

# Research for art and research in art: Didi-Huberman and Interart Theory

*Valquíria Guimarães DUARTE<sup>1</sup>, Anahy JORGE<sup>2</sup>*

*e-mail: valgd44@hotmail.com<sup>1</sup>*

*e-mail: anahymjorge@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>*

*Faculdade de Artes Visuais, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Brasil<sup>12</sup>*

## Abstract

The production in art, architecture and design has the need of researches which advance the traditional approaches, enabling the understanding of their different meanings. In many studies, the theoretical poetic analysis basis are still in iconology and semiotics, considered insufficient by Didi-Huberman in the apprehension of the senses of the art work. The author proposes an approach that extends the analysis and reviews their own field of art history, and in this sense an epistemology that privileges the relation subject x object, given the insufficient allocation to the different meanings of contemporary production.

The field of study Interart Theory (Noronha) contributes to the research of contemporary production. The approach involves the debate on how the time-space categories causes a new image and text-setting body, affecting the production of a theoretical and design of an experience and art. The story concerns the formulation of a model that re-locates the point of view of the languages, combining formal aspects, structural and contextual factors with the semiosis and historicity.

This article examines the theory linking it to Interart Didi-Huberman, a proposal to research and critique of (and for) the art, architecture and design, as it believes that a hermeneutic of the work subsidizes the creation of it.

**KEYWORDS:** Research for art, Research of art, Interart Theory

## Résumé

Les arts contemporains, l'architecture et le design nécessitent des recherches qui amplifient les approches traditionnelles, rendant possible la compréhension de leurs différentes significations. Dans plusieurs études, il est avancé que l'analyse du point de vue poétique trouve sa base théorique dans l'iconologie et la sémiotique, ces bases sont considérées insuffisantes par Didi-Huberman appréhender correctement le sens d'une œuvre.

Cet auteur propose une approche qui amplifie l'analyse et propose un regard nouveau sur le propre champ de l'histoire des arts, et dans ce sens, il critique une épistémologie qui privilégie la relation sujet/objet, la considérant insuffisante si l'on veut être en mesure d'attribuer différentes significations dans la production contemporaine.

Le champ d'études de la Théorie Interartes (Noronha) contribue à l'investigation de la production contemporaine. Cette étude englobe le débat sur la manière selon laquelle les catégories temps-espace provoquent une nouvelle configuration texte-image et corps, en influençant la production d'un dessin théorique et d'une expérience dans l'art. L'historicité mentionne la formulation d'un modèle que restitue le point de vue des langages, en faisant jouer les aspects formels, structurels et sémiotiques avec les aspects contextuels et de l'historicité.

Cet article analyse la théorie Interartes en s'articulant avec celle de Didi-Huberman, comme proposition de recherche et de critique de (et pour) l'art, l'architecture et le design, dans la mesure qu'il avance qu'une herméneutique de l'œuvre remplace la création.

**MOTS-CLÉS:** Recherche pour l'art, la recherche de l'art, la théorie Interart

## INTRODUCTION

From the methodological point of view, it is more and more necessary to approach the artistic, architectonic and design object, in a transdisciplinary way. Although the specialized knowledge has shown its effectiveness throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, epistemologically explaining the phenomena from their most elementary parts, (from the disciplinary specialized knowledge), there is a necessity of seeking a comprehension of the phenomena in a wider way (from the inter and transdisciplinary).

The discoveries of the natural sciences tear down some certainties of the modern thoughts opening ways to the appearance of a scientific knowledge based on the disorder and uncertainty, in theories which generate ideas and contradictory concepts, contrary to the ones that used to guide science until today. As a consequence, studies that help the comprehension of the creative phenomena that demonstrate logics based on the complexity start to be valued; naturally so that they will be understood it is necessary to seek theoretical paths that give sustainability to them. Thus, this discipline has been conducted to the borders of other disciplines, generating the transference of knowledge, concepts and methods.

Contemporaneously, the art languages are not restricted to the themes of languages, but its hybridism and profusion of means involve esthetics linked to the classic, baroque and romantic, reconfigured in the shapes of the contemporary debate about the modernity and post-modernity. This poetic complexity, influenced by several disciplines (theater, cinema, architecture, dance), requires a theoretical system for its comprehension (not only the one of the autonomization of the languages) that includes all the esthetics involved in the creation of the artistic object (and process). The architecture and the contemporary design productions also present varied philosophical postures, creative mechanisms and space logics, besides constituting phenomenon that include a diversity of means and technologies. These matters interest History and the Interart Theory, in its proposal of broaden the traditional studies, enabling new possibilities for the understanding of the productions in their diversities, which do not fit in the established theoretical models.

Noronha develops the central aspects of the History and Interart Theory, from the contemporary retaken of the debate of *Ut pictura Poiesis* from the renaissance contexture and its reflections about poetic and rhetorical. Meanwhile, the author follows the unfoldings of the “arts correspondence” in the 20 th century, observing the theoretical approaches in the field of the Compared Esthetics (Souriau, 1983) and of the different formal and structural approaches of the languages (structuralism and semi-optics) for the development of a new research proposal based on the principles of the inter and transdisciplinarity.

The contemporary languages in its hybrid, bording and experimental forms, if investigated from their own fields of creation, in an sinesthetic and kinesthetic aprehsion of characters of the phenomenon, enable reflections that end up constituting an amount of operational concepts: “*the apprehension of a language happens in the interior of the relational field, in an set that involves sounds, visuality and body*” (Noronha, 2005). It is necessary to understand the studied phenomenon, which will develop their own internal concepts, and the role of the researcher is to seek the potenciality of these concepts in the artwork or process, which generates meanings.

The interartistic studies have as aim to develop concepts that relate *artworks, projects, products* (creative processes, semiotics, paradigms) and *contexts, historicities* (traditions, sintagms, within philosophical and cultural hermeneutics) in a research that comes out from the work and creates a “*structure in a continuous space in a multiple time, promoting, in the simultaneity, several levels of reality*” (Noronha, 2010, p. 109). The proposal comprises three strategic categories of research that observe three logics: Fusion, Difference and Interval. These concepts allow the development of analysis *about the object of studies*, which is crossed by multiple disciplinary glances (such as in the Differentiation); *about the method*, since theoretical reflections are transferred from one place to another, in the generation of intermediate concepts and

products (such as in the Fusion), and a reasoning *about the time-spacial transits*, brokered by the *écriture*, visibility and performance, in the production of the *scinetesias*<sup>1</sup>, obtaining a result of analysis which is “in between”, besides the theoretical *corpus* constituted. Thus, the studied phenomenon arises in the interval, in a displacement of boundaries.

## THE INTERART THEORY AND THE DIDI-HUBERMAN'S THEORETICAL PROPOSAL

Regarding the time and space transits, the History and Interart Theory include how the relation time x space creates new configurations of text, image and body, in the production of a new theoretical and historical design, generating a different experience in art, architecture and design. Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon points out the epistemological proposal advocated for Didi-Huberman (2000), which includes the phenomenological cognitive man, who is part of the relationship with the object, and accomplishes a dialectic opening of the vision in the contact with the image. So, the historian-critic finds himself as subject, which has a memory, in front of the image and the multiple temporalities that it contains.

Didi-Huberman observes that the process of seeing acts on the visible, on the legible, but mostly over the invisible (virtual). This way the author problematizes the way of vision (on one hand the man of tautology, on the other hand the man of belief). The possibility of the image opening different temporalities allows the memories analysis, which, juxtaposed and overlapped, reorganize the historical narrative, and support all the process of assembly for an art, architecture and design critical history.

In order to give a support to this theoretical achievements, History and Interart Theory seek their methodological foundation in Psychoanalysis from the theoretical unfoldings by Didi-Huberman, aiming the construction of a history that is not submitted to the ideal of certainty nor restricted to the problem of form. Making use of anachronism is a strategy that considers a history that stands beyond the linear perspective (Benjamin, 1986). For Noronha, the incidence of various temporal surfaces in art, architecture and design, reveals the locus of the interstitium and the archaic presentification, in which the cultural manifestations that were destined to the field of The Other (a topological place) are the updated face of the antique, of the repressed historicity. Therefore, the construction of a psychic archaism “*demonstrates the updated meeting of a past that does not exist itself, being the punctuation of a continuous present and a present that is not unique, but as scansion – division, tension*

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<sup>1</sup>. The concept of Scinesthesia will be developed in the text.

*between past and future.*” (NORONHA, 2008-A, p.1). This way, the author emphasizes the construction of a history of political and psychological approach e not a cultural historical perspective.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that it is always in accordance with the requirements of each work that concepts come up, change, and this process results from its historicization.

## FUSION

The Fusion is a conceptual category that discusses operations which occur in the artistic domain broader, so it can be problematized from the romantic conception of the synthesis of the arts (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), from the creation of an art through the sum of all arts (synthesis or integration). Contemporarily, the concept dialogues with the “art theatralization” (Michael Fried), that refers to the objectuality and *mise-en-scène* of the contemporary art (from the minimalism and conceptual art), the “non-artistic” literality that promotes an experience of reading and reificada fruition in its duration. Besides that, we can think of the arts, architecture and design from the “circus as arts”, from the experimental romance, from the conceptual arts, when philosophical methods are incorporated to the contexture of the product-works. Thus, we can conclude that reflexions of an artistic domain in the comprehension of another disciplinar field enrich the analysis in the promotion of the signification.

Regarding this comparativism, (when reflections get transfered from one field to another) or of synthesis in the creation of art, it is necessary to make it clear that analogies in the interartistic studies are related not to common meanings, but to strategies developed in the process of the work creation, or structural similarities, which will be similar to other strategies. Therefore, according to Noronha (2008-A), the analogy problem will not be morphologic, nor semantic, but concerning objectives, creation processes. The author refers to analogies in the sense that Bois (2006) uses, the *structural form*, - which happen in the structural level of the phenomenon, that is, from strategic elements or of representation conditions, of the process analysis. So, even if the morphological analogies are considered, (what would lead to *Gesamtkunstwerk*), the proposal suggests and enables a more complex analysis.

Bois’s proposals bring to tone an important discussion to the Arts, Architecture and Design History: the concept of form. The author conceives the form in the sense of structure (contrary to the influence of the iconology by Panofsky and the formalism proposed by Greensberg), whose potential open multiple possibilites of signification. The *structural form* means the election of strategies of object analysis, so form means a series of elements mediators of meaning that can be discovered through a deep analysis of the object,

that is, the way it is constructed. As a consequence, the morphologic referent is only part of the structure of the meaning, maybe the less revealing.

## DIFERENTIATION

The concept of Diferentiation is based on the modern principle of the autonomy of the artwork (founded in Kant's aesthetics) and in its readings applied to the high modernism. It is about the reflections done between the concept of romantic criticism and the philosopher Walter Benjamin's reflections, in the elaboration of a perspective of treatment of the history of art. Benjamin's proposal observes a relationship of arts and history, but respecting its essential function, separating it of the time and historic space in which it was produced. Thus, it values its post-history, the tradition that it has created, as well as its pre-history, its sources and the tradition it has come from.

This category points out to the logics of specificity and internal unity of the researched phenomenon, in the development of a specific and approach critics theory of the arts, the architecture and the design. So, there can be or not an exterior unification to all of them, since the reasoning is the consideration of disciplinarity, "*... always telling the story of each one of these languages in a special History, the one of the Arts [the Architecture and Design], specialized, subdivided, which find strong affection in the academicism and in the intellectual thought of the academic-university type*" (NORONHA, 2010, p. 77). Therefore, we reaffirm that romanticism inspires a theory and a history derived from the work or process, from what it evokes,

"... Accordingly, the time is foundational because it is thought that the work builds around itself, a conceptual framework, and its *poiesis* determines the line of tradition to which it refers, but also the one it will create and develop, the pres and post stories of a work." (NORONHA, 2006:3)

## INTERVAL

The notion of Interval, according Noronha (2008-A), is the closest to a recent time strategy (of topological reasoning and interartistic semiosis), since it is in the shift of borders, showing an interest in overtaking them, setting itself in the space between the contemporary arts, architecture and design. See what the author has to say:

"[The Interval can be exemplified with] the installation, with a high degree of application of principles of construction to the visual arts, interface products, the effects of certain media devices in other media production ..." (Noronha, 2008, p. 5)

The works are products of border interface ("between two", "among more"), of 'contaminated' languages - when a language get to interact with other disciplines. For Machado (2000),

"... The "interacting languages" stimulate another type of relationship between the sensory impressions, promoting a rediscovery of the human sensory and their expressive powers. The exchange between procedures, and the interaction between codes support interactivity, one of the most striking properties of language "(Machado: 2000).

The concept of Interval presents a breakdown in operators of analysis, that can be used in understanding the phenomena, regardless they are part of a work in some genre. They are: Scinesthesia, Performance (both associated with haptic vision) and Audio-Visual (associated with the film paradigm, the cinematic paradigm or film-effect, and to the spatial-visual arts).

#### SCINESTESIA, PERFORMANCE AND AUDIO-VISUAL

The Scinesthesia points out a conjunction between kinesthesia and synesthesia, and concerns the reinstatement of two conditions in the research field of language: the first (synesthesia) is the relation of different sensory plans, ie, the ability to translate inter-perceptions, a indicial degree (semioptics), establishing a relationship between a perception of a meaning domain and another evoked domain. The term is used to describe a figure of speech and a series of phenomena caused by a neurological condition, the intersection of meanings in a sensory combination. On the other hand, kinesthesia restates the perspective of the body in the understanding of the phenomenon, because the term refers to the perception of movements, the nature of which allows the occurrence of tactile information, a proprioception. By integrating the terms in a single one, Noronha strengthens the view that the "a projection screen is always a habitable place, and a built space is always a projection screen", ie, he multiplies the prospects for a theory of perception that gets to be understood as a theory of language.

The Scinesthesia refers to creating a theoretical *corpus* that includes the *sensorium* (*sensorium corpus*) and aims at creating various plans:

"... sound, body, movements in space (from the movements to the paths), involving also the three dimensions (or the effects of it) the touch, the taste, the smell, the third dimension, tactile and impressive muscles, combining procedures, codes and means in

the constitution of hybrid/interartistic languages in extensive conceptual operations that promote a challenge to the culture [...] a sense of experimentation that disorients the culturally agreed navigation, forcing each of us [...] to regain our senses " (Noronha, 2008-A, p. 8).

This aspect concerns the development of a haptic sensitivity, according to Bruno (2007)<sup>2</sup>, and because of that we can add two other elements to the proposal, referring to the question of the body: Performance and Audio-visual. These concepts will rescue the studies about movement and haptic perception in the interartistic and historiographical project, in order to make an Atlas of Emotion, that is, the concepts propose a perceptual indivisibility between the exterior and the interior, which combine in the configuration of mental maps. The understanding of the phenomenon requires sometimes a more scinesthetic dimension (Noronha), sometimes more visual-spatial one (Bruno).

Bruno (2007) affirms that the historiography of art history has a debt to the body dimension. She creates the term spatial-visual, correlating not only painting and cinema, photography and cinema, but also architecture and cinema, suggesting the existence of a haptic route in the dark space: the tactile vision. The haptic routes relate to a cinematic paradigm and its disorders in artistic production. Noronha emphasizes the importance of these considerations in understanding not only the object but also processes and production systems, defining new positions of the artist, of the theorist and the public. Thus an extension of the senses is established as modes of cognition and of topographical and topological realities senses.

The Scinesthesia is related to Performance regarding poetic practices and semantic-linguistic plans, and constitute an operational and critical concept, as it produces a meta-review of an artistic and conceptual order:

“...And Further, guarantees the recognition of an inter-semiotic status in artistic production, a state of communication between different languages, focusing the inter-spaces areas between the arts and the transits of the hegemonic field in art history (as fine arts and later Visual Arts) to a seizure of a history among image, text, sound, body”. (NORONHA, 2008, p.xxx)

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<sup>2</sup> Haptic vision means the transition from the optics vision for an enlarged view of an emotion, movement, space-time, in which the vision (visual hegemonic paradigm in the organization of the senses) is reinstated in the sense of location, an inseparability between exterior and interior and the configuration of mental maps. There is an extension of the senses as modes of cognition and the establishment of topographic senses and topological realities. Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, architecture, and film*. New York: Verso, 2007.



Performance becomes an operational concept for excellence in the seizure of a history among image, text, body, since it is born in a zone located in the intertextual interval, in the meeting point between different languages (artistic), in which unconventional ways of dialogue occur with greater or minor strength.

Noronha says, from Lauxerois Jean and Peter Szendy (IRCAM), that the foundational paradigm of Performance is prior to itself and relates to an experiment made in film and in the formation of an audiovisual paradigm (surpassing the model of synthesis of art.) Thus, the concept can be observed within a zone and a range of aesthetic and it is problematized in the film (film-effects in contemporary art, Dubois), which is positioned as a device (Agamben, 2009) which invites the other arts to reflections on how to see and understand a work, "... from *the happenings (live events)* to the premises, what is exposed is the look - and the listening - *and the conditions of production of an audiovisual sensitivity - an optical-sound sensitivity*"(Noronha, 2008-A, p.11-12).

The History and Interart Theory consider the operational categories: Scinesthesia Performance and Audio-visual a key to the analysis of the artistic, architectural and design phenomena, once these phenomena are constituted by the transit among those.

## CONCLUSION

This short text aimed at presenting some of the theoretical bases of the History and Interart Theory. The research group "*Interart: the interartistic processes and systems, and performance studies*"<sup>3</sup>, not only investigates the languages, but also incorporates the themes of the formation of new sensibilities and the reflections on the problems of the body, of the text and sound and their special status to the discussion of artistic creation. Finally we tried to, in a few lines, explain about the theoretical and methodological approach, presenting some research operative concepts, and accordingly we elected only a few authors who collaborate in this venture.

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<sup>3</sup> The research group "*Interart: interartísticos processes and systems, and performance studies*" as a leader is prof. Dr. Márcio Pizarro Noronha, develops research initiatives and partnerships and artistic network has the following lines of research: Biographies of artists and art testimonial; Studies Performance, Body Art, narrative and Arts Space, Space Studies: Art History and Architecture as Art and Art Museums as a paradigm; Historiography of Art history and Theories of Image, Body and Audiovisual - Plural and Comparative history of Arts; Interart, intercultural and other fields of knowledge (psychoanalysis, history, anthropology, education ) processes and systems interartísticos: sound language, visual and audiovisual. Currently 23 researchers participating in the group-oriented artists to the area of Performing Arts, Photography and Performance, 05 researchers, artists and academics, working in 04 research and teaching of Art, 06 are researchers in interfaces with the History of Art, the Social Science and Psychoanalysis, 02 researchers are young graduates. Group of students are 05 undergraduate courses and 06 specializations, master and 02 are 03 are doctoral students.

What is important to emphasize in this occasion, is that the ramifications of the research conducted by the group, from transdisciplinary studies and from these operators of analysis, have already generated other concepts in the various surveyed areas, enriching the studies of their own fields. The important thing right now is to show that our work aims at finding structures and concepts that, integrated into the works, can leave them and define their own contours.

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