the school Deixa Falar furthers an understanding of the “school” as a deliberate subversion, not a place of passive listening, but one of active speaking, at once a political, performative and ironic gesture of claiming voice and asserting identity. Musically Deixa Falar is associated with a new kind of rhythmic counter beat denoting an africanization of samba sound.<sup>57</sup> It is also in this sense that Deixa Falar and other early schools were “schools,” as some historians note, because they became

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Havia aquela disputa com Mangueira, Osvaldo Cruz, Salgueiro, cada um querendo ser melhor. E o pessoal do Estácio dizia: ‘Deixa Falar, é daqui que saem os professores.’ Daí é que veio a ideia de dar o nome de Escola de Samba.” <http://www.dicionariompb.com.br/escola-de-samba-deixa-falar/dados-artisticos>; More recently scholars Nei Lopes and Luiz Simas, in their dictionary of samba, note other popular origins for the term as well as Deixa Falar and Ismael Silva: one origin is attributed to the “ranchos carnavalescos” – emerging in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as popular Carnival groups that celebrated, danced, played music “in situ” – out of which emerged the carnavalesco (designer of presentations including costumes, floats etc). One well known carnavalesco Ameno Resedá (1907 – 1943) called in his heyday “rancho escola” whose model inspired the first schools; the other, the researcher and singer Almirante suggests, emerged as an ironic popularization of end of war military service in 1916 where troops performed military drills in the streets to the commands “Escola! Sentido” (Squadron! Attention.)” In all cases it is possible to read Andrades poetic play of forest and school. Nei Lopes and Luiz Antonio Simas eds, *Dicionário da História Local do Samba* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização, 2015) 116.

<sup>54</sup> “A primeira escola de samba (the first samba school) surgiu no Estácio de Sá (started in Estácio de Sá) eu digo isso e afirmo (I say this and affirm) e posso provar (and I can prove) porque existiam naquele tempo (because there existed at that time) os professores do lugar, (teachers of the place)

Mano Nilton, Mano Rubens e Edgar (Brother Nilton, Brother Rubens and Edgar) Ainda outras que eu não quero falar... (Still others that I don’t want to mention)”

Pereira Matos and Joel de Almeida, “Primeira escola de samba.” In André Diniz, *Almanaque do Samba*, 95.

<sup>55</sup> Maria Laura Viveiros de Castro Cavalcanti. “Rite and the passage of time: the evolution of carnival in Rio de Janeiro,” *Papers on Latin América # 49. Institute of Latin American and Iberian Studies. University of Columbia, New York, 1999.* [http://www.lauracavalcanti.com.br/publicacoes.asp?codigo\\_area=1#](http://www.lauracavalcanti.com.br/publicacoes.asp?codigo_area=1#)

<sup>56</sup> Sérgio Cabral, *Escolas de Samba de Rio de Janeiro*, in “Conheça a primeira escola de samba carioca, a Deixa Falar.”, January 30th, 2012, *Folha de São Paulo*, <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/livrariadafolha/1041211-conheca-a-primeira-escola-de-samba-carioca-a-deixa-falar.shtml>

<sup>57</sup> Carlos Sandroni, *Feitiço decente: transformações do samba no Rio de Janeiro (1917 – 1933)* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2001) 31-32.



the schools that taught the other ones everything.<sup>58</sup> True, as writer Barbara Browning writes in *Samba: Resistance in Motion*, one cannot hold up Rio samba schools as “shining examples of antihegemonic, popular education.”<sup>59</sup> Yet, the “schools,” as a social phenomenon, refuse to grant the invisibility so readily bestowed on the urban poor, countering the precariousness of favela life with vitality. As Andrade repeats: “a alegria é a prova dos nove” (Joy is the decisive test). Joy, here is both a means of coping and a subversive force, akin to Andreas Huyssen’s call for a Marxist theory of sensuality, one that is grounded in the transformative possibilities of practical human sensuous activity.<sup>60</sup>

Curiously as one forest school pulsed in the town squares and the streets, another was emerging as politicized educational reform movement. What was known as the Escola Nova (New School) reform movement (1927-35) launched its Manifesto dos Pioneiros de Educação Nova (Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education) in 1932 signed by twenty-five leading educators and activists, defining the place of education as the “central muscle of the social and political structure of the nation.”<sup>61</sup> A key player here was the educator Anísio Teixeira who had studied with Dewey at Columbia University in the early 1920s. Here Dewey’s laboratory model and his notions such as, integration of theory and practice, relation between mind and body, emphasis on work and the importance of manual activities, and the school as a social medium and embryo for cooperation and democracy, had a significant influence on shaping both the discourse and practice of educational reform. Art educator Ana Mãe Barbosa writes that in the period of the launch of Escola Nova never had there been (and one may add never since) such a national propaganda about and attention to education. She impressively notes that between 1927 – 1930 over 2000 articles and notices regarding school, teaching and education appeared in the São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro newspapers where references to Dewey are “constant” (and also inclusive of other education theorists such as Claparède and Decroly).<sup>62</sup> The school was a “natural world and social embryo” where the emphasis was on stimulating the child’s “psychobiological interest” and on solidarity and cooperation.<sup>63</sup> Like Dewey’s Lab School, Ferrar’s anarchist model, the Free Universities and even the Samba Schools, the school was envisioned as “a powerful center for creation, attraction and irradiation of all forces and educational activities.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Castro. *Rio de Janeiro: Carnival Under Fire*, 100.

<sup>59</sup> Barbara Browning, *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (Indiana University Press, 1995) 98.

<sup>60</sup> Andreas Huyssen, “The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of US Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *New German Critique*, No 4 (Winter, 1975): 77-97, 96.

<sup>61</sup> “O Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova” (Manifesto of Pioneers of New Education). <http://www.pedagogiaemfoco.pro.br/heb07a.htm>

<sup>62</sup> Ana Mãe Barbosa, *Recorte e Colagem: Influências de John Dewey no ensino da arte no Brasil* (São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 1982) 41.

<sup>63</sup> Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.



Much reform, unfortunately, was cut short by the Getulio Vargas dictatorship (1935 – 1945). However, prior to the coup of the second dictatorship in 1964 Teixeira was engaged in another educational reform initiative known as Escola Parque (Park School). The idea was to develop a complement to basic curriculum for children from low-income neighborhoods with a focus on learning about work, culture, and responsibility via practical hands-on experience. Projects included carpentry, applied arts, weaving, gardening, culinary arts, book clubs, newspaper, music, gymnastics, school radio station etc.<sup>65</sup> The first school was established in one of the poorest favelas in the state's capital Salvador in 1950. For Teixeira education was part of the “great adventure of constructing nationality.” This adventure embraced both Brazilian modernist architecture and new educational ideas as a means of affirming faith in and possibility of “our agriculture, our industry, our commerce, our education and our public services.”<sup>66</sup> Education scholar Clarice Nunes in an article on the first Escola Parque and its legacy notes that, while critiques of the project focused on Teixeira, at times even seen as an “instrument of imperialism”, what seems to have guaranteed its political survival and relevance is that “its strategy didn’t override its events” and Teixeira’s own understanding of the project as a constant “rehearsal of a solution,” in essence the school as laboratory.<sup>67</sup>

This sense of rehearsal, where the school is an “organizing frame” for experimental possibilities and a literal and metaphorical scaffold of a phenomenological and social learning process is key to mobilizing its constructive potential. This “frame” while grounded in and emerging out of and within specific conditions does not necessarily need to be a physical space. Organic lines, social learning and forest schools suggest a qualitative notion of schoolness and constructivity that is more tied “to bodies than buildings, actions and off shoots rather than monuments or sites” and, as such, suggests an infrastructural practice that engages human relations, the affective, the proximal, the relational, and the contextual.<sup>68</sup> Here the frame might be temporal or organizationally dispersed. From the vantage point of institutions how might this

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<sup>65</sup> Barbosa, *Recorde e Colagem*, 33; [http://www.escolaparquesalvador.com.br/?page\\_id=32](http://www.escolaparquesalvador.com.br/?page_id=32) and Clarice Nunes, “Centro Educacional Carneiro Ribeiro: concepção e realização de uma experiência de educação integral no Brasil,” *Em Aberto*, Brasília, v. 22, n. 80 (April 2009): 121-134, 126.

<sup>66</sup> Anísio Teixeira, “Um pressagio de progresso,” *Habitat*, no 4, 1951.

<sup>67</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “[...] sua estratégia não se sobrepor aos acontecimentos.” Clarice Nunes. “Centro Educacional Carneiro Ribeiro: concepção e realização de uma experiência de educação integral no Brasil,” 129 & 133.

<sup>68</sup> Irene Small comments on the qualitative shift from public to publicness as “describ[ing] the ongoing construction of a public, which is to say its contingent and temporal character rather than its *a priori* existence as a space, a demographic, a thing.” Similarly the praxis-based shift from the institutionalized to “*instituting* evokes multiple and dispersed acts of activation and galvanization. Mobile and ephemeral, it would seem to cling to bodies rather than buildings, actions and offshoots rather than monuments or sites.” This can also apply to notions of “schoolness.” In “Pedagogia: How to do things with words” commissioned essay for the seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation*, organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, November 2011 (currently unavailable)

more qualitative mode of address be tapped into? Can we imagine a more open-ended instituting form of “schoolness”? What kinds of “constructivities” are possible within contemporaneity’s precarious conditions? What continuities are possible? Perhaps the only continuity is a commitment to the constructive itself. Sérgio Martins’ reading of the constructive through the lens of the anthropophagic may offer a useful means of thinking about this commitment:

As concepts go, it may be that anthropophagy is easier to retrieve from our contemporary critical viewpoint than the constructive – indeed, anthropophagy has undoubtedly become an (un) critical cliché that seems applicable to all matters Brazilian. And the constructive, after all strikes us almost as a relic of post utopianism. But bringing both back *together* seems relevant not as a synthesis so much as a trigger for rethinking histories of recent Brazilian art.<sup>69</sup>

It may also be a trigger for rethinking Brazilian art institutions. If a sense of constructivity is so protean to the Brazilian context and one that richly manifests parallels of art and learning, then perhaps, it is to the school as model or “organizing frame” that institutions might turn. Here Torres García’s constructive School of the South might be recuperated and reimagined. As Mari Carmen Ramírez has written of the School of the South, their positioning does not lie “in an objectifiable cultural experience but in a self-conscious stance with respect to Latin American cultural identity.”<sup>70</sup> From a Brazilian perspective – again a conscious positioning, not an essentialist mantra – a forest school might draw both on the constructive *and* the anthropophagic suffused with an anarchist spirit of agitate, construct, educate. This is a provocative way to think about the experimental constructivity and “schoolness” of the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, its local and regional focus and dialogue with and countering of contemporary art trends, specifically biennials recently re-imagined as art schools and the so-called educational turn in art and curatorship.

### 3.2 BIENNIALS, SCHOOLS AND THE EDUCATIONAL TURN

In *The Pleasure of Architecture* Bernard Tschumi said: ‘if you want to follow the first rule of architecture, break it.’ Something similar might be said of curatorship. There are no parameters applicable to each case, just intentions and desires. It is better to be consequent with the development of a project than consistent with a hypothetical should.

José Roca, chief curator, 8th Mercosul Biennial<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Sérgio B. Martins. *Constructing an Avant-Garde*, 78.

<sup>70</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Inversions: The School of the South,” in *Inverted Utopias*, 73-83, 73.

<sup>71</sup> José Roca, “[Duo] Decálogo,” *Ensaio de Geopoética*, 8th Mercosul Biennial (Porto Alegre: Biennial Mercosul

Although the expansion of the biennial exhibition model is both a symptom and a condition of our globally networked age, its myriad forms have provided small moments of resistance, dissensus, antagonism, and counterspectacle in relation to the grand narratives of art history, consumer culture, mass entertainment and the market-driven hegemonic forces of global capitalism.

Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*<sup>72</sup>

The biennial is [...] a *mise-en-scene* of contemporary subjectivity, with all that this implies of recognition and misrecognition. It is indicative of a certain state of things, of the state that we are in, or, as it were, in-between.

Simon Sheikh, *Manifesta Journal* # 17<sup>73</sup>

Sandwiched between the pressures of global capital and local politics, art world ambitions and cultural specificities, over the last three decades biennials have been deployed as instruments of capital yet also as experimental territories for art, curatorship, and education. We love to hate, but also, to counter them. It is in this potential as a counter – narrative, position, and model – that the medium maintains a certain poetic and emancipatory potential, even within an increasing appetite for countering itself.<sup>74</sup> This possibility along with, as Ramírez suggests, the necessity of legitimization amidst a new global order, is the only way to explain why the century old institution of the biennial, born at the dawn of the colonial period and directly associated with Eurocentric meta-narratives, could be marshaled to catalyze places as disparate as Havana, Istanbul, Johannesburg, and Porto Alegre.<sup>75</sup> It is a complex territory of emancipatory imagination and socio-economic desire. Rarely, as José Roca suggests, have biennials been “born out of the

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Foundation. 2011) 23-25, 23.

<sup>72</sup> Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge/Massachusetts/London/England: The MIT Press, 2012) 84.

<sup>73</sup> Simon Sheikh, “None of the Above: From Hybridity to Hyphenation. The Artist as Model Subject, and the Biennial Model as Apparatus of Subjectivity,” *Manifesta Journal* # 17: Future(s) of Cohabitation <http://www.manifestajournal.org/issues/futures-cohabitation-0#page-issuesfuturescohabitationnoneabovehybridityhyphenationartistmodelssubjectandbiennialmodel>

<sup>74</sup> In their introduction to the *Biennial Reader* the editors suggest the idea of the counter-narrative, counter-format and counter-model as part of the utopian promise of the biennial in the age of globalization. “Elena Filipovic, Marieke van Hal and Solveig Øvstebø, “Biennialogy,” *Biennial Reader: An Anthology on Large-Scale Perennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Bergen/Norway/Berlin: Bergen Kunsthall and Hatje Cantz, 2010) 12 – 25, 23; As a counter to this possibility critic Eleanor Heartney remarked in a 2011 *Artforum* review that this seems to have unleashed a trend of making countering the norm; Simon Sheikh similarly notes that countering may easily be (mis)read as while content or format may change the essential apparatus remains the same: “[...] the international biennial confirms that we are not witnessing a proliferation of multi-culture in terms of difference and contestation, but rather what we could name *hybrid mono-culturalism*. The subjects represented (and which represent) may vary, and indeed, must constantly change, while the apparatus itself remains the same, and, in turn, solidifies and fortifies. As it spreads geographically, the biennial form becomes not only more repetitive and similar, but also more hegemonic as an exhibition form and a method of circulation.” Sheikh, “None of the Above: From Hybridity to Hyphenation.”

<sup>75</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, in *Artelatina: cultura, globalização e identidades cosmopolitas*, eds. Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda and Beatriz Resende (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano Editora, 2000) 25.

initiative of a group of artists.”<sup>76</sup> Large-scale exhibitions, as Tony Bennett’s well-known essay warns, control minds, ears and bodies, they are “organs of public instruction” whose intentions to inaugurate an expanded cultural sphere must be looked upon with suspicion.<sup>77</sup>

In a keynote lecture for the conference “Why Biennial? Why Associate?” held at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin in 2014, curator Maria Hlavajova reflected on the challenges and questions at play in any attempt to revitalize and reimagine the possibility of the biennial model which she sees as being held hostage by old protocols.<sup>78</sup> Drawing on scholar Stephen Wright’s work on usership, Hlavajova suggests repurposing the emancipatory aspirations of the biennial and its formats (the traditional exhibition as well as related programmatic structures) as a platform for use. This is, as Wright suggests, a means of generating new discursive and constructive life “behind the exhibition’s back.”<sup>79</sup> This curatorial impulse, as curator Kate Fowle has suggested is born out of a resistance to the “stop-start” mode of the biennial, and, as art historian Terry Smith notes, the all-pervasive influence of network culture. Both, in turn, have created a new kind of curatorial practice vested in building infrastructure: research capacity and platforms, local, regional and international networks, and site-specific activism.<sup>80</sup> As such this practice must navigate the complexities of different understandings and expectations of what it means for biennials in their host city contexts to “produce localities.”<sup>81</sup> Who produces? The curators? The artists? The educators? The localities? Or more importantly how are the relationships between the “producers” and “locales” imagined and deployed? How do they play out ethically? What is the distance between their discourse and practice?

### 3.2.1 The Educational Turn: Para-education, Arte de Conducta and Manifesta 6

‘But how are you going to compete with the sound bites of the Olympics?’ I replied: ‘We are not. We are going to have a conversation.’

Mary Jane Jacob, *Conversations at the Castle*, 1996<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> José Roca, “Peripheral Vision: 8 Mercosul Biennial,” *The Exhibitionist*, Journal of Exhibition Making, no. 5 (January 2012): 53-59, 55.

<sup>77</sup> Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” in *Thinking about Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London/New York: Routledge, 1996) 81-112, 90.

<sup>78</sup> Maria Hlavajova, “Why Biennial?” Keynote lecture, conference “Why Biennial? Why Associate?” Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany, 10th - 13th July, 2014, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVO7T2\\_Bf3o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVO7T2_Bf3o)

<sup>79</sup> Stephen Wright, “Narratorship (Talking Art),” *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013) 42-43, 42 <http://museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf>

<sup>80</sup> Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012) 251-253.

<sup>81</sup> Hou Hanrou, “Towards a New Locality: Biennials and Global Art,” in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post War Europe*, eds. Barbara Vanderlinden & Elena Filipovic (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2005) 57-62, 62.

<sup>82</sup> Mary Jane Jacob, “Reaching the Goal: Curating Conversations,” in *Conversations at the Castle: Changing Audiences and Contemporary Art*, eds. Mary Jane Jacob ed., with Michael Brenson (Cambridge/Massachusetts/London/England: The MIT Press, 1998) 14-29, 16.

Whether the last few decades turn to conversation in contemporary art practice began at a castle in Atlanta or in Kassel, Germany depends on your curatorial north, interest or network: social practice or contemporary theory. In reality, like most paradigm shifts, there are many beginnings and milestones.<sup>83</sup> Yet while the harbingers are multifold, theorist and organizer Irit Rogoff and artists and curators Mick Wilson and Paul O'Neill are the key voices that named "the educational turn" and with it the turn's predominantly European-based discourse.<sup>84</sup> Here discursive models and pedagogical formats are deployed to reinvigorate traditional sites of display and propose new forms of cultural gatherings within and outside the art academy. In her influential 2008 *e-flux* article "Turning" Rogoff charts what she sees as some of the key qualities of these "educational" practices such as their being low-key and non-heroic, and in particular, their processual and durational dimensions which enable transformative possibilities.<sup>85</sup> A process of "occupying," of both time and space, Rogoff suggests, can translate into other formats and ways of working that are less programmatic and more like "inhabiting."<sup>86</sup>

Subsequent to her "Turning" piece, Rogoff edited a 2010 issue of *e-flux* furthering the debate and questions of the "turn" as one that is, and continually demands to be, "actualized" via the encounter between the forces of bureaucratic pragmatism and creative modes of dissent, criticality and self-organization.<sup>87</sup> It was this possibility of education, as a place for and a practice of curatorial and artistic agency that propelled O'Neill and Wilson to co-edit *Curating and the Educational Turn* published in 2010. Projects manifesting this engagement, they note, are "divergent in terms of scale, purpose, modus operandi, value, visibility, reputational status and degree of actualization." They cite the following as key examples:

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<sup>83</sup> Those most frequently cited include: Martha Rosler and Group Material's experimentations with reconfiguring exhibition space as a social forum in the 1980s at DIA in New York; new genre public art emphasizing collaborative and site specific practices and Mary Jane Jacob's 1992 public art project *Culture in Action*; art historian Grant Kester's work on collaborative art practices and notion of the dialogic; new institutionalism in the 1990s, particularly in Europe, manifesting an increased interest in absorbing the lessons of institutional critique internally within institutional practices and adopting more flexible, artistic, critical and process-oriented practices; the curatorial work of European based curators Charles Esche, Nicholas Bourriaud and Hans Ulrich Obrist and their re-imagining the museum and the white cube as a laboratory and Maria Lind and Jens Hoffman questioning the exhibition as just one of many potential curatorial models; Catherine David's *Documenta 10* and the *100 days – 100 guests* project where the exhibition afforded a platform for daily presentations and discussions by artists, scholars, scientists, authors and architects on questions pertaining to art and society; and Okwui Enwezor's global platforms extending the conversation beyond the frame of the exhibition for *Documenta 11*. See: Salon discussions "You Talkin' to me: why is art turning towards education?" Institute for Contemporary Art, London (July 2008) <http://www.ica.org.uk/17479/Coverage/Salon-Discussions.html> <http://www.ica.org.uk/files/audio/noughttosixty/ica-nts-salon-20080714-education.mp3>; Paul O'Neill. *The Culture of Curating*, 81-85; and Mick Wilson and Paul O'Neill. "Introduction," in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, eds. Mick Wilson and Paul O'Neill (London: Open Editions, 2010) 11-22.

<sup>84</sup> Irit Rogoff, "Turning," *e-flux* online journal, Issue #0 (November 2008).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Rogoff. "Smuggling."

<sup>87</sup> Irit Rogoff, "Education Actualized," editorial, *e-flux* online journal, Issue #14 (February 2010) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/education-actualized>—editorial/

Daniel Buren and Pontus Hultén's Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques, 1996; the 'Platforms' of Documenta 11 in 2002; the educational leitmotif of documenta 12 in 2007; the unrealized *Manifesta 6* experimental art school as exhibition and the associated volume *Notes for an Artschool*; the subsequent *unitednationsplaza* and *Night School* projects; *proto-academy*; *Cork Caucus*; *Be(com)ing Dutch*; *Eindhoven Caucus*; *Future Academy*; *The Paraeducation Department*; 'Copenhagen Free University'; *A-C-A-D-E-M-Y*; *Hidden Curriculum*; Tania Bruguera's *Arte de Conducta* in Havana; *ArtSchool Palestine*; Brown Mountain College; Manoa Free University; and School of Missing Studies, Belgrade."<sup>88</sup>

Amidst these examples, the school – as format, as place of encounter, as space to occupy, and as an organizing frame for the convivial, the political and the experimental – has been particularly prevalent. As a means of artmaking and also as a form of self-organizing, the school as a format offered a context to foreground exchange, learning and conversation in a low-resource and unspectacular manner. It was also a way to react to the fetish machine of the art market and the increasing pressures of accountability within higher education and an accompanying sense of diminishing autonomy. Here the societal imprimatur of the “school” could be marshaled and subverted. Many projects sought out new formats and models for self-organization, learning and discussion such as Annie Fletcher and Sarah Pierce's *Para-education*. Their informal group model was based on the concept of the affinity group developed by AIDS activist group ACT UP! and their *Civil Disobedience Training Manual*. These are self-sufficient support systems of about 5 – 15 people who may work together toward a common goal in a large action, or might conceive of and carry out an action on its own.<sup>89</sup> The term paraeducation was borrowed from US school and community education models where a community relies on a local network of volunteers to augment its resources.<sup>90</sup> Pierce and Fletcher have brought paraeducation to various locations in Europe and also created other independent reading groups, applying similar models in a variety of situations and contexts. The simplicity of paraeducation offers a self-organized, informal, do-it-yourself, and low-resource structure for knowledge exchange. Recalling John Dewey's notion of the work of art as “organizing energies,” here, the organizing itself becomes the art practice.<sup>91</sup>

Many other “educational turn” initiatives such as the School of Missing Studies in Belgrade embrace the school as seminar and network format while still others explore new art school models such as Tania Bruguera's *Catedra Arte de Conducta* 2002 – 2009 (Behavior Art

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<sup>88</sup> Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson. “Introduction.” In Paul O'Neill & Mick Wilson eds. *Curating and the Educational Turn*, 13

<sup>89</sup> Sarah Pierce, “Organizing and Art Practice,” in *The Paraeducation Department*, eds. Sarah Pierce and Annie Fletcher (Interface: Belfast 2006) <http://themetropolitancomplex.com/index.php?id=paraeducation>

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1934) 162.



School) where she developed a school for performance art as both an art project in and of itself and as a school for political art in Havana, hosted by Instituto Superior de Arte, Cuba's fine art school.<sup>92</sup> Bruguera saw the need of creating an alternative formative space that focused on the relationship between art and politics via creating a place to facilitate conversation and deconstruct and challenge everyday behaviors, particularly, as Claire Bishop notes, "at the interface of usefulness and illegality."<sup>93</sup> Studying, questioning and subverting behaviors are ways of becoming aware of, resisting and critiquing hegemonic power structures. Learning was done through the creation of artworks that in turn generated discussion and reflections. Anxious to work against the notion of education as format, Brughera positioned her deployment of education not merely as "a series of sensible combinations but as a way to change (or at least be a reference or a point of view) someone's life for a long time."<sup>94</sup>

However, Bruguera's school, along with many of the "educational turn" projects, hark back to standard pedagogical formats - schools, courses, workshops, seminars etc. What one might ask is the differential quality of such work? Does the process of "occupying" a space of learning as art rather than acquiring learning to make art enable new ways of thinking and forms of practice to emerge? In what ways might the school locale and site specificity – non-institutional, community, periphery – be key to its criticality? Is it about who organizes or who participates? Or are they one and the same? Do these schools seek to engage non-art world voices? Or are they geared, as if for some kind of radical squat team, for those already versed in contemporary art practices? Indeed, is their radicality primarily a Duchampian gesture of reframing, and as such their potential to provoke and challenge necessarily short-lived?

One "school" initiative in this latter vein was the *Manifesta 6* Biennial planned to take place in the divided Christian and Muslim capital of Nicosia, Cyprus in 2006. As a means of responding to the politicized nature of the locale, coupled with a desire to reinvent the exhibition/biennial model, *Manifesta 6* was to take the form of a temporary art school.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> For more information see projects websites: <http://www.schoolofmissingstudies.net/> and <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/703-0-.htm>

<sup>93</sup> Claire Bishop. "Pedagogic Projects: How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?" Chapter 9, *Artificial Hells*, 241-274, 247. Excerpt available online: <http://www.taniabruquera.com/cms/623-0-Pedagogic+Projects+How+do+you+bring+a+classroom+to+life+as+if+it+were+a+work+of+art.htm>

<sup>94</sup> Tania Bruguera, "Transpedagogy: Contemporary Art and the Vehicles of Education: Preliminary Dialogue with Pablo Helguera." Transcription of questionnaire sent to participations of the seminar "Transpedagogy: contemporary art and the vehicles of education" held at MoMA, New York, May 2009, in *Pedagogia no campo expandido*, 8th Mercosul Biennial, eds. Mônica Hoff and Pablo Helguera (Porto Alegre: Mercosul Biennial Foundation, 2011) 296-312, 301.

<sup>95</sup> Manifest 6 curators were Mai Abu ElDahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel (respectively Egyptian, Russian-born New Yorker and German). Inspired by such historical art school examples such as Black Mountain College and the Bauhaus, importantly, as the curators note, schools that were organized by artists, the Manifesta School was to be a meeting ground for cultural producers in the region and beyond, and a platform for discussion and production ("A letter from Mai Abu ElDahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel" <http://www.e-flux.com/shows/view/3270>). Conceived as a postgraduate transdisciplinary program for approximately 12 weeks, several thousand artists, curators, filmmakers,

However, in June 2006, the local partner, specially created by the municipality, terminated the curatorial contracts. Subsequent to the cancellation, essays were posted on Manifesta's website as *Manifesta 6: Notes for an Art School*. The high-profile nature of Manifesta and the online dissemination provided via *e-flux*, at the time recently co-founded by one of the Biennial's co-curators Anton Vidokle, combined to ensure an effective mix of visibility and controversy. In his essay Vidokle remarked on the increasing desire amongst organizers of large-scale international art exhibitions to see their work "as concrete social projects or active interventions," but he wondered, "Is an exhibition, no matter how ambitious, the most effective vehicle for such engagement?" Drawing on the kinds of activities that typically take place in "school:" experimentation, scholarship, research, discussion, criticism, collaboration, and friendship, Vidokle saw a rich potential in mixing models – the temporary nature of the exhibition and the school model of experimentation.<sup>96</sup> Following the biennial's cancellation Vidokle presented a version of the planned biennial as *unitednationsplaza, 2006-2007*—a twelve-month "school" project in Berlin featuring seminars, lectures, screenings, book presentations, and a web site to disseminate project materials.<sup>97</sup>

A criticism of *Manifesta 6* and many "school" projects has been that, for the most part, the focus of engagement was/is the (relatively) closed system of the art world, one that seems rather more to legitimize the institution of art than appropriate or redirect it toward educational and social ends. As noted writer Martha Schwendener in a critique of two "school" initiatives:

Museums and established art spaces become not just centers of power but hotbeds of intellectual activity—dissent, even! Both projects [*Night School* (a later project of Vidokle in New York) and the *Univeristy of Trash*] throw around similar words like 'production' and 'exchange,' 'collaboration' and 'dialogue;' 'utopia' also lurks in the background. Meanwhile, we're a long way from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* or Myles Horton's Highlander Folk School, which spawned the civil rights movement, or Herbert Kohl teaching kids in Harlem. (As one artist pointed out to me recently, teaching inner-city kids is one of those activities that's simultaneously romanticized and looked down upon in the art world.)<sup>98</sup>

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musicians, architects, designers and others from all parts of the world applied to take part and approximately one hundred were selected to be part of the program and stay on Cyprus for the one hundred days of the biennial. It would feature three departments each proposing a different structural "school" model: online/independent study program; a nomadic school with shifting locations throughout the city from movie theaters to bars; and living school/production and presentation space housed in an old hotel building in the Turkish Cypriot neighborhood which would also incorporate living quarters for participants. Anton Vidokle, "From Exhibition to School: Notes from Unitednationsplaza," in *Art School*, 189-200, 195-6.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/>

<sup>98</sup> Martha Schwendener, "The University of Trash" or, "How to Frustrate an Art Dealer," *Village Voice*, June 24, 2009, <http://www.villagevoice.com/2009-06-24/art/the-university-of-thinsp-trash-mdash-or-how-to-frustrate-an-art-dealer/>



Judging by reports of meetings in Nicosia amongst local artists and producers wishing to take part and the different understandings of what constituted “access” to the school, particularly in a charged border context, if it had been realized it may well have backfired.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, it appears from the final list of selected participants for the various school “departments” the majority were international, not local artists, a particularly disappointing dynamic considering infrastructural needs and read by many as a kind of art world “colonialism.”<sup>100</sup> Local voices offer varying perspectives on the cancelled biennial from soap opera-like scenario to critical catalyst and from disfunctionality due to curatorial disagreements to the recognition of the trap of Cypriot/peripheral desire to be “placed on the map.”<sup>101</sup> Yet read as a Duchampian artistic gesture and text – one that, perhaps, was never really meant to happen but rather goadingly provoke – the unrealized school definitely captured critical art world attention and debate. Indeed, perhaps, *e-flux* itself can be read as a kind of global and specialized distributed art school/network. But, as the art collective Bruce High Quality Art Foundation mused in relation to their own “university” project, calling it art may let it off the hook too much.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Various reports describing a January 2006 (January 20th and 21st known as The Manifesta Coffee Break <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/nicosia-cyprus-january-20th-21st-2006/>) and pre-month build up as increasingly frustrating local art community. Caterina Pizantias, Conference Presentation: *Manifesta 2006: When Art met Politics* at the 4th International Conference of the ESA Research Network Sociology for the Arts, 2007 cited in Evanthia Tselika, “Conflict Transformation Art. Practice Led Research examining the role of socially engaged art in resisting urban segregation, the case of Nicosia Cyprus,” PhD Birkbeck University of London, 2015, 144.

<sup>100</sup> Evanthia Tselika notes that the absence of a state funded art school on the island had been a subject of debate for years, creating both a receptive interest in the “school” project and significant disappointment in its lack of inclusivity and failure. *Ibid.*, p. 143 & 147-148. Chrystalleni Loizidou similarly describes a lack of sensitivity to the local situation and nativity amidst long-standing and complex political intransigence, giving rise to accusations of art world colonialism. Chrystalleni Loizidou, “Commemoration, Public Art and Memorial Poitics in Cyprus (1901 – 2013),” PhD Birbeck University of London, 2014, p.251.

<sup>101</sup> Perspectives on the Manifesta 6 biennial noted here are drawn from various informal discussions with artists, educators, curators and researchers from the region during a May 2015 visit to Cyprus. Yiannis Toumazis director of the Nicosia Municipal Arts Center and directly involved in the planning of the biennial published a short essay on the experience in 2012 in which he discusses key issues contributing to its cancellation such as: the balancing act of biennials particularly in peripheral contexts between redistributions of cultural power and neocolonial expressions of Western cultural hegemony (7-8); the Cypriot support being based on a conviction that “an international biennial on an island that otherwise lacked substantial art infrastructure would place the country on the map” (13); lack of consensus and strong disagreement amongst the curators who had never before worked together prior the Manifesta 6 biennial but had been put together by Manifesta in response to a call (18) which resulted in the “school” being divided into three schools – one per curator (19); the push for one of the schools to be located in the Turkish side of Nicosia, which although there was a collective local desire to promote movement/exchange, actually locating the operations of the school outside the local partners’ jurisdiction, although provocative, was practically untenable due to border restrictions and controls, and ultimately jeopardized the entire project (19-22). Yiannis Toumazis, *Manifesta 6: The Case of the Cancelled Biennial* (Nicosia: The Nicosia Municipal Arts Center, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Bruce High Quality Foundation. In <http://observer.com/2013/03/a-quality-education-the-bruce-high-quality-foundation-university-is-in-session/>

### 3.2.2 Turns, Doubts and Untold Stories... A School of the South Perspective

If much of the “turn” can be attributed to a crisis in the European academy or, as curator Daniel Birnbaum astutely observed, a crisis in exhibition making, both a response to a certain privilege of institutionality, in Latin America, a gesture of constructivity often emerges from within conditions of lack and social responsibility – weak institutions, necessary local and regional capacity building, questions of access and infrastructure – and art and education’s possible place within this context.<sup>103</sup> For example, Lugar a Dudas (Place of Doubts) is a highly active art-laboratory-school hub in a residential neighborhood of the city of Cali in Columbia. Established by the artist Oscar Muñoz in 2006, the project features residencies, multiple workshops, events, screenings, a library, an active publication program, and a small scale yet actively deployed vitrine exhibition space.<sup>104</sup> Capacete in Rio de Janeiro is a long standing artist residency program that recently has repositioned itself as a year-long school for select participants drawing from a Brazilian and international pool of applicants with a focus of countering the mode of cultural events that are “too often either directed at a generic public or a restricted elite.” A practice that “reduces and neutralizes the concrete ethical and political reach of art, as well as its potential for fostering discussion and inspiring other ways of working, thinking, relating, and living.”<sup>105</sup>

Within the framework of countering the “academy,” an interesting phenomenon in Brazil, emerging concomitant with Workers Party (PT) reforms, has been the re-surgence of “free university” models. For example the Universidade Nomade (Nomadic University) was established in 2003 by a transdisciplinary group of professors from UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) along with activists, artists and students from popular and working class movements. Brazilian state-run universities are free, however, they require challenging entrance exams, making access extremely difficult for poorer populations.<sup>106</sup> While many inequalities of access have been mitigated by PT administrations over the past decade and a half, nevertheless divisions remain. It is in this spirit that Universidade Nomade and other initiatives began to strive to be not just a “state” but also, a “truly public” university.<sup>107</sup> Similarly the University of Quebradas (quebrar = to break and referring to favela alleyways) is a university extension diploma course for artists, educators and activists from Rio peripheries. For others such as

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<sup>103</sup> Daniel Birnbaum. “Teaching Art: Adorno and the Devil,” in *Art School*, 231-246, 242.

<sup>104</sup> [http://www.lugaradudas.org/archivo/lugar\\_a\\_dudas.htm](http://www.lugaradudas.org/archivo/lugar_a_dudas.htm)

<sup>105</sup> Capacete mission statement <http://capacete.org/?cat=26&lang=en>

<sup>106</sup> Dean of Bahia University Naomar de Almeida Filho has described “a perverse education” where the middle class who benefit from tax breaks on schooling send their children to private school who in turn enter public universities and the poor, who don’t pay tax, send their kids to public schools, often receiving a poor education, either don’t do or are unprepared for the entrance exams for public university, so end up paying fees for courses at a private university for poor degrees. Naomar de Almeida Filho, “Educação Perversa,” Op-ed, *O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>107</sup> “Universidades Livres.” *Cultura Pensamento*, 6.

Universidade Cultura Livre (Free Culture University), Universidade Fora do Eixo (Out of the Frame University), Universidade Griô (Griô – Afro-Brazilian and indigenous culture) the interest is in enabling the flux of knowledge, conviviality, and transit between so-called “formal” and “informal” education systems and fostering an exchange of skills, cultures, and practices.<sup>108</sup>

From the perspective of the “educational turn” within contemporary art institutions, while many artists and collectives explored new forms of social practice, in the context of education, particularly given that in the 1990s few institutions beyond those in São Paulo had any form of sustained program, initiatives, instead of embracing a force of countering seem to rather constructively emerge out of and within local histories, institutional contexts and necessities. For example at Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM) in Recife in the state of Pernambuco, the curatorial team of Clarissa Diniz, Maria do Carmo Nino and EducAtivo MAMAM developed a year-long project called *contidonacontido* (told not told) in 2010 featuring discussions and exhibitions that collectively opened up and examined told and untold stories of museum’s permanent collection.<sup>109</sup> Here, in contrast to what Wilson describes as turn initiatives creating an “escape pod,” the focus is to open up the agency of narratorship to foster discursivity and affectivity in relation to institutional contexts and locales.<sup>110</sup> Certainly, Brazilian biennials themselves inaugurated “turns,” offering different socio-educational models, beginning with the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial’s “big school.” The 27<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s theme of “How to Live together” choose to expand the biennial in time and territoriality via seminars and artist residencies including education projects in peripheries. The 28<sup>th</sup> Biennial “In Living Contact” reduced the number of artists and left the second floor of the historical pavilion empty as a means of promoting reflection on the biennial model itself and foregrounding talks and seminars.<sup>111</sup> The “forest school” unfolding of the Mercosul Biennial is another vital model, to which I now turn.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>109</sup> The Project responded to MAMAM’s collection and in particular that it could not comfortably be seen to be an appropriate historiography of art produced in the Pernambuco region in the 20th century. <https://blogmamam.wordpress.com/2010/03/26/contidonacontido-texto-de-parede/> Interview with Clarisse Diniz, in *Conversas com Curadores e Críticos*, eds. Guilherme Bueno and Ricardo Rezende (Rio de Janeiro: Circuito, 2013) 94-123, 102-104.

<sup>110</sup> Mick Wilson makes this point in the panel discussion: “Artists, Institutions and the Public Sphere.” *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art, Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, November 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuXlIkUUyhs&list=PLO-GRBBQZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m&index=4>; Stephen Wright stresses the point of narratorship: “[...] the activation of practices that have deliberately impaired their coefficient of specific visibility cannot be dealt with by a narrative, as was supposed by late twentieth-century narratologist, but only through the active agency of narratorship.” [Wrights italics]. Stephen Wright “Narratorship (Talking Art),” *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, 42.

<sup>111</sup> See exhibition catalogues of each biennial and the website: <http://www.bienal.org.br/exposicoes.php> Other sources include: Lisette Lagnado and Pablo Lafuente eds. *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*. Exhibition Histories. London: Afterall Books, 2015; 27<sup>a</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, Apresentação Seminários, *Forum Permanente* [http://www.forumpermanente.org/event\\_pres/simp\\_sem/semin-bienalIvo](http://www.forumpermanente.org/event_pres/simp_sem/semin-bienalIvo) Mesquita and Ana Cohen. “Relatório da 28<sup>a</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, *Forum permanente* [http://www.forumpermanente.org/event\\_pres/exposicoes/28a-bienal/relatorio](http://www.forumpermanente.org/event_pres/exposicoes/28a-bienal/relatorio)

### 3.3 A FOREST SCHOOL: THE 8TH MERCOSUL BIENNIAL

There are schools that are cages and there are schools that have wings.

Rubem Alves<sup>112</sup>

Is school a place, an institution, a set of facilities, a situation, a circumstance, an attitude, or a constellation of relationships of the transfer of acquired, invented, and accumulated knowledge, experience, and insight from one generation to another? Perhaps a school or the idea of a school as a condition of learning, of being open to discourse and discovery, can also be seen as something that we might carry with us wherever we go, whatever we do.

Raqs Media Collective<sup>113</sup>

In a manifesto of biennial curatorship, José Roca, presented a list of dos and don'ts for the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial which he called "Duo decálogo" – a biennial exhibition was not a library, not a museum, not an archive, not a universal exposition, not an art fair, not a technology fair and not an art school.<sup>114</sup> Roca wanted to stress the biennial as an exhibition per se but also as an infrastructural tool and catalyst for local and regional impact. Writing mid project in 2011 he noted: "I hope to be held accountable."<sup>115</sup>

Understanding curatorial practice as a "rectified readymade" – a kind of compilation of different strategies both Roca's own and others (Lugar a Dudas being one), reframed as it were, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition entitled *Geopoetic Essays* conceptualized the biennial as an interrelationship of three distinct strategies: activation, exhibition, and education.<sup>116</sup> Activation strategies included: *City Unseen* a series of public art interventions in overlooked sites and contexts in the city center; *Travel Notebooks*, eight regional artist residencies and exhibitions throughout the state of Rio Grande de Sul occurring months prior to the official biennial opening; *Continents*, the consolidation of local and regional networks through grants to artist run spaces enabling them to invite peers from other parts of Latin America; and *Casa M* a neighborhood cultural center opening four months before and closing one month after the official biennial. Exhibition strategies, located in different museums, art centers and the city's port region featured:

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<sup>112</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: "Há escolas que são gaiolas e há escolas que são asas]. Rubem Alves, "Gaiolas ou Asas?" *Por uma educação romântica* (Campinas/São Paulo: Papirus, 2002) 29-32.

<sup>113</sup> Raqs Media Collective, "How to Be an Artist by Night," in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, 71-81, 74.

<sup>114</sup> José Roca, "[duo] Decálogo," *Ensaio de Geopoética*, 24.

<sup>115</sup> Roca notes that decalogue was inspired by Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg's Dogme 95 manifesto on filmmaking which embraces the traditional values of story, direction, and acting without special effects. José Roca. "Peripheral Vision." *The Exhibitionist*, 59; Dogme 95 Manifesto: <http://www.dogme95.dk/the-vow-of-chastity/>

<sup>116</sup> Roca. "Peripheral Vision," 57.

*Geopoetics*, the core show and presented in four large port warehouses; a retrospective of Chilean artist *Eugenio Dittborn*; the exhibition *Beyond Frontiers* that brought together works by nine artists who traveled in the Rio Grande de Sul region from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary times; and *Travel Notebooks* the collective result of the regional residencies. Pedagogical strategies included: regional and local teacher workshops, a series of disciplined-based notebooks for teachers, a mediator program featuring a three-month course for approximately 300 mediators in preparation to work with publics during the two-month biennial also available via online distance learning, and a special evaluation project. The curatorial team in addition to Roca were: Paola Santoscoy, Alexia Tala, Cauê Alves, and Aracy Aramal and Fernanda Albuquerque as assistant curator and Pablo Helguera as pedagogic curator.

Roca was interested in presenting what might be termed classical exhibitions while simultaneously breaking the rules of biennial formats and focusing on local and regional initiatives. For this he drew on a distinction by critic Justo Pastor Mellado between “service” and “infrastructure” curators.<sup>117</sup> The former, like the botanic explorers of the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century in their classifications of the flora and fauna of the New World, in the service of colonial power, ultimately pave the way for exploitation. The infrastructural curator, on the contrary:

[...] knows that he or she serves first and foremost a local art scene that may have weak institutions; that is centered on production, with scarce mediation or response by collectors or curators; and that has precarious or nonexistent artistic education, few critics and few professional cultural journalists.<sup>118</sup>

However, for such infrastructural approaches to have traction they must be critically tuned into existing socio-cultural conditions, histories and tipping points. For Roca, seven previous biennial editions had rather than leaving “scarce” or “non existent” conditions, critically laid the groundwork for his activation-exhibition-education geopoetic biennial. It was a context with which the curator was adeptly in tune.

### **3.3.1 The Mercosul Biennial: Context, Geographies and Histories**

Like most biennials The Mercosul Biennial was born out of various socio-economic forces flexing their muscles. As already mentioned the biennial name is that of a southern cone trade agreement (MERCOSUR). Porto Alegre, the host city for the biennial and the site of the Mercosul Biennial Foundation, with a population of approximately one and half million is the

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<sup>117</sup> Justo Pastor Mellado, “Dislocación: The Exhibition as an Analytical Procedure,” in *Dislocación: Cultural Location and Identify in Times of Globalization*, exhibition catalogue (Ostfildern/Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2011) in Roca, “Peripheral Vision,” 55

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

capital of the southern most Brazilian state of Rio Grande de Sul. The state borders Argentina and Uruguay and has a history of European (particularly German) immigration and at various moments has harbored independence notions. As Roca notes in his catalogue essay, citing the words of a Rio Grande de Sul poet and singer, it is a region that conceives of itself as different from the rest of Brazil, one that desires its own “aesthetics of the cold.”<sup>119</sup> Both in its geography, climate and culture, particularly in the figure of the gaucho – South American “cowboy” traveler, herder and folkloric hero and also the name for people from Rio Grande Sul – as well as the region’s love of beef and the social rituals of chimarrão drinking – a special tea made from a grass grown in the region – the state shares more with its neighboring countries and the pampas region than it does with the Brazilian north, more commonly imagined in terms of heat: beach, jungle, samba, tropics.<sup>120</sup> Given its strong independent streak and sense of cultural difference, it is not surprising to learn of the region’s history of “firsts” such as the first anarchist school in Brazil as already noted, or that Porto Alegre was the first worldwide to experiment with participatory budgeting – a democratic process of deliberation involving city residents in allocating municipal and public budgets that begun in 1989.

From the perspective of the biennial’s history, the launch of the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial was also concurrent with landmark re-inventions of two of the oldest biennial institutions: Documenta and the São Paulo Biennial inaugurated in 1955 and 1951 respectively. Catherine David’s 1997 Documenta 10, with its 100 days – 100 guests public program, seen as a key harbinger of the conversational turn in contemporary art practice, captured the millennium “back to the future” spirit with her “retrospective” approach. Paulo Herkenhoff’s 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial in 1998, also known as the anthropophagy biennial, similarly grappled with history through the lens of the contemporary but more specifically through the post colonial. If David’s 100 days and 100 guests inaugurated a spate of programming focused on the intellectual echelons and orbiting networks of the art world, Herkenhoff’s interest in curatorship as an act of cultural citizenship would, together with educator Evelyn Ioschpe, rather marshal resources to engage local teacher and school audiences with an investment, both in terms of dollars and curatorial interest, unprecedented in previous biennials.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> José Roca, “Geopoetics,” in *Ensaio de Geopoética*, 49-52, 51.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> Paulo Herkenhoff in “Dez anos depois: um debate com Paulo Herkenhoff,” *tropico*, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2008, <http://www.revistatropico.com.br/tropico/html/textos/2972,1.shl> in Carmen Mörsch and Catrin Seefranz. “Out of the *cantinho* – Art Education at the 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo,” in *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, Exhibition Histories, eds. Lisette Lagnado and Pablo Lafuente (London: Afterall Books, 2015) 188-204, 191.

From an international perspective Documenta 10 with presentations of works by Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, at the time relatively unknown, and the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, with its energetic flexing of Brazilian anthropophagy amidst the decade's emergence of postcolonial discourse, were key turning points in what Sérgio Martins described as “Brazilian art bursting on the scene.”<sup>122</sup> Yet, amidst this context Morais' 1<sup>st</sup> Mercosul Biennial garnered only a small amount of international attention and had little critical impact nationally.<sup>123</sup> It is telling for instance that in a recent essay on 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial curator Lisette Lagnado traces related and concurrent histories even noting Aracy Amaral's failed attempt to establish a Latin American biennial in 1970 but does not even mention Morais' Mercosul “Latin American” project.<sup>124</sup> The flexing of regionalism and its flip side of national critical disinterest, yet, global art world curiosity has had a pervasive presence in the Mercosul biennial's history. Writing a review of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial while it was still in process Roca noted that: “Curators from the periphery are usually weak and cowardly, taking few risks and always thinking how our work is going to be perceived by the international community, which as we say in Colombia, does not look at us even to spit on us.”<sup>125</sup> The irony here is that he is writing this in *The Exhibitionist*, a contemporary critical art journal edited by well known global artworld actors seeking out postcolonial examples of interest. The Brazilian national press, however, paid scant attention to the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, for example Rio de Janeiro's *O Globo* newspaper preferred to present a full frontpage spread of the 12<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial which opened a few days after the Porto Alegre biennial. Even though Brazilian curator Adriano Pedrosa was one of the Istanbul curators, it is a shame that the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial received no such coverage. Roca for his part, choose to see isolation and regionalism as positive.

Fernanda Ott, former Mercosul Foundation archivist, noted that this regionalist positioning was first embraced with the 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial where instead of a model of “bringing the world to Porto Alegre, it was rather Porto Alegre to the world.”<sup>126</sup> Under the chief curatorship of Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, the 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial also inaugurated a cycle of three successive biennials where contemporary artists were invited to act as pedagogic curators. Artist and critic Luis Camnitzer brought his considerable reputation and enthusiasm to the prospect of constructing a regional education network focusing on teachers and schools. In addition, an international

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<sup>122</sup> Sérgio Bruno Martins. “Bursting on the Scene: An Introduction,” in “Bursting on the Scene: Looking back at Brazilian Art,” *Third Text*, 1-4.

<sup>123</sup> Frederico Morais, “I Bienal do Mercosul: regionalism e globalização” In *Frederico Morais*, 181-188.

<sup>124</sup> Lisette Lagnado. “Anthropophagy as Cultural Strategy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo.” In *Cultural Anthropophagy: The 24<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo 1998*, 36-37.

<sup>125</sup> Roca. “Peripheral Vision,” 55.

<sup>126</sup> Interview Fernanda Ott, 2011. “Video: Coleção dos múltiplas vozes: Projeto Pedagógico,” 8th Bienal do Mercosul, Fundação da Bienal do Mercosul,” produced by Instituto MESA, 2012.

seminar and publication, *Education for Art/Art for Education*, presented projects from diverse international curators, artists and educators including Vidokle who presented on his “art school” project *unitednationsplaza*. Camnitzer positioned his joint venture with Pérez-Barreiro as “the first time that an international art biennial has tried to transcend its own vocation for exhibition and transform itself into an instrument radically dedicated to cultural change.”<sup>127</sup> The critic’s claim here to the “first time” could certainly be challenged by Herkenhoff/Iospe’s “big school” model for the 24<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial or arguably, in its Duchampian gesture of political provocation in the divided city of Nicosia, *Manifesta 6* exhibition as school. Indeed, Camnitzer also claimed to be the first to assume a position of “education curator” despite such terms being in fairly wide use since the early 1990s at least in US and European museum contexts.<sup>128</sup> In Brazil the first usage seems to be with Luiz Guilherme Vergara’s text/presentation “Curadoria Educativa: Percepção Imaginativa/Consciência do Olhar” in 1996 at the annual conference of ANPAP Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Artes Plásticas (National Association of Visual Arts Researchers).<sup>129</sup> However, the wide-ranging scope of the 6<sup>th</sup> biennial education project together with the Camnitzer’s vision to reimagine the Mercosul Biennial as a “living continuous institution that operates permanently dedicated to art education” articulated a key commitment to local investment and regionalism. Former pedagogic coordinator, Mônica Hoff, points to the constructive ground which made this possible when, she notes, that the 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial was a result of the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s chief curator Paulo Sérgio Duarte criticizing the stop-start format of the biennial education format.<sup>130</sup> Duarte critically saw the potential of the biennial as an “instigator of local and regional effects” and pushed for it to be “restructured to include a permanent education project.”<sup>131</sup> In turn, Hoff continues, the 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s sense of educational “event” contrasted with the pedagogic project of the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial *Shout and Listen*’s more intimate scale. Artist Marina de Caro presented a program of regional artist residencies engaging with diverse communities and contexts in Rio Grande de Sul which she called “The Artist is Available” and in turn actively sought to map artists, studios and cultural activists operating in the Porto Alegre art and cultural scene. De Caro constantly wondered why in Brazil everything had to

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<sup>127</sup> Luiz Camnitzer. “Introduction.” In Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and Luis Camnitzer eds. *Educação para a arte/Arte para a educação*. Porto Alegre: Fundação Bienal de Mercosul, 2009, pp. 287 – 296, p. 287

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>129</sup> Mônica Hoff makes this point in her essay on the history of curatorial education at the Mercosul Biennial. “Educational curatorship, art methodologies, training and permanence: the changeint education at the Mercosul Biennial,” in *Pedagogia no campo expandido*, eds. Pablo Helguera and Mônica Hoff (Fundação Bienal de Artes Visuais do Mercosul: Porto Alegre, 2011) 382-391, 384.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Paulo Sérgio Duarte in “Ideal Museum: Jean Galar, Paulo Sérgio Duarte, Marcelo Araujo and Fernando Cocchiarale interviews conducted by Martin Grossmann,” in *Museum Art Today* eds. Martin Grossmann and Gilberto Mariotti, Fórum Permanente Series (São Paulo: Hedra, 2011) 25-40, 31.



be big and sought to work on a more personal plane. Hoff remarks that, curiously, working in this 1:1 way, she seemed to manage to engage an entire community.<sup>132</sup> So, by the time of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, significant infrastructural foundations, on both a macro and micro level, had already been laid. Regional education networks and citywide artistic and cultural ones could now be interwoven to support the experimental expansion of artistic, curatorial and pedagogic practices.

Interestingly, it could be seen that the Mercosul Biennial's responsiveness to infrastructural approaches are also due to its very formlessness so-to-speak. Reflecting on its origins as an economic agreement, one could say that circulation is its *modus operandi*. As curator Gabriela Motta notes, in her history of the first five editions, the Mercosul Biennial does not have a specifically constructed space or site in contrast to Niemeyer's modernist São Paulo pavilion. For better or worse biennials "mimetically reveal the myths and significations of where they occur."<sup>133</sup> Yet in the spirit of the circulating two-sided coin, the lack of monumental architecture also enables an aggregate spirit, one that Morais richly fostered using thirteen different spaces across the city from diverse museums to non-traditional spaces such as DC Navegantes, a shopping center in the north zone of Porto Alegre.<sup>134</sup> This play of different sites and embrace of a city-wide initiative has been usefully exploited by various editions.

Another factor, key to fomenting a fertile ground for experimental and constructive practices and also a counterpoint to the biennial as economic apparatus, is the backdrop of socio-political activism vital to the region and to the city, as manifested in Porto Alegre's hosting of the 2001 – 2003 World Social Forums.<sup>135</sup> Born out of Latin American activism, decolonial discourses and practices reworking colonialist legacies, feminist networks, and the idea of the "encuentro" (encounter) as a radical meeting of dialogue and exchange, the forums were a result of activists seeking to galvanize regional and global forces in the fight against neoliberalism and the desire to emphasize a social rather than economic focus.<sup>136</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> forum's title, "World Social Forum: Another World is Possible" can be read as another vital palimpsest in synergic dialogue with the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial's project whose title, *Geopoetic Essays* or "Ensaaios geopoéticos" in Portuguese and Spanish, where "ensaaios" translates both as "essays" and "rehearsals" suggests a

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<sup>132</sup> Mônica Hoff, "Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial: The Biennial as School, the City as Curriculum," *Revista MESA*, no 3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/portfolio/poa-os-sentidos-do-sentido-do-publico-na-arte-03/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/portfolio/poa-os-sentidos-do-sentido-do-publico-na-arte-03/?lang=en)

<sup>133</sup> Gabriela Motta, *Entre Olhares e Leituras: Uma Abordagem da Bienal do Mercosul* (Porto Alegre: Zouk, 2007) 21.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-36.

<sup>135</sup> After the first three World Social Forums in Porto Alegre they have been held in various locations world wide returning to Porto Alegre in 2005, 2010 and 2012. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-anti-globalization-movement-and-the-world-social-forum-another-world-is-possible/5335181>

<sup>136</sup> First "encuentro" took place in Bogotá, Columbia in 1983, many others followed. For history and overview see essays in Elizabeth Maier and Natalie Leblon eds. *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice and Democratizing Citizenship* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 2010)

mutual critical emphasis on the possible, the experimental, the act of rehearsal. Indeed, the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial can be seen as a set of practices that continually rehearsed in different ways, formats, and encounters, the proposition: “Another Biennial is Possible.”

### 3.3.2 Transpedagogy and Geopoetic Essays

[...] this Biennial seeks metaphorically to ‘re-territorialize’ the field of pedagogy within the visual arts – to use a term of Deleuze and Guattari to indicate the process through which an old order is deconstructed and a new one established. An ‘expanded’ field of pedagogy also refers to Rosalind Krauss’ influential essay, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’ which expressed the need for art practice to break down conventions and established parameters of exhibitions. In recent decades, this expanded ‘re-territorialized’ field of art has acquired a social character, in which pedagogy can play a key role as an instrument of communication, reflection and, in the words of Paulo Freire, awareness.

Pablo Helguera<sup>137</sup>

“Transpedagogy” is Helguera’s term to describe the (potential) mutual re-territorializations of art and pedagogy. It was initially formulated to refer to projects created by “artists and collectives that mix educational processes and art making in ways that offer an experience that is different from conventional art academies or formal art education.”<sup>138</sup> Within the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, art and pedagogy, as complicit partners, instigated new proximities and sensory possibilities within the lived environment. Like critic Suely Rolnik’s description of Lygia Clark’s desire to maximize art’s transformative and contagious potential, the transpedagogic was more of a resonant contaminating energy.<sup>139</sup> A geopoetic art and pedagogy became akin to a Freirean notion of *andarilhagem* (*andar* = to walk) – a literal praxis of walking around, a nomadic dwelling with otherness and oneself, an active listening that engages and responds to people, contexts and situations, and a deliberate act of dislocation and of opening up to time.<sup>140</sup> The geopoetic and the transpedagogic had traction in the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial precisely because, as Hoff notes, they were already

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<sup>137</sup> Pablo Helguera, “Pedagogic Project: The Expanded Field of Education.” *Ensaio Geópoéticos*, 562

<sup>138</sup> Pablo Helguera, *Education for Socially Engaged Art* (New York: Jorge Pinto Books, 2011) 77. Also see various issues and questions related to transpedagogy in “Transpedagogy: Contemporary Art and the Vehicles of Education: Preliminary Dialogue with Pablo Helguera,” in *Pedagogia no campo expandido*.

<sup>139</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Molda-se uma alma contemporânea: o vazio-pleno de Lygia Clark,” in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goertiz, Hélio Oiticica and Mira Schendel* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999). Version referenced available online in Portuguese, 1 – 37, 2

<http://www4.pucsp.br/nucleodesubjetividade/Textos/SUELY/Molda.pdf>

<sup>140</sup> Danilo R. Streck, Telmo Adams, Cheron Zanini Moretti, “Pensamento pedagógico em nossa América: uma introdução.” In Danilo R. Streck ed. *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americana: Uma antologia*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010, 19 – 35, 28.

present, pulsating in the synergies of art and pedagogy in Camnitzer's "pedagogic event" of the 6<sup>th</sup> and de Caro's micro experimentalism and network building of the 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial.<sup>141</sup>

Prior to engaging in the questions and details of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial's geopoetics, it might be useful to quickly recall the constructive and anthropophagic practices identified in the chapter's preceding detours of organic lines, social learning and forest schools and issues of biennials, schools and the educational turn. This will hopefully act as a kind of running checklist to enable us to recognize transpedagogic or geopoetic reterritorializations. Practices will be: proximal, organic, experimental, contextual, relational, anti-hierarchical, anti-isolationist, and anti-specialization; act as community hubs and networks, subvert "organizing frames" for alternative learning situations, deacademize, socialize research, collectively engage, rehearse, perform and stress conviviality; in addition such practices might "walk around," "contaminate," work decolonially, embrace a transversal pedagogy of the "encuentro," occupy, inhabit, actualize contexts as spaces of learning and of art and see existing power structures as platforms for use.

As researchers/evaluators for the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial our task was to accompany these potential "reterritorializations" and how they were affecting both the individuals themselves and the collective geopoetic process as it unfolded. More as a research intervention than an evaluative apparatus, we choose to focus deeply rather than broadly, interviewing the same group of approximately 40 artists, educators, curators, and participants at various critical junctures throughout the biennial.<sup>142</sup> Excerpts from these interviews appear throughout the text. While a geopoetic mix of art and pedagogy manifested itself in many aspects of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, I will focus here on three components to specifically explore the working dimensions of the "forest school" and the contaminations of art and pedagogy and their potential and actual reterritorializations: *Travel Notebooks* – regional artist residencies; *Casa M* – neighborhood cultural center; and *Mediation* – a three-month long course for mediators and their role engaging with diverse publics throughout the biennial.

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<sup>141</sup> Hoff. "Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial." *Revista MESA*.

<sup>142</sup> The project was called "Coleção de múltiplas vozes" (Collection of Multiple Voices) and will be discussed later in the chapter in the section on Critical Constructivity: A Collection of Multiple Voices. The project featured interviews with artists, curators, educators and participants involved in the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial. Five videos were compiled focusing on particular sections of the biennial identified with the pedagogic team: *Cadernos de Viagem* (Travel Notebooks), *Casa M*, *Mediações* (Mediations), *Projeto Pedagógico* (Pedagogic Project), and *Perspectivas e horizontes* (Perspectives and Horizons). A short essay and 15 minute video compilation of the interviews with English sub-titles are published in the 1st issue of the online periodical *Revista MESA*. See Jessica Gogan and Luiz Guilherme Vergara, "Collection of Multiple Voices: The 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial." *Revista MESA: Territories and Practices in Process* (February 2014) <http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa/a-collection-of-multiple-voices-the-8th-mercosul-biennial-pedagogy-in-an-expanded-field/?lang=en> For those interviews cited here and included in this 15 min video compilation the citation to *Revista MESA* will be noted. For those interviews not included in the *Revista MESA* selection but are part of the five videos edited for the 8th Biennial, the reference will be in Portuguese only - "Vídeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes" noting the particular video in which the interview appears e.g. *Cadernos de Viagem*, *Casa M* etc. This material is available from the Nucleus of Research and Documentation at the Mercosul Biennial Foundation. If the interview was not included in these videos but was part of the original footage the reference will be "Coleção das múltiplas vozes."

### 3.3.3 Travel Notebooks: Travel and Artisanal Conceptualism

Amongst the delicate miniature cut outs meticulously installed in different corners and junctures of the old mill was an intimately scaled down paper version of a local road sign, painted green with the word “escola” (school) in white. Perched like a tiny flag on the mill’s banister the piece movingly evoked the precariousness of learning, a sense of isolation, but also a resolute fragility. The paper sign was part of artist Mateo Lopez’ project *Notas de campo* (Field Notes), one of eight regional residencies and exhibitions that took place in Rio Grande de Sul months prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s official opening. Lopez’s work often combines traveling, writing and drawing, a sort of artistic and poetic ethnography responding to place. He speaks eloquently and unassumingly of his art process as a kind of “artisanal conceptualism.”<sup>143</sup> His month-long residency in Ilópolis, a town of 4,200 inhabitants, a four hour drive from Porto Alegre, comprised engaging with residents, schools and those engaged with the restoration of the region’s old mills, the Caminho dos Moinhos (Walk of the Mills), and the city’s Museu de Pão (Bread Museum). The residency sparked both debate and respect for the artist’s presence. Lopez’s exhibition took place in Ilópolis’ restored Moinho (Mill), a restored barn of wood interiors adjacent to the Museu de Pão – in and of itself a jewel of a building featuring an elegant concrete “L” shape equally divided between museum gallery and a fully active and equipped bread making workshop.

Interviews at the start of the project revealed what participants called the “burburinho” or rumors the artist’s presence caused in the small town. Marlene Montager, the town’s secretary of education, wondered what we, as evaluators, and the artist wanted from her. She looked at us haltingly, clearly discomfited, and puzzled. Her journey from the confusion of her first interview to the confidence and enthusiasm of the last spoke volumes:

It was a great opportunity for our community of Ilópolis to have an artist with us, where he came to do his work and be together with the community. How should I put it? Sometimes we see art as something difficult, that doesn’t come to us, near us, something very distant, something for the artist for himself. Here no, the artist came to observe, pay attention. He was very detail-oriented in everything.<sup>144</sup>

It is interesting here that she did not seem to expect some kind of “community” art, rather her shift in perspective grew out of a trust in proximity. Other interviewees seemed to open up to the creative possibilities that the artist might bring from the start. Marizangel Secco, the Museu de Pão coordinator at the time, described a situation where she, the town mayor, secretaries of education and culture were all together with a perplexed teacher holding drawings of two students that she thought seemed interesting but she was not sure what to do with them. They decided to

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<sup>143</sup> Interview Mateo Lopez. “Coleção das múltiplas vozes.”

<sup>144</sup> Interview Marlene Montager, “A Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

call “Mateo.” Like a kind of journeyman teacher-doctor-artisan, the artist-out-of-towner is called upon to shed light on the situation, to diagnose, and give advice on what to do. Presence assumes here a radical possibility. Noticing, acknowledging place, and validating creativity are key to a conceptual and alternative pedagogy that reads the world before the word. Lopez’s medium of “reading” and observing the world is drawing which he sees as “a means of resistance, an attempt “to discover, to access, to listen to all that we feel and think in our minds via a medium that is in many ways elemental.”<sup>145</sup> Collectively, all those interviewed, pointed to the need for continuous investment in such projects. For Secco she remarked that working with artists in such a way “shifted the way people think.” Teachers, in particular, could really see the potential of “these kind of projects integrated into the curriculum.” This “shouldn’t just happen in the capital.”<sup>146</sup>

Another of the *Travel Notebooks*’ residency initiatives invited German/Finnish artist duo Oliver Kochta and Tellervo Kalleinen to realize a version of their project *Choir of Complaints*, where participants create a song and sing about their everyday complaints. Performed in cities worldwide over the past several years, the project was proposed for Teutônia, a regional city with more than a 100 choirs, assumed to be a natural choice for such a participatory project. All were surprised when none of these local choirs appeared interested in the at once mundane and radical proposal of singing about complaints. What ensued, however, seemed to fully grasp the conceptual and participatory proposition, where 40 singers of all ages and from all walks of life from children to farmers came together to write and sing their complaints. They responded to the project both in its sense of humor but also as the producer Liane Strappazon pointed out in its professionalism.<sup>147</sup> A song was created and the performance filmed and the ensuing video was included as part of the *Travel Notebooks* exhibition in Porto Alegre. In addition, two public performances were presented during the opening weekend of the biennial. The delight and gusto of the participants and sheer enjoyment of the crowd were clearly evident as the “choir” sang their complaints ranging from pointed critiques about Brazilian politics, TV, neighbors, food that gives you gas, murky clouds, and slow German fire trucks – a recent gift to the town of Teutônia.

One of the participants, blind for decades, spoke of this as the best thing he had done in his life since becoming blind, another woman said the project completely changed her outlook on life, and another simply decided she complained too much.<sup>148</sup> A unique feature of this kind of conjunction of art and education, as one of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial mediator supervisors Rafael Silveira

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<sup>145</sup> Interview Mateo Lopez. Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Interview Marizangela Secco. “Video: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Cadernos de Viagem*.”

<sup>147</sup> Interview Liane Strappazon. Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Diverse interviews and conversations with the author in the course of the evaluation project. “Coleção das múltiplas vozes.”

adroitly commented, is that it brings one into “contact with transformation.”<sup>149</sup> Here the artist often plays a different role. In the *Choir of Complaints* Kochta is present, yet completely in the background, literally depicted in photos of the choir’s performance standing in the back row of singers. Other players, organizers and participants take on critical aspects of the work’s creation and production. A key presence here was local musician Lucas Brolese who marshalled the group’s interest and wrote the music for the song. If Lopez’s artisanal conceptualism was one of artful and attentive observation, Kochta’s was a kind of radical unauthoring, a praxis of creating proposals that enable multiplication, ownership and participation, echoing Freire’s notion that one builds one’s autonomy by facilitating the possibilities for the autonomy of others.<sup>150</sup>

*Travel Notebooks* comprised an additional six projects involving diverse artists and the act of traveling, each in a different region of Rio Grande de Sul. Curator Alexia Tala was anxious to allow each artist’s practice and interest to determine the nature of the interaction with the local context. This meant widely varying engagements with time, place and community ranging from Bernardo Oyarzún traveling to the São Miguel Jesuit Missions and staying almost a month at the indigenous Mbyá-Guarani Koenju settlement to Marcelo Moscheta who never spent more than 48 hours in one place as he worked along the border region of Rio Grande de Sul with Argentina and Uruguay collecting rocks which he then repositioned between one country and the other.

Drawing on the work of art historians Rosalyn Deutsche and Miwon Kwon, Tala outlines two models of site specificity: a full model that includes dialogues and experiences shared between the artist and the community of a particular place and the other, a dissociated model, in which a work is installed in a place considering the space but without its social specificities.<sup>151</sup> This distinction was a significant mark of contention amidst the biennial’s curators and the pedagogic team. Differences emerged amidst the relation between site specificity, socially engaged art practice and whether or not such practices are necessarily integrated with or should explore or be accompanied by so called pedagogic ones. Indeed, it could be asked, is it possible to conceive of a socially engaged site specificity that considers space but not “its social specificities”? Places, Heidegger notes in “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” are what they are from being locations and not from “space.”<sup>152</sup> In *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, Helguera draws the distinction between what he calls symbolic versus real socially engaged art practice as a means to counter such dissociated site specificity arguing that: “the more ambitious and risk-taking [socially

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<sup>149</sup> Interview Rafael Silva. “Video: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Mediações*.”

<sup>150</sup> Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy and Civic Courage* (New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998) 87.

<sup>151</sup> Alexia Tala, “Travel Notebooks: Mobility and Art Practices in Contemporary Art: The artist as a container of experiences,” in *Ensaio de Geopoética*, 299 – 301, 301.

<sup>152</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971) Available online: <http://mysite.pratt.edu/~arch543p/readings/Heidegger.html>

engaged art] projects directly engage with the public realm – with the street, the open social space, the non-art community [...].”<sup>153</sup> Here Mateo Lopez’s *Field Notes* or the *Choir of Complaints* while each in different ways seem clearly about “real” socially engaged art practice. Yet how might this be understood for Maria Elvira Escallón beautiful interventions, using her research into local and native plants, to create carvings on trees in the Missions region? In what ways might projects less inscribed or compatible with social practice terminologies actualize, as Roca hoped, “pedagogic instances in and of themselves”?<sup>154</sup> Producer Gabriela Silva expressed her frustration in attempting to explore with Escallón forms of engagement that did not need to follow any kind of traditional understanding of the pedagogic. She mused on the interrelated critical issues of how artists, curators, educators, and producers (mis) perceive their own practice and that of the other. She also noted the lack of institutional structures and processes to take on the kind of plurality necessary in which to open up rather than pigeon hole possibilities.<sup>155</sup> What became clear is the operative challenge in trying to work against stereotypes that associate pedagogy with a particular format or didactic instructional modality (workshop, school tour, lecture etc) rather than potentially seeing artistic practice in and of itself as a form of pedagogy – each with its own idiosyncracies, possibilities and distinct language and potentially strategic refusals. If we can eschew preconceived notions, as education philosopher Gert Biesta notes, to embrace an understanding of education (and here I would also add art) as a response to a “radically *open* question” of what it means to be human that can only be answered – and has to be answered again and again – by “engaging *in* education,” we may be able to imagine a kind of transversal social praxis of “encounter” – an art and pedagogy that is about encountering people, ideas, contexts, difficulties, experience, difference.<sup>156</sup>

Such a praxis might be construed as a kind of constant “walking around,” a continual process of affective dislocation - traveling, dwelling, and encountering. This, of course, requires time. However, I am not sure that a mathematics of time is required – 3 weeks, 3 months or 3 years, it may be more a question of what one might call slow or textured time, a slow travel that, as feminist educator and philosopher Nel Noddings has explored with regard to notions of care and caring, enables a relation of “reciprocity.”<sup>157</sup> A time that is long enough to engage with difference, to encounter, to move to the edge – and maybe accidentally fall over. It is not only dwelling within and working out of and with a place and others, it is also a commitment to a

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<sup>153</sup> Pablo Helguera, *Education for Socially Engaged Art*, 12.

<sup>154</sup> José Roca, “Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>155</sup> Interview Gabriela Silva, “VÍdeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Cadernos de Viagem*.”

<sup>156</sup> Gert J.J. Biesta, *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future* (Boulder/Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2006) 151.

<sup>157</sup> Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition updated (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2013 (First published 1984)) 150.

constantly emergent form, to an organizational, literary, plastic, or corporeal language that is shaped and reshaped by place. Such praxis, constantly asks how to be a traveller citizen or a citizen traveller?

Given its presence within the larger structure of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial *Travel Notebooks* aimed to strike a balance of travel with commitment that at times wavered, at times succeeded. Each project was conceived as a three-week to month residency with a regional exhibition component presented and developed in/with each locale. All eight initiatives were then brought together in the official two month biennial exhibition in Porto Alegre. Together with other activities such as a scaled down Eugenio Dittborn exhibition that traveled to the interior of the state and teacher workshops and discussions in various towns throughout Rio Grande de Sul, *Travel Notebooks*, building on the 7<sup>th</sup> biennial's "Artist is Available" series of regional art residencies, was part of an effective regional initiative that points toward dynamic possibilities for a more distributed biennial model.

### **3.3.4 Casa M: Laboratory, Place, Encounter and Affect**

[*Casa M*] welcomed the community of Porto Alegre and its neighborhood, mobilized a field of affections and exchanges, saw the birth of loves and marriages, gave its floor so that children could learn to walk, and served as laboratory, studio, auditorium, school, open kitchen, music studio, dormitory, community center, and playground.

Mônica Hoff<sup>158</sup>

*Casa M* (literally M House or Home) was a cultural center inaugurated in a renovated residential house in a city center neighborhood as a social sculpture project of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial. Opening four months prior to the official exhibition and closing one month afterwards *Casa M* became the experimental engine and heart of the *Geopoetic* biennial. The house had belonged to a local artist and teacher, Cristina Balbão. Remembered with great affection, her portrait hanging in the library/archive/discussion space seemed to ground and affirm the sheer creative locality of it all. The three story shotgun style *Casa* comprised workshop, reading and café spaces, art commissioned installations including an outdoor installation featuring a red sand garden (Fernando Limberger), specially designed bookshelves (Daniel Acosta) and an ever present bell ring (Vitor Cesar) as well as a small vitrine with changing exhibitions. The *Casa's* discussion/library space also opened the archive of Mercosul Biennial Foundation and its seven previous editions to the public for research for the first time.

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<sup>158</sup> Hoff, "Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial," *Revista MESA*.



Programs featured talks, special events, workshops, courses, short residencies, and performances, along with the constant occupation by the *Casa's* mediators who generated projects and engaged the neighborhood with the center's activities or simply invited people to have coffee. If a transversal social praxis of "encounter" was only partially realized in *Travel Notebooks*, at *Casa M* it became its vital and dynamic modus operandi. Examples included: the *Duetos* project that brought together local artists of different disciplines to create collaborative works and performances; teacher workshops in philosophy, geography, history, literature and art that sought to geopoetically traverse curricula; and multiple gatherings inviting neighbors, families, artists and diverse practitioners to do everything from make gardens to sleep overs.

The sheer frenzy of *Casa M's* programming seemed to anticipate or compensate for its imminent discontinuity. The specter of its temporality was a recurring presence throughout its seven month existence, particularly in the last two months, where its success was obvious to everyone and the campaign "Fica *Casa M*" (Stay *Casa M*) strove to make a case to the Biennial Foundation to continue to support it. Curators, producers, artists and educators involved constantly wondered and questioned if the crazy energy, dedication and affection pulsating through center's every program would be sustainable. Did this very energy and motivation come from its temporal limitations? Could it exist as a social sculpture post the biennial? Would its permanence institutionalize the affective field built via the network of encounters crossing its doorstep? How might there be a way to think of all this agitation as a means to work toward the construction of a long-term project for the sustainability of the center? Some looked to *Casa M* to provide infrastructural support – nurture local and regional networks, provide presentation opportunities, or act as a lever or facilitator in local cultural negotiations. Artist and choreographer, Tatiana Rosa who participated in the *Duetos* project expressed this when she suggested that as part of the biennial program *Casa M* was a vital player in "provoking encounters" and "giving a hand" to the local art scene. While wishing that such encounters might have fostered even richer explorations across the collaborating group of artists involved she saw the *Casa's* differential praxis as one that represented an attempt to operate on a scale that would guarantee an affective dimension to the relationships it set in motion.<sup>159</sup> Others pointed to the unique neighborhood context that made it an a/effective architecture to promote surprising encounters. It was, as Michele Zgiet, *Casa* mediator described, "geopoetics in practice:"

There was a workshop going on and the teacher was super focused. Suddenly a group of teenage skateboarders came in. They wanted to cross the house to see the garden, so they asked to pass through and as they walked by they saw that

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<sup>159</sup> Interview Tatiana Rosa. "VÍdeo: Coleção dos múltiplas vozes: *Casa M*."

there was graffiti on the slides that were being shown and so they stopped to watch. And they were very knowledgeable about graffiti. Indeed, one of them was a graffiti artist. And it started a really interesting debate which is something that I really don't think could happen in another space.<sup>160</sup>

Artist Tiago Gora who presented *Entre*, the first in a series of intervention/installations in *Casa M's* vitrine similarly notes this sense of the house as a kind of “commons” and boundaryless territory that invites passerbys to check it out, without any kind of grandiose gesture:

Even more unexpected than the *City Unseen* interventions people pass by [...] and suddenly come across art exhibitions, studios [...] people thinking about and creating art in a regular residential house, and they can come in or not, or just look in the window.<sup>161</sup>

The relationship with the neighborhood was, however, not always smooth. Dancer Luiza Mendonça described the rehearsals for her *Dueto* performance project, *Geochoreography*, as tense. The piece was a collective dance intervention on public steps ascending a hill into the center of the city directly opposite *Casa M*. Practicing with loud music and instructions for the dancers infuriated the neighbors who even sent the police to question them and on one occasion threw a bag of urine at them. Yet on the day of the performance, they put out beach chairs hours beforehand to reserve their space wanting to see what all that noise had been about and even opened up their houses for the group to film the performance.<sup>162</sup> The buzz amongst the artists and their collaborators and their active use of social media brought over 2,500 to *Casa M* on the evening of the performance.<sup>163</sup> Afterwards the neighbors expressed how thrilled they were to have seen this abandoned public staircase so revitalized and filled with people. For Helguera:

These types of experiences, of conviviality, spontaneity, this is absolutely the most important, I think *Casa M* represents the best of what this biennial could have produced. For me, it's core to the principles of critical pedagogy, you don't just give people a product, you teach them to make the product so they can do it themselves.<sup>164</sup>

The *Casa M* project, as assistant curator Fernanda Albuquerque noted, was a laboratory on multiple levels: experimenting with independent formats within institutional contexts; encouraging cross-overs and collaborations between artistic languages; emphasizing process and

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<sup>160</sup> Interview Michele Zgiet. “Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>161</sup> Interview Tiago Gora. “Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>162</sup> Interview Luiza Mendonça. “Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>163</sup> Interview Gabriela Silva. “Video: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Casa M*.”

<sup>164</sup> Interview Pablo Helguera. “Collection of Multiple Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

reflection over production; and alternative methods of approaching audiences.<sup>165</sup> For her it truly constructed and “created its place.” What, she wondered, did *Casa M* bring that the biennial had not previously brought?<sup>166</sup> The emphasis, as Roca notes, in relation to the title of *Casa M* on the notion of “Casa” and not the Mercosul of the “M.”<sup>167</sup> It was an intimately scaled model, a space to be appropriated, a context for experimentation in art, pedagogy and life, a place for multiple encounters, and a kind of neighborhood school-cum-community center-cum studio.

However, *Casa M*'s infrastructure ended up being more ephemeral than bricks and mortar. Roca noted that the Mercosul Biennial Foundation only accepted *Casa M* when it was seen as a social sculpture, i.e. an artwork within the context of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial.<sup>168</sup> While certainly the temporal vitality of *Casa M* would have transformed into something else as a permanent center, it was a shame that the Foundation could not see to exploring the possibility of continuing it. Not only as a context for ongoing activities but also, as Fernanda Ott, coordinator of the Mercosul Foundation's archive at the time, suggested, as a place to house and socialize the evolving histories the biennial itself was producing. This disjunct between the pulsating and desiring energies of what the biennial was geopoetically generating locally and regionally and its administrative economic power structure was a source of visible frustration for those on the ground. Paula Krause, administrator of *Casa M* remarked:

I don't know if those who end up putting money into the biennial know much about what goes on. There's a gap... for example here this project represents the Biennial Foundation for the city, I sense this with my contact with the public, everyone that comes by here gives us feedback on how this is important for the city not just as a project of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial but linked to the Foundation [...] in the end though, all these statements don't end up really influencing a decision, we don't really understand how that decision is taken [...] It's something I see with [various] biennials. Projects come with a lot of force, they traverse [each] biennial during a time period, traverse the city, but they don't manage to transform that larger structure, that thing that doesn't have much form, the biennial leaves but that thing without form, that is the Foundation, the cultural policy of the city, continues without form.<sup>169</sup>

Despite this sense of a geopolitical failure and disappointment amidst the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial's geopoetic possibilities, the real infrastructural constructivity was the network of affection encompassing those closest to and orbiting around the *Casa M* experimental activities. In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out that “affects may have any

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<sup>165</sup> José Roca, Paola Santoscoy and Fernanda Albuquerque, “Casa M,” in *Pedagogia no campo expandido*, 406-408, 408.

<sup>166</sup> Interview Fernanda Albuquerque, “Vídeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Casa M*.”

<sup>167</sup> Interview José Roca. “Vídeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Casa M*.”

<sup>168</sup> José Roca. “Vídeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: *Casa M*.”

<sup>169</sup> Paula Krause. “Vídeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Perspectivas e horizontes.”

object” be it “things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions and any number of things, including other affects.” Their duration and impact is impossible to objectively measure, for example “anger may evaporate in seconds but can also motivate a decade-long career of revenge” or “hearing a piece of music can make [one] want to hear it repeatedly, listen to other music or study to become a composer.” They are also, “at whatever scale they are attended to [...] irreducibly phenomenological.”<sup>170</sup> Grappling with affects lead us to the unwieldy tides of human emotions and motivations, they may be influenced or contagious but cannot be corralled. Yet if mobilized their affective agency is exponential. It is in this sense as Hoff remarked that *Casa M*'s smallness made it so “huge.”<sup>171</sup>

Shortly after the center’s closing, a collective of curators, producers and educators, many of whom were directly involved the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial opened their own “house” continuing the spirit of *Casa M* on a volunteer-run basis known as “Casa Comum” (Common House).<sup>172</sup> The space, however, was also short-lived, as people left the city, costs rose, and energy abated, it closed. Yet, many of those involved still live in Porto Alegre and in different ways continue to embrace and “rehearse” the experimental and collective spirit of *Casa M* as social sculpture. This network also extends to the multiple places, cities and contexts throughout Brazil where those connected with the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial moved, to the varied masters and doctoral dissertations in progress, and to the taste for experimental encounters and affective possibility that the project catalyzed.

### 3.3.5 Mediators and Collective Spectatorship

Genuinely emancipated spectatorship rolls up its sleeves [...]

Stephen Wright<sup>173</sup>

September 2011, it was the final evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s three month long mediator course. Featuring workshops, lectures and debates with artists, educators and curators involved in the Biennial as well as other invitees, offered both on site and online, the course was a veritable free university. Choreography, role-playing, cartography and performance were just some of the many artistic, pedagogic and mediation strategies explored. The last few weeks had comprised a mini

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<sup>170</sup> Sedgwick draws on Silvan Tomkins’ *Affect Imagery Consciousness* published in 4 volumes over several decades from 1962 – 1992, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003) 19-21.

<sup>171</sup> Hoff, “Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>172</sup> The “casa” engaged many of those involved in the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial: Luciano Montanha, Gueibe, Marcos Sari, Ernani Chaves, Leticia Castilhos, Fernanda Albuquerque, Carla Borba, Giuliano Lucas among many others.

<sup>173</sup> Stephen Wright, “Disinterested Spectatorship,” *Toward a Lexicon of Usership* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2013) 20-21, 21 <http://museumartutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf>

residency in a local school called “Vivencias nas Escolas” (Lived Experiences in Schools) involving collaborations with teachers, specific classes and neighborhoods. The atmosphere was animated and tense. The biennial would open the following week and the “real” work would begin. As evaluators we were present to engage the almost 200 strong group in a discussion about highlights and key learning points since the beginning of the course. Given the size of the group, the strategy was to present images and comments the mediators had themselves produced to reflect on the course in a collective context, allowing the mediators to pick and choose elements they wished to expand upon. The emotional tenor of the evening shifted completely when one young man and future mediator stood up to say that that very day he had given up his tech day job because from here on out he wanted to work with art education. The group exploded.

The course had begun in May of that year. The plan was to prepare participants to offer mediated experiences for school groups and the general public for each of the *Geopoetic Essays* components over the two-month period of the biennial. The three month course would comprise two parallel sessions meeting respectively in the mornings and evenings twice a week offering training to a total of 300 mediators, some via distance learning, each selected via an application process with a few to encouraging a diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds. The ultimate number working in the biennial would be 200.

At that first meeting José Roca presented the overall concept, each component and the artists involved. We followed with a brief introduction to the “evaluation” project as an invitation to reflect. Critically, as an inaugural moment to that process, we invited participants to create their own mind map, putting the word mediation at the center of a blank page and jotting down associations with the word, concept and practice as they currently knew it. All of the “maps” we then collected. This was, as-it-were, an attempt to create a kind of ground zero to enable us to recognize and explore future learning, changes and impact and, as such, it was vitally important that this reflective moment was enabled at the very beginning of the course.

After this exercise Helguera then presented a performative lecture positioning and exploring critical questions, modalities and stereotypes of mediation. He also distributed a workbook style publication edited for the occasion comprising a selection of national and international reflections on various aspects of mediation. The following day, director of education at the Frick in New York and former choreographer, Rika Burnham, presented a special inaugural lecture weaving together knowledge gleaned from over three decades of teaching in art museums. Subsequently Burnham and Helguera facilitated hands on workshops in one of the local museums and planned exhibition sites of the biennial. The artful mix of their mediation styles, drawing extensively on their own art practices, for Burnham choreography – a play of silence, movement,

positioning and timing – and, for Helguera performance – a potent use of the possibilities of role-playing and theater – was an extremely useful foundational contrast that simultaneously offered high quality mediation strategies, distilled and refined over many years, and, importantly, legitimized different approaches. Also, in their very distinctness, Burnham and Helguera’s methods suggested that each must find their own singular mode of mediation.

In the three months of the course that followed from local based art education collective Coletivo E to Geo Brito director of Augusto Boal’s Teatro de Oprimido in Rio de Janeiro, a slew of different artistic and pedagogic practices would become the mediators to appropriate, refract and “anthropophagize.” The mix of lectures and hands on workshops was vital to giving depth and range to the mediator experience and as Etienne Nachtigall, course coordinator and mediator supervisor, noted the mix of “reflection and experience” was a key differential in the course.<sup>174</sup>

In a provocative short essay entitled “Why Mediate?” curator Maria Lind critiques staid mediation models that focus on cultivating the educated consumer or the participatory individual rather than fostering “any practical overlap between the sphere of art and the sphere of social and political action.”<sup>175</sup> Lind laments that most mediation methods are derived from modern art, drawing on individualist and formalist elements as opposed to collectivist approaches to spectatorship influenced by Constructivism.<sup>176</sup>

By contrast the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial mediators took their cue from the multifarious practices of contemporary art. In contrast to perceiving their role as some sort of “rear-guard action,” they rather saw themselves as engaged cultural citizens.<sup>177</sup> Their collective experience – participation in the course, their (often collaborative) mediation of different aspects of the biennial, the exchanges amongst themselves on site, socially, and online – as Mônica Hoff has often stated, meant they were the first, and one could add most engaged, public of the biennial.<sup>178</sup> This critically distinguishes the ambition of the mediator program from traditional models, a dynamic that may have frustrated those expecting a format of information, guiding, or customer service. The mediators were their own self-generating and self-engaging public so-to-speak. Here, the mediation process and experience can be read as a kind of constructivist collective spectatorship model, where, like critic Steven Wright’s truly emancipated spectator, with their sleeves rolled up, the mediators jumped in to “use” the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial – its exhibitions, programs, and practices –

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<sup>174</sup> Interview with Etienne Nachtigall. “Video: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Mediação.”

<sup>175</sup> Maria Lind, “Why Mediate Art?” *Ten Fundamental Questions About Curating* (Milan, Italy: Mousse Publishing, 2011) 100-104.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>177</sup> Hoff, “Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid* and also Mônica Hoff, “Educational curatorship, art methodologies, training and permanence: the change in education at the Mercosul Biennial,” in *Pedagogia no campo expandido*, 389.

as a space of encounter, authorship, learning, creativity and reflection, in turn, imbuing the Biennial with a collective geopoetic spirit.<sup>179</sup>

Mediators at *Casa M* hosted talks, gave workshops, baked cakes, grew gardens, held sleepovers, and invited neighbors for coffee. For *City Unseen's* public art interventions they created poetic routes and nighttime participatory corteges through the city. At the port warehouses the *Geopoetics* exhibition became a field for nomadic peregrinations and performances ideas. As *Casa M* mediator Gabriel Bartz noted, “there was so much difference, it ended up becoming one thing.”<sup>180</sup> To understand this potent collectivity, in our essay on the biennial, we draw on the philosopher Fred Evans who explores this kind of phenomenon as a body of multiple voices, one that simultaneously embraces solidarity, heterogeneity and creativity.<sup>181</sup> Similarly, Brazilian geographer Milton Santos’ “acontecer soldirário” (happening of/in solidarity) locates this phenomenon within a territorial context.<sup>182</sup> Suely Rolnik’s notion of the “corpo vibratil”(resonant body) activated by “precise processes of contamination and contagion” emphasizes the organic nature of this collective territorialized body.<sup>183</sup> A time slowed down, more textured, where different subjectivities, as she provocatively notes, “breathe the same air.”<sup>184</sup> This collectivity both animated and energized the transformative experiences of the multiple individuals involved. Paula Luersen who acted as a mediator at *Casa M* described going to a school on the city’s outskirts as part of her mini residency for the mediator course:

When I was presented with the list of schools, I didn’t know where I was going. We had to just go for it, which was part of the experience, to be open to whatever happens. So when I got there they said ‘look you came here to bring a notion of art from the Biennial, but look at all the art we have here.’ So it was the most amazing of things. I arrived with my notion from the Biennial with all of the concepts developed by the curators and I had to connect this with the notions they already had and really they had well formed notions of creativity, of using mosaics to reflect on their neighborhood and to think about their school, life, and reality. I went with a notion to transform a space and bring an idea of the Biennial and what I ended up discovering was that much more than transforming, I was transformed by the discovery. I went without direction and ended coming back amazed by the place [...] I think not knowing where your heading sums up what the Biennial means to me. The notion of the frontier that is imaginary, the image we create of the places we don’t know. Experiencing this you gives us another notion.

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<sup>179</sup> Stephen Wright, “Disinterested Spectatorship,” *Towards a Lexicon of Usership*.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Gabriel Bartz, “Collection of Multiple Voices,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>181</sup> Fred Evans, *The Multivoiced Body: Society and Communication in the Age of Diversity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) in Gogan and Vergara, “Collection of Multiple Voices,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>182</sup> Milton Santos, “O Processo Espacial: O Acontecer Solidário,” *A Natureza do Espaço* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2002) 165.

<sup>183</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Geopolitics of Pimping,” trans. Brian Holmes, European Institute for Progressive Culture Policies (October, 2006) [http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base\\_edit](http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base_edit)

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

Maria Aparecida Aliano Marques, coordinator of cultural policies at the Municipal Secretary of Education in Porto Alegre at the time, emphasized the critical value in these teacher/mediator encounters where assumptions and ideas about the periphery and public schools or art and biennials are challenged and reworked.<sup>185</sup> That both teachers and mediators were authorized to invent and to create was key in supporting an evolving polyphony of voices, ideas and experimentations. Special needs teacher Márcia Warner stressed the increasing care and attention to these relationships as fundamental to the creation of affective links and social bonds, describing such practices as a form of potentializing proximity.<sup>186</sup>

Proximal encounters with art, city, and diverse publics were daily experiences for Andressa Argente one of the mediators of the *City Unseen* public art interventions project. One installation in particular thoroughly engaged her: the *Garagem dos Livros* (Book Garage) an old secondhand bookshop garage in the city center featuring Brazilian artist Elida Tessler's installation *Isto Orbita*, named after an unpublished work by the writer Donald Schuler, Portuguese translator of *Finnegan's Wake*. Tessler had created a 138 volume encyclopedia, each featuring one poem by the author with other pages left blank and positioned signs on the bookshelves coinciding with the names of authors, characters and artists mentioned in Schuler's text. The garage constantly (re)staged an encounter between the orbiting worlds of city and literature, of transience and narrative, and, for Andressa, between art and mediation:

What made me happiest was to go the Garagem dos Livros because Sr. João was there and I think he was the living artwork there ... [He] would give feedback and each time I took someone there it was like: "Hi Dona Irena, Hi Sr João" [and they]... "How are you, so you're back again." So there was an affective relationship with them, we would shake hands and embrace them when we arrived. Sr João often brought beautiful things. He talked about storing. About storing things by means of memory or writing and that books are activated when we open them. When we close them they are just stored put aside but when we open them we give them life. Here he made mediation come alive, talking with us. Mediation is this. It's an activation, like an open book.<sup>187</sup>

Art here is like a table around which multiple narratives gather. As Hoff notes the web of human relations is the mainstay of the mediator experience where "art is a tool that is there, that we use, abuse, desire, appropriate [...]"<sup>188</sup> Yet it is also a geopoetic north. Eugenio Dittborn's airmail

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<sup>185</sup> Interview Maria Aparecida Aliano Marques, "VÍdeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Mediações."

<sup>186</sup> Márcia Warner is a special needs teacher at Escola Municipal de Ensino Especial Elyseu Paglioli. Her remarks, synthesized here, are drawn from the three interviews conducted over the course of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial. Interview Marcia Warner, "Collection of Multiple Voices, *Revista MESA* and "VÍdeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Mediações."

<sup>187</sup> Interview Andressa Argente, "Collection of Multiple Voices," *Revista MESA*.

<sup>188</sup> Interview Mônica Hoff, "VÍdeo: Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Mediações" and also in Jessica Gogan and Luiz Guilherme Vergara, "Multiple voices essays: Field notes 8th Mercosul Biennial Educational Program Evaluation [in progress]," in *Pedagogia no campo ampliado*, 392-405, 397.



paintings comprising collages of text and photocopied images sewn onto clothes-lining fabric, occasionally with painted marks, then folded and placed in special envelopes and sent through the mail, richly evoked the themes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, questioning issues of nation, border, periphery and its accompanying oppressions and restrictions. As symbols of mobility, the paintings, for Ana Stumpf Mitchell a mediator for the Eugenio Dittborn exhibition, became touchstones for her interactions as multiple forms of contact with self and others:

Essays and rehearsals of geopoetics. Multiple and several attempts of meeting with my multiplicity through the diversity of voices. Mediation that is Medi[t]ation. Action through the environment, space, frontiers [...] I choose to work as a mediator because I had given up being a teacher and a geographer. What a curious universe since I've never felt so much of a teacher and a geographer...<sup>189</sup>

These encounters with singularity and difference, locality and worldliness, and personal growth and collectivity, expanding the notion of what, where, how, and with whom art is constituted were the rich core of the mediator experience.

Of course, questions regarding the role of the mediator as explainer or performer-interpreter, or whether or not mediation was even needed were often raised. Indeed, Aracy Amaral, one of the Biennial's curators, registering perhaps her discomfort with Helguera's "expanded pedagogy," critiqued this focus on mediation suggesting that we may be witnessing the rise of the art educator star as we saw the curator star.<sup>190</sup> Mick Wilson has suggested that this desire for visibility stems from educator status anxiety, a profession traditionally belonging to the service economy characterized by serving goals of other sectors and having less autonomy over one's work, now wishes to enter the curator/artist reputational economy where actors "produce" themselves as special.<sup>191</sup> As Kaija Kaitavuori notes in her introduction to *It's all Mediating* this analysis raises more questions than it answers not the least of which are cultural attitudes to notions of "service."<sup>192</sup> Or indeed, one might add that the field of gallery education is just as reputational. Paying the rent, as philosopher and activist Rodrigo Nunes suggests, makes capitalists of us all.<sup>193</sup> Rather what this articulation of a service/reputational frontier may reveal more potently is the desire/need for certain kinds of hierarchies to remain in place. And it is

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<sup>189</sup> Ana Stumpf Mitchell email to Vergara/Gogan, *ibid.*, 400.

<sup>190</sup> Closing seminar *Pedagogy in an Expanded Field: 8th Mercosul Biennial*. November 2011, Porto Alegre.

<sup>191</sup> Kaija Kaitavuori cites Wilson's talk at the Engage conference of gallery education (national organization of gallery education in the UK) in 2011 entitled "Whose Turn is it Now?" where he identified this tension. Kaija Kaitavuori, "Introduction," in *It's all Mediating: Outlining and Incorporating the Roles of Curating and Education in the Exhibition Context*, eds. Kaija Kaitavuori, Laura Kokkonen and Nora Sternfeld (Newcastle upon Tyne/England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013) xiii.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>193</sup> Rodrigo Nunes, "Toward a Politics of Counterpimping," *Revista MESA* no. 3: Publicness in Art (May, 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/rodrigo-nunes/?lang=en)

within this challenge that future growth possibilities of “expanded pedagogy” will need to position itself. Zygmunt Bauman has noted that, “at the bottom of all the crises abounding in our times lies the crisis of *agencies* and of the *instruments of effective action*.”<sup>194</sup> For the 8th Biennial’s mediators, eventhough the lowest paid and (arguably) least recognized amidst the professionals involved, their poetic agency and collective experience were the prime motivators. Vitally the course empowered this freedom – the emerging school, already active and gaining strength over each biennial edition, especially energized since Camnitzer’s endorsement, and even more so with Helguera’s performative touch, had ceased to be a training course to provide good service but, as Hoff notes, had become the educational project of the biennial itself.<sup>195</sup>

Like Andrade’s “joy is the decisive test” the mediators engineered their own festive border-crossings. Amidst Roca’s “zones of poetic autonomy” presenting artistic projects that structure their own autonomy and nationhood, an emerging nation was being born in the geopoetic flux of the biennial itself.<sup>196</sup>

We, the nomadic mediators, encounter in one another the necessity for transformation.<sup>197</sup>

Our choir does not complain, it claims. We don’t want flags, marks, not even a knife to say this territory is ours. We want the liberty to cross frontiers without passports or stamps.

We do not see this Biennial as an already sewn fabric, but as a loom in constant activity, and we feel the necessity to be free to move about this mutating mesh, choosing and being chosen in the trajectory of threads, its knots and twists.

Manifesto Nomadic Mediators, 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, *Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge UK/Malden USA: Polity Press, 2013) 60.

<sup>195</sup> She is also referring here to the increasingly experimental dimension the course assumed in the 9th Biennial as a series of mediation “laboratories.” Hoff, “Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>196</sup> Roca discusses the “zones of poetic autonomy” in his catalogue essay. “Geopoetic Essays,” in *Ensaio de Geopoética*, 51.

<sup>197</sup> N.T “nós” in Portuguese means “us” and “knots” this implying the we, us and knots of the network of mediators tied together in this collective nomadic endeavor.

<sup>198</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original:

*Nós, os mediadores nômades, encontramos um no outro uma necessidade de transformação.*

*Nosso coro não se queixa, reivindica. Não queremos bandeiras, marcos, nem mesmo uma faca para dizer que o território é nosso. Queremos a liberdade de atravessar fronteiras sem passaporte nem carimbos.*

*Nós não enxergamos esta Bienal como um tecido já costurado, mas como um tear em constante atividade, e sentimos necessidade de sermos livres para cruzar essa malha mutante, escolhendo e sendo escolhidos na trajetória dos fios, seus nós e entrelaçamentos.*

In Gogan and Vergara, “Multiple Voices Essays,” *Pedagogia no campo expandido*, 400.

It is in the desire to foster agency and a frustration with this being pigeon-holed, curtailed or devalued that mediator supervisor Diana Kolker argued that “we are there adding our voice, not competing, not explaining, not translating, not making any kind of bridge, but shouting together.”<sup>199</sup> What makes this collective spectatorship is the sense of this “shouting together” as a collectively shared experience and also one of working within the cracks to create new socio-cultural and artistic-pedagogic opportunities for agency. Rafael Silveira confirms this while also expressing concerns for the future:

It’s totally crazy, people are turning their life plans upside down. Like “I used to work on this but now I see this completely different way.” Or “I want my artistic production to play a pedagogic role.” Or “I want to conceive my pedagogical work as a poetic practice.” Or “I want this for my life.” But while on the one hand this is beautiful, I’m also worried as it’s a professional field that is still incipient. So, I don’t know, we have what, over 200 mediators who fell in love with this, but the market for this work is still very limited.<sup>200</sup>

Here Rafael points to one of the significant challenges with the mediator model, even in its most creative applications, particularly as it has played out in Brazil. Born out of the blockbuster exhibition and cultural access demands, the mediator, first known as a “monitor,” was a role originally conceived to watch over artworks, answer questions and shepherd, mostly school groups, around exhibitions. In the context of the Mercosul Biennial the name was changed to “mediator” in 2003 for the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial, prompted by a burgeoning Foucaultian resistance to static/surveillance type terminologies for such functions such as “monitor” and by Mirian Celeste and Gisa Picosque, then pedagogic coordinators, who sought to embrace more poetic-esthetic pedagogical approaches inspired in Deleuze’s notions of “intercessors.”<sup>201</sup> What one might call a creative intercession or mediation is one that does not simply advocate for the other but generatively activates a kind of “going between” that assists by intervening in the other’s world and producing creative interference.<sup>202</sup> Following a research study group in the early 1990s Celeste began to envision the potential of “the mediator” as an instigative force, a kind of aesthetic pedagogic viral contamination that “challenges readings and aesthetic/artistic

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<sup>199</sup> Interview Diana Kolker, “Collection of Multiple Voices,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>200</sup> Interview Rafael Silveira, “Collection of Multiple Voices,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>201</sup> Mirian Celeste Martins, email exchange, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

<sup>202</sup> Celeste references the notion of “intercessores” from Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Minuit 1990) published in Portuguese as Gilles Deleuze, *Conversações, 1972-1990* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. 34, 1992) 156. The English translation: “Intercessors are essential. Creation is all about intercessors. Without them there is no creative work. They can be people – for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists – but also things, even plants of animals as in Castaneda.” Deleuze continues “Felix Guattari and I, are intercessors of one another,” from Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 125 & 171, in Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze’s Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (Burlington/USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2007) 13.

production.”<sup>203</sup> In the early 2000s, this notion is further informed by the concept of cultural memes and a more expansive understanding of cultural mediation emerges.<sup>204</sup> Mediation and/or cultural mediation, as terms, seem, however, to have widely varying usages.

Traditionally understood as conflict resolution, mediation’s practices of dialogue and empathy come into play to create a safe space, disarm, and negotiate futures. Mediation in this sense is a practice, as family therapy terms, of multipartiality.<sup>205</sup> For Vygotsky mediation is both how we alter and interact with the world via culture, history and those around us. A cursory look at current contemporary art discourse seems to suggest a parallel with Vygotsky’s socio-cultural understanding but with different applications. Paul O’Neill describes curatorship “as a distinct practice of mediation.”<sup>206</sup> Lind, in a manner similar to her argument for a more publicly and critically minded notion of “the curatorial,” instead of the “business as usual” notion of curating, suggests a way of thinking about mediation as a form of “creating contact” – a means of allowing a wider variety of modes of exchange with art, institution and the outside world.<sup>207</sup> Countering this more positive notion Lars Bang Larsen points to the flip side or the notion of the “middleman” associated with the curator as mediator where he or she is both ontologically and socially somewhere in between, where he or she is “typically seen as a conformist, parasitical agent responsible for short-circuiting authenticity haunted by an aura of mediocrity.”<sup>208</sup> A framing that in Brazil is more typically applied to education. This maybe an inadvertent result of the use of the term “mediator” for such an educational type function and as such may have been an error as Mirian Celeste Martins suggests.<sup>209</sup>

From a different perspective educators and scholars Carmen Mörsch and Nora Sternfeld see the potential of this “middle” as a potent hinge position of agency in the context of gallery education. Sternfeld draws on Gayatri Spivak’s notion that the knowledge/power nexus is not only the relation between two forms of agency, they also produce a space by placing them in relation to one another. This locates a space, a productive critical middle as Sternfeld sees it, for a

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<sup>203</sup> Mirian Celeste Martins, “Mediações culturais e contaminações estéticas,” *Revista Cearte*, vol 1, no 2 (August 2014): 248-264, 250.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>205</sup> “Multipartial” is a term coming from family therapy used by dialogue consultant Patricia Romney in a discussion at Animating Democracy Initiative’s Learning Exchange, Chicago, November 2001.

<sup>206</sup> Paul O’Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* 25.

<sup>207</sup> Lind “Why Mediate?” 103 & 105; on the “curatorial” see Jens Hoffmann and Maria Lind, “To Show or Not to Show,” *Mouse Magazine*, #31, November 2011 <http://www.moussemagazine.it/articolo.mm?id=759#top>

<sup>208</sup> Lars Bang Larsen, “The Middleman: Beginning to Talk about Mediation,” in *Curating Subjects* ed. Paul O’Neill (London: Open Editions, 2007) 20-30, 21.

<sup>209</sup> Email Exchange March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Martins suggests that the use of the term mediator focusing on function rather than the action of mediation may have been a mistake.

critical praxis of art education.<sup>210</sup> For Mörsch gallery education “seeks to transform the institution into a space in which those who are explicitly not at the center of the art world can produce their own articulations and representations. In this sense, it links institutions to their outside, to their local and geopolitical contexts.”<sup>211</sup> She defines mediation in the context of gallery education as a (potentially) progressive critical spectrum that moves from the affirmative and reproductive to the deconstructive and transformative.

In Brazil, a series of recent publications and seminars similarly approach this “middle” as a creative and political zone of possibility.<sup>212</sup> As Cayo Honorato notes the “coopting of educational mediation by corporate logic, [whether] private or state, doesn’t serve to negate the work of mediation in general, but turns it, precisely because of this, indispensable in the redistribution of the powers of art.”<sup>213</sup> This makes mediation a clear ideological locus. However, it constantly seems as if the discourse (and practice) is operating within a ceiling of debilitating limitations. In the absence of consistent and more stable professional models and opportunities of art education, this “middle” discourse also reinforces on-going cheap non-committal institutional labor and risks inhibiting constructive opportunities that build on these experiences. As already noted, in addition to the Mercosul Biennial, the São Paulo Biennial has a similar mediator course/concept, as does the recently opened Museum of Art of Rio (MAR). Here the mediators themselves are the public - young, energized and engaged with mediating connections between art and diverse publics. The experimental short-lived and starting-out newness of such mediation programs are now par for the course and often render truly rich results. An investment in polyphony is indeed one of the most effective. Yet there are a series of nagging questions and issues. Beyond the cheap labor issue what other possibilities in the focus on such models are being missed that might constructively scaffold into new and deeper forms of engagement? Also, too often this becomes, as curator Janna Graham argues against, about “cultivating access to, inclusion of, and increasing audiences for cultural objects and institutions as they stand.” To counter this she advocates “para-siting, making, and presenting culture that is useful to and in

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<sup>210</sup> Sternfeld refers to Spivak’s essay “More on Power/Knowledge” in *Outside the Teaching Machine*. Nora Sternfeld, “That Certain Savoir/Pouvoir. Gallery Education as a Field of Possibility,” in *It’s all Mediating: Outlining and Incorporating the Roles of Curating and Education in the Exhibition Context*, 1.

<sup>211</sup> Carmen Mörsch, “Allicanes for Unlearning: On Gallery Education and Institutions of Critique,” *Afterall*, no 26 (Spring 2011) <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.26/alliances-for-unlearning-on-the-possibility-of-future-collaborations-between-gallery-educa>

<sup>212</sup> Carmen S. G. Aranha and Kátia Kanto, *Espaços de mediação* (São Paulo: PGEHA/Museu de arte contemporâneo da USP, 2011); Adriana Fontes and Rita Gama eds. *Reflexões e Experiências: 1º Seminário Oi Futuro: Mediação em Museus, Arte e Tecnologia* (Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro/Livre Expressão, 2012); and Maria Tornaghi, Cristina de Padula, and Tânia Queiroz eds. *O mundo é mais do que isso: Mediação e a complexa rede de significações da arte e do mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Parque Lage, 2014).

<sup>213</sup> Cayo Honorato, “Expondo a mediação educacional: Questões sobre educação, arte contemporânea e política.” *ars*, vol.9 (2007): 116-127, 120 <http://www.revistas.usp.br/ars/article/view/2989/3679>

solidarity with projects of decolonization and social justice.”<sup>214</sup> Yet curiously developing such work requires an already strong institution to support it. Graham, for example, was able to facilitate this work under the auspices of The Center for Possible Studies, a neighborhood cultural action/residency project initiative of the well-established Serpentine Gallery in London. Nurturing this kind of criticality, however, amidst politically and financially precarious institutional contexts in Brazil and demands of numbers and social access will require deft sleights of hand, working both within and without that will need to deconstruct and reimagine multi-directional forms of mediation and/or strategically find other positions from which to build a critical practice.

These impasses or “ceilings” ultimately challenged the evolution of the Mercosul Biennial’s forest school. “Cloud Formations,” the pedagogic project of the 9<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial entitled *Weather Permitting*, was conceived as a network of learning. The project both built upon and inverted the geopoetics of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial and was led by Mônica Hoff now as one of the co-curators of this edition. A series of poetic “mediation” laboratories featuring even more expanded parameters, critical histories, and artistic-pedagogic strategies developed by Hoff together with Diana Kolker, as supervisor, continually rehearsed a distributed and disseminated concept of critical and creative citizenship. Energized by the waves of public protests in Brazil from June – September 2013, the increasingly empowered mediators ultimately burst the utopian bubble of their collective spectatorship. As the streets throbbed with collective energy and aesthetic wit disputing governmental investments in the World Cup and crying out for improvements in education and health care, a collective of mediators wrote a manifesto against the Mercosul Biennial. They objected to VIP treatment and related discrimination, among other things, and even mobilized a strike during the final days of the 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial. The mediator bravura seemed to be perfectly mirrored by institutional intransigence. (Mis) understandings and missed opportunities abounded. From the perspective of the mediators, it seems future approaches will need to grapple with a more multi-directional mode of working, particularly within institutions. As the mediators are themselves a public, internal administrations, boards and power structures will need to be reconceived as in and of themselves potential publics. As Paulo Herkenhoff has noted a significant educational (and one might say meditational) task is to “educate the ‘prince’, to educate who runs things.”<sup>215</sup> From the perspective of Mercosul power structures, it would seem

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<sup>214</sup> Janna Graham, recent presentation at Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm <http://www.tenstakonsthall.se/uploads/114-whatdoesartmediationdo.pdf>

<sup>215</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: “um tarifa nosso é educar o príncipe, educar quem manda.” Paulo Herkenhoff. “Dilemmas sociais na esfera pública da arte.” Panel: Paulo Herkenhoff. Responder: Márcia Ferran. Moderator: Fred Coelho. *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental

vital to find ways to draw on the rich potential of the network they created. A significant lost opportunity lies amidst the link of the mediators with, as both Lind and Mörsch note, the “institutional outside.”<sup>216</sup> For Hoff, the 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial impasse of mediator-institution resulted in an unintentional emancipation of the project that, from that time onwards, no longer belonged to the institution but was now more than ever part of the fabric of the city, in community narratives, and public life. It was in this process that the Mercosul Biennial truly became a school.<sup>217</sup>

However, the mediator concept and course continued for the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial, albeit significantly curtailed in its ambitions, reduced in number, and by all accounts clipped in its polyphonic discourse.<sup>218</sup> It seems in the future, if we are to challenge institutions from within the economies of the same, that we may need a different concept of mediation that shifts from a notion of a mediator-individual-role, more often than not associated with a devalued middle or some kind of brokering, to a more open-ended autonomous praxis of “beside,” as Sedgwick has suggested in relation to criticism.<sup>219</sup> It is a praxis drawing on Lind’s use of the curatorial instead of curating that one might call “mediational,” that is a mix of critical pedagogy, civic engagement, activism, and contemporary art practice that pushes beyond the typecast “mediator as usual,” to radically develop new modes of address as well as ways to talk about and build support for such work. The multiple voices behind the Pandora’s box explosion of mediation at the Mercosul Biennial will certainly be engaged in those possibilities in the next decade.

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Nucleus of Education and Art at MAM – RJ, November 2011

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6XdjYlcJMs&index=1&list=PLO-GRBBoQZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m>

<sup>216</sup> Lind “Why Mediate?” 103 & 105 and Mörsch, “Allicanes for Unlearning: On Gallery Education and Institutions of Critique.”

<sup>217</sup> Hoff, “Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>218</sup> The 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial *Messages from a New America* returned to Morais’s interest in rewriting and gathering the histories of Latin American art. However, controversy and financial problems complicated plans and two curators resigned and the opening was significantly delayed. The education curator was Cristián G. Gallegos. While on the one hand it seemed that an ongoing spirit of the experimental was embraced with the idea of an experimental school for curating, on the other the distinction between the mediator program and such as a school seems to suggest there was far less of an interest in geopoetic mixing. The Biennial ran from October 23 – December 6, 2015. See Mercosul Foundation site: <http://www.fundacaobienal.art.br/site/en/bienais/10-bienal> Obs: English version at the time of access (March 2016) was not accessible. Diana Kolker mediator supervisor from the 9<sup>th</sup> Biennial described some mediation experiences that she participated in as more attuned to esposing an institutional discourse than embracing the freer geopoetic spirit of previous versions. Email exchange with the author January 2016.

<sup>219</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. “Introduction.” *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 1-25, 8.

### 3.4 CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIVITY AND SOCIALIZING RESEARCH

Registering practice is the thread that weaves the history of our process. It's through it we can be for each other [...] but it's not enough to record and keep to oneself what was thought, it's fundamental to socialize the content of reflection to each and every one of us. This individual offering is fundamental to the construction of the collective archive. As Paulo Freire clearly pointed out, the record of such reflection and its public socialization are “founders of conscience” [...] and also the tools for building knowledge.

Madalena Freire, *Educador, Educador, Educador*<sup>220</sup>

Many, many, many thanks to make me stop now and talk about this, you know, and not keep this in thinking oh how great, but publically express just how fabulous this was, enriching, I'd like to see those tapes together, because I don't remember what I said, I think that I transformed so much that the Gabriel of the 1<sup>st</sup> tape doesn't exist anymore, at some moment he was lost, now I only am afraid of not making mistakes, if I do something and don't make mistakes, I am going to be worried.

Gabriel Bartz, mediador *Casa M*<sup>221</sup>

*Geopoetic Essays* strove to break rules, be consequential and re-territorialize pedagogy within the visual arts and the artistic imaginary in the field of pedagogy. Our task as researchers/evaluators was to explore how this might be recognized. We asked ourselves: what kinds of strategies could evaluate and document these processes and how might we accompany this critical geopoetic zone of contagion? These questions motivated and mobilized the idea of a collection of multiple voices engaging those directly involved in the expanded field of pedagogy of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial and their experiences, concerns, desires and questions have filled the preceding pages.<sup>222</sup>

Given the potential scope of such a collection project, we naturally were required to set limitations. Together with the pedagogic team we determined a process of interviewing approximately 40 people including curators, educators, cultural producers, artists, community members, teachers, and administrators, many of whom had previously collaborated with the

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<sup>220</sup> [Author translation: Portuguese original: O registro da prática é o fio que vai tecendo a história do nosso processo. É através dele que ficamos para os outros [...] mas não basta registrar e guardar para si o que foi pensado, é fundamental socializar os conteúdos da reflexão de cada um para todos. É fundamental a oferta do entendimento individual para a construção do acervo coletivo. Como bem pontuava Paulo Freire, o registro da reflexão e sua socialização num grupo são ‘fundadores da consciência’ [...] e também instrumentos para a construção de conhecimento.”] Madalena Freire. *Educador, Educador, Educador*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2008, p.55 & 60.

<sup>221</sup> [Author translation, Portuguese original: Muito muito obrigado me fazer agora parar falar disso, sabe, e não fica aguardando isso pensando ah como foi boa, mas bota para fora como genial isso foi, enriquecedora, queria ver aquelas fitas juntos, por que não lembra o que falei, acho que transformei tanto que aquele Gabriel da 1<sup>a</sup> fita não existe mais, algum momento se perdeu, agora só tem medo de não errar, se faço alguma coisa e não erra vou ficar preocupado.] Interview Gabriel Bartz. “Coleção das múltiplas vozes: Perspectivas e horizontes.” op cit

<sup>222</sup> This text draws and expands on essays by myself and Luiz Guilherme Vergara: “Collection of Multiple Voices” in *Pedagogia Expandida* 2011 and “Collection of Multiple Voices” in *Revista MESA*.



Biennial. To facilitate this process and further establish evaluation parameters, we focused on four representative and diverse areas of the pedagogic project's work: the pedagogic project in general; *Mediation*; *Casa M*; and two of the artist residency projects of the initiative *Travel Notebooks*. Certainly, in order to have more completely evaluated the full extent of the pedagogic project in all its expanded intentions, it would have been necessary to augment the scope and process of the project. However, we choose to work deeply rather than broadly. To do so we focused on maximizing the reflective possibilities of a "micro" collection of voices by interviewing the same group of people in three distinct moments – beginning, middle, end - over the Biennial's six months duration. At each interview we asked the same questions about motivations and risks related to each interviewee's involvement with the Biennial. In this way we opted to accompany the pedagogic project in its poetical and political dimensions, breaking away from evaluation models based on critical distance, objective parameters and quantitative impact. We opted to be "beside," inversely adopting proximity as a basis for an evaluation/research intervention, via what we called "an invitation to reflect and a collection of voices." In so doing we also recognized and welcomed the mutual contagion between interviewees and interviewers. Our proposal was much more one of listening from the inside to the voices of those engaged in various aspects of this "expanded" pedagogy than watching from the outside. In this way the "collection" project unfolded as a genealogy of motivations, exploring how and where the expanded nature of the pedagogic project was reaching, beyond the exhibition warehouses, in the schools, at *Casa M*, in the public interventions of *City Unseen*, as well as the interior of the state.

A number of contemporary researchers informed our proposed project – one of these was the work of Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, mentioned previously. His concept of "flow" describes a synthesis of the psychology of optimum experience, a word and state of being that his interviewees often used to express the feeling of being optimally immersed and fully engaged in a particular practice – be it making art, cooking, chess playing or mountain climbing.<sup>223</sup> In his "flow" research, he points out important aspects that need to be present to conciliate those experiences. Amongst them, the most important are: intrinsic motivation, constructing with previous knowledge, and autonomy, each organically interwoven with the possibility for immediate feedback. Finding ways to follow this flow is also part of the research-intervention strategies of cartography, a methodology deployed by scholars Eduardo Passos, Virgínia Kastrup, and Liliana Escóssia as a means of engaging with processes from the inside as

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<sup>223</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow and the Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990); Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Kim Hermason, "Intrinsic Motivation in Museums: What Makes a Visitor Want to Learn?" in *Public Institutions for Personal Learning: Establishing a Research Agenda*, eds. John Falk and Lynn Dierking (America Association of Museums: 1995). Also see Ted Talk: [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/por\\_br/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_on\\_flow.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/por_br/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html).

they are unfolding.<sup>224</sup> Inspired by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, cartography as a method works to dissolve subject/object positions and engage *with* the world, events, contexts and people.

Another reference was the work of Fred Evans and his proposal of an ethical dialogue that creates itself via elliptical open events (mutually affecting all parts of a process).<sup>225</sup> This elliptical event was one that was constructed and recognized as such, via the very fact of the collected statements, enabling an exchange of impact and perceptions, constituting and supporting an emerging body of multiple voices. Another useful conceptual reference in reflecting on the hybrid possibilities between artistic practice and an expanded pedagogy was the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer and his exploration of art as play, symbol and festival.<sup>226</sup> A dynamic that was richly operative in the mediator experience.

From the perspective of evaluation methodology, a key reference was the work of Harvard Project Zero, an educational research group affiliated with Harvard University in the United States, and one of its recent projects that sought to identify key indicators of quality in art education programs throughout the country.<sup>227</sup> Besides important factors, such as participative learning, the environment and quality of materials and professionals involved, they found that the best indicator of quality is the actual pursuit of quality itself. In other words, the more you see a pursuit for quality, the more quality is found.

This research amongst others influenced our choice to transform the mechanism of evaluation into an invitation to reflect – to create a kind of ombudsman, a resonant “listening” camera inside the process. In this manner, we were able to follow the ways individuals saw themselves, and how they were (re) nurturing and questioning their engagement, expectations and concerns. We were as much participants as well as listeners. More than an evaluation project, this invitation to reflect was taken on by participants as a kind of “third time and space” an in-

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<sup>224</sup> Eduardo Passos, Virgínia Kastrup, and Liliana Escóssia eds. *Pistas do Método da Cartografia: Pesquisa-intervenção e produção de subjetividade* (Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2011).

<sup>225</sup> Fred Evans explores the idea of an elliptical event that realizes itself in elliptical and dialogic identities. This elliptical dimension (a geometric figure with two centers) translates the dialogic condition inspired by Bakhtin, where the subject of an enunciation is also affected by the return from his/her interlocutor. Evans also refers to Deleuzian territorializations and causal reversibilities, in the sense that events inaugurate a state of mutual transformation. All dialogue is then a mutually impacting relational construction. To be open to this elliptical condition of identity and event is to bring to the other the expansion of him/her self. From here Evans also develops the ethical elliptical proposition of a body of multiple voices – of engagement in solidarity, heterogeneity and creativity – here used for our collection project as a qualitative parameter as much for the pedagogic project as for the processes of collecting multiple voices. These points were instrumental in how we saw the motivations and experiences of the pedagogic project as a political and ethical instigation of the Biennial’s “geopoetics.” Fred Evans, *The Multivoiced Body: Society and Communication in the Age of Diversity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

<sup>226</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful: Art as Play, Symbol and Festival,” *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, Trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 3-53.

<sup>227</sup> Steve Seidel, Shari Tishman, Ellen Winner, Lois Hetland, and Patricia Palmer eds. *The Qualities of Quality: Excellence in Arts Education and How to Achieve It*, Harvard Project Zero Arts Education Study <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/arts-education/arts-classroom-instruction/Documents/Understanding-Excellence-in-Arts-Education.pdf>. p.8

between space of listening and constructivity as they in turn (re) explored their own perceptions. The resulting project “Coleção das múltiplas vozes” (Collection of Multiple Voices) comprised an evaluation report and drawing from more than 40 hours of interviews, five videos each exploring an aspect of the Biennial: *Casa M*; *Travel Notebooks*; *Mediation*; and two general videos one on the pedagogic project as a whole and the other pointing to future directions. On the last weekend of *Casa M*, one month after the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial had closed, in-process versions of the videos were presented to a group including diverse interviewees and a few invited guests. The final edited videos along with the original footage were presented to the Biennial archives. A fifteen-minute video with English sub-titles was published in the bilingual digital periodical *Revista MESA*.<sup>228</sup>

What became vitally clear throughout the process, and was only partially realized, is the importance of finding ways to socialize and share such research. The record of such reflection and its public socialization, as Freire noted, are “founders of conscience” and also the tools for building knowledge. This practice is key to the participatory action research that evolved out of collective public activism projects in Latin American universities in the 1960s. But also, we can go back to the earlier demands at the turn of the century via the popular universities and anarchist schools to socialize knowledge and explore collective forms of research. In this context another critical resource is the evolving field of activity theory influenced by Vygotsky and his followers.<sup>229</sup> In conceptualizing activity as the generative process that mediates relationships between actors, subjects, communities, and systems, contemporary activity theory can be mobilized as a means to understand and explore institutional shifts and changes. Here the concept and practice of collecting “mirror material” as an elliptical device for organizations/contexts to visualize and engage with their own processes of learning is vital to engaging with critical questions and (in) visible barriers to change.<sup>230</sup> While we certainly did not sufficiently succeed in socializing the research of the “Coleção das múltiplas vozes” project, there is nevertheless no doubt that in its short published video format and archival videos the interviews represent “mirror material” to be constantly (re) visited as the histories and transformations of 8<sup>th</sup> and future biennials reverberate and unfold.

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<sup>228</sup> Gogan and Vergara, “Collection of Multiples Voices.” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>229</sup> Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning (CRADLE), University of Helsinki, <http://www.helsinki.fi/cradle/index.htm>

<sup>230</sup> Monica Lemos, Marco Antonio Pereira-Querol, Ildeberto Muniz de Almeida, “The Historical-Cultural Activity Theory and its Contributions to Education, Health and Communication: Interview with Yrjö Engeström,” *Interface – Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*. Vol 17 no 46 Botucau (July/Sept. 2013) [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S1414-32832013000300018&script=sci\\_arttext&tlng=en](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S1414-32832013000300018&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en)

Perhaps the project's critical usefulness to offer another mode of criticism, a "critical beside," that as contemporary paradigms increasingly shift toward the processual and experiential, offer new forms of research and researching that will become key to engage with and evaluate (or maybe more accurately narrate) the nature of such work – its ethics, esthetics and possibilities. Most vitally, the "collection" project registered the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial's geopoetical mix of curatorial, artistic and pedagogic practices, rendering it visible as a body of multiple voices, and hence pointing to the (possible) geopolitical legacy of *Geopoetic Essays*. Yet, such forms of research, as critic Grant Kester suggests, may sit uncomfortably within certain critical traditions.<sup>231</sup> For example, in her work on participatory practices, Claire Bishop describes the shifts in her critical process as a "journey from skeptical distance to imbrication: as relationships with producers were consolidated, my comfortable outsider status (impotent but secure in my critical superiority) had to be recalibrated along more constructive lines."<sup>232</sup> I would argue that such "imbrication" and "constructivity" are crucial. A being beside that can accompany, tease out, explore, register, and critique the generative and consequential possibilities for such processual work and to identify and examine how and in what ways these new modes of address of art and publicness become operative or indeed "geopoetic."

### 3.5 A FOREST SCHOOL ACTUALIZED: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

"If we think of actualization as the incarnation of an idea of "an education" within one particular educational system, we arrive at the duality we inhabit and work with."

Irit Rogoff, *e-flux, Journal*, 2010<sup>233</sup>

Reflecting on the biennial's history and her own eight-year tenure over the course of four editions, former pedagogic coordinator Mônica Hoff suggests that the geopoetical mix of art and

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<sup>231</sup> Grant Kester has noted in relation to participatory and collaborative practices that this implies a "model of reception and set of research methodologies that are potentially quite different from those employed to analyse object-based art practices." To engage in "the extemporaneous and participatory nature of these projects" requires the art historian or critic "to employ techniques (field research, participant-observation, interviews etc) more typically associated with the social sciences." Grant H. Kester, *One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011) 10.

<sup>232</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, 6.

<sup>233</sup> Irit Rogoff, "Editorial," *e-flux Journal* # 14: Education Actualized (March 2010) [http://www.e-flux.com/journal/"education-actualized"](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/)—editorial/

publicness was, from an institutional perspective, a simultaneously unintended and sanctioned detour – “constructed by what overflowed or was left over from the biennial structure.” The free and decentralized school pulsating through various editions of the biennial, and perhaps, most vitally realized in the 8<sup>th</sup> with *Casa M*: “is the biennial that the Mercosul Biennial [as institution] doesn’t know.”<sup>234</sup> Despite all the geopoetic rehearsing, geopolitical realities withhold. As hired education “sticks,” however brilliant – Camnitzer, De Caro, Helguera – whom ironically can only function within a locality already up to their measure, are brought in as outsider catalysts and shapers, welcomed in so far as their projects are linked to a particular edition of the biennial and its curatorial discourse. This leaves the school susceptible to the vagaries of event highs and lows, curatorial trends and names, and ready made and deferred modalities. This maybe, as the song goes, “all there is.”<sup>235</sup> Yet given that the stop-start nature of biennial culture is writ large in Brazilian society, the trauma of discontinuity a palpable presence, it raises questions around the practice of working “behind the exhibition’s back” even with the most radical, critical and generative of intentions.<sup>236</sup> True, a sense of constructivity in its organic, experimental and proximal nature is about bodies and minds not buildings. Without a doubt the vitality of the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial’s expanded pedagogy was the local community of artists, educators, and producers who used the biennial, like the activists of the World Social Forums’ “encuentros”, as an event to refashion and renegotiate identities, discourses and practices.<sup>237</sup> The effusive and potent legacy of this artistic pedagogy and pedagogic art will continue to be a part of the life of Porto Alegre, and if not the biennial’s future, its counter futures.

Yet while this human resource energy and life skill development is fabulous, Roca and Helguera’s bet on local/regional impact and infrastructure, five years post the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial, looks fragile. As former director of Pinacoteca and currently Secretary of Culture in the state of São Paulo, Marcelo Araujo has pointed out such cultural projects have contributed to advances in professionalization in the field, however, there has been almost none on the level of structural problems.<sup>238</sup> “Working behind the exhibition’s back” may require an even greater sleight of hand. Here Ted Purves’ notion of “interlocality” suggests a way to strengthen infrastructural practices

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<sup>234</sup> Hoff, “Publicness at the Mercosul Biennial,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>235</sup> “Is that all there is?” Song by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller. It became a hit for American Singer Peggy Lee and was recorded on her 1969 album. See version: “Is that all there is?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCRZZC-DH7M>

<sup>236</sup> Stephen Wright, “Narratorship (Talking Art),” *Toward a Lexicon of Usership*, 43.

<sup>237</sup> Sonia E. Alvarez, Elisabeth Jay Friedman, Ericka Beckman, Maylei Blackwell, Norma Chinchilla, Nathalie Lebon, Marysa Navarro, and Marcela Ríos Tobar. “Encountering Latin American and Caribbean Feminisms.” *Signs* 28 (2), (2003): 537-580; Also see [http://www.havenscenter.org/files/Alvarez\\_3\\_alvarez-et-al.pdf](http://www.havenscenter.org/files/Alvarez_3_alvarez-et-al.pdf) p.2

<sup>238</sup> Marcelo Araujo [former director Pinacoteca, São Paulo and currently Secretary of Culture for the state of São Paulo] “Ideal Museum: Jean Galar, Paulo Sérgio Duarte, Marcelo Araujo and Fernando Cocchiarale: Interviews conducted by Martin Grossmann, in *Museum Art Today* eds. Martin Grossmann and Gilberto Mariotti, Fórum Permanente Series (São Paulo: Hedra, 2011) 25-40, 38.

not through producing localities but rather interconnecting them, creating and reinforcing links between and across existing organizations and structures.<sup>239</sup> A practice that needs to draw on, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos advocates, a pedagogy that respects the ecology of temporalities and repositions the consequential and the emancipatory as reciprocity between subjects.<sup>240</sup> In this way, affecting a membrane, scaffolding, zone of proximal development, and laboratory, a sense of constructivity is not just site specific, as in Miwon Kwon's terms were "originality, authenticity and singularity" are "evacuated from the artworks and attributed to site," but is rather organically co-constructed in co-relation.

Here was the strength of the "geopoetic" proposal, that even without the realization of long-term infrastructural impact, in its success and failures, its sense of constructivity was co-created with localities (individuals, collectives, organizations etc) and with, within, by and for specific contexts.<sup>241</sup> This mobilizes the potential of both art and pedagogy as practices of encounter, between worlds, practices, individuals, and communities, opening up the possibility for what Ricardo Basbaum has called a "terreiro of encounters" and "conglomeration of alterities"<sup>242</sup> – a constructive and anthropophagic forest school that actualizes itself as a sense of constructivity – constructing and subverting institutionalities from within and without.

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<sup>239</sup> Ted Purves, "Thoughts for the archipelago," *Education for Art/Art for Education*, 349-356, 354.

<sup>240</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Para um novo senso comum: a ciência, o direito e a política na transição paradigmática," 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. *A crítica da razão indolente: contra o desperdício da experiência* (São Paulo: Cortez, 2001) 103-112 and Danilo R. Streck, Telmo Adams, Cheron Zanini Moretti, "Pensamento pedagógico em nossa América: uma introdução," in *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino-Americano: Uma antologia Fontes de Pedagogia*, 31.

<sup>241</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge/Mass/London: The MIT Press, 2004) 52.

<sup>242</sup> The term "terreiro" in Portuguese means a public square or gathering place and the site where the rituals of Candomblé and other Afro-Brazilian religions take place. Ricardo Basbaum, "Quem é que vê nossos trabalhos," *Seminários Internacionais Museu Vale—Criação e Crítica*, 203.

#### 4.0 MEGAFONES, ANTS, ARCHIVES AND CLINICS: RADICAL LOCALITY AND COMPLICITIES OF CARE IN THE *FARMÁCIA BALDIA DE BOA VIAGEM* AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, NITERÓI

The dispute in the realm of the symbolic is fundamental to dispute the city. The symbolic institutes the real.

Jailson de Souza e Silva<sup>1</sup>

Carlos Vergara smiled. Generous, astute, at home amongst the group of botanists, environmentalists, health practitioners, researchers, and cultural producers, the artist suggested that an exhibition can be a “megaphone for contemporary concerns.”<sup>2</sup> Vergara’s exhibition *Sudário* (Shroud), held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Niterói (MAC) from December 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 to March 9<sup>th</sup> 2014 brought together decades of the artist’s travels in the form of photographs and abstract monotype prints made in-situ on handkerchiefs capturing the singularities of place. As part of the exhibition, *Farmácia Baldia de Boa Viagem* proposed another type of journey, an experimental shroud-like retrieval via a tactile, curative and collective investigation of the medicinal plants growing in the “baldios” – abandoned land or empty lots - around us.<sup>3</sup> Taking the name of Boa Viagem from the region directly surrounding the museum, an area that also includes the historic island of Boa Viagem, registered on Portuguese maps since the 1500s, and the favela community of Morro do Palácio, the project enacted a kind of poetic medicinal botany, drawing attention to the mostly unseen and unrecognized therapeutic resource on our doorstep.

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<sup>1</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “A disputa no campo do simbolico é fundamental para disputar a cidade. O simbolico institui o real.”] Jailson de Souza e Silva, “The Authentic New Carioca: Interview with Jailson de Souza e Silva, director Favela Observatory,” *Revista MESA*, no. 1: Territories and Practices in Process (March 2014) <http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa/the-authentic-new-carioca/?lang=en> Jailson de Souza e Silva is a professor of geography at the Universidade Federal Fluminense and director of the Observatório de Favelas (Favela Observatory) based in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro. He also discusses the “symbolic instituting the real” in Jailson de Souza e Silva, “As periferias roubam a cena cultural carioca,” in *De baixo para cima* eds. Eliane Costa e Gabriela Agustini (Rio de Janeiro: Aeroplano, 2014) 55-78, 55. Also see his presentation for “Zonas limites: arte, cultura e agenciamento” (Limit Zones: Art, Culture and Agency) for the seminar *Reconfiguring the Public: Art, Pedagogy, Participation* organized by the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art at MAM-RJ, November 2011. (Portuguese only <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVtoaMOoqGo&index=7&list=PLO-GRBBoQZrjDOO0B7xSTsSu40BYBE48m>)

<sup>2</sup> *Farmácia Baldia* project meeting November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Translator Stephen Berg translates “terrenos baldios” as “empty lots” in his translation of Hélio Oiticica’s “Position and Program (July 1966)” where the artist describes “baldios” as “much more beautiful [...] than Rio’s pathetic Aterro da Glória type parks.” *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color* ed. Mari Carmen Ramirez (Houston/London: Museum of Fine Arts Houston/Tate Publishing, 2007) 320-322, 321. The question of baldios will be explored later in the chapter.

What is art's place here? British critic Adrian Rifkin, musing on the nature of the artistic profession, once remarked that being an artist is a *sentence in making visible*.<sup>4</sup> Rifkin's phrasing adroitly captures the internal and external creative compulsions and demands of the artistic process. For the *Farmácia* project Vergara opened up this process of making visible to collective possibility, chance and complicity. As a result, a curious kind of artistic contemporaneity began to transpire – a wholly processual, multifarious and collective engagement with place-making and medicinal plants where entirely different knowledge bases and autonomies were being played out and considered within the same network of questions and strategies. Art's role here is modest, as Vergara suggests “something extra,” but it is also, arguably, newly radical.<sup>5</sup> Promoting and occasionally achieving a third space – a poetic common ground – an in-between the fields of science, botany, medicine, and community health, art in this context is about “awakening the complicity to make.”<sup>6</sup> It is a striving to connect worlds, where the artist no longer has the big picture. Indeed, no one does.

Vergara first conceived the *Farmácia Baldia* as an art installation for the *Arte Cidade* (*City Art 3 Project*) in São Paulo in 1997. Organized by Nelson Brissac Peixoto, *City Art* presented public art interventions along a five-kilometer stretch of an abandoned city railway line including the warehouses of the formerly prosperous Matarazzo Industries that dominated the economic history of São Paulo from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1970s.<sup>7</sup> On an initial scouting of the area Vergara noted the presence of medicinal plants. So he invited a friend, landscape architect, Oscar Bressane, to map the plants in the vicinity, resulting in an impressive list of 52 species. In turn, botanists from the University of São Paulo identified an additional 30 species.<sup>8</sup> This inspired the artist to poetically describe this therapeutic treasure trove of abandoned city wilderness as a *Farmácia Balida*. The resulting artwork combined large-scale drawings made directly onto the derelict factory walls with sculptural installations of dried plants, as well as bamboo standards with colored fabrics placed at plant locations categorized according to therapeutic use. Interestingly, most of the plants identified were not native to Brazil or the São Paulo region, but rather to Africa, Asia and Europe, the result of the area's proximity to the railway.<sup>9</sup> The *Farmácia* recovered these forgotten vestiges of transcontinental trade, industry and transport and pointed to the therapeutic presence growing unnoticed in the city's midst.

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<sup>4</sup> Adrian Rifkin, “Artistic Education of the Public,” *e-flux* (February 2010) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/artistic-education-of-the-public/> [Sentence (my italics) making visible (Rifkin's)].

<sup>5</sup> Interview with the artist, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Nelson Brissac Peixoto ed. *Intervenções urbanas: arte, cidade* (São Paulo: SESC, 2002) 297.

<sup>8</sup> Celso Fioravante, “Carlos Vergara abre sua ‘farmácia baldia,’” *Folha de São Paulo*, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997 <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1997/10/25/ilustrada/9.html>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



More than sixteen years later, on the occasion of his exhibition at MAC, Vergara thought to (re) present the *Pharmacy* project. An initial meeting paralleling the first stages of the project in São Paulo was held in October 2013 with MAC's director/curator Luiz Guilherme Vergara (no relation), the artist, myself and four botanists and pharmacologists specializing in medicinal plants.<sup>10</sup> The discussion focused on a project of mapping medicinal plants in the area. Then, in a contagious wave of affectivity and opportune confluences, a month later, the project became the *Farmácia Baldia de Boa Viagem*, inaugurating a collective of botanists, educators, artists, cultural producers, doctors, pharmacologists, administrators, and community health agents. In the process critical networks in need of a new injection of energy were reinvigorated particularly between MAC's *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative, the city of Niterói's Family Doctor Program (a Cuban inspired preventive health initiative of outpost clinics in low income communities), and the museum's cultural community center satellite MACquinho ("little MAC") in the Morro do Palácio favela, a short distance away.

The collective was vested in creating a kind of living clinical archive. This would draw on both scientific expertise and popular know-how in its mapping and identifying medicinal plants and their therapeutic uses in the Boa Viagem area and simultaneously seek to explore programmatic avenues to render visible, validate, exchange, and promote this knowledge. To begin, similar to the São Paulo project, two interrelated mappings took place; around the immediate area of museum and on Boa Viagem island led by the botanists Luiz Soares Pinto and Marcelo Guerra Santos who identified 27 species and in the Palácio community in collaboration with the health team at the "Posto de Palácio" (the outpost clinic of the Family Doctor Program in the Palácio favela). In particular, Dr. Erika Niches and the health agents Josan Domingues and Fabio Carlos identified 14 additional species of medicinal plants growing in various areas of the community. They created a banner highlighting the identified plants and a folder to be distributed amongst community members. Overall 41 plant species were identified. Twelve large bamboo standards with vibrant colored fabrics, catalogued according to therapeutic use, were placed in various locations in the *Boa Viagem* area where medicinal plants had been identified. A map noting the findings was included in a wall display as part of Vergara's exhibition at MAC along with a vitrine featuring dried specimens of the identified plants and their names printed on newssheets – a curious serendipitous mix of news reports, advertisements and the medicinal. The research pharmacologist Bettina Monika Ruppelt completed an accompanying chart, outlining

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<sup>10</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara (director/curator MAC Niterói); Bettina Monika Ruppelt (medicinal plant specialist and professor of pharmacy at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF)); Leandro Rocha (professor of pharmacy at UFF) Marcelo Guerra Santos and Luiz José Soares Pinto (professors of botany at Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ))

popular and scientific names and therapeutic uses of each species. These display components, while not the main drive of the project, were nevertheless extremely useful in that they gave the project visibility, anchoring, representing and validating the process.

In addition to mapping plants in the community and producing informative flyers, the health team at the Posto de Palácio were particularly interested in engaging some of the older community members to share their knowledge on the therapeutic use of plants. Complementary programs were developed with this in mind. “Chá das cinco” (Tea Conversations at Five) was first held at the Posto in December 2013 with a handful of elderly women from the community. The following month’s “Chá” held at MACquinho welcomed more than forty people including Family Doctor and MAC teams. The banter about the plants people used or had in their yards, from boldo (native plant to Latin America) as a hangover cure to the calming effects of anise or lemon grass tea, suggested the affective and social potential of such sharing and also its therapeutic possibilities. Richly demonstrated by the observation of Dr. Erika Niches noting that “we invited patients for the event and many showed up, including psychiatric patients that have phobias of enclosed space who stayed till the end without fits – incredible!”

Other programs included a how-to composting session, cultural outings to other gardens locally and a special tour of the medicinal plant section of Rio de Janeiro’s Botanic Gardens organized for Morro do Palácio residents as well as visits to MAC with Carlos Vergara. The “Chás” continued for a few more sessions and a video of the encounters was edited by one of the *Farmácia Baldia* collective participants.<sup>11</sup> This video was presented along with special teas at an opening reception for an exhibition of the project at MACquinho in April 2014 featuring photographs of the *Farmácia* process (meetings, outings, “chás” etc) and a selection of the medicinal plants identified along with a map identifying their locations in the Boa Viagem region. Portraits of several of the elderly women were also featured presented together with their favorite medicinal “recipes” and “cures” using some of the identified plants – kebabs with mint, medicinal sherry with jurubeba, and cough syrup with guaco.

As part of these exchanges, a program of weekly conversations offered museum visitors an opportunity to learn about the project and Vergara’s art practice and to visit MACquinho. On a micro level this kind of encounter enables the circulation of the worlds of asphalt and favela.<sup>12</sup> There, together with favela residents working at the center, visitors shared a medicinal tea and conversation about plants, checked out the organic medicinal indoor garden in process and toured

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<sup>11</sup> José Abreu, *Chá das cinco*. Video produced in collaboration with the Fundação de Saúde de Niterói (Niterói Health Foundation).

<sup>12</sup> The term “asfalto e morro” literally asphalt and hill (also used to refer to favelas as many are built/emerge amidst Rio’s hillsides) refers to the contrasting worlds of the urban middle class city and favela life.

MACquinho's long-standing artisanal paper workshop, likewise engaged as part of the *Farmácia* project, experimenting with creating artisanal paper using medicinal plants and seeds. Artist/educator Eduardo Machado who led the process was amazed at how the subject of medicinal plants can act as a catalyst to bridge differences:

In these conversations there were students of biology (one who had recently come from Haiti to study in Brazil and I listened to an emotional statement of someone who in their native country, already emphasized the importance of the integration of man and nature), there were also health workers, pharmacists and visitors from Europe. I realized that the subject – plants and medicinal herbs evoke affective memories and make for great and interesting conversations.<sup>13</sup>

All these initiatives were small scale experiments intended to construct a future continuing program. However, even though the project never had much in the way of financial support, mostly relying on organizational and individual collaborations, post the initial evental synergies (October 2013 to April 2014), more or less coinciding with the duration of Vergara's exhibition at MAC, this lack of resources coupled with organizational changes and shifting priorities constantly stymied each striving toward continuity. While renewed forces continue to attempt to seed possible futures from botanical/artistic/medicinal projects with community crèches developed by artist/educator Daniel Whitacker to the collective's plans for a series of "how-to" encounters including DIY gardens and cooking with medicinal plants and herbs, these attempts face an uphill battle. Even, in what one might call its honeymoon phase, the project mostly moved from the opening and closing of one contingent crack to another. Remarkably, drawing on theorist Yve Lomax's explorations of Giorgio Agamben's work on potentiality, understood as something to be valued for itself and not merely stepping-stone on the road to being actualized, the effort has been sustained primarily by "the potentiality of that which never happened."<sup>14</sup>

Yet despite such highs and lows, stops and starts, the *Farmácia Baldia* project stands as affective potential, constructed in the links between the artist, MAC, MACquinho, the Family Doctor Program, and collective's participants. While being constantly (re)tested and (re)affirmed, and, at the moment of this writing, are extremely fragile, these links have laid the groundwork for a kind of organic learning system of unfolding conversations, circulating between and connecting

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<sup>13</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: "Nessas conversas contei com a participação de estudantes de biologia, (de um deles que veio do Haiti para estudar aqui escutei um depoimento emocionado de alguém que na sua terra natal, já dava importância para esta integração entre o homem e a natureza), sanitaristas e de farmacêuticos, inclusive da Europa (Portugal). Percebi que o assunto – plantas e ervas medicinais evoca a memória afetiva das pessoas e que rende boas e interessantes conversas." ] Eduardo Machado, "Farmácia Baldia: Conversas," *Carlos Vergara. Sudário* (Rio de Janeiro: Automatica/Atelier Carlos Vergara, 2014) 241.

<sup>14</sup> Lomax's beautiful book draws on the work of Giorgio Agamben's notion of potentiality not as reducible to a potential/actual binary but as a kind of potent living-on and perseverance in and for the actual world. Yve Lomax, *Passionate Being: Language, Singularity, Perseverance* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2009) 66.

fields of knowledge, communities, territories and practices. The process is somewhat akin to what curator Anthony Huberman suggests in his essay “Take Care,” that is a curatorial practice that is “not about preparing explanations in advance, but about following the life of an idea, in public, with others.”<sup>15</sup> This “caring” process is, of course, very different depending on cultural climates, political contexts and institutional wherewithal. In my experience in Brazil this “with others” demands a mutually accepted (and resigned) openness to vulnerability and fragility. For the *Farmácia* project this has meant embracing what one might call site specific dysfunctionality, whether a failed attempt to mount a community garden or endlessly accumulating Excel budget charts, as being as much a part of the project as what has actually been achieved. What follows here is a rhizomatic cartography of the histories, contexts and collaborations that informed and shaped the project – MAC, Family Doctor Program, MACquinho, Carlos Vergara amongst others – and some of the seed thoughts to which it has given rise – complicities of care in art, health and curatorship, radical locality, homes and coalitions, and commonalities within the uncommon.

#### 4.1 GENEALOGIES OF (IM)POSSIBILITIES: MAC NITERÓI INSIDE & OUT

In the clinic, in art or in politics, there is a circuit that runs from the extenuation of the possible to the impossible, and from there to the creation of the possible, without linearity, circularity or determinism. It consists of a complex and reversible game between ‘nothing is possible’ and ‘everything is possible.’

Peter Pál Pelbart<sup>16</sup>

Perched on a small peninsula in the peripheral city of Niterói, MAC overlooks Rio de Janeiro’s stunning Guanabara Bay. Designed by the renowned architect Oscar Niemeyer, the museum comprises a white circular building suspended atop a red twisting ramp with expansive glass windows, opening out to spectacular views and a large patio. It is a site-seeing landmark. Inaugurated in 1996, MAC was part of the worldwide museum building boom in the 1990s connected with urban regeneration projects, signature architects, and peripheries. Positioned to house the wealthy economist João Sattamini’s collection of contemporary Brazilian art – one of the most important in the country – the then mayor Jorge Roberto Silveira, clearly intent on making his political mark, promised the city’s investment in a museum of contemporary art if

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony Huberman, “Take Care,” in *Circular Facts* eds. Mai Abu ElDahab, Binna Choi, Emily Pethick (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011) 11-17, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Pál Pelbart, “Exhaustion and Creation,” Trans. C. Brayton, *Cartography of Exhaustion: Nihilism Inside Out* (São Paulo: N-1, 2013) 103 -113, 113.

Neimeyer designed the project.<sup>17</sup> For the architect, at the time in his 80s, the utopian dream promised in the design and construction of the civic buildings for Brasilia that became Brazil's capital in 1960 now long gone, MAC was to be a renewal of sorts. A native Carioca, Niemeyer drew inspiration from the city's landscape as both a lived and visual experience of the baroque, a dramatic beauty that the architect and Brasilia's urban planner mastermind Lucio Costa described as a "definitive confrontation" and "permanent tension" between "the natural and constructed."<sup>18</sup> It is a context that as art critic Paulo Venâncio Filho notes "identifies and characterizes the city as a unique and singular urban environment that fundamentally determines the sensorial experience of its inhabitants."<sup>19</sup> MAC's form would emerge and merge almost effortlessly amidst this tension. Niemeyer described his design:

It is so easy to explain this project! I remember when I went to see the location. The sea, the mountains of Rio, a magnificent landscape that I should preserve. And I created the building, adopting the circular form that I believe the space required. The study was ready and a ramp, which would take visitors to the museum, completed my project.<sup>20</sup>

The fluid lines of Niemeyer's sketch for the museum, overlapping in an almost spirograph-like manner, also seem to intuit and tension its future function as being similarly emergent amidst the drama of the natural and the constructed. As Luiz Guilherme Vergara has suggested MAC's form and setting is a powerful symbol of Brazilian hopes and paradoxes, a site specific context that both shapes and demands an investigative and explorative way of working from within as "an emerging archaeology where each excavation deepens understanding, ultimately revealing a proposal for a grassroots utopia."<sup>21</sup>

Post its inauguration in 1996 MAC was soon absorbed as a key symbolic image of the city as its official logo. Yet, while effective Niterói poster child, MAC is also prey to the vagaries

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<sup>17</sup> MAC is one of several Niemeyer buildings in Niterói commissioned by Jorge Roberto Silveira during several mandates as mayor of Niterói: 1989 – 1992, 1997 – 2000, 2001- 2002, and 2009-2012. These include the Teatro Popular (Popular Theater) and Museu de Cinema (Cinema Museum) still unfinished. The original idea was to develop a "Caminho de Niemeyer" – literally a Niemeyer pathway – from the ferry boat terminal where the Teatro Popular is located in the city center along the shoreline leading to MAC. Like the collection of Gilberto Chateaubriand housed at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, Sattamini's collection is on long-term loan to the museum via renewable (all partners willing) ten year contracts.

<sup>18</sup> Lucia Costa, *Registro de uma vivência* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1995) 373, in Paulo Venâncio Filho, "Modernidade em uma metrópole tropical à beira-mar," *A presença da arte* (São Paulo: Cosac Naif, 2013) 46-61, 47.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Niemeyer often wrote brief texts to accompany his architectural designs. This text is an edited version that Niemeyer wrote in 2006 on the occasion of MAC's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary when the architect himself was 99. Oscar Niemeyer, "Necessary Explanation," in Italo Campofiorito, "A história do início," *MAC de Niterói 10 anos* (Niterói: Prefeitura Municipal de Niterói/Fundação de Arte de Niterói, 2006) 19-25, 24.

<sup>21</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara, "MAC-Niterói as a Place of Hope: At the Crossroads of Brazilian Utopias," in *Access: All Areas. Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art*, ed. Helen O'Donoghue (Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art, 2009) 109-126, 112-113.

of municipal politics. Directors are politically appointed which means that museum leadership is subject to political favor, shifting every four years. Also, being under the jurisdiction of the Art Foundation of Niterói (FAN), whose entire administration also changes depending on who is in power, means that the museum's operations and any form of long-term planning are similarly debilitated. Salaries and financial support are at a bare minimum coupled with convoluted bureaucracies. This means constantly searching for ways around things that often lead to jacked up solutions – people (even senior staff) often work several jobs, independent producers need to be sought to take on fundraising and manage projects to avoid municipal vacuums, political kickbacks, whether true or merely rumored, cliques, and favors create a climate of mistrust and constantly shifting ground. That anything happens at all is a small miracle.

#### **4.1.1 Arte Ação Ambiental: Education, Networks and Working in Community**

From its utopian promise to political realities, the museum must also navigate the tension of the site's breathtaking beauty amidst the surroundings of luxury condos, favelas and polluted ocean. Responding to this context has necessitated a more socially engaged form of practice – one that both responds to the environment and recognizes its political fragility by seeking to build affective networks across platforms. Beginning in 1998 MAC began a longstanding initiative called *Arte Ação Ambiental* (Art Environmental Action) in collaboration with the neighboring Morro do Palácio favela, the Family Doctor Program and Niterói-based Federal Fluminense University (UFF). Inspired by the potential social and ethical legacies of the Neoconcrete movement, in particular by Hélio Oiticica's work and writings, such as his Environmental Program and immersion in the life of the Rio favela known as Mangueira, curatorial educational practices sought to engage directly in Brazilian realities, in this case the immediate environment of the favela of Morro do Palácio, embracing the artist's concept that "the world is a museum: everyday experience."<sup>22</sup> A key dimension of this was also engaging with what Oiticica defined as "anti-art" where the museum no longer sought to be a "creator for contemplation" but a "motivator of creation." The program focus was favela youth with the goal of offering possible creative alternatives and expressive outlets at an age when, particularly for adolescent boys, they are extremely vulnerable to the seductions of the world of drug trafficking.

In addition to Oiticica, the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative drew on a variety of Brazilian thinkers who similarly sought to challenge hegemonic structures via forms of popular participation whether through critical pedagogy, activist theater, liberation theology or public

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<sup>22</sup> The short essay "Position and Program" presents Oiticica's "Environmental Program" and "Ethical Position." For English translation by Stephen A. Berg in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*.

geography such as Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, Leonardo Boff, and Milton Santos.<sup>23</sup> From an international perspective, curator Mary Jane Jacob, who presented her landmark public art project *Culture in Action*, 1991 – 1993, at the international seminar “Museums in Transformation” held in Rio in 1996, offered an inspiring framework of a curatorial practice that drew on public art, education and site specificity.<sup>24</sup> Jacob, together with seminar co-organizer Luiz Guilherme Vergara, at the time MAC’s director of education, developed a cross-cultural proposal that would explore a mix of artistic and activist site specificity bringing together Gordon Matta Clark’s work in Bronx communities with Oiticica’s engagement with Mangueira. This project remains, like many ambitions of the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative, as unrealized potential.<sup>25</sup>

While this array of artistic, curatorial and pedagogic practice would constantly nourish the program’s conceptual thinking, it would advance and mostly continue, on an extremely modest micro scale, predominantly as a low-key environmental education program for youth in the favela. In 1999, supported by resources from the Family Doctor Program, MAC’s *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative officially begun with a mixed group of 40 teenagers from the Palácio favela. Each received a small stipend and participated in a six month long after school program. With dropout, teen pregnancy, amongst other things, at the end of the program approximately ten adolescent boys remained who were interested in continuing. Over the course of the next ten years this core group, with varying individual intensities and commitments, participated in regular workshops with MAC staff and with guest environmental educators as well as in special meetings with exhibiting artists.<sup>26</sup> The initiative evolved shaped by financial realities, stop-start resources, the perseverance of MAC staff and interested guest educators, all willing to commit and hoping for a more promising future.

The core group in turn led and facilitated workshops in the favela and other educational and cultural locations in the city and, in particular, together with environmental artist educator Eliane Carrapateira, spearheaded an artisanal hand-made paper program aimed at self-sustainability featuring speciality papers and that for a period produced hand-made notebooks and agendas that were sold at MAC’s store. Another example that also courted sustainable possibilities was an art and design project featuring the creation of small folding paper objects

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<sup>23</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara, “Raízes da arte ambiental: a eclosão da arte como geografia de ações,” *Ciência, Humanidade e Sociedade: Revista Seropédica*, v.31, n.1 (January/June, 2009): 77-94.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Jane Jacob, “Transformando exposição de arte em espaço público,” in *Museu em transformação. Cadernos de Memória*, cultural 4, Ano 6 no 4, ed. Mário Chegas (1998). This article was a summary of her presentation at the conference. For a recent analysis of *Culture in Action* see, Joshua Decter and Helmut Draxler et al, *Exhibition as Social Intervention: ‘Culture in Action’ 1993*, Exhibition Histories, Volume 5 (London: Afterall Books in association with the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Vergara, “Raízes da arte ambiental,” 85.

<sup>26</sup> Elielton Queiroz Rocha, Douglas Araújo, Josemias Moreira Filho, Rodrigo de Oliveira Paes, Maurício Souza da Silva, Marcos André, Carlos Alberto Vicente, Louis Rodrigues de Jesus, Eduardo Almeida Lopes Leonardo Freire.

inspired by abstract artworks from Brazil's Neoconcrete movement and Lygia Clark's *Bichos* (Critters) in particular. Working with artist educator Bia Jabor at one point they even received a commission from the folk art collector Jeanete Costa to transform the folded paper objects into framed artworks for several hotels in Rio and São Paulo. Other initiatives included a music band using recyclable materials and instruments that the youth called *Sonorizar* (To make sounds), which performed at various official museum, cultural and community events. Band members also gave workshops on music and recyclable instruments. Cristina Vargas, an undergraduate student from UFF gave Portuguese reading and writing workshops with the youth and communications student Thais Diniz and others. Together they launched the short-lived community journal *Paláciano*.<sup>27</sup> Other youth-focused projects included graffiti murals with MAC artist/educator Eduardo Machado and, photography and video workshops in collaboration with local NGOs.

On occasion the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative also embraced working with the elderly. One such example comprised a reliquary project featuring a series of encounters coordinated with the Family Doctor Health teams from three favelas – Palácio, Maruí, Ilha da Conceição. Each participant brought small objects they held dear to the museum and shared their memories. Followed closely by the Family Doctor health teams, the project proved to offer clear medical benefits such as reduction in blood pressure and depression.<sup>28</sup> All of this work somehow managed to hobble along over the years with a monthly \$750 grant – the only resource available to cover materials and stipends for the youth and invited artists/educators.<sup>29</sup> It was during this time that the idea to build a community cultural center in the favela emerged drawing on the model of the Family Doctor Program's concept of satellite clinical outposts.

#### **4.1.2 Niterói Family Doctor Program**

Niterói's Family Doctor Program arose out of converging socio-political influences that gained force in the light of the country's democratization post the dictatorship in the 1980s. Radically, Brazil's 1988 Constitution featured two key articles: 1) Article 196 inscribed universal access to health as a social right and 2) Article 198 established the national public health system SUS (Sistema Único de Saúde – One Health System) to be based on principles of decentralizing services, preventive medicine, and community participation.<sup>30</sup> Plagued by inefficiency and

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<sup>27</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara, "Raízes de arte ambiental," 86.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Conversation with Luiz Guilherme Vergara, December 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Luiz Hubner, "O Programa Médico de Família de Niterói como estratégia de implementação de um modelo de atenção que contemple os princípios e diretrizes do SUS," Universidade Federal Fluminense, Texts, 1-29, 3. [http://www.uff.br/pgs2/textos/programa\\_medico\\_de\\_familia\\_-\\_prof\\_luiz\\_hubner.pdf](http://www.uff.br/pgs2/textos/programa_medico_de_familia_-_prof_luiz_hubner.pdf)



inequalities, by the 1970s traditional models were no longer functioning. Concomitant with the push for democracy, collective health movements sought to develop a new conception of health and illness, understood within a transversal and ecological framework, where service was no longer based on demand but prevention and the key notion of territoriality – geographic, affective, familial, cultural and socio-economic.<sup>31</sup> Synergies of political and health activism merged in 1990, when, faced with a dengue epidemic and the rise of meningitis and desperately seeking solutions, Niterói's mayor and municipal health secretaries traveled to Cuba and learned of their health system known as the Family Doctor Program in operation since 1984.<sup>32</sup>

The program is based on a system of satellite clinical outposts where health teams are resident in communities. Following various exchanges of health experts and city officials between Brazil and Cuba, Niterói's Family Doctor Program was launched in 1992 with the goal of serving low-income and at risk populations estimated at the time to be approximately 120,000 of the city's 500,000 population.<sup>33</sup> Each clinical outpost – in Portuguese known as a “modulo” or module - comprises 2 or more full time health teams depending on the size of the favela territory and overall population. These teams are made up of one general practitioner and 1 nurse auxiliary (obligatorily from the community) servicing 250 families or approximately 1200 people. The outpost also includes community health agents (akin to a social worker/health assistant) who play a key role in mapping the territory of the favela and registering and communicating with residents. In addition cleaners and nightwatchmen are also hired from the community. Each outpost is in turn supported by supervisors, specialists and an area coordinator and connected to larger “policlinics” and where necessary public health hospitals.<sup>34</sup>

On June 30<sup>th</sup> 1999, in a whirlwind city visit, Fidel Castro himself inaugurated the Morro do Palácio clinical outpost, apparently spending twenty minutes longer there than at MAC.<sup>35</sup> Niemeyer was in fact a friend of Castro's and had visited Cuba several times when in exile during the military dictatorship. The Cuban leader who had also visited Brazil and Niemeyer on various occasions was known to quip: “Niemeyer and I are the last communists on this planet.”<sup>36</sup> Flip or not, it is a remark that speaks volumes to the utopian and often failed communitarian spirit at the heart of MAC and the Family Doctor Program. A truly pioneer initiative, the Program is far from

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>32</sup> Laura Greenhalgh, “Os missionários da saúde,” *Epoca*, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
<http://revistaepoca.globo.com/Revista/Epoca/0,,EMI134743-15257.00.html>

<sup>33</sup> Hubner, “O Programa Médico de Família,” 18.

<sup>34</sup> Currently there are 110 health teams distributed throughout 29 clinical outposts or “modulos”. See official municipal health website: [http://www.saude.niteroi.rj.gov.br/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=60](http://www.saude.niteroi.rj.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=60)

<sup>35</sup> “Depois da Cúpola: Líder cubano vai a quarto eventos no Rio, Fidel Castro passa ‘dia de candidato,’” *Folha de São Paulo*, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999 <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/brasil/fc01079916.htm>

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Glancey, “I pick up my pen. A building appears,” *The Guardian*, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2007/aug/01/architecture>

being without significant challenges that included the politics and demands of each territory – drug traffickers, neighborhood association members jumping queues, community ins and outs – and difficulties in intercommunication within and across the clinical outposts and their support groups.<sup>37</sup> It is as one researcher notes “capillary work.”<sup>38</sup> As such it requires being present amidst shifting territories and affective dynamics where the “work” is actively and constantly being (re)made and (re)produced. Trying to ensure the curative and creative possibilities of this “work” via an open encounter between health worker and patient and avoiding the inevitable closure caused by public administrative bureaucracies are constant struggles. This openness and closure is also true for the partnership of MAC and the Family Doctor Program, where despite the will for a more officially organized association, effective collaborations have entirely depended on affective relationships between individuals – MAC’s education staff and the Family Program coordinator and outpost doctor.

#### **4.1.3 MACquinho and Comuniarte**

In the early 2000s, upon hearing about the *Art Environmental Action* initiative and the idea of creating a cultural outpost conceived on the Family Doctor model, Niemeyer gifted a design for a cultural center “modulo” that could potentially be replicated in other favela/community contexts.<sup>39</sup> The Brazilian social bank BNDES who had just given the project a small grant came on board to support the construction. The first design was developed for an empty lot opposite the Palácio clinic, approximately 75 meters from the favela entrance coming from the commercial city side of the neighborhood of Inga. However, after armed threats to MAC staff and municipal officials by an alleged owner of the land, a new location was chosen at the top of the favela that, similar to MAC, would overlook Guanabara Bay. The center/outpost would house a music studio, library, computer room, general-purpose space, and studio for the handmade paper project.

As the construction project advanced, MAC director at the time, Luiz Guilherme Vergara (2005-2008) who had been formerly director of education (1996 – 2004), was concerned with the life of the center post inauguration. It was critical to ensure a continuing program that would: renew the energies of what had emerged in the late 1990s, expand the network of those involved, engage more artists and embrace a more diverse range of practices, and foster agency among a

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<sup>37</sup> Évelin Generoso Ferreira, “Programa Médico de Família: Sua inserção nas políticas públicas de saúde e intersectorialidade,” 2013, 9 & 13 unuhospedagem.com.br/revista/rbeur/index.../4299

<sup>38</sup> Moema Guimarães Motta, “Programa Médico de Família de Niterói: Avaliação da assistência pré-natal na região oceânica,” *Revista APS*, v.8, n 2 (July/December, 2005): 118-122, 3 <http://www.ufjf.br/nates/files/2009/12/niteroi.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara notes that it was Niemeyer’s granddaughter who in talking with MAC director at the time Dora Silveira (also sister of the mayor Jorge Roberto Silveira) suggested the idea of presenting the project to Niemeyer.

new generation of youth. In 2007-2008 drawing on conversations with a transdisciplinary team of professors from UFF – Geography, Education, Art, Medicine, Literature– the Family Doctor Program, and an international partnership with The Andy Warhol Museum (AWM), Pittsburgh, USA, where at the time I was curator of special projects, as well as collaborations with the artist Marcos Cardoso, choreographer Luiz Mendonça and the collective RUST (Radical Urban Silkscreening Team), the *Comuniarte* project evolved.<sup>40</sup> So named by the youth themselves, this public art, education and museum initiative supported by a grant from Oi Futuro, aimed to nurture socio-cultural agency amongst six university students from different disciplines and twelve favela youth from Morro do Palácio, ranging in ages from fifteen to twenty six.

The project began with a short course where each professor introduced various concepts and practices, particularly those of mapping which had emerged as resonant across disciplines. A six-month informal process followed where mini-teams of university students, professors and favela youth developed projects that “mapped” diverse aspects of favela life. Workshops and residencies with collaborating artists were integrated throughout the project. Mapping was not only key as a set of transversal practices across diverse fields of knowledge, it also emerged as a tool of empowerment. For communities, often not on any map, a process of mapping of self, other and community, of (re) claiming and (re) naming space offered new ways of seeing and validating everyday life and history. As for the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative as a whole, Milton Santos’ concept of practicing space, where “the lived surrounding is the place of exchange, matrix to an intellectual process” was also foundational to the project’s philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly Freire’s concepts of consciousness-raising, agency-building and existential learning outlined in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* informed *Comuniarte*’s framing concepts and strategies of: awareness, belonging and agency.<sup>42</sup> Importantly, this was not a one-way street

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<sup>40</sup> The entire project team comprised: Ana Karina Brenner, pedagogic coordinator – now professor of education at Universidade Estadual de Rio de Janeiro (UERJ); Jessica Gogan, curator of special projects, The Andy Warhol Museum now independent curator/educator and director Instituto MESA; Luiz Guilherme Vergara, director/curator MAC-Niterói and professor art department – UFF; Luiz Hubner, professor, Institute of Community Health, UFF and former coordinator Family Doctor Program (Morro do Palácio); Marli Cigagna, professor, Instituto of Geoscience, UFF; Paulo Carrano, professor of education, UFF and director Youth Observatory; Sonia Monerat, professor, Institute of Literature, UFF; and Renée Douek, psychologist and evaluator. RUST artists were Mary Tremonte and Heather White, their project evolved out of their work as artist/educators at the Warhol. At the time, the Warhol had recently developed an international project in collaboration with Russian partners featuring an online curriculum and various community based and school projects in different city locations as part of a major traveling exhibition of Warhol’s work supported by the Alcoa Foundation. The idea was to explore similar projects in Latin America, starting in Brazil.

<sup>41</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “O entorno vivido é lugar de uma troca, matriz de um processo intelectual.”] Milton Santos, *O espaço do cidadão*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (São Paulo: Nobel 1998 (first published 1987)) 61. Unfortunately there is little of Santos’ work translated into English. The following are two resources: *Shared Space: The Two Circuits of the Urban Economy in Underdeveloped Countries*, trans. from French and adapted to English by Chris Gerry (London: Methuen, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30<sup>th</sup> edition, Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York/London: Continuum, 2007 (first published 1970)).

exercise where presumably middle class teachers are the catalyst for consciousness-raising in low-income contexts that has, on occasion, been a criticism of Freire's work.<sup>43</sup> It was rather conceived as a wholly collective learning process (a mutual learning that Freire himself insisted upon) between professors, students and favela youth. The practices and discourses of mapping in each discipline – memory, narratives, sentiments, territories, space, body, experience – provided the architectural framework for this process.

Resulting projects included: a life-sized map of the favela that marked and photographed territories of affection and their interconnecting “becos” (alleyways); a photography project documenting life at the top of the favela under the themes of leisure, religion, and work; word poems and audio interviews with the *Comuniarte* group recollecting the games and locations where they played as children; miniature reliquaries comprising object assemblages and silkscreen books inspired by the lives of various individuals in the favela; video interviews and youth surveys on skills beyond school knowledge; and a multifaceted mapping of the favela football field, decided by one of the groups to be the center of community health, featuring video *Screen Tests* (inspired by Andy Warhol's) of various angles at different times of day of the football field, large-scale panoramic photographs, interviews, and memorabilia. Together with Marcos Cardoso, the youth also created a quilt-like piece featuring the logo they designed for the project, comprising MAC's outline with the favela inside, sewn together using left-over package wrappings. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008 MAC and the city of Niterói inaugurated the Morro do Palácio cultural center/outpost that would thereafter be called MACquinho with the exhibition *Territórios de afetos* (Affective Territories) featuring the *Comuniarte* projects and also a selection of displays from the history of the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative presented at MAC.

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We hadn't slept in 24 hours. We had worked through the night to mount the exhibitions and get the center ready. Embroiled in city politics, after a recent mayoral election that would change the

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<sup>43</sup> Jailson de Souza e Silva notes that the 1970s and 80s produced a generation whose political consciousness was marked by critical pedagogy and popular activism. While respecting Freire's “Pedagogy of Freedom,” Souza remarks that there was a strong elitist character to the logic of “conscientization” which often assumed a consensus of political alienation amongst favela dwellers and that it was up to the middle class groups and organizations to raise their consciousness. This is an operative preconception that continues to play out amongst political sectors. The difference in the new generation of NGOs is that they come from favelas themselves. The last two decades have seen a marked explosion of activism e.g. Observatório de Favelas, Afro Reggae, Redes de Maré (Maré Networks), Central Única da Favelas (One Center of Favelas) and Nós do Morro (Us from the Hill). I will refer to some of these organizations later in the text. Jailson de Souza e Silva, *De Baixo para Cima*, 70 – 71 and footnote no. 6, 78. Tom Finkelpearl in his introduction to his interview with Freire also commented on this aspect: “One of the basic criticisms of Freire's work is that it still depends on the teacher, the presumably middle-class, educated leader, who will open the minds of “the people” for their benefit, whether they like it or not.” Tom Finkelpearl, “Interview with Paulo Freire,” *Dialogues in Public Art* (Cambridge/Mass/London: The MIT Press, 2001) 277-293, 281.

current municipal administration including the directorship of MAC, the inauguration of MACquinho was bound to be as political as it would be joyful. A complex dance had been worked out between all the various players, drug traffic leaders in the favela, outgoing mayoral office, police, favela neighborhood association, long time youth members of the *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative now in their mid twenties, and the “graduating” *Comuniarte* group. The temporary alliances, however, would not hold. The mayor’s calendar changed, altering police presence, leading to violent incursions, infuriating traffic leaders, and usurping carefully laid plans for community speeches from the *Arte Ação Ambiental* youth. It was devastating for those closest to the project. Yet, all the while political appearances were upheld and congratulations offered. A bittersweet moment. The very inauguration of an almost impossible achievement was also the quasi assuredness of its non-continuity.

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Six years later, a few days before MACquinho was to be re-inaugurated as a Digital Urban Technology Platform, now under the auspices of Niterói’s Secretary of Education and Technology and a new mayor, I stood on the museum ramp looking toward the political juggernaut taking over the center. Shortly after opening MACquinho became mired in building problems from limited access to water to a major landslide requiring the construction of a holding wall that closed the center for over a year. Between a seemingly endless array of construction and resource issues and other political interests, the center and its possibilities had not been a priority. To MAC’s administration (2009 - 2012) due credit they had managed to tread water, maintaining some of the *Arte Ação Ambiental* members, mostly as building security, and on occasion hosting community programming. During this time the official jurisdiction of MACquinho, then under the direction of FAN (Niterói Art Foundation), as is the museum itself, was transferred to the department of education.

With the re-election of the Worker’s Party at the end of 2012, a new ambitious young mayor and the return of the previous museum administration, interest in MACquinho was renewed, resulting in both new investments and complex political and community lobbying. Secretary of Education Waldeck Carneiro saw the potential of the center as part of a career move to run for state representative. Visible, prestigious and needy, given its years of disrepair and underachievement, the center could be mobilized as a prime pawn in a publicity and electoral campaign. However complex and prone to corruption, Brazil’s obligatory voting means that politicians cannot ignore favelas. Palácio’s population of 5,000 would be a significant boost to the Secretary’s planned run for state parliament. The good news would mean that it would be finally

possible to complete the planned music studio, purchase computer equipment, create a simple outdoor stage with bleachers at the back of the building for events and screenings, and with the promise of staffing truly advance on original goals – an array of investments all but impossible for MAC to have realized on its own. Unfortunately, this also meant the dismantling of the last remnants of *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative. The community was tired of MACquinho and saw it as an underachieving white elephant. Justly so. But this also meant that trying to foster discussion about a mix of possible futures was almost impossible amidst the cries of “what have you brought us that’s concrete?” and the clever use of such opportunities as platforms for political speech delivered in an almost delirious oratorical mix of evangelical pastor and hip-hop DJ.

On that day, standing on the ramp, the artisanal paper studio cleared out and used as storage (or rather dumping ground), the organic in-door garden in-process evicted, the political promise of intersectorial collaboration all-but-ignored, everything was being manically painted the city’s municipal orange. I watched, what seemed like the final straw. Niemeyer’s design for MACquinho featured an elegant boomerang shaped white building, a breasting curve on the edge of the favela with large open windows overlooking the Bay, with a signature supporting yellow wall offsetting the structure – a use of primary contrasting colors, like the startling red of MAC’s ramp, that was common to the architect’s style.<sup>44</sup> Here, just days short of the re-inauguration, the wall, fully appropriated by the political machine, was being painted orange.

A few hours and cell phone conversations later, the Secretary of Education clearly keen to avoid potential loss of face in his “oranging” of Niemeyer, the wall was being painted back to its original yellow. It was a strange micro victory amidst a political machine that absorbs everything in its wake. Perhaps it is only ever in this minor suspension of the real – the way things operate – however momentary, that art, here via the mobilization of the symbolic power of Niemeyer, institutes the possible. On the B side of this, a few days later on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, a small exhibition of the *Farmácia Baldia* project somehow miraculously made it onto the walls of the new MACquinho, now a Digital Urban Platform, just hours before the re-inauguration. Put together by a series of contributions much more analog than digital including botanists, health agents, pharmacists, designers, curators, educators, producers, and community members – the exhibition sat powerless yet also like a potent seed, amidst the flash of political posturing and technological ambitions. Another bittersweet battle notch as all the while doors were closing.

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<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that Niemeyer’s design is not without criticism. The curved boomerang shape with expansive glass windows opens out to the view of Guanabara Bay but the entire rear of the building is closed off with no windows giving the impression that the building turns its back to the community. While it is a critique I have only heard from foreign visitors and rarely from those living in the community and working at MACquinho, a certain front of house/back of house dynamic can be seen in events that engage both “asphalt and favela.” Also, it is important to note that because the time of design was one of increased violence, there was a concern re windows at the back as being possibly exposed (as the building would be higher than most dwellings) to gunfire or loose bullets.

#### 4.1.4 Homes and Coalitions: Perseverance and Breathing a Little

There is a tendency in any kind of project recounting to exorcise the vulnerabilities, pains and embarrassments. If acknowledged, it is often difficult to avoid a jauntiness of overcoming. You survived didn't you. Here to tell the tale. And why would you even bother if there wasn't something of value (at least one hopes) at the core? While these stories reflect minor instances of political grandstanding amidst much more terrifying realities worldwide, they are nevertheless part of an unsung brigade of invisible histories that swirl around art and its public making. It is not to write as if armed with some incisive critical magnascope to expose failure – in my experience at the perennially fragile and low resourced limit zones of art, curatorship and education this would be a relatively easy endeavor – but rather to try and find a voice that accompanies, conveys and reflects experientially on what it actually means to work in the midst of socio cultural, political and economic conditions.

In her article “Difference, Dilemmas and the Politics of Home,” Bonnie Honig offers a means of crafting such a critical approach drawing on the concepts of home and coalition. Here she eschews the assumed freedom, privilege and safety of home to affirm “the ineradicability of difference, dilemmas, and conflict” and to embrace the risks and compromises of coalition.<sup>45</sup> Home is also problematized as not being immune to struggles and conflicts, while the often seen as compromised practice of working within existing social collectivity is understood as harnessing the generative power of coalition. Yet, as one collapses into the other, they never quite fully dissipate as future possibilities and yearnings. Home and coalition politics need to be seen rather as mutual life-giving breath.<sup>46</sup> For any practice in the public sphere, both need to be recast in terms of the other, where coalition depends upon the support of spaces of withdrawal, recovery and preparation and home on strategic and often conflicted, temporary alliances.

In the selection process for the *Comuniarte* project, one young man, furtively glancing from side to side throughout the meeting, almost certainly previously involved in drug trafficking, when asked why he wanted to participate simply said, “to breathe a little.”<sup>47</sup> He would come and draw, offer things done by his young children, mostly he was quiet and struggled to find a place. Over time he would come and go, occasionally dropping back. Perhaps it was enough, perhaps far from it. What was clear was that once the newfound home collapsed into the coalition of his small project group he was without a ground to construct alliances. While learning to work in groups was what the *Comuniarte* youth told us they valued most from the project, this was not the case

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<sup>45</sup> Bonnie Honig, “Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* ed. Seyla Benhabib (New York: Princeton University Press, 1996) 257-277.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>47</sup> *Comuniarte* selection process meeting, February 2008, MAC Niterói.

for this young man. Yet, what became important, at least retrospectively, was the need to understand this “space to breathe” less as a predetermined space of freedom but rather as a process of (re)creating homes and coalitions. This emerged as part of the project’s emphasis on process and learning via two research and evaluation initiatives: 1) Working with project coordinators filmmaker Leandro Almeida and MAC community programs liaison at the time interviewed each participant three times over the course of the project inviting them to reflect on what they thought they would learn, were learning, and learned;<sup>48</sup> 2) Psychiatrist Renée Douek accompanied the project and organized a group discussion (without the presence of coordinators and professors) together with the youth which she recorded with their permission removing their names for her report. These initiatives were vital in revealing the complex micro set of homes and coalitions each youth was negotiating and learning: pre- and misconceptions about intelligence of the university students or about life in the community and, particularly for the favela youth, crossing thresholds whether a shopping mall, university or museum. The interviews also capture the potential of the symbolic, a catalyzing force that we often don’t even know we mobilize.

When I was leaving the store at the shopping center the alarm went off and the security guard came after me. The guard accused me of being a thief but I showed him the receipt. My mom went there and started to complain saying she’d sue them. My mother is really happy that I am working at MAC. She’s really proud and said “Do you know who you’re talking to? Your talking to a young man from the “community” who’s working at MAC.” The people started to get worried. So that was, well, I don’t know if it was good, but it’s life, so even if you’re from the community, even if you’re black, you’re worth something.<sup>49</sup>

Interviews like this and Douek’s research were able to identify psychological turning points that might often go unperceived, even undervalued, but in fact represent important learning events. As one young woman succinctly remarked at the end of the program: “Something that could sum up everything that I learned. That I am still learning, is to speak when you have to speak and listen when you have to listen.”<sup>50</sup> Such evolutions of attitude are significant individual journeys, yet they are also extremely hard to quantify or translate into tangible results. Without scaffolding potential futures such initial learning gains may never evolve or foster agency no matter how significant the qualitative dimensions of the experience. Nevertheless, the act of registering and documenting such experiences is vital to assuming their potential.

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<sup>48</sup> For an edited selection see: Video Youth Testimonials. *Comuniarte*, 2008.

<http://institutomesa.org/projects/comuniarte/?lang=en>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. [N.T. The word “comunidade” (community) is used pejoratively to refer to favelas.]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. [N.T. Here “tem que” has been retranslated as “have to” rather than “supposed to” which has the connotation of external obligation whereas in her statement she is more talking about an internally driven dynamic.]



Where the precarious and the contingent reign, projects must provide tools and networks to prepare, navigate and scaffold the constant collapse and reconstitutions of homes and coalitions. A critical aspect must be socializing the process: finding ways to collectively reflect/discuss/understand a particular project as a process rather than endpoint; celebrating milestones (however minor) to both create awareness of the process/project and contextualize the struggle, as there may not be other ones; and the systematic registering of experience(s) not so much as a tool of documentation, albeit necessary, but rather as a mirror inside the process to collectively reflect and register stories and learning moments and to attempt to render visible the invisible power structures that shape and inform practices and territories on macro and micro levels. As discontinuity is a constant challenge, it is vital to think through in what ways such praxes can scaffold or at least point to possible futures – other networks of support, resonant and relevant examples, teach/learn specific competencies that be repeated and built upon. Some of these elements *Arte Ação Ambiental*, *Comuniarte* and the *Farmácia Baldia* managed, others clearly not. As a praxis this will not necessarily prevent the coming together and falling apart of homes and alliances, or indeed, ensure success (whatever that may mean) but it will provide a way of seeing the process which may ultimately be more important. As already noted, cracks in the achievement, bittersweet victories are standard when you breathe home/coalition politics; as activist Bernice Johnson Reagon noted, “when you feel threatened to the core” then “you’re really doing coalition work.”<sup>51</sup> All you can do is dust yourself off and, as she says, “go around, apply it. And then everyday you get up and find yourself alive.”<sup>52</sup>

Or not. This is relentless and exhausting work – everything takes much longer and results (however they are conceived) are modest and mostly wanting. It demands a kind of stoic perseverance. Choreographer Lia Rodriguez who set up her dance company along with the Escola de Dança Livre (School of Free Dance) in the Maré favela in Rio de Janeiro in 2003, commented recently on the ongoing struggle to maintain this resolve, particularly in the light of a hardening of rituals and social inequalities that she does not see as changing, and indeed that seem to be worsening.<sup>53</sup> Amidst low flying surveillance police helicopters, shoot outs and a breathtaking pace of change, her commitment is one of making art in a context that requires a constant process of “affirmation, investment and resistance.”<sup>54</sup> With a population of over 130,000 Maré favela is a

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<sup>51</sup> Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Coalition Politics: Turning the Century,” in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. (New York: Kitchen Table- Women of Color Press, 1983) in Honig, “Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home,” 267.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>53</sup> Lia Rodriguez. Seminar: “Brechas Democráticas.” (Democratic Cracks). Organized by Universidade Nomade and Transnational Dialogues at the Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Rodriguez company produces consistently rigorous and challenging dance pieces. For brief history see <http://www.liarodrigues.com/eng/page14/page14.html>

city compared to Palácio's village. Rodriguez works in partnership with the NGO Redes Desenvolvimento da Maré (Maré Development Networks) a community based organization in Maré that promotes, organizes and researches local development, education, public security, art and culture, and mobilizes collaborations across institutions to work toward sustainable change and development in Maré.<sup>55</sup> In 2007 together with Rodriguez the Redes network established the Centro de Artes da Maré (Maré Art Center) in a large warehouse space. As well as her Escola de Dança Livre Rodriguez's company rehearses and performs here. Over the course of her thirteen years in Maré, several members of her company have come from the favela and seven of those who participated in classes have pursued further education in dance.<sup>56</sup>

The strategy of dislocating artistic "excellence" traditionally based in the more privileged zones of the city to the favela is embraced by the Redes network and the research activist organization Observatório de Favelas (Favela Observatory). Also based in Maré, but with a national mandate, the Observatory was started by researchers and community activists from favelas and peripheries and comprises various initiatives dedicated to knowledge production and political policies regarding favelas. In 2011 in a warehouse next door to the Center de Artes da Maré they opened Centro Cultural Bela Maré (Beautiful Maré Cultural Center) with the exhibition of contemporary art *Travessias* (Crossings) now in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition in collaboration with the visual arts producer Automatica.<sup>57</sup> Over its four-year history this project has shifted from a traditional curatorial model to a more collaborative and diversified one – the question of dislocation of artistic excellence having raised a host of critical issues coupled with the experience of the territory itself revealing and demanding different approaches. While the symbolic role of culture is a cornerstone concept of the Observatory, art and culture is just one branch of their work. In this way, together with the Redes network they can provide a solid support network for artistic partners. Collectively, their practice offers truly useful critical examples and vital models, so hearing Rodriguez's despondency is particularly telling.

From the vantage point of a public art institution like MAC and their *Arte Ação Ambiental* initiative it is clear that the mechanisms required to truly support a socially engaged art or curatorial practice (both the art and the social) demand embedded territorial knowledge and

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.liarodrigues.com/eng/page13/page13.html> and [http://redesdamare.org.br/en/?page\\_id=7](http://redesdamare.org.br/en/?page_id=7) Redes da Maré is one of a number of organizations already mentioned in footnote number 39 that over the past decades have gained visibility presenting new ways of thinking about the question of favelas and the daily life of their residents. Jailson de Souza e Silva, *De Baixa para Cima*, 70.

<sup>56</sup> Lia Rodriguez and Silvia Sotter, "Brechas Democráticas."

<sup>57</sup> For a general description of the Observatory's activities: <http://observatoriodefavelas.org.br/en> Also see interview with director Jailson de Souza e Silva where he discusses the Observatory's work and *Travessias* in "The Authentic New Caricoca: Interview with Jailson de Souza e Silva, director Favela Observatory," *Revista MESA* no 1. For the most recent edition of *Travessias* see: <http://2015.travessias.org.br>

commitment that builds on a pre-existing socio-political activism. Fostering such commitment was part of MAC's effort. However, historically this has been doubly strained due to the museum's lack of autonomy in being able to raise and manage funds and power structures that constantly push back to pre-established formats, let alone the challenges and struggles of working in favelas. While on the one hand this may lead to questioning the value of beginning in the first place, particularly in such precarious conditions, on the other it reminds us that democracy is not a given but a constantly disputed territory. For an art institution to assume its contemporaneity as a meaningful context and tool for democratic expression and struggle it surely needs to develop a praxis that breathes it. This will mean troubling from within institutional economies of the same and from without – creating networks, partners, homes, coalitions, even seeding independent organizations and, as things change, starting over again, and again.

Six months after MACQuinho's "digital" re-inauguration, the *Farmácia Baldia* still stalled, things began to slowly reconnect via a recognition of the potential symbolic role of art and culture in the context of the center's work, left to the wayside by political interest, but understood as key by the new director Breno Platais. Also, two former *Arte Ação Ambiental* members – Elieton Rocha (Telto) and Josemais Moreira Filho (Jefferson) – assumed the shared responsibility of culture and citizenship coordinator of the center, an the agreement between MAC and the Secretary of Education that held. As part of this moment of re-constitution as-it-were and also for this research I thought it a useful moment to re-engage the *Comuniarte* youth and invite them to reflect on the project six years on.

In November 2014 I organized a meeting of youth participants, university students and professors at MACQuinho to talk about what had stayed with them, particular stories, themes, memories etc. I was interested in understanding, particularly given that beyond the project period there was no continuity, what might be (if any) the long-term implications of such projects (expected or unexpected consequences) and ways we might think differently about such work. Three of the youth – now in their early twenties, two with families of their own – offered distinct readings. Marcus Vinicius, as always phlegmatic and bemused, smiled saying he "missed Dr. Hubner's banana cake." Chianne Barbosa, who works at MAC reception and was the only one to go to university, at first, seemed to not identify anything in particular. Everything was a blur. When I asked if there was anything she remembered that she might want to see in other initiatives, perhaps for her own children, the question triggered a deep memory and she immediately said "care of the self", citing a workshop with the Palácio Family Doctor and a discussion on self-care and the possibilities to control when or not to have children. Camilla Thompson spoke of her six year old daughter and her desire that "she, like her, have opportunities

to think.”<sup>58</sup> A parenthesis is important here lest such self-assuredness be overly attributed to the project. All three are very much engaged with their local church. This is their support network. Art enters here, like Carlos Vergara suggests of his own position as an artist in relation to MAC and the surrounding landscape, as “supporting actor.”<sup>59</sup> Yet there is something wholly vital in the youth’s memories suggesting the potential of such work and that a praxis that “takes care” in public might constitutively embrace hospitality, care, and critical thinking.

#### 4.1.5 World as Museum/Museum as World: MAC as Environment

“Brazil is not my country; it is my abyss.”

Jomard Muniz de Britto<sup>60</sup>

Before turning to a reflection on care, it is worth revisiting Oiticica’s Environmental Program, as not only pointing toward an engagement with the world as a museum, but also, to the museum itself as a world. As an environment, the museum can be a site of integral fusion for participation, an “indivisible reunion of all the modalities at the artist’s command.”<sup>61</sup> However, as a potential “environment” MAC is notoriously challenging for artists and traditional display formats. The signature building, the view, and the large glass windows invite visitors to focus on the landscape outside. Art has a hard time competing. Many exhibitions or would be environments fail. Artists and curators must grapple with the museum’s site specific context embracing both the tension between the natural and the constructed and what Oiticica described as the “environment as such” – the sensorial and experiential environment in all its here-and-now temporality and spatiality.<sup>62</sup>

The museum’s inaugural exhibition *Arte Contemporânea na Coleção João Sattamini* (Contemporary Art in João Sattamini’s Collection) presented the complexities of this “environment” of the encounter between MAC’s open architectural proposal and the newly housed contemporary art collection.<sup>63</sup> Captivated by the landscape and fascinated with the building, the diverse range of visitors, however, often seemed alienated from the works on

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<sup>58</sup> Comuniarte meeting, November 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with the author, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<sup>60</sup> [Author translation Portuguese original: “Brasil não é meu país: é o meu abismo.”] From the poem by Jomard Muniz de Britto, “Aquarelas do Brasil,” in *Terceira Aquarela do Brasil* (Recife: Jomard Muniz de Britto, 1982) See full text in Portuguese: [http://www.revistazunai.com/materias\\_especiais/jomard\\_muniz\\_de\\_britto/atentados\\_poeticos.htm](http://www.revistazunai.com/materias_especiais/jomard_muniz_de_britto/atentados_poeticos.htm)

<sup>61</sup> Oiticica. “Position and Program,” *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, 320.

<sup>62</sup> “Environment as such” is the title of the second class of a curriculum Oiticica wrote for a course he gave at the 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y in New York in 1972-73 called “Experimentation.” The little known course is briefly discussed in chapter one. See Itaú Cultural Hélio Oiticica database: <http://www.itaucultural.org.br/programaho/> Note the site is in Portuguese but curriculum was written in English. “Experimentation” Hélio Oiticica Project Archives # 0507/72 Pages 01 -10.

<sup>63</sup> *Arte Contemporânea na Coleção João Sattamini*. September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1996 – September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1997. Curated by Reynaldo Roels.

display. Exploring ways of engaging these publics, Luiz Guilherme Vergara created a simple handout, an exercise of looking and discovery, inviting visitors to narrate a story connecting at least four works in the collection. This led to the creation of thousands of stories from the banal to the fantastical connecting artworks that would normally never be considered together under traditional curatorial presentations. This affective creativity inspired Vergara and theory and research director at the time, Luiz Camillo Osorio, to curate the exhibition *Visões e (sub)versões: Cada olhar uma história* (Visions and subversions: Each Look a Story) presenting four of the stories alongside the actual works chosen by the visitors together with each one's brief biography and portrait.<sup>64</sup> For Osorio this exhibition should be considered a historic marker, a turning point of new possibilities to think about the relationship of curatorship, education and the museum.<sup>65</sup>

From the vantage point of artistic responses to MAC's "environment as such," two installations conceived shortly after MAC's inauguration in 1999 by Antonio Manuel and Artur Barrio could be seen to have set the bar for site specificity.<sup>66</sup> Manuel created *Ocupações/descobrimentos* (Occupations/Discoveries) for the museum's circular veranda gallery. From its sequence of postcard views of Guanabara Bay to highrise condos and ramshackle fishing boats, the 360° vista makes the veranda an extraordinarily difficult place to exhibit. Manuel saw himself as up against a context that did not care about art. So he built a series of seven fake walls one side painted white and the other with exposed brick (similar to the use of such brick in favela construction) one of which was painted red, that blocked the circular passageway but for a series of holes sledge hammered open in each wall to allow visitors to climb through. The installation interrupted and fragmented the views of the stunning landscape. Its ludic physicality literally made spectator/participants take care, as the inside-outside experience became more consciousness, a heightened sense of traversing, bending, walking and viewing.<sup>67</sup>

To Manuel's ludic passageway, Barrio's *O sonho do arqueólogo* (The Dream of the Archaeologist) juxtaposed a literal and metaphysical excavation, turning the museum's central gallery into an archaeological dig-like experience of the sea – its depths, surfaces, smells, pollution. The almost totally darkened gallery featured a small makeshift hanging yellow light, a large wrapped up tarpaulin, granules of amber resin scattered on the carpet affecting a sparkling

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<sup>64</sup> *Visões e (Sub) versões: Cada Olhar uma História*. September 20<sup>th</sup> 1997 – January 25<sup>th</sup> 1998. Curated by Luiz Guilherme Vergara and MAC Department of Education. See Beatriz Jabor, "Curadorias Educativas e Jogos Interpretativas," *MAC 10 Anos*, 102-127, 104-106 and Luiz Camillo Osorio. "Visões e (Sub) versões: Cada Olhar uma História." *Ibid.* p.107.

<sup>65</sup> Osorio, "Visões e (sub) versões," 107.

<sup>66</sup> Antonio Manuel. *Ocupações/descobrimentos*. Artur Barrio. *O sonho do arqueólogo*. May 20<sup>th</sup> – July 26<sup>th</sup> 1998. Curated by Luiz Camillo Osorio.

<sup>67</sup> Osorio describes Manuel's installation as a "new adventure of experimentalism in the constructive vein of Brazilian art, where geometry, sensuality and playfulness interact in a singular way." Luiz Camillo Osório, *Antonio Manuel: Ocupações/descobrimentos*, Exhibition catalogue (Niterói: Museu de arte contemporâneo de Niterói, 2002) 4-13, 12.

twilit sea, a clothesline crossed the space from which hung strung up bundles with codfish.<sup>68</sup> In bringing the ocean inside the museum, Barrio plumbed the conscience of the place.

If Manuel and Barrio struggled with MAC's architecture, natural setting and oceanic depths, Nelson Leirner's 2005 *Por que museu?* (Why museum?) pop and incisively critical, grappled with the space tongue-in-cheek style.<sup>69</sup> For his exhibition located in the museum's main circular gallery and veranda Leirner teasingly questioned the museological function of this ever-increasing popular tourist site. His "why museum?" seemed to also say "why not just a restaurant or a bar?" A carnival-like procession of hundreds of figurines culminating around a football stadium filled the center gallery. Along the veranda with views to the ocean, Coke cans, Christ and saint figures, and a large cow were poised together with two deck chairs and a sun umbrella, all looking out to sea, as if to anticipate the visitor's desire to call it quits and grab a martini.

In startling contrast to Leirner gleeful jabs, at the same time José Rufino's exhibition *Incertae Sedis* (literally, that which has no classification) wrapped around the doughnut-shaped upstairs gallery.<sup>70</sup> It was like walking into another world, thick with the presence of history. A body of work steeped in the legacy of Brazil's military dictatorship and those who had gone missing. Trails of bureaucratic stamps pinned to the walls connected suspended wooden desks; slickly varnished cabinets grew menacing roots; old typewriters streamed filmic texts, and wooden suitcases and boxes coddled white egg-shaped forms. Dense sculptural works combined tables, desks, and chairs with ethereal shroud-like Rorschach inkblots layered on top of collaged archival documents. The experience was one of a pervasive grasping of memory and forgetting, of tangible violence, and of lost administration amidst corrupt and brutal bureaucracies.

The upstairs/downstairs environmental contrast of Leirner's irony and Rufino's metaphysics honed and deepened the critical and creative possibilities of each. Yet some have been known to remark that MAC is a great building but a terrible museum. This can be read into Leirner's teasing joust. Certainly, MAC resists being transformed into a white cube. It is rather best seen as its own anthropophagic gesture – part Niemeyer, part setting – that refuses the museum as mere contemplative armature or encyclopedic tradition and demands that different experiential avenues be explored. Curator and former MAC director Guilherme Bueno (2009 - 2012) has argued that he refuses to see these challenges as *a priori* ones, as if all was hostage to

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<sup>68</sup> Luiz Camillo Osorio, *Artur Barrio: O sonho do arqueologo*, Exhibition catalogue (Niterói: Museu de arte contemporâneo de Niterói, 2002) 7-15, 13.

<sup>69</sup> *Nelson Leirner: Por que museu?* October 15<sup>th</sup> 2005 – March 26<sup>th</sup> 2006. Curated by Agnaldo Farias.

<sup>70</sup> *José Rufino: Incertae Sedis*. October 15<sup>th</sup> 2005 – March 26<sup>th</sup> 2006. Curated by Luiz Guilherme Vergara and Claudia Saldanha.

the architecture and insists on the potency of the artworks themselves.<sup>71</sup> In contrast to the white cube that situates the spectator in a central position, key gallery spaces require movement, a dynamic that Bueno sees as enabling different curatorial concepts and juxtapositions. Artist Guilherme Vaz offers another reading suggesting the aggregative character of the circular spaces of the museum, which for him is distinctly contemporary. The curve he notes is social.<sup>72</sup>

If the previous examples mined MAC as a site-specific environment and space of encounter of the modern and the contemporary how might the museum more radically take up the latter drawing on Oiticica's ethical aesthetic legacy of anti-art, as the artist suggested in his "Environmental Program," and "give the public a chance to cease being an outside."<sup>73</sup> If this was partly achieved with the exhibition *Cada olhar uma história*, it was perhaps even more so with the 2006 exhibition *Lygia Clark: Abrigo Poético* (Poetic Shelter), the title of which recalled the artist's 1964 sculpture of the same name, a piece that uncannily parallels MAC's circular form.<sup>74</sup>

The exhibition embraced Clark's concept of biological and cellular architecture and her use of simple constructions to emphasize human action/interaction to affect what the artist imagined as a "poetic shelter in which inhabiting is equivalent to communicating."<sup>75</sup> The central gallery presented Clark's early sculptures and paintings from João Sattamini's collection. The surrounding veranda explored an archaeology of her creative process – organic line, folding, relational objects – and her artistic legacy via an illustrated timeline and the transformation of the belvedere gallery space into a laboratory of practice featuring Clark's propositions along with unpacking the processes of related contemporary artists and those of her generation as open public workshops led by artist facilitators. The latter was informed by MAC's years of curatorial education experiments with "neoconcrete games" exploring artists' use of materials and their processes with visitors ranging from paper cut outs playing with formal elements and foldings to giant size swaths of material literally playing, making, and experimenting with the constructive use of color and geometry as a live canvas. This spirit continued on the second floor and outdoor patio with dialogues between Lygia Clark's practice and the work of contemporary Brazilian

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<sup>71</sup> Gilberto Mariotti, "Uma Pergunta para Guilherme Bueno," In *Periódico Permanente*, v.1, n.1, 2012 eds. Ana Letícia Fialho, Gilberto Mariotti, Graziela Kunsch and Martin Grossmann <http://www.forumpermanente.org/revista/numero-1/museu-ideal/guilherme-bueno/uma-pergunta-para-guilherme-bueno>

<sup>72</sup> Guilherme Vaz, conversation with the author, April 2014. Also see Franz Manata's interview with the artist where Vaz speaks of what he sees as the difference between the modern (white cube) and the contemporary (more aggregative proposals). The interview is one of many featured on the curator's excellent sound art project web site. (Portuguese only) *Guilherme Vaz. Pod # 1*. Arte Sonora. <http://exst.net/artesonora/podcasts/pod-01-guilherme-vaz/>

<sup>73</sup> Hélio Oiticica. "Position and Program," *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, 322

<sup>74</sup> Luiz Guilherme Vergara explores the parallel between Niemeyer's architecture for MAC and Clark's *Poetic Shelter* in his essay "MAC Niterói as a Place of Hope," *Access All Areas*, 113. The exhibition *Abrigo Poético: Diálogos com Lygia Clark*. September 2<sup>nd</sup> – December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006. Curated by Claudia Saldanha and Luiz Guilherme Vergara

<sup>75</sup> Letter to Mário Pedrosa, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1969, in *Lygia Clark*, ed. Manuel Borja Vilel (Barcelona: Fundació Tàpies, 1999) 250.

artists from Jarbas Lopes' *Desembola Embola* (Unravel Ravel) that invited visitors to unravel and ravel balled up threads contained in tiny wooden boxes to João Modé's *Projeto Rede* (Net/Network Project), a collective net/web organically emerging on the museum's patio hanging from the ramp woven by public contributions.<sup>76</sup> Here participants could literally become part of and co-construct the environments, like Clark aspired, drawing on Merleau Ponty, affecting a "fold" in the "flesh of the world" where "the body is continuous with the world – part of its tissue – and yet individuated. A cell of fold within it."<sup>77</sup>

Clark's exhibition suggested an understanding of the museum as body and as a living structure. This was also at play in three more recent concurrent exhibitions in 2013. Joseph Beuys – *Res-pública: Conclamação para uma alternativa global* (Republic: Conclamation for a Global Alternative) presented a survey of the artist's work and excerpts from his writings together with a series of forums on education, environment and politics in the upper gallery.<sup>78</sup> Suzana Queiroga's *Olhos d'Água* (Eyes of Water) comprised a huge blue transparent inflatable hanging from the ceiling of the center gallery surrounded by works on paper and videos awash in hues of blue and purple.<sup>79</sup> Futons invited visitors to lie down and contemplate the giant aquatic-like creature with the hum of the inflatable machines created an effect as if it was breathing.

On the veranda *A felicidade as vezes mora aqui* (Happiness At Times Lives Here) explored the work of eight artists each a former student of the artist and project curator Edmilson Nunes who taught for many years at the local Museu de Inga.<sup>80</sup> Abel Duarte, Alê Souto, Bernardo Ramalho, Bob N, Ivar Rocha, Maria Mattos, Mariane Monteiro and Sergio Torres, each contributed distinct installations and performances but most of all it was their collective making in-situ embodying the horizontality of artist/teacher so embraced by Beuys, that offered a vision for a living museum as an open-ended creative process.

Amidst such potential environmental possibilities Carlos Vergara's *Sudário* crafted its own singular path.<sup>81</sup> For the artist, MAC's chalice-like raised structure with its red ramp and

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<sup>76</sup> Beatriz Jabor, "Curadorias Educativas e Jogos Interpretativas," 124-127.

<sup>77</sup> Cited in Susan Best, "Lygia Clark, the Paris Years," in *The Aesthetics of Matter*, eds. Sarah Posman, Anne Reverseau, David Ayers, Sascha Bru, and Benedikt Hjärtarson (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013) 292-301, 299.

<sup>78</sup> *Joseph Beuys - Res-pública: Conclamação para uma alternativa global*. September 2<sup>nd</sup> – December 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. Curated by Silke Thomas, Claudia Seelmann, Rafael Raddi ad Luiz Guilherme Vergara in cooperation with Instituto Plano Cultural and Thomas Modern Gallery.

<sup>79</sup> Specially designed for MAC the piece was a meditation on life and water, drawing on Queiroga's personal history of the loss of her father whom she would never know in a plane crash minutes from the museum in Guanabara Bay when her mother was pregnant with her. *Suzana Queiroga: Olhos d'Água*. October 5<sup>th</sup> – December 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. Curated by Luiz Guilherme Vergara. Funded by National art foundation Marcantonio Valaço visual arts award.

<sup>80</sup> *A felicidade as vezes mora aqui*: Abel Duarte, Alê Souto, Bernardo Ramalho, Bob N, Ivar Rocha, Maria Mattos, Mariane Monteiro and Sergio Torres. September 2<sup>nd</sup> – December 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. Curated by Edmilson Nunes.

<sup>81</sup> *Carlos Vergara: Sudário*. December 14<sup>th</sup> 2013 – March 9<sup>th</sup> 2014. Curated by Carlos Vergara and Luiz Guilherme Vergara.



spectacular setting affects a state of suspension that is akin to the travelling mindset – one of curiosity and openness. Using photographs from his travels around the world Vergara created a magic-carpet mosaic of cushioned mats where visitors could rest and congregate that, together with the use of dimmed and spot lighting on works made in places as far flung as Cappadocia or the Pantanal marshes of Brazil, transformed the central gallery into a sacred chapel-cum-middle eastern tent, as if primed for Scheherazade’s tales.

The light filled veranda featured various images of the monotype process from those made at Marx’s gravestone to ancient site of Pompey. Some of these were printed as transparent curtains hung from the ceiling at various junctures. Walking along the veranda looking out to Boa Viagem island, visitors moved through images such as those from the Jesuit Missions in the South of Brazil, a juxtaposition that seemed to reinforce the very singularity of this place, this history, this moment. The veranda also featured the vitrines and maps of the *Farmácia* project and from where the colored banners on the coastal banks, Boa Viagem island and MACquinho were easily visible.

The installation *Liberdade* (Freedom) made from prison doors, iron bars and silkscreened images derived from the imploded historic prison Frei Caneca was presented on the museum patio. Here the artist suggested the piece was a kind of metaphoric grain of sand in the eyes of site seers to call to mind the injustices of the penal system.<sup>82</sup> While the spectacle of the landscape may defy the potency of any political message, together with the *Farmácia Baldia* Vergara was one of the first exhibiting artists that sought to simultaneously mine MAC’s environmental possibilities both inside and out.

MAC, however, seems to embrace such contradictions without striving to resolve or despair of them. Also, perhaps because of what Vergara suggests as its suspended state, the museum exudes an openness and an environment of affectivity that is rare considering more formal art display contexts. Indeed, in its popularity as a tourist site, MAC embraces a diversity of publics unparalleled amongst contemporary art museums. Perhaps no recent set of exhibitions-as-environments has mined this more than Daniel Santiago’s *Brasil é o meu abismo* (Brazil is My Abyss) and Ricardo Pimenta’s *Fique à vontade* (Be at home).<sup>83</sup> Santiago, along with the better-known Paulo Brusky is part of an experimental generation of artists from the Northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco coming of age in the 1970s at the height of the military dictatorship. Mail art, performance, poetry, and urban interventions were key practices.

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<sup>82</sup> “An Artist Traveler: Interview with Carlos Vergara,” *Revista MESA* no.2: Poetic Spaces=Ethical Languages (March 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_2/an-artist-traveler/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_2/an-artist-traveler/?lang=en)

<sup>83</sup> *Daniel Santiago: Brasil é o meu abismo*. June 7<sup>th</sup> – August 24<sup>th</sup> 2014. Curated by Christina Tejo and Zanna Gilbert. *Ricardo Pimenta: Fique a vontade*. June 7<sup>th</sup> – July 7<sup>th</sup> 2014. Curated by Luiz Guilherme Vergara.

All lightness and wit, Santiago's experimentalism is both performative and pedagogic and he is an important figure for many artists, educators and critics in the region. With a flowing white beard donning a suit, hat and cane he has placed himself on various streetcorners with a placard noting "Godot waiting for Beckett." Similarly attired, he walked nonchalantly fully clothed into the ocean at a beach in Recife to the dismay of onlookers. In addition to documentation of such performances, Santiago created (at the last minute as there were no resources to ship the intended artwork) an interactive piece with large cut-out letters that turned the central gallery into a textual canvas of messages alternating from the mundane to profound. The exhibition title came from a poem by Pernambuco compadre Jomard Muniz de Britto called "Aquarelas do Brasil" (Watercolors of Brazil) a caustic litany of Brazilian contradictions. In 1982 Santiago hung himself up by his foot holding onto a placard with the line "Brazil is my abyss." The performance plays on the Portuguese *abismo* (abyss) and *abismar* (astonish) – at once a gapping chasm and take-your-breath-away experience. On opening night he invited the artist and fellow Recifean Lourival Cuquinha to re-perform the piece hanging from MAC's ramp.

At the same time on the veranda hundreds gathered. Ricardo Pimenta had used his exhibition opportunity as a kind of open house of hospitality inviting all and sundry to submit artworks as a collective wall installation – renowned artists, Sunday painters, activists, artisans – everyone. That night, the choc-o-block veranda featured everything from abstract compositions and flower paintings to manifestos and kitsch assemblages along with the artists, their families and friends. A Niterói based artist and activist Pimenta had run the alternative space Galeria de Poste (Post Gallery) from 1997 – 2009 as a counterpoint to MAC – a more domestic, activist and affective territory for local music, art, and social gatherings. The radical nature of his exhibition was to bring this spirit to the museum as a collective contemporary artwork. But what perhaps was more radical was the co-existence that evening in the same museological space of multiple worlds of contemporary art and contemporary worlds and their relation to art.

## **4.2 COMPLICITIES OF CARE: ARCHIVES, CLINICS, ART, AND CURATORSHIP**

[...] a clinical dimension of art gains visibility: the revitalization of the state of art, implies potentially overcoming of the state of the clinic. And, reciprocally, the aesthetic dimension of the clinic: overcoming the state of the clinic potentially implies a revitalization of the state of art. [...] It isn't to abandon art, what Lygia Clark proposed, not even eventually to exchange it for the clinic, but rather to live in the tension of its borders.

However radical and affective, MAC's strivings and struggles to (re)enact its environmental site specificity and programmatic reach are always unnervingly contingent. They are always on the verge of not happening, amidst brazen politics, lack of resources, poor infrastructure, community realities, and inadequate museological standards. While it is important not to romanticize such contingency, quite literally often totally debilitating, it nevertheless necessitates a questioning of norms of practice, their privileges and assumptions, and provokes a search for other ways of working and creating, tracing histories and telling stories. "From adversity we live" noted Hélio Oiticica, amidst the obstacle course of the "Vietnam-like chaos" of Brazilian realities.<sup>85</sup> Working in this context requires the artist's "constructive will" but also a resigned determinism, as critic/curator Jan Verwoert notes, "when you really care to not act is out of the question."<sup>86</sup> The result is a kind of curatorial praxis, immersed (and mired) in contingency, that, while manifesting itself, as Terry Smith notes of curatorship, as a "mak[ing] art public,"<sup>87</sup> is perhaps more a making *in public* and *with*. Here, drawing on its Latin roots of *curare* – to care – curatorship can be reimagined as a complicit form of caring that demands equal attention to artist, context and publics. The curatorial synthesis no longer happens in private behind closed doors or in curatorial committees but is opened up to the contingent, relational and contextual and is developed in collaboration with artists, researchers, publics, and diverse contexts. The *Farmácia Baldia* project clearly illustrates this process as an example of where questions of art, health and care were explored from varying perspectives and all involved, from community health agents to botanists, had a direct impact on the project as it unfolded and evolved. But what might be some other ways to understand and visualize such a complicit, caring curatorial practice?

In her work on Lygia Clark, in particular her creation of an archive of interviews on the artist's work, critic Suely Rolnik drew a parallel with her project and the potential role the art museum may play in constructing such histories: "it can be interesting for museums to keep their function of building archives of artistic production as long as they are based on another concept

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<sup>84</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: [...] ganha visibilidade uma dimensão clínica da arte: a revitalização do estado de arte, implica potencialmente uma superação do estado de clínica. E, reciprocamente, uma dimensão estética da clínica: a superação do estado de clínica, implica potencialmente uma revitalização do estado de arte. [...] Não é abandonar a arte, o que Lygia Clark propõe, nem eventualmente trocá-la pela clínica, mas sim habitar a tensão de suas bordas.] Suely Rolnik, "Lygia Clark e o híbrido arte/clínica," *Concinnitas*, ano 16, volume 1, number 26 (July 2015): 104-112, 109 & 112.

<sup>85</sup> Hélio Oiticica. "General Scheme for New Objectivity," in *Hélio Oiticica*, eds., Guy Brett, Catherine David, Chris Dercon, Luciano Figueiredo, Lygia Pape (Rio de Janeiro: Projeto Hélio Oiticica, 1992) 110-120, 120 and "Position and Program," *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, 322

<sup>86</sup> Jan Verwoert, "I can, I can't, who cares," *What's Next*, 162, 2008, <http://whatsnext.net/162>

<sup>87</sup> Terry Smith, "The Discourse," *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015) 13-36, 34.

of memory and the meaning of its construction.”<sup>88</sup> While the last few decades have seen a fervent artistic interest in the archive and in the praxes and subversions of archiving, rethinking the archive in ways that both draw on artmaking *and* making in public is critical to reimagining new possibilities for museum practice. Manuel Borja-Villel, director of Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid has called for the 21<sup>st</sup> century art museum to be an “archive of the commons.”<sup>89</sup> Such a model embraces the contemporary museum as both a platform and advocate for reconsidering and reworking colonist histories and practices (through exhibitions, collection strategies and education) and for new models of collective ownership. Here, in this new museum concept “radical education”, as Claire Bishop notes, would mobilize the work of art, “rather than being perceived as a hoarded treasure [...] as a ‘relational object’ (to use Lygia Clark’s phrase) with the aim of liberating its users psychologically, physically, socially and politically.”<sup>90</sup> Yet it is unclear how this “liberation” or “relationality” might be achieved beyond vested interests of artistic, critical and intellectual publics. What, we may ask, is the place of the common in the commons?

In her book *Performing Memory in the Americas: The Archive and the Repertoire*, Diana Taylor remarks that the writing and memory equation is central to Western epistemology, a governing cognitive archetype that “brings about the disappearance of embodied knowledge that it so frequently announces.”<sup>91</sup> As a means of countering the writing = memory equation and, by extension, its depositing in the “archive,” as the sole model of knowledge, Taylor makes a case for “the repertoire,” where traditions, performances, and embodied memories are transmitted by live action.<sup>92</sup> Yet the repertoire also suggests forms of knowledge already held, performed, known, passed on. What if the “common” of the commons is unknown or uncommon, less embodied memory and more repressed, hidden, disguised or simply unexplored? It is here that the idea of the clinic might be usefully deployed. While as allied with Westernized discourses as the archive, even as a space of what Foucault aptly critiqued as the “medical gaze,” the clinic nevertheless suggests an empirical, investigative and reparative context for patient health.<sup>93</sup> The example of the Family Doctor program’s clinical practice also offers a counterpoint to the

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<sup>88</sup> Suely Rolnik, “Lygia Clark Suggests: Avoid False Problems,” in *10,000 francs reward (The Contemporary Art Museum, dead or alive)* eds. Manuel Borja-Villel, Yolanda Romero, Francisco Baena and Chema González, conference proceedings (Barcelona: Ministry of Culture, State Corporation for Spanish Cultural Action Abroad and International University of Andalusia, 2009) 69-83, 82.

<sup>89</sup> See Manuel Borja-Villel lecture, “Revisiting the Late Capitalist Museum,” *Now Museum* conference, co-organized by CUNY, ICI and New Museum, March 2011 <https://vimeo.com/91363414>

<sup>90</sup> Claire Bishop, *Radical Museology or What’s ‘Contemporary’ in Museums of Contemporary Art?* with drawings by Dan Perjovschi (London: Koenig Books, 2013) 36-45, 43.

<sup>91</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) 24.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M.Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

turnstile approach of much contemporary medicine with its in-situ territorial practice of preventive counseling – a practice that might be compared with the histories of “biographical medicine” calling in on patients and checking out living conditions and habits.<sup>94</sup> Here the clinic is mobile and ambulatory. Together with the empirical, investigative, reparative and biographical these might be combined with notions of hands on experience, practical skills and DIY competencies that the term has acquired in contemporary usage from legal to art conversation clinics.<sup>95</sup> To add to this array of possibilities is the subversive example of singularity amidst serialized collective life, embraced by Felix Guattari and Jean Oury at the LaBorde Clinic in France in the 1950s and 60s. An experimental psychiatric clinic, LaBorde engaged in a multitude of group methods, workshops, and psychotherapies and most radically role inversions – medical staff working as cleaners, gardeners, chefs and vice versa.<sup>96</sup> “Treatment is not a work of art” Guattari notes, “yet it must proceed from the same sort of creativity.”<sup>97</sup> He muses:

One can only dream of what life could become in urban areas, in schools, hospitals, prisons, etc., if instead of conceiving them in a mode of empty repetition, one tried to redirect their purpose in the sense of permanent, internal re-creation.<sup>98</sup>

Singular re-combinations and creative inversions and subversions of the clinic and the archive may be the alpha and omega of a contemporary curatorial praxis that makes in public. One example of an exhibition cum archive cum clinic is the already mentioned Ricardo Pimenta’s *Fique à vontade* at MAC with its invitation to artists from all walks of life. It was both kitschy pastiche and psychiatrist couch. Its clinical potential richly deployed by videomaker Daniel Leão who was invited to develop a parallel oral history project. Leão engaged those submitting work from business executives and community activists to professional artists and local amateurs to share their “love for art,” asking them to identify themselves (however they understood that) and

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<sup>94</sup> Flávio Coelho Edler notes that medicine in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries often was conceived as holistic were body affected the mind and similarly the passions and emotions affected the body. Focus on lifestyle here could prevent disease. “The doctor was a counselor who acted preventively, according to a clinical model that some historians conceive as biographical medicine. So before medicalization was centered in hospitals, which occurred at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century medicine was practiced with regular visits to patients homes.” Flávio Coelho Edler, “Native Plants from Brazil in the Portuguese and European Pharmacopoeias of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil. Séculos XVI-XIX*, ed. Lorelai Kury (Rio de Janeiro: Andrea Jakobsson Estúdio, 2013) 303-306, 303.

<sup>95</sup> For example: Land use clinic: <http://www.vermontlaw.edu/academics/clinics-and-externships/land-use-clinic>; legal clinics as the “study of law and lawyering in context” <http://web.law.columbia.edu/clinics> or art conservation clinics: <http://www.winterthur.org/?p=577>

<sup>96</sup> Felix Guattari, “La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other,” *Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews 1972 – 1977* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009) 176-194, 178. For a brief contemporary overview of parallels of clinical and alternative pedagogical practices see Janna Graham, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place,” in *Curating and the Educational Turn* eds. Mick Wilson and Paul O’Neill (London: De Appel: 2010) 124-139, 135-138.

<sup>97</sup> Guattari, “La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other,” 192.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

what it meant to exhibit at the museum.<sup>99</sup> The hundreds of interviews capture a kaleidoscope of forms of relating to art and artmaking, a richness enabled by the museum as both symbolic plinth and poetic shelter imbued by the equal care in registering each object upon arrival and the very invitation to give a statement. This socio-therapeutic archive/clinic of the commons that as Rolnik suggests is “based on another concept of memory and the meaning of its construction” depends on an ethical, critical and affective curatorial practice of care. Ethical in that it can be affiliated with a “loosely defined ethic” that, as Nel Noddings notes in *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, “molds itself in situations and has a proper regard for human affections, weaknesses and anxieties.”<sup>100</sup> Critical, in that, its positioning is characterized by an intellectual curiosity that moves away from the self toward the other, the concrete and the proximal and, as Noddings notes, by “availability,” here drawing on the existentialist French philosopher Gabriel Marcel’s notion of “disponibilité”– literally a readiness to make oneself available, to open up to situations and the other. As Marcel affirms: “when I am with someone who is indisposable, I am conscious of being with someone for whom I do not exist; I am thrown back on myself.”<sup>101</sup> This ethical-critical practice becomes affective in that it turns this “availability” into a relation of reciprocity – a constitutive engrossment and motivational displacement (i.e. move away from the self) on the part of the one caring and a responsiveness or reciprocity on the part of the cared for.<sup>102</sup>

In her work on the ethics of care Noddings also makes a useful distinction between caring “about” and caring “for.” The first she notes “is always a kind of benign neglect” where a lack of specificity can let one off the hook in the appearance of caring without actually having to, as distinct from the later where the ethical self actually arises in the concrete practice of caring for others.<sup>103</sup> Taking care means actually doing so – a reality that artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles wittily reinforced in her *Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969!* written, shortly after the birth of her first child, as a proposal for an exhibition to be entitled *Care*. She pointedly asked: “after the revolution, who’s going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?” Maintenance, cleaning and caring are proposed as creative strategies, drawing attention to the devaluing of domestic chores

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<sup>99</sup> Daniel Leão, “Amor pela arte,” is a feature length documentary is in process. A select number of these interviews can be seen (in Portuguese only) on MAC’s website: [http://www.macniteroi.com.br/?page\\_id=1916](http://www.macniteroi.com.br/?page_id=1916)

<sup>100</sup> Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition updated (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2013 (First published 1984) 25.

<sup>101</sup> Noddings here draws on Gabriel Marcel’s notion of “disponibilité” (availability) in H.J.Blackham. *Six Existentialist Thinkers* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959) 80. Ibid., 19.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 112 & 50.

and service functions and subverting avant-garde revolutionary pretensions.<sup>104</sup> In a 2009 interview she reflected on her frustration at that time:

The trajectory was: make something new, always move forward. Capitalism is like that. The people who were taking care and keeping the wheels of society turning were mute, and I didn't like it! I felt when I was watching Richard Serra do these very simple things like throwing the lead, or Judd building things – the language of Process Art and Minimalism, which I felt very in tune with – I felt like ‘what are they doing?’ They are lifting industrial processes and forgetting about the whole culture that they come out of.<sup>105</sup>

More recently the artist Annette Krauss, through her series *Sites for Unlearning* (2013 - ) has been exploring, in various collaborative contexts, ways to unlearn value systems and disrupt habits of work and thinking. *Site Unlearning # 3* in collaboration with the Dutch art organization Casco comprises meetings, experimentations and discussions aimed at deconstructing practices and identifying what it means for an art organization to unlearn.

One of the main questions we have been exploring in our biweekly unlearning sessions has been the relationship between an art institution's vision, enacted in its engagement in cultural production and its day-to-day workings that inform an administrative and managerial ethos. What do we need to unlearn so that the front and back of an institution operates together?<sup>106</sup>

In a manner similar to Ukeles, they identified critical issues of undervaluing certain reproductive tasks, such as cleaning, cooking, hosting. One response, for example, was for management itself to take on cleaning chores. Here in a manner similar to the switching of roles at LaBorde clinic, creating an experimental space to try on one another's jobs, unlearn and learn different competencies may offer an effective and affective means of paying attention to, not just what is institutionally produced, but to what is reproduced (often invisibly, resignedly and coercively) as accepted value systems, discourses and behaviors. On the flip side of this we may also ask how is it that we may reproduce caring practices?<sup>107</sup>

Indeed, complicit forms of caring imply a kind of radical re-organization, rethinking of or paying attention to previously invisible institutional practices, where to invoke Oiticica again, the

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<sup>104</sup> Mierle Laderman Ukeles, "Maintenance Art Manifesto," 1969 [www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles\\_MANIFESTO.pdf](http://www.feldmangallery.com/media/pdfs/Ukeles_MANIFESTO.pdf)

<sup>105</sup> Bartholomew Ryan, "Manifesto for Maintenance: Conversation with Mierle Laderman Ukeles," *Art in America*, (March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009) <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/interviews/draft-mierle-interview/>

<sup>106</sup> Annette Krauss, *Site for Unlearning # 3 (Art Organization)* in collaboration with Casco, Office for Art, Design, Theory, Utrecht <http://siteforunlearning.tumblr.com>

<sup>107</sup> Kirsten Lloyd in her essay on the work of Scottish art and disability organization Artlink takes the other side of this asking in their sensitive and committed mode of "caring" what is the ethos that underpins their work, how is continuity supported, in other words how are these practices reproduced. Kirsten Lloyd, *Uncommon Ground: Radical Approaches to Artistic Practice* (Edinburgh: Artlink, 2014) 16 & 17 <https://issuu.com/artlinkedinburgh/docs/artlink-annual-review-2014-v9-webup>



public may cease being an outside. What this might mean or how it might be deployed, along with Clark's relational objects, as provocative gauntlets for the very contexts that the artists themselves challenged, is critical to engaging with their legacy but also in finding modes of practice inspired by their example that actively counterpoint institutional norms. Argentine psychoanalyst Enrique Pichon-Rivière's theory of "vínculo" (meaning bond or link) may offer a useful terminology to build complicit bridges between Noddings' "about" and "for," Krauss' "front and back of house," the archive and the clinic, and art vs. public distinctions. Similar to Clark's relational objects "vínculos" are an interweaving of mind, body and exterior world. Drawing on the fields of psychoanalysis, social science and social psychology, Pichon-Rivière's psychiatric theory of vínculo sees the human being within a praxis of transforming and being transformed by the interrelationship of the psycho-social (individual and their social relations), sociodynamic (social group and its structuring relation) and the institutional (social group within a larger context).<sup>108</sup> Pichon-Rivière's theory was particularly useful for Cuban artist and professor of art at Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte, Ruslán Torres, who deployed the psychoanalyst analysis for his artistic-pedagogic experiments called *L. Conduct-A-RT* (behavior-art) from 2001-2007 as a kind of in-situ investigative tool to explore meaning-making and behavior in social interactions.<sup>109</sup> Imagining a caring praxis as a constantly unfolding process of vínculos is useful in that it suggests ways of working in and understanding the situated, relational, affective and aggregate manner by which we build connections with the world – with people, places, objects, and ideas – and also demands an ethical responsibility and position regarding vínculos we create.

One example on an institutional level might be the Scottish art and disability organization Artlink. Their relationship-driven approach comprises "ideas teams" engaging a cross-section of careworkers, family members, therapists, and medical staff and researchers working with artists as a means of developing creative and communicative "links" and tools for people with profound disabilities.<sup>110</sup> Each team embarks on a highly specific, experimental and long-term journey that both aims to connect with the perception of individuals, often severe brain damage, and, as

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<sup>108</sup> Enrique Pichon-Rivière, *Teoría do vínculo*, trans. Eliane Toscano Zamikhouswky (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000 (original published 1979)) 2.

<sup>109</sup> Torres introduced me to Pichon Rivière's theory of vínculo on a visit to Cuba in 2012. His experiments were part of a number of collective, interventionist and pedagogic experiments at ISA in 1990s and early 2000s initiated by the artists Lázaro Saavedra, René Francisco and Torres himself. Tania Bruguera's *Taller de conducta* came after these groups. Torres notes: "Specifically what interested me was to explore, the symbolic nature of the vínculo that exists between behavior and the context of where it is taking place; as well as the power relationships that are produced in such a vínculo." [Author translation. Spanish original: "Específicamente me ha interesado investigar, desde lo simbólico, sobre el vínculo que existe entre la conducta y el contexto donde se desarrolla; así como las relaciones de poder que se producen en dicho vínculo."] Ruslán Torres. "Investigación, Arte y Experiencia 2001-2007: L.CONDUCT-A-RT Taller de Arte y Experiencia," Masters Thesis, La Habana: Facultad de Artes Plásticas Instituto Superior de Arte, 2007, 6.

<sup>110</sup> Artlink <http://www.artlinkedinburgh.co.uk>



Kirsten Lloyd notes in her essay on Artlink’s work, to ask within this challenge: “what can we learn about the world and ourselves if we learn how to communicate”?<sup>111</sup> For example, the artist Steve Hollingsworth and the ideas team that works with the profoundly disabled Ben created a “sensorium” – a prototype device featuring a projection screen, color changing LED strip, speakers and amplifier, and a special interface.<sup>112</sup> The sensorium can be interacted with and controlled by Ben through a joystick, enabling him to create his own experiences. It is both a form of personal sensory immersion – playing with light, sound and amplification - and a means of communicating feelings to the outside (heretofore impossible) that, as Hollingsworth suggests, “re-writes the narrative of Ben from can’t to can.”<sup>113</sup>

Such long-term transdisciplinary research based projects are extremely difficult to structure in a Brazilian context. Artlink benefits from stable resources (albeit potentially threatened in an increasingly neoliberal framework) solid staffing and strong collaborations with hospitals and clinics. Beyond MAC’s work with the Family Doctor Program, there are few art institutions that grapple directly with art and health themes. Museu Bispo do Rosário Arte Contemporâneo (Bispo do Rosário Museum of Contemporary Art) is an interesting exception. Based in the suburb of Jacarepaguá in Rio de Janeiro, the museum houses the collection of the outsider artist Arthur Bispo do Rosário and is actually situated as part of the mental health complex known as the “Colônia”(colony) – an expansive park territory with various clinical outposts originally known as “hospital city” or the “city of the insane” and where from 1964 to 1989, the year of his death, Rosário was interned.<sup>114</sup> In addition to its long history as an asylum, reflecting the radical shifts and turns in mental health care, the site is also said to have been a sacred territory of the Tupinambás Indians. The “Colônia” is run by the Instituto Municipal de Assistência à Saúde Juliano Moreira (Juliano Moreira Municipal Institute of Health Assistance) and the museum is supported by and under the jurisdiction of the city of Rio de Janeiro’s health department. Exploring the intersections between art and mental health, in addition to exhibitions, the museum functions as a site-specific hub/clinic including a school, artist residency program, community garden and various workshops with the goal of creating affective links between mental health users, artists and the surrounding community.<sup>115</sup> Established in 2000 as the Museu Bisop do Rosário adding “contemporary art” to its name in 2002, since 2013 the museum has been actively expanding its work in the “Colônia” and aims to incorporate critical questions of

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<sup>111</sup> Kirsten Lloyd, *Uncommon Ground: Radical Approaches to Art Practice*, 15.

<sup>112</sup> <http://ideasteam.org/2014/11/12/a-bespoke-planetarium-for-ben/>

<sup>113</sup> Stephen Hollingsworth, panel presentation for the seminar “Exchange of Method: Scotland and Brazil,” organized by Artlink and Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland, November 18-19<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>114</sup> <http://museubispodorosario.com/bispo/obra-vida/>

<sup>115</sup> <http://museubispodorosario.com/polo-exp/o-polo-experimental/>

memory (history of the area, psychiatry, art and madness) as core to its mission.<sup>116</sup> Its future as archive/clinic has immensely rich potential. As an art museum (so far) it seems to weather the precarious cultural storms via its institutionalized links to official health systems, its clear relationship to a specific usership and the rich historical territory in which it is situated.

Another project, Hotel de Loucura (Madness Hotel) also bridges affective links between art and mental health and is similarly supported by Rio de Janeiro's health department. Situated in the institute named after the psychiatrist Nise de Silveira in an unoccupied ward of the psychiatric hospital Dom Pedro II in the city's north zone, Hotel de Loucura offers accommodation for doctors, researchers and artists who wish to engage more directly with patients both promoting art as a form of treatment and as a means of waving a flag of inclusion. Inaugurated by the psychiatrist, actor and coordinator of the Nucleus of Culture, Science and Health at the city health department, Vitor Pordeus, the project has been running since 2012.<sup>117</sup> The art collective Norte Comum (Common North) was one of the first invited to occupy the space and amongst various painterly transformations of wards they developed an ongoing series of events bringing together artists and patients called Sarau Tropicaos (Sarau is an event with performance, poetry, readings etc., and Tropicaos is a combination of the tropical and chaos and also recalling the graphic artist, poet and key Tropicalist Rogério Duarte book of writings of the same name).<sup>118</sup> Vested not only in de-stigmatizing the mentally ill, Norte Comum also aims to challenge Rio as a divided city of the north zone and south zone (the zone of Ipanema, beaches and cultural elite for which the city is best known) by promoting circulation to the north and emphasizing the dynamic artistic culture alive in the so-called peripheries. Like Nise de Silveira they see the potential of affection as a catalyst. Building affective links between artists and patients and amongst themselves is key.<sup>119</sup>

Vínculo not only connects Noddings' notion of "about" and "for" in that it points to the constitutive caring relation based on reciprocity (one caring for and one receiving) but also allows for the critical "abouts" that may emerge out of that relation. In turn the concept allows for how such "abouts" may inaugurate new "fors." Clarity on the "about" is key to the practice of the Wochenklausur, one of the first groups to emerge in the field of social art practice in recent decades, who argue that interventionist art can only be effective when the problem is clearly

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<sup>116</sup> Director Raquel Fernandes, curator Ricardo Resende, and educator Bianca Bernando.

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.lappis.org.br/site/noticias/1407-ocupa-nise—um-hotel-e-spa-da-loucura-como-prática-de-integração-social>

<sup>118</sup> "Norte Comum – Inversão da rota," in *Debaixo para cima* (Book website: <http://www.debaixoparacima.com.br/norte-comum-inversao-da-rota/>)

<sup>119</sup> Conversation with the artist Jefferson Vasconcelos/Norte Comum member and their interest in Nise de Silvera and her ideas about the role of affection a key catalyst in sparking creativity in patients, November 2015.

stated.<sup>120</sup> Their mobile clinic providing medical care to the homeless began in Vienna in 1993 and continues to operate (via a relief organization) providing over 700 treatments per month.<sup>121</sup> As an attitude of concern, responsibility and affectivity, for liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, care means intervention, local action, facilitating possibilities of self-organization, touch, vital tenderness, and hospitality.<sup>122</sup> A new ethic, he notes, will emerge from new ways of working.<sup>123</sup> From the vantage point of art and curatorship, such new ways of working engage caring practices that immerse themselves in “vínculos” and vitally open themselves up to more textured experiences of time. These ultimately proffer different results for art and its public making. For example, describing his work on an AIDS oral history project, artist and Ultrared collective member Robert Sember suggests the critical shift a caring practice may enable:

By constructing the archive as a pedagogical rather than objectifying practice, we battle with the contradictory conditions of time as continuity and time as a form of living beyond. It is insufficient merely to represent this contradiction, which is what almost all research and art making aims to achieve. It must be embodied and lived through. This requires sticking around to take up the questions in often brutal and always messy projects of love.<sup>124</sup>

What such caring practices might mean for art and curatorship may also be equally relevant for clinical practice. When artist AA Bronson asks: “How can I remain a subject, an actor, in this unfolding of my life, and not become a mere object of the health care system?”<sup>125</sup> His question is one that could equally be asked by health care workers. Trapped in situations of capital, morality and discipline, how can health workers actually care? How is care produced or reproduced? How, amidst recalcitrant macro-systemic overhaul, might the encounter of patient and worker be rendered more textured, alive, and vital? For Túlio Franco, psychologist and professor of collective health at UFF and collaborator on the *Farmácia Baldia* project, a critical necessity is the control health workers have on affects and their possible capture.<sup>126</sup> Creative and affective

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<sup>120</sup> Wochenklausur cited in Andrea Phillips, “Too Careful: Contemporary Art’s Public Making,” in *Actors, Agents and Attendants: Caring Culture: Art, Architecture and the Politics of Public Health*, eds. Andrea Phillips and Markus Miessen (Amsterdam/Berlin: SKOR Foundation for Art and Public Domain/Sternberg Press, 2011), 35-56, 49.

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.wochenklausur.at/projekt.php?lang=en&id=3> (Accessed January 2016)

<sup>122</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Saber Cuidar: Ética do humano - compaixão pela terra*, 20<sup>th</sup> edition (Petropolis: Vozes, 2014), 37 (attitude of concern, responsibility and affectivity), 119 (intervention), 132 (facilitating possibilities of self-organization), 139 (vital tenderness), 158 (local action), 198 (touch), 210 (hospitality).

<sup>123</sup> “A new ethic will be born from a new way of seeing” [Author translation Portuguese original: “uma nova ética nascerá de uma nova ótica.”] *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Sember, “Live to be Legend,” in *Actors, Agents and Attendants. Caring Culture: Art, Architecture and the Politics of Public Health*, 191-202, 202.

<sup>125</sup> AA Bronson, “Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I’m sixty-four?” in *Actors, Agents and Attendants* 219-231, 221.

<sup>126</sup> Túlio Franco, “Trabalho criativo e cuidado em saúde: um debate a partir dos conceitos de servidão e liberdade (Creative Work and Care in Health: A Debate Drawing on the Concepts of Slavery and Freedom),” *Saúde Soc.* São Paulo, v.24, supl.1 (2015): 98-110, 98.

work on a micropolitical scale is essential to enable innovations in institutionalized forms of care. In Brazil collective health models and therapeutic practices (such as those by Nise da Silveira in her workshops at Engenho de Dentro in Rio in the 1940s and Norte Comum's *Saraus Tropicaos*) find much synergy with Spinoza's ideas on subjectivity and theory of affections, in particular the relationship between agency and affect. Deleuze offers a synthesis of Spinoza's thought:

The passage to a greater perfection, or the increase of the power of acting, is called an affect, or feeling, of *joy*; the passage to a lesser perfection of the diminution of the power of acting is called *sadness*.<sup>127</sup>

Our humanity is defined by our capacity to affect and be affected. Joy is directly connected to our potential to act, our sense of agency, sadness to its diminution. Controlling these affects, in particular their possible negative effects, often produced due to a separation between those effects and their real causes (e.g. in the context of health care a patient screams wildly without seeming cause), is key to fostering agency. This means that encounters with others are a constant site of affectivity and of potentially increasing and diminishing our sense of agency. Each encounter generates its own psycho-chemical dynamics, there is no formula. As Deleuze notes:

[...] no one knows ahead of time the affects one is capable of; it is a long affair of experimentation, requiring a lasting prudence, a Spinozan wisdom that implies the construction of a plane of immanence or consistency. Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected on this plane of immanence.<sup>128</sup>

Embodied, fragile, and constantly under threat of being derailed, these affective encounters are what constitute a caring practice. While their dynamics and outcomes cannot be predetermined in advance, what is possible is to set the stage and have on hand a toolbox of practice that may include strategies such as: availability, hospitality, and *vínculo*. For Franco, creativity is key in the context of the relationship between health careworker and patient/user:

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<sup>127</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988 (Originally published as *Spinoza: Philosophie pratique* in 1970)) 50.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

It's about invention, creative acts that generate possibilities for the resolution of user health problems, via detours, "lines of flight" or in other words, something that re-signifies the problem, the necessity, the care in the context of the relation between the worker with the user.<sup>129</sup>

These "lines of flight" or "deterritorializations", draw on Guattari and Deleuze's concepts in *A Thousand Plateaus*. They are disruptions from planes of consistency, escape routes, flows and leakages from, across and between territories and disciplines that, in the context of clinical situations, may, as therapist Elizabeth Lima notes, "extrapolate the dominium of pathology."<sup>130</sup> Clinical practice is here reconfigured, no longer solely devoted to cure, remission of symptoms or moral notions of wellness. Dr Luiz Hubner, former coordinator of the Family Doctor Program including the Morro do Palácio favela would often describe clinical visits, here re-imagined as territorial peregrinations, talking with patients in their houses, as conversations. An elderly woman diabetic who had lost her husband, one son (and most likely soon a second) to drug trafficking, should not be drinking, but together they have a beer and talk. Less despairing and lonely she may drink less, and be open to a discussion of reducing damages rather than prohibition.<sup>131</sup> To deploy artistic practices in such contexts extrapolates traditional understandings of art as autonomous activity. It is not even clear if it remains as art or indeed how it might be categorized. Instead it is dispersed more like flows of textured sensibilities. "What are you doing in that course [*Comuniarte*]," asked one of the favela youth's mothers of Dr Hubner that, "he is sweeping the house?"<sup>132</sup> The question is not only how is care produced but also what makes us want to "take care"?

In *Actors, Agents and Attendants. Caring Culture: Art, Architecture and the Politics of Public Health* editors Andrea Phillips and Markus Miessen probe critical questions of care in relation to health and art when they ask: "[a]s care is privatized across the West, how are artists, architects, designers, curators and writers responding?"<sup>133</sup> Their publication is the result of a 2010 project sponsored by the Dutch foundation SKOR – Foundation for Art and Public Domain whose interest in art and health projects emerged out of a national governmental scheme for artworks to be incorporated in building and renovation projects in hospital healthcare. The closure of this program and subsequent implementation of neoliberal policies prompted the urgent

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<sup>129</sup> Note while the article has been translated and published in English I am revising the translation here due to a misleading translation of "lines of flight" as "escape routes" which misses its direct reference to Deleuze and Guattari. Túlio Franco, "Trabalho criativo e cuidado em saúde: um debate a partir dos conceitos de servidão e liberdade," 100.

<sup>130</sup> Elizabeth Maria Freire de Araújo Lima, "For a minor art: resonances between art, clinical practice and madness nowadays," *Interface* vol.3 no.se Botucatu 2007, PDF, p.8 [http://www.scielo.br/pdf/icse/v10n20/en\\_04.pdf](http://www.scielo.br/pdf/icse/v10n20/en_04.pdf) trans. Lílana Lopez from *Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação*. Botucatu, v.10, n.20, July/December. 2006, pp. 317-329

<sup>131</sup> Discussion with the author, February 2008.

<sup>132</sup> Discussion with the author, April 2008.

<sup>133</sup> Andrea Phillips and Markus Miessen, "Introduction" in *Actors, Agents and Attendants*, 10-15, 10.

necessity to reimagine the organization's work and think through questions of care for art and health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>134</sup> From 1984 – 2006 SKOR and its predecessor Bureau for Visual Art Assignments (PBK) oversaw a rich array of public art and health commissions. In his essay reviewing this work curator Nils van Beek reflects on how the projects illustrate the privatizing shifts in healthcare and the emergence of participatory art practices. Andrea Phillips draws a parallel between the two, an analysis worth quoting in full:

With the dissolution of the welfare state and its ideological structures, a new concept of care is ushered in, one of participatory individuality and client choice. Interestingly, in its move from monumentalism to dispersed and participatory practice, especially in the field of art in the public realm, artistic practice has either followed suit or provided the avant-garde for such narratives – perhaps both (in the form of the cultural industry). In both milieux – art and healthcare – and as such care as an idea itself, power is not redistributed.<sup>135</sup>

Navigating these realities require adept shapeshifting, even more so in a Brazilian context. A redistribution of power may be too tall an order. Caring runs up against a double bind where the affective promise held out by an intervention may be equally a tool of oppression such as for example financial dependency or lack of continuity. Sustainability generally loses out to eventual affectivity. Yet this may be the most we can hope for where the “evental” may render the invisible visible and create possibilities that enable us to “unlearn” and “take care.” For van Beek “the most noteworthy art projects in the healthcare sector share an emancipatory component, particularly where social stigma are involved [...]”<sup>136</sup> Phillips notes, the “status of art confers exceptionality” upon the clinical situation, distinguishing itself from other services.<sup>137</sup> This is problematic when working toward sustainable change. Exceptionality may be harnessed (wittingly or unwittingly) as a catalyst, but it may also force a visibility and expectation that stymies progression, plays the same record, and even though the public has been invited in, the art remains outside. It may also arrogantly masquerade as a revolutionary believing it confers when it actually appropriates. How to work with this shadow? While the *Farmácia* failed to truly intervene, its small success drew attention to the living “archive” and potential “clinic” growing in the area. But perhaps the project's open making and failing in (and with) public(s) may ultimately make it more useful in the questions it generates and new possibilities it sketched.

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<sup>134</sup> Nils van Beek, “The Skor Files,” in *Actors, Agents and Attendants*, 101-118, 104.

<sup>135</sup> Andrea Phillips, *Actors, Agents and Attendants*, 39.

<sup>136</sup> van Beek. *Actors Agents and Attendants*, 109.

<sup>137</sup> Phillips, *Actors Agents and Attendants*, 49.

### 4.3 RADICALITY, BALDIOS, AND MEDICINAL PLANTS

Just as there are people that like to live next to plants, there are plants that ‘like’ or ‘have the necessity’ to be close to humans – botanists call these plants ruderals or weeds. They ‘hide’ in the baldios of cities, and it’s necessary to have the antidote to ‘plant blindness’ to appreciate them. Learn and relearn the secrets hidden in plants. They are there, by our side with their beauty and therapeutic possibilities. To discover their curative powers could be one of the keys for wellness.

Luiz José Soares Pinto and Marcelo Guerra Santos<sup>138</sup>

The *Pharmacy* drew attention to the invisible resource growing on the roadsides, favela yards and alleyways, and Atlantic forest areas - all at a stone’s throw from the museum. But can we understand this resource as one held in common? Can we consider these contexts as “baldios”? In Portugal the term “baldio” actually refers to a specific area of land, whereas in Brazilian Portuguese “baldio” is not used as a substantive but as an adjective, as in “terrenos baldios” (literally vacant terrains). As noted earlier the term has been translated as “empty lots.”<sup>139</sup> It may also refer to abandoned private land and/or so-called wasteland in public use. In Portugal, there are laws protecting community use of “baldios,” pointing to a possible parallel, that curator Nuno Sacramento draws, between “baldios” and the English term “commons.”<sup>140</sup> In Brazil, however, most “baldio” lands will have an owner, albeit in many cases unknown, so understanding “baldios” as “common” or “shared” lands may be difficult to establish. Of course, it is interesting to speculate on the colonial journey that strips a word/concept/territory of its substantiveness. While this can be read as symptomatic of the complex intermeshing of the public and private in Brazilian culture, where the public is both allied with the dysfunctional and the abandoned and appropriated for private purpose. It is also interesting that in its qualitative understanding – empty, vacant, abandoned – the term implies a sense of open, albeit contingent, possibility for use. While “owned,” it seems “baldio” land may be rather more defined and redefined by its use or non-use than by ownership.

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<sup>138</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: Assim como tem gente que gosta de ficar perto das plantas, tem planta que “gosta” ou “tem a necessidade” de estar perto do homem - os Botânicos chamam essas plantas de ruderais ou daninhas. Elas se “escondem” nos baldios das cidades, e é preciso antídoto à “cegueira vegetal” para apreciá-las. Aprender ou reaprender os segredos escondidos nas plantas. Elas estão por aí, ao nosso lado com sua beleza e terapêutica. Descobrir os seus poderes de cura podem ser uma das chaves para o bem-viver]. Luiz José Soares Pinto and Marcelo Guerra Santos, “Plantas medicinais: dialogando saberes,” in *Carlos Vergara: Sudário*, no page numbers.

<sup>139</sup> As already noted translator Stephen Berg has translated “terrenos baldios” as “empty lots” in his translation of Hélio Oiticica’s “Environmental Program.” *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*.

<sup>140</sup> Nuno Sacramento, “Makers Meal and the Production of the New Common,” *Revista MESA* no. 1: Territories and Practices in Process (March 2014) <http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa/makers-meal-and-the-production-of-the-new-common/?lang=en>

Territories, as Michel de Certeau suggests, are never ontologically given, but rather discursively mapped and corporeally practiced.<sup>141</sup> The very indeterminate quality of being “baldio” – public/private, uncultivated/cultivated, used/abandoned - while legally precarious may in turn enable transformative possibilities. This sense of indeterminacy is a rich ground for experimental art practice and new forms of collectivity suggesting that we can understand “baldios” as both a literal territory to be explored and as a metaphoric space “in-between” to be created or sufficiently emptied out to allow for multiple appropriations. Interestingly Oiticica in his “Environmental Program” includes “terrenos baldios” as part of extending the meaning of the term “appropriation” to the environment.<sup>142</sup>

For the *Farmácia Baldia* the fact that curative medicinal plants can be found growing in these baldios metaphorically suggests that our “health” may be found in the interstices and the overlooked common land around us. That the plants identified, in contrast to the project’s first iteration in São Paulo, were almost entirely native to Brazil and the region, also emphasizes an ethical dimension in that it recuperates both indigenous species and knowledge.<sup>143</sup> Shedding light on often invisible and unrecognized terrains and practices, the project, symbolically and literally countered what the botanists involved in the *Farmácia* collective call “plant blindness.”<sup>144</sup>

Yet in taking the antidote to this blindness, we need to be cognizant of the complex and interwoven histories of medicinal plants and colonialism.<sup>145</sup> It is a past that reveals both exploitation and savvy adaptation as well as a significant degree of circulation of species, ideas and culture. For example, in his essay “Pharmacology, Medical Botany and the Circulation of Plants in the Jesuit Pharmacies in the Province of Brazil, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” researcher Bruno Martins Boto Leite notes that of the 122 plants used by Jesuits, 69 came from Europe brought by the Portuguese, 19 from new Portuguese dominions, 9 from Spanish conquests and just 25 as being native to Brazil.<sup>146</sup> Other researchers point to a “cosmology of contact” where pajés (shamans) adjusted rituals with magic curative properties of plants to include Christian rites in order to ensure their survival both their own and the legacy of indigenous medicinal

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<sup>141</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press 1984).

<sup>142</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “Position and Program,” *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, 321.

<sup>143</sup> *Farmácia Baldia* collective participant pharmacist and medicinal plant specialist Bettina Monika Ruppelt made the observation that the medicinal plants identified were native to the region.

<sup>144</sup> Luiz José Soares Pinto and Marcelo Guerra Santos, “Plantas medicinais: dialogando saberes,” in *Carlos Vergara: Sudário*.

<sup>145</sup> Lorelai Kury, “Introduction,” in *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil*, 293-294, 293.

<sup>146</sup> Bruno Martins Boto Leite, “Pharmacology, Medical Botany and the Circulation of Plants in the Jesuit Pharmacies in the Province of Brazil, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil*, 298-302, 300.



knowledge.<sup>147</sup> Trade, bartering and circulation of plants not only featured seeds and seedlings but also cultural exchange, “not only of products but ways of preparing meals and their consumption.”<sup>148</sup> Plants that had potential medicinal or economic use were of keen interest and there was much experimentation in crossing species and adaptation to new environments. Lorelai Kury notes these experiments became a key branch of colonial politics:

Thus the plants played a central role in the concerns of governments and in the individual strategies of survival and social positioning of the military, technicians, adventurers, men of science and letters. The gardens were associated [with] the activities of espionage, contraband, circulation of seedlings, seeds, planters, technicians, botanists and their techniques. Along with the plants were manuscripts, pamphlets, magazines and books that helped in the process of collection, identification, transplant, acclimatization and cultivation of species.<sup>149</sup>

Kury also observes that natural history and medicine in the Enlightenment cultivated an ambivalent relationship with the new tropical worlds where, on the one hand heat and humidity were deemed as poisonous to the body and soul, and on the other, the curiosity with which the very difference of the climate and vegetation might reveal marvelous and as yet undiscovered (at least by the old world) possibilities.<sup>150</sup> Updated to contemporary postcolonial realities it is easy to read the ongoing presence of such “ambivalence” manifesting itself in multiple ways whether via contemporary pharmaceutical companies or the so-called global art world.

Educator Danilo Streck has argued that in order to: “‘excavate’ an emancipatory pedagogy with characteristics of [Latin American] peoples, it is necessary to start from the contradictory but indissociable encounter between European, Indigenous and African culture.”<sup>151</sup> How do we “excavate” the play of the colonial and the subaltern and of resistance? How might we render visible these questions of historical and contemporary ambivalence? The ethnobotanical world of medicinal plants may be a rich catalyst for such debate. Recalling the discussion of the archive and clinic, one example might be the Matsés peoples of Brazil and Peru and their creation of a 500-page encyclopedia detailing their traditional medicine and use of plants compiled by five Matsé shamans with assistance from the conservation group Acaté.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Juciene Ricarte Apolinário, “Native Plants, Colonial Indians: Uses and Appropriation of Portuguese American Flora,” in *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil*, 311-314, 312.

<sup>148</sup> Leila Mezan Algranti, “The Art of Cooking and the Plants of Brazil 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” In *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil*, 307-310, 308.

<sup>149</sup> Lorelai Kury. “Plants Without Frontiers: Gardens, Books and Travels 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In *Usos e circulação de plantas no Brasil*, 315-318, 316.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>151</sup> Danilo R. Streck, Telmo Adams, Cheron Zanini Moretti. “Pensamento pedagógico em nossa América: uma introdução,” in *Fontes da Pedagogia Latino Americana*, ed. Danilo R. Streck (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2010) 19-35, 23.

<sup>152</sup> Jeremy Hance, “Amazon Tribe Creates 500-Page Traditional Medicine Encyclopedia,” *Mongabay*, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://news.mongabay.com/2015/06/amazon-tribe-creates-500-page-traditional-medicine-encyclopedia/>

The encyclopedia is both an archive of indigenous medicine and a clinical guide for training new, young shamans. To prevent knowledge from being stolen by corporations or researchers, as has happened in the past, the encyclopedia is only written in Matsé. Christopher Herndon, doctor and co-founder of Acaté, who worked on the project notes:

Some of mankind's most important pharmaceuticals, such as quinine and aspirin, have been developed through learning from traditional healers. Due to the political climate and international fears of biopiracy, it is challenging for even well intentioned pharmaceutical companies committed to equitable profit-sharing agreements to undertake such initiatives. Practically speaking, the complexity of indigenous knowledge and medicines is such that it is not possible to fully evaluate the phytochemistry within the time frame that the knowledge is poised to be lost. The Encyclopedia, although not designed for this purpose, keeps options open in the future for the Matsés; a future that, in contrast to most historical precedents, will be one of their own determination. [...] If there is to be dialogue, in my view it should begin with how we can support them in the present rather than how they can help us in the future.<sup>153</sup>

While empowering indigenous tribes is vital to rainforest preservation and in turn, global conservation, how might such radical approaches of “how we can support them in the present” be usefully deployed in the less urgent and more affluent climes of contemporary art and culture? A rather mind-boggling example of the opposite is the case of the Rio de Janeiro based Latin American art institution Casa Daros, which, upon closing its doors for good on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2015, decided to donate its extensive library on Latin American art to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Casa Daros was a project of Zurich based Daros Latinamerica and opened to much fanfare in March of 2013 after a seven-year renovation project of a 19<sup>th</sup> century school building in the heart of the city. The new institution positioned itself as a critical resource for the continent featuring a state of the art exhibition space, an innovative art and education program and a major resource library.<sup>154</sup> While Claire Bishop's *Radical Museology* mostly focuses on what one might call “front of house” radicality, she does note the example of Reina Sofia's support of the Chilean based collective CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte en Chile from 1979 to 1985) “who offered their archive to the museum lacking confidence that a Chilean institution could house it.” Bishop notes that the museum paid researchers to catalogue the archive and worked to ensure a Chilean

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid. Acaté is a US and Peru based environmental organization that works in collaboration with the Matsé and diverse researchers and professionals with the goal of rainforest conversation. For more information: <http://acateamazon.org>

<sup>154</sup> According to news reports the decision was made for “exigencies of cataloguing efficiency and quick public visibility.” To boot, in a rather unfortunate irony, the elite college that bought Casa Daros (returning to the building's original school function but here no longer public) turned down the opportunity to continue the library. Daniela Labra, “Análise: Casa Daros foi empreitada colonialista de Ruth Schmidheiny,” *O Globo*, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 <http://oglobo.globo.com/cultura/artes-visuais/analise-casa-daros-foi-empreitada-colonialista-de-ruth-schmidheiny-18266517> For an essay on Casa Daros's closure see Luis Camnitzer, “Brother Can You Spare a Dime?” *e-flux Journal* # 67, November 2015 <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/brother-can-you-spare-a-dime/>

institution would house it while in turn they received an exhibition copy of the archive.<sup>155</sup> Might the Met have responded similarly or explored some counterproposal? How is it possible that a major collector of politically engaged Latin American art, who could not but be aware of the continent wide critical issues of poor infrastructure, did not even appear to think twice about their last salvo? Returning to the plant metaphor, there maybe various ways in which one can be a botanical imperialist, one is introducing an invasive species that wipes out all indigenous diversity, another is only watering your own plant. Despite a rich body of programming and its gesture toward critical pedagogy and social practice, embraced by former director of art and education, Cuban curator Eugenio Valdés and Art and Education Manager Bia Jabor and a truly talented team of artists and educators, Daros Latinamerica ultimately behaved like a European duchess in the jungle tut tutting the heat.<sup>156</sup> Is there an “antidote” to this blindness?

The work of the environmentalist collective Ala Plástica and their fostering of localized “eco-systems” certainly offers a counterpoint and antidote to what they call the “ego-systems” behind capital. Their projects in the Rio de La Plata basin near Buenos Aires with environmental and health networks focus on recovering indigenous knowledge and constructing collaborative ecological approaches that resist capitalist models of development.<sup>157</sup> One initiative, for example, employed the use of junco reed species as a means of environmental restoration, starting new plantings, facilitating water purification, artisanal products and community building. The collective’s notion of *place vocation* as an understanding of and commitment to the environment of a specific place – its cultural and natural manifestations – as an extension of who we are, offers

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<sup>155</sup> Bishop, *Radical Museology*, 44. While there is no reason to doubt Bishop’s decolonial example there may be to temper it. It is curious that Reina Sofia’s website suggests that the archive was realized by the Latin American research group Red Conceptualismos del Sur via a foundation grant with a subsidy from the museum and was produced in relation to an exhibition that they were already planning: <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/biblioteca-centro-documentacion/archivo-de-archivos/archivo-cada> The project “archivo en uso” (archives in use) is a larger initiative of Red Conceptualismos del Sur and an announcement on their website <http://archivosenuso.org> says that CADA’s physical archive will be donated to the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos de Chile (Human Rights Museum). There is no mention of Reina Sofia support: [http://archivosenuso.org/acerca\\_de\\_cada](http://archivosenuso.org/acerca_de_cada)

<sup>156</sup> This is further complicated when Casa Daros and Daros Latinamerica can be traced to the fortunes of Swiss billionaire Stephan Schmidheiny (whose former wife Ruth Schmidheiny is the art collector and driver behind Daros Latin America and Casa Daros) much of which can be attributed to being the fourth generation heir and company director in his family’s worldwide asbestos cement empire. In Italy he was brought to trial, convicted and later acquitted for related environmental impact and asbestos related deaths. While the billionaire claims that as soon as he found out about the dangers of asbestos in the mid 1980s he terminated its use, others say it’s not that simple pointing to victim compensation problems and discrepancies between the press release discourse and on-the-ground reality. For a review of positions see: Fernanda Giannasi, “Stephan Schmidheiny: The Bill Gates of Switzerland of “The Godfather of Asbestos,” 2012 <http://www.asbestosdiseaseawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/Stephan-Schmidheiny-the-saga-of-an-asbestos-businessman-final-janeiro-2012.pdf> and Tatiana Serafin, “Swiss Billionaire Schmidheiny Wins Asbestos Court Battle,” *Forbes*, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tatianaserafin/2014/11/20/swiss-billionaire-schmidheiny-wins-long-court-battle/>.

<sup>157</sup> Ala Plástica Statement: <http://es.scribd.com/doc/53950384/Ala-Plastica-Brief>

a rich model for thinking through more ecological and committed practices.<sup>158</sup> Here “experimental communities are formed where the participants’ commitment is manifested in their immersion in the creative process” and in this way “thought and public debate” are woven into the “constitutive core of the artistic work.” This process is an *ensemble* of forces and effects that operates in numerous registers.<sup>159</sup> Ala Plástica’s example suggests that radicality may find its richest contemporaneity in how it is localized and, returning to Marx’s original emphasis, rooted.

#### 4.4 MEGAPHONES AND ANTS: CONTACT ZONES

To be is to be beyond the human. To be a human being doesn’t do it, to be human has been a constraint. The unknown awaits us, but I sense that that unknown is a totalization and will be the true humanization we long for. Am I speaking of death? No, of life. It isn’t a state of felicity, it is a state of contact.

Clarice Lispector<sup>160</sup>

Anthropologist James Clifford famously referred to museums as “contact zones.”<sup>161</sup> While referring mostly to westernized ethnographic presentations of other cultures and the need to rethink curatorial practices along more culturally sensitive lines, particularly post some egregious examples in the 1980s and 90s, Clifford also saw a relevant application to social divides. He borrowed the term from comparative literature scholar Mary Louise Pratt who had used it to discuss questions of unequal power relations at play in such zones. She, in turn, drew from what linguistics calls “contact languages.” These are improvised languages that develop:

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<sup>158</sup> Ala Plástica Statement: <http://groundworks.collinsandgoto.com/statements/alaPlastica.pdf> and Ala Plástica, “Bio-regional Initiative: A Redefinition of Spaces of Creation and Action,” *Revista MESA*, no. 2: Poetic spaces = Ethical Languages: Diverse Practices in Latin America (March 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_2/bioregional-initiative-a-redefinition-of-spaces-of-creation-and-action/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_2/bioregional-initiative-a-redefinition-of-spaces-of-creation-and-action/?lang=en) For a further discussion of Ala Plástica’s work also see Grant H. Kester, *The One and The Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>159</sup> Ala Plástica, “Bio-regional Initiative: A Redefinition of Spaces of Creation and Action,” *Revista MESA*.

<sup>160</sup> Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, trans Ronald W. Sousa (University of Minnesota Press, 1988 (Originally published in Portuguese: *A paixão segundo G.H.*, 1964)) 166. I am grateful to Roberta Condeixa whose passion for Clarice is infectious and led me to *The Passion* via her essay on Columbian artist Juan Manuel Echavarría. Roberta Condeixa, “Juan Manuel Echavarría: Multiple Voice Biographies in *The War We Have Not Seen*,” *Revista MESA* no 2: Poetic Spaces = Ethical Languages: Diverse Practices in Latin America. [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_2/juan-manuel-echavarria-english/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_2/juan-manuel-echavarria-english/?lang=en)

<sup>161</sup> James Clifford, “Museums as Contact Zones,” *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188-219.

[...] among speakers of different tongues who need to communicate with each other consistently, usually in the context of trade. Such languages begin as pidgins, and are called creoles when they come to have native speakers of their own. Like the societies of the contact zone, such languages are commonly regarded as chaotic, barbarous and lacking in structure.<sup>162</sup>

MAC, as an art belvedere situated on the edge of ocean, politics, luxury and favela, is perhaps uniquely situated to be both contact zone and praxis, as an environment in and of itself and as a activist tool out in the world. The *Farmácia Baldia* project drew on these possibilities and challenges, but also, and perhaps most interestingly, we often found ourselves, as if like traders constructing a kind of contact pidgin language, struggling to communicate across fields – art, botany, medicine – and worlds – favela, university and museum – and professionals and individuals – educators, artists, doctors, health agents, community members. Like Johnson’s “homes and coalitions” the pidgin world would momentarily open up and effusively share, it seems everyone, if not themselves familiar, had a grandmother who had used a special tea or had a herbal cure; and then close down when this fragile cordiality was not prepared to navigate the realities (and judged appearances) of the “chaotic, barbarous and lacking in structure.”

Art as a contact practice might also best describe Carlos Vergara’s indefatigable forty-year career, one that has followed many different paths and engaged unusual partners whether the uneven murmur of hallowed ground in making monotype prints or the relational chemistry of a network of collaborators. Indeed, a kind of vocational reverence for the singularities of place and a pluralist theology of contact is a constant thread in the artist’s practice. In the 1970s responding to the atmosphere of repression during the dictatorship, Vergara took to the streets photographing carnival street parties and in particular the neighborhood block party known as “Cacique de Ramos” where thousands gathered in costume and everyone was a “cacique” (chief). The images capture an almost oneiric momentary freedom and subversive power, from the intense gaze of a shirtless young black man with the word “poder” (power) written in white across his chest to exuberant drag samba queens strutting their stuff. Vergara describes the series and his role as “being in the right place at the right time and with a unique eye.”<sup>163</sup> Shifting from the visual focus to a more tactile one, beginning in the 1980s, his monotypes explore a deep contact with Brazil – its materiality, pigments and memory. They are an experimental and ritualistic laying on of hands such as the handkerchiefs that register the ethereal vestiges of Santo Miguel Missions in Rio Grande de Sul, once a model of an utopian indigenous/religious community. For the *Farmácia*

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<sup>162</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2007) 8, cited in Nora Sternfeld, “Memorial Sites as Contact Zones Cultures of Memory in a Shared/Divided Present,” European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, December 2011 <http://eipcp.net/policies/sternfeld/en>

<sup>163</sup> “Interview with Carlos Vergara by Paulo Sergio Duarte,” *Carlos Vergara: Rio de Janeiro 1972/1976* (Rio de Janeiro: Silvia Roesler Edições de Arte, 2007) no page numbers.

*Baldia* project Vergara made contact via medicinal plants with the multiple worlds of one place.

Each of these artistic expressions took on very different forms— photography, monotype prints, collective process – yet share an impulse to capture authenticity of time and place and to probe collective sensibilities. If curating always follows art, as Hans Ulrich Obrist suggests, what kinds of ways might it, as a process of “making public” and “making in public,” make contact?<sup>164</sup> To Vergara’s exhibition megaphone broadcasting its message of contemporary concerns, the Family Doctor health agents offered that their slow micro work of creating affective links is akin to the cooperative maneuvers of ants. A tale of the megaphone and the ant may read like the hare and the tortoise of Aesop’s fables or recall the famous surrealist juxtaposition of umbrellas and sewing machines. In each case it is about the possibility of surprising oneself. From a nothing-in-common, a common ground can be made and remade.

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As I write this, the *Pharmacy* project has moved from its eventual affectivity phase of public art project, teas, and exhibitions to being embraced as an ongoing university/museum initiative, only to be stalled because of the temporary re-assignment of the medicinal plant expert and MAC’s closure for repair in February 2015 including significant staff lay-offs and finally to its current status of wondering whether we should simply just give up trying to continue. This last embodiment is the direct result of mounting a major proposal to have the Ministry of Culture say that it’s not culture i.e. it doesn’t fit into their current state guidelines of what culture is.<sup>165</sup> The see-saw “baldio” of the borderline of art or clinic can sometimes leave one without a leg to stand on in either court. A ray of hope exists within the context of MAC’s reopening and its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2016 and curator Nuno Sacramento’s *Faremos Baldios* (Let’s Make Baldios (“commons”)) a collaboration with MAC, MACquinho and Observatório de Favelas with the goal of making a collective meal literally from scratch – tables, chairs, flatware, and all vegetable produce even compost. Conversations are ongoing.

Along the way I have asked myself and continue to: Can we push beyond initial gains to a critical, generative and sustained practice? What kind of impact is possible in the long term on the community of Palácio and beyond? Can what we do matter for art *and* for health? The jury is out on many of these questions. Yet what still resonates is the *Farmácia Baldia*’s way of making

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<sup>164</sup> “Hans Ulrich Obrist: Curating As Medium,” Terry Smith, *Talking Contemporary Curating*, 114-138, 121.

<sup>165</sup> Most corporate sponsors will only support projects that are already approved by either Brazilian federal or state laws. In essence most sponsorships are not donations but redirected tax dollars. This requires the pre-approval of projects by the Ministry of Culture prior to considering sponsorship. Both the laws and related bureaucracies are increasingly controversial.

(and failing) in public. Embracing curating as a praxis of care – *curare* – it points to a still emergent form, one that may be particularly contemporary, a kind of affective blend of the archive and the clinic developed via co produced creative practices and strategies across different worlds and disciplines, a new species mixing ethnography, pharmacology, botany, medicine, art and community health that has the potential to extend itself organically as a kind of micro poetic and affective network. What we do with that potential and with what has been made visible remains to be seen.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION: CONTINGENT, CONTEXTUAL AND RELATIONAL LESSONS

Talmudic tradition tells that 26 failed attempts preceded the creation of this world. As such Genesis would not have been that so-celebrated, miraculous inaugural moment, nor the sudden bursting forth of a round totality, out of a Nothing from the Word, but trial and error, experimentation, failures, re-assembly, re-collages from former debris. Yet, this world retains of this origin story a constitutive fragility. Constantly and forever exposed to the risk of failure and the return to nothing. At any moment the success of the venture can become undone, and everything can fall apart. It is always a close call that everything exists. Always, it is thanks to a mix of ingenuity and chance that things hang together.

Peter Pál Pelbart<sup>1</sup>

And care. If experimenting and constructing can be seen as co-extensive relations, born in the drama of late 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialism, a presence of which permeates, albeit in distinct ways, the writings and practices of American pragmatism (John Dewey), Russian Constructivism, and critical pedagogy (Paulo Freire), avant-garde art (Hélio Oiticica), curatorship (Frederico Morais) and criticism (Mário Pedrosa) in Brazil in the 1960s, care maybe a particularly contemporary ethical dimension that demands a new kind of connectivity across, within and between such practices. The projects discussed here offer glimpses of such possibilities and impossibilities amidst the struggles of an at once clashing and porous encounter between the specter of modernity and a contingent, contextual and relational postcolonial contemporaneity.

Reports from Brazil, the chapters are tales of labs, schools and clinics and a still emergent integrated praxis of art, curatorship and education. Their common thread is woven through a praxis of experiment, construct, care – the actuality of being-in-the-world and acting within it in ways that reconfigure binary oppositions, institute new possibilities, and come up against old problems. If *Domingos da Criação*'s “quasi-education” represents a mythic experimentality born out of political urgency and an artistic expansiveness seeking new forms of expression and contact, the Experimental Nucleus of Education and Art's micro experimental directions are

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Pál Pelbart, “Notes on the Contemporary,” *Revista MESA* no.3: Publicness in Art (May 2015) [http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa\\_3/think-piece/?lang=en](http://institutomesa.org/RevistaMesa_3/think-piece/?lang=en)



rather tentative gestures of escape where scale has become the norm and education is suspect. The 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial's "geopoetics" ingeniously deployed such gestures by paradoxically making them evental, concentrating and multiplying their polyphonic possibilities, momentarily suspending the neoliberal biennial machine via a temporary constructive infrastructure of relational affectivity and experimental learning. The *Farmácia Baldia*'s collective initiative of art and health, anchored as part of an exhibition and long term museum initiative, strove to reimagine curatorship as an act of caring – inverting the traditions of custodianship from object to locality.

While each chapter focuses on a particular framework/practice pairing, in order to examine the workings of each in depth, the practices are really quite mutually interdependent, with care perhaps emerging as a vital ethical substrate and phenomenological scaffold. Care here is just as much a method as subject. Both "curating as care and curating care-full projects" as curator Kirsten Lloyd has offered.<sup>2</sup> Whether this kind of curating is understood within an exhibition or social practice framework, it implies a more richly interwoven relational complexity to what and whom we care for and about that, in turn, translates into different, more durational, experiential, and textured ways of working. However, it is important to emphasize. Caring is not benign paternalism, nor obligation or some therapeutic fantasy of egalitarianism. It is about reciprocity that is, it is in relation, which does not mean to imply that there is no dissensus nor questions of unequal power relations but that it is characterized, as Nel Noddings notes, by a move away from the self (one can read here from traditional roles of curator, artist, educator or institution) toward an available receptiveness, partiality (taking sides) and ethical responsiveness (individual, place, community, context); it chooses to be simply beside – a critical third.<sup>3</sup> Curatorial work here is grounded in a multifarious and caring present-ness, an ongoing creative complicity with artists, community, and context. It is Dewey's *the* work rather than *a* work of art deployed as a third thing (Rancière) within hybrid spatio-temporal third spaces (Bhabha).<sup>4</sup>

Of course practice triads or three step dialectical frameworks are par for the course: Raymond Williams' dominant, residual, emerging; Hans Gadamer's play, symbolic, festival; Thierry De Duve's attitude, practice and deconstruction; Eve Koskoff Sedgwick's affect,

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<sup>2</sup> Kirsten Lloyd, *Uncommon Ground: Radical Approaches to Artistic Practice* (Edinburgh: Artlink, 2014) 16.

<https://issuu.com/artlinkedinburgh/docs/artlink-annual-review-2014-v9-webup>

<sup>3</sup> Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition updated (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2013 (First published 1984)) 16.

<sup>4</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1934) 162; In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière discusses in the "logic of emancipation there is always a third thing [...] that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one" which acts as a kind of substrate. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliot (London/New York: Verso, 2009) (First published in French as *Le spectateur émancipé*. Editions La Fabrique, 2008) 14-15; Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 207 – 21; and Homi K. Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 28 –56

pedagogy, performativity; Daniel Birnbaum’s hospitality, collaboration, exchange... a list that could go on.<sup>5</sup> The third gives depth, momentum, connects. Like the gesture of Gentileza, Rio de Janeiro’s self-appointed street art prophet and fanatical missionary, wandering the city handing out messages of Gentileza Gera Gentileza (Kindness Begets Kindness), painting his poetic treatises along highways, and his notion of “amorrr” (amor = love) with three “r’s” where 1 “r” represents material love and 3 “r’s” universal love (father, son and holy spirit), the infatuation with the third – deeply religious in his case, lapsed for most of us – instinctively points to the sensible possibility of a thickened more textured experience of the present.<sup>6</sup> Care returns us to our bodies, human relations, space, surrounding contexts, and connected and disconnected worlds and temporalities in the here-and-now as feeling, sensing, voicing, and demanding subjects. This not only opens up new agencies and practices for art but also for curatorship and education.

Vital to these practices are the localities and conditions in which they try to work and out of which they emerge. For most of Latin America colonialist and mercantile extractionist legacies still permeate socio-cultural and economic spheres. Lacking infrastructure, resources and mired in complex dependencies between politics and culture, searching in the mirror of the first world/global institutional other for self-determination and validation will almost always come up short. Amidst such realities Oswald de Andrade’s anti-colonial, perspective-eating and future-producing anthropophagy still emerges as a vibrantly relevant tool of thought and of practice. As does Torres García flipped map of the Americas, offering a similarly provocative, albeit distinctly different gesture, of constructive inversion. This is not only a way of seeing geopolitical and colonialist legacies but also of assuming a position of difference, not as essentialist bravura, but rather as education scholar Claudio Barría suggests as a necessary “pedagogy of the south,” a vital and radical “*locus* of enunciation.”<sup>7</sup> If we are to bring back both the anthropagic and the

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<sup>5</sup> Raymond Williams, “Dominant, Residual, Emerging,” in *Art in Theory 1900 – 2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden MA/Oxford UK/ Victoria AUS: Blackwell, 2003) 1001-1005; Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The Relevance of the Beautiful: Art as Play, Symbol and Festival,” *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 3-53; Thierry de Duve, “When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond,” in *Education: Documents of Contemporary Art* ed. Felicity Allen (London/Cambridge MA: Whitechapel Gallery/MIT Press, 2011); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003); Daniel Birnbaum’s tongue-in-cheek interview play “Teaching Art: Adorno and the Devil” briefly wonders about triads and whether there always needs to be a three step dialectic. He offers both “hospitality, collaboration and exchange” as a description of recent practices and the possible future oriented mix of “reflection, navigation, creation.” Daniel Birnbaum, “Teaching Art: Adorno and the Devil,” in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)* ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge Mass/London: The MIT Press, 2009) 231-246, 241 & 244.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief exploration of Gentileza’s work in relation to care see Leonardo Boff, “O profeta do princípio Gentileza,” *Saber Cuidar: Ética do humano - compaixão pela terra*, 20<sup>th</sup> edition (Petropolis: Vozes, 2014) 211-217. For more a in-depth study: Leonardo Guelman, *Univvverrso Gentileza* (Rio de Janeiro: Mundo das Ideias, 2009). Typing “profeta gentileza” in google will yield numerous images.

<sup>7</sup> Claudio Barría discusses a potential “pedagogy of the south” and the vital importance of a radical *locus* as of enunciation in his doctoral dissertation. Barría uses García’s map as an illustration but does not address the artist’s work or his School of the South. Claudio Andrés Barría Mancilla, “Pela poética de uma Pedagogia do sul: Diálogos e

constructive to rethink histories of recent Brazilian art, as art critic Sérgio Martins suggests, then perhaps we might imagine a similar recovery for a generative approach to curating?<sup>8</sup> Here like curator Mary Jane Jacob's recent multifaceted engagement with the work of Chicago educators and social pioneers John Dewey and Jane Addams, including exhibitions, artists commissions, symposia and publications, Andrade and Torres García might be taken as critical touchstones to inspire a very different set of generative and critical investigations of local histories and current possibilities. Ones that would engage with education scholar Catherine Walsh's question: "what does it mean to think of decolonization pedagogically and pedagogy decolonially?"<sup>9</sup> Similarly what does it mean to think of curating decolonially? How might this be approached simultaneously from the perspectives of content, process and modes of address and be thoughtfully engaged with from multiple positions? Education scholar Henri Giroux has argued that, "First World educators [and one can read curators, institutions et al] rarely articulate the politics and privileges of their own location."<sup>10</sup> This is not, as curator Gerardo Mosquera cautioned, to provide "carpet slippers for the periphery," but it is to radically question from a range of vantage points the distance between discourse and practice and some of the more insidious realities and unacknowledged privileges that shape them.<sup>11</sup>

If Andrade and Torres García are the decolonial baseline, critical pedagogies and the social and ethical aesthetic legacies of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica may offer an equally generative conception of a post Neoconcrete curatorship and education as being actualized as a kind of molecular learning, vitally networked and derived from a poetic contagion of encounters – of ideas, practices, people and contexts. Drawing on artist Ricardo Basbaum's analysis of Clark's use of organic lines, borders and the relational "as a construction progressively gaining "thickness," [one that] involves more and more spaces, issues, elements and concepts, becoming a "membrane," such curatorial and education practices might constitute themselves as a kind of "membrane" – a space of micro- perception and politics, of contact, and of productive

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reflexões em torno de uma filosofia da educação descolonial desde a Cultura Popular da Nossa América," PhD, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Centro de Estudos Sociais Aplicados, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, 2014

<sup>8</sup> Sérgio B. Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde: Art in Brazil 1949 – 1979* (Cambridge/Mass: MIT Press, 2013) 78.

<sup>9</sup> Catherine Walsh, "Introducción: Lo Pedagógico y lo decolonial: Entretejiendo caminos," in *Pedagogias decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re) existir, y (re) vivir* ed. Catherine Walsh (Serie Pensamento Decolonial, Tomo I, 2013) 23-68, 31 available online <http://catherine-walsh.blogspot.com.br/search/label/PUBLICACIONES%20%2F%20PUBLICATIONS>

<sup>10</sup> Henry A. Giroux, "Paulo Freire and the Politics of Postcolonialism," in *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*, eds. Peter McLaren and Peter Leonard (London/New York: Routledge, 1993) 177-188, 184.

<sup>11</sup> Gerardo Mosquera, "Introduction," In *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London: Iniva, 1995) 10-17, 14.

emptiness.<sup>12</sup> In addition to deploying the relational and the liminal as artistic and learning contexts to be inhabited, inspired by Oiticica, practices might experiment with the interrelationships of the social body, structure and environment, engaging and provoking “completely new forms of communication.”<sup>13</sup> Curating thus might constitutively investigate the possibilities and implications of, as the artist suggested, “taking on” the experimental as a method.<sup>14</sup> The projects investigated in the previous chapters tried, both successfully and unsuccessfully, to assume that challenge.

If one of the lessons of the 1960s and 70s was to see a wealth of experimental practices across the fields of social museology, critical pedagogy and avant-garde art fail to exploit their potential strength in solidarity, perhaps our contemporary challenge is precisely that of learning from these failures and inaugurating practices of connectivity that help us reimagine creative and social support structures to counter the juggernauts of global capital and environmental destruction. For García Canclini: “we need nomad social sciences capable of circulating through the staircases that connect [...] floors – or better yet social sciences that redesign the floor plans and horizontally connect the levels.”<sup>15</sup> While certainly such initiatives may emerge naturally, drawing on a multitude of creative and critical practices, in Brazil it is unclear how they will position themselves, as art, curatorship or education, an expanded version of one or a merging of all three. This will depend on regimes of belonging (and I would add affect), shifting values and of course cultural resources. My approach of praxis argues for a kind of border-crossing passport less vested in roles and more engaged in *the* work at hand. As Terry Smith has noted the “main task is to shape a worldly practice, one that will deliver on the expectation that it exhibit the real relations that constitute our contemporary conditions.”<sup>16</sup> It is also a practice of creating worldly spaces of encounter inside and outside institutional contexts and that explores new forms of curating or educating and making contact across, amongst and between worlds, activating spaces of empowerment, of connectivity and creativity, and of plurality and difference.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ricardo Basbaum, “Within the Organic Line and After,” in *Art after Conceptual Art*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann (Vienna and Cambridge, MA and London: Generali Foundation and The MIT Press, 2006) 87-99 available online: <http://www.ludlow38.org/files/conceptualartorganicline.pdf> and Ricardo Basbaum, “Quem é que vê nossos trabalhos,” *Seminários Internacionais Museu Vale—Criação e Crítica*, 2009, 200-209, 206-207 available online <http://www.seminariosmv.org.br/2009/?target=textos>

<sup>13</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “The Senses Pointing Toward a New Transformation.” Archives. Hélio Oiticica Project. # 0468/69, 4

<sup>14</sup> Hélio Oiticica, “Attempt, Try To Experiment the Experimental,” in *Fios Soltos: Arte de Hélio Oiticica*, ed. Paula Braga (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2008) 347-351.

<sup>15</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) 2.

<sup>16</sup> Terry Smith, “The Discourse,” *Talking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2015) 13-36, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Examples of such emphasis in education: Gert J.J. Biesta, *Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future* (Boulder Colorado/London: Paradigm Publishers, 2006); and Henry Giroux, “Edward Said and the Politics of

As if responding to that challenge, particularly presciently, Lygia Clark already in 1968 noted that society had digested the artist and “found a title and a bureaucratic occupation for him: he will be the future engineer of entertainment, an activity that has no effect whatsoever on the equilibrium of social structures.” She continued, that the “only way for the artist to escape co-optation is to succeed in unleashing a general creativity, without any psychological or social limits. This creativity will be expressed in lived experience.”<sup>18</sup> This worldly practice within the world is a sentiment reinforced more recently, by the critic Stephen Wright:

I think, that an increasing number of art-related practitioners today are seeking not to broaden the frame still further – thereby pursuing art’s already extraordinary colonization of the life-world – but to get outside of the frame altogether. Every year, more and more artists are quitting the artworld frame – or looking for and experimenting with viable exit strategies – rather than broadening it further. And these are some of the most exciting developments in art today, for to leave the frame means sacrificing one’s coefficient of artistic visibility – but potentially in exchange for great corrosiveness toward the dominant semiotic order.<sup>19</sup>

Yet these exit strategies are still described as the most “exciting developments in art today.” They are presumably still art. Exiting clearly doesn’t mean totally leaving, rather more like Gerald Raunig’s “instituent practices” or Oiticica’s “anti-art” it is a constant challenge to rethink practice. But what makes this different from broadening the frame? It perhaps suggests a critical inversion; where art no longer sets the frame but is rather a supporting actor within a worldly frame. As psychologist Anna Stetsenko suggested in relation to learning, the discourses and practices of participation are insufficient we must reimagine our work in terms of “contribution.”<sup>20</sup> From an institutional standpoint this can, not only usefully reconfigure oft held binaries such as participation vs expertise, but also, offer a way to conceive of a praxis of momentum that reworks the parallax tension of temple/forum and in the process reshapes critical positions from within and without. Frederico Morais in 1969 already imagined such a possibility:

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Worldliness: toward a Rendez-vous of Victory,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, vol. 4, no. 3 (August 2004): 339-349.

<sup>18</sup> Lygia Clark. “L’homme structure vivante d’une architecture biologique et cellulaire,” in Robho no. 5-6, Paris, 1971 (a facsimile of the journal is available in the catalogue Lygia Clark, de l’oeuvre à l’événement. Nous sommes le moule, à vous de donner le souffle, op.cit.); reissued under the title “(1969) O corpo é a casa,” in Lygia Clark, Textos de Lygia Clark, Ferreira Gullar e Mario Pedrosa (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1980, out of print); pp. 35-37; then later in Manuel J. Borja Villed and Nuria Enguita Mayo eds. *Lygia Clark* (Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 1997). Citation and reference in Suely Rolnik, “Geopolitical Pimping,” trans. Brian Holmes, *European Institute for Progressive Culture Policies* (October, 2006) [http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base\\_edit](http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/rolnik/en/base_edit)

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Wright, “Users and Usership of Art: Challenging Expert Culture,” *Transform*, European Institute of Progressive Cultural Policies (April 2007) <http://transform.eipcp.net/correspondence/1180961069#redir>

<sup>20</sup> Anna Stetsenko and Eduardo Vianna, “Vygotsky and Cultural Historical Activity Theory: Re-Imagining Methodologies and Critical Perspectives on Learning and Development in Communities,” Lecture Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, published June 28th, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqIvmm-098>

The city is the natural extension of the art museum. It is on the street [...] where the fundamental experiences of man occur. Either the art museum brings to the street its museological activities, integrating itself with the everyday and making of the city (the street, the embankment, the square or park, the vehicles of mass communication) its natural extension or it will be a cyst. More than a collection, more than a building the Postmodern Art Museum is creative action – a proposer of artistic situations that multiply themselves in the space-time of the city. Acting without “geographic” limits the museum’s objective is to make itself invisible.<sup>21</sup>

While this “into the street” gesture still retains a radical edge despite the passing of more than half a century, as an institutionally led practice it may be hard to imagine amidst the worlds of signature architecture, spectacle and turnstile accountabilities. Yet for Morais the “invisible museum” is one of several possibilities for the “postmodern art museum” which would continue as a museum but one enlivened, energized by action, the senses and participation where it’s “not enough to show.” If such a model seems tainted by the globalizing trend of the experience museum, perhaps the contemporary countermovement is a museum, as curator Zdenka Badovinac suggests of “parallel narratives,” or as museology scholar Vladimir Sibylla Pires suggests, “a multitude of museums.”<sup>22</sup> In Brazil, given the enormously challenging political and financial realities of working within institutions, these movements may not be able, despite truly radical efforts to situate contemporary institutional critiques from within, to find traction. Practices that operate within networks of cultural acupressure points or like the 8<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial’s Casa M that create a small-scale highly active temporal node, may more readily and flexibly cultivate their own autonomies and localities. Or like the wealth of small arts organizations and organizations as art projects emerging in the last few decades worldwide, itself a critical repositioning countering existing institutional models, these parallel narratives may require a more independent and critically networked base.

To conclude it might be useful to revisit and create a list of practices gathered from the material discussed in each chapter as a kind of condensed provocation of possibilities that might contribute to an integrated socially engaged praxis of art, curatorship and education.

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<sup>21</sup> [Author translation. Portuguese original: “A cidade é a extensão natural do museu de arte. É na rua, onde o “meio formal” é mais ativo, que ocorrem as experiências fundamentais do homem. Ou o museu de arte leva à rua suas atividades “museológicas”, integrando-se ao cotidiano e fazendo da cidade (a rua, o aterro, a praça ou parque, os veículos de comunicação de massa) sua extensão natural ou ele sera um quisto. Mais que acervo, mas que prédio o Museu de Arte Pós Moderna é ação criadora – um propositor de situações artísticas que se multiplicam no espaço-tempo da cidade. Atuando sem limites “geográficos” o objetivo do museu é tornar-se invisível.”] Frederico Morais, “Plano piloto da futura cidade ludica,” *Correio da Manhã*, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1970 (Also in *Artes plásticas: A crise da hora atual* (Rio de Janeiro: Paze e Terra, 1975) 60-62.

<sup>22</sup> Terry Smith, *Talking Contemporary Curating*, 25 and Vladimir Sibylla Pires, “Para o levante da multidão, uma museologia da monstruosidade?” *Cadernos do CEOM*, Ano 27 n.41, *Museologia Social* (2014): 225-238, 235.

From “Past as Blueprint: Paralaboratories and Conductive Threads of Experimental Education and Art” history is seen as a possibility for generative and necessary critical engagement in the present; paralaboratories might be mobilized as operative constructs exploring the “artist-work-public relation” together with artists, educators, and researchers vested in experimentality, liminality, subjectivity, sociality, openness, performativity, destabilization, marginality, criticality, disabilities as abilities, the cheap, recyclable and perishable, and anti-art and anti-education where the anti is not so much a negation but rather a constant instigation to reframe practice; the paralaboratory can also be understood as a site specific interventionist critique within an institutional location and as activist reflective praxis out in the world; as such it may also constitute itself through the compilation and distribution of critical repertoires and gifts of artistic gestures as distinctly individual creative processes and connections with the world, all the while building and expanding the notion of collecting itself via a poetic collection of experiences, silences, breezes, and possibilities.

Drawing on “A Sense of Constructivity: Forest Schools and Social Learning” the inventory might include practices that ground themselves in: the proximal, organic, experimental, contextual, and relational, and that are anti-hierarchical, anti-isolationist, and anti-specialization. Engaging in a radical praxis of recuperating and reworking histories of anarchist and popular education, free universities and “forest schools,” a sense of constructivity will be deployed as part of a program that will deacademize, act as a community hub and network, socialize research, collectively engage, rehearse, perform and stress conviviality. A vital existential praxis of “walking around,” working decolonially, and embracing a transversal pedagogy of the “encuentro” will similarly offer a radical thread for thinking about forms of social art, curatorship and education. From debates on biennials and the educational turn in contemporary art and curatorship we might add: occupying, inhabiting, and actualizing contexts as spaces of learning and of art; see existing power structures as platforms for use and recognize the importance of publishing in multiple forms and formats. In addition, as part of such “walking around,” transpedagogy and geopoetics might be deployed, where art and pedagogy are methods with which to engage in the world. In the process, initiatives should remember to travel slowly and engage in artisanal conceptualism, never lose a sense of event and the potential of collective spectatorship, collect multiple voices and create listening/reflective devices inside a process, reinforce interlocalities, and importantly see the city and region as an expanded school.

From “Megafones, Ants, Archives and Clinics: Radical Locality and Complicities of Care” the list might first of all stress a praxis of care as a vocation to place, as a radical locality that demands intervention, local action, facilitating the possibilities of self-organization for

others, touch, vital tenderness, reciprocity and hospitality. As a body of praxis such a vocation might also strive to consciously unlearn and problematize what is normally taken for granted, connect front of house and back of house realities, and create and disseminate antidotes to “plant blindness.” In the process such work will need to build on, create and study vínculos (social and personal bonds) and create methods to navigate the constant collapse and reconstitution of homes and coalitions. It will deploy a symbiotic relationship between creating archives and facilitating clinics and vitally will inaugurate new languages, species and practices built via micro poetic and affective networks of co produced creative practices and strategies across different worlds and disciplines, mixing ethnography, pharmacology, botany, medicine, art and community health.

While such a body of praxis might be seen as a sort of Brazil-grown antidote to imported theoretical and social models, contributing to what historians Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves imagined in their introduction to *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory Through the Lens of Latin America* as potentially Latin American specific “macrosociology lessons in contextuality, contingency and relationality,” the list is meant as an inventory, a set of constitutively fragile ephemera, not some kind of totalizing counter model.<sup>23</sup> They are rather singular possibilities and open-ended lessons to be explored, rejected, multiplied, eaten, recombined, and refracted.

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<sup>23</sup> Miguel Angel Centeno & Fernando López-Alves eds. *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory Through the Lens of Latin America* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000) 5.



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