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Brazilian Video Art in the Early Days: from Experimental Video to Mainstream Television

Abstract: This article examines Brazilian video art in its early days, between 1973 and the end of the 1980s. This choice of topic is due to the historic importance of these artists: it covers the first experimental video productions in Brazil until their relative vulgarisation and assimilation by the mass media, especially television. I intend to discuss how Brazilian video art – which initially sought, inspired by ideological and technical issues, to disengage from the language of commercial media – became an element of aesthetic renewal in mainstream TV.

Keywords: video art; Brazil; Video; mainstream TV; independent video

Introduction

This article examines Brazilian video art in its early days, between 1973 – the year of the first documented work of video art – and the end of the 1980s, when video art collectives such as *Olhar Eletrônico* and *TVDO* were active. This choice of topic is due to the historic importance of these artists: their work comprises the first artistic experiences of that kind in Brazil until their relative vulgarisation and assimilation by the mass media, especially television. I intend to discuss how Brazilian video art inspired by ideological and technical issues initially sought to disengage from the language of commercial media, only later absorbing this very language and making video art an element of aesthetic renewal in mainstream TV.

According to Machado,¹ Brazilian television is directly related to cinema, theatre and radio. From the first, it borrowed its linear narrative and brought about a television *dispositif* focused on mimicking reality through its narrative structures.² It reverberates some linearity based on a compositional superstructure which is very like those already known in other arts, especially cinema and theatre; a *dispositif* which

¹ Cf. Arlindo Machado, *Pré-cinemas & pós cinemas* (Campinas, SP: Papyrus, 1997); Arlindo Machado, *Arte E Mídia* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Zahar, 2007).

² Cf. Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," *Film Quarterly* 28, 2 (December 1974): 39–47; Jean-Louis Baudry, "Le dispositif," *Communications* 23, 1 (1975): 56–72; A-M. Duquet, "Dispositivos," in *Transcinemas*, ed. K. Maciel (Rio de Janeiro: Contra Capa, 2009), 49–69.

aims at copying reality and dates back to the Renaissance.³ For this reason, video as a professional art in Brazil seems to be related to an iconographic representation of human beings. In a sense, Brazilian TV history might have inspired a video art production not necessarily related to the world of mass media communication.

Indeed, many of the dilemmas proposed by Benjamin,⁴ when discussing the future of painting in relation to photography in the beginning of the 20th century might also apply to video. In the middle 1960's, video art began a metalinguistic reflection upon form and gradually broke free from television's iconographic paradigm by taking a metalinguistic pathway. Consequently, narratives which do not mimic reality as well as presence of the human figure as a main video protagonist came as natural consequences.⁵ Video art threatened television due to its dynamism: a faster and less accurate representational process.

The above-mentioned aspects mentioned above allowed video art to transcend ordinary television. At the discursive level, the pioneers seemed to realise that being stuck on simply representational aesthetics underestimated most part of the expressive possibilities of this medium, considering such technology not only a simple background in which to create figurativeness. According to Elwes, one of the very pioneers of video art,⁶ various artists began to explore the potential of portable video, bringing the first great transformation to the image since the invention of the cinema.⁷ It is in this context that several new discussions emerged, comprising social, political and aesthetic themes, in a clear challenge to what was presented by television. In the dilemma faced by video art, figurativeness is questioned by deconstruction. Therefore, video art, as a paradigm break, deconstructs video as language not only from the point of view of its production, but also from its reception, as an expression not predicted by cultural industry.

This discussion may have brighter colours if we think that traditional production relied upon very specific historical distribution *dispositifs*. Television did not assimilate this new reflection in the first place. Galleries and museums also refused to exhibit these pieces. Even though galleries incorporated them in a second moment, video art initially depended on private exhibitions or state TV channels. The creation of video art as an aesthetic expression was only possible because of the alternative attitude of several pioneers.⁸

³ Cf. Arlindo Machado, *A arte do vídeo* (São Paulo, SP: Brasiliense, 1990).

⁴ Cf. Walter Benjamin, "A obra de arte na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica," *Magia e tecnica, arte e politica ensaios sobre literatura e historia da cultura* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1993), 221–18.

⁵ Cf. C. Elwes, *Video Art: A Guided Tour* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 2005).

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

⁷ Despite of the fact that cinema had many technological breakthroughs, such as the invention of Technicolor, Paik seems to rely on the fact that the mainstream audiovisual industry kept an iconography until the time *Fluxus* began its video productions.

⁸ Cf. Osmar Gonçalves dos Reis Filho, "Encenação Do Vago: Notas Para Uma Estética Da Videoarte," Trabalho apresentado no XXX Encontro dos Núcleos de Pesquisa em Comunicação – NP Comunicação Audiovisual, 2007, <http://www.intercom.org.br/papers/nacionais/2007/resumos/r1587-1.pdf>, acc. October 2017.

This general scenario brings about an aesthetic of glitch that leads to a change of the communicative process that now seems to focus on sensations.⁹ Such a revolution is possible thanks to the abstract and allegorical character that different forms of representation have in video art, making a direct criticism of both rationalism and the predominance of instrumental reason and logic. It opens up space for non-rational forms of expression, as the technological elements of video are re-signified: cathode tubes, circuits and waves are means to discuss political and aesthetic issues. The idea of video art as a meaning making system¹⁰ based on breaking socially relevant semi-otic choices, helps to understand its place in the Brazilian context. Video art, then, is breaking already naturalised choice patterns, leading to a video work that does not reverberate traditional models. As a result, this context gives video art a 'non-place'.¹¹

The transposition of Brazilian video art goals from an experimental video experience to mass media production occurs because of the saturation of a model based only on structural exploration of videographic sign. Discourse, then, begins to reflect not only on aesthetics and politics, but also on the potential of expression of mass media.¹² This fact encouraged producers to seek audiences and broadcasting models based on traditional television, but renovating its language. In a way, the lack of information about what was happening outside Brazil, mostly due to the political closure the country faced until the mid 1980's, made Brazilian video art to develop its own path.¹³

The emergence of Brazilian video art

In the 1970s, two video art production centres emerged in Brazil: the first in Rio de Janeiro and the other one in São Paulo.¹⁴ The former was the result of John Azulai's private initiative – he brought from Japan a Sony *Portapak* camera – and the latter took

⁹ Elwes, *Video Art: A Guided Tour*.

¹⁰ In a socio-semiotics perspective, meanings are a result of a potential combination of signs, which are available for any language user, here called meaning maker or sign maker. As we think that video is a combination of meaningful choices, it is a system of probable, although infinite, choices. Each aspect of video vocabulary would be available for the sign maker to create his/her meaning. Cf. G. Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010); G. Kress, "Multimodal Discourse Analysis," in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Handford (London, New York: Routledge, 2012), 79–89.

¹¹ Elwes, *Video Art: A Guided Tour*; Rodrigo Esteves Lima-Lopes, "Redimensionamento do espaço de exibição e distribuição de vídeoarte," in *Conteúdos digitais e convergência tecnológica: Prospecções, reflexões e experiências*, ed. Alvaro Benevenuto Jr. (Gastal & Gastal, 2014), 91–109.

¹² Rafael França, "Vídeoarte," in *Intimidades*, ed. Renata Mota (São Paulo: Paço das Artes, 2002), 68–71.

¹³ Tadeu Jungle, "Vídeo E O TVTDO," in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 203–8.

¹⁴ Fernando Cocchiarale, "Primórdios Da Vídeoarte No Brasil," in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo, Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 61–8; C. T. d. Costa, "Vídeoarte No Mac," in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 69–74; Arlindo Machado, "Linhas de Força Do Vídeo Brasileiro," in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 15–51.

place thanks to the creation of a video department at the Museum of Contemporary Art of São Paulo (MAC-SP). Both initiatives allowed for the flourishing of groups that created authorial pieces with great political bias. Such videos were a response to the socio-political situation of Brazil, and a deaf cry against the non-democratic government.

It is worth highlighting that both groups experienced many technical difficulties.¹⁵ The marginal aspect of these productions was the result of an interaction between the political context and general production conditions, particularly the difficulty of access to resources considered minimal nowadays. The videos were taped in long takes – given the impossibility of editing – and collectively, with artists taking turns between the technical and performance roles. They used borrowed equipment and had no professional editing stations.

Analívia Cordeiro and the female body

Analívia Cordeiro, who might be considered one of the pioneers on computer dance, reflects on language and technology in its various aspects, mostly how the female body could be portrayed through technological means. Amongst Cordeiros' many works, I will focus on three: *M3x3* (1973), *0°=45°* (1974), and *Slow Billie Scan* (1987).

M3x3 (1973), the first piece of Brazilian video art, points to an automatization of gestures, discussing how media representation prevails over human expression. Beyond the artificiality of the representation of colours through black and white television, Cordeiro shows dancers in a 3x3 matrix, in a fixed position. A geometric construction is established by the dancers and the background. Each of the nine quadrants is taken by a dancer and the camera contrasts their black clothes with the invisible intervals with dashed lines on the matrix, creating new images. It makes an important break from the traditional system of television framing by shifting the audience's attention away from those so-called noble areas. Such a video creates multiple attention areas within the screen. The choreography was created by computer software,¹⁶ following guidelines that include the coordinates of the dancers, their extremities, upper bodies and heads, all based on a choreographic database provided by the artist.¹⁷ The software chose random movements made during the performance, and also sets the music beat: a continuous and minimalistic metallic sound of a metronome,¹⁸ putting rhythm to our perception of the choreography.

¹⁵ Machado, "Linhas de Força Do Vídeo Brasileiro."

¹⁶ It would be important to observe that Cordeiro herself tells us about the use of computer software for creating a mathematical matrix for the choreography. Her article shows detailed workflows of the interaction amongst the body, the camera and the choreographer. The software used at the time of *M3x3* was written using Fortran IV programming language in a PDP-11 computer, and a working progress on an open source motion analysis tool based on trajectory study is at <https://sourceforge.net/projects/notaanna/>. Cf. Analívia Cordeiro, "Expressão & Tecnologia," *VIS 6 2* (2008): 32–44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cordeiro (personal communication), March 2018.

$0^{\circ}=45^{\circ}$ anticipates a series of aesthetic matters related to the hybridism of the videographic language that would only be discussed in the 1990s. It contrasts the dancer's body, framed in close-up, and a series of pictograms that represents the computer's output of the final body position.¹⁹ The most interesting aspect of this work is the editing that sequenced the close-ups to help the viewer imagine the movement that culminates in the pictogram, operating directly on the viewer's cognitive process. There is a reflection on the body fragmentation and in the process of creating the illusion of movement by offering the viewer its initial and final frames. On the other hand, it also shows how dancing movements could be represented in mathematical terms.

Slow Billie Scan establishes a relation between technology and the aesthetic possibilities of dance and video art. It uses the *slow scan* technique – a way of transferring pictures in the 1980s – to transmit a series of stills of two dancers. Such stills overlap, mix and form impressionist images and, due to the very low number of pixels, the eyes synthesize the colour of both images as a continuum, creating bodies that have never existed.

The animation technique turns out to be so special that the slow movement of scanning and image formation directly interacts with the soundtrack, creating a synchronism between music and the technological construction of the referent. The creation of forms is dynamic as the juxtaposition of frames generates a choreography that could not be effectively perceived in a non-technological environment.

The technological process in this piece is used as way of building the choreographic sign: both languages (computer and choreography) seem to complement each other. In general, Cordeiro's productions seem to have a special fondness for the female body as a means of signifying; her videos merge choreographic experiments that seem to depend on both video technological interventions and the dancer's body. It expands the universe of video art, creating an artistic expression that is dependent on both semiosis.

The early 1970s and political resistance

Letícia Parente, Geraldo Anhaia Mello and Paulo Herkenhoff had in common an aesthetic of self-flagellation. It was a theme that oriented the surface of their work, which at a deeper observation level, aimed to protest against the Brazilian political dictatorship at the time. In *Preparação I* (1975), Parente seals her eyes and mouth with Band-Aids while applying make-up her face in front of a mirror, in a clear metaphor for the “see-nothing” “say-nothing” practical rule, which was typical in the Brazilian non-democratic environment at the time. In *Preparação II*, she gives herself four injections in her arm, taken from vials identified by the letters A, B, C and D. After each application, the artist fills out a form from the Ministry of Health reading: “cultural anti-colonialism”; “anti-racism”; “anti-political mystification” and “anti-art mystification”, the last one in French.

¹⁹ Ibid.

In *A situação*, Mello sits in front of the camera, wearing a suit and a tie, as a “talking head”, while drinking a bottle of *cachaça* in big gulps and repeating: “the Brazilian social-political-economic-cultural situation.” His drinking is rhythmized by the speech which sounds like a mantra. The artist’s state is clearly deteriorated as his drinking goes on; a metaphor of the narcotisation promoted by the media.

Herkenhoff, in *Estômago embrulhado* (1975), reflects on the process of censorship. The work is divided into three parts – *Fartura*, in which the artist eats a newspaper and retransmits it to the people by telling the news, *Jejum*, in which the artist, sitting on a chair, consumes news related to federal censorship, and *Sobremesa*, in which he eats a piece of art made from newspapers. A metaphorical process is established: the intellectual knowledge of the objective content of a journalistic text is related to its physical intake, and the nausea caused by the political situation.

All of these videos seem to be a masochistic political statement, in which the authors are objects of their own anger, a self-portrait that seems to set up a direct confrontation between reality and the political situation. The video acquires a status of technological memory,²⁰ related to dictatorship that seemed to be forgotten by those who were living it. In a nutshell, due to the difficulties of access to production technology and the inevitable political struggle, Brazil developed of a national videography that is deeply authorial and centred on resistance. These artists’ focus was on the individuals’ portraits and their individual suffering through raw and direct performances that led them to personal sacrifice. Their work translates their political and social concerns into pain.

Despite the fact that many of the artists in the 1970s did not seem to be organized into a cohesive political group, this aesthetics of pain and suffering seems to be the result of the intensification of Brazil’s dictatorship. On the other hand, these artists seemed to unite by two key elements: access to technology and aversion to the regime: the MAC (São Paulo) and Azulai (Rio de Janeiro) groups had in such opportunity the only effective way to produce their art. The political issue seemed almost a ubiquitous theme, a bond that led to the thematic unicity without necessarily forming closely-knit or manifesto-oriented groups. The enemy was there, for everyone to see, it needed to be challenged.

Rafael França and the video art of transition

Coming from the fine arts, Rafael França went through several artistic experiences. He began his artistic career doing visual pieces using Xerox and offset printing machines, which generated animation-like image sequences. He also joined *3nós3*, in the late 1980s, along with the artists Hudinilson Jr. and Mario Ramiro, a group responsible for performances that used the city as media. This variety of experiences gave França a special role in Brazilian video art. While his knowledge of visual arts

²⁰ Leandro Garcia Vieira, “A Inscrição Da Memória em Vídeo,” *XXVI Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências Da Comunicação – BH/MG/Brasil*, 2003, 1–3.

improved the technical quality of his productions, he also understood the performing role of the directors that preceded him. For França, video was “an accident”, leading him to consider theoretical questions about technology.²¹

His historical conscience contributed to making his work a bridge between the pioneers’ anti-narrative and those who started their production in the mid-1980s.²² França stands out by imposing some transformations, especially by the technical quality of his pieces: unlike Brazilian pioneer video artists, he’s versed in the technical-expressive vocabulary of video. At the same time, such a path allowed França to notice an ongoing language change in Brazilian video art at his time. Video art initially despised television language as a discursive format, bringing about a collapse of its anti-narrative production. This led video art to flirt with the formats and themes of mass media.²³

Autobiographical meanings were the central theme for Brazilian video makers at least until the beginning of the 1980s.²⁴ The work of França seems to be deep into this biographical discussion, since his work is focused on the individual, the finitude of life and self-knowledge. These aspects are different if compared to the earlier artists for whom the political issue was represented by a masochistic performance. França takes a different route, he is responsible for trying to construct a metaphorical discourse of human inner complexities, a reflection upon the artist’s angst. Considering the different contexts, I think it is reasonable to trace parallels between the works of França and Bill Viola. In both works a discussion about the inner universe is presented, creating a personal view of the world.

França’s biographic representation could be initially discussed in two of his pieces: *Reencontro* (1984) and *Prelúdio de uma morte anunciada* (1991). The former shows two parallel narratives, one in which a man is tortured in a chair and another in which França wanders through an abandoned building. The edition creates a distressing feeling that is heightened by the soundtrack: a piece of speech played backwards. The narratives run in parallel until the point when Rafael walks up a staircase and leaves through a door. On the roof, he finds himself standing and static; he then pulls a gun, kills his double and himself next. In *Prelúdio...*, which was finished two days before his death, França and his partner share a stage in a sequence of close-ups, exchanging cuddles under the sound of *Bidú Saião*, who sings an aria of “La Traviata”.²⁵ The melancholic tone of the film is completed by names of the artist’s various friends who had passed away because of AIDS related diseases, the condition that also caused

²¹ Rafael França, “Depoimento – Videobrasil,” 2001, <http://site.videobrasil.org.br/acervo/artistas/textos/25944>, acc. October 2017.

²² Costa, “Videoarte No Mac;” Machado, “Linhas de Força Do Vídeo Brasileiro.”

²³ França, “Videoarte.”

²⁴ Vieira, “A Inscrição Da Memória Em Vídeo.”

²⁵ The term “aria” represents a self-contained piece of an opera, which is commonly part of a larger musical work.

França's death. The film ends with the words "They had no fear of Vertigo"²⁶ on the screen.

That final sentence is a direct reference to a França's film, *Without Fear of Vertigo* (1987). In it França uses a mockumentary style to create a fictional piece that brings the testimonials by friends of an AIDS patient who had asked a colleague to register his final moments. The piece is punctuated by juxtaposed images without apparent explanation, creating an accumulation of feelings and anxieties. The colleague is charged as an accomplice to his suicide, and convicted without any evidence. This format is also present in other movies of his, as in *Profundo silêncio das coisas mortas* (1988), in which two men tell us about the breakup of their homosexual relationships. Their lines are incomplete and fragmented, echoing their loss of love as well as the violence related to the end of their relationships. Their testimonials are marked by contrasted, fast-forwarded images of the urban Brazilian *Carnaval* and the traffic in a large avenue. In *Getting Out* (1985) a woman tries to escape from her flat. Locked up, she is constantly trying the lock and walking around the flat. The sound is cumulative and out of sync – it is not clear why she is there or why she wants to leave. Suddenly the sound stops and, in a sequence of mute key frames, the woman throws a matchbox on fire inside the cooker's oven, turns on the gas and runs through the back door.

These pieces present some of França's common technical and aesthetical elements, such as the lack of synchronisation between sound and image, narrative fragmentation, and juxtaposition of images treated as a cumulative flow of emotions. Although there is a clear connection between what is seen and heard in his inner world, França develops a type of video art that is elliptical: a work full of missing information to be filled in by the audience, which makes sense of it based on its own perceptions.²⁷ In general, França offers a synthesis between activism and political commitment through a more accurate use of typical mainstream formats, which are translated into his aesthetic and ideological goals. Although he is not interested in broadcasting his work, França already points to a subversion of mainstream formats.

Video art and the mainstream: Establishing ties

The deconstruction of mass media established formats was the objective of experiments conducted by some Brazilian video collectives, such as *Olhar Eletrônico* and *TVDO*. Both groups mark a significant change in the way of making TV and video art in Brazil. They are the ones that formed the segment of independent movie producers, which until that moment did not exist at all.²⁸ However, there is an important

²⁶ Some of Rafael França's videos were produced during a fellowship at the University of Chicago, the reason some are originally titled in English.

²⁷ Arlindo Machado, "Ensaio Crítico – 2001," 2001, <http://site.videobrasil.org.br/acervo/artistas/textos/25944>, acc. October 2017.

²⁸ Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural, "Olhar Eletrônico – Enciclopédia Itaú Cultural," 2014, <http://enciclopedia.itaucultural.org.br>, acc. October 2017; Associação Cultural VídeoBrasil, "TVDO – Videobrasil," 2007, <http://site.videobrasil.org.br/acervo/artistas/artista/89720>, acc. October 2017.

difference between them and previous Brazilian video artists: both *Olhar Eletrônico* and *TVDO* intended to work their way into Brazilian mainstream television.

Olhar Eletrônico, after participating in the *Associação VideoBrasil* festivals, was invited to produce some programmes for Brazilian TV stations, initially for *TV Gazeta* (São Paulo locally), later for *TV Manchete*, *TV Cultura* (São Paulo locally at the time) and, then, for *Abril Vídeo* (part of Abril Publishing Company in São Paulo). Initially, the group incorporated new formats that challenged traditional television production, mostly through a programme named *Repórter Ernesto Varela*, whose the main character was a naïve reporter.²⁹ In his news stories, such as his trip to Brasília (the capital of Brazil), the character lets the microphone cables appear while purposefully mistaking information about politicians. The character questions a presidential candidate in an almost childish way: “Mr. Paulo Maluf, are you a corrupt?” – something unthinkable for Brazilian television at the time.

The prominence of excluded voices is common to the group’s works.³⁰ A fine example is the documentary *Do outro lado da sua casa*, in which homeless people, who initially were the subject of the documentary, take the microphone and start to direct the video, presenting the causes of their social vulnerability and invisibility. Amongst the novelties introduced by *Olhar Eletrônico* on Brazilian television are the invasion of the technical and newsroom area by reporters, the city in the background of the show’s broadcast, jump-cuts and many other common resources used in mainstream Brazilian media nowadays.

Another important work is their programme on *Serra Pelada*. In the mid-1980s, the area was a large gold prospecting camp that attracted millions of workers annually. The program, in the form of a news story, impresses not only by the beauty of the images, but also by its focus on poverty and difficulties faced by the prospectors, who left their situation of social and professional marginalization to be the protagonists in a comic news story.

The breaking of some traditional Brazilian TV models also occurred in *TVDO*’s productions. Amongst them, I would highlight *Quem KISS teve* (1983); a documentary that discusses the influence that rock band Kiss had during their first Brazilian tour. The reporters questioned the effective knowledge that fans have of both the songs and the band in a somewhat humorous way. It is one of the first times that a sequence of interviews is done in a concert queue, and that rock fans were allowed to speak and state their reasons for being there. Although it features music critics and interviews with members of the band, the story has a comical and anarchic tone.

One of the biggest differences between *Olhar Eletrônico* and *TVDO* was their approach to video making: whereas the former was organised and methodical, the latter was confused and anarchic.³¹ Although striving for the same goal, participants

²⁹ Marcelo Tas, “Minha História No Olhar Eletrônico,” in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 209–19.

³⁰ Cláudia Mesquita, “Alargando as Margens,” in *Made in Brasil: Três Décadas Do Vídeo Brasileiro*, ed. Arlindo Machado (São Paulo: Iluminuras, Itaú Cultural, 2007), 181–200.

³¹ Jungle, “Vídeo E O TVTDO.”

of *TVDO* did not accept to enter the television market as a unified group due to the kind of contract they were offered. The first invitations by *TV Gazeta* in São Paulo for both groups assumed they would produce without being paid.³²

Despite the aesthetically accurate reflections, there were several technical difficulties, since access to portable video equipment was still quite restricted in Brazil. Such restrictions were also imposed in terms of information access; both groups had little or no contact with experimental video outside festivals that occurred in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This made their video art develop along its own course, with little or no influence from what was taking place abroad.³³

Amongst those young videomakers were Fernando Meirelles (dir. *City of God*), Marcelo Tas and Tadeu Jungle, names that would later be widely known in Brazilian TV and cinema. It is important to realise that these filmmakers seem to merge political discussion and the exploration of mainstream formats for the first time; a kind of transgression being absorbed by everyday life. These were groups that sought an aesthetic renewal of television by focusing on possible new audiences.³⁴ A practical result of this is that the best part of Brazilian television nowadays tries to repeat some of the 'formulae' created by these two groups.

Final remarks

The aim of this study was to discuss the aesthetic ideological transformation through which Brazilian video art underwent in its first years. Brazilian video art emerged as a reaction against aesthetical *dispositifs* and political issues. It begins as a form of questioning Brazilian socio-political reality in the 1970s, seeking to represent the ideological resistance and aesthetical innovation through performances of a kind of self-flagellation by the video artists themselves.

Because of this initial proposal, Brazilian video art questioned television's narrative and explored new performance and technological formats. The result was several works that were motivated by the deconstruction of what was understood as television.

The linear narrative formats gradually returned, but never leaving the technological experimentation and political/social questioning aside. A new method of production emerged. It was deeply related to the criticism of our perception of the world and our place in it, focusing on issues such as social and sexual minorities. Gradually video art became closer to the aesthetical elements of mass media, since some of these artists began to have television as their professional goal.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ França, "Videarte."

Acknowledgments

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