

## METHODOLOGY IN VISUAL POETICS

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**ABSTRACT:** The insertion of artists in the research in Visual Poetics in different Visual Arts postgraduate programs promotes a process of blending of these agents' role. The combination of artist and researcher presents a need to build adequate methodologies to the objectives of this study field. To this construction were used different elements: the fundamental work of Marcel Duchamp, the concept of performance and the critical discussion on the theme and thesis and dissertations done by artists/authors who proposed inciting methodologies in post graduation in the visual poetics' field.

**KEYWORDS:** Methodology. Visual poetics. Performance

## INTRODUCTION

“Obviously, many of these data are of doubtful worth, and my interpretations — especially of some of them — may certainly be questionable, but I assume that a loose speculative approach to a fundamental area of conduct is better than a rigorous blindness of it.” (Goffman, 1963).

The research on Visual Poetics is characterized as a field dedicated to projects and works within the field of visual arts, especially the development of poetics and researches on artistic processes,<sup>1</sup> be them theoretical of experimental, using different kinds of support. This guideline aims to develop the investigation and reflection of the mode of production from the relationship between procedures and languages, seeking to effectively contribute to the practice,

<sup>1</sup> Definition of the area of Concentration in Visual Poetics at the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at School of Communication and Arts in University of São Paulo. Available in: <<http://www.pos.eca.usp.br/index.php?q=pt-br/node/57#arvi>>. Accessed in: Dec 30 2010.

analysis and construction of knowledge of the artistic production and its contemporary manifestations.<sup>2</sup>

Within this profile, this line of research becomes a legitimate space where artists have been involved in the condition of researchers with big methodological challenges, once they seek to articulate their personal poetics inside an academic structure, and also through the complexity that trespasses the production of an academic writing volume.

Lancri (2002) stresses that the writing of the text that accompanies the poetic research has to seek the biggest possible precision in thought, without, nevertheless, rationalize art. That means to situate the production and not merely try to explain it, relating theory to artistic practice.

Nevertheless, the starting line of the research is obligatorily located in the student's artistic or visual practice, with the questioning it contains and the *problematics* it rises. [...] The part that deal with artistic or visual practices, *always personal*, has to have the same importance of the written part of the thesis to which it is not only juxtaposed, but rigorously articulated [...]. (Lancri, 2002, p. 19-18).

Pohlmann (2008) also contributed to the discussion when assuring that, in the research of visual arts, there is an uninterrupted flow between practice and theory that attempts not to “mingle” one to the other, but to “link” them in a two-way modulations and articulations. Contemporary art presupposes more doubts than answers, and, in this sense, the research in Visual Poetics allows for the proposal of experimental methodologies. Quoting Ribeiro (n.d.), “it is necessary to establish principles of formation that don't put obstacles in experimentation”.

According to Plaza (1996), to think and/or do art in the university field means the establishment of live laboratories with no inflexible scientific aesthetics or a dichotomy between knowing and doing. What exists, in reality, are “intertextual interlacements of science and art” (p.26).

This article aims to conceptually explore the theme of methodologies inside the Visual Poetics research beginning from these assumptions, in a way that offers artists and researchers the necessary material for

<sup>2</sup> This is the aim of the Major in Visual poetics of the Graduate Program in Arts from University of Campinas. Available in: <<http://www.iar.unicamp.br/pg/art.sobre.curso2007.php?id=2>>. Accessed in: Dec 30 2010.

the construction of creative methodologies.<sup>3</sup> The article begins with an analysis of the concept of performatives in order to understand the different actions used as an artistic resource in contemporary times. Following that, the relationship between the artist and the discursive elements is presented as in Marcel Duchamp's work. These approaches conceptually support the discussion that deals with the distribution of inflexible roles in cultural context, focusing on the pluralization of the artist's role. The conclusion presents methodologies specific to the research of contemporary artists in different post graduation programs in Visual Poetics.

### I – DUCHAMP/AUSTIN

The practice of performatives gradually becomes more relevant when it deals about the broadening of the contemporary artist's operation field. The number of artists whose work is realized through documents, published articles, books, testimonials, speeches, lectures, courses, classes and talks is increasing.

The concept of performatives was first introduced by J. L. Austin, the English philosopher and linguist. His article "How to Do Things With Words" draws attention to a characteristic displayed in some instances of speech. According to Austin, in these moments, "to say something is to do something" (1962, p. 147). Commissive speech act can have the same characteristics that "to do" has. An example of this is the ceremonial act of marriage, which involved the affirmation "I do". According to Austin (1962), such an affirmation is more than acceptance or declaration, once we are, on uttering such words, "doing something, [...] rather than simply reporting" (p.147). The logical step is to analyze the cultural field under this perspective, just like Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson (1999), who indicate the method of performatives as a tool for the study of visual culture:

Adopting the notion of performativity as a critical strategy within the study of visual culture thus enables a recognition of interpretations as a fragile, partial, and precarious affair and, ultimately, affords a critique of art criticism and art history as they have been traditionally practiced. (p.2).

Thus, artistic unfoldings can be viewed as a condition of performatives:

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This discussion is the result of a dialogic construction made during the author's PhD studying in Visual Poetics at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, under Prof. Dr. Ana Maria Tavares's supervision.

[...] artistic meaning can be understood as enacted through interpretive engagements that are themselves performative in their intersubjectivity. Thus, the artwork is no longer viewed as a static object with a single, prescribed signification, that is communicated unproblematically and without default from the maker to an alert, knowledgeable, universalized viewer. (p.1).

The study of performatives conveys something that was hidden before, that is, the way speech acts are promoted and distributed in order to become part of a social body.

Performative acts transport the artists to a Duchampian terrain, in a contemporary context in which the discursive element is integrated to contemplate and stagger delimitations of visual arts fields.

This amplification is also related to the breaking of boundaries regarding the contemporary artist's work within the cultural system in which writing plays a new role.

Marcel Duchamp is a discursive articulator, especially regarding the ready-mades, his most powerful works of art, *Fountain* in particular. The artist tried in vain to exhibit this work, under the name "R. Mutt", but it was turned down by the Society for Independent Artists' annual exhibition in New York. When *The Blind Man* published a picture of the *Fountain*, Duchamp revealed himself to be its author, also revealing to the public his letter to the Society's committee, pointing that mutt "created a new thought for that object" (Duchamp in Tompkins, 2004, p. 208). Through this act, Duchamp appropriated from discursive methods with affirmation tools of his operations, arousing an uproar in the art circle (Peled, 2007).

Duchamp encourages a state of mind that allows the analysis of his work in its own context. The operation that involved the insertion of ready-mades is contextually and discursive-based, which is important for the art production that followed and for its relationship towards performatives. The performative and discursive aspect becomes a reference to the contemporary tendency manifested in the fictional chink that Robert Mutt has unveiled.

Together with another work, *The large glass*, Duchamp presented a box with drawings, notes and writings that complement his project. In this way, the artist adds one more procedural chink<sup>4</sup> in the work of art format.

Foster (1996), in his analysis on Duchamp, states that up to this day there are only a few able to accept the status of art as a

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*The large glass* actually chinked while being transported to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Duchamp incorporated it in the work.

social symbol mixed to other symbols in productive systems of value, power and prestige (p. 140). The role of the artist and his formats of affirmation end up receiving a new push from Duchamp, definitively modifying the arts field<sup>5</sup> and overcoming Kant's view of the independent beauty (De Duve, 1996).

## 2 — PLURALISM

Supported by the historical foundations of the academism, a great portion of undergraduate courses in Visual Arts in Brazil still maintain the separation between technical competences, inserting the students in the arts field through specific formalities of sculpture, painting, engraving, drawing, among other areas. Even digital art and performance, despite its essentially hybrid conditions, are being framed as new categories in the context of academic education. However, in contemporary practice, this separatist view is gradually becoming abandoned. Except for digital/technological art exhibits, we rarely see an exhibit that separates areas based on technic. Nowadays, the idea of supporting the argument of formal purity seems outdated. Harrison and Wood (2003) show that the modernistic projection has also failed in the separation projected between the roles of an artist and a critic, according to which it used to be supposed that “the artist were a ‘disarticulated maker’ in whose name the critic presented intelligent meanings and explanations” (p. 207).

Another form of resistance, now regarding the artist as researcher, is the one approached in Ferreira e Cotrim's (2006) publications of texts by artists, which emphasize this opposition to the use of statements and quotes by artists regarding the modernist theory. The texts not only integrate to the poetic of each work as they also invade the fields of critical discourse and art history.

This resistance agrees with the adoption of precise boundaries and distinct roles of the agents in the artistic field, and is a defended position in a debate<sup>6</sup> during which the questioning of the artist's

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Since Duchamp, the relationship between art and writing gains momentum in literature. Mallarmé, the poet, explored the notion of spaciality used also in concrete poetry. In visual arts, writing appears in conceptual art, in Fluxus instructions and works/publishings and multiples.

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Mention to the round table *Trópico na Pinacoteca: arte e universidade*, in July 26, 2004, at Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo. The event welcomed Carla Zaccagnini (artist) and Tadeu Chiarelli (professor at ECA/USP, art historian and curator at MAM/SP) and was coordinated by Lisette Lagnado. Retrieved in Feb 7, 2010, in: <<http://pphp.uol.com.br/tropico/html/textos/2379,1.shl>>.

competency for cognitive and critic rigor, suggesting that the specialized critic's position is like a putative neutral and more qualified arbitrator. Such stance tends to project paternal gestures towards the artist against a bureaucratization of himself in contact with the academic system.

The English artist John Latham is relevant to the content explored above. In 1966, Latham carried out a project called *Still and chew*. He rented Modern art critic Clement Greenberg's<sup>7</sup> *Art and Culture* from St. Martin's School of Arts' library, in London, where he taught classes. After that, he asked his pupils to chew pages from the book, and then spit the resulting pulp into a vial. The collected pulp was subsequently distilled using various chemical processes. When Latham received a notice from the library to bring the book back, he brought the vial, labeled “essence of Greenberg”.<sup>8</sup> The transformation of writing made by the artist is a contesting act regarding the stately ideologies projected by Modern art critics of the time, and also shows a bodily integration, a form of artistic digestion of writing in a yet unseen and creative form, in which a discursive critic context is incorporated and transformed by the artist. Nowadays, artists perform a variety of activities in the cultural field,<sup>9</sup> taking on the roles of curators, critics or publishers. Ricardo Basbaum's (2010) concept of “etc.-artist” is suitable to stress forms of roles that valorize aspects of critic and metalanguage which are activated by possible interacements in roles in the art field.

When an artist is a full-time artist, we should call her/him an “artist-artist” when the artist questions the nature and function of her/his role, we should write “etc.-artist” (so we can imagine several categories: curator-artist, writer-artist, activist-artist, producer-artist, agent-artist, theoretician-artist, therapist-artist, teacher-artist, chemist-artist, etc.). (p. 1).

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Clement Greenberg (1961) argued for a pure maintaining of areas within the field of art, describing them as fields of distinct abilities, connected to its technical supports. His theory argued for the exclusion of political content from art and spread the supremacy of abstract expressionism as a new step in art history.

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This action led the artist to receive a dismissal letter from the school. His work was acquired and is part of the collection catalog at MoMA, New York. More data on this operation can be found in Paul Schimmel's “Leap in to the void” (1998).

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Kester (2004) suggests that one should bring the art of an object's aesthetics to a dialogic context in the form of a “performative interaction”. (p.10).

A dichotomous view on the artist's roles in the field of art do not seem to correspond to the free-flowing conditions of the contemporary artist. The cultural field became a complicated context with many interlacements in which all agents play a variety of roles. In this context, the Visual Poetics artist can play a dynamic role.

### 3 – THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH IN VISUAL POETICS

In the last two decades, the presence of artists with contemporary productions in a line of research regarding Visual Poetics in Brazilian universities allowed the emergence of some proposals that stimulated reflections on new methodological possibilities that will be highlighted further on here. Some quotes on the utilized methodologies were presented literally in order to demonstrate the precise and specific form of these articulations.

The intention of this inclusion is to present a panorama and offer creative fomentation to artists and supervisors who face the challenge of production in the field of Visual Poetics, in which the construction of a specific methodology becomes very pertinent.

#### 3.1 – “Would you like to participate in an artistic experience? (+NBP)”

Artists who present in their work a discursive aspect and already operate artistically in a widened context of art seem to enjoy a certain easiness to establish a more flowing interlacement regarding the academic context of Visual Poetics. An example of this is the artist Ricardo Basbaum, who transformed the title of his thesis in a question and a proposition. To Basbaum (2008, p. 9), the thought is “loaded of a plastic potential”, explained chemically in physical processes. In his thesis, the artist describes a complex methodology, in which movements between plasticity, text, functionality and self-questioning are highlighted.

The research is developed in two complementary parts: firstly, the notion of *Künstlertheorie* or artists theory is established, as an working procedure that involves at the same time the production of texts and artworks, articulating theory and practice from the standard of a plastic-discursive rotation system; secondly, it is elaborated what might be considered the theory of the Would you like to participate in an artistic experience? project, with the use of the so-called artists writing. A new narrative is brought forward, with the use of several preexisting writings, articulating visual and discursive forms. As a result, a text is produced, one

that is inscribed as artists theory (*Künstlertheorie*); at the same time, it inquires about the possibilities of its functioning as a work of art. (p.4).

Michael Lingner's “Artist's Theories” deals about Basbaum's relationship with writing and “takes from that a productive relational game” (p.15). In this narrative of a historical journey beginning with the movement to artist's independence in Romanticism, Lindgner separates the relationship of the artist with writing in three steps: constitutive, integrative and performative.

The first step stems from the detaching of the artists' from Classicism, time in which the artists' text was separate from the work. An example of that is painter Philipp Otto Runge's work. After that, a new condition of the artist in Modernity is shown, which happens when a new relation of integration in which discursive layers become important. Such a relation can be perceived in artists like Wassily Kandinsky and Marcel Duchamp. The last step is based on Conceptual Art as represented by artist Joseph Kosuth, which demonstrates a complete integration of the work with theory. Kosuth (*apud* Osborne, 2002, p. 27), in the end of the 60's, stated that “All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually”. Basbaum shows that, even if one tried to detach oneself from Greenberg's formalism, Kosuth's conceptual art took on a sort of writing formalism that the artist tries to overcome in his artistic project.

The artist as researcher seeks to solve the problem of delimitations of academic context on stating that his thesis wants to “[...] account for some presence as a work of art in its actual condition as a conceptual-plastic aggregate, crossed by a discursive field” (Basbaum, 2008, p. 16).

It seems like Basbaum is replying to the critics aforementioned on the artist in a line of research in Visual Poetics when he states that his writing does not seek to occupy the position of critic of itself and also not to create a critic text, but to be permeated by it in the search of “relations of alteration” (p.20).

#### 3.2 – *Lugares moles*

In *Lugares moles* [soft places, in free translation], his master's thesis, Jorge Menna Barreto (2007) presents content on the sense of the term *site specific*. The artist presents the goals of his methodology:

This research's goal is to fold the concept implied in the term on the word itself, that is, to defend the idea that the expression

“site specific”, and that, therefore, its utilization in other contexts and languages that do not belong to it from the start have to suffer some sort of elaboration or translation. The site specific is not understood only as a subject, but as an approach method of the thesis itself as a specific site where it is possible to propose an artistic operation. (Barreto, 2007, p.10).

The author uses neologisms such as “texterritoriality” [in free translation of *texterritorialidade*] to deal about contexts of translation in which he inserts his invention (p.8).

The thesis is crossed by graphic interventions that the author designates as negative method; lines that, marked over writing,<sup>10</sup> indicate a “contextual transposition” (p. 17).

First, the research presents the context of works regarding the *site specific* realized by the artist and designated as “happened”. Next, he proposes the “unhappened”, utilizing for this end many authors and realizing one of the most creative operations of the thesis: a fictional debate, in which Barreto converses with various authors connected to the theme proposed by him<sup>11</sup> and presents critics and artists, alive and dead, translating their sayings as if they were in a round table with an exchange of ideas that builds the moment’s specificity. Thus, the texts gain voice through their interpretations and the living ones talk to the dead:

Note that the authors’ names are striked through in accordance to the negative method described in the beginning of this thesis.

This indicates that the sayings are a free and experimental version of the original speech, for a specific usage in this imagined situation. Therefore, they should not be referenced historiographically. The exception here is the insertion of Paulo Reis made directly in the text by the author himself. (Barreto, 2007, p.02).

<sup>10</sup>

This graphic operation alludes to Joseph Kosuth and his operations on writing in installations and artworks. For instance, in the exposed artwork *Here is an example* (1987), the act of self-annulment refers to a restatement of his own writing’s sense.

<sup>11</sup>

The aforementioned book comprising essays by artists, edited by Ferreira & Cotrim (2006, p. 9) was put together as a space to “suggest possible dialogues of a wide variety of voices” and combines essays by Brazilian artists with canons from the 60’s and 70’s, thus forming a discursive dialogue between them. This publication alludes to a similar operation to Barreto’s, albeit sans the invenite element inserted by the artist through a fictional conversation.

This action puts in evidence the contextual translation operated within a discursive field of art in which ideas transform in each context of use.

In 2010, Barreto’s master’s thesis’ published version began to be sold in the project *Loja* by researcher Regina Melim as an artwork/publication.

### 3.3 – *Bookwork*

The developed flexibility of the format of a thesis volume can be seen as the beginning of the deconstruction of the covered academic standard. The relationship between text and the artist’s book<sup>12</sup> becomes pertinent. In this context, the volume of writing becomes an object of art correlated to the poetic of the artist. The artist’s poetic coherence seeks to find its measure of coherence. Vitor Cesar, Carla Zaccagnini e Ana Maria da Silva de Araújo Tavares made this kind of operation.

Artist Vitor Cesar defended his thesis *Artista é público* [Artist is public, in free translation] in 2009, and his methodology was presented as thus:

As my methodology to examine such questions, I thought about my experience as an artist together with a theoretical approach. Thus, the thesis’ structure is divided in two cores: the first presents a cut in my artistic journey that problematizes the form of text as middleman to the thesis reader and the realized artistic proposals. The second comprehends a theoretical contextualization that discusses the manner through which the transformations of artistic practices during the XX century approach the concept of public and public sphere, with Hannah Arendt as a reference, following an attempt to draw such questions near to the Brazilian context. The text presented here is, by its turn, a graphic conforming that intends to visually establish the conceptual connections of this methodological process. (Cesar, 2009, p. 7).

The structure of Cesar’s thesis is established from the two distinct and crossing cores presented separately. The first one approaches the artist’s artistic production; the second one “crosses”, using his own term [“atravessa”, in the original Portuguese version] his production.

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Paulo Silveira’s book *A página violada* (2001) is a reference that specifically explores the format of artistic book, a gradually more common operation in Visual Poetics projects.

In the researcher's words: "even if the parts are presented separately, it bears reminding that these are layers of a manner of working that overlap and permeate among themselves" (p. 16).

In the chapter "How to transform obstacles? In what manner to write about works?", Cesar thinks about the impossibility of a neutral presentation: "this thesis is an object that seeks to establish a mediation between the reader and the projects that happened, therefore, at the same time it seeks to be a bridge between the two of them, it also constitutes as an obstacle between them" (p. 21). In the chapter "Addressees (fragmented reportings of a public)", through testimonials, Cesar brings a reflection by the public on his work, showing the problematics and gaps that emerge from the communicative act of the artwork. To differentiate between these testimonials, he typed the text using different font types, so as to individualize each quote. The testimonials are anonymous, a strategy that puts them as possible fictional characters created by the artist about his own work.

Cesar, who is also a graphic designer, made entire insertions in his original formatting of texts by other artists, like Felix Torres and Hélio Oiticica, allowing an integration of these artists' writing's visuality in his own work. His thesis is very visual, which contributed to the construction of a spaciality that is present in writing. This context is connected to the historical reference of French poet Stéphane Mallarmé's literary work *Un Coup de Dés*, highlighted by Campos et alii (1974); a poetic symbol where word gained a compositional dimension in the blank page, becoming a composition implanted in the territorialist boundaries of paper, distributed as objects in an installation. This proximity between writing and visual arts has been gradually more explored since the beginning of Modernity and its more radically used in Brazilian concrete poetry.

To sum up, one can state that, in the field of plastic arts, word gains mobility and is moved to the space. The digital era tools allow word to gain yet other dimensions, in a format that is even more explored, called hypertext. It offers a non-linear context of reading, connecting verbal and non-verbal in a multi-sequence condition, thus allowing for a new form of text experience (Landow, 1997). Through its use, the presentation of academic works can become more flexible or even let go of printed forms, specially if you use the hypermedia language.

According to Salgado (2008), hypermedia allows for a more complicated reading form. The author presents the potential and limitation of this language:

Therefore, the hypermedia language bring with it potential to the articulation of sound, visual and verbal languages in a non-hierarchical way in an yet unseen form in history. However, despite the technological conditions required for hypermedia to establish itself, the ways that solidify day by day are gradually more distant from these possibilities. (p. 6).

In this author's view, one of the problems presented in the usage of hypermedia is shown when "the aspects of language are in the background, since the designers were deviated from the projectual action to technical action" (p. 7).

In her thesis *A obra como lugar do texto, o texto como lugar da obra* ["The artwork as a place of text, the text as a place of the artwork", in free translation] Carla Zaccagni (2004) clarifies that her projects "aims to be an analysis of a part of my artistic production simultaneously, an artistic project that is not realized in no other support beyond these pages" (p. 1).

The thesis is presented in two volumes of writings stuck by the same binding. The volumes are separated when one open the thesis in order to read it and, at the same time, they overlap each other, suggesting the possibility of a double reading, or a simultaneous one of both parts of the text.<sup>13</sup>

The presented texts were written by the author and by art critic Santiago García Navarro. When interviewed by Ribeiro (s.d.), Zaccagnini explained that her thesis "emerged from the comprehension that text is, by definition, the matter of academic work. And the result only brings texts, but no images". The artist and the critic collaborated through the description of each work the artist sent him:

The critic responded with insertions in this descriptive text. From there comes the double binding: in has his text printed in a transparent sheet, which fits my text, printed in paper. My text is his thesis' body and his is an annex — this is the only way with which I could insert the text of another person in my work. But the idea is, of course, for you to reader the hybrid text, formed by both writings. (Zaccanini in Ribeiro, s.d.).

<sup>13</sup>

This choice of page overlapping makes reference to the project that Latham installed at the front of *Flat Time House* in 2003, called *Book Sculpture*, related to his attempt to unite science and art. More in: <<http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/latham/furtherresources.shtml>>. Retrieved in May 7, 2011.

The formatting of the volumes corresponds to the aspect of “interpenetration” of the critical text by the artist’s and vice-versa. Besides that, the text’s right part (that of the critical discourse, that is) is printed over transparent acrylic, a choice that allowed for part of the text from former pages to be visible (to a certain point; the text is made gradually opaque, as if the ideas only gained focus insofar as the text is read). In this way, Zannagnini offers different forms of penetration of her text.

In her doctoral thesis, *Armadilhas para os sentidos: uma experiência no espaço-tempo da arte* [Traps for the senses: an experience in art’s time-space, in free translation], the artist Ana Maria da Silva de Araujo Tavares (2000, p. 45) states that “the research’s work emerges from germinative preoccupations: to whom the work is done for, who is the subject of the artwork? To focus in these questions meant not only to include what pertains to the artist’s subjectivity, but, overall, to be conscious of the system in which art is inserted”. Following this, Tavares widens the textual volume to a spatial contextual dimension. In her thesis’ blank cover, one can find a round convex mirror that reflect the environment (in this case, ECA/USP’s library), as if a transit mirror, in which the work’s peripheries, normally imperceptible, gain visibility.

Such strategy of the usage of a mirror that reflects the library in which other publications can be found impossibilitates the separation from the object/thesis of other thoughts also present. The reflection of the mirror ends up also integrating other crossings, once many thesis works present in the same library were written by artists supervised by professor and artist Ana Tavares. As a traffic light warning, the mirror’s convex shape in the thesis becomes a warning about the reader’s condition, contaminated by writing.

### 3.4 – Fictionality

Some graduation thesis focus on the question of fictionality that has already appeared in aforementioned projects that go through any writing.

Dora Longo Bahia’s masters’ thesis created a Brazilian-inspired version of Marcel Duchamp, named in Marcelo do Campo’s thesis. This strategy corresponds to Thomas McEvilley’s statement that everything we might say about an artwork that is not neutral description of aesthetic properties is an attribution of content (1991, p. 70). Methodology is the fictional game the artist creates for the readers, a game inside of which readers that have not been informed will be at risk. The abstract already puts doubt on Marcelo’s destiny when Longo Bahia presents his birth date together with the date of his

supposed disappearing. The narrative presented by the researcher brings the reader to mistrust the forms of legitimation of art and artist, the informative genuineness and the creation of the artist myth. The artist figure becomes an entity created by the “field”; thus, Marcelo’s surname becomes even more pertinent (in the sense of valorization or disappearing) inside a cultural field.

The thesis’ introduction questions the limits of art. This is a tip for justifying Longo Bahia’s option to use the fictional aspect of writing and photographic documentation manipulated by her. The operation reverberates inside the differentiation used by Auslander (2006) to distinguish forms of spreading the performance. One of them was called “documental”; the other is a “fictional” category. The documental tendency consists in using pictures of performances that give an impression of genuineness about something that happened, a record of a “real” happening. The other — fictional — takes on the invention that lives in every photography, but as a fabricated scenic construction. Something like Yves Klein did when assembling images in his work *Leap into the void* (1960). According to Longo Bahia, every artwork is a state of suspension between reality and its representation. Thus, she explores in her text the artwork’s nature’s relationship in artists like Smithson and Duchamp, as well as the usage of heteronyms by artists like Duchamp and Fernando Pessoa.

Longo Bahia’s work, presented as being authored by Marcelo do Campo, operates within a chink of representation of scientific text that is allowed by the area of Visual Poetics. The foundation of a supposed scientific truth is manipulated. The artist uses varied forms of affirmation to build the figure of Marcelo do Campo, as in the following paragraph:

I first got in touch with his work while researching informations on the Vila Nova Artigas project for the new FAU building at USP.

Together with Artigas’ plans, I found some heliographic copies of drawings with the following saying: plan modified by Marcelo do Campo. The drawings where frequently absurd, for they contradicted the rules of architecture. (Longo Bahia, 2009, p.18).

Campo’s action, on changing the structural roles of the plan and manipulating the building that becomes untenable, is equivalent to the construction of Longo Bahia’s methodology that modifies the structure of the traditional academic writing’s premises, as well as its fundamentals based in a supposed truth.

Some creative moments happen in the thesis when the artist integrates with Marcelo do Campo’s artwork, creating a “state of

suspension between situations and judgements” (p. 24). Trought the black and white video (*Ambiência 2*, *Ambiance 2* in free translation), presented as having been produced in 1971, Longo Bahia appears lying in a still pose resistant to a supposed torture by a masked figure that has now become dominant. It is almost inevitable to conclude that Longo Bahia’s torturer is the ghost created by herself, who becomes more powerful.<sup>14</sup>

Longo Bahia emphasizes Marcelo de Campo’s disappearing in obscurity of south Brazil:

In the end of the year of 1975, disillusioned with where Brazilian society was head for, Marcelo do Campo abandons his artistic investigations. He moves to Florianópolis to dedicate himself to surf and to beekeeping. Since then there have been no news of his whereabouts. (Longo Bahia, 2009, p. 26).

Recently, it was discovered that Marcelo do Campo changed his name when he was a refugee in Florianópolis. He became known in his neighbourhood as Marcelinho do Campeche. Marcelinho, involved in surf and beekeeping, continued to produce art and part of his production was realized in a collaborative way with other artists. Some of these works, recently discovered, were exhibited in *Espaço de Performance Contemporâneo*,<sup>15</sup> in Florianópolis, in 2011.

In a dialogue with Longo Bahia’s proposal, artist Marilá Dardot’s thesis is made of three parts. Its second volume, named *Volume outro* [“Another volume”, in free translation], demonstrates that the thesis also came from the creation of a character. In the first volume, Dardot developed the figure of collector Duda Miranda, whose collection is made of works he reproduced himself.

The collector’s text reveals how to remake and recreate works from memory. The list of works that appears in the text’s sequence corroborates this operation, once under every title by him there is the addition of “by Duda Miranda”, together with both dates, the original’s and the remake’s.

The introduction is built in a discourse based in academic research and presents the collector’s action’s meaning.

In this sense, Duda Miranda Collection’s works would be considered fake. But we don’t consider Duda Miranda as a fake in the normal sense of this term, because he does not intend to deceive nobody; he does not intend to obtain profit with his pieces (art as a commodity). (Dardot, 2003, p. 9).

Dardot’s methodology contemplates a relationship with what’s true and makes the collector’s invention a tool for discussing about ownership and the value of art. The proposal also approaches the collection within the reader’s body and mind. Dardot offers an expanding of this reader’s figure when he provokes as thus: “you can also be Duda Miranda” (2003, p.38).

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The artistic forms of hereby presented researches demonstrate the variety of possibilities to the construction of instigating methodologies in the context of Visual Poetics. This may be one of the most important contributions to artists’ engaging in academy.

The context is certainly a challenge that goes beyond the standard academic format and any easiness to choose and elaborate a theme. The proposal of Visual Poetics programs requires the complexification of the relationship between the roles of researcher, supervisor and the chosen theme, as well as an expansion and diversification of the methodology proposal that should be explored in such a program. A graduation program in Arts that contemplates artists promotes the creation of free flowing relationships that problematize a separation between theory and practice. In some of these research’s contexts, the artist as researcher/member of the academy is put in a situation that allows for a performative platform, a structured context for research and an expectation for creative superation of formerly established rules.

<sup>14</sup>

In 2010, Marcelo do Campo is presented as one of the artists at the exhibition *Por aqui, formas tornaram-se atitudes*, curated by Josué Matos, inaugurated at SESC Vila Mariana on November 30th, 2010.

<sup>15</sup>

From: <<http://www.dobbra.com/terreno.baldio/contemporao.htm>>.

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## CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIONS

The images in this article are placed in its Portuguese version (all pictures by Yiftah Peled, 2009).

Figure 1. Detail of Jorge Menna Barreto's thesis.

Figures 2 and 3. Carla Zaccagnini's thesis' details.

Figure 4. Ana Maria da Silva de Araujo Tavares' thesis, photographed with a reader, at ECA/USP's library.

Figure 5. Detail of Dora Longo Bahia's thesis.



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