

Cultura Visual: caminhos, direções e emergências sobre os estudos com visualidades no século XXI¹

Lucas Pacheco BRUM²

Maria Cecília Lorea LEITE³

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Resumo

O presente texto encontra-se inserido dentro da vertente pós-estruturalista em educação, a partir do campo de teorização dos Estudos da Cultura Visual. Esse surge por volta dos anos de 1990, no território acadêmico brasileiro, colocando em discussão as práticas de visualizações, as imagens e as maneiras de interações e socializações entre sujeitos e visualidades. Este texto tem como objetivo discutir percursos, caminhos e direções referentes ao surgimento e institucionalização do campo dos Estudos da Cultura Visual no território brasileiro, no decorrer dos últimos vinte anos. Nesse sentido, no desenvolvimento desse trabalho, traçamos alguns apontamentos sobre o surgimento do campo dos Estudos da Cultura Visual, abordando como esse campo de estudos e de investigações se institucionalizou no discurso acadêmico brasileiro. Na sequência, realizamos algumas observações sobre a produção e reprodução das imagens no século XXI, buscando salientar alguns caminhos futuros e emergentes sobre os objetos visuais atuantes na cultura contemporânea que precisam e necessitam ser pensados, estudados, analisados, investigados e colocados nas discussões das agendas acadêmicas.

Palavras-chave: Cultura Visual. Objetos visuais. Caminhos futuros.

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² Doutorando em Educação pela Universidade Federal de Pelotas (UFPel). Integrante do Laboratório Imagens da Justiça da (UFPel). Suas pesquisas envolvem cultura visual, educação da cultura visual, currículo e pedagogias culturais. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7655-8463>. E-mail: lukaspachecobrum@yahoo.com

³ Doutora pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Docente do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal de Pelotas (PPGE/UFPel). Coordenadora do Laboratório Imagens da Justiça da (UFPel). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9197-2299>. E-mail: mcleite@gmail.com

Visual Culture: paths, directions and emergencies on studies with visualities in the 21st century

Lucas Pacheco BRUM

Maria Cecilia Lorea LEITE

Abstract

The present text is inserted within the post-structuralist strand in education, from the field of theorization of Visual Culture Studies. This emerges around the 1990s, in the Brazilian academic territory, putting into question the practices of visualizations, images and the ways of interactions and socializations between subjects and visualities. This text aims to discuss paths, paths and directions referring to the emergence and institutionalization of the field of Visual Culture Studies in Brazilian territory, over the last twenty years. In this sense, in the development of this work, we traced some notes on the emergence of the field of Visual Culture Studies, approaching how this field of study and investigation was institutionalized in the Brazilian academic discourse. Following, we make some observations on the production and reproduction of images in the 21st century, seeking to highlight some future and emerging paths on the visual objects active in contemporary culture that need and need to be thought, studied, analyzed, investigated and placed in the discussions of agendas. academic.

Keywords: Visual Culture. Visual objects. Future paths.

Cultura Visual: caminos, rumbos y emergencias en los estudios con visualidades en el siglo XXI

Lucas Pacheco BRUM

Maria Cecilia Lorea LEITE

Resumen

El presente texto se inserta dentro de la vertiente postestructuralista en educación, desde el campo de la teorización de los Estudios de Cultura Visual. Esto surge alrededor de la década de 1990, en el territorio académico brasileño, cuestionando las prácticas de visualizaciones, imágenes y las formas de interacción y socialización entre sujetos y visualidades. Este texto tiene como objetivo discutir caminos, caminos y direcciones referentes al surgimiento e institucionalización del campo de Estudios de la Cultura Visual en el territorio brasileño, en los últimos veinte años. En ese sentido, en el desarrollo de este trabajo, rastreamos algunos apuntes sobre el surgimiento del campo de los Estudios de la Cultura Visual, abordando cómo ese campo de estudio e investigación fue institucionalizado en el discurso académico brasileño. A continuación, hacemos algunas observaciones sobre la producción y reproducción de imágenes en el siglo XXI, buscando señalar algunos caminos futuros y emergentes sobre los objetos visuales activos en la cultura contemporánea que necesitan y necesitan ser pensados, estudiados, analizados, investigados y puestos en las discusiones de agendas académicas.

Palabras clave: Cultura Visual. Objetos visuales. Caminos futuros.

Introduction

... road signs, advertisements, store fronts, clothing prints, comic books, cartoons, magazines, newspapers, television programs, Netflix series, cinemas, billboards, posters, photographs, street graffiti, tagging, video games, electronic images and those from mobile phone apps, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, websites, among others...

These are images that operate within culture, with which we interact daily and that are part of our lives. Images that we consume, that tell us who we are, that govern our gestures, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, and that shape our identities, subjectivities, and sensitivities. They are images that proliferate across different sources/visual media⁴ conveying "images of information, art, science, fiction, advertising, and popular culture, emphasizing the role and importance of visualities and visual media in our daily lives and in the dissemination of ideas in both public and private spheres" (TOURINHO; MARTINS, 2011, p. 53).

Since the beginning of human civilization, images have been a part of human life. However, at no time or in no part of the universe have so many images been produced and consumed as today. In immeasurable numbers, they now coexist with, govern, and mediate our social, cultural, educational, economic, and political relationships. Our bodies, identities, bank passwords, what we buy, sell, communicate, spend, read, and the places we visit are incessantly tracked and monitored through electronic/digital images, which manifest as numeric images, graphic images, and map-location images.

The ways we relate to each other and establish our social, cultural, and even emotional connections are now under the influence of images. All our actions and behaviors are guided and governed by the regime of images. We are captured, watched, recorded, and mediated by those who observe us and those who start to observe us, more than we observe them. Images that we often do not see, but that "sharply interfere in the realization of the locations and practices of today's society" (FILHO, 2011, p. 198), forming an intrinsic and inseparable part of our world and people's lives.

As Guy Debord (1997) noted half a century ago, societies lived, and continue to live, like ours today. For instance, more than ever, in the "society of the spectacle" or in a society mediated by images, which in contemporary times take on an affective predominance in

⁴ We refer to visual sources/media as the places where images originate, create, and distribute meanings. For example, advertising is a visual source/medium, as are television, cinema, Instagram, among others.

constructing realities forged through two-dimensional screens, such as computers, notebooks, laptops, tablets, cell phones, television, cinema, and others.

In light of this, it is fruitful to consider that images are effectively present in human existence, affecting various layers of societies and impacting ways of being and living in culture through their visual discourses. These discourses circulate information, meanings, values, beliefs, ideas, worldviews, ideologies, and Fake News⁵, guiding and directing people in shaping their ideas and forming "opinions about problems and situations, and, above all, building some kind of interaction and understanding of the world they live in" (TOURINHO; MARTINS, 2012, p. 11). Thus, the authors understand that individuals' personal knowledge, as well as their interests and identities, are influenced by visual elements that, once incorporated into their ways of life, become part of their subjectivities and sensibilities.

However, the images and visualities⁶ that permeate our daily lives and experiences fall within the framework of Visual Culture Studies (CUNHA, 2008; 2005; DIAS, 2012; 2011; 2008; DUNCUM, 2011; HERNÁNDEZ, 2011; 2007; 2000; MITCHELL, 2002; MARTINS, 2009; 2004; TOURINHO, MARTINS, 2015; 2014; 2013; 2012; 2011; 2010; 2009; TAVIN, 2008; TOURINHO, 2011), which addresses the various practices and interpretations of the world that challenge social relationships and navigate between positions of subjectivity and the act of seeing and being seen.

This field of theorization focuses on everyday experiences and visualities, the cultural dimension of social experiences, and, according to Mitchell (2002), includes everything we see, display, and exhibit, as well as what we hide and refuse to see. In this way, according to the author, Visual Culture is not only a field for studying images but also the entire visual experience. He argues that we experience the visual through culture and symbolic constructions. Duncum (2011, p. 21) highlights that this area of study

[...] is quite inclusive, as it incorporates fine arts along with the extensive range of vernacular and media images, contemporary electronic imagery, and the entire history of imagery produced and used by human cultures (DUNCUM, 2011, p. 21).

⁵ The term *Fake News* comes from the English words *fake* (false) and *news*. In Portuguese, the term means *notícias falsas* (false news), which refers to false information that spreads among the population as if it were true. Currently, it is mainly associated with digital social networks.

⁶ Due to the limitations of this text, we emphasize that our goal is not to clarify the concepts of images and visualities, which are often both valuable and confusing within this theoretical field. A more in-depth discussion and clarification regarding the use of these concepts can be found in (MARTINS, 2018; MIRZOEFF, 2016; WALKER, CHAPLIN, 2002; SÉRVIO, 2014).

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According to Hernández (2011, p. 33), "visual culture is also a transdisciplinary field, meaning it considers other visual representations that carry and mediate meanings and discursive oppositions, which contribute to thinking about the world and to understanding ourselves as subjects." In light of these initial observations, this text is positioned within post-structuralist studies in education, drawing from the theoretical field of Visual Culture Studies. Our objective is to discuss the pathways, developments, and directions regarding the emergence and institutionalization of the field of Visual Culture Studies in Brazil over the past twenty years.

In this sense, the first part of this writing aims to outline some observations on the emergence of the field of Visual Culture Studies in Brazil, noting how this area of study and investigation, which has visualities as its overarching premise, has become institutionalized in Brazilian academic discourse. Thus, we present the main visual objects⁷ that have been analyzed and investigated, based on the theories of Visual Culture, with or without intersections with other fields of theory.

Our objective, therefore, is not to present in detail the visual objects analyzed, investigated, or studied but to show which visual objects have been studied over the past twenty years; that is, the images, visualities, and visual artifacts that have gained prominence in academic discussions. In the second part of this text, we provide some observations on the production and reproduction of images in the twenty-first century, particularly regarding the increasing proliferation and creation of images over the last two decades. We aim to highlight some future and emerging pathways - or clues - about the visual objects active in contemporary culture that need to be considered, reflected upon, studied, analyzed, investigated, and incorporated into academic agenda discussions.

The Emergence of Visual Culture in Brazil

The field of Visual Culture Studies emerged in the late 1980s at the University of Rochester in the United States, within the Cultural and Visual Studies Program, which organized doctoral programs in areas related to culture and society across disciplines such as Education, Geography, Anthropology, and Sociology. This initiative was rooted in a cultural perspective derived from British Cultural Studies. The work developed at the University of

⁷ For clarification purposes, we highlight that in this text, the term "visual objects" refers to the objects of study being investigated, such as television images, magazines, cinema, advertising, among others.

Rochester was instrumental in the institutionalization of this field of study, contributing to seminars ⁸, that later resulted in the first significant publications⁹ that fueled the debate surrounding Visual Culture Studies.

Visual Culture emerges from the intersection and hybridization of these academic disciplines, conceptual fields, and methodologies aimed at understanding culture as a practice of visualization and meaning-making. According to Martins (2004), Visual Culture is an "emerging corpus of knowledge, resulting from an academic effort stemming from Cultural Studies; visual culture is considered a new field due to its focus on the visual as a priority of everyday experience" (MARTINS, 2004, p. 160). In a similar vein, Dias (2012) points out that Visual Culture

[...] is associated with studies of culture and society and various knowledge disciplines that use the term to include in a common concept all visual realities and visualities, regardless of their nature, that affect individuals in their daily lives. (DIAS, 2012, p. 60).

From this perspective, the Studies of Visual Culture emerge from a debate marked by theoretical and methodological issues, as well as visual realities that traverse different academic disciplines in a relationship between the knowledge of Art History and media studies, "cinematographic studies, linguistics, and comparative literature with post-structuralist theories and cultural studies" (HERNÁNDEZ, 2007, p. 21). These areas of study converge into a dispersed and transitional movement between the Arts and the Humanities.

In the literature found regarding this field of study, there are indications that some preliminary experiences concerning everyday visual experiences had already been conducted in the United States in the mid-1960s (DIAS, 2008; TAVIN, 2008). Similarly, in Brazil, we find accounts of experiences conducted during the same period (BARBOSA, 2010). It is during this time that the first publications and academic discussions emerged, facilitated by the Art History professor William John Thomas Mitchell at the University of Chicago in the United States. With the advent of the 21st century, there is a more substantial literature on art education and Visual Culture at the international level, particularly in the United States and Canada (DIAS, 2011), including contributions from Fernando Hernández at the University of

⁸ Knauss (2006) highlights two important seminars on Visual Culture: the first was held in 1987 at Hobart and William Smith College, and the second in 1989 at the University of Rochester itself. According to him, these seminars "resulted from a large integrated national research project that involved various researchers aiming to discuss the study of art history through theoretical debates conducted in other fields of reflection" (KNAUSS, 2006, p. 103).

⁹ According to Knauss (2006), the two seminars led to the publication of two books on Visual Culture Studies, edited and coordinated by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Kietik Moxe.

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Barcelona; Nicholas Mirzoeff at the State University of New York; Kerry Freedman at the University of Illinois; and Paul Duncum at the University of Tasmania¹⁰.

However, in Brazil, the term "Visual Culture" began to circulate and be used in academic production starting in the 1990s, referring to the emergence of various social media that became part of people's lives, shaping and constructing their ideas, imaginations, and thoughts, while teaching new configurations about art. According to Sardelich, Garcia, and Alves (2016), one of the first publications in Brazil was the journal *Cultura Visual*, published semiannually by the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Bahia-PPGAV/UFB¹¹, "the first issue of which was published in 1997" (SARDELICH; GARCIA; ALVES, 2016, p. 160).

This journal has been dedicated for over a decade to publishing articles, reviews, and interviews, fostering the production of knowledge in the field of Visual Arts and Design, in both theoretical and practical realms across the national landscape, encompassing studies in Art, Artistic Poetics, Design, and the History, Theory, and Criticism of Art. It is worth noting that, since July 2013, the journal has been suspended indefinitely for new submissions, having also edited and published its last issue in that mentioned year.

In 1998, we find in the *USP Journal*¹², of the University of São Paulo (USP) a translation of an article titled "Cultural Studies, Visual Culture" (CRIMP, 1998) by the American researcher Douglas Crimp, a professor of Art History at the University of Rochester in the United States. It is in this text that the term "Visual Culture" likely first appears in Brazilian academic production. Despite the few pages that make up the text, Crimp does not provide a consistent argument regarding this term and what this "culture" that is "visual" entails. The author also does not present a plausible distinction between Cultural Studies and Visual Culture or the intersection between these two fields of theory. He argues that Cultural Studies cannot be defined by any one definition, nor can they be anything at all.

In this perspective, he points out that Visual Culture can be understood as "the object of study in visual studies, as a narrower area of cultural studies" (CRIMP, 1998, p. 80). However, it is important to consider that, although the way the author presents and uses the term Visual Culture in his text makes sense to us readers, there are many misconceptions and theoretical

¹⁰ Currently, he is a Professor of Art Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

¹¹ Available for information at: < <https://periodicos.ufba.br/index.php/rcvisual> >. Accessed on 06 March 2021.

¹² Available for information at: < <https://www.revistas.usp.br/revusp/article/view/28422> >. Accessed 06 March 2021.

confusions among various Brazilian and foreign authors and researchers when it comes to defining and conceptualizing what Visual Culture Studies and Visual Studies entail. Undoubtedly, this is a sandy and thorny terrain filled with many controversies, as "being an emerging field under construction, with many divergences among its scholars regarding its definition and its own object of study, Visual Culture lacks a specific vocabulary (SARDELICH; GARCIA; ALVES, 2016, p. 162).

In this sense, soon after, in 2000, the book "Visual Culture, educational change and work project" (HERNÁNDEZ, 2000), by the Spanish professor Fernando Hernández, of the University of Barcelona, is published. The first version of this book was published in Spanish in 1997 under the title "Educación y cultura visual". For our context, the work was revised with the aim of approaching the Brazilian educational reality, establishing some connections with the "Triangular Approach"¹³ (BARBOSA, 2005; 1998; BARBOSA, CUNHA, 2010), with the National Curriculum Parameters - PCNs (BRAZIL, 1998) of Art and the Brazilian bibliography, which at that time were permeating the educational and curricular discussions. In this work, some questions were also introduced in a different way, which until then had not been contemplated in the first version of the publication.

This book was a landmark in the field of Visual Culture Studies in Brazil, as until then there was no consistent literature providing theoretical support for pedagogical practices in the visualities of everyday life, valuing the representations of children, adolescents, and young people in the pedagogical scene. It also provided arguments to support the inclusion of media images, advertising, fashion, and others in the Visual Arts curricula of schools. At that time, the teaching of Art and its respective curricula were still grounded in teaching concepts inherited from modernism and a curricular canon that legitimized traditional practices, images from Art History, movements, artistic vanguards, and officialized knowledge.

¹³ The "Triangular Approach" (BARBOSA; 2005; 1998; BARBOSA, CUNHA, 2010) is a methodological proposal designed for art education, formulated by Brazilian art educator Ana Mae Barbosa. This approach is supported by three pillars: contextualization, artistic creation, and interpreting a work of art. The "contextualization" pillar refers to the contextual aspects of artistic production, including the historical and cultural manifestations in the time and space in which they were created. The "artistic creation" pillar emphasizes practical work, meaning the process of creation. It does not consist of mere copying but rather stems from the imagination and interpretation of what is contextualized and read. Lastly, the "reading" aspect involves interpreting and appreciating images of art, or even non-art images. This entails producing narratives and critiques based on what is being observed, taking into account the context in which it is situated and the visual repertoire of the students

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Cunha (2008; 2005), Barbosa (2008), and Dias (2011) emphasize that in the year 2000, the term "Visual Culture" began to emerge in the Brazilian educational context, stemming from Hernández's (2000) book. Barbosa (2008) also highlights that the emergence of the term in the country is attributed to a course taught by Kerry Freedman on Art/Education, organized by the Serviço Social do Comércio - SESC in São Paulo, at Vila Mariana, in April 1998. One of the texts discussed in the course¹⁴ is published in the book edited by Barbosa (2008).

Cunha (2008), as one of the main precursors of this field of research in Brazil, argues that since the first edition of Hernández's (2000) publication "Cultura Visual: mudança educativa e projeto de trabalho," the academic community has been engaging with the term "Visual Culture" within the educational context. At that time, it was considered an incipient and "young field of study, with rare publications in Brazil" (CUNHA, 2008, p. 108), especially since discussions about Visual Culture had already been taking place abroad, along with several publications. It is in this early part of the century, following the publication of Hernández's book (2000), that a discourse on Visual Culture begins to institutionalize in the country, driven by movements led by various authors, research groups, and postgraduate programs.

After Hernández's (2000) publication, academic production in Brazilian territory begins to branch out with published works by Barbosa (2008), Barbosa and Cunha (2010), Cunha (2008; 2005), Dias (2008), Hernández (2007), Martins (2004, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009), Martins and Tourinho (2010), Oliveira (2007), and Oliveira and Hernández (2005). In our view, the publication of articles, book chapters, texts presented at seminars, events, congresses, and books by some of these authors and researchers has sparked interesting theoretical and practical reflections, contributing to the formation of an epistemological and methodological discourse on Visual Culture in Brazil, as well as outlining the routes and contours of this field of study and investigation.

However, much of the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological grounding used in these academic publications by these authors is derived from historical influences from Spain, especially following the release of Hernández's (2000) book published in that country. The contributions of the Spanish author, therefore, served as one of the bases for introducing the epistemological and philosophical discourses that led to the institutionalization of Visual

¹⁴ Freedman, K. (2008). Currículo dentro e fora da escola: representações da Arte na cultura visual. In A. M. Barbosa (Org.), *Arte/educação contemporânea: consonâncias internacionais* (pp. [insert page range]). São Paulo: Cortez, p. 126 - 142.

Culture Studies in Brazil. This, in turn, amplified and strengthened discussions around the institutionalization of the field in the country towards the end of the first decade, as previously mentioned.

It is also important to emphasize that the first doctoral thesis defended in the country on Visual Culture was in 2005, titled "Educação e Cultura Visual: uma trama entre imagens e infância," defended by researcher and professor Susana Rangel Vieira da Cunha (CUNHA, 2005) in the Graduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul - PPGEDU/UFRGS. The author discusses and examines the images in Early Childhood Education Schools, using the environments of classrooms as a reference, "as a text that goes beyond its decorative function, exercising a pedagogy of visibility, understood as the ways children see and understand the world" (CUNHA, 2005, p. 05). She seeks to understand how children are being educated by these scenarios both inside and outside schools through images, and how the settings that constitute Early Childhood Education institutions contribute to the ways of being for children and teachers.

According to Cunha (2005), these scenarios are composed of media images, such as images of characters from animated cartoons, television shows, and films from the Turma da Mônica, Disney, among others, which are often used in school settings without a pedagogical proposal or without being problematized in a way that allows children to reflect critically on these images. These "pedagogies of visibility," however, operate alongside other forms of teaching, obscuring "what they teach in the (in)visible: the production of meanings, values, inclusions and exclusions, inequalities, and power relations" (CUNHA, 2005, p. 75).

The research conducted by Cunha (2005) has significantly contributed as a theoretical scope to support investigations by other Brazilian researchers, particularly those exploring and investigating images and artistic artifacts aimed at children, as well as the relationships between visualities and childhoods in formal and informal spaces. Thus, we can say that, in addition to being the first thesis defended in Brazil, it also inaugurates discussions on childhood and Visual Culture.

Also, during the same period of these academic productions, the National Meeting of Researchers in Plastic Arts (ANPAP)¹⁵, took place in 2005, in its 14th edition, which dedicated a session to the theme "Visual Culture and the Challenges of Research in Art." This meeting

¹⁵ Available for information at: < <http://www.anpap.org.br/encontros/anaais/> >. Accessed on 06 March 2021.
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allowed researchers to delve deeper into the subject across its various segments in Art, such as Visual Arts Education, Art History, Theory and Criticism, Artistic Poetics, Curatorship and Heritage, Conservation and Restoration, and also contributed to publications related to the theme.

By the end of the first decade of the current century and the beginning of the second, the academic production on Visual Culture became more solid, primarily with the publication of the Visual Culture Education Collection by the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), organized by researcher Raimundo Martins and researcher Irene Tourinho from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). Between 2009 and 2015, a book was published each year. The books cover various themes within the multiple ways of studying, researching, teaching, analyzing, and exploring Visual Culture.

These publications gather texts, essays, accounts of artistic/pedagogical experiences, and completed and ongoing investigations from various Brazilian and foreign researchers engaged with different conceptual and methodological approaches to Visual Culture. This collection is committed to sharing the research projects prompted and developed in formal and informal spaces, and their diverse possibilities for articulating visualities and education, as well as visualities and the teaching of Arts. As Martins and Tourinho (2015, p. 10) describe in the preface of the latest book, Visual Culture encompasses “lived and imagined spaces that allow us to dialogue, provoke, and stimulate ways of learning/thinking/teaching visual culture”.

The consolidation of Visual Culture in the country is also due to the contributions of the Graduate Program in Art and Visual Culture at the Faculty of Visual Arts of the Federal University of Goiás (PPGACV/FAV/UFG), established in 2003¹⁶. It was a pioneering program in the institutionalization of the field of Visual Culture Studies. In the same year, along with the program, the first edition of the journal *Visualidades* was developed and circulated, which is linked to the Graduate Program in Art and Visual Culture at the Faculty of Visual Arts of the Federal University of Goiás (PPGACV/FAV/UFG). The journal, nationally recognized in the field of Art, focuses its publications on the areas of culture, art, visualities, and education.

¹⁶ It is important to highlight that in 2003, with the implementation of the Master's level, the program was called the Graduate Program in Visual Culture. Its structure then consisted of two areas of concentration: 1) Visual processes and systems and 2) Education and visuality. Later, in 2010, with the approval and opening of the doctorate program, which was implemented starting in 2011, there was a comprehensive reformulation of the regulations. It then became known as the Graduate Program in Art and Visual Culture (PPGACV). Today, its area of concentration, Art, Culture, and Visualities, is structured into three lines of research: a) image, culture, and meaning production; b) visual poetics and creative processes; and c) cultures of the image and mediation processes. For more information, visit: <https://culturavisual.fav.ufg.br/p/36408-historico>. Accessed on March 5, 2021.

In addition to the PPGACV/FAV at UFG, other graduate research programs in the country have focused their research interests at the Master's and Doctorate levels in the field of Visual Culture, or have concentrated some of their research lines related to the field of visual studies. They have also produced knowledge in the area, such as: the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the University of Brasília - PPAV/UnB¹⁷, with a concentration area in "Art, Image, and Culture"; the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Bahia-UFBA¹⁸, with a concentration area in "History, Theory, and Processes"; the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro- UFRJ¹⁹, with a research line in "Image and Culture"; and the Graduate Program in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), with a concentration area in "Contemporary Art," among others.

Sardelich, Garcia, and Alves (2016), in a bibliographic research conducted at the CAPES Thesis Bank and in the proceedings of ANPAP, over a temporal cut between the years 2005 and 2015, point out that academic production significantly grew in Brazil over these ten years, particularly in graduate programs in the fields of Arts, Communication, Literature, Education, and History. They indicate that most of these productions in the knowledge area of Arts and Education are being carried out in the Central-West, Southeast, and South regions, meaning these are the regions where most of the graduate programs in Arts and Education that develop or focus research at the Master's and Doctorate levels in Visual Culture are located.

In this sense, Visual Culture in Brazil will institutionalize from these various academic discourses, with many efforts from researchers, teachers, research groups, graduate programs, events, seminars, and academic meetings on this theme. The efforts of these scholars and academic institutions have been fundamental in discussing images, visualities, visual phenomena, and cultural artifacts of the daily lives of children, adolescents, and young people who were outside the educational processes of art teaching and school curricula. They were also important for bringing to the pedagogical scene the processes of interaction, socialization, and mediation through the visual, as well as the ways of seeing and being seen.

However, in the last twenty years, there has been more consolidated literature on issues of Visual Culture, visual culture education, and art education. When we look back at studies in

¹⁷ Available for information at: < <http://www.ppgav.unb.br/> >. Accessed 10 March 2021.

¹⁸ Available for information at: < <http://www.ppgav.eba.ufba.br/> >. Accessed on 30 April 2021.

¹⁹ Available for information at: < <http://www.ppgav.eba.ufba.br/> >. Accessed on 30 April 2021.

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this field over the past twenty years, we find a plurality of visual objects that have been central to discussions and investigations. Among them, the representations of students, images of school environments, advertising images, film images, cartoons, drawings, comic strips, photographs, graffiti, animated drawings or characters, illustrations, fashion images, electronic games, performances, and images of contemporary art stand out. Most of these visual objects have been articulated with the fields of gender studies, Cultural Studies, ethnic studies, youth culture, childhoods, identities, curricula, teacher training, cultural pedagogies, school knowledge, artistic education, and education, among others.

In light of these visual objects, which have sparked distinct discussions in the field of Visual Culture Studies with the help of other concepts and fields of theorization, we can affirm that they have been fundamental for consolidating the theoretical contributions of Visual Culture, thereby providing new theoretical and conceptual tools to examine, study, and investigate the visual that is being presented in culture. With these contributions occurring throughout this period, we believe that this field of study has been directed toward visual objects, that is, toward the visualities and cultural artifacts related to digital social media, forged realities, and media and electronic visualities that are actively operating within culture. What appears to be emerging in current academic discussions is a new way of understanding and exploring Visual Culture and its pedagogies. This represents a new visual paradigm that is omnipresent, mobile, ubiquitous, and persuasive.

(Re)production of images in contemporaneity: paths and directions on studies with and about visualities

We are surrounded by thousands of images in all social spheres, to the extent that we interact and coexist with them naturally, often without reflecting, classifying, interpreting, questioning, or critically assessing their discourses, persuasions, simulacra, stimuli, and teachings that operate in culture and consequently affect us. With the advent of new visual sources/media, these images have rapidly multiplied, especially since the beginning of the first decade of this century. Today, we coexist not only with traditional visual sources/media such as newspapers, magazines, cinema, and television, but also with more sophisticated visual sources/media that involve and engage subjects to a high degree, integrating technologies and digital systems, such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, digital accounts, and mobile phone applications, among others.

With the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the market-driven internet industry, the production of new visual sources/media is enhanced, which consequently also creates new images, putting them into operation in contemporary societies. Thus, it can be stated that digital technologies enable the creation of new images.

However, that is not all; digital technologies, with their high-performance computers, programs, and software, do not account for the revolution of images we are witnessing. It is not the digital technologies themselves that have facilitated the catastrophic production of images, but rather the need that individuals have to (re)produce, possess, and consume according to the course of humanity that surrounds them. Above all, it is about seeing, being seen, and interacting and socializing with and about images.

Duncum (2011) argues that technology provides us with "the means" for the proliferation of images but not "the explanations." According to him, while new technologies result from such growth, they are also "motivated by the combination of economic demand and human needs based on new social arrangements" (DUNCUM, 2011, p. 17). In other words, we can say that the economy frantically demands new ways to consume ephemeral products and services, as well as interact with them, which in turn requires new images.

In this sense, images in the current century emerge, multiply, and are generated according to the needs of globalization, capitalist societies, and the segmentation of the cultural and media industry, which determine new consumption habits, desires, lifestyles, and values, ultimately leading to the fabrication of emerging images and visual objects. Consequently, this produces new ways of circulation, reception, interaction, and socialization with images. The author also emphasizes that "technology has provided an unprecedented proliferation of images that has completely revolutionized, seemingly in the blink of an eye, our visual landscape" (DUNCUM, 2011, p. 17). Thus, all our actions in our daily lives are mediated and commanded by images, as the author states, "at no point in human history has it been possible to communicate instantly with other parts of the world through the support of high-resolution images" (DUNCUM, 2011, p. 17).

Today, for example, we encounter moving and electronic images created by electrical circuits that surround our lives. Simultaneously and omnipresently, they are sent through digital means, requiring no materiality or physical support to be transmitted or displayed. These images, known as digital, have predominantly changed the ways images are received and produced among human beings. While a few decades ago, access to and reproduction of images

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was only possible in printed form, today they are in the palm of everyone's hands, thanks to the creation of photographic records. In this sense, digital technology

has significantly contributed not only to expanding the production of images but, more importantly, to transporting them in real-time through cell phone cameras, digital cameras, and computers, creating links and making them public on the internet and sites like YouTube (MARTINS, 2009, p. 34).

In light of the perspectives presented so far, it is possible to assert that the non-(re)production of images has become impossible, both due to technology and the actions of individuals. The effects and production of images become indispensable and inseparable from contemporary life, as they are implicated in modes of communication, the mechanisms of social organizations, daily leisure, and the ways we learn and relate to "what we see and how we are seen" (HERNÁNDEZ, 2011, p. 32).

Author Irene Tourinho (2011, p. 09) supports this discussion, inferring that "each day, we consume almost 18,000 images just by navigating our daily, routine paths dictated by our obligations and commitments." I would amplify the number of images stated by the author to an equivalent of three times the images we consume and operate daily. If, a decade ago, Tourinho already claimed that we consumed a significant number of images in our daily routines, today, a decade after the author's statement, there is no doubt that this number has increased substantially. This increase is due to the excessive use of cell phones, smartphones, iPods, tablets, and computers, which come equipped with state-of-the-art cameras—front and back, lenses, filters, image editors, and other resources—as well as the use of social networks and other digital media that drive the (re)production of images.

In this sense, it is essential to consider that the quantity of images produced today is also related to image reproduction technologies and the speed at which they reach us. Whereas before it was possible to take a static photograph with analog cameras and have to wait for a period to develop it, or still have access through printed media, now, in the culture of reproducibility through copies and reproduction it is possible in our daily practices to send, receive, and share moving images or still images of high resolution, accompanied by sounds, music, and effects from anywhere in the world instantaneously, in a few seconds. An example of this is live broadcasts, commonly known as "lives," which allow two individuals or collectives to communicate or hold video conferences in real-time from anywhere on the planet via digital tools.

Technology has not only caused the (re)production of images but has also facilitated and given people access to become producers and reproducers of their own images. For instance, photographs can now be taken using cell phones, which are literally at our fingertips. In an era marked by consumption and visual mediation, we have become receivers, creators, and manipulators of our own images. Moreover, within this mechanism of technological advancements, as well as economic influences, multicultural impacts, and the constant changes in communication methods, work, and exhibition, the symbolic systems of representations and (re)productions of images are significantly and profoundly affected and altered. These systems are crucial in determining how we look and are looked at, which in turn creates new modes of framing and visualizing.

Filho (2011, p. 192) points out that “the improvement of technologies accompanies the increasing sophistication of symbolic systems, which have always had their uses expanded from mere functional or utilitarian communication to the endless process of elaborating, instituting, and ordering realities.” If, in the past, images served the purpose of communication and representation of reality throughout human civilizations, depicting and narrating a historical sequence of facts and events within established categories, with the advancements of new technologies, they now create other visual sources/mechanisms, which are nothing more than producers of images. These visual sources/mechanisms reconfigure and circulate other visual imaginaries, forged appearances, and illusory realities that substantially transform the directions of our gaze, the visible, and what we believe to be reality/truth.

In light of these new processes of production, reproduction, and circulation of images in contemporary culture, the field of theorization in Visual Culture Studies expands and broadens to think about, study, analyze, and investigate other images, visualities, appearances, and social practices operating in daily life. In this sense, we consider that, with the consumption and (re)production of new visual representations, this field, in the current decade, begins to change or emphasize different visual objects within its umbrella of analyses and investigations that have not yet been included in academic discussions.

Thus, from our perspective, Visual Culture begins to focus and pay greater attention to visual objects, that is, to other ways of socialization, interaction, and mediation with images. We highlight some current visual objects that Visual Culture encompasses within its framework of representations that need to be studied, analyzed, and investigated, such as: selfies; the abusive use of self-representation; Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp stories; YouTube

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channels with thousands of followers; emojis as a form of communication and social interaction on digital networks; GIFs; memes; the influences and impacts of YouTubers and digital influencers on the lives and governance of individuals and collectives; the pedagogical processes caused by Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, Skype, Snapchat, websites, and other social interaction and mediation devices/applications; as well as the ways of being and being seen within these digital social networks; visual appearances that are forged, camouflaged, false, and produced with layers of filters circulating in culture; the relationships and power/knowledge disputes among visual monopolies fighting for representation and visibility; Fake News that operate as visual truths in certain social strata; visualities as social and cultural practices; symbolic systems of representation; practices of visual voyeurism; the socializations and senses of belonging established with images; the ways individuals are seen and see themselves in relation to images; and many other surrounding visual objects in our culture.

Conclusions

There are many formats, materialities, and artifacts in which images are present in contemporary culture. However, these are part of the theoretical field of Visual Culture Studies, which need to be analyzed, thought about, and researched within or in intersection with this field of study. Seeking new understandings and insights through analyses and investigations about the world and the visual formats that shape our perspectives, attract our attention, and operate in our daily lives are ways to comprehend our sensitive relationships with images, with visualization practices, and how we are constructed and subjected by the visual universe that surrounds us.

In this text, which does not conclude here, we aim to outline some observations, pathways, directions, and trajectories regarding the emergence of the field of Visual Culture Studies in Brazil, noting how this field of studies and investigations has navigated over the last twenty years in the national territory, leading us to what we now refer to as Visual Culture Studies.

Furthermore, we highlight the main visual objects that have been studied and researched during this period, as well as provide glimpses, traces, indications, and recommendations for new and powerful visual objects that, in our view, exert significant influence in contemporary culture, which may thus become subjects of analysis and investigation within the theoretical

framework of Visual Culture. Therefore, we extend our invitation to those who research and study Visual Culture, as Hernández (2007) refers to "visual culture gatherers," to take flight, cast looks, harbor doubts, ask questions, and interrogate the practices of visualization and the visual materialities active in the 21st century.

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