Volume 21 Issue 19
Originally issued as A5



Global Journal of human-social science: A
Arts & Humanities - Psychology
Volume 21 Issue 5 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Curatorial Processes in the Network Environment: Practice and Contexts from the 1980s

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In the first part of the article, we will present a brief history of curatorial activity, with an emphasis on productions made in networks and on the network from the 1980s.

Keywords: networked curatorship; networked art; paço das artes; contemporary art; digital curatorship.

GJHSS-A Classification: FOR Code: 330205



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Curatorial Processes in the Network Environment: Practice and Contexts from the 1980s

Priscila Arantes

Abstract- The online environment has become an unprecedented space for the creation and diffusion of art and culture with the COVID-19 pandemic. The spread of the virus was a kind of catalyst that helped artists reach far beyond the specialized settings, proposing a series of creative and curatorial possibilities on the agenda since the emergence of the Internet. Within this context, this article aims at discussing similarities and differences in curatorial practices carried out for physical spaces and for digital environments, considering their conceptual, expographic, technological and accessibility-centered aspects for audiences.

In the first part of the article, we will present a brief history of curatorial activity, with an emphasis on productions made in networks and on the network from the 1980s. In the second part, we present a case study on four curatorships developed at Paço das Artes that were articulated in different environments, addressing the theme of memory and archive as a starting point: the exhibition *Arquivo Vivo* (2013), held in a physical space; the show *Livro/Acervo* (2010), presented in the space of the book; the digital platform in process *MaPA* (2014– currently); and the curatorial project currently underway *Ex(s)-Paços Críticos* (2020-2021), created for the online environment and puts in the same network artists who have never worked together and who represent a hybridization of generations, genders, ethnicities, territories and languages.

Keywords: networked curatorship; networked art; paço das artes; contemporary art; digital curatorship.

Part I

I. Curatorship: Displacements, New Formats and Circuits

Just as museums have been reconfiguring in the face of contemporary demands, we identify in the curatorial field, in connection with the plurality and diversity of artistic manifestations and mutations in the arts system, experimentation with new formats and exhibition circuits.

The principle of curatorial activity is directly related to the emergence of museums and the appearance of cabinets of curiosities: places where, at the time of the great expeditions and discoveries of the 16th and 17th centuries, a multitude of curiosities were collected-objects related to zoology, botany, archeology, historical and ethnographic relics, paintings and antiques.

If the work of curators originally comprised the preservation and exhibition of collections, in last decades their role has gained new outlines. The curator ceases to act only as chief conservator at a museum and starts to carry out independent projects. In this sense, there is a shift, or coexistence, of the figure of the curator as maintainer of collections and conservator/ head of museums-whose concerns regard the permanence and integrity of collections-to the curator who works with temporary exhibitions, incorporating different exhibition spaces and formats, and often imprinting an authorial view to their exhibitions.

It can be said that by the 1960s, it was the artists themselves who organized their exhibitions. In the period of modern art, for instance, we can identify the initiative of some artists to get together and put up their own exhibitions. In 1855, Gustave Courbet constructed a temporary building to show some of his paintings rejected by the Paris World Fair. And in 1863, when he had two works rejected by the Official Salon of French Artists, Manet, along with other artists, organized a show that ran parallel to the official one: the "Salon of the Refused."

Other exhibitions were organized by artists who were on the margins of the salons, or whose works were rejected by the Academies. The Salon of the Independents (*Salon des Indépendants*), for instance, is an art exhibition organized by the Society of Independent Artists, originally assembled in Paris in 1884. Bypassing the monopoly of art academies and their official salons, the society of independent artists created an annual open salon, showing all the novel trends in modern art, accessible to anyone who wanted to participate, adopting the "no jury, no awards" philosophy.

In 1942, Marcel Duchamp was invited by the Surrealists to set up two exhibitions. One took place in New York, named *First Papers of Surrealism*. The exhibition was characterized by the entangled white threads that the artist tied where the paintings were, making it difficult to walk around the gallery and to see the paintings on display.

It is by the 1960s, however, that the role of the curator and curatorship, as components for the assembling, production and dissemination of an exhibition, appears more systematically within the arts system. In the 1980s, keeping up with the flourishing of the art market and trade, the increase in temporary exhibitions and in contemporary art museums, the curator's activity undergoes a real expansion.

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Many associate the curator boom to the mutations that occurred within the arts system, for example, to the emergence of the so-called mega-exhibitions (biennials, documentas, manifestas), whose organization would be "unthinkable" without the curatorial presence.

It is important to note, however, that the expansion of curatorial practices led to the incorporation of new exhibition formats and circuits, often associated with existing parameters in the artistic production itself-some of the examples we can list are in-process curatorships, or those manifested in circuits other than "traditional" exhibition spaces (such as museums and art galleries), collaborative curatorships, networked curatorships. That is to say, the "histories" of curatorships, their formats and circuits, are closely related not only to more general issues of the arts system, but also to mutations and experimentation with new languages in the artistic practice.

The exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, by curator Harald Szeemann presented in 1969 at the Kunsthalle (Bern) was a landmark in this sense. The idea of conceiving a theme for the exhibition, in addition to being unprecedented, reversed the usual exhibition process, marking an important shift in methodology regarding the exhibition practice. Up until then, exhibitions were guided by formal, stylistic, chronological affinities, or by artists who were part of the same movement. Artworks were mostly completed, and were chosen by the curator and then exhibited. Harald Szeemann proposed a challenge to the artists. He accepted that artists presented concepts and actions that could be carried out in the exhibition space itself, or even outside of it, based on the suggested theme. The essence of the exhibition was not in the works exhibited, but in the "attitudes" arising from the creative process, "in the engagement of the artists themselves as subjective creators and in their eccentric personalities." Gesture and behavior united under one and same action.

Szeemann's motto was "take over the institution." So much so that artist Lawrence Weiner removed the plaster on one of the Kunsthalle's walls, creating a square measuring almost 90 x 90 cm, which became one of the most emblematic works of the exhibition's intentions. Joseph Beuys filled the corners of the exhibition space with his notorious lard, and Richard Long removed a piece of the Kunsthalle structure and took it for a three-day hike through the Swiss alps.

In Brazil, we cannot fail to mention the work of curator Walter Zanini in the 16th (1981) and 17th (1983) edition of the São Paulo International Biennial, which replaced the exhibition assembly with allotted spaces by countries, but also the exhibitions and proposals such as the *JACs*, *Prospectiva 74* and *Poéticas Visuais* (1977), held at MAC-USP.

At the JACs (1972), for example, Zanini not only made way for productions connected to new languages and media (xerox, video, fax), but also he allotted spaces for artists to produce their work at the museum, requesting, in the registration regulations, that artists should try to place more emphasis on the artistic process than on the finished object. *Prospectiva 74* was innovative, also in the sense of forming a *network* of well-known artists, in which each artist could invite one more and so on. This network of "friends" resulted in an exhibition featuring more than 150 artists who produced works that exceeded the limits of conventional media, such as video art and mail art. Also introducing innovative aspects, the exhibition *Poéticas Visuais* (1977) gave the public the possibility of selecting the works they would like to take home. In this exhibition, the public could obtain photocopies of the documents and works exhibited, in which the spontaneous participation of visitors potentially created numerous possible "portable exhibitions."[1]

a) Expanded Circuits: Experimentation with New Languages and the Online Exhibition Environment

It is important pointing out that in addition to the procedural aspect, the new formats, the incorporation of new languages in the field of art and curatorship, we can also notice-in connection with the practices of urban intervention, collaborative and network practices and productions in media art-the incorporation of new exhibition circuits beyond conventional spaces such as museums and art galleries.

The creation of new circuits for the circulation of exhibitions is not a discussion that is exclusive to the field of practices articulated with the online media or environments, but of a set of concerns that echoed in a series of productions-for instance, in the countless urban interventions projects or practices that value the urban environment as a stage for artistic expression.

One of these exhibitions, *Chambres d'*Amis, was formulated by the Belgian curator Jan Hoet in 1986, and had a quite daring curatorial proposal. The curator previously requested that some residents of the town of Gent, in Belgium, made their homes available so that 50 artists made interventions or installations in one or two rooms of the house. With a map in hand, visitors could knock from door to door and visit the "exhibitions", during a two-month period. The rooms used by the artists were usually living rooms, gardens and passageways, such as stairs and doors—except Daniel

[1] We must mention Seth Siegelaub, who in 1968 developed one of his most well-known curatorships in a format for publication: *Xerox Book*. For this exhibition, the curator invited seven artists (Carl André, Robert Barry, Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris and Laurence Weiner), who contributed 25 pages of works.

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Buren, who chose a couple's bedroom in which he painted red stripes on a white wall.

We can argue in this sense that the use of the network environment as an exhibition space is part of these shifts in the field of curatorship, which, attentive to the different expressions of artistic practice, proposes different formats and circuits.

On the other hand, it is important to point out that the use of networked environments to house artworks in curatorial proposals has not started with the Internet. Two exhibitions that are worth calling to mind, within this perspective, are the 16th São Paulo International Biennial (1981), with an entire space dedicated to mail art, and the 17th São Paulo Biennial (1983), with a space devoted to art projects in videotext.

The mail art section of the 16th São Paulo International Biennial brought together artists of different nationalities to experiment with new poetic possibilities and to exchange works in a network parallel to the official art market and circuit. Mail art, as we know, was one of the first types of event to treat networked and large-scale communication as art. In the exhibition catalog, Julio Plaza, then curator of the mail art section, emphasized the democratizing aspect of this form of expression, criticizing the status of ownership of art and culture as economic practices. Mail art incorporated the notion of circuit into the field of art, breaking with the traditional layout of exhibitions in galleries and institutionalized spaces, emphasizing the communicative and interpersonal function among artists:

> "The post had become a media for the exchange of works between artists. This is an important aspect of the conceptualist movement, rooted in the early avant-gardes. Abandoning the unique object and looking for ways to act outside the commercial circle and integrate into the world, transformed by new technologies, a large number of artists turned to updated forms of communication" (Zanini in Arantes, 2012 p. 92)

Yet another trailblazing environment for art on the Internet that deserves to be called to mind is videotext. One of the main researchers of this technology in Brazil, Julio Plaza, wrote the book *Videografia em Videotexto* to discuss the processes of translating art and poetry for this environment. He has engaged in many experiments in which the videotext environment was used by works of art. These were mostly situations in which access terminals were available in museums and institutions, making it necessary for the public to access the arts circuit (Arantes, Bastos, 2020).

In his text for the catalog of the 17th São Paulo Biennial (1983), Plaza anticipates important aspects of the thinking regarding the use of digital environments as spaces for art. He discusses the hybrid and compact traits of the new languages, something that will be important later in the Internet environment. The synthesis of all languages through binary code and the need to create light packets to avoid overloading transmissions are clearly formulated by Plaza, whose text delimits the vocabulary used later by the main researchers in the field.

In this text it is possible to notice that the videotext exhibition, such as the one organized by Plaza, incorporates discussions not only related to experimentation with new languages, new circuits-the videotext environment-but also to the formats of exhibition and information storage linked with technological issues specific to this new environment.

> "Storing information in the database implies specific organization, which precisely allows for easier consultation by users and information retrieval by designers in order to update the information. Various editing formats are possible based on the needs of the electronic editor, thus comprising application structures. Tree-shaped structuring or "tree modeling": it comprises the distribution of pages in a linear sequence, according to the diagram of a tree having, for this very reason, a hierarchical structure with an in-depth movement in the choice of information. Users are given two movement choices: forward and backward. The forward movement in the information is made page by page, whereas the backward movement can be from page to page (...). The immediate tree modeling is that of the book due to the causal relationship in the "leafing" of pages. However, with the difference that, in the book, information exists virtually, as something you have never seen, but know it is there. In other words: a page exists when it shows itself" (Plaza, 1986, p. 27).

The 1970s and 1980s were marked by a great deal of experimentation in new media. They were part of a proposal that is still underground-as an alternative system to the more hegemonic arts system, with very little incentive from Brazilian institutions for proposals of exhibitions and artistic object in more traditional physical spaces.

After the 1990s and more specifically the 2000s, with the advent of Web 2.0, we began to see shows designed specifically for the online environment. In general, these curatorships, at least those of the first decade of the 2000s, were developed by researchers and institutions interested in experimenting in this field.

An example is the Whitney Artport. Launched in 2001 by the Whitney Museum, the portal commissioned networked art projects launched monthly, comprising one of the main collections of original works of this genre in a contemporary art institution. Networked art represents challenges at the institutional level, because in addition to its objects being often ephemeral, the artists' websites are available on the Internet.

In its first interface (currently available as a collection on the museum's webpage), the Whitney Artport is organized in a way that resembles a plain directory. The projects are listed one on top of the other, from the most recent to the oldest. The links are designed as buttons, in a style that refers directly to the

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time in which they were developed. They give access to a biography of the artist and a pop-up where the work itself is readily available. The Artport reveals a contradiction in Internet art that has already been pointed out, as the works are websites that can be accessed directly from their hosting addresses. These are commissioned works which, when published, become public (Arantes, Bastos, 2020).

The Artport affords us a condensed glimpse at a history of Internet art and the networked technologies themselves. There are defunct projects, as if they were testimonies of the ephemerality of mediatic environments. Additionally, the sequence of works reveals how the network has developed, passing through languages ranging from text-based games to groundbreaking data visualization experiences. In terms of online environments, it is extremely simple, but the complexity of the proposal stems from the fact that these are commissioned works, making the project one of the main responsible for the introduction of networked arts in the museum environment.

It is worth remembering the 2002 CODeDOC net art exhibition, curated by Christiane Paul. For this exhibition, artists were invited to create codes with a specific theme: connecting and moving three points in space. The CODeDOC exhibition strategy was unique: before "looking at the piece," the public was invited to access the work's source code. The curatorship was clearly asserting its objective: not only to explore the source code as an integral part of the work to be developed, but also to bring to the fore discussions about democratization and access to information. Among the works exhibited, a project by Sawad Brooks Perl stand out-its source code altered and interfered with the home page of the websites of three major global newspapers.

It is interesting to note that the exhibition is currently part of the Archive of Digital Art (ADA) project, started in the late 1990s to preserve the memory of art and digital art curatorship. It is true that museums and other institutions such as libraries and institutions of memory, have always had to deal with issues concerning the deterioration of material, as is the case with paintings or works of art that suffer from humidity, pollution, among other factors. Hence the care, especially in museums' collections in storage, with controlled temperature, humidity and handling of the pieces. When dealing with digital media, in addition to the issue of deterioration itself, we can add its obsolescence and constant impermanence:

> "Digital files can be easily copied without any loss in quality; can be reproduced, linked, marked and passed on from a blog by anyone on the Internet. However, they are also extremely ephemeral. The ghost of total disappearance is always peeking out from behind the door. Software changes (...) and network structures can render part of a code unusable, making it useless which takes up space on the hard disk. Successful online services can quickly become obsolete and end up being removed after a while without notice. Storage equipment can be damaged and lost," argues the researcher and curator Domenico Quaranta (2014, p. 240).

It is worth remembering the case of Geocities, which was a free hosting service website discontinued by Yahoo, obliterating much of the history of Web 1.0 with it. Not coincidentally the web artists Olia Lialina and Dragan Espenschied started the project *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age* (2009). They downloaded the entire content from Geocities, voluntarily retrieved by the *Archive Team* collective, and have been making their content available on the web, while also creating themed exhibits based on the collection.

Another project I would like to draw attention to, carried out in 2012, was the show *Collect the WWWorld: The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age*, organized by Domenico Quaranta for the LINK Center for the Arts of the Information Age. Its starting point was to shed light on works by artists focused on the archival and documentation of productions made on the Internet. The curator says about the exhibition:

> "The perception of the situation on the Internet that what exists online today can become a broken, inactive link, or a 404 error page tomorrow (...) leads some artists who work in this medium, such as net artists, to become collectors" (Quaranta, 2014, p. 240).

Unlike Christiane Paul's curatorship or the *Archive Team*'s project, *Collect the WWWorld: The Artist as Archivist in the Internet Age* integrated a hybrid format; in addition to a simplified index, the exhibition was also organized in the physical space.

A widely used environment in the early 2000s was Second Life, an interactive 3D environment focused on social relations. At the threshold between game and social network, the service garnered fans around the world, and many artists and curators started working in this environment. Some of the artists include Fred Forest, an Algerian artist who as early as 2008 developed performance projects especially for Second Life. More recently, the Chinese artist Cao Fei has made unusual combinations made possible by the "tool," combining in one place, for example, statues of Mao Zedong and aerial shopping malls, as in the RMB City series. The artist mixes pop aesthetic with digital technology in her multimedia projects to reflect on the fast changes contemporary Chinese society is undergoing.

Within this perspective, we can also recall some of Ars Electronica's initiatives, which since its conception in 1979 have produced a considerable amount of documents that are crucial for understanding art and the history of media art. One of Ars Electronica's concerns has been to work creatively to present its historical archive to the public. One of them is based on a diagram and map developed by the artist Gerhard

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Dirmoser at the prize's 25th anniversary. The artist, who works with data visualization, presented over 50,000 elements of the archive in a circular diagram: each event, talk, project, work organized and presented by the prize appears in the diagram, developed through a software created by the artist.

Later, in 2005, the festival turned the diagram into an interactive installation. In this iteration the public could access all the information from a smartphone. In 2010, the festival created for an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo a browsable archive with an avatar in Second Life.

With Web 2.0 and the popularization of the Internet, the network becomes a privileged environment not only for the circulation of artistic projects, but for exhibitions and experiments beyond those carried out by artists and curators from the existing media fields. In other words, we can make the case that after 2010 the online environment is occupied not only by artists and researchers in art and technology, but also for experiments by artists and curators dabbling in other languages.

Such is the case, for instance, of Instagram. Since it was launched in October 2010, it has been transforming the ways we relate to images. It is certainly one of the most popular among all social networks, not only as a space for the circulation of works by artists, but as a kind of virtual gallery where creators become almost curators of their own works.

Instagram feels like the perfect place for Cindy Sherman, an artist famous for her conceptual self-portraits, in which she portrays many different characters from American society. In her profile, made public in mid-2017, it could be no different: the artist plays with filters and features to create her changeable photographs.

This has also been the case for a number of artists in Brazil, such as Nino Cais, Aleta Valente, and Thiago Honório. In the case of the latter, Instagram becomes not only a space for the dissemination of his work, but an environment for poetic experimentation. In *Present*, the artist developed a collaborative project through Instagram: from a collection of photographs posted by the artist on the platform, showing winter gloves found on the streets of New York, Thiago Honório started to receive numerous photos of the same situation.

The series not only expands on discussions that Honório had already addressed in other projects (such as collecting, cataloging, and found objects), but also incorporates dimensions posed by the use of this new environment, such as collaborative practice.

On the other hand, it is clear that the editing process of the images posted to Instagram is not at all random. This control is exerted both through the choices in the three-column grid and through the many editing tools available. These decisions mostly involve specific knowledge-tutorial videos and texts that teach how to create an aesthetically coherent profile, what are the best times to post, etc. we can say that defining the sequences of images, as well as their possible manipulations, is akin to a curatorial role, turning personal interfaces into small galleries.

Lev Manovich, a digital culture theorist and one of the main researchers of social networks, coined the term "instagramism" to define this contemporary phenomenon, comparing it, in terms of impact and production of visual language, to the revolutions brought about by the "isms" "of modern avant-garde movements at the turn of the 20th century, such as futurism and surrealism. The difference, to him, is in the reach that instagramism allows for the sharing culture, allowing shared authorship in the definition of the language.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the online environment becomes an unmatched space to create and disseminate art and culture. The spread of the virus worked as a sort of catalyst that helped artists reach far beyond the specialized métiers, proposing a series of creative and curatorial possibilities on the agenda since the emergence of the Internet.

This is the case of the *Pink Umbrellas Art Residency Festival*, with its first edition taking place from June to December 2020, held online due to the pandemic of the novel coronavirus. The event invited over 70 Brazilian and foreign artists, yielding hundreds of hours of original art works made especially for YouTube. During its 29 weeks in 2020, the festival created a new space for artists to meet and share, mixing different languages-performance, music, visual arts, among others-and which resulted in original works in video, available online on the project channel: www.youtube.com/PINKUMBRELLASARTRESIDENCY/videos.

Another interesting example of curatorial proposals developed in the midst of the pandemic crisis is *Critical Zones*, an exhibition organized by ZKM. The guided tour on Instagram shows the works installed in the space in the middle of a visitation process with masks and social distancing, which led the institution to propose a *Streaming Festival* and an online environment that transformed the project into a hybrid initiative with consistent use of digital environments in the context of the coronavirus health crisis.

Despite the hybrid format, *Critical Zones* forged a very sophisticated environment, both graphically and architecturally. The exhibition offered parallel browsing paths, according to the theme of interest to the user, and has remained in constant evolution throughout its duration. With introductory texts and illustrative images integrated into an environment that offers direct links to the included works, the interface of *Critical Zones* explores a radically vertical format that is consistent with the network situation marked by the massive presence of cell phones. (Arantes, Bastos, 2020)

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Yet another exhibition, by the research group *Zonas de Compensação*, from the São Paulo State University (Unesp), reproduces in 3D the physical gallery of the University's research institute, placing in frames the works of students working in different languages. Clicking on the pictures, we are taken, through links, to the artists' personal websites.

Part 2

II. Arquivo Vivo: Livro/Acervo, Mapa and E(x)Paços Críticos

Working with discussions related to memory and archives within a different perspective-thematic, historical, social and technological-has been the main concern of my curatorial research.

The first exhibition in this sense was *Arquivo Vivo* (Living Archive) curated by me and presented at Paço das Artes in 2013. In close connection to the concept of "Archive Fever" proposed by the philosopher Jacques Derrida, who understands the archive as a lacking, incomplete dispositive and, for this reason, always open to new and constant rewritings, the exhibition presented twenty-two works by artists who, through different ways, incorporated themes and procedures that concern the archive and the database in their relation to history, memory and oblivion based on the articulation of three main vectors: (1) *Archive and Appropriation of Documents and History and Art History Works*; (2) *Archive in the Body and Body as Archive*; (3) *Artist's Archives, Institutional Archive and Database*.

The first vector comprises artistic projects that appropriate historical documents or reenact iconic art history works/documents. By appropriating these files/documents, the artist deconstructs and modifies their "original" meaning, triggering the notion that the archive is always open to different readings and interpretations. This was the case, for example, with the project *As perólas, como te escrevi*, by the Brazilian artist Regina Parra. The project comprises a video installation formed by three synchronized projections. Each projection is composed of images of immigrants who crossed illegally into Brazil and now live in São Paulo. The immigrants read excerpts from the *New World* letter written by Américo Vespúcio in 1503. The projections on multiple screens, added to the polyphony of the different accents of immigrants who read the document telling the history of the "discovery" of the Americas, not only alludes to a fragmentary and multiple narrative, which is built in the relationship with the viewer, but also refers to the power relations and the colonization processes that have marked our history.

The vector *Archive in the Body and Body as Archive* comprises projects that consider the body as a kind of archive and/or that incorporate the archive in the body tissue itself. The body, here, can be understood as a kind of writing that incorporates marks, erasures, remnant signifiers of a body/message in a constant process of construction of meaning. *Made in Brazil*, by the Brazilian artist Letícia Parente, and *Time Capsule*, by Eduardo Kac, were part of this second vector of the exhibition. In *Time Capsule*, for example, Kac implants a microchip with an identification video on his ankle, registering himself, via the Internet, in a database. The project raises issues related to digital memory, and surveillance and information control devices.

The vector *Artist's Archives, Institutional Archives and Database*, in turn, comprises not only projects addressing personal and/or institutional archives, but also proposals that create complex classification systems and databases in different media.

Rejane Cantoni and Leonardo Crescenti present, in this vector, *Fala,* an autonomous and interactive talking machine based on a database that includes the 20 most spoken words in 40 different languages. The installation is composed of a microphone connected to a "chorus" of 40 cell phones. All devices are in a listening state, to capture voices and other sounds from the exhibition hall. The talking machine analyzes the information and establishes equivalences with its database, generating an audiovisual result with a semantic meaning similar to the sound captured, like in the telephone game. That is, it displays on the cell phone screens a word identical or similar to the word heard, pointing to the fact that the database is a dispositive open to a multitude of possible meanings and relations.

In this sense, the exhibition invited artists who approached the archival field from different perspectives-historical, conceptual and technological. As an exhibition held in a physical environment, the installation of works in the space, the concern with possible connections between them, lighting, visual and exhibition design were vital as a discursive dispositive.

In terms of exhibition design, our intention was to group together works that tackled the same theme in order to "guide" viewer's readings. The work chosen to start the exhibition-although the show didn't propose a closed circuit-was *La Liberté Raisonneé*, by the Spanish artist Cristina Lucas, who re-enacts in video the painting Liberty Leading the People (1830) by Eugène Delacroix. The work, steeped in profound drama, suggests a cruel fate for "Liberty," different from the one presented by the romantic painter. As a reenactment of Delacroix's painting, the work clearly presented the concept of *living archive* and narrative discourse intended by the curatorship.

The curatorial concept, in addition to being part of the discourse of the works, was also featured on the visual identity of the exhibition and the catalog. The design choices, predominantly in black and white, addressed the concept of "duality" (living/inactive

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archive; light and non-light), and also with the notion of archive through the marks and rectangles left by the image traces of the works that were part of the exhibition. It stemmed from the idea that each image was an information archive that could be manipulated and/or highlighted.

This research dialogued with another curatorship entitled *Livro Acervo* (Book Archive, 2010) focused on a more institutional discussion: the archive of Paço das Artes. Unlike the previous project, this exhibition took place in the space of the book, associated not only to issues related to the curatorial format-with direct references to the field of graphic design-but to the exhibition circuit-since it could be considered a mobile curatorship that allowed the public to access the institution's institutional archive.

Livro Acervo, was conceived by me in 2010 for the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of Paço das Artes. The initial concept for the project was to develop a "major" curatorship that could revive the memory of Paço das Artes-the players and agents that were part of its history-and offer audiences access to a curatorial project that would extend beyond the traditional exhibition space. This perspective led to the idea of developing not only a project on the very space of the book-a kind of mobile, touring curatorship-but also of developing a curatorship from the institution's "archive" and "collection," reviving one of its most notable projects: the *Temporada de Projetos* (Projects' Season).[2]

The project was divided into three main parts.[3] In the first one, 30 artists selected for the *Projects' Season* were invited to develop a never-before-shown work on paper sheets (such as the flip book *Naufrágio*, developed by the artist Laura Belém). These works were printed for free distribution, together with the other items that made up the project. Accompanying the notebooks created by the artists was the Encyclopaedia, the second part of the project, with information on each of the artists, curators and members of the jury that participated in the *Projects' Season* since its first edition. The third part consisted of a sound work of up to one minute, distributed on a CD-ROM, developed by the artists and curators who participated in the *Projects' Season*. It should be noted that the project (consisting of these three parts) took the form of a box/file, alluding precisely to the idea that this dispositive contained a significant portion of Paço das Artes's history and part of the young Brazilian art.

Not to be restricted to a mere list of artists who passed through the institution over the years, the idea of commissioning new works (whether on paper or in audio) was vital to incorporate the dimension of *living archive*, which also served as the curatorial motto for the 2013 exhibition. Here, however, the dimension of access-that is, of giving access to the institutional archive-was an essential conceptual and formal element, since the Paço das Artes, until 2007, had not yet developed a more affirmative policy concerning its institutional memory.

Different from *exhibition design* issues of an event held in a physical space, the dimensions and interface with graphic design were crucial for the development of the project's concept: a collection accessible to the public, put in circulation through the book.

The exhibition gallery-if we can call it that-in this project consisted of the file box with its thematic and operational sections: the encyclopedia, the works commissioned on sheets of paper and the CD-ROM, with the sound works. The warm color, in yellow, resulting from the visual identity chosen for the exhibition (for the file box, that is) can be seen as an attempt to get closer to the public; as a collection that is presented as "not cold," "living," that can be manipulated by the public through their different senses (sight, touch and sound). Also different from the physical space, the concerns took place inside the pages of the box, falling on the choices related to typography and chromatic range, the material aspect which, as a whole, conceptually translated the project.

Moving along the path of the *Book/Collection* project, in November of 2014 we implemented *MaPA: Memória Paço das Artes*, a digital platform for contemporary art that brought together all the artists, critics, curators and members of the jury that have participated in the *Projects' Season* since it was created in 1996.

The platform is comprised of a database with more than 900 images of the works showcased in the *Projects' Season*, as well as nearly 270 critical texts and video interviews that have been developed exclusively for this project since 2014. Gathering more than 240 artists, 14 curatorial projects, 70 art critics and 43 jurors, the platform was built as a relational dispositive and a work-in-progress, offering researchers the opportunity to access all the information from existing relationships in the *Projects' Season*.

At MaPA's home page, the public is presented, through a random system, to various names (of artists, critics, curators, and jury members that have taken part in the *Season*). By hovering the mouse cursor over any of these clickable names, the *MaPA* highlights, in bold,

[2] Paço das Artes's experimental vocation is confirmed mainly through the Projects' Season, which is aimed to providing opportunities for young artists to produce, promote and disseminate their work. Conceived in 1996 by the technical director Ricardo Ribenboim and the then curator of the institution, Daniela Bousso, the Projects' Season held its first exhibition in 1997, becoming over the years a rich incubator for the young contemporary Brazilian art.

[3] From this initial idea for the project, we invited the artists Artur Lescher and Lenora de Barros to develop the first curatorship for the *Book/Collection*.

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other names involved in that edition of the *Season*. This is how a research on the MaPA platform begins: as a relational device that allows the public to learn more about the trajectory of each artist, together with the critic and the jury he or she was selected by.

In technical terms, *MaPA* is a hybrid website, sitting between two distinct moments of the Internet. Its home page is dynamic, changing each time the user accesses it. It is made up of clickable names of artists and curators included in the environment. In practice, these names are tags-the structural keywords that have become common in self-publishing systems. The tags on a blog or video platform work like the old keywords of static search engines, with one difference: they are structurally associated with the content, and the list of things "hanging" under a given tag grows over time, as accesses to the site increase.

With the mouse over one of them, we activate a network of relationships. This form of browsing is no longer related to the print culture, as in the case of the *Livro/Acervo*. On the contrary, it expresses a networked reasoning. On its internal pages, *MaPA* is close to a simple directory, with an upper menu organized based on the website's themes, and side menus in chronological and alphabetical order, framing a content group composed of texts and images that make up the selected entry.

The *MaPA* curatorship can be seen not only as a dispositive that revives part of Paço das Artes's trajectory and its "collection," but also as a fertile research tool for all those interested in the directions of the young Brazilian contemporary art. Last but not least, *MaPA* is a triggering instrument for the construction of new narratives for the histories of the Brazilian arts, of the young contemporary Brazilian art, which is not given enough opportunities or is not included in the official art history discourses.

As one last project, I would like to highlight *E(x)Paços Críticos*, an extension of a project that has been developed for some years in partnership with the Anhembi Morumbi University. Entitled *Ex-Paço*[4], the initial idea-which emerged in 2016 when Paço das Artes was leaving the building it occupied in Cidade Universitária-was to conduct a 3D mapping of the building where the institution was housed for over two decades. The title of the project alluded not only to the name of Paço das Artes, but also to the fact that that location no longer belonged to the institution. *Ex-Paço*, in this sense, can be seen not only as a browsable space for shows and exhibitions, but also as a digital archive of an architectural space that for more than twenty years housed the cultural institution. The project, beyond a mere exploration of language, put in question the policies of institutional erasure and the need to create strategies for cultural memory.

In January 2020, at the opening of Paço das Artes's new building in Higienópolis, the project got a second version, in which visitors were invited to visit, through virtual reality, all the previous buildings that were part of the history of Paço das Artes in its 50 years of activities. Due to the museum's nomadic and inconstant trajectory, the idea behind the version presented in early 2020 was not only to revive the history and memory of Paço das Artes, as well as the different locations where the institution was present, but mainly to create a project that could be a triggering dispositive for the creation of policies against institutional oblivion.

This project had a hybrid version, since the public had to go to the exhibition space to have access to the project's virtual reality glasses. Although the resources for this work were somewhat limited, since it only had a plasma screen and a pair of virtual reality glasses, the project saw a strong engagement from the visiting public, especially from younger attendees.

The current version of the environment that bears the name of *E(x) Paços Críticos* was conceived at an extremely critical moment, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a similar situation in previous versions, which were developed at important moments for the institution: in the first version, in 2016, when Paço das Artes was asked to vacate the building it occupied in Cidade Universitária; and in the second version, in 2020, when Paço das Artes inaugurated its new facilities. Drawing on this research, the curatorship developed by Arantes and Bastos challenges the team from the Anhembi Morumbi University to develop a generic environment, which converts this institutional experience into a space for experimentation and research.

Ex(s)Paços Críticos was completely designed for the virtual environment-from the creation of a platform to browse the exhibition, developed by designer Guilherme Falcão, to the implementation of unpublished works designed for this environment and which had the support of a technical team formed by students from the university.

The themes proposed by the guest artists addressed many different issues, such as memory, history, colonization processes, among other critical discussions of contemporaneity. In *O mundo arde*, for instance, the duo Ana Maria Tavares and Dino Vicente allude to the chaos the world experienced in 2020. According to the artists:

> "The world burned and burns still. It burned with fire, it burned with viruses, it burned with indifference, with falsehood. It burns... and it will last. The World Burns. We don't know for how long, but we do know that it will leave marks on our memories, on our skins, on our senses. Our landscape was transformed, it became fire, it dried up and will dry even further. The rivers dried up, the fauna dried up,

[4] The Projeto Ex-Paço was conceived by Priscila Arantes and Sergio Nesteriuk in 2016.

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the flora dried up; relationships dehydrated and we ended up alone. And the hot wind drove animals and people out of their habitats. 2020 shut away and dehydrated lives. 2020 burns in politics, burns in values. It burns forests, ignites lives. It ignited the earth. It burned outside and it burns inside each one of us, even if we don't know it. It burns. How do we deal with this volcanic bubbling that seems to inflame us inside and out?"

Andres Burbano, Fernando Velazquez and Pierre Puente present *Sãotá*, a work that consists of a 3D environment for the web, merging two neighborhoods in São Paulo (Higienópolis and Paraisópolis) and two in Bogotá (La Candelaria and Chapinero), which are characterized for their opposite socioeconomic profiles. The project is an appeal to subjectivity in interpreting big data and its algorithmic processing. It questions the apparent objectivity of the data and the algorithms that articulate them, and to highlight the need to develop subjectively based methodologies that address the territory from humanistic rather than merely economic perspectives. With the creation of this visible and browsable, though nonexistent and adrift meta-city, the project seeks to unearth some of the invisible yet essential layers to understand the territory and the urban air space.

JardimDeEpicuro_EmChamas is an encounter between the performance artist Dani Dini and the computer artist Tania Fraga. Based on the exchanges between the works of these two artists, a site-specific installation was built at Tania Fraga's studio. Streamed online in several social networks simultaneously, the site-specific expands from the physical space of the studio to the space of the networks. *JardimDeEpicuro* is a virtual reality work with a brain-computer interface, whose realms are lavish with flowers, life insemination through pollination, and renewal, originating a Dionysian reality. The installation sparks the connection between virtuality and physicality, which recombine reciprocally. During the discussion and development process of the work – in line with what has been impacting the Brazilian environment, with fires in many regions of the country – the artists reformulated the work, addressing this issue on the environment depicted.

In *DE REVUELTA / MINHA PALAVRA*, Daniel Lima and Gabriela Golder have created a project that springs from a dialogue between two perspectives, two ethnicities, two genders, two languages, two nations. Adopting an anti-colonial view, two authorial conceptions are entangled in revolt, in which words represent desires, imaginaries, utopias, dystopias, forces of destruction and creation. There is no obvious answer, there are no traced paths, just a maze, a storm, a trap or a possibility; to remain on the edge, to keep going or to decipher the solution.

In this project, the idea was not to bring a digitized work from the real to the virtual environment, but to explore the creative possibilities offered by the online environment. In this context, it was extremely necessary, in addition to the conceptual issues addressed in the project, to work with an interdisciplinary team formed by curators, artists, experts in game programming languages, 3D, sound, coders and interface designers.

Another concern of the project was the issue of access, considering the different levels of technology accessible by the public. Not coincidentally, the idea was that each work could be watched in real time online, but we also offered an offline version, with a pre-recorded browsing session. Another goal was to offer a more sensory and immersive experience to the public, making the work available in full screen format.

The work interface, developed by the designer Guilherme Falcão, presented the works in a vertical grid, mirroring the format of cell phones, and referring, in the project's visual identity, to the 3D navigation vectors.

In this sense, it is not a matter of transferring to the virtual environment the experience we live in a curatorship in the physical space, but of being able to live through the possibilities afforded by the online environment.

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