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CINEMA, ART AND REALITY: A STORY OF DIALOGUES

André Hallak

PhD student in Communication at the
School of Communication - UFRJ
Belo Horizonte – MG

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Abstract: This article analyzes some movements in Brazilian cinema and video art that potentiated connections between documentary and the visual arts. Based on experimental cinematographic works by Arthur Omar and Glauber Rocha, it is understood how experimental cinema created a close relationship with Brazilian artistic fields. Video art emerges as an important means of passage from the movie theater to the galleries. Artists use portable cameras to produce video work. Motivated by the movements of French cinema verité and the ease of direct sound, documentary aspects are incorporated into these videos, producing a large amount of work that transits between documentary and the visual arts. This passage can be understood through the study of works by Sandra Kogut, Walter Silveira and Eder Santos. It is thus understandable that the entry of the moving image and the documentary in the galleries has permeated contemporary art exhibitions in recent years.

Keywords: Movie theater, documentary, video art, visual arts.

INTRODUCTION

The relationships between the arts are continually getting closer in contemporary times. “In fact, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify an exclusive space for the performance of a work, to such an extent that the works today are crossed by different artistic practices”. The limits are becoming more tenuous and the dialogues more constant. It is often not possible, or pertinent, to identify to which field of art this or that manifestation belongs. It is up to analytical works to reflect on the influences and openings to which the work proposes, no longer fitting into defined trends, styles or movements.

The purpose of this work is to reflect on a particular dialogue between documentary and the arts in Brazil, based on video art.

Both photography and cinema took time to be considered as art. Initially these, which today are called mechanical arts, were considered only as “reproduction and diffusion techniques” (RANCIÈRE, 2005, p. 36). Documentary cinema acquired artistic nobility even later. This nobility “was denied to it for a large part of its history – often by documentarians themselves, who wanted to get away from the idea of cinema as art or entertainment” (LINS, 2005). This refusal made him reserve, for a long time, a position distant from cinema considered artistic. Going against this historical trend, contemporary documentary, “more than fictional cinema” (LINS, 2005), incorporates and contaminates different aesthetics, in addition to moving with ease through the various arts. Documentarists make works that use aesthetics and supports coming from the arts, and artists appropriate documentary devices in the conception of their works.

Contemporary works that trace artistic perspectives on reality move freely through these two fields. They seek the truth, reality, without the pretension of finding it or expressing it, or even representing it. They appropriate images of reality, not to document, but to raise awareness. The images are contemplative and invite a sensitive contact between spectator and work. In many cases, the author walks away, letting the work self-constitute itself in front of him and the spectator. He creates the devices and retires.

To understand how this movement connected documentary and video art in Brazil, we will make a brief history of the relationship between documentary and arts, with particular emphasis on the movements of Cinema Verdade and Cinema Directo.

THE ATTEMPT TO REPRESENT REALITY

For some scholars, the roots of documentary predate the first public projection of moving images, by the Lumière brothers, in 1895, officially considered the beginning of cinema. Erik Barnouw considers his pioneers to be those who, from 1870 onwards, were looking for a way to document reality in motion: a horse running (Eadweard Muybridge) or a bird flying (Étienne Jules Marey), Venus passing through the sun (Pierre Jules César Jassen).

To say that the emergence of documentary is, in a way, linked to the very emergence of cinema is unquestionable. After all, the first moving images, captured by a camera, by the Lumière brothers, were documentary records of urban activities at the time. They portrayed everyday scenes, such as: the train arriving at the station, leaving the factory at the end of the day, leaves on the trees being moved by the wind. The films could not yet be considered documentary films, because at the time they were produced there was no questioning and legitimation of the genre as such. However, their importance for the history of documentary is unquestionable, as they are the first record of reality projected in motion. Several explorers, inspired by the Lumière brothers' quest to depict the time in which they lived, began recording their expeditions to unknown places. These travel films still did not have a specific language that characterized them as documentary.

It is from "*Nanook of the North*"¹ that the documentary begins to consolidate itself as a cinematographic genre. The genre that was, until then, in an embryonic state came to develop until the format reached by Robert Flaherty, in the film finished in 1922. Its

conception came from Flaherty's decision to take a camera for his third expedition to Hudson Bay (Canada), in order to record and illustrate his research on a group of Eskimos, the Itvimutis. The production distinguishes itself from travel films by presenting its own syntax and narrative line, which did not exist in the first films. Flaherty's film marks the transition from document to documentary (NICHOLS, Bill. 2001) through the addition of cinematographic narrative to the register of reality. Unlike the travel records until then, Nanook told the story of an Eskimo, showed specifics of his daily life, his family, fishing, through scenes assembled in order to create a character and a life narrated around him.

However, it was with the Scottish John Grierson, founder of the English documentary school, that the genre began to be formalized. In the article: "*First Principles of Documentary*", published in 1932, Grierson launched what would become the first principles of classic documentary. He said that:

Fundamental principles (1) We believe that cinema's ability to move, to observe and select from life itself, can be exploited in a new and vital art form. Studio films largely ignore this possibility of opening the screen to the real world. They photograph stories staged on artificial background. The documentary would photograph the living scene and the living history. (2) We believe that the original (or native) actor and the original (or native) scene are the best guides for an interpretation of the modern world on screen.[...] (3) We believe, therefore, that the materials and stories taken from the raw material can be better (more real in the philosophical sense) than the staged article.[...] The documentary can achieve an intimacy with knowledge and effect impossible for the mechanical falsehoods of the studio and the affected interpretation of the metropolitan actor.. (GRIERSON, 1932, in FOWLER, 2002, p. 40)²

1. Filme realizado por Robert Flaherty em 1922.

2. First Principles. (1) We believe that the cinema's capacity for getting around, for observing and selecting from life itself, can be exploited in a new and vital art form. The studio films largely ignore this possibility of opening up the screen on the

Dziga Vertov, another important documentarian of the time, believed in the development of a “cine-writing” of the facts. According to him, life must be captured improvised and the meaning of the documentary constructed through editing. the film: “*O homem com a câmara*”, 1929 film, illustrates the filming style developed by Vertov, also known as “cine-eye”.

Later, technological developments (such as the development of light filming equipment and the emergence of synchronous sound in cinema) contributed to changes in the conception of documentary. Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, the search for a spontaneous record of the real was the strong mark of productions of the genre. The classic documentary began to be questioned by new groups of filmmakers from France and the USA. The result was the emergence of two movements that became known as true cinema, led by the French Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, and direct cinema, whose main representatives are the Americans Robert Drew and Richard Leacock.

Throughout history, there have been several attempts to fit documentary works into specific categories. However, defining documentary was never an easy task, mainly due to the genre’s mobility and versatility. Bill Nichols believes that:

Documentary as a conceptual practice does not occupy fixed territory. It mobilizes a non-finite inventory of techniques, addresses an undetermined number of questions, and adopts a taxonomy of forms, styles, and modes not fully known. The term documentary must itself be constructed in

the way that the world we know and share. The practice of documentary film is the place of contestation and change. (NICHOLS, 1991, p. 12)³

Documentaries closely follow the changes that have taken place in society, not only recording them, but also participating in and being influenced by them. As a result of this proximity to “real life” and its constant transformations, the structure and “way of thinking” of documentary are also constantly changing. This makes an objective, stable or scientific classification of this type of work impossible. However, attempts to define and oppose fiction cinema have raised questions relevant to this and other studies on the genre.

The first of them took place in 1948, when filmmakers gathered at the World Union of Documentary congress to discuss the new way of recording the real. The documentary was qualified at the time as a film that deals with real events and aims to understand problems of an economic, cultural, or human relations nature. The concept, which involves linking to social commitments and giving it a didactic and essentially informative character, is an idea that persists even today among spectators and producers, despite being less widespread than in the past. It was believed that there were specific subjects to be dealt with in documentaries that, at that time, did not have the function of providing aesthetic pleasure to the spectator, but mainly of informing them about specific contextual and historical issues. Furthermore, the genre must differentiate itself from fiction, clearly

real world. They photograph acted stories against artificial backgrounds. Documentary would photograph the living scene and the living story. (2) We believe that the original (or native) actor, and the original (or native) scene, are better guides to a screen interpretation of the modern world. [...] (3) We believe that the materials and the stories thus taken from the raw can be finer (more real in the philosophic sense) than the acted article. [...] Add to this that documentary can achieve an intimacy of knowledge and effect impossible to the shim-sham mechanics of the studio, and the lily-fingered interpretations of the metropolitan actor. – our translation

3. “Documentary as a concept or practice occupies no fixed territory. It mobilizes no finite inventory of techniques, addresses no set number of issues, and adopts no completely known taxonomy of forms, styles, or modes. The term documentary must itself be constructed in much the same manner as the world we know and share. Documentary film practice is the site of contestation and change.” Our translation.

marking its opposition to it.

In an attempt to reconstruct the domain of documentary – often questioned as a language and as an aesthetic object, at the same time that its domain was shaken by the recurrent statement that “every film is organized as a discourse” – Bill Nichols developed a theory that distinguishes between documentary and fiction. The distinction is made according to their differentiated strategies of meaning production, without falling back on the naive distinctions of the period before structuralism and semiology. Nichols, unlike the other “defenders” of documentary, does not deny its narrative and representative properties, nor its character of discourse and artifice. The author states that, although through the same narrative processes, fiction offers access to a “fictional world” and documentary offers access to representations of the “historical world”, the one in which people are born and die. Defending that it is necessary to consider the various difficulties intrinsic to the whole process of generalization about aesthetic objects, Nichols also states that the development of the same properties of the image has different functions and objectives in the two models. In fiction, they contribute to giving verisimilitude to the narrated story; in the documentary, they contribute to confer credibility and power of persuasion to the argument (NICHOLS, 1991).

However, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate what is reality and what is not in one’s own life, perhaps in the documentary. People, even if unconsciously, choose the way they are going to express what they want to be, which in turn cannot be totally separated from what they are (GOFFMAN, 1992). Memory, both collective and individual, mixes lived events with attributed impressions. Language, in turn, analyzes and reconstructs the narrated “facts”.

In cinema, I don’t know how it happened... we seem to know what documentary and fiction mean; In fact, I believe that the two moments are different, and I can see a little in what, but the thing is not so simple: when is the gesture of a worker a fiction, or the gesture of a mother with her child, or of a girlfriend with her boyfriend, at what time? (GODARD, 1989, p. 116)

This concern of filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard is supported by the history of frustrated differentiations between the two genres, added to the complicating factor of representations in life itself. The production of a documentary involves different moments of construction of a reality. Starting with the capture, in which the angles and clippings of what will be recorded by the camera eye are chosen. If there is a character, there is one more complicating factor for this construction, now adding to his representation the relationship with the camera and the technical team

Does reality exist independent of your observation? The mere fact that a person knows that he is being watched in his privacy substantially changes his behavior. The film crew of a documentary disturbs the social environment in such a way that the film does not reflect the state in which that environment was, but a state already disturbed by the crew. (ACIOLI, 1997, p. 167)⁴

In editing, what was captured is recombined in the way that best suits the film, creating a different narrative, external to that of the moment lived and captured. There is still the script, whether made before or after capturing the images, which seeks to lead the film towards a logical understanding of its director.

However, the questioning regarding the documentary film’s ability to represent the real has been visible since its beginnings. According to Andréa França, since Flaherty’s film, *Nanook of the North* and of “*O homem*

4. ACIOLI, José de Lima. O princípio da incerteza e o realismo do documentário cinematográfico. 1997. p. 167.

com a câmara” by Dziga Vertov “that thought and reflection on the field of documentary have not stopped struggling between the notions of truth and lie, authenticity and fiction, reality and *mise-en-scène* (cinema-eye, cinema of the lived, cinema-truth, cinema-direct, etc.)” (FRANCE, 2006).

DIRECT CINEMA AND TRUTH CINEMA

Direct cinema and true cinema, movements already mentioned above, arise precisely from a questioning of the way in which the vast majority of documentaries were organized until then. Taken as classics, the latter were characterized by the investigation of an objective reality, which is presented to the spectator through the narration in off, accompanied by illustrative images. That is, reality is brought in the form of an objective argument that, in turn, is made explicit by the narration and inductively legitimized by the images. In general, they present great internal cohesion (absence of gaps and breaks), a characteristic that brings them closer to an affirmative tendency as it distances them from the possibility that their arguments become topics of discussion. They generally avoid contradictions, hide the character of discourse and employ the particular/general model - corresponding to the exposure of testimonies and actions of characters as pure and superficial data, which are then generalized and adapted by the speaker to the documentary's argument.

The impression of objectivity proposed and induced by classic documentaries is taken to the extreme in films belonging to direct cinema - a movement that brought together a group of young filmmakers and that developed mainly in the 60s in the USA and England. In addition to discursive and conceptual motivations, direct cinema has technological motivations, as it makes use

of resources that emerged at that time, such as: more compact and dynamic cameras and, above all, the possibility of capturing direct sound.

At the same time that it corresponds to the continuation of the search for the real that was initiated by the classic documentary, direct cinema abandons the tendency to control the filmed situations, inherent to the classic documentary. Da-Rin describes the basic structure of direct cinema as follows:

Direct cinema sought to communicate a sense of immediate access to the world, placing the spectator in the position of the ideal observer; he strongly advocated non-intervention; suppressed the script and downplayed the direction; developed working methods that conveyed the impression of invisibility on the part of the technical team; he renounced any form of control over the events that took place in front of the camera; privileged the synchronous sequence shot; adopted a montage that emphasized the duration of observation; avoided commentary, off-line music, signs, role-plays and interviews. (DA-RIN, 1995, p. 100)

The emphasis is on observation, “the life observed by the camera”. The editing, which tends towards real time, seeks extreme objectivism and privileges authenticity and spontaneity. In relation to the classic documentary, the observational mode of representation inaugurates direct speech, to the detriment of signs and offs. From a theoretical perspective, direct cinema moves away from the aesthetic function of cinema, towards the search for a sense of physical presence.

The transparency of the documentary and its ability to present the real without intervening in it were again questioned, even considering all the care proposed by direct cinema. The choice between what to show or not, the organization of what is shown, the duration of this exhibition and

the ordering of the plans among themselves were indicated as strong and inevitable signs of subjectivity in the images. At that moment, true cinema emerged – also in the 1960s and especially in France – which abandoned the search for capturing a pre-existing reality independent of the encounter between documentary filmmaker and character by assuming the subjectivity inherent to any representation. The documentary filmmaker of cinema Verdade, related to the interactive mode of representation, abandons the utopia of a specular reproduction of the real and assumes its mediating role, in some cases, of provocateur. Da-Rin tells the truth about cinema:

[...] emphasized the filmmaker's intervention, rather than seeking to suppress it. The interaction between the team and the social actors, people invited to participate in the film, takes the foreground, in the form of interpellation, interview or testimony. The montage articulates the spatio-temporal continuity of this encounter and the continuity of the points of view at stake. The subjectivity of the filmmaker and the participants in the filming is fully assumed. (DA-RIN, 1995, p. 100 and 101)

True cinema is mainly characterized by the intention to bring out the artifact character of documentary works, showing the manipulation process that took place throughout the development of the documentary. The interviews and testimonies take a prominent place, privileging the interaction between the team and the interviewees. The representatives of cinema veri, including the French Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin, eliminated the gap between one side of the camera and the other – as existed in direct cinema – and proposed circulation and experiential exchanges between the two parts.

Therefore, true cinema maintains truth as an objective, but proposes another way

of accessing it: if in direct cinema the truth pre-exists and it is enough to wait for it to happen, true cinema seeks the emergent and eventual reality, which appears at the moment of meeting between the camera and the interviewee, through a series of strategies and provocations. In *true cinema*, as in *direct cinema*, the argument emerges from the situation captured.

FROM BRASIL TO THE WORLD

In the 1960s in Brazil, the documentary makes use of technological changes, privileging the voice of the “other” as an essential issue for filmmakers (the interview is extremely facilitated with the possibility of direct sound). These films were mostly made by directors linked to new cinema, which was effervescent. However, according to Consuelo Lins and Cláudia Mesquita, authors of “*Filmar o real*”, Brazilian documentaries of this period followed different paths from those experienced by other movements.

Unlike innovative movements in documentary in this period – such as the French Cinema Verdade and North American direct cinema, which abolished the over fleshed, omniscient and omnipresent narration, in favor of a rich and varied sound universe – the Brazilian documentary form became allows contamination by modern procedures of interaction and observation, but does not effectively transform. (LINS and MESQUITA, 2008: 22)

The growing use of interviews as a means of accessing the voice of the “other” did not effectively demonstrate a commitment to the questions posed to the documentary at that time. National films continued to use ready-made concepts. The arguments were elaborated many times even before the interviews were carried out, which emerged as a rhetorical element for the affirmation of an already established position.

It is also in this period that, according

to Arlindo Machado, “many artists tried to break with the aesthetic and marketing schemes of easel painting, seeking more dynamic materials to give shape to their plastic ideas” (MACHADO, 2003: 14). The convergence between an audiovisual universe with more accessible devices – however still stuck to classic premises by its directors – and a community of artists thirsty for new means and materials for their production, culminated in the effervescent emergence of a critical documentary in relation to its own language. This criticism took place through experimentalism, which focused on the genre itself and its ability to represent certain problems and issues related to popular experience.

One of the most important appearances for this contesting movement is Arthur Omar who, in 1972, released his film “Congo”, followed by the critical rehearsal: “*O antidocumentário provisoriamente*”. Omar criticizes the good intentions of documentarists concerned with popular issues, explains the distance between them and the social motivations they expose, and explains the falsity of all imagery representations.

The anti-documentary film would have much more of a function of examining the impossibility of knowing oneself, than trying to provide new knowledge. It is a film that alludes to much more than it proposes. I’m not proposing a new view of the congada, the *Congo*, objectively, it is not the theme of the film, the theme is the tension between erudite knowledge and a popular practice that is placed on another level of reality and that ultimately does not communicate.

I want to question the structure of the documentary as a producer of the satisfaction of knowledge, because in fact you will only have the feeling of knowing when that object is far from being apprehended. I do not deal

with this object. I deal with the way this object is treated by a given discourse. This is the anti-documentary – it’s almost an epistemological film.⁵

A few years later Glauber Rocha offers us: *Di/Galuber* (1977). A documentary narrated in the first person, demonstrating the relationship of affection – even at a distance in many moments – between the director and the object of the film, the painter Di Cavalcanti who had just passed away. Glauber interferes during the painter’s funeral, filming the coffin and the body. His narration is frantic and passionate. It bothers, it shows the widow and the mistress. It produces one of the most beautiful tributes ever made in cinema, paradoxically banned from national screens by the painter’s family.

Congo and Di/Glauber are experimental, reflective, essayistic films; works in which the intervention of filmmakers is central and explicit, made from heterogeneous audiovisual material, and in which what matters are not the “things” themselves, but the relationship that can be established between them. (LINS and MESQUITA, 2008: 24)

Arthur Omar presents another essential work, “*O som ou o tratado de harmonia*” (1984). The film appropriates a radically experimental language, typical of the video of that period. Using noises, interviews and provocative images, Omar seeks an atypical relationship with the spectator around the sound issue. He interferes, gives arguments, decontextualizes images, inserts sound interventions during the speeches, increases the volume of the music, opens a human ear to show how the documentary works.

Audiovisual language is in vogue. From the mid-1970s onwards, the first video production devices, known as portapacks, arrived in

5. ARTHUR OMAR interview with GUIOMAR RAMOS about the anti-documentary in *Congo* (1972) and “*O Ano de 1798*” (1975) - october 1993. <<http://www.museuvirtual.com.br/targets/galleries/targets/mvab/targets/arthuromar/targets/entrevistas/languages/portuguese/html/sobreantidocumentario.html>> Accessed on 09/14/2009.

Brazil. The audiovisual is now experienced not only in cinema, but also in video. Video artists begin to spread across Brazil. The search for new materials finds in electronic language a more accessible and malleable medium than the previous audiovisual equivalent, film. With a highly favorable environment, it was in the 1980s and 1990s that documentaries infiltrated video arts with greater force, or that video arts tore the documentary to pieces with greater intensity. The diversity of productions reveals the diversity of languages.

On the other side of your house (1985), a video documentary by Marcelo Machado, Paulo Morelli and Renato Barbieri (directors linked to the Olhar Eletrônico group) is an important reference in this context. The video seeks the marginalized, excluded “other”, belonging to another class, as criticized by Omar in his anti-documentaries. However, the filmmakers appropriated Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin’s true cinema convictions, making the relationship of distances between documentarians and objects more complex, and leveraging relevant discussions both for documentary and video art, as well as for the social issues it addresses.

Explicit microphone, Morelli, Barbieri and Machado go to the streets willing to give voice to the “characters” found [...], the documentarists of Olhar Eletrônico even pass the microphone to Gilberto, one of their characters, in an evident effort to raise awareness its “object” to the condition of subject of the experience that the video itself proposes. The procedure, in addition to revealing, reflexively, the set of the interview, significantly complicates the representation of the homeless carried out by the video – confronted with different “equals”, Gilberto plays other roles, and everyone leaves the meetings amplified. Assuming and amplifying a certain minority tendency in Brazilian documentary cinema from the 60s, “*Do outro lado de sua casa*”, by incorporating Gilberto’s active participation, it does not assume a previous and untouchable reality,

but records precisely the intervention that the video provokes and proposes among those it portrays. (MESQUITA, 2003: 190)

Video art paves the way for the diversity of production. It is the space of hybridity, of infiltrations. The electronic image is not as transparent as the cinematographic or photographic image. The real in the video is translated by lines, it is placed in the sphere of impulse, of the digitally manipulated. It is the field of graphics, of complex, broken edits. Of texts over images, of texts without images. From decontextualizations, reconstructions, connections. The electronic image “presupposes an art of relationship, of meaning and not simply of looking or illusion” (MACHADO, 2003: 29).

With the new tools, experiences of extreme importance arise both for the universe of art and for the documentary. A work consensually considered to be borderline was prepared: *AC/JC* (1986). Directed by Walter Silveira and Pedro Vieira (from TVDO, another important group of Brazilian videart) the video is a tribute to the silent musician John Cage (JC) and the poet of the blank pages Augusto de Campos (AC). The images, for the most part, do not exist. A white screen, with quick flashes of words, few, and fragments of images. In these fragments of images John Cage, who also appears in the sound fragments. A creative record of the musician’s presence at the Bienal de São Paulo that year, relating his work to that of Augusto de Campos. Documentary? The TVDO video is motivated by a real event, it uses images and sounds captured from the event, in addition to, in its form, in its language, intrinsically relating to the objects of its research: the works of John Cage and Augusto de Campos. So for this text the answer is yes.

In this sense, documentary is also: *Parabolic People* (1991), by Sandra Kogut. New York, Dakar, Tokyo, Moscow... Kogut

has installed video booths in several capitals around the world, opening the possibility for passers-by to enter and leave their message, whatever it may be. In editing, these images were cut, recombined, fragmented, creating unexpected relationships through the combination of windows and the use of graphics. As a result, a series of videos that create diverse connections in multiple contexts.

There are many videos considered as “arts”, or video arts, which are intended with the universe of documentary. This relationship between artistic and documentary production, often ignored by documentarists and theorists themselves, has subsidized and enriched the history of cinema and video, reaching an explosion of hybrid works in Brazil since the video art boom.

There are countless examples of this relationship in Brazilian videography. Caco de Souza and Kiko Goifman produced: “*Tereza*” (1992). A complex immersion in the prison universe, through revealing imagery. Goifman later produced 33 (2004), another experimental documentary that shows the author’s own search for his biological mother. In the same vein, another video by Sandra Kogut, “*Um passaporte húngaro*” (2003). In this work, the director delicately shows her odyssey to obtain a Hungarian passport, as she is related to that country.

Carlos Nader has produced several documentary works related to video art, which circulate in the environments of artistic productions. Among them: *O beijoqueiro* (1992), *Trovoada* (1995), *O fim da viagem* (1996), *Carlos Nader* (1997). Nader’s productions are characterized by a particular, in-depth look – the author even lived with some of his characters, as in “*O beijoqueiro*” and “*O fim da viagem*” – resulting in an experimental work both in the approach and in the editing of his videos.

Another essential director for the investigation between the documentary and the visual arts is Cao Guimarães. “*Acidente*”, conceived in partnership with Pablo Lobato, it is a film triggered by a poem with the name of 20 cities in Minas Gerais, chosen at random. The script is the poem. Documentarians must, therefore, go to those cities and capture everyday fragments that, for some reason, maintained a fluid relationship with their names. Other work by Guimaraes, “*Andarilho*”, strongly marks the infiltration in the field of visual arts in a way that was chosen to open the Bienal de São Paulo in 200. About Cao Guimarães, and especially about these two works, and Esther Hamburger wrote:

The movement towards the documentary comes in search of the artistic elaboration of the accident, the unforeseen, the unusual, that which escapes the rules of narrative genres. This focus on the inexplicable as a productive element that weaves everyday sociability, bumps into major accidents, the raw material par excellence of the visual spectacle. But the movement is precisely in the direction of forging approaches that deviate from conventional formulas. Far from major events or famous characters, what interests me is the digression on details that are generally invisible or entangled in a series of other elements. (HAMBURGER, 2007: 114)

I could not fail to mention: “*Rua de Mão Dupla*”, documentary video installation (later transformed into a single-channel video) that displays pairs of people on different monitors. These pairs switched houses for 24 hours, equipped with a camera. The material is edited in such a way that we see a person observing the “other” filming his house and then commenting on his impressions.

If already in Vertov links between documentary and modernist practices are revealed, if in direct cinema and in cinema veri the classic structure of documentaries is questioned and its perspectives expanded, it

is in Brazilian video that the tension between documentary and visual arts comes to mind. apex for this study, presenting itself with all its complexity and diversity. These works briefly cited here demonstrate the richness and productivity of the effervescent connection between the visual arts and documentary in the Brazilian context.

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