

***Imagens: arte e cultura* [Images: art and culture], organized by Alexandre Santos and Ana Maria Albani de Carvalho**

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Abstract: Organization by Alexandre Santos and Ana Maria Albani de Carvalho, the book "*Imagens: arte e cultura*" (Images: art and culture) (Editora da UFRGS, 2012, 336 pages) gathers 19 articles and essays that investigate the relations between image and culture in the spheres of history, theory and criticism. The texts present studies from researchers who share interest in the reflection on the mechanical image – especially the photographic one, from its emergence in the 19th century to the present – and the later practices of image production, such as the cinema, the video and the digital. The book has as important contribution the establishment of interchanges between different approaches and research methodologies related to the phenomenon of the image.

Keywords: Photography. Image. Culture. Society. Contemporary Art.

The complex articulations between the status of the image and the field of culture in the contemporary world evoke questions and problems whose investigations gain contributions not only with interdisciplinary methodologies, but also with transversal approaches between the different areas of knowledge. A series of research studies that approach this perspective is presented in the book *Imagens: arte e cultura* (Images: art and culture) (Editora da UFRGS, 2012, 336 pages), being the result of the activities from the CNPq Research Group "The image in art and culture since modernity: history, problems and research methodologies".

Organized by Alexandre Santos and Ana Maria Albani de Carvalho, the book presents a wide and diverse set of reflections on the relations and tensions between image and culture in the fields of history, theory and criticism. The essays' authors are researchers related to different Brazilian and foreign higher education institutions, all working in three major areas of knowledge - art history, cultural history and social communication. In addition to members of the research group, the book counts with the involvement of guest researchers, all recognized for their

contributions to studies on the image in their respective areas of academic performance.

Published in 2012, *Imagens: arte e cultura* had its launch followed by a seminar, at the Goethe Institute, in Porto Alegre, on April 17th and 18th of the same year, in which the organizers and some of the guest authors participated. In this sense, everyone who participated in the meetings held over the two days had the opportunity to envision the publication as a platform formed by the combination of book and event. That is, the reading of the texts could be unfolded in the speaking of the authors who participated in the seminar, as well as in the ensuing discussions at the end of the communications.

The essays gathered in the book present studies from researchers who share interest in the reflection of the image in a broad spectrum of research areas. The line of thought that goes through the set of 19 texts in *Imagens: arte e cultura* is the reflection on the mechanical image – especially the photographic one, from its emergence in the 19th century to the present – and the later practices of image production, such as the cinema, the video and the digital.

The book was organized in six parts, proposing, with its divisions and approaches, theoretical interfaces and thematic affinities between texts. In the presentation, the organizers explain that with it they do not seek to establish an oriented reading, but to present a line of dialogues among innumerable other possibilities that extrapolate the proposed divisions. However, for the purposes of this text, we will read the texts in the form of syntheses following the path proposed by the organizers.

The first segment, "*Percursos do fotográfico*" (Paths of the photographic), is composed by a single text, by Michel Frizot, a reference on photography history and theory. In "*Fotografia: um destino cultural*" (Photography: a cultural destination), the French researcher presents a panoramic study on the development of mechanical imagery, speculating the origin of its etymology and the ways in which it became generalized by the designation of analogue and electronic processes of image capture and reproduction. By pointing out that digital has made us aware that the notion of "energy of light" is a more accurate designation to the etymology of the term, the author suggests that "photology" or

"art of light" are more appropriate terms to the nature of photography. Focusing on the impact of photography on culture since its inception in the 19th century, Frizot presents the idea of a *photographic culture* as something related to the conditioning to which we are subjected by the images, which would constitute a *photographic anthropology*. Such notion highlights the documentary aspect of the photographic and, thus, the troubled relationship with the real and its consequent role in the constitution of subjectivities, or, according to the author, of *photographic imaginaries*.

the second thematic segment, "*Realidades recriadas*" (Reconstructed Realities), the much debated question of the real in photography is unfolded with reflections proposed by three essays. In "O retrato fotográfico como alteridade: Fernando Lemos" (The photographic portrait as otherness: Fernando Lemos), Annateresa Fabris analyzes aspects of surrealism in the works of the Portuguese photographer, proposing that his procedures and results operate as a strategic line of critic action in the context of the Salazar dictatorship. On the images from Lemos, the author emphasizes how the notion of time and duration, in Bergson's terms, occurs in the relation between past and present, not as a succession but as coexistence. In the text that follows, Vesta Mónica Herrerías takes as object of study the photographic portraits of the Mexican bourgeoisie, discussing how the current generation of this bourgeoisie shows the permanence of an iconography that exalts the theatricality in the staging of the images that grant affirmation to the position that they occupy in the social hierarchy. The title of the essay, "*O escandaloso caso do retrato fotográfico da burguesia mexicana e suas convenções desalmadas*" (The scandalous case of the photographic portrait of the Mexican bourgeoisie and its soulless conventions), suggests an allegory to one of the best known works of fantastic realism by the Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez, *La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y de su abuela desalmada* (The Incredible and Sad Story of Candida Eréndira and Of his soulless grandmother) (1972). In the essay that concludes this segment, "*Fotografia e naturalismo na arte: o debate entre Francis Wey e Étienne-Jean Delécluze*" (Photography and naturalism in art: the debate between Francis Wey and Étienne-Jean Delécluze), Daniela Kern presents the questions present in the title of her text, a debate that the two critics waged in 1951 in a series of articles published in the French press. The complex relationships between photography, art, and art history

are first approached with a brief study of the change of artistic canon in France in the 19th century. Next, Daniela analyzes texts from the debate between Wey and Delécluze, identifying aspects that, nowadays, help to reflect the way in which photography influenced different positions on what would be naturalism or realism in the production of artistic images.

The third segment, "*Migrações da imagem*" (Migrations of the image), brings together four essays that present discussions about photography in contemporary art. Three of them deal with the appropriation of photographic images by contemporary artists in their creative processes. Camila Schenkel, in "*Imagem e texto: aspectos da apropriação no trabalho de Rosângela Rennó*" (Image and text: aspects of ownership on the work from Rosangela Rennó), discusses the ways in which the Brazilian artist draws upon photographic archives from different sources as one of the key elements of her poetry, casting, through her work, questions about the place of the image in contemporary culture – namely, how we relate to photographs when they are transposed and re-signified by artistic procedures. The author sets theoretical and historical frameworks on the status of photography since the 1960s, pointing to the 1980s as the period when it is absorbed by institutions and the market. However, Camila disassociates Rennó's works from this context, because, according to the author's argument, the artist does not present her images autonomously, but through objects and installations in most of her works, almost always using the feature of a series and/or hybrid procedures. By showing in her works the legacy from the conceptual art elements of the 1960s and 1970s, through the use of preexisting second-hand images combined with textual elements, Rennó distinguishes herself from the more sophisticated photography that emerges especially in the United States during 1980s. In the following essay, "*Os códigos fotográficos como aberturas de percursos fotográficos na obra de Marilice Corona*" (Photographic codes as openings for photographic paths in the work of Marilice Corona), Niura Legrant Ribeiro studies the role that photography plays in the pictorial creation process of the Brazilian artist. By investigating the language modifications that photography produced in Marilice's painting, the author analyzes the artist's different works, points out changes in the course of her poetics, and concludes that photography and painting play a circular, juxtaposed and complementary role. Such reflection signals studies that can be

developed along with other artists whose pictorial processes are related to the photographic. The third essay, "*Imagem fotográfica e ambigüidade narrativa na obra de Milton Kurtz*" (Photographic image and narrative ambiguity in the works from Milton Kurtz), by Alexandre Santos, proposes an analysis on the Brazilian artist's work from a personal agenda in which Kurtz (1951-1996) made collages with original images, for the most part, from magazines and newspapers. The author identifies in this kind of diary a source of visual references that relates to later works realized by the artist. Santos then investigates the place of the photographic image within the narrative and autobiographical ambiguity of the work of Kurtz did in the 1980s, as well as in the representation of the body, in the portrayal of intimacy, in a homoerotic bias and in the comments on the place of the individual in a consumer society. It emphasizes, therefore, the discursive specificities of personal memory in the field of photography, throwing questions about the micronarratives in the contemporary artistic procedures. The fourth essay ends the segment not by analyzing specific artists' productions, as in the previous three texts, but by reflecting the impact of the image on a broader panorama, defining the place and transits of the contemporary artist. In "*A imagem no circuito de arte global*" (The image in the global art circuit), Ana Maria Albani de Carvalho turns to the globalized artistic system providing theoretical subsidies for a critical discussion about the circulation of still and moving images in the institutional circuit. The author starts from the so-called "global turnaround" of the 1990s, situating problems arising from the worldwide proliferation of events such as fairs and biennials. Thus, it points out changes in the artistic field and the role played by new forms of production, diffusion and reception of the image in discourses in the history of art, as well as in the parameters of taste and aesthetic appreciation. In showing the preponderance of the global circulation of images, Ana Maria Albani indicates that many artists are investing in works that reflect political tensions and contemporary debates in a scenario marked by the dissolution of boundaries between the universes of high art and entertainment, as well as between the fields of art, science, technology, economics and politics, once delimited and circumscribed.

The fourth segment, "*Territórios inconstantes*" (Inconstant Territories), brings together three essays that consider the porosity of boundaries and the consequent displacement of the image, especially the photographic one, to other disciplines or fields of

knowledge. In "*A imagem fotográfica como arte informacional*" (The photographic image as informational art), Virginia Gil Araújo focuses on the use of photography by the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s and 1970s to demarcate theoretical, conceptual and historical aspects in their reflection on the impact of the relations of images in circulation – specially of photographic matrix – with communication and everyday life. By situating the different specificities that mark the Brazilian context in that period in relation to the US and Europe, the author emphasizes the montage as the "correction of reality" feature that allowed artists to engage in language games such as allegories, metaphors and serializations, resulting in artistic propositions that demonstrate certain political assemblages of art in society. In the following essay, "*Variações do tempo – mutações entre a imagem estática e a imagem-movimento*" (Time variations – mutations between static image and motion-image), Antônio Fatorelli devotes himself to an argumentation focused on hybridity and contamination between languages and contemporary artistic practices, especially on what photography and cinema borrow between themselves as well as the resulting tensions that the author designates as *complex temporalities*. Reflecting on the impact of technological innovations on the changes of aesthetic order and perception in the field of the visual arts in its crossings with other fields of culture, Fatorelli points out the insufficiency of modernist values of purity, specificity and autonomy in face of contemporary projects and artwork. The essay "*A imagem entre a arte e a ciência*" (The image between art and science)", by Rosana Horio Monteiro, brings a reflection on the panorama of collaborative productions of contemporary art, focusing on the complex transits between artistic practices and scientific laboratories. The text provides an ethical discussion on the ways in which artistic status is given to scientific images originally conceived as non-art. This segment of reflections concludes with a text dedicated to practices in the sphere of digital art. In "*Arte contemporânea: a experiência da presença nas instalações interativas de Anna Barros*" (Contemporary art: the experience of the presence in the interactive installations of Anna Barros), Nara Cristina Santos has as a starting point the nanoart research of the Brazilian artist to discuss the need for interdisciplinary criteria in the task of seizing works that use digital technology for artistic purposes. In this sense, the author shows that the examination of the works from Anna Barros (1932-2013) points to the need

for articulations between different areas of knowledge, such as neuroscience, nanotechnology, anthropology, philosophy, technology and art. Before the interactive video installations of the artist, Nara Cristina examines the experience of the presence confronting theoretical frameworks on the different notions of *participative activities* and *interactive activities*, both fundamental for the apprehension of the productions in digital art.

The fifth segment, "*Fronteiras do visível*" (Frontiers of the visible), brings together three essays dealing with image issues in their representations of cultural and social. Roberto Conduru, in "*Imagens-corpos na fotoplástica de Mário Cravo Neto*" (Image-bodies in the photoplasty of Mário Cravo Neto), takes works of the photographer that operate in the limits of allegorical staging and photodocumental ethnography. In dealing with images that depart from representations of Afro-Brazilian religions, the author points in a sensitive – and poetic – way to what is presented as invisible and unrepresentable and to what may or may not be communicated of the rituals in *candomblé terreiros* by means of capture of the photographic image with artistic intentions. In the following essay, "*Arte e imagem como construção de memórias familiares da pós-ditadura argentina*" (Art and image as a construction of family memories of the Argentine post-dictatorship," Rodrigo Montero discusses the traumatic theme of dictatorial military regimes in Latin America, investigating their implications for the practices of Argentine artists. Through works from the 1990s that use memory images of times of repression, the author identifies practices from artists who offer contemporary political responses and reflections to the context of persecution, torture and assassinations of state terrorism. They are works built not by images recovered from the pinnacle of the period of violence, but from the moment of decadence and ruin of the military regime. In this sense, the author identifies the return of the intimate drama, previously diluted in collective drama by the need to account for the socialization of images, representations and discourses that, at first, was necessary for the unification of movements and initiatives to demand for truth and justice. This perspective from the familiar intimate drama is dynamized by the political and judicial context favorable to historical corrections, to the co-presence of different generations and, consequently, to the mosaic of different reports, memories and experiences about the Argentine military dictatorship. Finally, the essay "*Estética da violência: imagens*

de prazer e dor em Francis Bacon" (Aesthetics of violence: images of pleasure and pain in Francis Bacon), from Fabio Parode, presents a reflection about the ways in which pleasure and pain are represented within the art. From the conceptual contributions of Deleuze and Guattari, the author comments on the aesthetics of violence taking as object of analysis the artistic process and the speech from the artist Francis Bacon.

Imagens: arte e cultura closes up with the sixth segment, "*Narrativas do imaginário*" (Narratives of the imaginary), which brings together four essays that discuss relations between art and culture, focusing on issues that cross the disciplines of communication, anthropology and history. The essays take the world of images as an object of study or as a methodological tool to illuminate certain reflections. As common ground, the texts collected in this segment are dedicated to the examination of the cultural and artistic scene of Rio Grande do Sul – especially Porto Alegre – throughout the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century. This is a crucial period for the transition from an eminently agropastoral society to a more urbanized society, in the process of entering a process of modernization, including artistic modernity, without neglecting the late aspect of this regional stage in relation to other capitals of Brazil. In "*Porto Alegre pitoresca e bucólica: narrativas fotográficas urbanas dos irmãos Ferrari*" (Picturesque and bucolic Porto Alegre: urban photographic narratives from the Ferrari brothers," Zita Rosane Possamai examines the one that is the first album of photographs of urban views of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, produced at the end of the 19th century by the Ferrari Brothers, Italians who settled in the city and used to sign their photographs with the name of the studio, without needing individual authorship. In presenting a brief overview of the process of popularization and massification of photography in Porto Alegre, the author analyzes images from the album, identifying the construction of a photographic narrative that captures the city and its natural landscape in transition to an environment in the process of urbanization with the first large streets and buildings. Next, the essay "*Os usos das imagens na construção das práticas culturais: as fotogravuras do público do cinema na revista Kodak*" (The uses of images in the construction of cultural practices: the photographs of the cinema audience in Kodak magazine), by Alice Trusz, uses the images from the aforementioned publication to point out the formation of a public meeting space in Porto Alegre

because of the pioneering projection rooms. The author presents a series of historical aspects from the implantation and development of street cinemas in the city, highlighting the increments of urban sociabilities stimulated by the cinema sessions and the circulation of illustrated magazines that covered social encounter situations with images and texts. Analyzing editions from the "Kodak" magazine published between 1913 and 1914, Alice takes its images as a documentary support to analyze the cinema as a social and cultural phenomenon that generates situations of encounter, and, therefore, forms publics and sociabilities. In the following essay, "*Visualidade urbana moderna nas revistas ilustradas brasileiras dos anos 1920*" (Modern urban visuality in Brazilian illustrated magazines from the 1920s), Charles Monteiro dedicates himself to the magazines "Madrugada" and "Mascara", both published in Porto Alegre. The author reflects on the place and status of photography in the processes of modernization, with special attention to the elaboration of a new modern urban visuality and the process of diffusion of new cultural codes and forms of sociability. In presenting researches that focus on the theme at the national level, the author highlights a regional peculiarity: the high level of illiteracy in the local society in the 19th century, which indicates the importance acquired by pictorial magazines based on images. Already in the first decades of the 20th century, explains the author, there is an expansion of the readership and, as a result, an impulse to the circulation of new magazines. Regarding the issues of "Madrugada" and "Mascara", Monteiro shows that his images portray the elaboration of new forms of sociability, of consumption and of goods related to a new urban and modern culture, being also vehicles of artistic modernism in the regional context. Finally, the essay "*O campo cultural no RS: o designer Ernst Zeuner*" (The cultural field in Rio Grande do Sul: the designer Ernst Zeuner), by Susana Gastal, analyzes the initial stage of regional modernization from Bourdieu's theory field, taking as object of study the insertion of the bookstore and publisher Globo (1883) and the *Globo Magazine* (1929), as well as the creation of Varig (1927) in the implementation of air transport in Brazil. The connections presented by the author come from Henrique Bertasso, a Globo shareholder and one of the first shareholders from Varig, to the graphic designer Ernst Zeuner, German immigrant responsible for the graphic department from Globo and the visual design from Varig. The historical panel presented by the author gives an account of the process of modernization of artistic visibility in the

local context, presenting emblematic artists from the period such as João Fahrion, Edgar Koetz, Nelson Boeira Faedrich, João Faria Vianna and Sotero Cosme.

The 19 essays assembled in *Imagens: arte e cultura* consider the strong presence of the image in a historical and contemporary perspective, from daily operations to scientific investigations, through the media and arts, without overlooking the strong impact of the massive diffusion of analog and digital imaging devices. The studies indicate that the investigations dedicated to the relations between image and culture can find dialogues with cultural studies, visual culture and the contemporary theories of photography.

The researchers who participate in the book show that in their investigative and reflexive works they do not seek to establish specific and autonomous fields of knowledge, as in modernity, but rather to recognize, at the edges of intersection and in the intersecting zones of the different domains and knowledge, conceptual and theoretical contributions in order to identify new contributions for the reflection of the complex interfaces between art and culture in their connections with the world of images. Taking account photography in its ambiguous relationship with the real and discursive fields, the studies gathered in "Imagens: arte e cultura" outline perspectives for the emergence of new bases for knowledge and understanding for modern and contemporary cultures, starting with the role of the image in these contexts.

Finally, the conception of the book has as a high point the establishment of interchanges between different reads and research methodologies related to the imaging phenomenon. By abandoning once secure frontiers in the history of art, communication and visual history, researchers rely on crossings and even overlaps between different domains. From this, there is a publication that contributes to the debate and to raise questions that can signal subsequent reflections and gaps in research on the subject of the image in different areas of knowledge, pointing out the fecundity of transversality in the face of doubts and questions that the contemporaneity offers.

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