Architecture between plan, trick and feint: spatial hacking strategies based on "Insertions in ideological circuits" by Cildo Meireles

Arquitetura entre plano, truque e finta: estratégias de hackeamento espacial a partir da obra "Inserções em circuitos ideológicos" de Cildo Meireles

Arquitectura entre plan, truco y finta: estrategias de hacking espacial a partir del trabajo de Cildo Meireles "Inserciones en circuitos ideológicos"

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Abstract

In this article, we argue that a rational reconciliation by the 'plan' is just one mode of architectural action, i.e., there are at least two other modes that may be considered when designing: both the covert 'trick', which disassociates the statement from the operation, and the 'feint', which openly declares its opposition, but that sways marginally as a way of deflecting it and winning it over. Furthermore, we also argue that although we are mostly trained to design through plans, contemporary urban contexts and challenges have required us to know how to take action through tricks and feints – especially in the political conditions of the Global South. The intention of this article therefore, is to assist in the theoretical construction of these two other ways of designing. In order to do so, it reviews the theoretical proposal by Keller Easterling on 'spatial hacking' and proposes that the work by Cildo Meireles called "Insertions into Ideological Circuits" may be considered an important political/aesthetic reference for architectural trickery and feints, since it offers lessons for a theoretical construction on the difference between the two.
Key-Words: Architectural project, Hacker, Political strategy

Resumo

Nesse artigo, argumentamos que uma conciliação racional pelo 'plano' é apenas um modo de atuação arquitetônica, isto é, há ao menos outros dois modos que podem ser considerados ao projetar: tanto o 'truque' dissimulado que dissocia declaração de operação; quanto a 'finta' que abertamente declara sua oposição, mas que ginga marginalmente como forma de desvia-la e vence-la. Além disso, defendemos que embora sejamos treinados majoritariamente para projetar por planos, os contextos e desafios urbanos contemporâneos têm nos exigido saber atuar por truques e fintas – especialmente nas condições políticas do Sul Global. Esse artigo pretende, portanto, auxiliar na construção teórica dessas duas outras maneiras de projetar. Para isso, revisa a proposta teórica de Keller Easterling sobre 'hackeamento espacial' e propõe que a obra de Cildo Meireles "Inserções em circuitos ideológicos" pode ser considerada como importante referência político/estética para o truque e a finta arquitetônicos, pois oferece lições para uma construção teórica sobre a diferença entre ambas.
Palavras-Chave: Projeto de arquitetura, Hacker, Estratégia Política

Resumen

En este artículo, argumentamos que un conciliación racional por parte del 'plan' es solo un modo de acción arquitectónica, es decir, hay al menos otros dos modos que se pueden considerar al diseñar: el 'truco' encubierto que desvincula la declaración de operación; en cuanto a la 'finta' que declara abiertamente su oposición, pero que se balancea marginalmente como una forma de desviarla y ganarla. Además, argumentamos que aunque en su mayoría estamos capacitados para diseñar según los planes, los contextos y desafíos urbanos contemporáneos nos han requerido saber cómo actuar mediante trucos y fintas, especialmente en las condiciones políticas del Sur Global. Este artículo pretende, por lo tanto, ayudar en la construcción teórica de estas otras dos formas de diseñar. Para ello, revisa la propuesta teórica de Keller Easterling sobre el 'hackeo espacial' y propone que la obra de Cildo Meireles "Inserciones en circuitos ideológicos" puede ser considerada un referente político/estético importante para el engaño y la finta arquitectónica, ya que ofrece lecciones para una teoría construcción sobre la diferencia entre los dos.
Palabras clave: Diseño Arquitectónico, Hacker, Estrategia Política

1.   Design as a plan, trick and feint

In 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin (1987 (1935)) proposed, as a metaphor to problematize the difference between the cinematographer and the painter, two archetypes for the cure of an invalid: that of the magician and the surgeon. Benjamin describes:

> The stance of the magician healing an invalid by laying-on of hands (...) [and who] maintains the natural distance between himself and the patient; to be precise, he reduces it only slightly (by virtue of a laying-on of hands) while increasing it (by virtue of his authority) hugely. The surgeon does the opposite: he reduces the distance to the patient a great deal (by actually going inside him) and increases it only a little (through the care with which his hand moves among the latter's organs.)
> In short, unlike the magician (...) the surgeon abstains at the crucial moment from facing his invalid person to person, invading him surgically instead. (BENJAMIN, 1987, p. 187, italics added (1935))[1]

In other words, while magic implies the clarity of confrontation added to a belief in the clairvoyance and authority of the magician, the operation consists of simultaneously inserting the hands into the patient's body and not having to face him directly: there is no face-to-face and the surgeon operates in silence. In the text, Benjamin associates the magician with painting and the surgeon with cinema. The painting acts magically in an open manner with the spectator (it manifests itself and induces an optical reception of reality); while the cinema acts in a hidden manner (it disappears through the sequence of images and distortions of the recording and editing devices, which enable a tactile reception through vision). Benjamin situates architecture between these two poles. The architectural space acts as a magician, by establishing optical (visual) representations and, simultaneously, as a surgeon by organizing the tactile habits of its users.

In the text, Benjamin deals primarily with the action of the work on the spectators. In other words, although it discusses the process of artistic production – the title even synthesizes the problem of serial and mechanized reproduction of works – these archetypes (magician and surgeon) are more concerned with the result of the production process than with the stance of the producers. Indeed, if we consider Benjamin's text, it may be stated that, in relation to the creation process, there is an inversion: the painter's archetypal posture is close to the surgeon (a tactile operation between author and work, which we could even say is 'invisible' while in the production process); and the director's archetypal posture is close to the magician (a coordination and optical montage that follows a clear, efficient work plan, as well as the authority of the director's voice). Expressed in another manner, no one 'touches' the film while it is being produced (it will only become tactile at its reception), only the director 'sees' it; at the same time that the painter does not 'see' the painting while producing it (it will only become visible at its reception), he/she only 'touches' it. It should be noted, however, that, as Buck-Morss (1991, p. 249) argued, this inversion is not problematic for Benjamin: his work seeks precisely the "dialectical image" that emerges between "magic and positivism".

It may be said that the *production* of architecture is again situated between these two archetypes: architects are simultaneously magicians and surgeons. This is because architectural production not only implies planning (magical, optical, open) and the construction site (surgeon, tactile, hidden), but also because designing often implies a stated (magical) and rational (surgeon) confrontation between plan and reality: the *plan* openly explains how the architecture will solve the problems of this reality. In other words, the architectural design normally intends to rationally reconcile magic and operation,

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[1] For direct citations the English version was used of BENJAMIN, W. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.* Penguin Great Ideas. English Edition. eBook Kindle Version. Translated by J. A. Underwood. (2008, p.25).

detailing openly its 'face-to-face' surgery.

In this article, we argue that this 'rational reconciliation' by the 'plan' is just one mode of architectural action, i.e., there are at least two other modes that may be considered when designing: both the covert 'trick', which dissociates the statement from the operation; and the 'feint', which openly declares its opposition, but that sways marginally as a way of deflecting it and winning it over. Furthermore, we also argue that although we are mostly trained to design through plans, contemporary urban contexts and challenges have required us to know how to take action through tricks and feints – especially in the political conditions of the Global South. Thus, the intention of this article is to assist in the theoretical construction of these two other ways of designing. In order to do so, it reviews the theoretical proposal by Keller Easterling on 'spatial hacking' and proposes that the work by Cildo Meireles called "Insertions into Ideological Circuits" may be considered an important political/aesthetic reference for architectural trickery and feints, since it offers lessons for a theoretical construction on the difference between the two.

2.   The trick of hacking in architecture

In a series of recent publications, the architect Keller Easterling (2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021) has advocated a fundamental design strategy for the field of architecture and urbanism: 'spatial hacking'. Easterling argues that, faced with the challenges of contemporary urbanization, most authors propose a total transformation and sublimation (2017, p. 265). However, for her, this absolute confrontation tends to reinforce the global "big bullies" and "superbugs" (authoritarian governments, large multinational companies, urbanizations by global financial capitalism) that take advantage of the openness and ingenuousness of urban idealisms and, by "playing dirty" maintain their logic and functioning (2014, p. 213, 2017, p. 265, 2021, p. 135). Thus, instead of solving the fundamental problems, direct, stated confrontation tends to aggravate the most urgent challenges of contemporary urbanization (precarious urbanization, large-scale loss of human rights, spatial authoritarianism, etc.) (2014, p. 212). Easterling argues that this is because what incurs the greatest impact is not the content of the opposition, but the action of opposing (2021, p. 36). Furthermore, for her, fighting through an opposition only provides the fundamental fuel of these "big bullies" and "superbugs": violence (2021, p. 7).

On the other hand, Easterling proposes *to operate in a covert manner* and argues that the space activist "need not face off against every weed in the field but rather, unannounced, alter the chemistry of the soil" (2014, p. 214), nor wait for favorable political climates (2021, p. 81). Easterling calls this practice *spatial hacking*: a strategy that involves getting to know the system and bugging it to produce effects that are different to the original. She argues that *opposing* and *hacking* are complementary practices (2019, p. 243), but that the second implies that "an unorthodox auxiliary entertains techniques that are less heroic, less automatically oppositional, more effective, and sneakier" (2014, p. 213). *Opposing* proposes that the political project should focus on the counterpoint that separates it from reality as it is given. *Hacking* proposes that the political project should focus on transforming the same elements of the given reality, covertly mixing revolution and maintenance.

In her main work, "Extrastatecraft: The power of infrastructure space" (2014) – rehearsed in the article "We will be making active form" (2012), summarized in the chapter "Split screen" (2017) and continued in "Medium design: knowing how to work on the world" (2021) – Easterling developed her thesis in a more complete, in-depth manner, proposing that the space of infrastructures offers important lessons for the practice of hacking. For her, infrastructures have been converted into the main language of

urban transformation on a global scale, in the place of legislation or diplomacy (2012, p. 59, 2017, p. 267): they have finally become the main umbrella for all "extra-state" action[2] (2014, p. 15).

Easterling argues that infrastructures have both "stated intentions" and "formal dispositions"; and often "the most consequential political outcomes of infrastructure space remain undeclared in the dominant stories that portray them" (2014, p. 71). For her, infrastructures are made of "dispositions", which "uncover forms of power (…) hiding in the folds of infrastructure space" (2014, p. 71–73): "disposition remains as a latent potential or tendency that is present even in the absence of an event" (2014, p. 83). She argues that the dispositions of infrastructures – what they do, rather than what they say they do – appear more clearly if we consider the way in which they act in space, their "active forms" rather than their "object forms". Active forms do not need to be in the movement of action, since the mere presence induces this "temperament", this disposition (2012, p. 61, 2014, p. 72, 2021, p. 27). She proposes four fundamental ways of action – "multiplier", "switch", "topology" and "interplay". "Multiplier" refers to the serial condition of certain infrastructures (cars, formulas for gated communities, shopping malls or retail outlets, etc.), in which changing a 'code' of serial reproduction has an impact on an immense 'population' of spaces and practices. "Switch" refers to the function of the 'gate' or 'bridge' of some infrastructures (transport stations, electricity or water treatment substations, bridges, etc.), i.e., its possibility to 'turn off' or 'turn on' parts of a system, defining schedules, rhythms, flows, etc. "Topology" refers to the network condition of certain infrastructures (roads, railways and other lines of transport, energy cabling, water or sewage pipes, etc.), in which a whole topological hierarchy implies more or less accessibilities, more or less flows. Lastly, "interplay" refers to the condition of a merely regulatory code of certain infrastructures (computer programs, legal systems, automation systems, etc.), capable of defining spatial rules from non-spatial programming. These active forms become "both the markers of a disposition and the means to tune or alter it" (2014, p. 214). An example she uses is the repeated (multiplied) formula of the free zone, as an infrastructure for accelerating the production of global financial capitalism. Easterling proposes that a "space activist", instead of opposing one zone or another because of its myriad of restrictions on labor, environmental and legal rights, could take advantage of the immense multiplying power of the zones to produce great global effects that reverse these restrictions on rights. For this, it is necessary to know how to redesign its logic of repetition, its multiplier parameters. Another example she presents is the ability of transit stations to work as "switches", which implies their capacity to articulate entire regional economies and cultures over time (2021, p. 77–81). Easterling thereby concludes that "hacking (...) is to engage the political power of disposition in infrastructure space" (2014, p. 214).

While Easterling's argument for this strategic shift is compelling, potentially implying a renewed consideration of the political power of architectural space[3], it is still unclear how this attitude alters conventional design practices. What are the fundamental action steps of a "space hacker"? In addition, despite recognizing that there is no generic formula that crosses the entire world, but rather a way of acting (EASTERLING, 2021, p. 59), it is not evident how hacking is suited to different contexts. In specific terms, how may we understand this covert strategy within the Brazilian context? What references of the Brazilian urban condition transform this way of acting? In this article, we propose that the work by Cildo Meireles called "Insertions into Ideological Circuits" may contribute to confronting these issues, since it may not only be considered an important political/aesthetic reference for the

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[2] Easterling (2014, p. 15, 2017, p. 267) explains that by "extrastatecraft" she means all governance action outside, in addition to, in partnership with and competing with the State.
[3] With regard to this potential, see for example the argument posed by Oyarzun (2015, p. 60).

hacking strategy, but also offers important pathways for the practice of spatial and architectural hacking in the Brazilian urban context.

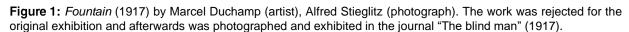## 3. Insertion and the ready-made collective

The work by Cildo Meireles called "Insertions into Ideological Circuits", was created for the collective exhibition entitled "Information" at MoMA (New York), in 1970. It consisted of two projects – "The Banknote Project" and the "Coca-Cola Project" – in which, respectively, Cildo engraved texts on bank notes and on returnable glass Coca-Cola bottles. The engraved messages produced counter-information in relation to their support: on the banknotes, which represent the abstraction of wealth defined by the state and symbolize the power of money, Cildo wrote messages of a revolutionary political nature, such as "Who killed Herzog?"[4], during the military dictatorship. Likewise, on Coca-Cola bottles, which symbolically mark an 'Americanized', capitalist consumer culture, he wrote messages such as "Yankees go home" as well as instructions for transforming the bottle into a Molotov cocktail.

Through these "Insertions", Cildo provoked a fresh reading of the work by Marcel Duchamp called "Fountain", which was rejected for an exhibition in New York, 53 years earlier (Figure 1). The porcelain urinal, a 'ready-made' sculpture, i.e., an "everyday object raised to the dignity of a work of art by the act of the artist's choice"[5] (DUCHAMP, 1938) as described by Duchamp himself, would promote "a form to deny the possibility of defining art" (SEITZ, 1961, p. 46). In the manifesto-text that accompanied "Insertions into Ideological Circuits", Cildo makes reference to Duchamp, arguing that instead of simply taking ready-mades to art spaces, it is essential to "get your hands dirty" in the "dirty" processes outside the museum and artistically intervene in the reality of everyday life (MEIRELES, 2006 [1970]). Thus, Cildo concluded that instead of producing an aesthetic intervention (with the ready-mades), we produce a political action with the "Insertions".

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[4] Herzog was a member of the Brazilian Communist Party and was active in the civil resistance movement against the Brazilian military government. In October 1975, Herzog, then editor in chief of TV Cultura, was tortured to death by the political police of the military dictatorship, which later staged his suicide. It took 37 years before his death certificate was revised to say that he had in fact died as a result of torture.
[5] This and all non-English citations hereafter have been translated by the author.

Figure 1: *Fountain* (1917) by Marcel Duchamp (artist), Alfred Stieglitz (photograph). The work was rejected for the original exhibition and afterwards was photographed and exhibited in the journal "The blind man" (1917).

Source: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Indeed, the contextual position of the work is a fundamental difference between the insertions and the ready-mades. In ready-mades, although the object remains with its original 'aura', the context is changed (from everyday life to the museum)[6]. Ready-mades are, in this sense, like a 'collage' (assemblage), in which the real object, rather than its representation, is fundamental to the work's "extreme actualism", acting poetically in a process in which "physical materials and their auras are

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[6] In fact, for Cohen (COHEN apud DANTO, 1981, p. 93), this is the fundamental action of the work: the work is less about the urinal in itself and more about the gesture of placing it in the museum.

transmuted into a new amalgam that both transcends and includes its parts" (SEITZ, 1961, p. 83). There is a symbolic, poetic transfiguration (DANTO, 1981) between the original meaning of the object ("merely a real thing") and its new aesthetic meaning ("art"). In fact, as Buck-Morss (1991) argues when reviewing Bürger (1984), in the avant-garde art of the early twentieth century, what is at stake is simultaneously the subjective manipulation (poetic and political narrative) of the *meaning* of these objects, as well as the juxtaposition of objects "magically endowed as "meaning" on their own" (BUCK-MORSS, 1991, p. 227). Without delving too deeply, it is interesting to emphasize the political dimension of this artistic manipulation of altering the context. Leonidio (2020, p. 375) argues that this practice of naming something as art is similar to what Austin (1962) calls a "performative utterance", in which, unlike a "constative utterance" (i.e., one that merely observes the world as it is), the action of pronouncing serves as an instrument for the consummation of an intention (of the person who pronounces it). Thus, supported by De Duve's (1996) argument that Duchamp's work "Fountain" replaces the characteristic expression of a Kantian aesthetic regime "this is beautiful" with the expression "this is art", Leonidio emphasizes not only that the first is constative and the second is performative, but also that:

> (...) if in Kant the experience of the beautiful presupposes the existence of a collectivity founded on an aesthetic sensus communis – a community that is instituted in and through the transcendental and incommunicable experience of the beautiful – in Duchamp the artistic phenomenon takes place in a context defined by – circumstantial, unstable – relationships of power. (2020, p. 376)

On the other hand, in Insertions, the original meaning (and its status as 'merely a real thing') of the object is fundamentally maintained: the work depends on a poetic non-transcendence of the original meaning of the objects. In other words, a change in the meaning and original function of the objects in the insertions 'kills' the work itself: the bottle must continue to function for the distribution of soda and the banknote to act as money. Thus, it is important to emphasize that, by 'performing' certain objects in art, keeping them as a part of everyday life, Cildo distributes the faculty of 'performance' to the spectators (now co-artists) of the work: his instructions open up the means for anyone to perform in everyday life.

This political intention of Cildo becomes even clearer when we place "Insertions into Ideological Circuits" within a context of work that also proposed direct actions in the encountered reality. In her book "Arte-Veículo" [Vehicle-Art] (2015), Maia presents an overview of this practice[7] in the Brazilian artistic context from 1968 to the beginning of the 1970s. Artists such as Cildo Meireles, Antônio Manuel, Paulo Bruscky, among others, challenged the boundaries between art and activism, criticism and entertainment, ordinary object and work of art, performance and political action. In particular, the difficulty of critical artistic actions during the military regime in Brazil, mainly after the validation of Institutional Act Nº 5[8], motivated practices in order to deviate from censorship. According to Maia, artists found in the media an alternative survival space for creative experiments such as "Inserções em

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[7] An action that can be considered as the first to use the modus operandi of a collective channel to infiltrate everyday life was carried out in 1938, on the eve of Halloween in the United States, in which Orson Welles aired a radio version of "War of the Worlds" through a transmission by the influential CBS network (Columbia Broadcasting System). In the action, the artist interrupts the radio station's musical programming to report on an alleged alien invasion. Radio was the main means of communication at the time, a conduit for entertainment and journalism for the population on a daily basis. It was common to interrupt its usual schedule for extraordinary and urgent reports. The journalistic tone used by Welles in the dramatization was within these narrative standards and resulted in a huge collective commotion across the United States.

[8] The most infamous of all the Institutional Acts issued during the military dictatorship in 1968. It resulted in the forfeiture of mandates, interventions ordered by the President in municipalities and states and also in the suspension of any constitutional guarantees which eventually resulted in the institutionalization of torture. It gave the president authority to order the National Congress and the State Legislative Assemblies into forced recess.

Jornais" [Insertions in Newspapers] (1970) by Cildo Meireles, the series "Clandestinas" [Clandestines] (1973), "0 to 24 hours" by Antônio Manuel and "Amnesty" (1979) by the collective 3Nós3. These experiences had the common objective of reaching a wide, unlimited, diverse audience, a different aspect to the art exhibition environments of the time. However, due to the repression, constant negotiation was necessary with the press corporations and with their official alliances in order to find loopholes and make it possible to print newspapers with the alterations made by the artists. Thus, the capacity for invisibility was soon questioned by Cildo and his desire to find a terrain completely free from censorship led him to commodities and paper money. Although the general public had been reached and the art environment questioned, Cildo considered it urgent to use "mechanisms that exist within society and that are censorship-proof" (MEIRELES apud MAIA, 2015, p. 138). Hence – and as we will develop further on – the "Insertions in Ideological Circuits: the Coca-Cola Project and the Banknote Project" (as well as "Insertions into Anthropological Circuits") opened up a new channel not only to daily life, but one that was open to being edited and manipulated by the general public.

This real daily life ('outside the museum') in Cildo does not, however, constitute a public sphere. As Wisnik (2017) argues, Cildo acted marginally, clandestinely, within the existing consumption circuit. He thus escapes both "the trap of seeking to establish a public sphere in Brazil through art" (2017, p. 108), and the vacant or 'refused' space of the favela (as in the work of Helio Oiticica). Wisnik adds that:

> (...) avoiding any wretched or supposedly edifying solution, the work intelligently shifts the notion of public to the idea of circuit and of a circulating medium, in which value production becomes a paradoxical value. (2017, p. 108)

In other words, for Cildo, this 'outside the museum' cannot be idealized a priori: it must be the *encountered* circuit, with all the 'dirt' that constitutes its reality. In summary, "Insertions" provokes us to accept the modus operandi of this 'encountered collective'[9], intervening in a parasitic way from within its rules, as a 'hacker' *avant la lettre*. For this practice of profane insertion, three steps are therefore essential: first, a pragmatic acceptance of the encountered collective system; second, a mere description capable of revealing the encountered rules of the system; and third, to intervene with actions that simultaneously maintain the rules and transform the collective system.
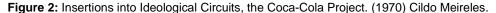
4. Learning with the object

Before acting on each object, Cildo must learn about how they function and about their rules of circulation. The "Coca-Cola project" (Figure 2) is somewhat didactic in this sense: understanding both the circulation of the bottle and the support material (glass) became fundamental aspects. The Coca-Cola bottle is sold full and, due to the dark liquid inside, it enabled a contrast in order to be able to read the white elements engraved onto the transparent glass. Once empty, reading the white elements becomes very difficult, almost impossible. These empty – and illegible – bottles are returned to the factory, which then washes and refills them. Any new information in white added to the empty bottle will hardly be noticed in the industrialized soda recirculation process. A new message will only be noticed by whoever touches the same bottle again, a new user who does not have the function of 'censoring' the content (as we might expect if the factory notices the message[10]). Thus, a possible message against

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[9] Federico Morais (2017, p. 168–170) elaborated that, in general, Cildo's art begins with the observation of everyday life and society, in search of unwritten rules that hide behind appearances, in order to produce a "creative work [that] expresses this simultaneously physical, material and intellectual experience of the world" (2017, p. 170).
[10] It should be stated that Coca-Cola factories were forced to stop on two occasions, because of Cildo's bottles.

the current system is disseminated by the system itself[11].

Figure 2: Insertions into Ideological Circuits, the Coca-Cola Project. (1970) Cildo Meireles.

Source: MoMA, New York. Available at: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/293092. Viewed on 31/05/2022

In order to learn from the object, it is necessary to denaturalize the gaze, which easily becomes used to naming the world with previously known names[12]. 'Giving new names' is a fundamentally surrealist practice and studied by Benjamin within the production of dialectical images (BUCK-MORSS, 1991). Often, when there is no possible name for what you see, neologisms appear in the 'non-___' format (e.g. 'non-place', 'non-city', etc.). This 'negativist neologism' becomes even more critical in urban conditions such as those in Brazil, which are often made up almost exclusively of 'non-urbanities', i.e., urbanities that escape predefined concepts of city, architecture, etc. Only denying what has been encountered is not enough to understand cultures that escape the hegemonic status quo, emerging from the margins of the great global centers. It is necessary to shift the point of view to produce a positive relationship with the object.

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[11] Thus, Guy Brett (2017) underlines the particular potency of the "Banknote Project", since it asked a direct question that was "as uncomfortable for the regime as it was threatening to a frightened population" (Herkenhoff apud. BRETT, 2017, p. 177).). Brett concludes that the notes asking about the murder and torture of journalist Vladimir Herzog "circulated very quickly, since people could neither keep the money nor destroy it" (2017, p. 177).

[12] As Ronaldo Brito essays, Cildo's work invites us to "twist words, make them fluid beings, malleable in meaning and figuration (...)" (2017, p. 162).

A series of strategies enables this denaturalization of the gaze in the field of architecture and urbanism. Although, for us, it is not possible, as Duchamp did with the urinal, to rotate the city and position it lying in a gallery so that it is seen fantastically as a "Buddha" or "like the legs of the ladies by Cezanne" (NORTON, 1917), we can reposition our gaze and collect the elements of the city in order to 'fantastically' assign them a new narrative.

In her book, "O interior da história" [The interior of history] (2013 [1990]), Marina Waisman proposed a radical shift from the colonial viewpoint to enable architectural production in Latin America to be placed within a context that allows it to be understood. This is because, when analyzing peripheral realities from the hegemonic scale of values (mainly European and North American), everything becomes a 'non-center', as in the 'negativist neologisms'. Thus, Latin America is always seen as a stunted, backward and poorly made version of the central (north) origin. Waisman argues for a critical review of central and dominant values and proposes the definition of others – marginal and popular – that enable the construction of a purely Latin American reading of architecture in Latin America.

For example, delving into Argentine architecture, Waisman refuses the traditional periodization guided by European stylistic criteria and reveals the fundamental importance of social, political and economic conditions in the architectural production of its context (WAISMAN, 2013, p. 60–62). Thus, the buildings are no longer identified by stylistic types, but as a direct response to local requirements, which enables an integral organization of Argentine architectural historiography.

This process, which Waisman calls "decentering", brings visibility to the intrinsic centrality of each culture in relation to itself (2013, p. 96). For this, a typology study is presented as an *instrument* by the author, thereby serving as an important analytical tool for understanding the local circumstance, in its most diverse aspects. The analyzed object must be recognized both through the way it functions and its relationships throughout history in order to inform the possibilities of transformation. From this instrumental typological reading, a structural renewal for Argentine historiography would then be possible. The reading of reality is possible from a typical rationality, especially when it is sensitive and unique to its own history, acting as an affirmation and construction of a cultural world upon its own model.

This attitude resembles what Enrique Walker (2018) calls records of the ordinary: ways of learning from experiences that are still 'unrelated'. In a series of interviews with Rem Koolhaas, Denise Scott Brown and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto, Walker argues for the power of collecting and reflecting on the city's artifacts considered as being banal and quotidian. He suggests that this approach often unmasks apparently 'ordinary' architectural and urban elements as 'extraordinary', i.e., that there are sensitively invisible lessons operated by these objects with great everyday efficiency in society. For example, this action implies recognizing and capturing the visual power of the Las Vegas' strip (VENTURI; SCOTT BROWN; IZENOUR, 1977), the congestion culture of New York's skyscrapers (KOOLHAAS, 1994), the additive and customized logic of Japanese tiny architectures (TSUKAMOTO, 2002), the functionalist pragmatism of the banal buildings of Tokyo (KAIJIMA; KURODA; TSUKAMOTO, 2006), or even the metropolitan performances of architectures from Rio de Janeiro (LASSANCE; VARELLA; CAPILLÉ, 2012) and the design operations of landscape architectures in Brasilia (LASSANCE et al., 2021), citing works that have sought a similar attitude in Brazilian contexts.

For Walker (2018, p. 25), these works are not like a 'research study', which would imply a vision without the arbitrary judgment of reality and the formulation of a 'scientifically accepted' theory. These investigations are closer to a literary practice in which the construction of an arbitrary 'judgment', i.e., of a system of values, is only postponed to a second moment. This 'deferred judgment' transforms these

works into 'retroactive manifestos', i.e., manifestos that are preceded by evidence and not the other way around (WALKER et al., 2018, p. 94). Thus, the fundamental of this literary practice is the construction of a narrative that enables lessons to be revealed from the collection of found objects – even if these objects later turn into other realities (WALKER et al., 2018, p. 23). These narratives allow the emergence of new architectural typologies, organized from the internal logics of the reality encountered. For example, although 'elevators' or 'escalators' are non-traditional categories of architecture, they become fundamental elements of reading space in the work of Koolhaas. Unlike a reading that would deny these elements (imagine a term such as 'non-ladder', which defines everything that escapes a nomenclature of types of vertical circulation), the positive collection of these elements allows us to understand their typical limits and potentials – and apply them to architectural projects.

In summary, it may be stated that the "Insertions" begin with a process of 'decentering' – in which the collective reality as encountered is not only pragmatically 'accepted', but mainly sustained as an engaged form of marginal action (from the margins) – and continue in the 'instrumental typology' that allows lessons and typical emerging potentials to be collected, which may, in turn, be positively used in the design.

Therefore, it is important to consider one of Waisman's (2013, p. 92–97) fundamental criticisms: recognizing the 'location and decentered history' of these architectures – and their emerging lessons – does not, then, necessarily imply a regionalist preservation through "resistance". On the contrary, for Waisman, a "divergence" through design is fundamental, i.e., "to develop, from that which it is, that which it may become", essentially "(...) from the margins, everything is – or should be – project" (2013, p. 98). In other words, the reading of the typical rationality of space enables a subsequent typological (or generative) rationality in design[13]. Thus, new questions emerge: How may architecture based on these parameters be designed? What lessons emerge? Even more pertinent to the Brazilian context, it should also be questioned: how many lessons remain invisible due to the glaucoma of architectural and urban typologies imported from outside our context?

5. Maximum maintenance and maximum transformation

A third fundamental lesson from Cildo's work refers to the fact, as briefly mentioned above, that 'Insertions' cannot change the internal rules and languages of this encountered context. The system needs to continue working so that the action against it is able to circulate. Moreover, the 'insertions' seek a tendency toward the maximum maintenance of all the typical characteristics of this encountered reality, while seeking a maximum transformation of the political meaning of this reality. This third lesson unfolds in two: the indeterminate collectivization and the author's political position.

The 'Insertions' originate in the individual and private sphere (Cildo in his atelier, for example) and afterward move towards an enormously enlarged spatiality (the bottle circulation circuit). These objects thus acquire the potential to be seen by a collective of people. Above all, in a multiplier dynamic, in which the operation of inserting messages may be performed by anyone, at any time without being censored by the regulatory body, this potential acquires a profoundly revolutionary and unpredictable dimension. Indeed, Cildo opens a new channel of direct communication between people (a new 'medium' between them), available as a free, collateral resource of the consumption circuit in force. Cildo even argued on numerous occasions that this power is an intrinsic part of "Insertions" and some of his other work, categorized by the author as *phenomena* (MORAIS; MEIRELES, 2009, p. 221;

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[13] We refer here to the differentiation proposed by Sam Jacoby (2015) on typical rationality and typological rationality, which we delve into further on.

OBRIST; MEIRELES, 2018, p. 411)[14]. Thus, as Morais (2017, p. 174) explains:

> The insertions radicalize the concept of public participation in the work of art, one of the central issues of Rio de Janeiro's neo-concretism. Now, in Lygia Clark's Bichos [Animals] or Bólides by [Hélio] Oiticica, the participation was based on a work created by the artist, the spectator in the condition of co-creator. With Insertions, Cildo surrenders his authorship, providing precise instructions on how to make the decal on Coca-Cola bottles, the stamp on paper money, the artisanal manufacture of coins[15] for use in public telephones. It is the anti-copyright.

We are able therefore to imagine a 'bottle-protest' of messages written by an entire population – immensely visible and anonymous by the method-means of insertions. At the same time, we should not romanticize this potential and believe that all messages would agree with Cildo: there is both the uncertainty of participation, as well as that of the position of each anonymous author. It is possible that there are reactions contrary to Cildo's position: reactionary actions that also take advantage of the bottle to express themselves[16].

This uncertainty, however, does not reduce the political force of Cildo's action[17]. Quite the contrary in fact: as Easterling argues (2021, p. 39, 136–137), a disposition is "more sturdy and reliable precisely because (...) it is latent, unfolding, indeterminate and environmental" (2021, p. 39). For Easterling, this flexibility allows for a sequence of actions that may come into play over time: a slower strategy, but possibly more sustainable precisely because it infiltrates the logics it intends to transform (EASTERLING, 2021, p. 136).

However, while the idea of maximum maintenance of the current rules is clear in Easterling's hacking proposal, her proposals for transformation (political, economic, cultural, environmental, etc.) diverge on one important point in relation to the work "Insertions" by Cildo. The 'hacks' that Easterling suggests usually involve maintaining the uncertainty of the project's outcome (a common point between Easterling and Cildo), as well as *concealing* the hacker-designer's political position (a point on which they diverge). Thus, it is interesting to highlight the review that Easterling (2021, p. 25–40) makes on her own use of the term 'disposition', recognizing that it is associated with the ideas of '*dispositif*' or 'apparatus' (based on in the work of Foucault (1975)) and 'affordance' (based on the work of Gibson (2015 [1979])) and differs from the idea of 'predisposition' (as in the work of Bourdieu (1972)): while the two first imply latent indeterminacies and ambiguities, the third implies a predictable tendency of an action not yet performed (EASTERLING, 2021, p. 34). Easterling argues (2021, p. 137), thus, that the space activist never presents his/her political position, since this may create more obstacles, instead of provoking real changes.

Cildo differs from this point (OBRIST; MEIRELES, 2018, p. 414)[18]. Although the "Insertions" wager on

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[14] When interviewed by Frederico Morais (2009), Cildo Meireles declared "I prefer to imagine that some of my works may be performed by anyone, anytime, anywhere". For Cildo, the 'encountered collective' is a common ground of action. From understanding the object, he finds a way of insertion/manipulation that may be performed by others. There is an invitation to participate that reinforces the capacity for transformation.

[15] A reference to the work called "Insertions into Anthropological Circuits: Token" from 1971, in which Cildo teaches how to manufacture public telephone plugs with clay and a mold.

[16] Frederico Morais (2017, p. 171) elaborates on this, in "Insertions into Ideological Circuits", Cildo acts like a "guerrilla artist", where his art produces "ambushes" both for and by the spectators.

[17] Although Cildo refuses to label his work as "political art" (MORAIS, 2017, p. 172), several readings of his work have valued its political potential (e.g. ANJOS, 2017; OBRIST; MEIRELES, 2018; ROLNIK, 2017; WISNIK, 2017).

[18] In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, Cildo commented that "(...) this work (Insertions) has a lot of meaning for me. It naturally expresses a definite political position. HUO: Political infiltration? CM: Yes, and I still think that's the way to go into action, like in Insertions. It is a good method, which consists of finding a flaw in an existing system and using it to propagate counter-information" (2018, p. 414).

an uncertain disposition over time (especially when collectivized)[19], his position as an author is stated and deeply politicized. Cildo determines his own action, politicizing and provoking a reaction from the other. There is not only an opening up of the *means* (media, '*medium*' and '*millieu*') to be edited collectively: there is a bottle with instructions on how to become a bomb.

It may be said, then, that the "Insertions" are closer to the idea of "divergence" that Waisman upholds. In other words, they promote, once accepted in a pragmatic and engaged manner, that as well as being understood through their typical potentials and limits of transformation, the elements of the encountered reality form the fundamental language of action. Cildo's work demonstrates that speaking the language of the current system – an 'managementese'[20] – is not sufficient, it is necessary to know how to position and act in the face of the system, even if marginally.

For the field of architecture and urban design, this understanding of the 'encountered collective' as a context for a 'project of divergence', i.e., one that concurrently maintains and transforms it, renders Waisman's argument (2013, p. 102–105) even more pertinent with regard to the practical value of architectural typology. For her, typology has both an ontological dimension (type as a principle of architecture) and an epistemological dimension of reading architecture (a rationality about what is typical); and an instrumental dimension of architectural design (a rationality to *transform* what is typical)[21]. This instrumental dimension of typology enables a deeply critical and politicized action[22], since it is necessary not only to understand the encountered reality (typical) of the context, but also to assume a position that defends *a* possible (and not 'any', 'concealed' or 'undetermined') future for that reality. In other words, this synthesis from maintaining what the encountered reality currently is (with all its typical "dirt") and its transformation to a desired future produces a "visible dialectical form"[23] with profound political power. Without delving too deeply into this subject, it should be noted that the manner of typological intervention must vary from context to context, as Waisman (2013, p. 107) argues, for example, when criticizing a direct application of Aldo Rossi's work in the Latin American context.

6. Spatial activism through architectural tricks and feints

Easterling argues that "having the right answer isn't enough in a world with global warming naysayers and Donald Trump to contend with" since "reasonable innovations can easily be outmaneuvered by unreasonable politics" (2017, p. 265). In other words, the *plan* that openly seeks to reconcile a stated magical confrontation and a rational surgical operation may ultimately be manipulated to such an extent that it never comes to fruition. Easterling criticizes a posture that is "utopian [and that] often imagines a transcendent and singular moment of change—a comprehensive reform or a soulful masterpiece", because "the world never seems to adopt the utopian schemes of planners", being therefore frequently "portrayed as a sad mistake, or a lack of purity" (2014, pp. 231–232). Instead, Easterling argues that the practice of hacking does not value the purity of the conciliatory statement. Quite the contrary in fact, the hacker operates precisely from the impure and dissimulated dissociation between magic and operation:

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[19] In that same interview with Obrist, when talking about insertions, Cildo stated: "I was very interested in Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle', which in a way provides a scientific demonstration of the illusory nature of objectivity." (2018, p. 411–412)

[20] Easterling (2014, p. 19) argues that the production of contemporary space speaks a language of infrastructure – a "managementese" – that controls space through "quality certificates", in which defining design ideas as 'right' or 'wrong' gain airs of technical quantification and a contract with guarantees of success.

[21] These two polarities of the use of typology in architecture in fact mark different lines of studies and practices over the last few centuries (JACOBY, 2007, 2015): one of 'typical rationality', which refers to the ways in which the built environment may be read (e.g. in Quatremère de Quincy, Aldo Rossi and Rem Koolhaas); and a 'typological rationality', which refers to the practice of experimenting with potential formal variations of a given formal problem (e.g. in Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, Le Corbusier and Peter Eisenman).

[22] This dialectical synthesis is similar in some respects to Manfredo Tafuri's (1980) proposal for a 'critical typology'.

[23] We refer here to Susan Buck-Morss's (1991) concept of "dialectical image", which involves the visible synthesis of critical dimensions of the world and history.

in the *trick*, the gestures show you one thing, but the action itself hides another.

This stance is even more fundamental in situations where open, conciliatory opposition implies martyrdom. The censorship implemented by the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-1984) from 1967 onwards prevented freedom of expression for all press vehicles, artists and activists. It played a fundamental role in maintaining the regime by silencing opposing positions. Thus, when Cildo acted for the 'insertions', he managed to bypass the censorship, concealed within the circulation system itself, and oppose the system[24]. Thus, there is an important difference between Easterling's hacking and Cildo's insertions: unlike the 'trick' of hacking, which covertly dissociates statement from operation, the 'feint' of insertions declares its opposition (like the magician), but sways marginally as a way of deflecting it (like the surgeon) and overcoming it.

Considering the great complexity of the challenges of contemporary urbanities in the Global South, it is necessary to consider the very high cost of the utopian 'confrontation' of planning. This revision does not necessarily mean covering up or, even worse, romanticizing the current situations. It actually implies considering a strategy that takes advantage, recycles and reacts *from* the encountered reality. From a process of decentering and collecting the encountered collective reality, typical potentials emerge that may be positively used in a project.

Thus, by manipulating the elements of this reality and its variations through the 'trick of hacking' and the 'feint of insertion', we believe that a profound change is possible in the precarious and unequal conditions of our urban realities, even if in a dissimulated manner: i.e., without the high cost of confrontation and with the benefit of agility, flexibility and reuse. In an ongoing research, we have developed in more depth the 'trick of hacking' and the 'feint of insertion' strategies in the context of urban mobility infrastructures, which implies both reviewing current models and design teaching methods, as well as how to propose new projects for critical contexts (CAPILLÉ; GONÇALVES; SOVERAL, 2021; CAPILLÉ; SOVERAL, 2019; CAPILLÉ; SOVERAL; MACIEL, 2020; CAPILLÉ; SOVERAL; PEREIRA, 2020). In summary, we consider that the architectures of mobility infrastructures in Rio de Janeiro form an obligatory collective space where a population of millions sees itself as a collective in their daily lives: they are, therefore, an 'encountered collective' in the metropolis with great political potential. There is a huge gap in understanding the architecture of this condition – and very often planners, architects and governments use traditional recipes of 'good urbanity' in an attempt to transform it. Through a 'research by design' we argue that it is necessary to act from the current condition, typologically understanding and learning from its fundamental elements, so as – while keeping them – to diverge from their functioning through design, in order to strengthen an everyday and potentially revolutionary urban *common*.

7. Acknowledgements

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[24] Sueli Rolnik (2017, p. 200) argues that Cildo's work offers "conditions to overcome the split between micro and macropolitics that is reproduced in the split between the classic figures of the artist and the militant."

arguments defended in this text.

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