



**Arlindo Machado in
Argentina: readings,
drives and lines of force**
*Arlindo Machado en
Argentina: lecturas,
impulsos y líneas de fuerza*



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Abstract: This article outlines the impact of Arlindo Machado's work on Argentina's academic and cultural sphere from the translation of his texts into Spanish and his teaching and curatorial activities since the early 1990s. The lines of force of Machado's itinerary are detected, with his recognized forays into the field of photographic creation, his experiences in short films and multimedia works, his electronic books in different architectures and formats, and the publications that have left notable marks, not only in Argentina, but also in other Latin American Countries.

Keywords: Arlindo Machado; arts; film; video; new media.

Resumen: Este artículo traza un panorama sobre el impacto de la obra de Arlindo Machado en el ámbito académico y cultural argentino, a partir de la traducción de sus trabajos al castellano y sus actividades curatoriales y de enseñanza, desde inicios de los años 1990. Se detectan líneas de fuerza del itinerario de Machado, con sus reconocidas incursiones en el campo de la creación fotográfica, sus experiencias en el cortometraje y obras multimediales, sus libros electrónicos en distintas arquitecturas y formatos y las publicaciones que han dejado marcas notables no solo en Argentina, sino también en otros países de América Latina.

Palabras clave: Arlindo Machado; arte; cine; video; nuevos medios.

A distinctive voice

In the early 1990s, the Spanish translation of Armando Machado's works was incipient and fragmentary, with the circulation of a few essays scattered in academic publications in Latin America. For example, his key text "*El imaginario numérico: simulación y síntesis*" (The Numerical Imaginary: Simulation and Synthesis) was published in *Acta Poética*, the journal of the Institute of Philological Research of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (MACHADO, 1992). Surrounded by various articles in an issue dedicated to nonverbal semiotics, a different voice, reluctant to the disciplinary frames, appeared, exercising a transversal view on a radical change of regime that few were able to glimpse yet. Based on the concept outlined by Alain Renaud to address a territory that many considered basically an instrumental novelty, Machado analyzed a new focus of attention for art, technology and communication. It was an object, moreover, requiring a rethinking of the configuration and delimitations of those spheres, posing the emergence of a new regime of the visible and a reconfiguration of both the perceived or intelligible world and contemporary subjectivity. The text, in a clear formulation, evidenced that its author had a perspective of a territory that was difficult to inscribe in the usual specializations of the academic field and, at the same time, of great potential.

Simultaneously to the occasional circulation in Spanish-speaking university publications of international scope, on a small scale, in Buenos Aires a systematic pole of diffusion in Spanish was developing for the works that Machado had been publishing in Portuguese for more than a decade. With the beginning of a series of publications designed by Jorge La Ferla, the *Video Cuadernos* (video notebooks), closely related to his teaching activity at the *Universidad del Cine* (University of Cinema), a singular voice, dedicating space to the language of video and to the work of the videomaker Sandra Kogut (MACHADO, 1991; 1993) began to be recognized by Argentine readers, mainly film students and artists from different fields who found a guide for their first approaches to video creation.

Throughout the 1990s, first with the *Video Cuadernos* and, later, with other publications compiled by La Ferla, which each year accompanied the exceptionally up-to-date Muestra Euroamericana de Cine, Video y Arte Digital (MEACVAD – Euro-American Exhibition of Film, Video and Digital Art), a compact series of collective publications and a couple of individual volumes would bring about a notorious repercussion of Machado's production. This process would allow the enjoyment of a distinct, divergent and alternative space with respect to the disciplinary

traditions and the territorial compartmentalization of university departments, faculties and areas of study. Thus, an interstitial as well as firm installation in the academic and intellectual field was growing for more than a quarter of a century in Spanish. From the translations of his texts and his repeated activities in Argentina, a clear conceptual influence spread, which also became an impulse for theoretical, critical and artistic production, while strongly influencing the field of curatorial activities. On the other hand, this focus, which was initially activated particularly from Argentina, contributed, in the course of two decades, to the establishment of a true network that generated research initiatives, teaching and curatorial activities on a growing Latin American scale, in which Machado's figure was affirmed as an unquestionable reference.

In issue 56 of *Significação* magazine, Marcus Bastos has insightfully pointed out the existence of a double way of approaching art, communication and media in Machado's thought, exercised in two complementary senses. On the one hand, when dealing with media with a more or less developed theoretical tradition, Machado was concerned with breaking down the languages and proposing original alternatives to the established ideas. Thus, it is possible to notice that when dealing with photography, cinema or television, he engaged in a firm discussion, not without some differences of opinion, with some of the main references in the area, and even strongly refuted some celebrated figures. He did not do so merely out of polemical eagerness, but guided by the need to elaborate a thought that did not rely on the argument of authority. On the contrary, it sought to be based on the search for his own consistency. As a complement to this combative discourse, which demolished what had been previously agreed upon – especially when such received ideas were based on totalizing judgments devoid of a serious examination of the media experience – Machado was also interested in detecting and mapping, as far as possible, some emerging spheres and languages. Thus, his early focus on the ascendant video art in the 1980s, which he later extended to the constellation opened up by the new media in the digital revolution, made possible real provisional maps and road maps for the understanding of phenomena as new as they were complex (BASTOS, 2021).

The title of this article might be seen to allude to the reception of the work of Arlindo Machado in Argentina. Yet speaking of reception in this case might be a mistake. We could affirm that, strictly speaking, it was not a reception, just as the subjects questioned by Machado's texts, classes or lectures were not exactly receivers. Rather, there were and are interlocutors, subjects impacted by his discourse and encouraged to prolong their contributions by an action that accepts the challenge

and is ready to continue the search. In a panorama where the disciplinary restrictions, the routines of thought and the so required “theoretical frameworks” that reproduced some liturgies delimited the attempts to understand the relationship between art and media, the irruption of Machado’s works helped to disperse an accumulation of commonplaces presented as theory. His work stimulated the opening of an area that combined an interest in audiovisual media with a more encompassing concern for the relationships between technologies and subjects, and boldly explored the challenges of a profound transformation underway.

On one hand, Machado challenged discourses that simply reproduced previously-established knowledge in the field of social and communication sciences and media studies. On the other hand, his work also challenged authors and ideas coming from different sectors of the humanities, such as the traditional histories of art, studies oriented to the examination of visual culture, or the aesthetics, theory and history of cinema. Opposed to the disciplinary fronts and their monolithic identities, Machado proposed a discussion that remained open to the design of an *ad hoc* conceptual apparatus for the understanding of the crossroads posed by the relations between art, technology and communication. In his own way, more than a theoretician in a consummate sense, possessing finished models, he was someone who was determined to design and redesign his own conceptual toolbox from an incessant analytical and critical activity, since he read in the audiovisual creation as many ideas as he found in published writings. It is very symptomatic to note that among those impacted by his production throughout his itinerary in Argentina are many artists, architects and designers. His own experience in the field of visual creation and his curatorial activities removed him from a closed theoretical or analytical exercise on the elaboration of his discourse, and inserted him in a dialogical matrix that exceeded the community of researchers, to extend among other profiles of art and communication practitioners.

It is highly suggestive that among the authors on which Machado based some of his most audacious ideas were historical references that were decidedly resistant to attempts at disciplinary and academic classification, such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Gilbert Simondon and Vilem Flusser. Together with them, it is essential to add the perhaps even more unclassifiable and overflowing figure of Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein, to whom he dedicated his first book in 1982 and who was always a close presence in his discourse. The writer also often revealed himself as an astute reader of the contributions of his referents

and offered his production so that his own could be inscribed, in turn, in the experience of his readers. In fact, his writings have been a crucial element, to cite just one example, in the dissemination of Vilem Flusser's thought in Argentina at the beginning of this century, particularly since his indispensable "Repensando a Flusser y la imagen técnica" (Rethinking Flusser and the technical image) (MACHADO, 2001).

We will then try to trace some of the paths and repercussions of his texts, examining how they became triggers of important initiatives in the academic and intellectual sphere, to detect, finally, some lines of force of a work that has left significant marks, although to date it has only been partially translated into Spanish. As Lúcia Santaella (2021) points out, Machado's scholarship is still astonishingly relevant today, especially in the field of new media, where the vertigo of events tends to quickly outdate attempts at analysis and conceptualization.

Readings, ideas and drives

Let's take a closer look at the expansion of the influence of Machado's work in Spanish. After the two *Video Cuadernos* already mentioned, which contained his first texts in Buenos Aires, La Ferla edited in 1994 the first volume entirely composed of texts by the author as issue VI of the series. As indicated in the prologue, this publication organized a collection of writings as brief as it was representative. For then, with the prevalence of small publications that passed from hand to hand and were replicated "clandestinely in film and video schools, universities and different multimedia circles in the country" (MACHADO, 1994, p. 5), recognition was affirmed.

The volume brought together seven texts written by Machado in the previous decade that revealed the spectrum of interests and elucidations typical of an author very difficult to ascribe to a disciplinary belonging or to a predominant object of knowledge. The first text entitled "La cultura de la vigilancia" (The Culture of Surveillance) (1994) challenged the commonplaces about the society of spectacle and proposed an alternative conceptualization, aimed at detecting the emergence of a surveillance society. Without referring to it in a central way, this approach echoed both the diagnosis of control societies formulated by Gilles Deleuze and anticipated what would later be called in a similar way by authors such as David Lyon. But above all, Machado's ideas were expressed based on the reading of a key video: the documentary *Der Riese* (1983), by Michael Klier. Later it was possible to read this article, already titled "Máquinas de vigilar" (Surveillance Machines), as a visionary

approach to an environment regulated by artificial vision machines, dedicated to the control of spaces and subjects increasingly devoid of any privacy. This framed a range of concerns that went beyond any focus on a specific environment.

Machado proposed a transversal approach to video technologies, to cinematographic and television discourses, to cultures mediated by viewing machines, but he also entered into an unusually ambitious analysis of a new psychosocial and civilizational environment. The small volume continued with enlightening essays on zapping as a much more complex practice than the mere television symptom to which it was reduced, on newscasts in times of the Gulf War and on the dialogues between the discourses of cinema and video, plus an analysis of the production of video-creation groups in Brazil and the essay on the numerical imaginary previously mentioned. This last text, which managed to address an emerging issue in an at once impactful and theoretically-sound way, became a key element at that time to discuss the digital irruption in a context that, encompassing the audiovisual field, was expanding towards a radical reconfiguration of a regime of the sensible and the imaginable (MACHADO, 1994).

We have highlighted in this presentation the singularity of Machado's voice and the difficulty of assimilating him to predominant currents or orientations, especially those related to communication studies. But it is necessary to consider that he was not exactly a solitary, since his contributions are in tune with those of other peers who also shared in the same period several visits to Argentina and had some of his key works published. The recurring references in his approaches to photography, video creation, the cultures and techniques of looking and listening examined over long periods of time, from pre-cinema to post-cinema, allowed the creation of a networked dialogue that was transferred from the aforementioned authors to a growing horizontal community, not exempt from discussions, whose task of correlating different experiences in the field of image and media was a distinctive mark.

Thus, in connection and discussion with the contributions of Raymond Bellour, Philippe Dubois, Siegfried Zielinski and Jean-Louis Comolli, Machado's texts became a regular part of the undergraduate and graduate bibliographies of several universities and study centers in Argentina. Fundamentally, it was the permanent link with La Ferla that made Machado a regular presence in local classrooms for almost two decades, participating in conferences and exhibitions, as well as in various seminars and master classes, sometimes extended to other Argentine universities. The different editions of the MEACVAD saw, in the collective books presented in each year, Machado's texts added to a growing *corpus* (MACHADO, 1996a; 1996b;

1996c; 1997a; 1997b; 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2008a) and dialogued in some way with the aforementioned authors. It is important to point out that, among all of them, Machado's distinctive feature consisted in the support of a look in which, without finding the slightest trace of a declamatory Latin Americanism, an unmistakably Latin American mark could be detected. In the "Prologue" to the work *El paisaje mediático: sobre el desafío de las poéticas tecnológicas* (The Media Landscape: On the Challenge of Technological Poetics) (MACHADO, 2000a), La Ferla stated: "we consider him the greatest theoretician on audiovisual media in our continent".

The publication of this book marked a true landmark, and two decades later it would be considered in Argentine classrooms as a young classic in studies on audiovisual arts, media and technology. It was an anthological edition prepared especially for Argentina, a longtime aspiration of La Ferla's during the preceding years. Machado selected a series of texts from several books: *A arte do vídeo* (The Art of Video) (1988); *Máquina e imaginário* (Machine and Imaginary) (1993); *Imaginário numérico* (Numerical Imaginary) (1995); *Pré-cinemas e pós-cinemas* (Pre-Cinemas and Post-Cinemas) (1997), and *A televisão levada à Sério* (Television Taken Seriously) (2000). He also incorporated almost completely the content of *O quarto iconoclasmo e outros ensaios hereges* (The Fourth Iconoclasm and Other Heretical Studies) (2001), which would be published shortly afterwards, in April 2001, in Rio de Janeiro.

In the prologue that we had the privilege of writing for *El paisaje mediático*, and which, thanks to Machado's generosity, became soon after the afterword of *O quarto iconoclasmo* and *Outros ensaios hereges*, we pointed out how the author developed an approach, a methodology and even a communicative tone that simultaneously distanced him from the nebulous theorizations of the specialists who prophesied an imminent catastrophe in the media environment, making of his discourse a simile of the trumpets of the apocalypse, and from the celebratory discourses of those who augured an angelic state of complete communion in charge of the new communicative technologies. In his heterodoxy, Machado did not place himself above the media, visualizing everything from an all-encompassing academy. Neither was he fond of reverie or of the nightmare seen from grandiloquent theories, he shunned technophobia and technophilia. There was nothing in him of that figure of the traveler on the sea of clouds that bewitched Carl Gustav Carus, but rather he joyfully launched himself into an enclosed and proliferative jungle, trying to orient himself and trace some paths (RUSSO, 2000).

Among the dozen collective books compiled by La Ferla in Argentina between 1996 and 2008, eleven volumes include his contribution. To this must be

added another fundamental publication, such as the impressive volume *El medio es el diseño audiovisual* (The Media is Audiovisual Design) (LA FERLA, 2007b), published in Colombia by the Universidad de Caldas. This book is a true summation of the state of audiovisual thought at the beginning of the new century and provides the exact measure of a presence so strong and from different perspectives, as it has no less than seven writings by Machado, distributed in various axes contained in the book. This set of collective texts in which his presence was decisive, together with the two solo volumes already mentioned, *Video cuadernos IV* and *El paisaje mediático*, whose success led to a second edition (MACHADO, 2009b), formed a corpus of particular impact.

The anthological strategy of these publications, whether in the collective works or in the volumes that compiled his texts from different sources, arranged themes in a range that, taking a term dear to Machado such as repertoire, made it possible to verify both the variety and consistency of his fields of interest. There was cinema or television, approached from perspectives defying the usual modalities of film studies or media studies. There was also the advent of new media and the derivations of the digital, video art, artistic creation and machines, or the transformations of the subject involved in dealing with technologies of looking and listening. All these were not only tackled with fluency and erudition, but not infrequently established novel interconnections.

The question of repertoire, with respect to television or Brazilian video production, was a constant concern for Machado. Repertoire, rather than a question of canon, that preferred construction of the academy and Anglo-Saxon critics, with its model resonances. It is, in the repertoire, a set linked by a requirement of amplitude and variety in its conformation, which goes hand in hand with some consistency. With this concept, the author fought against the policy of indifferentiation that lurked behind the appeal to a televisual flow, a reductionism for which Raymond Williams was not so much responsible as his hasty readers. His strategy was to stop the flow, to pause in order to better appreciate some highlighted passages; to observe the correlations and the differences between the image in progress and the stop in an instant or the serialization of some moments.

Thus, Machado was perhaps, in Latin America, the one who was most able to take advantage of the analytical dimension of the spectatorial power made possible by the function, as humble as it was decisive, of the remote control in the television set and the VCR. A spectator enabled to control the image, which opened the way to new instances of both enjoyment and the possibility of knowledge. Authors close to

his perspective such as Raymond Bellour, Jacques Aumont and Peter Greenaway have repeatedly highlighted the potential of remote control to activate a topological view, inside and outside the fascination with the moving image, which could not fail to lead to new frontiers for the study of audiovisual media. In the television analysis, instead of conjecturing presumed tendencies or general guidelines, Machado launched a close reading of news and pop videos that challenged, which challenged a host of clichés or abusive generalizations, raising the aforementioned question about repertoire as a crucial issue. It is plausible that in this matter, reading and ordering strategies were activated, very close to the curatorial procedures that he developed in parallel with his research; to see and understand better, and to make others see and understand, as part of the same experience.

This does not mean that Machado preferred short-range ideas, without aspiring to draw some long-term connections. The appeal to the technological poetics that had matured in the times of *Máquina e imaginário* has a prominent place, which even rises to the same subtitle of *El paisaje mediático: sobre el desafío de las poéticas tecnológicas*. From the media, the author moved towards the transgenic possibilities of artistic creation, based on a detailed analysis of Eduardo Kac's experiments, on a path that led towards a transhumanist horizon. In this way, his influence was highly perceptible in various Argentine institutions that in the last twenty years have developed teaching and research initiatives in the field of design and communication, electronic and audiovisual arts.

In addition to the aforementioned presence of his work in various chairs, projects and curricula of different faculties of the University of Buenos Aires and the Universidade del Cine, we can also mention several nuclei where his teaching has been translated into guidelines for various research projects. Among them, it is possible to mention in particular the graduate and postgraduate programs of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism of the *Universidad de Buenos Aires*, in which the Graphic Design and Image and Sound Design programs have had their reiterated contribution, and in particular the Master's Degree in Communication Design, thanks to the permanent link with La Ferla. At the *Universidad Nacional de La Plata*, the Faculties of Arts and Journalism and Social Communication have incorporated his materials to different subjects since the early days of its local diffusion, and it could be said that the influence of Machado's thought has been as decisive in the Faculty of Arts to inspire various aspects of the current design of the Degree in Audiovisual Arts, as it previously occurred in the emergence of the Degree in Multimedia,

towards the end of the 1990s. It is also worth mentioning his influence in several courses, projects and curatorial activities carried out at the *Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero*, especially in the Graduation and Master's Degree in Electronic Arts.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the significant case of Ludion, the research collective on technopoetics founded by Claudia Kozak, which has been developing a constant task of research, teaching and creation around the relationship between art and technology. The initial configuration of Ludion adopted Machado's term "technological poetics" as its object of study, to later consolidate during the last few years around the more compact denomination of technopoetics. These mentions are enough to explain a true "Machado factor" verified as an impulse to highly productive developments both in theoretical production and in artistic creation or design produced in Argentina.

We leave for the end of this section, which reviews the drive promoted by his ideas, the only one of his books published in Spain, which fortunately has been well distributed in Latin America: *El sujeto en la pantalla* (The Subject on the Screen) (MACHADO, 2009a). It is symptomatic that this volume was published in Barcelona, not in a collection of books on cinema, art or communication, but in a series dedicated to educational communication. His proposal is an exemplary demonstration of Machado's strategy, committed to connecting fields that are sometimes artificially divided by disciplinary boundaries. Certainly, cataloging a book that began with an innovative analysis of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) from a theory of enunciation, and then reviewed the theories of the cinematic device, to continue with reflections on subjectivity in cyberspace and immersive audiovisual experiences, and finally look at the horizons of gaming and interactivity was a real challenge. However, the internal linkage underlying these cross-cutting themes was of singular consistency. It is necessary to notice the common thread that sustained the apparent diversity of territories, since there is, in our opinion, a rigorous logic that relates these different work areas.

Lines of force in an expanding field

In several passages of Machado's discourse, one can literally read his intention to explore certain lines of force, for example, when he focuses on the study of video art production in Brazil. These lines of force referred to fields, but their meaning was very different from the one assigned to them by Pierre Bourdieu, who was also one of their prominent opponents. Here, lines of force and fields should be understood rather as James Faraday put them in his pioneering studies on electromagnetism. Without abusing the energetic simile, we can think that our author used to approach

his cartographic explorations, for example in Brazilian video art, by detecting what those lines of force let us organize in a territory in which the incognito and the entangled alternated. In this way, he allowed himself to exercise a perspective that was as oblique as it was productive, far from the specialist's own focus. In a revealing conversation with Chilean researcher Iván Pinto, Machado pointed:

I am not a film specialist. It seemed to me that a lot had been said about it, since it is the only area of audiovisuals that has a tradition of criticism and thought. I decided first to go towards video, which seemed to me something different, something that deserved analysis. Then I moved on to television and new media. (PINTO, 2010)

Just as research and curating were not divergent but complementary activities for Machado, and even in a certain way interconnected, the movement from photography and cinema to electronic and digital images allowed him to investigate them in an oblique way. And when the time came, to draw the necessary connections, as when he began to work together the traditions of experimental cinema and video art.

On the other hand, to describe Machado's intense and significant activity as a curator during his career would require another article. We will only highlight the impact that his inspiration and publications produced in the curatorial spheres, both in Argentina and in other Latin American countries, such as Chile, Peru, Colombia and Mexico. In this context, it is worth mentioning the unprecedented scope of the *Visionários* (Visionaries) exhibition, which integrated until 2009 the selections of material by five curators covering an unprecedented number of Latin American and Caribbean countries, mapping and even experimenting a periodization of the production of experimental cinema and video art in the continent. This was a landmark in the aspiration, embraced for a long time by Machado, to transcend the limitations of the histories of experimental audiovisual creation rooted in the limits of each nation. The objective of this project was to examine the possibilities of ongoing artistic, critical and analytical dialogue, bringing together 73 works, organized in nine programs, and covering the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. Being a mixture of research and curatorship, Machado was in charge of the process as organizer and presenter of a historical anthology, while regional curators Elias Levin (Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean), Jorge La Ferla (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay), Marta Velez (Cuba, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and Venezuela) and Roberto Moreira S. Cruz (Brazil) designed the repertoire of a set that toured several Argentine cities and

could be shown in different countries, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Mexico. A concise description of the project was published in the volume compiled by Jorge La Ferla, *Las prácticas mediáticas predigitales y postanalógicas* (The Pre-Digital and Post-Analogical Media Practices) (MACHADO, 2008a).

In the first decade of the 21st century, beyond the aforementioned texts, some of Machado's essays have been intensively read, quoted and discussed for their innovative approaches. We highlight, among them, "*Arte y medios: aproximaciones y distinciones*" (Art and Media: Approaches and Differences) (MACHADO, 2004), which proposes to cross the limits of semiotic machines and reinvent their capabilities through the intervention of their hardware and software. Changing the means and their pre-assigned purposes for other horizons of creation, with a Flusserian imprint, he affirms:

What a true creator does, therefore, instead of simply submitting to the determinations of the technical apparatus, is to continually subvert the function of the machine or the program he uses, is to manage them in the opposite direction of their programmed productivity. (MACHADO, 2004, p. 86-87)

In this regard, it is necessary to remember that also during those years, Machado intervened with a powerful political approach to artistic creation in technological environments, appealing to an updated and enriching reading of Flusser in a political key in "*Tecnología e arte contemporánea: como politizar o debate*" (Technology and Contemporary Art: How to Politicize the Debate) (2005). Although it was not a manifesto, the essay included a whole program of action around politics and ethics, based on breaking, through the intervention of art, the program commanded by the apparatuses of the art world (MACHADO, 2005).

Another short essay, reproduced in Spanish in numerous electronic publications, which had a notable impact and diffusion during the last decade and a half, was "*Convergencia y divergencia de los medios*" (Convergence and Divergence of the Media) (MACHADO, 2008b). The material was widely disseminated after it was put online in 2006 by the *Miradas* magazine of the International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños, where it is unfortunately not available today, although it can be found in other publications (MACHADO, 2008b).

The translation of these texts, abundantly replicated on the web from different academic and cultural publications, preceded their Brazilian compilation in the brief but crucial volume *Arte e mídia* (MACHADO, 2007a). Art and media, hybridization and convergence, together with his proposal of a necessary divergence, are processes of intersection, transactions and dialogue; they imply movements of

transit, transition and provisionality in the becoming of the media. They also refer to the tensions of hybrid elements that act in converging directions, with parts that are separated and never completely fused, in a media landscape that is nothing like a static painting, but a process in which remediation and reinvention set the pace.

In the same year in which *Arte e mídia* (2007a) was published in Brazil, within the aforementioned volume *El medio es el diseño audiovisual* (MACHADO, 2007b), another small work by Machado appeared, which constitutes one of the most lucid contributions to a topic of growing importance in audiovisual creation: “El film-ensayo” (The Film-Essay).

Originally published in Portuguese in the magazine *Concinnitas* of the Institute of Arts of the Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro, the text circulated in Spanish after its inclusion in the aforementioned book and was also replicated in various electronic media, constituting a decisive contribution to the delimitation of the multiform field of the audiovisual essay, enunciated from our latitudes. But it is also possible to read “El filme-ensayo” as a manifestation of a line of force that runs through the entirety of Arlindo Machado’s production and that, we believe, can be considered as a thread that connects many of the apparently divergent and proliferative dimensions of his intellectual work. There he expressed in a revealing way something that concerns both the subject matter of the article and his own intellectual journey:

Let’s think about the film-essay today. It can be made with any kind of image-source: images captured by cameras, designed or generated in a computer, as well as texts obtained by means of character generators, graphics and also all kinds of sound materials. That is why the film-essay goes far beyond the limits of the documentary. It can even use fictional scenes, taken in studio with actors, because its truth does not depend on any immaculate “record” of the real, but on a process of search and conceptual inquiry. (MACHADO, 2007, p. 188-189)

We will return to what is expressed in this quote in the last paragraphs of this article, but not before dedicating a few paragraphs to what is to date his last book published in Argentina. This was the case of a volume that, in spite of the anachronism imposed by the editorial trends, obtained a not minor achievement: that of overcoming that delicate test of actuality to which books dealing with the panorama commonly referred to as “new media” are inexorably subjected. The itinerary of the publication in Argentina of *Pre-cine y post-cine en diálogo con los nuevos medios digitales* (MACHADO, 2007) was a test of capacity and validity. The Brazilian edition, published in 1997, was a landmark not only for being a decisive

contribution to the installation in our continent of the concept of post-cinema in the academic and intellectual debate that would develop with intensity in the following decade, but also for proposing a study of the media and audiovisual arts in long times, which did not have as its axis the alleged “birth” of cinema around the time of the *Lumière Cinématographe* and its competitors during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Although the proposal of a pre-cinema has awakened numerous discussions, which are not the object of analysis of this article, but which are mostly oriented to object to its teleological appreciation of a series of very diverse phenomena, which explored different audiovisual spectacles and technologies during the previous centuries. Machado used the term to elaborate a refined archaeology of the machines of vision and hearing since the Renaissance, which made it necessary, at some points, to go back to the Paleolithic experiences. For a volume devoted to examining certain connections between technical images located along the entire history of mankind and certain recent trends in new media, the risk of becoming outdated in a short time is patent: the new media of the 1990s were already obsolete twenty years later.

Nevertheless, the Argentine edition could be read and was productive in 2015 with an unusual contemporary effect. Although the bibliography and the cases of artistic production analyzed were limited to the first half of the 1990s, not only were the approaches to pre-cinema admirably sustained, but the lines of force observed in the midst of the transition from a universe of electronic images of analogical character to another marked by processing and digital generation maintained their elucidatory capacity intact. The only thing missing, for obvious reasons, were the contributions and discussions raised in the 21st century by the concept of post-cinema, but it was possible to verify that the dissemination of this book in Spanish allowed the reader to be introduced to this classic young audience of audiovisual theory in our continent (MACHADO, 2015).

Let's return, finally, to the subject of the film-essay. In the aforementioned conversation with Iván Pinto, held precisely during Machado's visit to Chile as part of the *Visionários* exhibition, Machado said:

I have a pending project to talk about images as a form of knowledge. That's one thing I learned with Eisenstein, who believed that in the age of images one way of writing would be via cinema, via images and sounds. And somehow that ended up being concretized by filmmakers like Chris Marker, Jean-Luc Godard, Alexander Kluge. They are philosophers, they are thinkers, but they don't write books, they make films. And films can be understood as a way in which philosophy is constructed today, as thought is constructed today. So my idea is to take up that path of intelligent images, images of thought. (PINTO, 2010)

What was evoked there, certainly, was a project whose extension was that of an entire intellectual life. In reviewing the lines of force of Machado's itinerary, with his recognized incursions in the field of photographic creation, his experiences in short films and multimedia works, his electronic books in different architectures and formats and the publications in paper format that we have commented on here, the decantation of his thought into new audiovisual forms was not only a viable perspective, but a logical continuation of his project. His physical disappearance and the important volume of his works still untranslated into Spanish calls us to the challenge of continuing to extend his legacy. In short, it is a question of continuing to question what in his own words was that path so often dismissed by persistent prejudices, but increasingly essential: the path of intelligent images, those images of thought that he knew how to fathom in an exemplary way.

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