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Vai e Vem / Back and Forth¹

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Abstract: This article discusses the exhibition *Vai e Vem / Back and Forth*, composed of works by Canadian artists Duncan MacDonald and Ehryn Torrell, and Brazilian artists Jefferson Kielwagen and Nilton Tirotti. The exhibition, which brings together and creates tension in works of art from geographically and culturally different contexts, took place in the cities of Joinville, in Santa Catarina, Brazil, and in St Catharine, in the province of Ontario, Canada. The curatorial thinking was built in an exercise of exchanges, dialogues and tensions established in the development of the artists' proposals, at a distance, which resulted in an exhibition that highlighted the power and subtlety of art. Although it was not made explicit in the artists' discourse, the reflection on the works and the exhibition space made it possible to think about the North-South relations, not in a geographical but in an epistemological sense.

Keywords: exhibition; contemporary art; cultural exchange; curating.

Resumo: Este artigo discute a exposição *Vai e Vem / Back and Forth*, composta por trabalhos dos artistas canadenses Duncan MacDonald e Ehryn Torrell, e dos artistas brasileiros Jefferson Kielwagen e Nilton Tirotti. A mostra, que aproxima e tensiona trabalhos de arte frutos de contextos geográfica e culturalmente distintos, aconteceu nas cidades de Joinville, em Santa Catarina, no Brasil, e em St Catharine, na província de Ontário, no Canadá. O pensamento curatorial foi construído a partir do exercício de troca, dos diálogos e das tensões estabelecidos entre os artistas e suas propostas na medida em que foram sendo construídas, à distância, o que resultou em uma exposição que destaca a potência e sutileza da arte.

Palavras-chave: exposição; arte contemporânea; intercâmbio cultural; curadoria.

We often find terms such as "modernism" and "postmodernism" referring to a given

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set of works of art that has common characteristics. However, these words, in addition to being generalist, as they do not consider the specificities of each of the objects of art, at times create a reductionism of concepts. These are terms stemming from a Eurocentric view, taken by most people as the sole, true, and unquestionable one. However, as Mignolo puts it, also referring to decoloniality (2017, p. 24),

These concepts are not universal, not even global. They are regional, and as regional, they have their own value as any other regional configuration and transformation of knowledge. The only difference is that the local histories of European concepts became global designs. That means that concepts, such as the aforementioned, were needed to make sense of actors' desires and institutional demands. [English version taken from <http://www.confero.ep.liu.se/issues/2013/v1/i1/130312b/confero13v1i1129.pdf>]

From this perspective, it is relevant to highlight that the exhibition *Vai e Vem / Back and Forth*, the object of discussion in this text, based on the works of Duncan MacDonald, Ehryn Torrell, Jefferson Kielwagen and Nilton Tirotti, did not start from pre-defined concepts, nor from a pre-established set of criteria for the choice of works. Rather, it was built step by step, together with the artists. Their works were the starting point, and the curatorial discourse was drawn up in connection with the discussion. Thus, each artist in their poetics built and selected the works that would become part of the exhibition.

According to Tlostanova, it is not yet possible to speak of an organized artistic movement which may be seen as decolonial art; however, “[...] artists are increasingly developing self-conscious critical practices of subversion and corporeal emancipation, grounded in decolonial agendas.” (2019, p. 103). According to this author, who refers to decolonial artistic production as “post-Soviet decolonial art”, as it deals with the production by artists from countries that underwent the Socialist State regime, their artistic practices generally involve forgotten native sounds, tastes and odors. They explore the narrative of the geographical body and break with Eurocentric standards, as they border on irony, parody, nostalgia and deconstruction (TLOSTANOVA, 2019), such as presented in the works that make up the exhibition under discussion. According to the same author,

Instead of positioning native cultures in the modern / colonial sense of going back to something dead and frozen, artists negate progressivist temporality and the translation of exotic spaces into lagging behind times, thus advancing a complex interpretation of traditional and contemporary features. (2019, p. 103).

When we get to know the works on display, it can be realized that, even if unconsciously, the artists and their propositions constitute a set from which forms of artistic behavior pointing to a decolonial perspective can be perceived.

THE HISTORY OF THE EXHIBITION

The *Vai e Vem / Back and Forth* exhibition results from a partnership with Canadian artist Duncan MacDonald³. The jointly designed idea was to hold an exhibition with two artists from Brazil and two from Canada and in two editions, one to be held in Joinville and the other in St Catharine. The artists from both countries did not know each other.

³ In October 2014 we met in Uruguay, during an artistic residency, organized by Curatoria Forense, with the participation of Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay, Austria, and Canada.

The exchange of messages and portfolios for decision-making began at a distance. Thus, a virtual space for discussion was created, but without ready-made thematic proposals for the artists, just as there was still no guidance for the construction of a curatorial concept. It began to be structured based on the proposals of the artists. The actions were discussed during the process. Along the way, conceptual issues emerged from each work, but also from the state of tension generated by them. The challenge lied in the relationship to be established between the proposals, the always tense dialogue resulting from the encounter of different productions to be organized in the same physical space. The title in Portuguese, *Vai e Vem*, and in English, *Back and Forth*, illustrates the spirit that arises from the coming and going between Joinville, Brazil, and St. Catharine, Canada. But it also highlights movements of exchanges, dialogues and conflicts established between works that discuss issues arising from different cultural contexts. However, while such cultural differences can be perceived and, at some moments, even highlighted, when organized in the same space they are challenged, so that in the exhibition, regardless of the geographical differences involved in them, they are works of art that deal with human aspects and are read based on their particularities.

The first exhibition took place at the Joinville Art Museum (fig. 1), composed of two spaces: the main building and the annexes across the street, at the Cidadela Cultural Antarctica. The main house (fig. 1) was the residence of the first mayor of the city, Ottokar Doerffel, built in 1854. Its architecture mixes characteristics of German origin with elements of colonial architecture, in an approach combining aspects of the northern and southern hemispheres. Located in a large garden and on a higher part of the grounds, it showed power in the 19th century and is also steeped in memory. The annexes are in a disused old brewery which is part of an industrial complex. It was sold to the municipal government to be transformed into a cultural center. There are two large sheds, with high ceilings and a rustic atmosphere. The exhibition took place in one of these spaces. The space is wide and has no decorative elements, as it is part of what was formerly a brewery. Today, however, it hosts contemporary exhibitions.

Fig.1 - Museu de Arte de Joinville, main building. 2016. Joinville, Santa Catarina, Brazil



Photo: Ehryn Torrell

In St. Catharine, the exhibition took place at the Visa Gallery (fig. 2), at Brock University, a single environment with a good infrastructure. The building's architecture has characteristics from Bauhaus. The Gallery has only one spacious room. It is a place still without memory, as it has been recently inaugurated. There are no rooms for installations,

the works had a direct interchange and confrontation with each other.

Fig. 2 - Brock University. Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts - Visa Gallery



Source: <https://brocku.ca/humanities/departments-and-centres/dramatic-arts/>

Fig. 3 - View of exhibition in Visa Gallery



Photo: Duncan MacDonald

ABOUT THE WORKS AND THE ARTISTS

Duncan MacDonald participated with three works, among them *Piano burn* (fig. 4), which was exhibited in a dark room set with armchairs, in Annex II. In the video a piano is burned in the vegetation. For 52 minutes, the movement of the fire is recorded, slowly consuming the instrument. It is a discarded object which symbolizes here the end of an era of culture and power. This piano once made unique aesthetic experiences possible, but now it is the sound of the flames that packs a rhythm of destruction, and what remains are ashes. The piano can be taken as a symbol of a classical strand of music that, by means of a transgressive gesture and in the creation of a scene which has a beauty not derived from the classic tradition of the beautiful, opens a space for new aesthetic experiences. A music that, by breaking with its classical roots, approaches contemporary sounds and questions its role in bourgeois history such as the romanticism that surrounds it. In Duncan's poetics, the research of sound is relevant; the presence of noise is recurrent; music is part of his training. In some of his artistic production the soundtrack is his own. His research revolves

around noise in art, in everyday life, but also cultural policy.

Fig. 4 - Duncan MacDonald. Piano burn. 2012. HD video HD, single channel with stereo sound, 52 minutes. Installation in the Annex of the Joinville Art Museum



Photo: Nadja C. Lamas

At MAJ's main building **Ehryn Torrell** exhibited six paintings with collages of images from magazines for women. The artist combines the gesture of painting with those of tearing and pasting. To understand and perceive what is happening on the canvases, an effort and a careful look at the relationships established between different fragments are necessary. There is a hybridism of languages from the classical tradition of painting, crossed by the gesture of collage. The act of tearing and composing the painting has its roots in cubism and surrealism, now taken up with other meanings. Ehryn has a peculiar way of thinking about the universe of women, and she does it in her own way of painting today. Through its composition, she reconfigures and reorganizes forms of the world, which are suggested rather than represented. A Canadian artist, Torrell lives in England, and she has a background in art, English literature and a Master's in Art and Design. Her poetics focuses on visual culture, cultural theory, architecture, philosophy and the way human experiences are affected in different areas. She appropriates existing images, intervenes in them, tearing and reconstructing them; her poetic method moves through deconstruction and construction. In *Filters and screens* (2015, fig. 5), we see fragments of wood, of grids and screens, as if they were in a collapse. The image starts with the artist's observations about demolitions in different cities, which refer to or provoke thinking about everyday social demolitions. In this work, from a feminist perspective and amid the demolition, the figure of the woman is highlighted by the representation of a pair of legs, cut out from a magazine, that in the composition is mixed with the fragments of what is already a ruin, sustaining it at the same time.

Fig. 5 - Ehryn Torrell. *Filters and screens*. 2015. Acrylic and collages on 30 x 24 cm canvas.



Photo: Ehryn Torrell

In *T MT font poster* ["T MT font poster"] (fig. 6), a poster with a black background, Torrell presents a fragment of the letter that her mother sent to her before her death. The artist made a study of her mother's handwriting, separating and organizing the letters in order, and then, with the help of a multidisciplinary team, she built a sphere with the characters of her handwriting. In this way, she prepared the fragment of the letter in the form of a poster. On the black background the words fall apart between the spacing of the letters and the fading of the white until they are lost in infinity. Next to the poster she installed a mailbox containing the enveloped letters, making them available for the public who are interested in taking one with them. The set (figs. 6, 7 and 8) deals with intense and profound pain, which is certain, but so difficult to accept, viz. death. Ehryn poetically elaborates the experience of loss, of the awareness of the finiteness of human existence and does it sensitively and elaborately.

Fig. 6 - Ehryn Torrell. T MT font poster. 2013. Matte inkjet poster. Approximate size 50 x 90 cm



Photo: Fábio Salun

Fig. 7 - Ehryn Torrell. It really did help. 2013. Inkjet print on out-of-print UK Air Mail set. Free artist multiple.



Photo: Fábio Salun

Fig. 8 - Ehryn Torrell. Installation. 2016. Art Museum of Joinville, SC. Brazil



Photo: Fábio Salun

The video installation *Slakt* (fig. 9) connects to the set exposed in the main house. After her mother's death, Torrell traveled with her father to Sweden to reunite with her maternal family. The video addresses family memories; retrieves family ties; they look again at the photos in the family album, in a search for the memory of her mother and childhood. Assmann (2011) says that the act of remembering cannot be disconnected from oblivion. The artist seeks the perennial character of memories, a struggle not to forget and maintain family ties even if they are territorially far apart. The video narrative is a reflection on her life. Torrell designed it in English, but it is read in Swedish, showing the nuances of the language. The sonority intoned by the orality of the mother tongue evokes an affective memory arising not from the meaning of the speeches themselves but from the voice that pronounces each of the words. Through *T MT font poster* (fig. 6), the artist shares the words written by her mother, while in *Slakt* (fig. 9) her memories are shared through a narrative woven by stories of her family in another land.

Fig. 9 - Ehryn Torrell. *Slakt* (Relative. 2013. 4:30 video, 13min 48sec. Exhibition MAJ/Annex II (frame)



Photo: Nadja C. Lamas

Jefferson Kielwagen, a Brazilian artist born in Joinville, presented four works. A set of six photos composes the record of the performance *Pearl in the sky* [Pérola no céu] (fig. 10). This is an ironic title that gives the key to this proposal, as the performance was done during a protest movement at the Cidadela Cultural Antártica [Antártica Cultural Citadel], in 2014. This space was acquired by the municipal administration to host and

foster artistic and cultural activities; however, no investment was made there. Then, artists, intellectuals and people sensitive to the cause got together and created the “Ocupa Cidadela” [Occupy Citadel] movement, which lasted 24 hours. Thus, the Citadel was occupied by independent collectives and artists with artistic activities and the public reading of a manifesto, demanding that the local authorities make the necessary investments there. Pearl is a hard-organic material found inside oysters or mussels. When the inside of the shells of these mollusks is invaded, they react immediately, covering the invader with a nacre substance (mother of pearl), thus initiating the formation of a pearl. In the performance action the pearl is carried by a balloon upwards until it can no longer be seen; this upward movement is symbolic and significant.

Fig. 10 - Jefferson Kielwagen. Pearl in the sky. 2014. Installation of three pearls in the sky. Visa Gallery



Photo: Duncan MacDonald

This is a forceful metaphor regarding the way in which public administrations should treat art and cultural manifestations in Joinville, as something precious, but they do not. They do not do this because they lack the sensitivity and perception of the world’s need for art, or even the insight for its understanding, including what this performance is about, considering the state of disregard of this space by the agencies responsible for the cultural and artistic management of the municipality. The space was acquired with public funds for a purpose of interest to the community. There was evidence of disregard and negligence. This is a poetics of political resistance to such inertness.

In *Exchange of entities* [Troca de entidades] (fig. 11), Kielwagen discusses cultural and religious exchanges between *terreiros* [places of worship of religions of African origin] located in Brazil and Haiti. It displays, side by side, images of exchanged entities between Umbanda, Candomblé and Vodou. The artist explains that in the first part of the project (2013) he bought a statue of Exu Marabô (Umbanda) and took it to a Vodou temple in Haiti. During the Ghetto Biennial in Haiti, he met a Vodou priest who agreed to install Exu Marabô in his temple. He then acquired, while still in Haiti, an image of Loa Dambala, worshiped in Haitian Vodou, and took it to Brazil. In 2014 he installed this second statue in the Candomblé center of Yalorisha Jacila d’Oxum, in Joinville. This exchange discusses religious syncretism in Brazil and Haiti, in which there are not only physical displacements but also displacements of cultural and religious meanings, which take on the figure of exchanges in his work. Kielwagen does not build the images but appropriates them, acquiring them in a store of religious articles and installs them in a space legitimized as sacred, at the very place where the ritual is performed. However, since it is an authorized exchange, there are many implications for this action, as he will have to seek the *pai-de-santo* or *mãe-de-santo* [priest or priestess] who accepts the exchange and who allows an “impure” image to occupy a place on their altar. By accepting it, they incorporate and sacralize it.

The exchanged entity now belongs to that temple. The saint present there, with his or her appearance and meaning, is integrated into this other space and will silently influence the faithful who attend it. In a transgressive gesture, it subtly incites a syncretism that is both religious and cultural. Therefore, through the exchange of images the artist begins a slow movement, which to a certain extent is ironic, towards the dissolution of religious and cultural differences. In this displacement Kielwagen articulates three religions of African origin, but which differ from each other due to the historical context of each one.

Vodou is practiced in the family and in the community as a way of finding the lost entity when they are taken from Africa and preserving the religious tradition based on African ancestry. It is a response to their captive condition, to the fact of being exploited and disrespected in their human condition, subjugated by the economic, cultural and social imperialism of white persons. It meant having their own language that marked and distinguished the slave from the colonizer. It was a secret religion in contrast to the European religion imposed by the settler. However, it was fundamental in strengthening and creating the union that led to the Slave Revolution of São Domingos (1804), because it solidified the involvement of black people in the struggle for the independence of Haiti. From 2003 onwards it became the official religion of Haiti.

Candomblé and Umbanda, however, are religions of African origin that emerged in Brazil, but with a quite different ritual and theogony. Candomblé has its origins in the beginning of the 17th century, but until the middle of the 20th century it hid behind Kardecist spiritism or spiritualism. Its tradition is based on African ancestry. Although it is a nationwide religion, it is asphyxiated by others of European origin. It was as one of the black movements of re-Africanization and resistance to racism that Candomblé started to play a more evident religious role, and its African roots became more valued. The *terreiro*, place of worship, is now attended by white people and different social classes. There is much in common between Vodou and Candomblé.

Umbanda is a Brazilian religion of African origin, but its base lies in Kardecist spiritualism because in its rituals it needs the medium to receive the spirits. Its main references are Brazilian sources, and its strength is in nature. The name Umbanda was made official in the early '40s, but it originated around 1910. It arose during the period of nationalist movements, culminating in the dictatorship of 1937, the so-called "New State". Unlike Candomblé, Umbanda does not have an initiation process in the preparatory phase for exercising functions in the *terreiro*. It mixes elements of Catholicism, Spiritualism and Afro-Brazilian religions. In this action of exchange, by intervening in the sacred space through the introduction of an image of one religion in the other, even if they are from the same African origin and have different characteristics, Kielwagen seems to aim at a mutual contamination, so that one attributes a new meaning to the other.

The curious aspect of this proposition is that when taking the image of a saint to Haiti, the artist chooses that of Exu Marabô, who is from Umbanda. This deity has characteristics of good and evil it can serve both entities. In fact, the two religions have little in common. However, when taking the image of an entity from Haiti to Brazil, he takes that of Damballa from Vodou's Loa tradition, that is, an entity of religions of the same tradition which is based on African ancestry. So, this raises a question: why take to Haiti the image of an entity from Umbanda and then the image of an entity for Candomblé from Haiti to Brazil?

Fig. 11 - Jefferson Kielwagen. Exchange of entities. 2013/2014. Photograph. 2 photos of 31 x 22 cm each



Source: <http://jkielwagen.blogspot.com.br/search?updated-min=2014-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2015-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&max-results=6>

Sand [Areia] (fig. 12) is a performative intervention action in which Kielwagen installs grains of sand in eight American museums, viz. the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA), the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD), the Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA-NY), the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Contrary to what an attentive and thorough researcher would do, which would be the collection of material to be studied in the laboratory, Kielwagen inserts a minimal particle in the space, an almost invisible intervention, if it were not for the images recorded with a portable microscope. The grains were not collected or removed, but were permanently on display in the museums, and began to invisibly, anonymously, and transgressively become incorporated into their collection. According to Kielwagen, “these images were later paired and displayed at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum as my MFA thesis exhibition, from April 3 to 13, 2014” (<https://zekielwagen.blogspot.com/2014/04/areia.html>). There are two photos of each grain, one at the time it was installed and another of the grain itself, which are afterwards presented in pairs, accompanied by the indication, through the legend, of the Museum where the act was carried out. According to the artist,

Sand is a guerrilla action and intervention on the smallest scale possible. A grain of sand is a small intruder. It can be quite annoying if it gets under your clothes, but if it stays in a healthy oyster, it can produce a pearl. In the strictly controlled, sanitized and often mystified space of the art museum the invasive object brings a little of the outside world. (KIELWAGEM, 2014 - [http://jkielwagen.blogspot.com.br/search?updated-min=2014-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2015-01-01T00:00:00-08:00 & max-results = 6](http://jkielwagen.blogspot.com.br/search?updated-min=2014-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&updated-max=2015-01-01T00:00:00-08:00&max-results=6)).

This is, therefore, an unauthorized performance and installation, transgressive and irreverent actions which break with the *modus operandi* by which their proposals could be accepted in these institutions. As the artist says, a grain is a three-dimensional object and has minimal physicality, but it is still a physicality. The grains were installed, occupied those spaces, and it may be that they are still there, somewhere, this is a fact. The three sets of photos all have in common the fact that they constitute new works resulting from performance actions which were actually carried out. However, they are presented not in the sense of simply registering the action, but they manifest an intention to be other propositions, shown in the definition of the size and form of the presentation of the photos.

Fig. 12 - Jefferson Kielwagen. Sand. Performance intervention in eight large US museums

Source: <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-FWYAUUV12z6c/UzdA7Lj6ZMI/AAAAAAAAABT8/cYO2g9L21k0/s1600/prints6+low.jpg>

Tirotti, born in São Paulo, has lived in Joinville for over 20 years. He has a background in Product Design and has worked for many years in a multinational appliance industry. At the present, however, he is almost entirely dedicated to art and teaching. In his poetics, video, photography, and objects predominate. He also explores sound as a form of expression, with sound installations and interventions. Tirotti also thinks about the different displacements experienced daily and the existential concerns resulting from them.

In *Baptism light* [Luz do batismo] (fig. 13), Tirotti uses an image of his own baptism. The photo is printed on a transparency and placed in a back light. It is an object presented on an about 80-cm high base. The image evokes memory and the marks of time – in this case, baptism. Remembering is directly linked to memory, but also to forgetfulness. You remember something at the expense of several other things that you forget. Remembering and forgetting go together. Memory makes something lived become present; it is what makes it possible to retrieve past experiences, however, from a new perspective, and a new experience is lived through it. We edit, even if unconsciously, the moments when memory allows us to relive them. And this retrieval (editing) can only be socialized when it is materialized, which occurs through language. Tirotti works from this perspective, in the articulation of memory with artistic language. *Baptism light* is a fragment of memory made present in a self-referential poetics. The photo it presents works as a window, illuminated by the artist, for a moment experienced in a past which he does not remember, since he was still a baby at the time. However, the image allows this lost memory to be retrieved and reconstructed, although now edited and re-signified. Tirotti chose this photo not because of the importance of the moment, but because, when browsing through the album in which it had been placed, he realized that the image had been partially transferred to the plastic that protected it. This process interested him, according to his account of the story. During that period, when doing research on memory, he decided to make an adjustment to the light, by addressing his own past and opening photo albums of his family. However, when faced with the photo of his christening, he realized that the intervention of the temperature and humidity had generated a new image. He then realized that all the elements he was looking for were there, viz. time, light, chance and memory, and the image emerged from this observation.

Fig. 13 - Tirotti. Light of baptism. 2015. Object, wooden frame, acrylic support, strip of leds, printing on transparencies. 16 x 2 x 13 cm



Photo: Fábio Salun

In *Other visits* [Outras visitas] (figs.14 and 15), which is a proposition created especially for this exhibition, Tirotti does an installation composed of a video and six printed frames arranged three on each side. The video shows the route taken virtually, through Google Maps, through the two cities in which the work was exhibited, viz. St Catharine and Joinville. It alternately approaches two spaces that are spatially distant, two hemispheres, but at the same time they are so close in their artistic productions. Time and space are relativized thanks to technology. The viewer travels with Tirotti on different paths and points of each city, so that the two are mixed. The moving image enabled the symbolic fusion between them, so that now, in their new geography, the same place becomes a new place. Among the scenes of the itinerary there are images of e-mails exchanged between the artists and the curators, whose discussions, all of them virtual, resulted in the construction of both their work and the exhibition. In this sense, Tirotti's work, even as it reinforces the exchange movement, is based on it, in the back and forth of ideas woven by the exhibition.

Fig. 14 - Tirotti. Other visits. 2016. Printed images, video

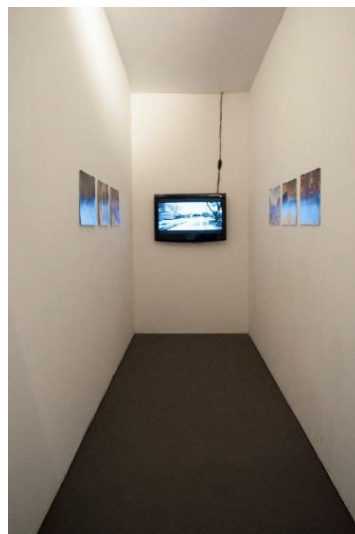


Photo: Fábio Salun

Fig. 15 - Tirotti. Other visits. 2016. (Frame). Printed images, video.

Photo: Duncan MacDonald

The poetics of these artists have their peculiarities, but they have thoughts that bring them together, despite their geographical distance. They break with conventional artistic languages to think in languages connected with contemporaneity. Languages that broaden gestures such as diverse appropriations, interventions, installations, performances, hybrid languages, cultural and religious mixings. The ideas of movement, displacement and political articulation are also present. All works that are present in the two spaces in which the exhibition was held somehow challenge a prevailing type of thinking marked by the domination of power arising from the colonial period. Some works are more evident, and others less. Explicitly it may not be as clear, but it is something that is latent and manifests itself in poetics.

Two artists were born in Brazil, a country that was colonized by the Portuguese. It received the largest number of African slaves in the Americas and for this reason its culture is strongly based on the African slave matrix. The cultural formation of Brazilians is marked by the African and indigenous language, music, cuisine, and religiosity. Colonization radically interfered in the lives of the indigenous people, imposing its religion, habits and customs on them and also made them ill by bringing them diseases for which they had not developed antibodies. Their culture was stifled by the regime of domination. For three centuries Brazil was a colony. It was only with the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Family and their court, fleeing the war in Europe in 1808, that the social scene appeared to undergo significant changes. The opening of ports and foreign trade brought colonial domination to an end. However, the new political order was based on slavery, a conservative and dominating mentality, economic dependence and lack of bargaining power in business. The bases of the Republic (1889) and of society were established during this this period. There were all kinds of conflicts, and the so-called Golden Law (1888) that freed slaves did so only in an institutional manner, as in practice little was changed. Free blacks were discriminated against, did not have the same working condition, and did not have access to basic and higher education like white people did. The country underwent the Revolution of the Thirties, in 1945 the New State dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas came to an end, in 1964 came the military dictatorship that lasted until 1985, when the period of re-democratization of the country began. This democratization is currently shaken by the measures taken in the opposite direction by the current government.

This brief contextualization of the history of Brazil shows that, although there have been advances in the quest to transcend and subvert colonial power, the latter is still present in the worldview of a significant part of the population. Brazil is a country that despite carnival, samba and many other artistic and cultural riches was constructed on the basis

of suffering and pain. And this cannot be erased; rather, one can and must search in its depths to understand its history with a view to overcoming European modernity and its project of domination. Colonialism persists, it is still present in the 21st century, but art shows, denounces and resists all forms of domination. This discussion was not proposed to the artists. They were completely free to decide what and how their artistic proposals would be, and thus it was. Nevertheless, the works themselves unveiled subliminal issues and led to the perception of the potential of art as a form of resistance.

Propositions like *Pearl in the sky*, *Sand*, *Wings* or *Reading* are clear evidence of sensitive, dense, and politically articulated poetics, provoking new looks which are not subject to silence, but rather incite displacements. They are challenging and therefore destabilizing. “Other visits” and “Exchanges” shift meanings physically and virtually by intervening in a sacred space in Haiti and Brazil, and by juxtaposing two geographically distant territories in the same space. This articulation is possible thanks to existing technology.

Canada’s history differs from that of Brazil, even though it was colonized by Europeans. In the years 1489 and 1498 there was the presence of the British crown, through the Venetian Giovanni Caboto, who reconnoitered these lands. However, there is evidence of its occupation by indigenous peoples of the Americas thousands of years ago. The British and French began European colonization in the region in the 16th century. Despite various conflicts and contamination of natives with European diseases that led to their deaths, in the colonial period, Canada developed under successive liberal governments, through multiculturalism, the presence of two official languages, French and English, and Social Democrat programs.

In the search for a maritime route to the East through North America, attempts that were unsuccessful, the British and French went on to fishing and fur trapping in the region. This led to the beginning of the colonization process. The Franco-British presence and the successive conflicts over the hegemony of this territory gave greater dominance to the British. Disputes over ownership of their land also took place at the borders with the United States. The emancipation from the British Crown, however, began in the mid-19th century and extended into the early 20th century. In the second half of the 20th century Canada developed a prosperous, solid economy. It invested in social policies that guarantee a good standard of living for its citizens, and openness to immigration, which contributes to multiculturalism.

Although the country was colonized by Europeans, its historical path differs significantly from the Latin American path. However, the Canadian artists present at the exhibition are not unaware of what is happening in the contemporary world. Their poetics are challenging, causing displacement of meanings and reflections. A clear example is in *Piano burn*, *Whork whork*, and in paintings/collages like *Wood pulp* and *Filters and screens*.

So..., in the back and forth of the poetics which made up this exhibition, art revealed its potency and subtlety in the perception of the world ...

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<http://duncanmacdonald.ca/> - Accessed on June 15, 2020

<http://www.ehryntorrell.com/> - Accessed on June 15, 2020

<http://tirotti.blogspot.com/> - Accessed on June 15, 2020

<https://zekielwagen.blogspot.com> - Accessed on June 15, /2020