

## **Political bodies, poetic resistances: *Praça da Estação* in Belo Horizonte, Brazil**

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The "*Praça da Estação*" (Station Square) in Belo Horizonte/Brazil, is the point from where this planned city has grown. With only twenty years, the first train station building was demolished, to be replaced by a new one, revealing a history of constructions and deconstructions that accompanies the story of this "new" metropolis, always under construction. In 2003, this central square suffered an intense refurbishment, justified by the need to create new spaces for major city events. In its new configuration, a sterile space was created, easily disciplinable, free from the urban mnemonic inscription.

The station building, previously integrated to the urban life, became museum, which gave its back to the city, placing culture as an articulator of gentrification in the very heart of downtown. Ironically, in 2009, the mayor issued an order prohibiting the performance of "events of any kind" in this location, which led to a popular insurgent movement that occupied the square on Saturdays, for months, transforming it in a downtown cemented sort of beach. Under the motto to occupy the city, the square then received other forms of art such as the "*Sombra Grátis*" (Free Shadow) performance, by the local art collective LIO, in which performers climb ladders and open umbrellas to shelter citizens that were waiting for their buses under the scorching sun of the square, that has no trees.

From the *Praia-Praça* (Beach-Square) and the poetic-political inscriptions that are produced on the "*Praça da Estação*", this paper aims to question how art and the ludic can face the production of the commodity-city. Our reflection is made from a psychosocial analysis of the (re)constructions of the square and its experiences, and is orientated from a critical theoretical conception about the production of cities that are projected as goods to compete over private investment on a global level.

[DELGADO, 2007; VAINER, 1999.]. The use of urbanization and urban planning as economic strategies can lead to an impoverished urban experiences and to standart cities, consensual cities, increasingly similar, that are made under hygienist, surveillance and controlled measures, in the attempt to silence conflicts and build an suitable image to the urban marketing.

To perform this analysis we start from a literature review, with the guidance prospects brought by David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre over the city and the urban. Simultaneously, urban experiences as a method were used at the “*Praca da Estação*” and in other areas of the city of Belo Horizonte. With inspirations in ethnographic methodology and guided by the *dérive* method on specific occasions, our registration were made as field journal format. From July to April 2014, four guided *dérives* and two urban experiments that dialogued with the performance were done.

It was also part of our approximation with this scenario four meetings and interviews with a group of urban intervention called *Coletivo LIO*. From this material, two pilot workshops were raised, which gathered the themes of the city, urban occupation, art and corporeity.

The question of what kind of city we want is not disconnected from the question of what kind of society we desire [HARVEY, 2013]. Therefore, this work aims to point other ways of the right to the city claimed, but also to present the existing potential of the ludic spaces, which opens dialogue to the city and the society to be created, open to experience. Seeking the legitimacy of these spaces and these discussions, we try to work towards a more democratic, horizontal urban space, where there can be the participation of these speeches even in the draft of urban plans.

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