



Confluências/Confluences

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When we talk about **confluences**, many will have in mind an image with a series of straight lines intersecting at one point or multiple arrows in different directions that point to the same place. Rather Cartesian, one might say. An easily accessible image. This graph-like conception considers place in a biplane situation, certainly a tradition of representation in the visual arts and in ways of seeing the world - static and monocular - whereas actions are spatially developed with interactions, especially in theorization post-Duchamp, involving people and places in the moment of presence. Leaving biplanal representation and passing to spatiality, images are not so geometrically defined. They take on other contours, becoming complex images, whether from the perspective of concrete reality, or from fictional or institutional perspectives. What would be the place, then, where art confluences could be more actively found?

Considered places, or depositories of art par excellence from the nineteenth century forward, art museums - art history, modern art, contemporary art, or any other artistic form - embody a space of **convergence**: of visibility, security and the worldwide dissemination of art (from the Eurocentric point of view, of course). However, these museums were later seen ripping out (or at best, dislocating) "objects from their original historical contexts not as an act of political celebration, but in order to create the illusion of universal knowledge" (Crimp, 2005, p.181).

Similarly, in Brazil, the main museums followed this curatorship of illusion in their collections, for example, the National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA), in Rio de Janeiro, and the Art Museum of São Paulo (MASP). In a similar way, art histories have taken on the notion of **confluence** as a way of organizing and classifying museum collections, rather than build photo albums of universal culture, as Aby Warburg has suggested (Didi-Huberman, 2013, p.23).

Douglas Crimp would remind us that “the institution is not only exercising its power in a negative way - removing the artwork from the praxis of life - but also in a positive way - producing a specific social relationship between the artwork and the viewer” (Crimp, 2005, p.29). Many museums, in contemporary times, actively seek to provide a place not only for knowledge and to safeguard treasures, but also to construct experiences.

In happy coincidence with the stated theme of this year’s JRA, in December 2014, the Museum of **Confluences** (Musée des Confluences) was inaugurated in Lyon, France. The Museum proposes access to the confluence of knowledge, although the tone of the collection reverts back to the natural sciences, anthropology and ethnology. The museum is located at the confluence of two rivers, the Rhône and Saône. The term, by the way, is specific in geography to designate the place where two or more rivers join. However, within the contemporary practice of diluting disciplinary boundaries and opening up the insulated character of knowledge, the idea of confluence becomes a desirable concept to guide new institutions. Far from appealing to a specialized audience, it will attract a variety of the world’s peoples: different tribes or groups, and different intellectual levels.

This friendly environment welcomes a broad public and demands a more porous structure that can simulate other spaces and places, unlike the palatial buildings invoking symbolic guardians of treasures, or the white architectural cubes that isolated the world’s art, creating a particular territory, autonomous and self-sufficient. The Musée des **Confluences** assumes an extroverted and exhibitionist attitude. With a sculptural impact on architectural scale, incorporating unique and attention getting materials that are spatially distributed so that the museum becomes integrated into, and part of, the physical area surrounding it, which, in turn, reflects back to the actual museum space, the integrated spatiality extends the sense of an open museum into the park and the peninsula thus remaking the whole profile of

the neighborhood as well as that of Lyon. The museum becomes a place-magnet, able to spatially reconfigure itself to exert a strong attraction. People want to be near it, around it, not just within it.

In such a setting, art offers itself, appears, appropriates the city, and collaborates with the experience of its urbanity. Whether clandestine or with institutional and government support, the artistic actions in different media invoke various political and aesthetic relations with the environment, the community and its experiences, promoting interferences that assume other attitudes toward reality. From the urban artist Gentileza's prophetic poems covered the walls and pillars of Rio's surfaces, many artistic tattoos have marked the urban skin, with graphics that proposed other languages and media to speak about the world - a changing world and one transformed by art. Art does not arise separate from Urbis, but as a constitutive member of the city, its charm and chaos, enjoying the opportunity to mix with the public.

Whether of long or brief duration, urban artistic actions can function as performance: the body (the artist or several actors) being the political support invoking people to perceive and participate. As Belting pointed out, "the human being remains the site in which images are received and interpreted, in a living sense" (2014, p.79), i.e., the principal axis of confluence.

The **Confluence** theme was arrived at collectively during the 23rd Meeting of the National Association of Researchers in Fine Arts (Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Artes Plásticas / ANPAP), held in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, in 2014. As in an elliptic progression, the Journal was produced throughout the year, while its publication will be celebrated at the 24th Meeting of ANPAP in Santa Maria, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in 2015. The significance of the experience this issue No. 2.2 of the ARJ journal recounts for the field of visual arts will be apparent only once the journal assumes its final form. Thus, the density of material it imparts can be considered as being a part of a shared project between research organizations throughout Brazil, to be continued, as a collective project, in the next cycle of meetings, artistic and essayistic production.

Due to professional exigencies, its size and advertising, the Journal requires a collective effort, especially since it deals with the Arts. From publishers to authors, peer reviewers to visual designers, translators to reviewers, the fabric is woven through a process of collaboration and discussion; confrontations and adjustments

among positions, negotiations and **confluences** among efforts and interests. In order to commit to a more representative community, graduate programs in the field of Visual Arts were asked to indicate names of national and foreign authors -researchers-artists for contribution to the theme Confluences, suggestions added to the editors' indications.

Those involved in this issue are: the publishers appointed in the ANPAP assembly - Marize Malta (UFRJ); Nara Cristina Santos (UFES) and Yacy-Ara Froner (UFMG); Section editors - Emerson Dionísio de Oliveira, UNB (Dossier - Visual Arts); Lisbeth Rebollo Gonçalves, USP (Dossier - Visual Arts); Magdalena Zaccara, UFPE (Reviews); Milton Sogabe, UNESP (Works); Maria Beatriz de Medeiros, UNB (Research articles streaming - Visual Arts); Sandra Ramalho, UDESC (graphic layout). Martha Tupinambá Ulhôa, as Executive Editor, supervised the overall project.

The theme of this edition of *ART JOURNAL* sought to highlight research in visual arts that could contribute to act, think and historicize together in **confluence** with other disciplines, whose cooperation helped to disrupt rigid certainties, to suggest, through the optic of collaborative art, new paths, other intersections, other single-plural propositions.

Confluence in the sense that the currents of some rivers join differences that maintain their separate distinctive identities for a part of the river's course until they fully fuse, drawing attention to a liquid reality, fluid and without clear contours. In the Amazon, we have the celebrated encounter of the Rio Negro with the Solimões River, which we can observe in its essence as "a shared common and unique parts" (Rancièrè, 2005, p.15). The first, the Rio Negro, flows from Colombian Andes and, filled with organic matter, is very dark in color, like black tea; while the second, with its source in the Peruvian Andes, receives sediment from land erosion wherever it meanders, getting muddy, attaining the color of coffee with milk. Furthermore, each river progresses through different temperatures and velocities in its course, unique conditions that slow down the combination and mixing of the two waters so that they remain clearly differentiated, but flowing side-by-side in a contrast that respects their idiosyncrasies. The line that separates the two rivers is winding and imprecise, admitting absolutely no possibility of defined, fixed borders. When they finally mix into one another they are transformed into something else, the Amazon River. Thus, the confluence of the two rivers, so different in origin, upon their meeting negotiate

their peculiarities to merge and achieve an other geography - the ocean - after encountering various realities in the Brazilian Amazon, from west to east. The flowing, intermixing waters permit changes because their paths are transformative.

Faced with the possible confluences that the articles and interviews of this issue could propose, we wish to call attention to two axes of discussions, or two currents, to follow the image of rivers:

Art in the world - Possible Connections, with articles by Joaquín Barriendos, Sheila Cabo Geraldo, Paul Werner, Patricia Franca-Huchet, concluding with Madalena Zaccara's interview with Paul Bruscky. Emphasizing aspects of the anthropology of images, this axis engages with contemporary art, art history and theory as well as with forms of apparition, of collective action, of written recall and memory.

Art and Technology - Connectivities approaches discussions about art's engagement with new media fields, particularly digital, its interactive possibilities and resulting hybrids, joined with experiences in the field of art and education. The articles of Edward A. Shanken, Suzete Venturelli, Raúl Niño Bernal and Rejane Galvao Coutinho's interview with Ana Mae Barbosa comprise this axis.

In the first trajectory (to follow our 'current' metaphor), we find relationships regarding how art and its collectives are subject to risk. In presenting *Magiciens de la Terre*, Joaquín Barriendos discusses the globalizing ideologies that gravitate around this exhibition, questioning the "spherical confluence" of global art, from the dissolution of the canonical hierarchies of modernity in the name of a geo-aesthetical and post-asymmetrical regime.

Sheila Cabo Geraldo uses the strategy of recall to discuss the writing of art history as it goes beyond a practice based on transmission by successive imitation, as it was registered from Vasari to Winckelmann. From the impact that works by Ai Weiwei and Walter de Maria at the Venice Biennale 2013 had on her, giving rise to uncertain and conflicting thoughts, the author hazards a ghostly, or phantasmagorical model of art history, basing her discussion on the precepts of Aby-Warburg and André Malraux, in conjunction with interpretations by Didi-Huberman and Jacques Rancière. Interested in the contradictions and resonances of the Imaginary Museum proposed by Malraux, Cabo has us dive into a story of art as immense surface, cracked, or liquid, with currents, swirls and ripples, inviting us to visit part

of her mental museum, where everything can converge to an imaginary place without walls, without boundaries.

Post-production Anarchism, by Paul Werner, is a bold report on the conflicts of a generation around a collective project called *Come! Unity Press*: an anarchist community of the 1970s, born in New York, and inspired by the ideas of Murray Bookchin, known for his theory of "Post-Scarcity Anarchism." Ironic and inquisitive, the text takes the reader beyond the comfort zone and presents, in an honest manner, the conflicting relationships that configured the cooperative's ideological support.

Patricia Dias Franca-Huchet invokes Marcel Duchamp and notes on *Infra-mince* (or *Infra mince*, separated, or *Inframince*, all together, without hyphen), reflecting how play with written language, that perturbed the artist so, is configured into a libertarian experimentation of constructed meanings. Duchamp's thoughts, as schematically outlined in the notes, connects flashes of ideas, references to texts and images, persistent memories, plastic intentions and aesthetic reflections, seeking to go beyond the logical structure of speech and writing, in the search to give clues to decipher artistic events. In an allegorical attitude, the notes reveal and hide, recall and forget and rebel to become spatial intention within the work. Thus, Patricia Huchet goes through Duchamp seeking to reflect how his inquiries about art could become enigmas in the *Infra-mince* notes and how imprecisions converge to constitute the challenge that the artist took on to create what bypasses figuration, to think of a reality that converges, materially, but also escapes material convergence.

It's as if the Seurat color tubes, indicated by Marcel Duchamp in Note 1 of *Infra-mince*, were materialized by Paul Bruscky in *Ensaïos* (2008), represented on the cover of this issue, which, ripping up images on paper, are transfigured as a 'becoming:' not one of the colors of pointillist paintings, but as conceptual allegories of artistic experimentation, like laboratory experiments, in which chemistry provides a poetic exploration of multiple poetic means manipulated by the artist.

The tireless Paulo Bruscky converted his atelier into a total-work collection, or a mental-material museum, a place of convergence and trajectories, references, experiences and experimentation, works, memories. In his interview with Magdalene Zaccara he recounts his collective actions, remembering the transgressive artistic and political attitudes that were incorporated into his work through multiple means

of expression. Considering his works that circulated through different territories to be completed by collaboration, via mail, fax, advertisements, among other means, one sees an artist, while rooted in Recife, in harmonious connection with the world, creating networks and circuits even before the advent of the Internet.

In sequence, we continued with our second **Confluences** theme that updates debates on contemporary art from digital innovations, a growing field of research that is increasingly attractive to post-graduate programs in arts and interdisciplinary studies.

Edward Shanken spells out the discomfort of the “art world” with the artistic output based on new media, which still has not found real support in terms of theorization, criticism, nor a market that acknowledges ways of thinking that have developed without electronic support. The market and collectors remain somewhat askance at an art that needs to be plugged in or connected in order to happen. Seeking to map the current state regarding reception of digital forms, scanning agents “for” and “against”, and the reasons for so little theoretical adhesion, Shanken does not spare names such as Claire Bishop, Rosalind Krauss and Nicolas Bourriaud, considered important contemporary thinkers, but who seem unable to address problems that art using technological support presents, nor of reflecting from a new logic of ideological commitment, as do the authors whose articles appear in this section.

Suzette Venturelli showcases the most popular side of computer art, game art, to discuss the varied profiles of another ‘subject’ who experiences art in interactivity with machines - the hyper-Subject, who manipulates advances in techo-science. Referring to works she has been developing using game language, Suzette describes PLAY!, a digital exhibition held in São Paulo in 2013, to discuss the boundaries between entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment and the possible contributions to narrativity that video games can offer under different cultural conditions. If art tradition remained conjoined with Euclidean geometry for many centuries, logic and algorithms dominate in computational art, establishing a new mathematical benchmark for thinking about the artistic fact.

Codes, byte and fractal language are other tools for the production of art and knowledge. By means of network connectivity, they allow the transfer of ideas and sharing of data across distances, scale and speed never before thought of. Proposing an understanding of aesthetics as open science, of knowledge from the perspective of computer science and electronic networks, Raul Niño Bernal places

us in the middle of a nonhuman technological world, one growing at an exponential scale, to call attention to other approaches to understanding digital art. We are thrown into another dimension of reality, as if we were living in a city of the future, yet fully in the present.

The interview with Ana Mae, conducted by Rejane Galvão Coutinho, examines the thought of John Dewey to reflect on the art world and arts education in Brazil, taking stock of her own research career in art education since the 1970s. We finalized the second part **Confluences** in ARJ 2.2 with the strongest of networks: the large network of knowledge woven and promoted through education and the power of transformation through the experimental and critical potential of art.

In addition to the dossier, two articles in the open call section complete this issue: an article on participatory documentaries made in rural settlement camps by Andreia Machado and Felix Palazuelo; and, Maria Betânia e Silva's review of the book *Cartografias das Artes Plásticas no Recife dos anos 1980*.

Whether as constituted by its tradition, or by its contemporary manifestations, the Visual Arts (no longer restricted to the visual) deal with issues of collectivity, sharing and collaborative poetics, promoting a realm and atmosphere of confluence in which different agents, diverse languages and varied experiences and experimentation mix and mesh in constant negotiation.

For artistic fact be instituted, **confluences** are necessary, not in the sense of convergence of similar views, but as situations of encounter, of joining forces, of a celebration of differences, protests and combinations of distinct potencies. As in fiction, just as imagined by Milton Machado in the City of the Future, art is present in the "contours that inform our imagination" (Machado, 2014, p.74), allowing a person to build bridges and connections, provoke fissures and ruptures, to develop destruction-modules to ensure ephemeral, but permanent states of flux in the sensory and material world.

Faced with the challenge of contemporaneity, with its intense flow and permeable borders of information, in respect to diversity and tolerance with inequality, artistic practice emerges as a transforming and disseminating agent, presenting accessible and politically sensitive versions of all possible worlds. As Paul Brusky would say, art still is the last hope.

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