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Experimental Art and the Body: Parangolé and the Collective Body

Abstract: The article deals with the changes in Brazilian art from the 1950s to the 1970s, from concrete art to experimentalism, taking into particular account the importance of the artistic production of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica. It can be said that both artists contributed to a radical questioning of the concept of the work of art and its traditional supports, and also provided a new relationship between the work of art and the viewer in contemporary art. In fact, Brazilian experimentalism anticipated at least a decade ahead of similar questioning of contemporary art posed by European artists and institutions.

Keywords: Concrete art; Neoconcretism; experimental art; art and concept; Brazilian contemporary art; Helio Oiticica; Lygia Clark.

Introduction

Brazil's industrial modernization following the Second World War resulted in a appreciation for rationalist art, which was connected to the international constructive movement exemplified by Russian Constructivism, the Bauhaus and Neoplasticism. In São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, modern art museums were inaugurated, showcasing contemporary exhibitions mainly focused on abstraction, geometric and informal art, but also concrete art. Further to the existing cultural landscape, the São Paulo Art Biennial was launched in 1951. This was followed by the founding of modern art institutions and the mobilization of artists and art critics in favour of contemporary manifestations of art, a series of debates about their importance in forming a taste for modern art and the possibility of being informed about new contemporary trends in the visual arts. In this sense, conferences were organized by the institutions themselves, such as Romero Brest's six conferences on contemporary art at the São Paulo Art Museum (MASP)¹ and a series of proposals also emerged over the years regarding the true role of museums in shaping our artistic milieu.

¹ Aracy Amaral, *Projeto construtivo brasileiro na arte (1950–1962)* (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo: Funarte, Pinacoteca do Estado, 1977), 18–20.

In fact, the minority left in Brazil that did not align itself with the Communist Party in the 1940s and 1950s was able to bet on modern art and its institutions without this meaning that Brazilian culture was subordinated to the impositions of modern art disseminated by the United States in the post-war period. Mário Pedrosa was a key figure in this left-wing alternative to the Communist Party in Brazil; he championed an alternative vision of art, far removed from the traditional modernism, viewing modern art as an integral part of a broader and more profound revolution encompassing aesthetic transformation. Modern art museums in Brazil played the role of institutionalizing modern art in the country. The proposals and constitution of the new institutions were received with enthusiasm, due to the expectations of a greater dynamic of Brazilian artistic production. In the years that followed, Mário Pedrosa emphasized the importance of these institutions in the development local artistic circuit, showing, however, the contradictions of this expansion taking place in the 1970s. These modern museums would be true *pantheons of the future*, in Pedrosa's words, "already an expression of posterity"², where the idea of a museum would prevail less as a place where the official history of the arts would be deposited – a concept that was criticized by the avant-garde for its place in the affirmation of ethnocentric culture, valuing the meaning of art as the historical result of "economic and intellectualist progress"³ – and more as a place where art could be seen as a historical result of "economic and intellectualist progress" – and even more as a living museum, committed to revealing new contemporary trends in art and to the "perceptual-aesthetic" re-education of man.⁴

Once the art circuit had been established, which would be initiated with the founding of the Biennale in 1951, contemporary art exhibitions began to pass through those capitals, eliminating, to a certain extent, the standards established by figuration in various different tones, contemplating versions of realism, thematization and referencing the image of the human – partly the result of the internalization of cultural interests due to the lack of international communication – rooted in the Week of Modern Art.⁵ Among these exhibitions, Mário Pedrosa (1986) identified two as particularly significant for our artistic landscape: Among these exhibitions, Mário Pedrosa (1986) identified two as particularly important for our artistic *métier*, one in São Paulo and the other in Rio de Janeiro: Alexander Calder's exhibition at the Ministry of Culture Salon in 1948, initiated by Henrique Mindlin, and Max Bill's 1950 exhibition at the São Paulo Museum of Art, organized by Pietro Maria Bardi. In turn, each of the artists mentioned above informed the new generations about the trends in art being produced in the major international centers.⁶

² Mário Pedrosa, *Acadêmicos e modernos*. (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo), 1998, 305.

³ Mário Pedrosa, *Homem, mundo, arte em crise*. (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1986), 281.

⁴ Mário Pedrosa, *Política das artes* (São Paulo: Edusp, 1995), 298.

⁵ The week of modern art took place in 1922 at the municipal theatre in the city of São Paulo. It was a cultural and artistic event that inaugurated the presentation of the ideas and works of modern art in Brazil. It was attended by poets, writers, sculptors, painters and enthusiastic supporters of modernism. For more information see: Elza Ajzenberg, "A Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922," *Revista Cultura e Extensão* 7 (2012): 25–29.

⁶ Serge Guilbaut, *How New York stole the idea of the modern art – abstract expressionism, freedom, and the cold war* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985) 19–20.

Concretism in Brazil developed in the post-war period during the 1950s. Influenced by the Ulm School and Soviet experiments, several Brazilian artists experimented with the language of non-representational and geometric art. Geometric art gained strength in two locations in Brazil: Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In the city of São Paulo, the concretist experiments were very close to industry due to the city's industrial vocation; in Rio de Janeiro, concretism was closer to free production and guided by uncompromising invention. Among the artists in the Rio de Janeiro group, Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica stood out for their strength of production. Over the years, the constructive experience opened up the opportunity for radical questioning of art supports, the relationship between work and public (for example, Mangueira samba school dancers inside the museum of modern art) and the conceptualization of the artistic experience. All this was called Brazilian experimentalism, Neoconcretism.

Faced with the progressive tendency in the 1950's to contradict the parameters established and in force for centuries, it was up to modern art to re-establish the motto of the dissolution of norms as its own identity. Over time and based on the contributions emerging from the artistic avant-garde at the beginning of modernism, the necessary conditions were created for radicalization of its proposals, leading art to completely dissolve the structural residues of its conceptions that were still in force.⁷

This elimination did not take place without protest by many who did not understand the new operability that was being established. There was, so to speak, the closure and death of the Auratic character of the work of art, but at the same time the opening up of a new artistic practice that sought to extend the artistic experience from a visual to a sensory or conceptual field. Although the approach is not entirely true, the fracture of the usual parameters was felt in almost all areas of human material or intellectual production. In artistic activities more closely linked to mass production, the symbolic-representative nature of objects has been eliminated in exchange for the search for greater productive effectiveness combined with and transformed into personal customer satisfaction. The caveat regarding the approximation of various artistic-productive activities is due to the, so to speak, specific character that each of them has taken on, even though they participate in the same structural sphere. This is easy to see when we look at the link to the market that a fashion designer has in comparison to a painter, although this distance between the two has diminished and almost disappeared completely in recent years. For this reason, the tendency of art today (painting, sculpture, engraving and any other artistic manifestation that can be categorized or not) is to move closer to a total incorporation of its practice into usual practices of the market economy society.

The participation of artistic activity within the new rules of the market society can be effectively seen in the great value given to the cultural market, which generates dividends all over the world. Cultural markets are the new facet of neoliberal societies, the offspring of the transformation of culture and scientific knowledge into activities

⁷ Ronaldo Brito, *Neoconcretismo: vértice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1985).

that are uncritical of the status quo. Or rather, these activities have taken on the role of reproducers of today's society, where art has its performance embedded in managed cultural policies. Modern art, which had its space more or less guaranteed and inseparable from the freedom to invent and modify existing standards, now has its precise place in managed leisure. As such, the introduction of artistic endeavor into the sphere of producing “creative and renewable proposals” has led the plastic arts to take on the same meaning as *fashion weeks* do in society today, namely: emphasis on the artistic product as an innocuous activity in the transformation of society marked by serial production.⁸

This process began with the fate that was attributed to the renovating proposals of modernity that opposed both the oppressive system of the divine order of distinction between men and the bourgeois rationalism of the 19th century. In art, the dissolution of artistic parameters was erased in favor of its opposite. The dissolution or destruction of the foundations of academic art, in search of a living practice – an eminently modern activity as an act of building human freedom, lost ground to the dissolution of all activities in a monolithic social order. What had previously seemed to be a revolution without precedent in human history became a trivialized and dissolute practice, without any transformative effect – not independent – as was foreshadowed by North American *styling*, in which avant-garde art had generated its opposite, the retrogressive avant-garde of our day.⁹

The loss of the symbolic character of art, as has been said, was a response to criticism of the superhuman order of organization of society based on divine laws and also to art as a symbol of social distinction in the bourgeois world of the 19th century. In painting, the change from a representational character to a symbol or allegory of social values led to a reduction in the visual importance of painting, which was often conceived as a reflective simile of the image of the world. The invoice of painting changed due to the resignification of all its elements (colour, form, support).

This change also occurred in other fields of art. Leaving the court and the spheres of the emerging upper bourgeoisie at the end of the 19th century, the painter gained freedom because he was freed from social ties that held him and to which he owed obedience, as well as ties that bound him to a standard of taste determined by social customs of a particular milieu.

Modern art and rationality

At the turn of the 19th century, productive relations were dynamized by the development of technology. This process was experienced by the painter who, with the introduction of technical means – photography – for the production and reproduction of images, lost his role as a portrait painter and was left on the margins of society, with no defined social function. Art occupies new social places. The work of

⁸ Mário Pedrosa, *Política das artes*. (São Paulo: Edusp, 1995), pp. 322-326.

⁹ Otilia Beatriz Fernandez Arantes, *Mário Pedrosa: itinerário crítico* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004), 27.

art and the symbolism of colors no longer have an explicit link to social position, but rather derive from the symbolic production of the capitalist system introjected by the artist. Painting has followed a separate path from modern social production, where the industrial means of production are monitored, unlike the trend towards clothing, which has not ceased to adapt to industrial modes of production. Like architecture, it responded to the needs of a real social demand, in an attempt to produce a new reality. In fact, like architecture – which was eminently social in nature – clothing was the first to adapt well to the new *modus operandi*.¹⁰ In turn, less than architecture, with the exception of the constructivist production of Tatlin and other constructivists, the art of dressing was relegated to a subordinate position to the new relations of modern production and followed, in most of its experiments, the old ‘well-dressed’ scheme, when it didn’t contribute to the aestheticism of life.

Apart from this, we find in sewing the same tendency to break down traditional dressing patterns as in modern art. The process of disintegration of traditional compositional values can lead to couture constructing its own values within the mode of production, freeing the couturier from his subordinate position in exchange for a free creative position. Both the discovery of gestalt psychology and the rationalizations implemented in urban spaces by architecture marked the plastic arts of the 1950s and 1960s, especially in Brazil. Brazilian artistic production largely followed this trend, something that had been abandoned by European and even American art since the time of Mondrian or the Bauhaus. In turn, international critics in the 1950s didn’t understand the persistence of a geometric and abstract program in Brazil at the time Informalism dominated the art scene worldwide.

The persistence and dissemination in Brazil of an abstract-geometric art in its most radical manifestation, concretism, was spreading in the country with exemplary force due to the efforts of art critic Mário Pedrosa and the advent of the First Biennale. But how could the insistence on affirming pure plastic values in Brazilian art be explained? Because of perseverance, Pedrosa’s insistence and great vision of the fate and significance of modern art in our time. The roots of modernism in the arts were inextricably linked to the attempt to plan and rationalize social production for its own sake. This task was taken on by modern art throughout the century, from its first revolutionary experiments, drawing closer to the political identity from which the artistic manifestos imported from politics emerged, to the manifestations of constructive art aimed at the geometrization of architectural space and the experimental union between architecture and painting proposed above all by the Neoplasticists. There was, so to speak, a commitment on the part of modern art to be affiliated with the social struggles of its time.

Modern art undoubtedly suffered its first reactionary backlash with Nazi figurative art and then with socialist realism. These art forms tried to absorb the transformative content of art in order to use it to benefit the political-ideological struggle of totalitarian regimes. Their opposite line was Picasso’s cubism, Malevitch’s Russian

¹⁰ Brito, *Neoconcretismo*.

constructivism and Mondrian's neoplasticism, in which art still seemed to retain its independence (its autonomy) and its transformative potential. Emphasizing these two characteristics of modern art, Max Bill's concretism and Ulm's constructivism emerged. After Concretism and Neoconcretism, the modern project transformed the pictorial space into a rationalized space, which was therefore non-allusive and compatible with the garment and the body: Parangolé and the Collective Body new era, exerting particular pressure on art's commitment to building a new era. The modern trend promoted another role for the artist, namely his formal intervention in the social space, sensitizing people to a new, more collective type of society.

In turn, the defense of abstract-geometric art in Brazil served as a search for *ordo rationalis*, an intrinsic and predominant quality of the constructive trend in art. The transformative role of art is being questioned as criticism of modernism advances, particularly constructivism, whose ideals of reducing form to its minimum elements expressed in geometric relationships, its tendency towards planning and even the standardization of forms were instrumentalized and contributed much more to the market economy than to a significant improvement in the living conditions of the population. The shipwreck of the modern project was most evident in the architecture and urbanism of the world's great capitals, where the immeasurably large size of streets and the enormous concentration of people in small spaces transformed people's living spaces into increasingly restricted and inhumane ones. The metropolis, symbol of our time, has become, in its modern grandeur, synonymous with the failings of modernism itself with its inoperability, its cultivation of a productive rationality of repression and its development and growth without any planning of space without economic interests intervening in the first place. The new conditioning of art and even science in favor of economic interests sidelined the importance of man, subjected now more than ever to the market-god. In this new historical context that characterized the post-World War II period, the hope of Brazil actually entering the modern way of life through the developmentalism of Juscelino Kubistchek was transformed from a dream into a nightmare: the Military coup of 1964 brought the far right to power and began to implement the plan to subordinate Brazil's economy to the interests of the United States. All the contradictions that arose in the construction of Brasilia, the modern city par excellence, were valid for all the developments of the modern project which, over the years, was not accompanied by a social change in the structures of exploitation of man by man.

The limits of the Brazilian constructive experience

The introduction of concrete art in Brazil, although on the one hand it aimed for more than a simple artistic update and saw its hopes dashed, on the other hand it favored the unleashing and the real possibility of developing constructive artistic proposals to their end. Projects that relied on art's ability to transform collective living standards were abandoned in favor of previous programs to raise awareness among

individuals. The neoconcrete experience was the articulation of constructive language in all its consequences and limits. For its part, neoconcretism had been a response to the lack of consequence and impasse of concrete experience. In São Paulo, it had reached the structural impasse of painting, in other words, concrete painting – in which the example of the limit of experience becomes more evident – had reached the extreme of the material consideration of the work of art, conceived as a material support that enables optical experiences through the manipulation of color and form. Neoconcrete art will take this experience to its extreme degree through discontent with the reduction of the work to optical-mechanical aspects in search of a more complete aesthetic experience.¹¹

The total work was the motivation for the new entry of the human aspect into perception and, above all, into creation; in other words, neoconcrete art wanted to give rise to existential experience. This existential experience became possible with the introduction of time into the work. Now the work of art was open to the viewer's sensory investigation, it was no longer a work of contemplation where time and space are fictitious, as they are representative of a scene, but rather time and space in the work. The neoconcrete experience reaches its ultimate consequences with the break-up of the previously stable categories of creation and the neoconcrete work becomes an artistic manifestation among poetry, painting and sculpture.

The cutting-edge art research, in the form of object art phase, that subsequently dominated the international art scene emerged from the neoconcrete experience of the 1960s' Brazil. Without being tied to the establishment of a new category of art, neoconcrete artists such as Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica continued their experiments in destroying the flatness of painting in search of a deeper understanding of the new field of artistic research that emerged with the advent of neoconcrete art. The new art was not constituted as a new artistic statute called by any 'ism', but proposed the experimental radicalization of art. This experimental radicalization led Hélio and Lygia to seek new means of artistic expression beyond conventional means of artistic representation. But what determined their search for new materials of expression? This question must be answered within the framework of what the artists understood as the dilation of the meaning of the artistic object and its new function. The search for new expressive materials was due in the first place to the new meaning attributed to art, in which the notion of expressiveness of form was not confined to a particular way of making art, but to various ways, because expressiveness was independent of the means of expression.

This was seen as broadening the meaning of what it means being artistic. On the other hand, the new art sought less to act in the aesthetic conformation of the social environment and more in the sensory expansion of an individual's reception and the change in his/her behavior within the technical-industrial society. The proposals put forward by artists Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark were aimed at recovering the dormant sensibility (*aesthesis*) of modern man immersed in a numbing, machinic

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

and therefore alienating everyday life. It was, therefore, a matter of imprinting and believing in the possibility of changing the individual's existential meanings by seeking to reread everyday events in another sense; the aesthetic dimension capable of transforming the social dimension experienced by adding possibilities for each person to intervene in the world. Thus, it was not a question, at least as a program, of simple aestheticism, that is, giving a new form to a retrograde and reactionary content, but of opening up the possibility of an individual's aesthetic awareness. To do this, these artists used a variety of materials, usually from the discards of consumer society, as a way of recovering man's sensibility.

Among the various ways of sensitizing the spectator-participant are Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolés* and Lygia Clark's *Corpo Coletivo*. These experiences give us the key to understanding the disalienating value of art through the use of new means of artistic production. These experiences will serve as an attempt to explain a new way of conceiving the relationship between man and his social environment, the city.

Social deconditioning: Hélio Oiticica's experiments

Parangolé has an important significance in HO's art, as it marks the change from strictly optical art to environmental manifestation.¹² After the *Parangolé* experience, Oiticica entered the program of environmental propositions that sought to involve the former viewer in a set of sensations that were no longer just visual, but tactile, auditory and olfactory. These experiences followed a path of propositional coherence with continuous development in a very clear constructive sense. The constructive sense defined by HO will be the basis of the research into color and form in space in search of new notions of time and space. Now, form and color will be part of the sensory evolution of the former spectator – now participant. Evolution is linked not only to color and form, but to the expressiveness of the body as the particular rhythm of each participant, which becomes fundamental part of the work. Color and form do not exist per se but depend on participation in order to manifest themselves as dynamism, which is why form and color are the means of an artistic manifestation that involves the participant, their evolution and the dynamic effect of form and color in real space as a total work that can be experienced by other former spectators. All of them aimed to bring about a transformation without historical precedent and which constituted the Brazilian artistic experience as a singular one. HO's proposal will be to instill within the constructive developments of color and plan in the inventions, penetrables and bolides their overcoming in something new: the *Parangolé*, the sum of all previous experiences. This will bring to light the last significant consequences of the loss of conventional support, understood as a guarantee of a harmonious relationship between form and color. The *Parangolé* will be inscribed within artistic practices as a coherent development of the previously existing practices that takes the constructive sense to its telos, that is, the *Parangolé* will be an experience, no longer of construction

¹² Celso Favaretto, *A invenção de Hélio Oiticica* (São Paulo: Edusp, 1992).

conceived as a dissociation of art and society, but as a de-aesthetization of the work of art, or rather, its insertion into the societal experiential practices, trying to give them a new meaning.¹³

The de-aesthetization of art proposed by HO inscribed artistic practice in its approximation to everyday practices and, at the same time, discredited social transformation as an aesthetic transformation of society, in a strict sense of the word. Aesthetics doesn't disappear in HO's latest artistic manifestations; it finds a new path: non-expressive action. According to what has been said above, we believe that the great change in HO's art was not really a break with the plastic developments prior to Parangolé; on the contrary, there was a continuity and, so to speak, a radicalization of his previous proposals: *Invenções*, *Penetráveis* and *Bólides*. These virtually contained the possibility of creating Parangolé. However, the path could have been different. HO opted not for a prescriptively determined artistic experience for the enjoyment of his work, but for the total opening up of the artistic experience to the viewer. This gesture means that his work will no longer be inscribed to a limit of creative conception of the work, but in the transmission or liberation of the sense of authorship, which Oiticica himself called a field of supra-open experience. If before the constructive experience aimed to give order and even to imprint a certain modification of man's behavior through his aesthetic sensitization to the world of rationalized forms in collective spaces, HO's experience now aims to establish the constructive project in its fullness (art and life), enabling the viewer to have an open experience, something that will manifest itself in full force in his Whitechapel experience in 1969.

The displacement proposed by HO, of the viewer as the creator of a rhythmic evolution of the Parangolé, aims to transform the last valuable place of art as it has been understood since the earliest traditions of artistic expression. The abandonment of creation or authorship was intended to be total freedom of the artistic experience and its new inscription as a practice in everyday life. The participant should be the limit of a new experience of the circulation of artistic values, which in turn no longer depended on an institution (museum) and a creator recognized by the art circuit (artist). HO's environmental art proposals were intended to be a link between art and everyday life in a vital sense whose consequence in extremes would be artistic creation as an everyday practice. The new utopia produced by Oiticica's work foresaw its end as an institutionalized practice and sought a creative space far from any form of incorporation that would restrict its freedom.

HO's great political endeavour was to try to establish artistic practice as a non-expressive practice. This explains HO's use of cheap materials: burlap sacks, plastic bags, plastic bathroom curtains, sisal, etc. If, on the one hand, these materials seek to broaden the visual and tactile experience for the viewer, on the other hand, they spell out the connection between HO and the yearnings for a 'popular culture' in the industrial age. HO did not share the political yearning of the time to search for the roots of Brazilian culture, but he understood artistic activity in its universal meaning

¹³ *Ibid.*, 173.

and, therefore, common to all without any distinction of race, sex or economic situation, that is, as a practice common to man and which guaranteed him freedom from the great system of managed human relations or the symbolic appeals of the market.

HO's politics could be understood as a practice of subverting values within the space of freedom guaranteed to art. He himself conceived of his attitude as an ethical attitude, in other words, an attitude located outside the institutions of politics. HO was an outcast, just as Lygia Clark expressed the same yearning for unconditioned social transformation in her *Corpo Coletivo (Collective Body)*.

Social deconditioning: Lygia Clark's experiences

In 1970, Lygia Clark moved to Paris to live and work. She became professor at the *Faculté d'Arts Plastiques Saint Charles* at the Sorbonne. Her classes there are based on the proposal to transform the aesthetic experience of art into new forms of experience based on phenomenology. Artistic practice is understood as collective creation, in transition to body therapy. From the 1970s onwards, LC began to develop a series of research projects on the sensations of the human body. Like Oiticica's, her plastic research follows closely the elimination of traditional supports in art and the search for a new position for artistic creation in the face of managed society. Her research into the body was precisely a response to the sensory and situational conditioning of the body within our society. Lygia didn't just want to decondition human behavior, which has its statutory form (in schools, hospitals, banks, in other words, in all forms of contemporary social organizations), but she also sought other possible ways of manifesting one's living. If, on the one hand, her propositional research was as coherent as Oiticica's, on the other hand, she preferred; moving from the representational framework to the notion of spectator's participation in *Bicho*, the next step should be to emphasize the creative-free possibility of the participant. This situation, as in Oiticica, has as its background the very condition of the artist and his integrated position in the art circuit. All that remains is for the artist to deny his/her comfortable position and seek a new path of intervention in social practices.

LC's aim with *Corpo coletivo* was to alter the sensitive experience of the participants, making them experience new and unusual forms of manifestation, not just in the sense of playful practices, but in the sense of real manifestations of a new experiential possibility. LC's proposals aimed at interfering in the 'smooth running' of things, altering the individual's consciousness towards a new possibility of life beyond the narrow confines of existing everyday practices. Rather than a vision of a real possibility of unlimited transformation in the manifestation of life, LC's work is the beckoning of an utopia that could potentially be realized; rather: "from the absurd desire for everything to suddenly becoming exceptional [...] or for our usual condition to be transformed into the realm of the extraordinary' is at least the 'will to see one day – which can begin with the experience of the proposition – the ordinary itself ceases to be identified with failure'"¹⁴

¹⁴ Ricardo Nascimento Fabrini, *O espaço de Lygia Clark* (São Paulo: Atlas, 1994), 162–63.

Among the developments in research into the forms of manifestation of the body in collective acts, LC's *Collective Body* explores relationships of human coexistence in open situations of current psycho-corporal bonds. The *Collective Body* was one of these pieces of research that was presented at the 1986 IX Salão Nacional de Artes Plásticas in Rio de Janeiro. It was a work of participation of up to fifty people wearing synthetic knitwear with zips in the back. The knitted garments looked like gym overalls and came in different colors (red, blue, orange, black and carmine). All the garments were tied together at different points by metal hooks. The hooks or elastic bands connected these garments in different places, i.e. the sleeve of one garment could be connected to the waist of another, which in turn was connected to the back of another garment. When the participants put on the knitwear, they found themselves strangely joined in with each other.

From this union, the movements of attraction and repulsion between the participants occurred in such a way as to alter the entire group of participants, constituting a collective act. The search for new references for space and behavior was intrinsically linked to the intentions of abandoning repressive psychic instances and the search for a concrete liberation of the body and sensuality understood in the relationship that was no longer established in a private environment, but in a space of collective interaction. It was, among other things, an attempt at a collective social liberation from the social standards of behavior that were demanded by the very conformation with an unforeseen circumstance and the therefore participants' collective involvement. A political act in metaphor, the *Collective Body* points to new alternatives for the production of experiences and the emancipatory possibility for an individual in a collective action. LC's intention in her entire phase of *Collective Body* experiments (*Túnel*, *Canibalismo*, *Baba antropofágica*, *Rede de elásticos*, etc.) was to strengthen the link between art and politics.

Both LC's and HO's experimental work centered on questioning the meaning of modern art after its comfortable accommodation in the uncomfortable class division of capitalist society. The fact is that both LC and HO adhered to anti-art and with it aimed for a position as non-artists. They sought a new dimension of aesthetics that would escape the weariness of the experiences of modernism. On the one hand, HO turned to questioning elite art and introduced contact with popular art, especially samba, into his artistic solutions. On the other hand, LC began to produce sensory experiences linked to therapeutic mediation and a concern with psychic research. The experiences they produced attempted to break down the division between art and everyday life, art and life, in order to recompose human existence to a higher level of life.

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Article received: May 14, 2024

Article accepted: July 15, 2024

Review article