



EDITORIAL

MODOS has arrived, a journal providing a new platform for debates on art history.

Published by the Research Group *MODOS - História da Arte: modos de ver, exhibir e compreender* [MODES – Art History: modes of seeing, exhibiting and understanding], the journal aims to contribute toward diffusing recent theoretical texts in the field of visual arts. Three online editions shall be launched each year, offering free access to their content. It is, first and foremost, a collective effort, to connect differences, to reign in distances and to rise to the challenge of giving the history of art more exposure.

MODOS is the result of several conversations between art researchers, at annual events and meetings, such as the Brazilian Committee of Art History (CHBA) meetings and those of the National Association of Art Researchers (ANPAP). These spaces for exchanges, as well as the increased number of graduate courses in Arts and the proliferation of bachelor's degrees in Art History at Brazilian universities have played significant roles in the development of the field in our country. Our group is the result of these networks and congregates research professors working in five graduate programs in Arts/Visual Arts (UNICAMP, UFRJ, UnB, UFRGS and UFBA), interested in discussing the multiple dimensions of art production, critique and historiography.

For three years the MODOS group has been organizing events that have led to important contributions to reflection on the history of art in Brazil, resulting in printed and electronic publications. The first meeting, entitled “Histories of art in exhibitions: modes of seeing and exhibiting in Brazil” occurred in May 2014 at Unicamp and was developed from the question: What is the role of art exhibitions for the constitution of a History of Art in Brazil? The second meeting, held in 2015 at the Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, in Rio de Janeiro, investigated the role of art collections in the constitution of a history of art in Brazil and in Portugal. In 2016, researchers gathered in Campinas to address the theme “Possible genealogies: archive, exhibition and circulation”, and in Brasília, at the Visual Cultures Seminar, to debate the expansion of the field of art history and discuss to possibility of building alternative affiliations and transversal connections. Also of note is the organization, by members of the research group, of different themed symposiums during major meetings in the field (CBHA, ANPAP, ANPUH, to name a few) and international joint projects, such as the event Art Collections in Portugal and Brazil in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

This trajectory clearly indicates the group's concerns and initiatives to broaden thinking about art and its histories, proposing different angles of reflection. Exhibitions and their curatorships, critical reception, collectors, public and private collections and the role of archives are all examples of objects of study that enable a dialogue between academic minds and other spaces for furthering knowledge.

The journal is a new step on this path, also highlighting exhibition places, the circulation of works, the collections and narratives that define the MODES in which we perceive, interpret and divulge works of art and the object of art.

It is, therefore, with great enthusiasm that the MODOS group launches its first edition and invites everyone to visit the many modes of writing art history. Read, spread the word, share and, above all, contribute to this space with your own MODES to enrich and multiply discussion about art, its history, theory and critique.

The first edition

The articles published in the first edition present topics of interest to the journal, investigated in distinct manners by art historians: critique, curatorship, exhibitions, collections, institutions and methodological questions of the field. In the latter case, we have the question about how the history of art sees itself as regards indigenous production. This issue is addressed by Ivair Reinaldim, who draws on the critique of cultural relativism as an operational model for understanding what is known today as “indigenous art”. The boundaries of the discipline are considered by Angela Brandão, who flags the exaltation of a “plural history of art”, but that continues to insist on leveling perspectives and maintaining methodological operations that ensure hierarchies, dealing with how to investigate clothing and fashion in the sphere of art history. The author points to the problems that arise when comparing the two areas, especially in studies that reduce the history of fashion to its representation in works of art.

Following the path of theoretical perspectives and their relation with critique, the subject of Christophe Longbois-Canil’s article is the discrepancy between the concept of *modernité*, established by Baudelaire, and that constructed by 19th century critics and constantly employed in relation to a small group of artists. Longbois-Canil shows that the sense of “rupture” linked to that of *modernité* served only to reduce and limit understanding of the concept in the latter half of the 19th century. A history of art critique also guides Patricia Mayayo’s text, but from a different point of view. Mayayo argues about to what extent the representation of an artist interferes in the way in which we comprehend their works, offering a fine discussion on the public image of Spanish artist Maruja Mallo. The artist “invents herself” in a paradoxical condition, breaking from the standards required for her gender, which gave space to the male universe of the historical avant-gardes of her country and, at the same time, and for the same reasons, becoming a victim of her peers’ suspicion.

The wealth of critical analysis about Roberto Magalhães is the subject broached by Maria Luisa Tavora. The art historian refers to the artist’s graphic work, the conditions of his production and his relationship with reference to the magical and oneiric universe, in a reading that underlines the “ironic” dimension of his work. The reception and circulation of Roy Lichtenstein’s work in Western Europe were the issues addressed by Catherine Dossin in her article. Dossin investigates expert critique that aligned the artist’s work to the idealized vision of U.S. culture and art, understanding it as the visual expression of an efficient, technical and comfortable America.

Circulation and critical reception are also the themes on which Artur Freitas bases his text, which discusses Pedro Escosteguy’s participation in the IV Modern Art Meeting of 1972, in Curitiba. Freitas sheds new light on the work of one of the most important experimental artists of the 1960s/70s in Brazil, also discussing how his presence engaged different interpretations of the Parana art critics. Another researcher who dedicates her thoughts to a particular exhibition is Almerinda Lopes. Drawing on significant documental research, Lopes reiterates the importance of the role played by Walter Zanini in charge of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de São Paulo, in the sixth edition of “Jovem Arte Contemporânea” [Young Contemporary Art], held in 1972.

The collector and creator dimension in Burle Marx is the focal point of Vera Siqueira’s article, which investigates the relationship between the botanical and art collections of the Sítio Santo Antônio da Bica. The author presents Burle Marx’s dual vision of the garden, in which the idea of nature merges with that of artifice, blending contemplative intimacy and the public dimension. For the author, when studying Marx’s vision about the garden one is able to clearly understand the ethics of the collection.

Gallery text and the condition of mediator are the subjects discussed by Jean Galard, David Ruiz Torres and Maria Luisa Bellido Gant in their articles. Galard asks how to comment on art works on show at institutions and present them to visitors in view of the fact that the art of interpretation should never be

confused with the pretension of revealing the truth of the work. Torres and Gant, meanwhile, reflect on the use of “increased reality”, especially when it arises to substitute, rather than complement, other forms of mediation.

Finally, the article by Ana Cândida Avelar inaugurates the section “(Ex)Positions”. This section has been created to receive critical works about domestic and foreign exhibitions, written by artists, curators, historians and educators, among other researchers who devote their time to gallery texts and their relationships with artwork. Avelar presents her curatorial experience with the work of Gustavo von Ha, at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de São Paulo in 2016, discussing the values and criteria that lay behind her conceptual, spatial and aesthetic choices.

So, we would like to invite you all, colleagues, teachers, students and others who share an interest to discover in this journal different points of view about these themes and subjects that unite and fascinate us: works of art and artistic propositions, the critical texts that surround them, their modes of exhibition and circulation.

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