

# TRANSFORMING SPECTATORS INTO WITNESSES: ARTUR BARRIO'S *BLOODY BUNDLES*

CAMILA MAROJA

In 1969 Artur Barrio created what he termed "T.E." (*trouxas ensangüentadas*) or *Bloody Bundles*: "objects" consisting of blood, cow meat, paper, and rope tied together with cloth. Essentially ephemeral, with raw meat and blood staining the wrapping cloth and producing a distinctively pungent odor, he used these highly evocative objects in three performances in 1969-70, calling the action/installation a *situation*. Although the artist originally installed the *Bloody Bundles* in a museum gallery, he subsequently moved them into public spaces.<sup>1</sup> Deposited throughout a city, the *Bloody Bundles* would accost and upset the daily routines of unsuspecting viewers. When thinking about the provocative use of such non-aesthetic, disturbing materials, it is important to remember that, in 1964, Brazil was the first of many countries in South America to suffer a coup-d'état. During Brazil's subsequent twenty-one years of dictatorial rule, some eighteen million people were denied rights, sixty thousand were arrested, 203 were killed, and 136 "disappeared," all crimes hidden from public view by state censorship.

This essay analyzes the *situations* Barrio realized with his *Bloody Bundles* in relation to Brazil's violent history. As the crimes committed by the military were perpetrated in secrecy, I employ the concept of "hiddenness" as a metaphor for the dissociation of the Brazilian people, which blurred their sense and perception of the event and image they were experiencing. I propose that Barrio's public interventions with *Bloody Bundles* reenacted a form of this dissociated knowledge and fear of state terror, and that they also functioned to transform viewers into victims and witnesses of their historical situation. In so doing, I argue that the *Bloody Bundles* constitute the visual, material presence for the otherwise invisible violence of Brazilian history, especially for its missing political prisoners. At the same time, Barrio's *Bloody Bundles* also belong to the aesthetic and art historical context of early conceptual, performance, and installation art, and cannot be reduced to a narrow reading of political history. Moreover, the *Bloody Bundles* stood as Barrio's strategy to actuate himself not only as an emerging avant-garde artist at the time, but also as a critical citizen.

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To fully grasp Barrio's work in the 1960s-1970s, the terror of this period of Brazilian history must be reviewed.

Although the Brazilian coup-d'état dates from 1964, its most ominous effects were only felt four years later on December 13, 1968, when the military government of Brazil approved the Institutional Act Number 5, known as the AI-5. This decree dissolved the National Congress and suspended the right to *habeas corpus*.<sup>2</sup> The new law, in the words of art critic Frederico Moraes, made torture an official practice in the Brazilian territory.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the period between 1968 and 1974 marks the apogee of political repression in Brazil. During these years, torture and censorship became legal—thousands were tortured and/or exiled, and the press was closely surveyed. The bodies of political prisoners were disposed anonymously in clandestine cemeteries, or arranged inside prison cells to appear as suicides. Taking advantage of the impunity and the environment of terror created by the military regime, secret death squads formed by members of the police executed "unwanted" persons without trial. Censorship, however, made impossible the open accusation of these crimes, which consequently became a hidden fact in Brazilian history. Yet, numerous strange newspaper articles (like the announcement of an electric storm approaching Brazil on the same day that the right to *habeas corpus* was suspended) were read with foreboding that the country was troubled.

Art institutions were affected during the worst years of the military rule: museums, as well as the São Paulo Biennial, which until then had been safe havens for artistic experimental practices, were also censored.<sup>4</sup> The organizers of the 10<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial (1969) received an official letter proscribing the selection of artworks containing immoral or political content. Police closed several art exhibitions in 1968 and 1969, including one at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM/RJ), which was showing selected artworks from the 4<sup>th</sup> *Biennale de Jeunes* in Paris.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the then recently formed art market boomed, buoyed by the rapid economic growth resulting from the military government's nationalistic and modernizing politics: this period was known as the "Brazilian miracle."<sup>6</sup> Artur Barrio was twenty-three years old in 1968, and would define his poetics and his work ethic during these turbulent times.

Surely, one needs to ask: Did Barrio's *Bloody Bundles* actions augment social violence in the country?



Artur Barrio, *Situação T/T, .1 (Situation T/T, .1)*, Part 1. Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1970. Photograph by César Carneiro. Courtesy of the artist. Inhotim Collection, Brumadinho, Brazil.

Commenting on the unconventional nature of the works of art in the milestone conceptual art exhibition *Information* in 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, curator Kynaston McShine aptly responded to the question of the aggression of Barrio's objects:

If you are an artist in Brazil, you know at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having long hair or for not being "dressed" properly; and if you are living in the United States you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem to inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room and apply dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas. What can you as a young artist do that seems relevant and meaningful?<sup>7</sup>

While McShine does not acknowledge the crucial difference between the relationship of art and politics under dictatorial states and democratic countries, it is obvious that the stakes for the former are much higher than he expressed, even if he understood the urgency that artists felt during this period to act in a "relevant and meaningful" way. In an effort to share the conditions of this

historical period, in the *Information* show Barrio exhibited photographs of the *Bloody Bundles* he had created during the fiercest years of Brazilian military dictatorship.

Beginning in 1969, Barrio articulated the liminal position of his ephemeral artistic praxis as a *situation* that, while occurring in the context of mainstream culture, was conceptually activist and, thus, in many ways on the margins of society. Loosely defined by the artist as "a question mark" or an unpredictable encounter, Barrio's *situations* continue to constitute the conceptual nucleus of his aesthetic trajectory to this day. Barrio developed the three multi-part *situations* using the *Bloody Bundles* primarily outside institutional spaces, and he carefully recorded them in films, photographs, and texts. In *Situação... DEFL...+s+... ruas Abril....*, 1970 (*Situation... DEFL...+s+... streets April....*, 1970), he created more than 500 bundles and placed them in various locations throughout Rio de Janeiro.<sup>8</sup> In the artist's words, a *Bloody Bundle* was "not [to be] recovered[,] as it was created to be left and follow its own trajectory of psychological involvement," resulting in an emotional experience produced by the unexpected confrontation of passers-by with the bundles.<sup>9</sup>

The artist Ricardo Basbaum has analyzed Barrio's urban interventions in the context of the history of Brazilian



Artur Barrio, *Situação T/T, .1 (Situation T/T, .1)*, Part 2. Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1970. Photograph by César Carneiro. Courtesy of the artist. Inhotim Collection, Brumadinho, Brazil.

Neoconcrete artists of the late 1950s and 1960s, and their interest in the phenomenology of activating viewer-participation. Basbaum notes that Barrio's "*Situations...* energized the urban space" and activated the sensibilities of people who encountered them through a process of occupying space and a strategy of causing "sensation [by] spreading, dispersal, [and] fragmentation," which made it difficult to identify or "capture the authorial agent, [who was] always on the move."<sup>10</sup> Basbaum understands the perambulatory movement of Barrio an "anti-arrest" strategy, and the ubiquitous and apparently random placement of the *Bloody Bundles* as a kind of guerrilla method deployed to confuse the police.

While Barrio's dispersal approach is part of the significance of his work, the performative physicality of the bundles is also a form of evidence, a metonymy of the bloody violence of the dictatorship that visually linked them to bodily torture. He thus rendered the repressive, political circumstances physically concrete. Thus, the bundles were simultaneously carriers of ideas and strategies, as well as physical presences, a factor that is vital to their denotative and connotative context. Emphasis on the significance of the bundles' materiality and their psychological impact on the viewer is crucial, as too frequently the history of

conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s is depoliticized when it is only presented as "dematerialized," the term introduced in 1967 by Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, which in some cases, despite their own strong Marxist positions, can blunt the political agency of the artist and the object.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, the materiality of the *Bloody Bundles* is vital to how Barrio activated viewers' bodies and how his process differs from that of his antecedent Neoconcrete artists' approach to process.<sup>12</sup> Left in public urban spaces, people casually encountered the bundles during their daily routines, which only exacerbated the strong reactions induced by the repulsive objects. Barrio's intent, as he explained it, was the "fragmentation of everyday affairs in the light of the passer-by."<sup>13</sup> Unlike the participatory work of now internationally celebrated Neoconcrete artists such as Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, who intended their art to be manipulated, Barrio's *Bloody Bundles* were not to be handled, but rather "encountered" to activate their cultural meaning.<sup>14</sup> The objects curbed either playful or curious impulses by being repulsive to the touch, smelly, and abject. Furthermore, unaware that the *Bloody Bundles* constituted works of art, those who found them could hardly be identified as "participants" in the

artwork. These individuals became simultaneous victims and witnesses: victims of Barrio's redoubling of the state-mandated perpetration of violence and witnesses, who both recognized and functioned as metonymies of the victim/perpetrator cycle.

Barrio first employed his *Bloody Bundles* in 1969 when he was invited to participate in the *Salão Bússola* (Compass Salon, 5 November – 5 December, 1969) in the MAM/RJ, which was sponsored and organized by an advertising agency that hoped to associate its image with "young art."<sup>15</sup> Even though it was not originally conceived of as a space for avant-garde art, the *Salão Bússola* became, in retrospect, a landmark site for experimental art in Brazil. Moreover, the show immediately conveyed political overtones, since some of the pieces displayed were part of the selection from the militarily censored 4<sup>th</sup> *Biennale de Jeunes*.<sup>16</sup> For *Salão Bússola*, Barrio exhibited what he called *Lixo* (*Garbage*, 1969)—a paper bag with pieces of newspaper, aluminum, and an old bag of cement inside it—and one of his *Bloody Bundles*—a bag of cloth containing fabric, rope, paint, blood, and cut paper. He named this action: *SITUAÇÃO... ORHHHHHH... ou...5.000...T.E....EM... .N.Y.....CITY (SITUATION... ORHHHHHH... or...5.000...B.B... IN....N.Y.....CITY*, 1969). The *situation* was divided into two parts, one held inside the official institutional space and the other outside in the museum's garden. In the first part, Barrio wrote that the public "participated directly in this work, sometimes throwing more debris on the *Bloody Bundle* and the garbage, sometimes money, sometimes writing bad words on the cloth of the *Bloody Bundle*."<sup>17</sup> One month after the exhibition opened, the artist added a piece of raw meat inside the bundle placed at the gallery space.

Next he began the second, outdoor section of the work. At night, he carried the bundles to the garden and onto a concrete base, which he described as a place "reserved for the consecrated sculptures."<sup>18</sup> His action did not pass unnoticed. As Barrio explained:

In the next day, when I came back to the Museum of Modern Art, I was informed that the guards of the museum were very distressed because the *Bloody Bundle* attracted the attention of a police patrol that periodically passed on the place,/..... immediately, the police called the Museum director to know if that work really belonged to the museum or what was that [sic]...<sup>19</sup>

The artist's gesture can be understood as an open provocation to official organizations, art institutions, and the public to show that all were inseparable from the dictatorship.

For Barrio, the night action transformed "ossified" artworks from salons pieces "into evolution," a reference to artworks that have a life beyond art institutions in the everyday world.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, by presenting organic material in, and as, the work of art, and by placing the object in the garden, his *Bloody Bundle* challenged the status of the autonomous art object, submitting it to the temporal cycles of nature. Mutating from one state into the other, the artwork became "alive" for Barrio and the public, and

escaped, or at least interrupted, the rigid confines of the static art world object. Barrio explains: "In my work, things are not indicated (represented), but rather lived."<sup>21</sup> Thus, the presence of the blood and the rotting meat should not be mistaken for Barrio's descent into Thanatos, but rather a performance of the traumatic intensity of living under an authoritarian regime, which revoked fundamental human rights. The bundle should be viewed as an index of the experience of extreme circumstance, when human life is disposable.

I am suggesting that the episode at the *Salão Bússola* must be understood as a reenactment of the traumatic event that the country and Barrio endured. By making a provocative gesture in such a dangerous time, Artur Barrio transformed the role of the artist into that of a political rebel, and simultaneously expressed a worldview and view of self that was shattered by the 1968 proclamation of AI-5 decree. As such, the act of introducing the meat into the artwork and subsequently placing it in the garden of the museum was fundamental to Barrio's definition of his artistic and ethical position. By transforming the ossified into evolution, by inserting organic material in his work, by exhibiting it inside an art context (both within and outside the museum), Barrio ratified art as capable of reshaping thought, politics, and everyday life.

Barrio's life was profoundly shattered by dictatorship twice. Understood in this context, the artist's rebellious act at *Salão Bússola* gains broader dimension in a double trauma. Although considered a Brazilian artist, Barrio was, in fact, born in Portugal and immigrated with his family when he was ten years old to Brazil in order to escape Portugal's military dictatorship.<sup>22</sup> If coming to the "new world" represented, as the artist wrote, "the escape from boredom, absolute boredom of Salazar and Cerejeira dictatorship, ...aiming South, ...under the Equator line, beaches of white sand, light, calm, heat, body," then the 1964 coup d'état made "the certain became uncertain."<sup>23</sup> Brazil's coup d'état, thus, represented for Barrio's family the tragedy of living again under a second dictatorship, and the re-traumatization of returning to a situation from which they had once escaped. Reliving the trauma of his Portugal in Brazil contributed to Barrio questioning his identity, an experience common among those who endure the "traumas of revolution, oppression, and dislocation," according to literary critic Laurie Vickroy. She adds that traumas "produce a fragmented, isolated, and dissociated identity in addition to an aesthetic sensibility compelled to both critique and reconnect to homeland."<sup>24</sup>

While self-identified as a Brazilian, Barrio is one of those whom Vickroy refers to as the "unbelonging," a term that accords with the artist's own declaration. As Barrio wrote:

This is my condition: of nowhere. [...] When I arrived in Portugal, I was considered Brazilian, and here, sometimes, I am considered Portuguese. Then I am of nowhere, what also defines my relation with art. Because we can say that art has no boundaries, no nationality.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the idea of being an artist for Barrio is intermingled with the concept of being a citizen, extending

beyond a mere professional qualification. Indeed, as the *Bloody Bundles* are a metonymic and metaphorical presence for the atrocities being committed in the country, the *situations* containing *Bloody Bundles* are fundamental to shaping Barrio's personal aesthetics and ethics.

Barrio would further develop the ideas related to the outdoor phase of the *Bloody Bundles* when he presented *Situação T/T, .1 (Situation T/T, .1, 1970)* in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, during his participation in the collective exhibition *Do corpo à terra (From Body to Earth)*. The show gathered the most respected names of artists working in conceptual art in Brazil at the time, artists such as Cildo Meireles and Hélio Oiticica. The exhibition was presented under extraordinary conditions, considering the political repression and turmoil of the period. Moreover, the event was entirely sponsored by Hidrominas, a local touristic agency, whose president issued an official letter authorizing the artists to exhibit inside the park.<sup>26</sup> This invitation and authorization was understood as a form of *carte blanche* permission for the presentation of transgressive works of art.<sup>27</sup>

The event occupied two different spaces: the official governor's palace and the city park.<sup>28</sup> Morais described the park as "the typical place where bourgeois families would have their Sunday walk."<sup>29</sup> Because the artists knew that the exhibit would not be censored, the works they presented could be eminently political. Barrio chose to show his work in the city park, where he presented a three-part *situation*, carefully documented in black and white and colored photographs and 16mm black and white film. The first part took place during the night of April 19, 1970 when Barrio prepared fourteen *Bloody Bundles*, filling cloth bags with meat, bones, knives, and rope. For the second part of the *situation*, early in the morning he deposited the materials on the banks of the Arruda, a small river located inside the city park. Barrio described the place as a river/sewer. By three in the afternoon, when the photographer César Carneiro started to photograph the *Bloody Bundles* and the public's reaction, police and firefighters had been called to the site along with a substantial crowd. By the end of the day, the artist and photographer counted some five thousand onlookers attracted by the swiftly spreading rumor of slaughtered bodies in the river. On April 21, as the third and last part of *Situação T/T, .1*, Barrio unraveled sixty rolls of toilet paper in the site. He then immediately returned to Rio de Janeiro, refusing to participate in the artists' debate scheduled for the end of the exhibition.

*Situação T/T, .1* took place during the most brutal phase of the Brazilian military regime, known as the *anos de chumbo* (years of plumb, 1969-1974), when tortured political prisoners' bodies were dispensed in remote areas, like the ocean, lakes, or rivers. If the body was eventually found, death could then have easily been described as caused by drowning or suicide. This tactic was well known all over Latin America, and was used in other military dictatorships in the continent, such as in Argentina and Uruguay. However, the facts of this brutality were suppressed. According to art historian Malcolm Bull, "Hiddenness arises in cases where we sense something

but do not perceive it, or when we perceive something but cannot sense it."<sup>30</sup> In other words, only partially revealed things can be hidden; in order to be hidden, events or images *must* be either sensed (via sensibility) or perceived (via sense). The phenomenon of the missing political prisoners, known as the *desaparecidos*, which registered emotionally through sensed fear, but was not epistemically perceived due to censorship, was thus a hidden fact. In order to fully grasp an event, sense and perception must complement each other: the public's strong reactions to Barrio's work resulted precisely from their confrontation with the visualization of the previously invisible.

When the artist left his fourteen *Bloody Bundles* of meat, bones, fabric, and rope on the banks of the Arruda in Belo Horizonte, he revealed the collective traumatic situation of Brazil. Barrio's *Bloody Bundles* provide an aesthetic testimony to state brutality. Moreover, they create a cultural memory for the artist, Brazil, and the world of this period. Barrio united sense and perception, shining a spotlight on the military dictatorship's atrocities. Two months after his powerful work at *Do corpo à terra*, Barrio exhibited in New York as part of the *Information* show. Although the artist sent extensive photographic material to McShine, including the works he presented at the *Salão Bússola*, in the end Barrio decided to exhibit only *Situation T/T, .1*. He also chose to print only four images of the *situation* in the *Information* catalog: the *Bloody Bundles* beside the Arruda and images of civilians and the police nervously observing the bundles.<sup>31</sup> Using the art system to evade the country's repressive environment and circulate his artwork, Barrio emerged as an avant-garde artist, empowering other artists and art itself to become political agents.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a good description of Barrio's works in this period, see Júlia Rebouças, "Artista – Corpo – Cidade – Política – Arte: relatos sobre Artur Barrio e sua obra" (Master Thesis, UFMG: 2011).

<sup>2</sup> The Brazilian dictatorship lasted twenty-one years, from 1964 until 1985. By mid-1970s the military government launched a series of measures to prepare for a slow democratic transition. As part of this process, called *abertura* (opening), the *habeas corpus* for political prisoners was reinstated in Brazil in 1978.

<sup>3</sup> See Frederico Morais, "Geração AI-5," in *I Bienal de Artes Visuais do Mercosul* (Porto Alegre: FBAVM, [1986] 1997), 526.

<sup>4</sup> Brazil art institutions generally welcomed experimental practices. For example, in São Paulo, the University of São Paulo Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC-USP), then under the direction of the critic Walter Zanini, organized the event Young Contemporary Art (*Jovem Arte Contemporânea*, JAC, 1967-1974), which promoted mail and video art in the country. In Rio de Janeiro at the Modern Art Museum in Rio de Janeiro (MAM/RJ), the critic Frederico Morais together with artists Cildo Meireles, Guilherme Vaz, and Luiz Alphonsus organized an art laboratory called *Unidade Experimental* (Experimental Unit, 1969) to promote conferences, performances, and synesthetic approaches to art. Furthermore, establishments like the São Paulo Biennial and museums like the MAM/RJ were private institutions, and therefore not directly linked to the authoritarian state. Commercial art galleries were not major participants in the Brazilian art scene during this period, but institutions like *Galeria Astréia* (São Paulo) and *Petite Galerie* (Rio de Janeiro) welcomed contemporary production and documented it by publishing related exhibition catalogues. For further reading about the MAC-USP, see Cristina Freire, ed., *Walter Zanini, Escrituras Críticas* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Besides the MAM/RJ show, in 1968-9, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bahia Biennial (*Segunda Bienal da Bahia*), the third Ouro Preto Salon (*Terceiro Salão de Ouro Preto*) were forcibly closed, artworks were apprehended, and art professionals arrested.

<sup>6</sup> The emerging Brazilian art market, unlike contemporaneous museums and galleries, did not promote experimental production in the 1970s, but rather specialized in artworks by the first modernist generation (typified by artists Tarsila do Amaral, Di Cavalcanti, Cândido Portinari, Lasar Segall, etc). Barrio's generation was keenly aware of how the art market was benefiting from the economic politics issued by the military government. In 1976, the art critic Ronaldo Brito together with artists Carlos Zilio, Waltercio Caldas and José Resende, published the essay "O Boom, o pós-boom e o dis-boom," in which they strongly criticized the art market.

<sup>7</sup> Kynaston McShine, *Information* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 138.

<sup>8</sup> This *situation* took place throughout the city of Rio de Janeiro in April 1970. Shortly before *Situação T/T*, .1. Of the 500 *Bloody Bundles*, Barrio signed only 100. He put them in a car and for the whole day distributed them in the city in the company of the photographer César Carneiro and the artist Luiz Alphonsus; and together they would watch the reaction of the public. The objects were disposed of in a wide and significant area of the town, including lower and middle-class neighborhoods, on iconic art sites (such as the lake in front of the MAM/RJ and the sidewalk in front of the Petite Galerie), and so forth. He had the work documented by César Carneiro and Luiz Alphonsus in twenty-six photographs, developed at the size of 30 x 45 cm.

<sup>9</sup> Barrio quoted in Ricardo Basbaum, "Into the Water," in *Regist(r)os, Artur Barrio* (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2000), 25.

<sup>10</sup> Basbaum, "Into the Water," 20.

<sup>11</sup> See, Lucy Lippard and John Chandler's "The Dematerialization of Art" (1967), first published in *Art International* 12.2 (February 1968), 31-36. The two main theoreticians of Latin American conceptual practices, Mari Carmen Ramírez and Luis Camnitzer, frame Latin American *conceptualismo* as distinct from their North-Atlantic peers arguing for its "ideological" nature rather than its "formalist rigor." But this view does not take into account the strong Marxism of Art and Language and the politics of many other artists involved in conceptual art throughout the world. See Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity," in Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss, *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 53-71; and Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> While drawing his comparison between Barrio's work and the Neoconcrete artists, Basbaum observes that Neoconcretism was more concerned with a "sensibilization" of reason: "In terms of the Brazilian context, the experimental, neo-concrete legacy pointed to a collision between art and the real world (physicality of the space, presence of the spectators as activating agents), in the aestheticizing process (and the sensorial micro-politization) of the surroundings. Nonetheless, this ability of art and life to expand takes place through the subliminal impact of a way of thinking, constructive in origin and with the rigor of a rationalist inflection that wants to make positive transformations and changes in the world." Basbaum, "Into the Water," 25.

<sup>13</sup> Barrio quoted in João Fernandes, "Records," in *Regist(r)os, Artur Barrio* (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2000), 19.

<sup>14</sup> Brazil is internationally famous for its participatory art, initiated by the Neoconcrete movement. One of the most celebrated examples is Lygia Clark's famous *Bichos* (Critters, 1960-84), a series of aluminum articulated sculptures that need to be freely manipulated and arranged by the viewer. Having no reverse, no "other side," the *Bichos* have endless formal permutations that can be explored by the viewer-participant, who becomes a co-author of the work to a certain extent.

<sup>15</sup> The publicity agency, Aroldo Araújo Propaganda Ltda., sponsored the *Salão da Bússola* to celebrate its five-year anniversary. It is believed that Kynaston McShine chose to exhibit Barrio, Cildo Meireles, Guilherme Vaz, and Hélio Oiticica after visiting the show.

<sup>16</sup> After the police closed the MAM/RJ exhibition due to what they deemed its pornographic and political content, Brazilian participation in the 4<sup>th</sup> *Biennale des Jeunes* was cancelled. Consequently, most of the artists involved in this exhibition showed the same artworks in the *Salão Bússola*. For example Cildo Meireles exhibited *Espaços Virtuais: Cantos* (*Virtual Spaces: Corners*, 1968), previously made for the French biennial, in the Salon, and received the main award. With the prize, he spent two years in New York (1971-1973). About the *Salão Bússola*, see Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Barrio quoted in Ligia Canongia, ed., *Artur Barrio*, (Rio de Janeiro: Modo Edições, 2002), 16. This description shows how different the kind of "participation" Barrio generated was from that of the Neoconcrete artists.

<sup>18</sup> In Barrio's words, "After a lot of bureaucracy the work was moved to the 'museum's' (garbage) deposits, [which] automatically [changed the work into] continuous transformation, therefore annulling the germination concept of the finished art work." Canongia, ed., *Artur Barrio*, 16.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Words like "germination," "evolution" and its opposite, "ossified," are fundamental concepts in the artist's lexicon, as his notes in the *Cadernos-livros* (*Notebooks-Books, 1969-present*) and artworks from the 1970s attest.

<sup>21</sup> *Artur Barrio, Actions after Actions* (Philadelphia: Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art & Design, 2006), 24.

<sup>22</sup> Prior to his arrival in the country, Barrio spent approximately one year in Angola, another Portuguese ex-colony, before his family returned to Portugal and finally moved to Rio. According to the artist, his father was antimilitarist and was "against the Salazar and Cerejeira dictatorships," the Portuguese authoritarian regimes lasted from 1926 until 1974. Artur Barrio in an email to the author, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Adolfo Montejo Navas, "Energía, libertad, sensaciones – entrevista a Artur Barrio," *Lápiz: Revista Internacional del Arte*, n. 234, (2007): 28-39.

<sup>24</sup> Laurie Vickroy, "The Traumas of Unbelonging: Reinaldo Arenas's Recuperation of Cuba," *Melus* 30.4, (Winter 2005): 109.

<sup>25</sup> The statement was given on the occasion of the artist representing Brazil in the 4<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, exhibiting the work titled *Situação/Trabalho: de Lugar Nenhum* (*Situation/Work: From Nowhere*, 2003). Paula Azugaray, *A Insubordinação de Artur Barrio. Entrevista com o Artista*.

Available at: <http://p.php.uol.com.br/tropico/html/textos/1759,1.shl> (June, 2014). (Translated by author) (December 1, 2009). There is a massive amount of literature on exile and dictatorship in the Southern Cone, since Brazil's coup-d'état was followed by Chile's (1973) and Argentina's (1976). In Brazil, historian Denise Rollemberg published *Exílio: Entre raízes e radares* (1999), recounting the story of the Brazilian exile experience (1964-1979) from the perspective of the exiles. By means of extensive interviews, she highlights the problem of redefining identity as imposed by day-to-day life in exile. Barrio's exile history is not limited to his Brazilian experience. In 1974 Barrio returned to Portugal in the midst of the Carnation Revolution, a military coup coupled with a campaign of civil resistance. There, the artist executed situations such as *4 Movimentos e 4 Pedras* (*4 Movements and 4 Stones*, 1974), which can also be understood as a response to the political situation he experienced in Europe. He then went to Paris (1975-1981) and Amsterdam (1981-1985), before returning to Rio.

<sup>26</sup> The exhibition presented works by Alfredo José Fontes, Artur Barrio, Carlos Vergara, Cildo Meireles, Décio Noviello, Dileny Campos, Dilton Araújo, Eduardo Ângelo, Franz Weissmann, Frederico Morais (who also exhibited as an artist), George Helt, Ione Saldanha, José Ronaldo Lima, Lee Jaff (who executed an idea by Hélio Oiticica), Lotus Lobo, Luciano Gusmão, Maria de Lourdes, Terezinha Soares, Thereza Simões, and Umberto Costa Barros. For the first time in Brazil, the organizers paid for the artists' travel expenses, as well as the production of the site-specific artworks, but no catalog was produced. Ironically, as Frederico Morais notes, the event was organized as part of a celebration for Tiradentes, a national hero associated with freedom because he took part in a rebellion that unsuccessfully tried to promote Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1789.

<sup>27</sup> Besides being sponsored by Hidrominas, the show was promoted by politicians directly linked to the military government, who endorsed Morais' invitation as the event's organizer and as a participating artist. During our conversation, Morais explained that the State of Minas Gerais (MG), where he came from, had a very peculiar relationship with the military: The MG government believed that the Brazilian coup-d'état had been conceived there, and consequently felt superior to the rest of the country. It refused to provide explanations of events that happened locally to the centralized government in Brasília.

<sup>28</sup> According to Morais, the two exhibition spaces comprised two simultaneous and integrated events: the show *Objeto e Participação* (*Object and participation*), inaugurated inside the *Palácio das Artes* in April 17, 1970, and the manifestation *Do Corpo à Terra* (*From Body to Earth*), which took place in the Municipal Park of Belo Horizonte from April 17 – 21. The events in the park, which occurred in different times and places, were left on-site until their destruction. Both the indoor and the outdoor shows were sponsored by Hidrominas and shared the theme of "object," understood as an aesthetic category. The term was already a popular concept in Brazil, as acknowledged by poet Ferreira Gullar's famous "*Teoria do não objeto*" (*Theory of the Non-Object*, 1959). Morais, who made the suggestion to include the park in the event and chose the events' theme, had been actively trying to integrate spaces outside institutions in his curatorial practice. Starting in 1968, he would develop a series of events in the gardens of the MAM/RJ, the most famous being the celebrated *Domingos de Criação* (*Creation Sundays*, 1971) in which the public was invited to create artworks collectively.

<sup>29</sup> Frederico Morais in an interview with the author, December 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Malcolm Bull, *Seeing Things Hidden: Apocalypse, Vision, and Totality* (London: Verso, 1999), 12.

<sup>31</sup> Four photos were published in black and white together with the caption: "work realized in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, April 20, 1970." See McShine, *Information*, 16.