

Figures of the beholder's visual immersion in pictures: the construction of 'places of experience' in contemporary documentary practices¹

Figuras da imersão visual do espectador na imagem: a construção dos "lugares de experiência" nas práticas documentais contemporâneas

Figuras de inmersión visual del espectador en imágenes: la construcción de los "lugares de experiencia" en las prácticas documentales contemporâneas

Andrea França Martins²

José Benjamim Picado Sousa e Silva³

Consuelo da Luz Lins⁴

Abstract *The paper aims to examine some issues concerning the "beholder's share" in visual image documentary regimes in contemporary culture: examining the case of photojournalism and recent documentary films. In this analysis, we intend to highlight the modes of constructing the "immersion's vectors" of the*

¹ This text results from a course we held in the second semester of 2012, in a common effort of four respective Postgraduate Programmes in Communication (PUC-RJ – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, UFRJ – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and UFF – Universidade Federal Fluminense – Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro), about documentary practices in contemporary visual culture. We are grateful to all the students and colleagues who contributed to the discussions of the basic reading and with critical interventions during the sessions of the course.

² Doctorado en Comunicación por la Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro-UFRJ. Profesora del Departamento de Comunicación y del Programa de Posgrado en Comunicación en la Pontifícia Universidad Católica de Rio de Janeiro – PUC-RJ, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil; afranca3@gmail.com.

³ Posdoctorado – Université Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne. Doctorado en Comunicación. Profesor adjunto en la Universidade Federal Fluminense – UFF, Niteroi, RJ, Brasil; jbpicado@hotmail.com.

⁴ Posdoctorado por la Universidad de París 3 – Sorbonne Nouvelle. Doctorado en Cine y Audiovisual por la Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, Francia. Profesora de la Escuela de Comunicación y del Programa de Posgrado en Comunicación de la Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil; consuelo-lins@gmail.com.

images, together with “the principle of eyewitness testimony”, which permeates some of contemporary documentary practices, in order to identify in them the constitution of “experiential places” of the images which defines their visual meanings in contemporary culture.

Keywords: *Beholder's share; Visual witness; Photojournalism; Documentary cinema*

Resumo *o texto pretende analisar questões relativas ao papel da espectadorialidade associado às funções documentais de certos regimes da imagem na cultura visual contemporânea: examinando o caso do fotojornalismo e do cinema documentário mais recente, pretende-se destacar o modo de construção dos “vetores de imersão” das imagens e o “princípio do testemunho ocular” que permeia algumas destas práticas documentárias, de modo a identificar nelas a constituição de um “lugar de experiência” visual que define suas significações na cultura contemporânea.*

Palavras-chave: *Espectatorialidade; Testemunho visual; Fotojornalismo; Cinema documentário*

Resumen *El artículo se propone examinar algunas cuestiones relativas al papel de las funciones de la espectadorialidad asociados a ciertas funciones de la imagen documental en la cultura visual contemporánea: examinamos el caso del fotoperiodismo y del cine documental más reciente, teniendo por objetivo resaltar en este análisis la construcción de los “vectores de inmersión” de las imágenes y el “principio de testimonios oculares” que impregna algunas de las prácticas documentales con el fin de identificar en estos el establecimiento de un “lugar de la experiencia” que define sus significados visuales en la cultura contemporánea.*

Palabras-clave: *Espectatorialidad; Testimonio visual; Fotoperiodismo; Cine documental*

Date of submission: 14/04/2013

Date of acceptance: 02/05/2013

Documentary practices and spectatoriality

Here we establish some observations about the strategies which are present in different image regimes in contemporary culture having in view the way in which a hypothetic “documentary register” is produced in them, which defines a universe of visual and audiovisual works. In the extension of the manifestations of these practices, we momentarily emphasise certain historical and aesthetic implications of the relationships between visual regimes of these works and the mobilisation of the spectator’s systems of creeds. In the course of the last years, we worked on the correlations between the visual configuration of the contemporary documentary forms and the reception conditions of these pictures in frameworks such as documentary cinema and photojournalism (LINS e MESQUITA, 2008; FRANÇA, 2008; PICADO, 2011).

In the first case, the examination of a segment of the more recent Brazilian documentary cinematography confronted us with a series of displacements produced by documentary practices with respect to various of their supposed limits – such as for example the dissolution of certain traditional distinctions between the statuses of “fiction” and “documentary” and the problematisation of a question which is not much discussed in the contemporary audiovisual creation, that is to say the spectator’s creed in front of the pictures of the world.

In the case of contemporary photojournalism, this displacement affects the meaning of the dramatic intensification of the representation of the event, an aspect which conferred a more “canonical” dimension of their signification upon these pictures: in such context, the dynamising function of the relative gestures, postures, physiognomies and positions of the bodies has been losing the centrality it exerted, ceding space to other meanings of the spectator’s sensory and affective participation – on their turn more linked to a certain minimalism of the presentation of the events.

Another aspect which interested our anterior observations concerns the way in which the spectator’s inclusion in the regimes of the documentary picture occurs through the construction of various positions of

the eyewitness testimony: this implies the production and explicitation of the “devices” of the interaction between the cinematographer and his characters – by using the voice in off, by establishing the conversational protocol (LINS, 2011) or by constituting a “documentary scenography”, by means of a “topographical” conception” of the filming spaces (FRANÇA, 2009) or in the case of photojournalism, by constituting “immersion vectors” through which the picture can establish the various dimensions of its experience as aspects of a vicarious testimony of the scene (PICADO, 2011).

In all these moments, although the “spectator’s part” and the system of creeds and presuppositions which are inherent in him have been topicalised, our attention was more directed to the strategies and devices, as if the subject of this reception only lets himself imply, in the conditions that are proper to each of the devices which are constituted in the picture. For our part, we would like to observe this “place of experiences”, as a central element of the analysis of the documentary practices by means of the pictures of the contemporary photojournalism and cinema.

On the one side, in a large part of the materials we have worked with, a socio-historical parameter of the characters’ identification and of the privileged situations of the documentary treatment is still preserved: in photojournalism, for example, predominate aspects of the event (its historical significance, its spatial indices) and of its presentation (the public or typological character of its characters); in the same order, in documentary cinema, we identified the socio-historical keys of the thematic choices (a certain conception of the social orders in vogue), as well as the way of characterising the framework of the filmic situations (dealing with spaces which signify institutions: the jury room, the prison, the school), or the survival of social discussions in other special contexts (the masters’ mansion, the theatre room).

On the other hand, in this universe of documentary practices there are more important transformations we would like to deal with from now on: it is the fact that the meaning of these practices reveals another disposition in front of the world – which we can generically qualify as an “aesthetic attitude”, that of the cinematographer/photographer as well as

that of the spectator. An attitude which translates itself in moments in which the documentarian/photographer suspends his schemes of action and reaction in front of that which affects him and he makes a sort of "pause" on a scene, a picture, a temporality, that are not those which are contained in the dominant documentary practices.

We found this inclination of a mode of being in the face of things in the way in which a certain iconography of photojournalism manifests disgust for the notion of sensational proximity – proximity which would promote degraded forms of compassionality. Examples of this situation are some pictures that were recently awarded a prize by World Press Photo (the major laureate of world journalism): the most exemplary case is that of the prize awarded in 2009 to the Italian photographer Pietro Masturzo and his visual essay on the electoral process in Iran in that same year (Figure 1). In the context of the series in which this laureate picture is inscribed there is a certain way of avoiding the idea that the human face is the preferential place of the manifestation of the repercussion between photography and spectatoriality: in his post, appears a meaning of permanence and indeterminacy, associated with the landscape and with the almost apparent insignificance of human presence in the picture.

In certain contemporary documentary films, we find the same ethos of the picture, in the way in which they displace themselves from the excessive characterisation of the subjects of their films, in order to introduce a way of understanding reality, in an attitude which is freer of presuppositions and of critical knowledge: here the most outstanding works are those by Cao Guimarães, in works such as *Da Janela de Meu Quarto* [From the Window of my Room] (2004) and *Andarilho* [Drifter] (2007), Sandra Kogut with *Um Passaporte Húngaro* [A Hungarian Passport] (2003), Lucas Bambozzi with *Do outro lado do rio* [Across the river] (2004), Roberto Berliner with *Afinação da interioridade* [literally Tuning Interiority] (2001) and even Eduardo Coutinho, with *Um Dia na Vida* [A Day in Life] (2010).

Deriving from the new audiovisual situations created by these films and photographs, there is another kind of involvement (sensory and emotional; reflexive and moral) in the interaction promoted between these

pictures and the testimony, which we are interested in exploiting here. This way in which the picture presents the spectator's place – as a “place of experience” – confers a special quality upon this visual universe, thus making difficult the access to the principles of its signification as well as to the mediation of the discourses about socio-historical conditions of these spaces and bodies. To experiment these practices, in the regime proposed for these pictures, leads us to accept them as being to a certain degree in connection with a sediment of reality, because the interaction into which they throw us is being defined as an aesthetic experience of immersion (Figure 1).

Precisely because of this, we want to make a momentary displacement of the way in which we treated these questions, in order to think of a special aspect of the relationship between these picture practices: their connection with the production of forms which are distinct from being in presence of the picture and the possible pacts which all this implies with the spectatorial instance. According to us, this element of the relationship of the pictures with the reception is not much approached by the analyses of the documentary forms, but it must urgently be taken to



Figure 1. Cao Guimarães, *From the Window of my Room* (2004).

the first plane. Therefore we will focus on the problem of the production of this meaning of “immersion” or of “absorption” in/by the picture, which is central in the creation of the effects by means of which we can give back an aspect of their centrality in the visual culture of today to the documentary practices. In order to duly approach these questions, we will make an argumentative approximation on the basis of the following discussion points:

- the relationship between immersion and the “principle of eyewitness testimony”, in photojournalism and in documentary cinema;
- the recourse immersive/absorptive as an element of guarantee in the aesthetic experience of audiovisual fiction;
- immersion as an articulating axis of the relationships between documentary and plastic arts.

The testimony based upon the picture and the spectator’s creeds

One of the aspects which contributes to establish a position of the testimony of the picture derives from that which results from the pause done to the animation of the visual topics, mainly when from this pause gesture emerge the figures of the somatic expressivity, of the relative positions between bodies, objects and space and which serve the production of a strongly dramatic meaning of the pictorial representation in photography (PICADO, 2008).

The art historian E. H. Gombrich argues about the relationships between the pictorial representation of space and the meaning of the testimony that it is able to establish in its relation to the spectator: the geometric principles of the construction of the frameworks of a visual drama do not only concern the consistency of the relationship between painting and reality, but above all the appeal which it addresses to the spectator, with respect to the pictorial arrangement of the event. Hence the “principle of the eyewitness testimony” is enunciated as a rule of the composition of the pictorial space which, for the representation only selects that which can be visualised, in a determined moment, from a

certain point of view: by analysing the use of the enunciation of this principle, in the analysis of a painting by Rafael, Gombrich assumes it as a “negative” rule (or a selective one) of the pictorial representation of dynamic events.

“There is no doubt in my mind that an opus such as *St Paul Preaching at Athens* can be better understood as an application of the principle of eyewitness testimony. It is convenient to note once more how the artist makes us participants of the momentary scene in which Christ’s apostle addressed the elite of the pagan philosophers. We must see ourselves sitting on the external invisible steps of the painting, but the picture does not show us anything which cannot be seen from a certain point at a given distance, a distance that can be mathematically elaborated, but which we instinctively feel. It is this consistency which the art historians liked to describe as the ‘rationalisation of space’.” (GOMBRICH, 1982: 255, 256).

In the case of the contemporary documentary cinema, this question of the space of representation assumes various aspects, sometimes even opposed to that of the pictorial naturalisation of the testimony in photojournalism: in films such as *Jogo de Cena* [Scenic Game and *Juízo* [Behave], our attention is drawn, for example, to the way in which the device of the inscription of a scene into the scene constitutes itself by attributing to its respective representation spaces (the theatre scene, the cinema, the tribunal) the fundament of a social function which legitimates each of these places.

If in representation exists, at the same time, one scene for one room, one actor for one spectator, characters for singular subjects, one picture for one thing, this topography of the scene can suppose a “calculated place” from where one observes things, a dialogue “between geometry and theatre”, a cut, as Barthes affirms it by examining the classical scene, but it can also suppose a kind of “gyrating spectacle” which turns upside down the closed worlds of the scene and of the room (BARTHES, 1984: 81). What is of interest in both cases is that this scene topography always constructs a relationship and, in these films, it is updated by sensitising the relations of power, of cognition and of subjectivity in question—of the cinema, of the theatre and of justice.

Such strategies – technical, spatial, temporary, visual, sensitive – determine and they are as well determined by the very effect which wants to be produced. In the case of *Jogo de Cena* [Scenic Game], Eduardo Coutinho sets up a device of theatre/cinema, in which actors and characters reflect themselves respectively, in undistinguishable reflections, which not only shake the evidences of the sensitive but they also show that every *mise-en-scène* is a social fact, “maybe the main social fact” (COMOLLI, 2004: 211). In *Juízo* [Behave], on its turn, it is the tribunal scene which - filmed by Maria Augusta Ramos in contra-plane to actors of destitute communities in substitution of the defendants – directs towards a different experience, in which the first become doubles or repetitions *ad infinitum* of the precariousness of the means in Brazil, of the rarity of possibilities, of a past which can be repeated, for this reason present and future, all mixed in an undistinguishable social and imagetic reflection (Figure 2).

In the case of Eduardo Coutinho, the very title *Jogo de Cena* [Scenic Game] suggests one of these aspects of its signification: Coutinho invites the actresses to interpret women with whom he had already talked and

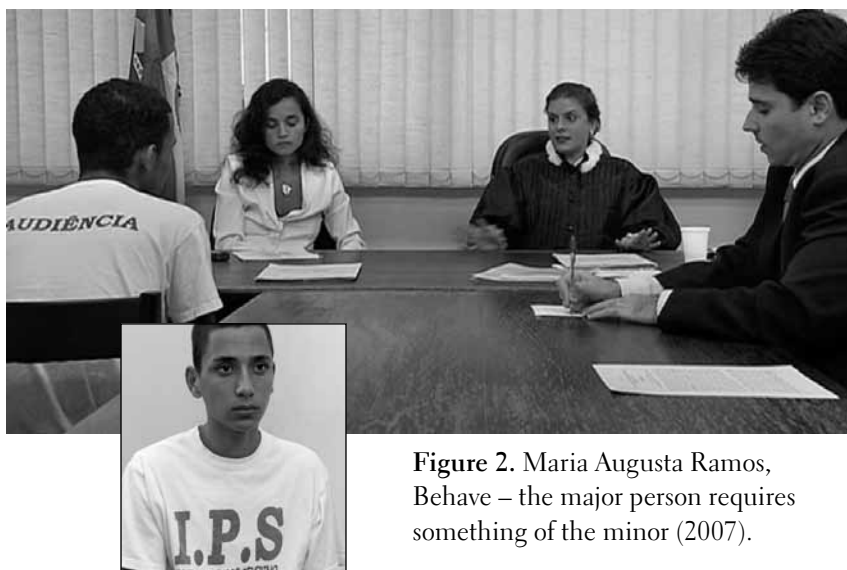


Figure 2. Maria Augusta Ramos, *Behave* – the major person requires something of the minor (2007).

DOSSIER

makes an unexpected articulation between these various testimonies; he dissolves distinctions between that which is staged and that which is real and he produces changes in the course of the film in the way in which the spectator relates himself to it. If in front of the known actresses we are initially tempted to judge their performance, with time passing, the film takes us out of this place and provides another kind of experience – that of sharing anxieties and difficulties inherent in the staging of real people with well-known and talented actresses.

That which is of the order of the “authentic”, of the “true”, of the “spontaneous” – adjectives which accompanied the reception of the director’s documentaries (and which concerns Coutinho’s particularly “testimonial” function in front of his characters’ speeches) – splits up. Uncertainty spreads all over the film (reinforcing the emphasis Coutinho gives to the dimension of fiction and of “self-staging” he concedes to his characters) and reaches famous and anonymous people: actually we do not know after all to whom belong Andréa Beltrão’s and Fernanda Torres’ hesitations and silences – to the actresses or to the characters they reinterpret. We lose the control of what is or is not staged and the indices that the film is “deceiving” us makes us paradoxically enter even more the proposed game. We are touched twice by the same case and we do not want to know which one of the women is the “true” owner of the story.

In this aspect of the relation to the creeds which sustain the testimony of the pictures, the case of photojournalism deserves a separate examination, of a kind which permits us to understand the regimes in which the picture acts so that it implies in its more concrete manifestation the actantial places (“of experience”) of the spectators to whom it is destined. The truthful character of this existential implication – as definer of the photojournalistic picture – must be valorised in its very “pragmatic” dimension: not so much through that which it shows of its elements, so that it makes itself understood, but through that which it does in order to make understandable the communicational relationship it proposes to establish.

All this has to do with the idea of how the pictures of the events work with the socially dominant system of creeds (MICHAUD, 2002), but also

with the problems which derive from the pretensions of historicity which are linked to this event production – on its turn derived from the testimony values which these pictures seem to be semantically laden with: in comparison with the way in which the contemporary documentary does eventual displacements and ruptures of this relation to the reception, the more “canonical” photojournalism exerts this same mediation function with reception, from the inverted perspective of a reinforcement of its very condition of discursive mediation of historical topicality; if the documentary cinema produces displacements in the spectator’s creeds, the mediatic administration of the event in photojournalism assumes a reproductive dimension of some social orders of the communication of the historical fact.

When we think about some of these more classic pictures of a canon of visual coverage of events (Eddie Adams’ very famous picture about the execution of a Vietcong rebel in the streets of Saigon, in February 1968, for example), we must also take into consideration that this “objective” testimony which the picture promotes has to do with the frontality of the presentation of the scene and with the correct exploitation of the limits of the visual plane of the picture in order to present the event – aspects which, as we will see later on, are linked to the variables of “theatricality” of the presentation of the topics of the event representation: all this is also correlated with the way in which some historians of art and documentary photography define as the aspects of a “documentary stylistic” of social photography, in Walker Evans and August Sander (CHEVRIER, 2001; LUGON, 2001).

From the principle of the “eyewitness testimony” to the “vectors of visual immersion”

There is another order of questions which is evoked by the notion that the picture can serve the production of a testimonial meaning, questions which are due to other kinds of condition of their presentation. Gombrich mentions it, when he evokes this same principle, on the basis of another rule of the production of testimony based upon the picture, de-

defined as “positive”: here we speak of that which occurs when many of the objective aspects which would help us to define the eyewitness testimony get lost, for various reasons, all linked to the intensification of some condition of their capture (movement, distance, luminosity, among others).

In such cases the testimony which the picture offers would translate the specific circumstance in which visualisation would connect itself to the testimonial register, displacing the axis of its comprehension of the objective conditions of the aspectual selection which a spectator is offered – to the extent that he places himself in the appropriate position in order to experience it: in its place appears that which Gombrich will designate as a “subjective testimony” by means of a picture, in which the very conditions of the localisation of the gaze are guided by the intensification of certain variants of the visualisation – such as illumination, atmospheric conditions, colour, texture, contrasts of the objects with the environment, among others (GOMBRICH, 1982).

It is at that point that we are led to a dimension of the testimony which emerges from the experiences of “immersion” or “absorption” by the picture: if the documentary cinema works more intensely with these questions (which is reinforced by certain traditions of the genre, such as Frederick Wiseman’s direct cinema, “of observation”), the photojournalistic picture does not avoid to also exhibit some indices of this same turning point towards the subjectivity of the spectatorial regimes. One aspect of this displacement is, as we have already seen, the fact that the promotion of this immersivity implies the dissolution of the frontiers between the documentary function of the pictures and the recourse to certain fictional devices, for example: the destabilisation of the systems of spectatorial creeds in the documentary cinema and in contemporary photojournalism involves the recourse to certain systems of absorption of the spectator in the “places of experience” constituted by the pictures.

In this last aspect, the implication of the event transferred by photojournalism and by documentary cinema to the modes of construction of the spectator’s position with regard to the facts results in a topicality meaning of these practices which manifest them as part of a more “po-

etic” regime of its significance: with this, we want to establish that the question of the basic discursive production of the documentary practices involves the correlation of these pictures with certain processes of “mimetic reactivation” – proper to the cognitive economy of the fictional experience – and which certain authors associate with the representational powers of the photographic and cinematographic devices, especially in the establishment of an “almost natural” visual world (SCHAEFFER, 1999).

But if – in the case of photojournalism – this question of the immersive powers of the pictures is an element of the promotion of a certain wish of visual mediatisation of the historical element (which ends up naturalising the truthful pretensions of the visual coverage of the events), the case of documentary cinema is completely different: the absorptive vector of these pictures serves a dynamics which signalises the relationships between the testimonial meaning of the spectator’s experience and the arcana of an aesthetic participation experience, which possesses deep roots – in art history, for example. In the reflection of a critic such as Michael Fried, for example, this is a problem associated with the way in which the criticism of the art of the 18th century positions itself again with respect to the primacy of « theatricality », characteristic of gender painting – especially in the art of portraying (FRIED, 1980).

In this context, the importance that the absorptive topics of the painting of the 18th century of the Parisian salons assume, according to Diderot, causes the emergence in his writings of an evaluation of a predominantly “theatrical” character of the painting which precedes that of Greuze and Chardin: in the middle of the 18th century in France, the portrait requires the exhibition of a model to the audience’s gaze, by means of a presentation of his character and social and political position (for example, by means of the character’s frontality, who directly looks at the spectator); the presupposition of this kind of exhibition conferred a character of theatrical artificiality upon the representation of the portrait, which made the gender dubious in the eyes of many critics, above all Diderot. In the painting of absorptive topics (which begins to appear

in the Parisian salons, from 1767 on), emerges the “primacy of absorption”, in contrast to “theatricality”: the result of this way of treating the portrait – in which the characters are presented as if they were immersed in thoughts and actions, indifferent to the way in which they are perceived, – seems to imply a special relationship between the portrayed model, the painting and its observer.

Without specifically discussing these questions related to problems of art history, we are interested in using again the relationship between the meaning of immersivity and the valorisation of spectatoriality, in the context of contemporary documentary cinema. But, to this purpose, we must move to the examination of certain concrete cases, saying beforehand that in them we see the way in which the “place of experience” assumes a density which is very near to the displacements which characterise the experience of contemporary art, for example.

What is documentary in the absorptive picture

Michael Fried emphasises – in a work such as *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* (2006)], by Douglas Gordon and Phillipe Paeno (Figure 3) – the way in which the promotion of this immersion carries in itself the sign of a particular regime of spectatoriality which the basic filmic devices intend, in a way, to emulate: it is the visual experience of following in real time all the details of the French football player Zinedine Zidane’s movements, in the course of a football game between Real Madrid and Villarreal. On the basis of a selection of pictures produced by about 17 cameras scattered on various points of the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, we are thrown into a kind of situation of the following of an event of this kind which maintains some similarities with the usual way of watching a football game on television, but which, at the same time, repositions certain aspects of the same more familiar experience of the vision of the event.

Even if the absorption in which the player is presented can indicate a certain distancing between the evolution of his actions in the game and the conditions in which he is observed, Fried emphasises that it is virtu-



Figure 3. Zidane: a 21st century portrait (2006).

ally impossible to disregard this relation of immersion in which Zidane finds himself and the one that the pictures promote, in relation to the 80,000 fans who accompany him (without counting on those to whom the experience of the film is destined more immediately). In these terms, Gordon and Paeno's documentary helps Fried to put again certain affirmations in more precise terms, by means of which he seemed to imply, in his considerations about painting of 18th century genre, the dissociation between the emergence of absorptive topics and the presupposition of a radical absence of spectatoriality.

“Anyway, we are in the reign of ‘observability’ [to-be-seeness], which turns back as a vengeance. And, nevertheless, the spectator's certainty in the total involvement of the great athlete during the game is not shaken. On the contrary, the film unveils a relationship between absorption and observation, which had not been a thematic topic up to then – more precisely, between the convincing representation of the state of absorption and the apparent conscience of being observed – in the context of arts, a relationship which is no more simply of opposition or complementarity, but which permits a superposition Diderot could not imagine. (FRIED, 2010: 186).

In the same way, in the contemporary Brazilian documentary these displacements are also produced on the spectatorial regimes, which characterise the kind of immersion that makes the “places of experience” of these pictures recognisable. The predilection for absorptive topics is a feature of some films of the artist of the State of Minas Gerais Cao Guimarães, for example. These works constitute themselves in the middle of

different domains and artistic devices by using elements taken out of all of them: they pass from one support to another, from one kind of exhibition to another, they circulate in different festivals and institutions; since they do not own an exclusive space of action, the analysis of this work imposes great challenges – since it supposes a multiplicity of practices, traditions, exhibition and circulation spaces.

For reasons such as these, the exhibition *Passatempo* [Pastime] marks this trajectory quite well: for the first time and in an individual exhibition, the artist unites installations in video, photographs, and – as his main work – *Otto*, a seventy-minute feature film, which can be watched in continuous sessions, in one of the gallery rooms, especially adapted for the projection. In the general context of the exhibition, the artist exploits colours, lines, textures, forms, tiny life, the horizon lines, the movements, the durations, reorganising this plastic material by means of unusual cuts. They are works which make visible the sensitive power of the world which we were not conscious of until then, which we could not see. What all of them have in common is the sensation of temporal suspension, an interruption of the chronological time, a pause in the daily "normality" – suspension which befalls characters, insects, things, landscapes and also spectators.

In this context, maybe it is the video *Sem hora* [Without time], shown at the beginning of the exhibition which expresses with more acuity this temporal effect, which is already suggested in its very title. It is a sequence plane of seven minutes, in which we see a couple of fishermen from behind, at a good distance of one another, in front of a river. They are together, they are companions in what they do, but the fishing of one of them does not disturb the other one's fishing – a beautiful view of the couple. In this situation, fishing in itself, to catch a fish, is that which is less important. What is valuable is that which fishing provides the fishermen with: to have another relation to time and that which surrounds them. It is a placid scene and without almost no movement, a time-picture without major purpose; there is no anxiety in these characters it is just to be there, with the "body which is present".

In the conclusion of this essay (which meets less the function of a final argumentation than that of the proposal of certain main lines for the future points of this visual configuration of testimony in contemporary documentary practices), we finally collected some aspects of the dynamics of these plastic matrices of the localisation of the immersive experience based upon the picture, in order to introduce certain problems, above all those relative to two great fronts of questions: firstly a reflection about the ways of thinking about the question of the documentary regimes of the picture (as constituents of the different strategies which delimit contemporary photojournalism and documentary cinema on the basis of its resuming by the “places of experience” which the pictures propose, relative to the principles of eyewitness testimony” and of the “immersion vectors”.

Another important aspect of this discussion concerns the tendencies of the “emptying” of the emotional and sensational intensity, associated with the representation of the events – an aspect which derives from our observation on the last prize awards of World Press Photo and on certain approximation tendencies between documentary forms and plastic arts, in the most recent cinema: there we noted a suggestive tension between the reiteration of the canonical characters of the representation of the event in the history of photojournalism, on the one hand, and of the frequent exercise of a certain intentional “evasion” of these characters, towards a “photography of empty times” (in Raymond Depardon’s expression); in the case of documentary cinema, this movement also signals a kind of displacement with respect to the figures of alterity, as central elements of topicality of documentary cinema, bringing the elements of slower living experience, which are proper to certain visual situations, to the centre of attention of this immersional ethos, which make the documentary scene come near to the absorptive strategies of the installation, in contemporary art.

References

- BARTHES, R. Diderot, Brecht e Eisenstein. In: *O óbvio e o obtuso* (trad.). Lisboa: Edições 70, 1984.
- CHEVRIER, J. F. Walker Evans et la question du sujet. In: *Communications*. 71, 2001: pp. 63, 102.
- COMOLLI, J. L. *Voir et Pouvoir*. Paris: Verdier, 2004.
- LINS, C.; MESQUITA, C. *Filmar o real: sobre o documentário brasileiro contemporâneo*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2008.
- LINS, C. Le film-dispositif dans le documentaire brésilien contemporain. In: *Cinémas*. 22/1, 2011: pp. 93, 104.
- FRANÇA, A. O cinema, seu duplo e o tribunal em cena. In: *Revista Famecos*. 36, 2008: pp. 91, 97.
- FRANÇA, A. É possível conhecer a estória toda? Variações do documental e do tribunal nas imagens contemporâneas. In et al.: *Imagem contemporânea* (Beatriz Furtado, org.). vol II, 2009: pp. 215, 233.
- FRANÇA, A. Cinema documentário e efeitos do real na arte. In et al.: *Ensaíos no real: o documentário brasileiro hoje* (Cezar Migliorin, org.). Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2010.
- FRIED, M. *Absorption and Theatricality: painting and beholder at the age of Diderot*. Berkeley: University of Califórnia Press, 1980.
- FRIED, M. Absorto na ação. In: *Novos Estudos*. 37, 2010: pp. 181,191.
- GOMBRICH, E. H. Standards of Truth: the arrested image and the moving eye. In: *The Image and the Eye*. London: Phaidon, 1982: pp. 244, 277.
- LUGON, O. *Le Style Documentaire: de August Sander à Walker Evans*. Paris: Macula, 2001.
- MICHAUD, Y. Critiques de la crédulité. In: *Études Photographiques*. 12, 2002. pp. 110, 125.
- PICADO, B. Le Temps des Gestes et l'Arrêt sur l'Image dans le Photojournalisme: entre la rhétorique corporelle et le pathos iconique. In: *Image & Narrative*. 23. In: <<http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/Timeandphotography/picado.html>> (consultado em 03/04/2013).
- PICADO, B. Sentido visual e vetores de imersão: regimes plásticos da implicação do espectador no fotojornalismo. In: *Galaxia*, 22, 2011: pp. 53, 66.
- PICADO, B. Assinaturas do Instante: causalidade, geometria e expectância como marcas estilísticas no fotojornalismo e na fotografia documental (Henri Cartier-Bresson e Pierre Verger). In: *Revista Fronteiras*, 15, 2013: pp. 54, 65.
- SCHAEFFER, J. M. *Pourquoi la Fiction*. Paris: Seuil, 1999.