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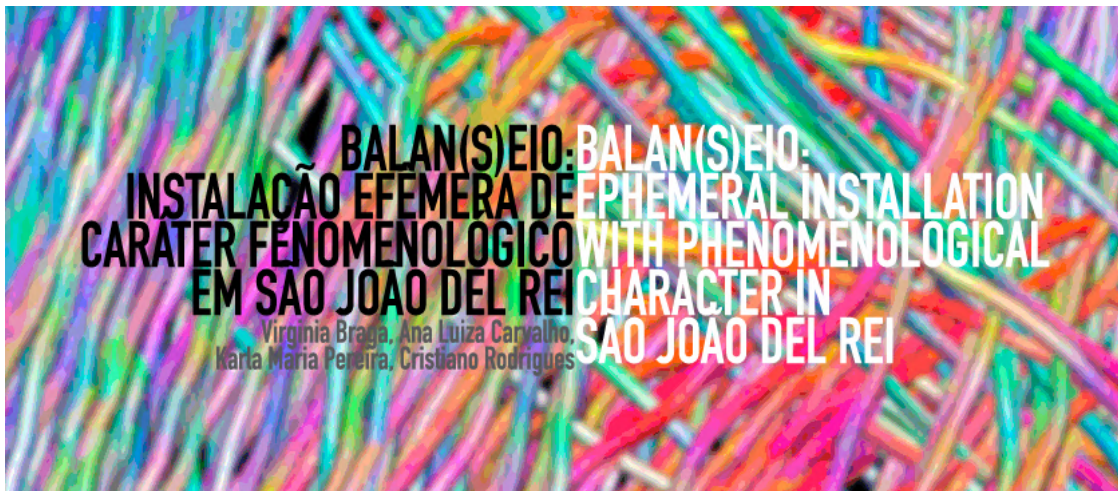
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Balan(s)eio: ephemeral installation with phenomenological character in São João Del Rei

Abstract

This paper presumes a critique of the relationships established in urban spaces with the growing progression of information technologies and contemporary society 's cultures

Contextualizes the emergence of the work and the authors and theories that permeated its creation, and then describes the experiment, based on this criticism, by the students of the group Balan(s)eio. The experiment itself consists of exposing a swing in several bridges mapped in the city of São João del-Rei, allowing to observe and analyze the relationship between subject and object and space-time in the places where the object was inserted and from a phenomenological analysis, recreating these meanings.

As a conclusion, the experiment and the work suggest an in-depth revision of the relations we establish with everyday places and through an appeal to the poetics of space, relating it to the experience and the knowledge of the site and its surroundings.

This paper integrates the Carpet section of the 14th issue of the V!RUS journal which theme is Weaving the City. It prioritizes the actors in the urban scene through reflections crossing the philosophical knowledge by a poetic approach, raising questions about the complexity of the urban space and the relationships involved in it. It lays on a conceptual and experimental work that seeks recurrence in the phenomenology and the senses we attribute to objects and places.

Keywords: Phenomenology; Semiotics; Cartography; Transdisciplinarity

Introduction

The work Balan(s)eio derives from a conception dedicated to the discovery, investigation, exhibition, and propagation of practices searching to extend and expand the traditional limits of the disciplines through transdisciplinarity, understanding the epistemological processes as a product of ArtScience. The city arises from complex relationships through various actors and is continuously woven by those who inhabit it.

The advent and influence of new information technologies and cultures in society generated anxieties and conflicts in contemporary life, directly affecting relationships in urban life. The series Black Mirror (2011) explains this scenario well as it opens the obscure conflicts of individuals who are sometimes reluctant to accept them. The narratives exposed in the series function as allegories, metaphors of practices of the subjects to highlight the characteristics of the reality of our society. Through the analysis of the series context in which themes of daily cultural and identity were raised, the idea arises of intervention in collective spaces related to the city.

The globalized world is suffering consequences where rationality and artificiality impose strictly rhythmic practices. The territory, as well as the economic and social fields, are being targets of contemporary rationality. Society becomes submissive to objects produced by itself, and this is one of the causes of today alienation (SANTOS, 1996). The issue of the impact of new technologies and information as a significant influence on the production of space leads us to investigate new forms of cartography of the territory, detached from the epistemological formalism characteristic of modernity. It leads us to unfold cartography, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1995), meaning that it aims to follow a process and not only represent an object.

In this sense, we began to map spaces of the city of São João del-Rei, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Mapping such places as important symbols of memory, we created a work that has an affective memory with the place. Bridges, then, appear as elements of a semiotic analysis, since it directs our gaze to the scene of everyday life, allowing us to observe them in a different way than usual and seeing this urban emptiness as an opportunity for action and imagination. Therefore, the individual will seek within the space the well-being through affective relations with the objects, in essence, recreating them by a particular and imaginary world, where toys become indispensable references and without any technical interest by these areas (ÁBALOS, 2003).

Bachelard confirms this phenomenological analysis of space when he warns that to relive the moments of the past it is necessary to take flight as the child in his daydreams. In this existentialist poetics, "the being of childhood links the real to the imaginary, living with all imagination the images of reality" (Bachelard, 2009, 102). Finally, understanding that the space-time variable directly influences production, the work concludes with the poetics of space where the swing-instrument used to recall childhood and the memory of the place deconstructs this reality of hurried beings in real time, influenced by the need to connect with information technologies, making them fragments of a space-time relationship that deals with the man-world connection.

Nowadays, extraordinary facts and actions prevent us from perceiving and moving with the simple, so the work is based on this affective memory of the place through a familiar object that seeks, according to Dal Gallo and Marandola (2015, p.20), "to withdraw the objects from their practical and utilitarian design resulting from a long habitual contact and would put them into a situation of strangeness causing a break with everyday existence."

Cartography

Cartography consists initially of following the processes and functions that make up a social field, which is the reality, in continuous arrangement and disarray. Thus, "cartography starts from the recognition that, all the time, we are in processes, in work". (BARROS; KASTRUP, 2009, p.73).

Psychosocial landscapes are also mappable. Cartography, in this case, is also doing and together the time as the disintegration of some worlds, their loss of meaning, and the formation of others: worlds that are created to express contemporary affections, in relation to which the universe in force have become obsolete.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2000), cartography aims to follow a process and not represent an object. Also, as the cartography method has no rules to follow, it is an attentive movement, focused on the experience and on locating clues and signs of the ongoing process.

Helping us to approach the concept of cartography, Moura and Hernandez (2014) affirm that it is necessary first to understand the concept of map. For the authors, map "is a specific type of design that has the function of demarcating a place or a particular portion of space at a given moment, and its purpose is to facilitate our orientation in that space and increase our knowledge about it."

The map is not a static object; it can be created and reinvented at any time, depending on the movements that its author intends to represent at any given moment or the researcher's reading about the data represented in it. In this sense, the map is not only the graphic representation of space but everything that is embedded in it, such as culture, social relations, conflicts, politics and, why not to say, art.

"The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed on itself, it constructs it (...). The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, collapsible, reversible, susceptible of receiving modifications constantly. It can be ripped, reversed, adapt to assemblies of any nature, be prepared by an individual, a group, a social formation. " (DELEUZE, 1995, p.22).

Still according to Moura and Hernandez, "Cartography is the science that deals with the conception, production, diffusion, use, and study of maps" (2014, p.84).

Thus, we can think of cartography as a method that analyzes and examines the process with all its specificities and subjectivities. Deleuze and Guattari's (1995) mapping of the geographic sciences concept, which defined it as "the art or sciences of composing geographic maps", searches in several spaces, specificities capable of producing movement. They affirm that one of the main characteristics of cartography is the procedural observation of the studied object, which is only perceived during the research.

The aim of cartography, say Laura Pozzana de Barros and Virginia Kastrup, is "to draw the network of forces to which the object or phenomenon in question is connected, giving account of its modulations and its permanent movement" (BARROS, KASTRUP, 2009, P 57). Ephemeral, transient, sprouting and blurring, constituting maps, decoding meaning maps and overcoding them dynamically. Through this semiotic chaos, which is the reality, subjective characters, individual and collective, are composing themselves, emerging at every moment to the center stage of the social plan.

Thus, the cartographer, when presenting how the research was done, the way in which it was carried out, demonstrates the paths used in the knowledge production process. It seems to us, therefore, that what legitimates the cartographer's analysis is the apprehension of reality presented, although provisionally, under the aspect of territoriality and the mask, subjective static constitutions, ontologically related to being. However, the work of the cartographer extrapolates the analysis of the constitutions of the existential worlds, their territories, their identities.

The cartographer, in fact, accompanies a highly dynamic field. What he relentlessly seeks are processes and becomings. Cartography consists of a sort of openness to the unlimited finite of the possibilities of human existence. The cartographer needs to be aware of

the process, know the time to stop and observe the paths that are being traveled and the best time to move on. In this way, Deleuze and Guattari (1995) affirm that cartography is not competence, but a performance.

Phenomenology and semiotics

The idea of work dealing with the affective memory and the phenomenology of the territory is part of the interaction and perception of the subject as a member and considers it an important factor for understanding these spaces. To adopt phenomenology means, first, to recognize that the basis of knowledge of territory consists of experience. Experiencing is to go against something and to be touched by the science of being in its existence, that is, to place itself previously as a bearer of a meaning related to the singularity of a place through the affective presence, letting itself be carried by the tonality of the place (BESSE, 2011).

Merleau-Ponty (1996) defines this Phenomenology of Perception as the practice lived in space and time in order to rescue our experiences between the self and the world and to reveal its essence. According to this logic, the author reinforces the argument that the meaning of phenomenology lies in ourselves, in temporal space relations and the experience of the world. Space only finds meaning through the experience of the "self".

Therefore, the sense of space does not focus on its delimitations, but on the interior of those who experience them, so that we can transpose this sense of space to whatever places we are. The phenomenological inhabitant is not restricted to the purely delimited space but seeks to "look at the fact that our relations with space are not those of a pure disembodied subject with a distant object, but those of an inhabitant of space with his family environment" (MERLEAU-PONTY, 2004, p.16).

In this sense, the urban experience was decisive for the elaboration of the concept of the work while questioning these new limits addressed by the influences of informational technologies. Since the everyday approach is understood through the dialectic of space, the phenomenological inhabitant recognizes that space only receives a meaning, a meaning from the moment in which it attributes it. In the context of our work, represented by the bridges of the city of São João del Rei, the city is re-presented and relearned under a new paradigm: the subject (observer and/or participant) in relation to the object (swing) and the concrete existence of that meaning is validated from the experience of an individual discovery that translates semiotics through the thought of the city, through an object strange to the place, but familiar to each one's everyday life .

This contact with the process stages of the work, its conception and execution, reveals the author as the inventor and, at the same time, is invented incessantly. In this way, the author and the object while carrying out the action of conceiving the work, deconstruct the process and begins to see it as a means and not as an end. It defines the sensation as a starting point for the relations of being with the world through sensory and physical experience. A perception of experience coupled with the necessary pauses, casting a new eye on space and raising questions regarding the indifference of the individual to the territory and establish an active connection between the human environment and its production processes. What is wanted is a diminution, even if momentary, of the speed in which we relate, so characteristic of the present times and thus, to establish between the authors and the work an experimentation of experiences of the practices.

In parallel with this phenomenology, we seek other points to contribute to this investigation, through the implications of humanist geography and the thought of Deleuze and Guattari, without the intention of a conclusion, but of a questioning. The process is the core of Deleuzian cartography and not only the object as in phenomenology. It focuses on the experience and the signs of this ongoing process, taking into account that the map represents not only space but everything that is inserted in it, characterizing itself as an open process and leaving room for the rapprochement between experience and place. Experiences that touch the very notion of the territory and its place in the contemporary world, differently from the production of indifferent spaces and leading us to practices that extrapolate the disciplinary limits and expand the social reach, building possibilities of coexistence.

However, we realize that this critical process is an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between body and mind, and subject and object, which was initiated by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and other philosophers of phenomenology. But after the second half of the twentieth century, new critiques of this classic concept of object representation were made by philosophers such as Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, Rorty, and others. The fact is, there is a fine line in the effort to deconstruct discourses in search of knowledge of what is hidden and unrevealed, so we perceive that there are several ways of understanding the truth, the most important being not to succumb to absolute truths, radical skepticism, dogmatism, but having the sense of analyzing, being curious and studying possibilities between certainty and uncertainty, contemporary philosophy is open to the exercise of freedom of thought, dialogues, and possibilities of interpretation of reality. In this sense, the intention behind this work is to perceive the essence that we give things so that they have a meaning.

"[...] If my essence is the very fact that I exist, then every sense is given by this fact, that is, the eternal becoming of relationships. Furthermore, it does not matter to ask yourself something outside my essence / existence that gives meaning to the world and to things. Essence only makes sense when in relation to existence [...]" . (SIQUEIRA, 2005, p.5).

In this way, the work is characterized as a translation of the intersemiotic, where the interpretation of these textual signs occurs through the representation of visual codes. The swing on the bridges translates this space semiotics since it re-signifies a place of passage and/or contemplation and redraws these relations between subject and object, catalyzing unpredictable reactions and temporarily dissolving their limits. Ephemeral installations that emerge punctually, but that are always waiting for an upcoming analysis opportunity. Since this look is directed to a day-to-day place, it allows us to observe it in a different way than usual. The different contexts and models of bridges in which the installation was allocated allowed us various investigations and perceptions, highlighted by several factors.

Semiotics, as developed by Charles Peirce, was adopted as the basis for this comparative analysis of the signs. Our thinking does not indicate a direct relation to things, so for semiotics the signs are the only way to be in connection with the world, or according to its definition "A sign [...] is what, in a certain aspect or way, represents something to someone." (Peirce, 1977, p.46). The relations that are established from the sign depend on the attribution of meanings that this interpreter will confer. Therefore, the meaning of something depends jointly on the sign and understanding of the interpreter. Thus, in the presented work, the understanding of semiotics permeates the phenomenological event, where the memory of the place directly affects the attribution of meaning to an unknown object in an everyday place, and it only makes sense from the experience of the "I". Space, in this context, is by principle as flexible as time, varying according to the points of view. Given the unique existence of this object in this experience we have, the sequential existence, that is, the object is updated in each convergence with the subject. The object remains the same, but the experience will always be unique, generating an endless array of uncertainties.

As the swing is transposed from one bridge to another through simple spatial articulations, subjects (be they spectators or participants) translate this sign in different ways, involving different sensations and feelings through aesthetic experience. What interests us here are the infinite possibilities of this work in creating new realities, expanding the imagination through the repetition of the same object as a power of analysis.

The concepts discussed here, whether of phenomenology, cartography or semiotics, seek to understand that the project needs to go beyond and recognize reality as a becoming, transgressing its limits and releasing several creative intentions within the challenge of the project in urban space. The absence of a conception of conservation of these public spaces and their relations between architecture and the use of spaces is the starting point of the idealization of the work, through a poetics of space and the vision that is concluded is that what I see Is my creation and that "I am the creature of what I see" (PAZ, 1982).

Experience and childhood

The phenomenological person is always surrounded by several objects that refer to his feelings, usually collections of them, a notorious inventory of items that relate to memory, past, and childhood, but he does it in a disorderly way, without hierarchizing or organizing such objects. It is a loose and labyrinthine organization, the result of relation between spaces and objects (ÁBALOS, 2003).

In childhood, time and space are not rationalized, that is, divided, timed, not based on routines and calendars, for children the world is lived sensitively and subjectively. The games are not suffocated by space-time, they are free from this imprisonment, childhood is phenomenological in its essence. According to Maturana and Verden-Zöller (2004, p.231) "Play is a fundamental and easily lost attitude because it requires total innocence. We call play any human activity practiced in innocence, that is, any activity carried out in the present and with attention directed toward itself and not towards its results."

Playing is an opportunity for learning in childhood because it requires a creative complexity, independent of social class, cultural and time play is part of children's lives. In the contemporary world, these activities are being replaced by others such as watching television, playing video games, playing on tablets and smartphones.

The act of playing in childhood is very serious, considering that the child practices these activities in a contiguous way, assimilating information and knowledge (FIGUEIREDO, 2004). Toys are indispensable to the thought of the phenomenological being, as, through them, essentially affective relationships are created through a miniaturized imaginary world, totally ignoring their technical point of view.

The installation "The vacant room" made in 1976 by Juan Navarro Baldeweg, in Sala Vinçon in Barcelona, shows perfectly the idea of phenomenal space, where a swing was installed in an illuminated room, reminiscent of the infantile experience of the challenge to gravity, leaving the time suspended for a moment. Merleau-Ponty (1996) states that it is possible to understand in childhood that phenomenology is a reflection of experimentation and learning and placing subjectivity on the side of its being and its time.

The joke belongs to a kind of communication, called a paradoxical nature. This double consciousness is a product of the fact that the artificial, and potential structure of games or games allow individuals to express their opinions and criticize without hurting (BATESON, 1987). The everyday life of children, even those who do not go to kindergartens or schools, is influenced by the time and space routine of the adult world, so it is only in the act of playing that the child and the adult enjoy their total freedom of creation (WINNICOTT, 1994).

*"Play is not to waste time, it is to win it.
It's sad to have boys without school,
but sadder is to see them
lined up in airless rooms,
with sterile exercises,
without value to human formation."
Carlos Drummond de Andrade*

The present work Balan(s)eio was created to arouse restlessness of the people who transit through the places where the installation was placed, of an ephemeral character, to draw attention to the questions of concepts and ideas. Swings were placed on the bridges of the city of São João del-Rei to provoke the construction of a critical eye, creating an inextricable relationship between the viewer and the work, through conceptual art to mess with the senses of the public and even make an uncomfortable experience and disturbing.

Through authors, works, projects, films and other works, a mental map was built that contributed in an analogous way to the research if based. The creation of the collective added to the research gain strength and was widely disseminated in social networks, contributing to encourage the growth and greater exploration of practical activities.

The first executed piece of the project happened in the joinery, the seat of the swing, made of scrap wood (Figure 1). During the month of December, team meetings were held at the UFSJ's experimental ceramics laboratory for the execution and finishing of the swing with the painting of its seat in white acrylic paint and 10mm white nylon strings, as well as the production of other materials such as videos, stencils, paintings, drawings and texts (Figure 2).

When realizing the need to present our proposal, we created a logo with the name of the collective and a swing occupied by a person, suspended by the initial letter "B" (Figure 3) and thus we reproduce this image by several places of the city through the application of stencil (Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7).



Fig. 1: Making the swing at the logging company. Source: Authors.



Fig. 2: Swing assembly process and stencil preparation in the UFSJ's Laboratory of Ceramics. Source: Authors.



Fig. 3: Stencils done and application test in sulphite. Source: Authors.



Fig. 4: Stencil application on a wall at the Federal University of São João del Rei. Source: Authors.



Fig. 5: Stencil application on a wall at the Federal University of São João del Rei. Source: Authors.



Fig. 6: Stencil application on a wall at the Federal University of São João del Rei. Source: Authors.

In January 2017, new team meetings were held for the development of the script and the schematization of the swing sheet installation on the city's bridges, putting into practice all the theoretical conceptualization that we addressed during the studies (Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12).

When we started the installations, we collected information and results in the urban space, analyzing the interactions, or the lack of them, with our object of study. Aiming at exposing this work during the 1st Exhibition PIPAUS-UFSJ, traces were recorded in various ways, videos, photos, audios, and texts, as well as dissemination through a page in the app Instagram - @ coletivo.balansieio - where followers could follow up the entire process in real time and interactively.



Fig. 7: Preparation of the swing to be installed in one of the mapped bridges. Source: Authors.



Fig. 8: Installation of the swing on the Biquinha Bridge. Source: Authors.



Fig. 9: Swing installed seen from above on the Cadeia Bridge. Source: Authors.



Fig. 10: Swing installed on the Estação Bridge. Source: Authors.



Fig. 11: Team member preparing to install the swing on the Rosario Bridge. Source: Authors.



Fig. 12: Team members preparing to install the swing on the Coreto Bridge. Source: Authors.

Final considerations

We present below the map indicating the bridges where the swing was installed, totaling seven intervention sites, where we analyzed that the interactions between subject and object varied according to the space-time of the phenomenological perceptions of each individually.

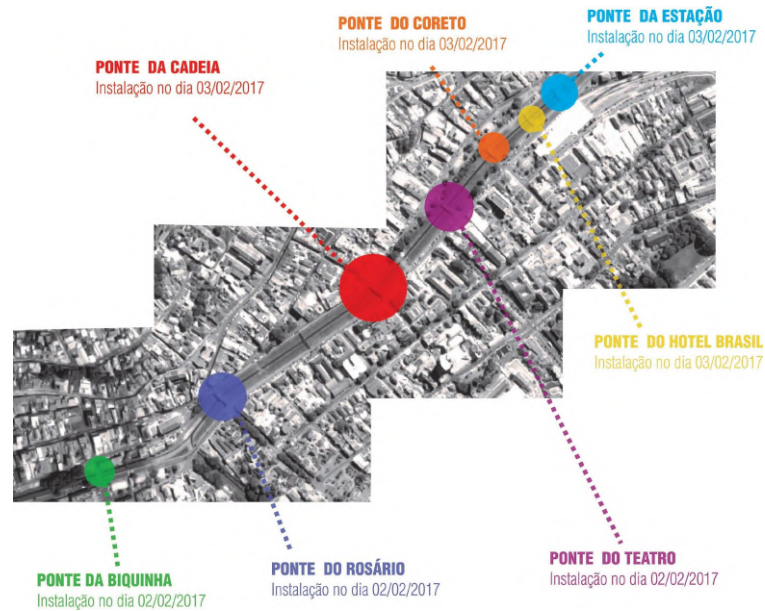


Fig. 13: Map of cartographed bridges in São João del Rei. Source: Authors.

According to the bridges' scales, we conclude that spaces become more conducive to interactions and relationships according to the proportion of pedestrians and vehicles. Bridges exclusively of pedestrians tend to have a greater approximation between subject and object, while those that have more vehicles, this approach distance.

The phenomenological subject identifies with the affective memory of each space and of the object – swing – according to its identification with the "self". Children identified themselves with the toy object in a visual and curiosity interaction. The contemporary world, with rushed connected in real life, brought a curious reality to the work-experiment.

The experience of carrying out this conceptual work in the center of a city full of meanings has brought the group a differentiated experience and a poetic perception of space, experiencing it in a deeper way and understanding better the criticism of relations established in the urban environment. Through a poetic language of space, an attempt was made to integrate the subject with the theme "Weaving the City" of the 14th issue of V!RUS journal, questioning the fact that the city became more and more market and less for people through plural approaches, which mixes philosophical knowledge and contemporary questions such as the growing expansion of digital media. The work Balan(s)eio raises a sensitive reflection of relationships, seeks a return to children's pure and playful thinking and suggests a greater confluence between subject-object and space-time in the construction of a more participatory city.

This process was complete through hard work and a bit of idleness, without keeping us the exact proportion of each. In the midst of fun and seriousness, playing is serious.

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