

# **QUEER SCRAPSCAPE: HUDINILSON JR.'S *CADERNOS DE REFERÊNCIAS***

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## ABSTRACT

Ahead of print

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This essay sheds light on Brazilian artist Hudinilson Jr.'s *Cadernos de referências* (c. 1981-2013), a series of dense and layered scrapbooks. Through an analysis of layouts and media, the investigation highlights the extensive design and cultural implications that the practice triggers. The focus lies primarily on formal recurrences and narrative strategies identified on double page spreads, revealing how they condense the artist's queer poetics. The *Cadernos* emerge as an everyday practice of exploration of the human body, a space for self-design and cultural resistance, and a tool for questioning the relationship between the exposed body, self-image, and mass media.

**KEYWORDS** Hudinilson Jr.; Scrapbooking; Ephemera; Self-design; Narcissus

### RESUMO

Este ensaio lança luz sobre os *Cadernos de referências* (c. 1981-2013) do artista brasileiro Hudinilson Jr., uma série de álbuns de recortes densos e cheios de camadas. Através de uma análise de layouts e mídias, a investigação destaca as extensas implicações culturais e de design desencadeadas pela obra. O foco recai principalmente sobre as recorrências formais e estratégias narrativas identificadas em páginas duplas, revelando como elas condensam a poética queer do artista. Os *Cadernos* surgem como uma prática cotidiana de exploração do corpo humano, um espaço de auto-design e resistência cultural, e uma ferramenta de questionamento da relação entre o corpo exposto, a autoimagem e os meios de comunicação de massa.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Hudinilson Jr.; Scrapbooking; Efêmeros; Self-design; Narciso


### RESUMEN

Este ensayo echa luz sobre los *Cadernos de referências* (c. 1981-2013) del artista brasileño Hudinilson Jr., una serie de álbumes de recortes densos y llenos de capas. A través de un análisis de layouts y medios, la investigación resalta las extensas implicaciones culturales y de design desencadenadas por la obra. El enfoque recae principalmente en las recurrencias formales y estrategias narrativas identificadas en páginas dobles, revelando cómo condensan la poética queer del artista. Los *Cadernos* surgen como una práctica diaria de exploración del cuerpo humano, un espacio de auto-design y resistencia cultural, y una herramienta de cuestionamiento de la relación entre el cuerpo expuesto, la autoimagen y los medios de comunicación de masas.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Hudinilson Jr.; Scrapbooking; Efimeros; Self-design; Narciso





*O artista é solitário e solidário ao mesmo tempo.  
The artist is solitary and solidary at the same time.  
(HUDINILSON JR., 1986)*



## I. INTRODUCTION

The series of interviews given by artist Hudinilson Urbano Jr. (São Paulo, 1957-2013, hereinafter Hudinilson Jr.) in 2011-2012 to the then director of the Centro Cultural de São Paulo (CCSP) Ricardo Resende and the researchers Maria Olimpia Vassão and Maria Adelaide Pontes,<sup>1</sup> clearly show that his *Cadernos de referências* embody one of his most significant practices (RESENDE ET AL., 2011-2012). Mario Ramiro, close friend and artistic partner,<sup>2</sup> properly calls them “the space of resonance of all his work” (RAMIRO, 2014, p. 278). They not only house an extensive collection of references, but also offer, through an analysis of their pages, the possibility of shedding light on the main triggers of his poetics.

The *Cadernos* bring to life a queer *scrapscape*<sup>3</sup> of bodies, gazes, mirrors and texts. Combining heterogeneous heaps of mass media with mythological references and personal memories, they stand somewhere between an anecdotal archive and a communicative artifact. Desire flows explicitly across the pages and the dense space overflows with narrative. The erotic content teases the reader, who eventually becomes the subject and object of a seductive game mediated by the gaze, where each clipping is transformed into a tool of homoerotic transgression and a weapon of counter-narrative. But the relevance of *Cadernos* does not end there. They also stimulate a number of issues related to its design: the role of the medium, the use of ephemera, the recurrence of certain layout solutions, and the effects of those layouts to the pace and rhythm of the narrative. They also condense all the trajectories that permeate Hudinilson Jr.'s practice, from the topos of Narcissus to copyart, from erotica to mail art, from the exposure of the artist's own body to a broader exploration of the representation of the human body, with a predilection for the male. Moreover, by combining material from Greco-Roman mythology with U.S. pornographic and gossip magazines, French Theory and Brazilian art and pop scene, they foster the unfolding of a transcultural discourse, encouraging a

continuous shift in perspective and allowing critical distance for active confrontation with cultural patterns and appropriations.

Due to the complexity of the artist's practice, the quantity of items (about 130) and the lack of a comprehensive database,<sup>4</sup> Hudinilson Jr.'s *Cadernos* remained understudied until now. His entire body of work has actually long been neglected. Despite an intense and long artistic activity and an extended circle of artistic relationships in São Paulo, Hudinilson Jr.'s multimedia practice only began to receive international attention toward the end of his life and his fame came only posthumously.<sup>5</sup>

So far, the few studies devoted to the artist aimed to trace an overview of his extensive artistic production (RESENDE, 2016), to acknowledge his pioneering contribution to xerox art in Brazil (ALDANA & MAYNES, 2017) or more specifically to offer an analysis of the *Cadernos* as an atlas, establishing a pathos correspondence with the Warburghian device (STIGGER, 2020). Following this path, this essay aims to demonstrate that the *Cadernos* represent an exercise capable of stimulating horizontal and transdisciplinary reflections. The rehabilitation of such a labyrinthine practice involves the recognition of formal recurrences and peculiarities, and a reflection on double-page layout choices and on the use of printed media as a medium for artistic expression.

Before delving further, it is important to anticipate some limitations and premises of this essay. First, it is worth noting that it takes as a reference only a portion of Hudinilson Jr.'s *Cadernos*: 40 of them were examined, corresponding approximately to one third of the whole series. Although small in number, the selection covers a period of more than 30 years of activity and can therefore be considered a sufficiently reliable sample on which to base an overall reading. It is also useful to mention that each *Caderno* recycles different media in different ways, having its own characteristics and peculiarities, defying comparison. The compositional patterns highlighted here represent some of the most widely used and recognizable recurrences, but a more minute investigation would bring to the surface many other distinctive elements worthy of attention and analysis.

Furthermore, it is essential to state that the analysis focuses on double page spreads and not on single pages. This preference not only captures better the stimulations of the layouts but seems to be suggested by the media and the artist himself.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the spreads of the *Cadernos* are reminiscent of the unbound collage plates that Hudinilson Jr. composes copiously.

In addition, in the essay the *Cadernos* are described as ‘scrapbooks’ (that is, as customized books that collect elements from printed media, photographs, texts and other ephemeral objects), even though the term ‘Cadernos’ has been so far translated into English as ‘notebooks’ (RESENDE, 2016; MAIA, 2020), and even though visual culture and art theory would treat them as an atlas – that is, a device of knowledge production relying on thinking through images and structured as montage (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2010; 2018). Treating the *Cadernos de referências* as scrapbooks emphasizes the daily routine of practice and the techniques behind their composition that this essay seeks to highlight. Indeed, it is in the predominant use of appropriation and photocopying, of cut and paste, typical of punk fanzine design (FARIAS, 2011), that Hudinilson Jr’s *Cadernos* may be defined as a practice of resistance and transgression. Understanding Hudinilson Jr.’s action as scrapbooking also reveals the intimate dimension of the exercise, closer to that of a diary, in which a transitive and special relationship is established between composer and instrument, and the personal and the social intermingle to the point of blurring. In this regard, according to communication and media academic Katie Day Good (2013), scrapbooks share a fundamental characteristic

with pages created by users in social media, being both sites for recollection, assemblage, and archive of personal media.

Finally, like the atlas, scrapbooking succeeds in enhancing the materiality of storytelling, which, as curator Paulo Miyada (2020) points out, is by no means secondary: “Leafing through these notebooks it is clear that, to this artist, images had a haptic nature that surpassed their referential significance or visual appearance. Images can be caressed, shaped, compressed or loosened; they have weight, taste, and consistency”.

## II. UPCYCLING MEDIA, REPURPOSING SPACES

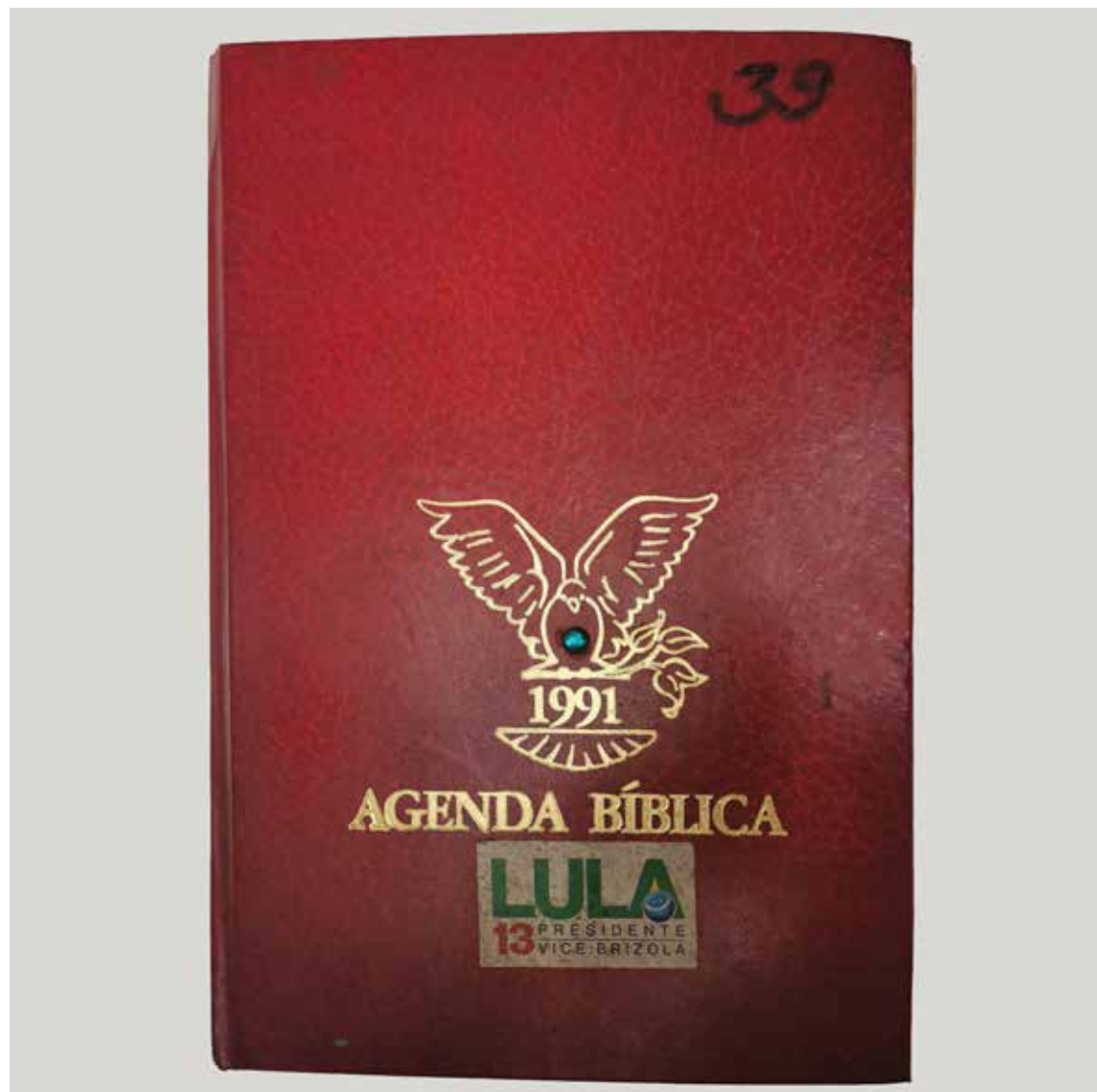
It is not known exactly when Hudinilson Jr. began composing his *Cadernos*. Conscious of that, Ricardo Resende (2016, p. 400) titles the chapter of his book dedicated to those beginnings “Reference notebooks, 1981 onwards... or before that”. Through Resende’s interviews and book it emerges that from a very young age the artist absorbed the archival impulse that he recognized was inherited from his father, Hudinilson Urbano, a former professor of linguistics at the Universidade de São Paulo. Starting to accumulate a large number of magazines, including erotic and pornographic ones,



he devised the plan to cut out and keep only the parts he was interested in, and to more easily hide them. After some early experiences using the scraps cut from magazines for front and back collage plates, he also started pasting them on agendas, which soon became a genuine fetishistic device, capable of stimulating desire and satisfying a particular scopophilic fulfillment. The practice became such a daily obsession that Hudinilson Jr. even got to claim: “whenever there is a day in which I do not add anything new, ... it is as if I had an empty, unproductive day” (MAIA, 2020, p. 21).

The frenzy that characterizes this need suggests that the focus of the exercise is to be found in the intensity of the gesture and the redundancy of the materials and not in formal coherence or order. It follows that Hudinilson Jr., in full postmodern and postproductive spirit,<sup>7</sup> uses whatever medium enables the exercise. Whether it is untouched or previously used, large or small, diary or book, full or empty of content, he adapts his gesture to the medium he finds. Again from the interviews (RESENDE ET AL., 2011-2012), it turns out that chance would allow a friend to have at his disposal a large number of black fabric, paperback minute books (in Portuguese, “*livros de atas*”) that became his most recurring media.<sup>8</sup> But it is equally possible to encounter the most diverse blank

or printed books adopted as support for the *Cadernos*, from religious agendas (figure 1) to Harry Potter scholar notebooks (figure 2); from typewritten volumes to coffee-table illustrated books.



**Figure 1.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 39*.  
1990s. Prints, newspapers and magazines  
cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints  
on paper. Unique. 24x16,5x7 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Pinacoteca do  
Estado de São Paulo and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.

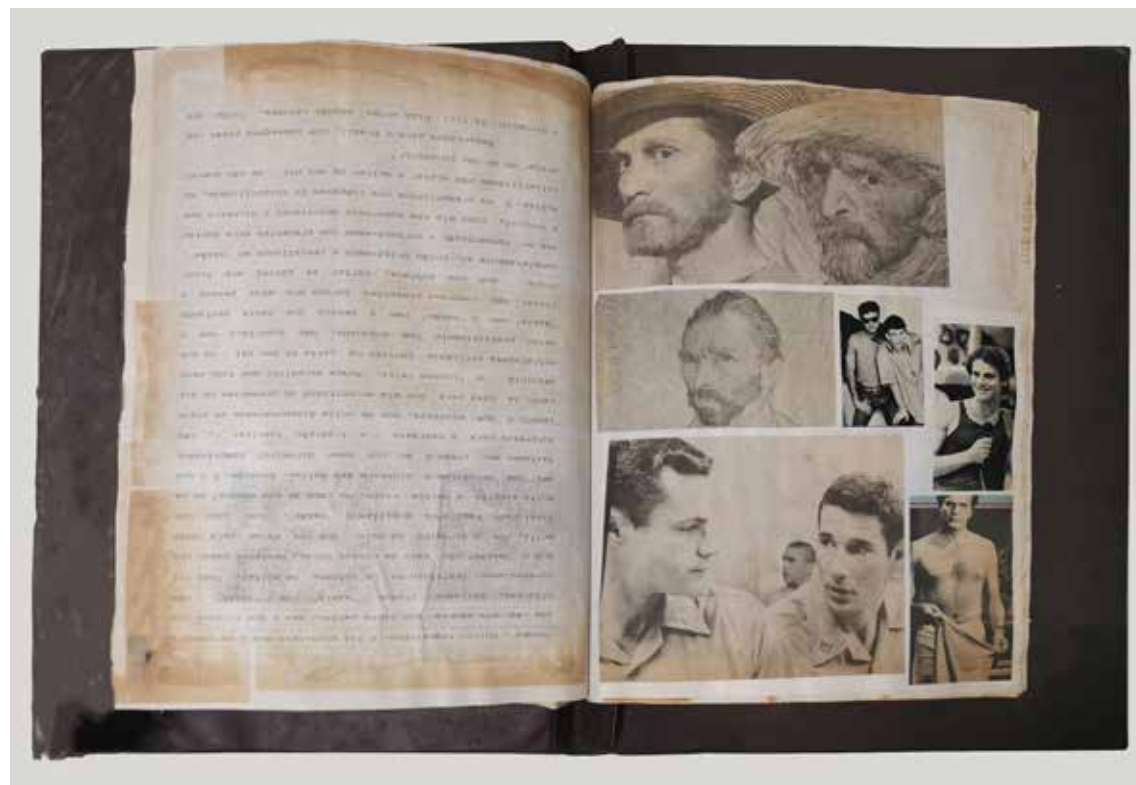
**Figure 2.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 86*.  
2000s. Prints, newspapers and magazines  
cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints  
on paper. Unique. 28x24x7 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Pinacoteca do  
Estado de São Paulo and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



Just as the fragments he collects are scraps from a print media universe that incessantly produces, consumes and discards, so the media that house these ephemera are objects that exhausted their primal function and no longer conform to their time (diaries from

years past, typewritten copies of books and plays, etc.). Like Walter Benjamin in *The Arcades Project* (2002, p. 349-350), who makes his own the image of the ragpicker “picking up the day’s rubbish in the capital” so dear to Charles Baudelaire, Hudinilson Jr. uses ephemera to wander through the media cosmos and construct his own imagery, resemantizing mainstream icons and stereotypes into samples of queer transgression.<sup>9</sup> A new imagery that feeds on the very objects and representations from which it seeks to emancipate itself. And although the operation is radical, Hudinilson Jr.’s practice never takes a violent stance. His action of overwriting is careful and precise, overwhelming but organized, with collages almost never overlapping each other. Always concerned with the pre-existing text he goes to conceal, when working on picture books or typescripts he operates with discretion, even leaving room for the original narrative to serve his own storytelling purposes. In the typewritten volumes he uses as support, for example, it is interesting to note that the new narrative is integrated upside down with the existing text, which thus ends up becoming secondary while not being hidden. The original book cover now becomes the back of the *Cadernos*, and the preexisting text is thus juxtaposed with the new

narrative reversed (figures 3 and 4). Hudinilson Jr.'s strategies of appropriation and manipulation of space thus favor the creation of numerous layers of reading in which the different techniques and anachronic times by which space is traversed are made to dialogue with each other, without hierarchies.



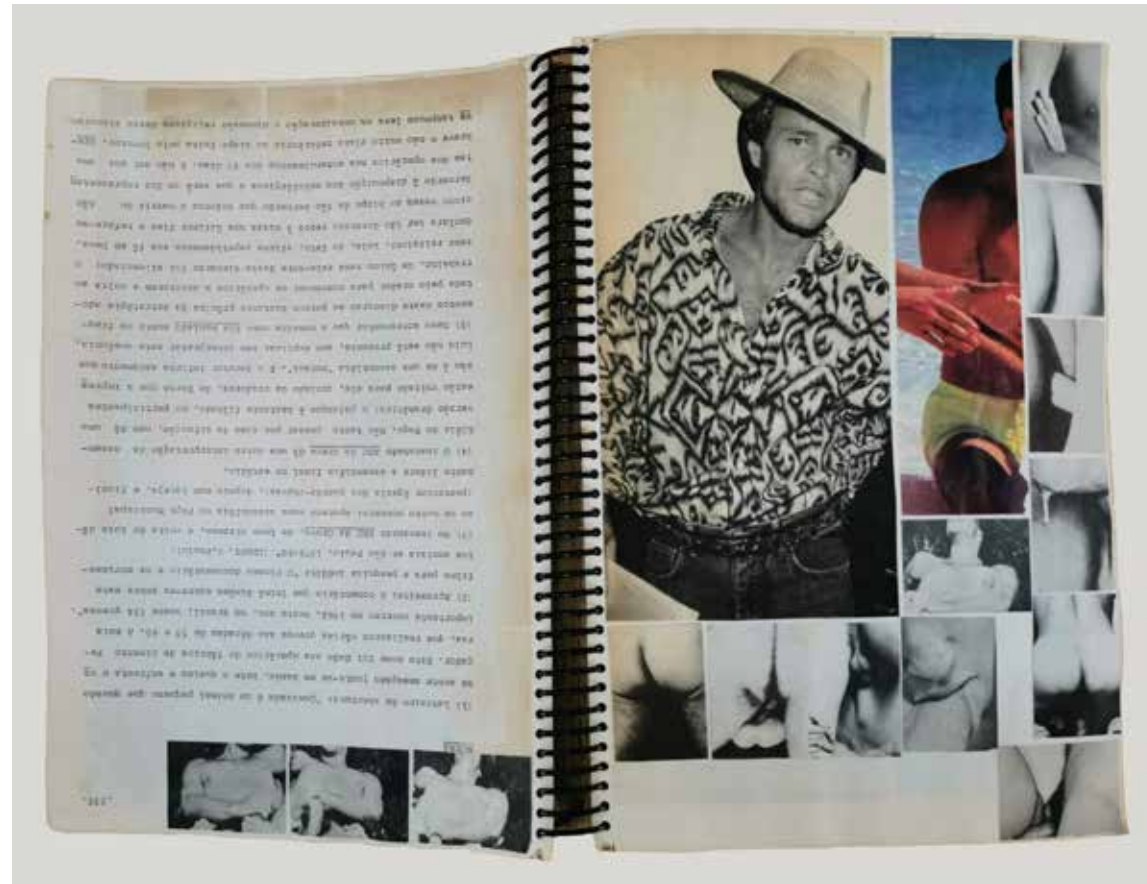
**Figure 3.**

Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 23*. 1980/2000s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper.

Unique. 34x25 cm (closed).

Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.

**Figure 4.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 21 A*. 1990s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper. Unique. 31x20,5x1 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



To the pre-existing printed elements in the support and the clippings from printed mass media, Hudinilson Jr. adds yet another element: photocopies. The xerographic elements derive not only from magazines and newspapers, but also from his own fragmented body. All those images enter the *Cadernos*' anonymous mass media vortex, which absorbs and exposes everything.

Through this expedient, the artist stands simultaneously inside and beyond the medium, playing the dual role of artist and artwork at the same time. The inclusion of xerox materials attests to the artist's cross-cutting interest in the relationship between original and copy and adds another piece to the praise of fragmentation performed throughout his body of work.<sup>10</sup> A fragmentation that can be understood as a continuous effort of refocusing and reassembling, an operation that influences Hudinilson Jr.'s narratives and equally reaches an existential dimension, to the point of problematizing the very monolithic structure of subjectivity. For it is no coincidence that the *Cadernos* are devoted to Narcissus, a myth capable of bringing into play issues that provoke speculations far broader than the psychopathology that commonly identifies the figure, such as the theme of the gaze, the relationship between self and image, and the opposition between illusion and reality, mimesis and fiction, copy and simulacrum, eros and death (BRUHM, 2001).

In order to lead the analysis finally toward a study of the recurrences and peculiarities of the layouts designed by Hudinilson Jr., it is important to understand that the issue of Narcissus does not only represent a mythological reference but influences the entire practice, producing a seductive form of communication, which lies between the cinematic and

the voyeuristic.<sup>11</sup> But if habitually in scopophilia the possibility of a role reversal – such that the seeing subject finds out to be watched in turn – transforms the voyeur’s excitement into shame and anxiety, in Hudinilson Jr. this dynamic is flipped and shame turns into additional stimulation. Indeed, the artist, composer and first reader, seems fascinated by the idea of becoming a victim of the weapon he uses – the gaze –, and thus being objectified and redesigned in turn. Later in the text this aspect will be explored further, mobilizing the issue of self-design (GROYS, 2008; 2009; 2016).

Adding a further piece to the matter, it can also be noted how in the *Cadernos* this game of seduction takes place not only reciprocally between the reader and the page, but also within the latter, between the clippings, transforming the practice into a double-sided device, specular and immersive at the same time.<sup>12</sup> This dynamic produces layouts that at first glance seem anomic, but actually respond to certain stylistic choices that become recurrent throughout the exercise.

### III. PROLEGOMENA TO *CADERNOS DE REFERÊNCIAS* LAYOUTS

The recurrent layouts solutions on which this study offers a synthesized overview are part of an initial exploration into the



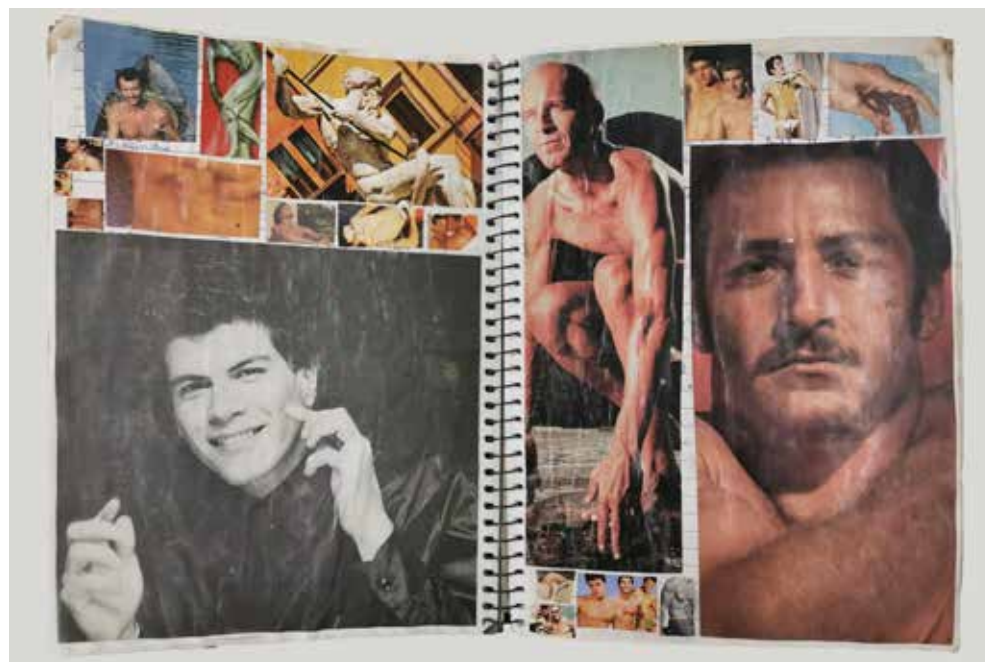
deeply labyrinthine and metamorphic space created by the *Cadernos de referências*. Like the underground zines in vogue since the 1960s,<sup>13</sup> Hudinilson Jr.'s *Cadernos* are based on a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) practice and aesthetic, which attempts to “make your own culture and stop consuming that which is made for you” (DUNCOMBE, 2008, p. 7). Media and culture professor Stephen Duncombe calls fanzine design “chaotic” and uses this word precisely in relation to the development of a graphic language of cultural resistance. Indeed, as graphic design historian Teal Triggs (2006, p. 69) notes, the DIY process openly “critiques mass production through the very handmade quality it embraces, but also in the process of appropriating the images and words of mainstream media and popular culture”. Associating the construction of *Cadernos* with that of zines should not blur the differences between the two practices, but might be useful for highlight some common elements, such as the principle of amateurism<sup>14</sup> and the subversive use of ephemera and the photocopier. Those are aspects that characterize both practices as animated by a profound distance from and critique of an increasingly anesthetized and mainstream society.<sup>15</sup>

Dwelling briefly on the basic characteristics that distinguish scrapbooking from fanzines or from printed media design in general, it is worth mentioning that scrapbooks are, by definition,

originally developed as single-copy books, not intended for reproduction and circulation, and retaining the capacity for modification and expansion. Indeed, as something inseparable from the artist's life, the *Cadernos* were subject to constant transformation. Like in an ever-evolving draft, Hudinilson Jr. edited them even many years after the last revision. They thus stand as artifacts never properly completed, and never prepared for mechanical reproduction. In the *Cadernos*, mechanically reproduced matter is employed, instead, authorially, to perform a fluid and splitted identity, disengaging from the dominant cultural and media regime through a transgressive use of the very vehicle that feeds and disciplines it: desire. By resemantizing advertising and editorial images, Hudinilson Jr. transforms mass media communication into a machine of constant homoerotic provocation. Without intending to confine in sterile schematizations a flow that is, by its very nature, intolerant to rules, four layout solutions within a far more swirling design making were identified. Four trajectories on which much of Hudinilson Jr.'s storytelling transits. They are sometimes superimposed, sometimes adopted individually, and give the whole universe of pages that compose the *Cadernos* series a relentless, entangled rhythm.

The first and most evident of these layout solutions seems to respond to an explosive impulse by which desire overcrowds the page to the extent that the supporting medium disappears (figures 5 and 6). Clippings heap upon each other and fill a space now devoid of its own air. To be inserted, elements are adapted to the available space, being cut and resized until the last empty corner is filled. This approach to layout results in a deep spectatorial immersion: the reader gets lost among the relationships that the collages generate and struggles to recover an orientation that would allow an exit. The potential number of connections between elements is so large that reading becomes slow and hesitant. Indeed, this layout solution seems designed precisely to make the reader feel called in. Wisely employing a feature peculiar to fashion and pornographic magazine covers where images engender frontal communication with the reader, Hudinilson Jr. makes extensive use of cutouts of pictures of people (usually male) whose gaze directly interrogates that of the observer. The predilection for an all-over layout amplifies this correspondence and likewise collapses the distance separating the observer and the observed, driving the reader to enter the page. For all these reasons, this layout solution may be termed *accumulating*. It contrasts a second one, that may be named *mirroring*.

**Figure 5.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 105*. 2000s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper.  
Unique. 28 x 21,5 x 4 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.

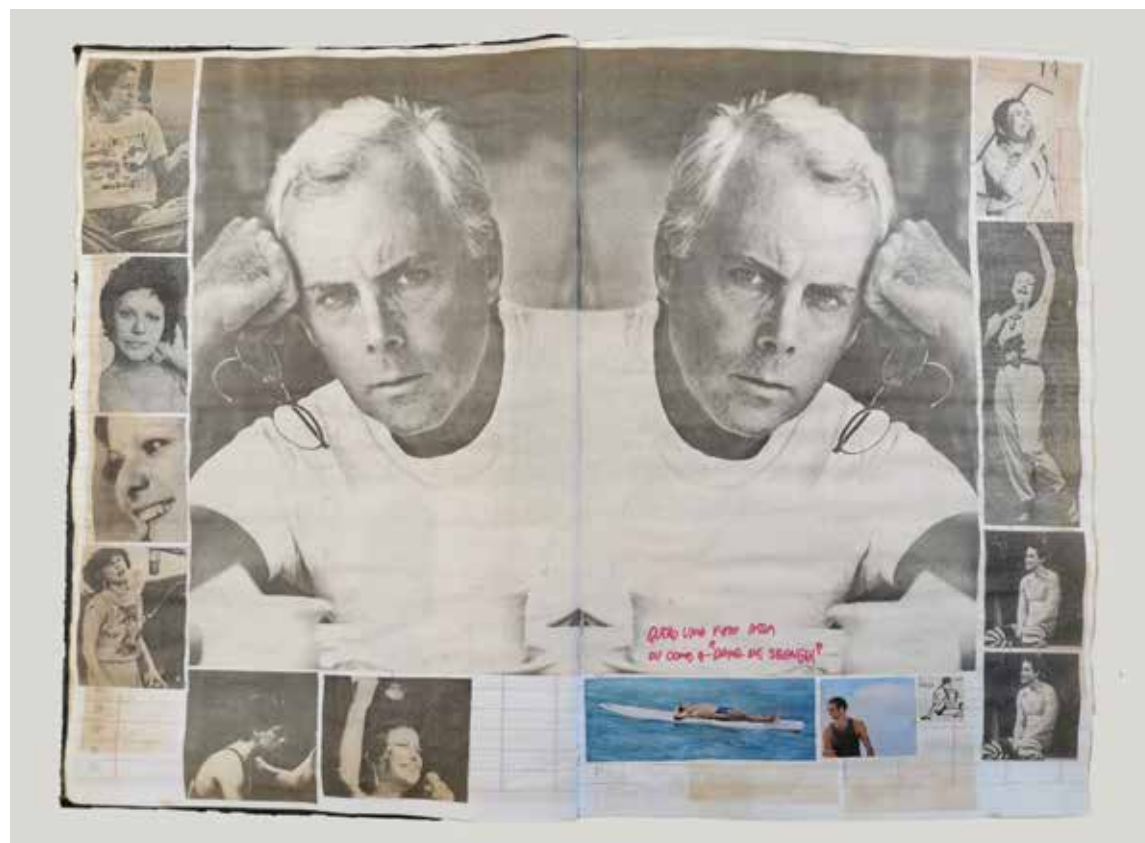


**Figure 6.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 125*. 2000s. Photograph prints, newspaper and magazine cutouts, photocopies and documents on paper.  
Unique. 28 x 22 x 5 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



In the latter, Hudinilson Jr. opts for a balanced organization of elements in the double-spread space. In such cases, by tracing an imaginary axis of symmetry along the vertical binding in the center of the page, one can see that the cutouts and xeroxes are arranged according to basic symmetrical rules (figure 7). When this happens, the same image is often used twice, mirrored, in the center of the spread, with other elements of the narrative organized around it. While in *accumulating* layouts the reader is explicitly called upon to untangle chaotic and layered relationships on the page, in *mirroring* ones the visual rhetoric is usually less dense and articulate. In this case, the reader is primarily engaged in resolving the confrontation involving the two sides of the symmetry. The design of such a space favors a comparative reading approach, attentive to the position of elements and their role in the composition. Moreover, although the number of images and texts is smaller, Hudinilson Jr. usually exacerbates the contrast between the connections on the page. The result is daring and anachronic juxtapositions that prevent easy reading and suggest new scenarios of meaning in which past and present – symbols and cultures, postures and bodies – merge together.

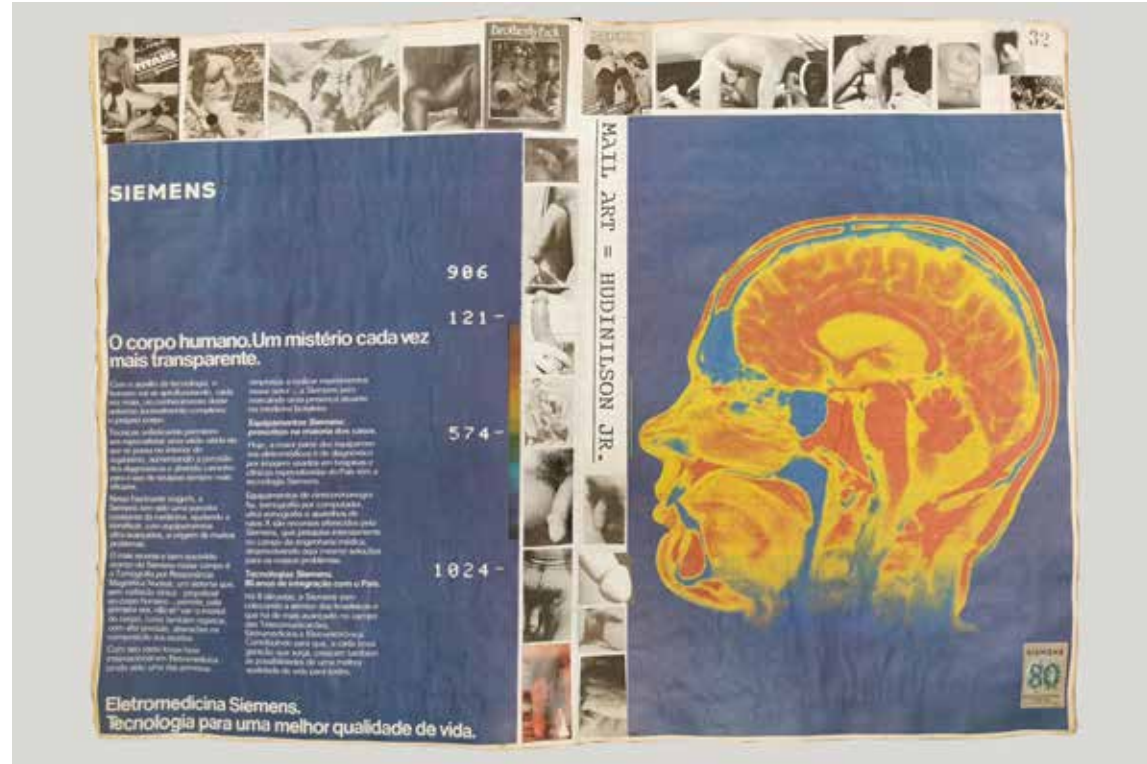
**Figure 7.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 20*.  
1980s. Prints, newspapers and cutouts,  
documents, photocopies, prints on paper.  
Unique. 33 x 22 x 7 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria  
Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



A third solution that exemplifies Hudinilson Jr.'s double-spread design is one that features a series of small cutouts and details of explicit bodies. Drawing another link between Hudinilson Jr. and ancient Greece, this layout solution may be called *friezing*, from frieze, a decorative element of classical architectural orders, with which it shares many similarities. As in architecture, layout friezes in the *Cadernos* appear to fill an ornamental function

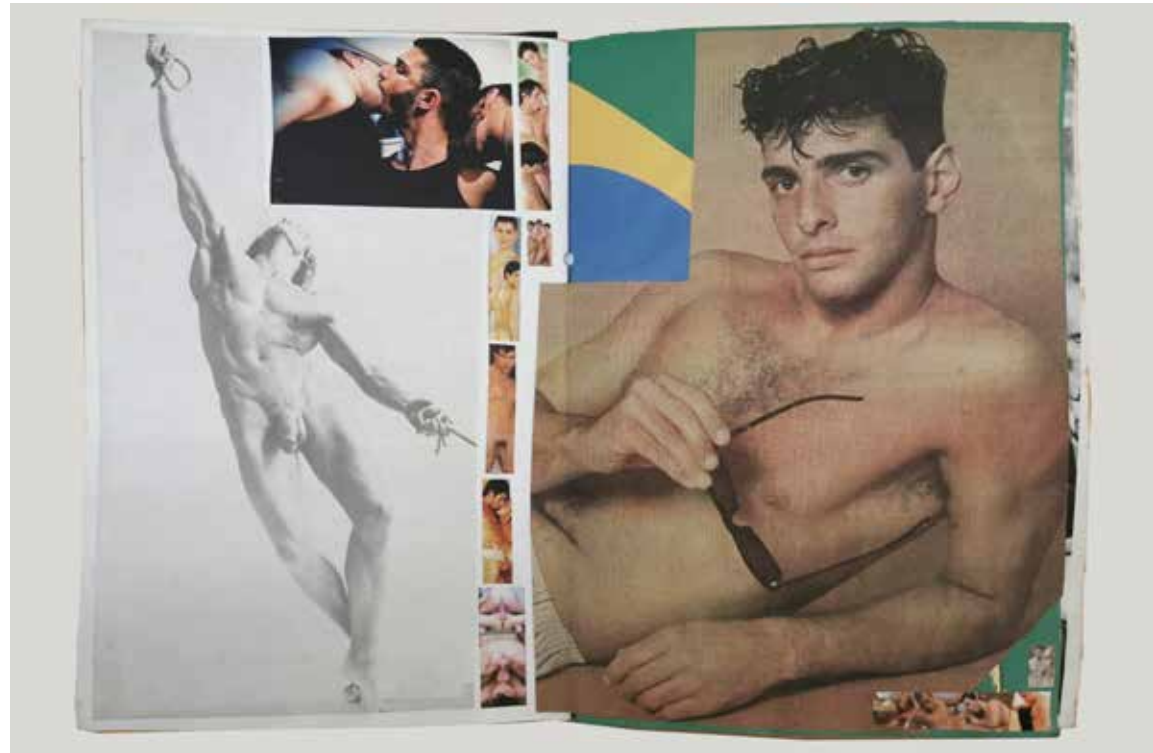
and are disposed in linear segments. These successions of small images and phallic details occupy marginal portions, at the edge of the page or along the inner border dividing the two pages of the spread. As an auxiliary masturbatory gesture accompanying the reading, they construct a narrative usually autonomous from that displayed on the rest of the page (figure 8). But on the occasions when, on the other hand, they enter direct dialogue with the advertising images or newspaper articles they decorate, the friezes act as a cause or effect of the main storytelling. That is, they can be the cause of reprehensible or moralistic looks, or sexual responses to nude bodies posing seductively, as frames of a film that, removed from their narrative, consequentiality, now react to each other, scattered in space (figure 9). In both cases, the artist's ability to develop, through simple strategies of layout and scale, multiple plot lines that dialogue with each other while retaining their own self-sufficient semantic horizon is noteworthy.

**Figure 8.**  
 Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências X*.  
 1980s. Prints, newspapers and magazines  
 cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints  
 on paper. Unique. 33 x 22 x 4 cm (closed).  
 Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria  
 Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.





**Figure 9.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 119*. 1980s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper.  
Unique. 29 x 21 x 3,5 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



**Figure 10.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 27*. 1980/2000s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper. Unique. 21,5 x 16 x 7,5 cm (closed). Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



This capacity leads to the fourth recurring layout solution that characterizes the *Cadernos*, which may be called *masking*. It specifically concerns texts handwritten by Hudinilson Jr. himself. In fact, many of the *Cadernos* seem to have been used for taking notes, doodling, and, most importantly, to store phone numbers and addresses (figure 10). It is not possible to know which operation takes place first, but the two never overlap: handwritten text and pasted clippings share the same space without any form of prevarication.

As if to signal the use of a different editing technique, Hudinilson Jr. usually covers these handwritten parts using colored ink pens (blue, red, green, etc.). The intervention produces a twofold effect: on the one hand it clearly isolates the handwritten text from everything else on the page, and, on the other, it conceals it. In fact, the islands of color that arise from the process produce an overexposure that conversely dulls their own content. The resulting colored blocks fill the empty spaces between cutouts, providing light signals that instead of obscuring the rest of the page, announce it.<sup>16</sup>

*Accumulating, mirroring, friezing, and masking* outline four main layout solutions adopted by Hudinilson Jr. for designing the *Cadernos de referências* pages. Gerund nouns were chosen precisely to convey a process value to these design decisions that suggest narrative trajectories. The attempt lies precisely in avoiding fixing the design process and flowing with it, merely recording some of its main layout solutions. Emphasizing some of the main tendencies that move the artist's design, therefore, is not to claim that the *Cadernos* always follow these layout solutions nor that these tendencies produce layouts that perfectly follow their own rules.<sup>17</sup> It is, in any case, relevant to unveil that the *Cadernos* conceal, beneath an apparent disorder, recurring design

solutions that provide visibility to a number of questions that are fundamental to the artist's practice. If *accumulating* takes to extremes an archival and rewriting impulse that is at the very basis of the haunting scrapbooking exercise that Hudinilson Jr. performs relentlessly, *mirroring* straightforwardly exemplifies the artist's interest in the theme of the double. *Friezing* magnifies the erotic desire for the male body and a cinematic use of images, while *masking* corroborates the centrality of scrapbooking, and thus of clippings and ephemera, over every other component.

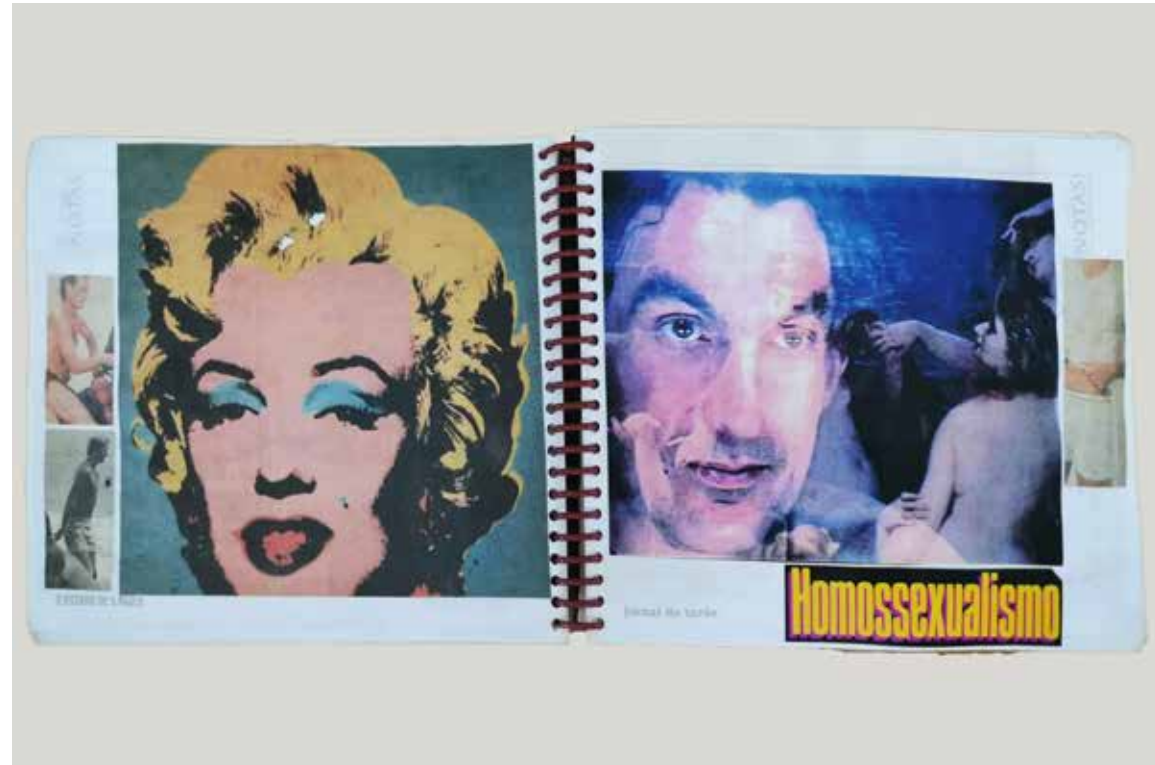
Finally, one last thread remains to be described, which somehow links the design strategies to Hudinilson Jr.'s seminal poetics. It has already been mentioned in the introduction of this essay and also aroused, more or less explicitly, during the discussion of layout solutions. It emerged, for instance, when discussing the strong effect of connection between the reader and the images that explicitly address their gaze resulting from the *accumulating* layout solutions. This feature, accentuated in pages where such a layout solution is adopted, is actually ubiquitous in all *Cadernos* and Hudinilson Jr.'s body of work. It could be named the trajectory of Narcissus.

#### IV. SELF-DESIGN, OR THE DESIRES OF NARCISSUS

The trajectory of Narcissus concerns an articulated interaction between body, gaze and mirror,<sup>18</sup> and renders explicit a problematization concerning the relationship that ties the subject to (self)image and mass media. Such trajectory embodies two main Hudinilson Jr.'s desires: to be double, on this side and beyond the mirror (figure 11), succeeding where Narcissus fails,<sup>19</sup> and to be desired.

This latter form of yearning, expressed by an artist who finds in scrapbooking, especially in the last years of his life, his main window of communication with the world, appears symptomatic of an approach to a position similar to that of Narcissus at the source. The main difference being that Hudinilson Jr.'s mirror is the stream of mass media images. It does not seem coincidental, therefore, that he defines his scrapbooking practice as a constant “exercise of seeing” and personifies the figure of an image hunter (RESENDE, 2016, p. 403). Nor does it seem coincidental that he chooses to insert xeroxed details of his body within the media stream, becoming part of the cultural imagery with which he is constantly engaging. The extraordinary paradox that makes this whole interaction so compelling is the fact that, once the artist is the

designer and also the first reader of the designed pages, the whole process is ultimately reversed, as in a mirror. It is no longer only Hudinilson Jr. who hunts images, now it is the world of images that hunts Hudinilson Jr., too (figure 12).



**Figure 11.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências 29*. 1980/1990s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper. Unique. 23,5 x 18 x 4,5 cm (closed). Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.

**Figure 12.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências XVII*. 1980/2000s. Prints, newspapers and magazines cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints on paper.  
Unique. 32,5 x 23 x 10 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



**Figure 13.**  
Hudinilson Jr., *Caderno de referências IX*.  
1980s. Prints, newspapers and magazines  
cutouts, documents, photocopies, prints  
on paper. Unique. 33 x 22 x 4 cm (closed).  
Photo: Simone Rossi. Courtesy Galeria  
Jaqueline Martins and Hudinilson Jr. Estate.



The recurrent use of mirroring surfaces,<sup>20</sup> mirrored images, erotic gazes, details of nudity, xerox copies of his own body, headlines and articles dedicated to Narcissus – together with a graphic organization that triggers them – make explicit the one-and-the-other reversal (figure 13). A reversal that therefore mobilizes the myth of Narcissus not simply as a disconsolate and passive figure aporetically facing his mortal fate, but as an active



hunter in search of gazes and bodies. This reactivation of Narcissus may appropriately be explained by the concept of self-design as elaborated by media theorist Boris Groys. Indeed, Groys argues that the fundamental question of self-design concerns not the problem of how “I design the world outside, but how I design myself or, rather, how I deal with the way the world designs me” (GROYS, 2009). Groys argues that self-design has to be considered an all-modern obligation subsequent to the death of God announced by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, “an aesthetic presentation as an ethical subject” (GROYS, 2008), that quickly expanded not only to public figures such as politicians or stars, but to the masses as a whole. The radical aestheticization of life brought about by mass and social media and biocapitalism has accelerated this process by creating in everyone a constant *desire to be desired*. A desire, however, that is not achieved passively but constantly by working for it to happen: “the subject of self-design clearly has a vital interest in the image it offers to the outside world. This subject is therefore not passive, but active and productive” (GROYS, 2016). Self-design thus gives rise to an approach that Groys calls precisely “productive narcissism.” And in calling it narcissistic he too resorts to the myth of Narcissus, to finally state:

However, it is difficult to say that the mythological Narcissus is interested exclusively in himself. Obviously he is not interested in satisfying his desires, which he ascetically rejects. But neither is he interested in an “inner,” “subjective” vision accessible exclusively to his own contemplation, isolating him from others. Rather, he is enchanted by the reflection of his body in the lake presenting itself as an “objective,” profane image—produced by Nature and potentially accessible to everyone. It would be wrong to say that Narcissus is uninterested in others, in society. Rather, he completely identifies his own perspective with an “objective” social perspective. And so he assumes that others will be also fascinated by his own worldly image. (GROYS, 2016)

Given this framework, the trajectory of Narcissus elaborated transversely in the *Cadernos* would reveal an “exercise of seeing” that, anticipating an increasingly intrusive exposure of the subject to media and self-image, attempts to respond to identity fragmentation and the anxiety of being constantly and radically subjected to the gaze of the Other by developing strategies of imagery resemantization, homoerotic transgression and queer decentering. Indeed, the trajectory of Narcissus outlines a practice that is not solipsistic, but in constant dialogue with the world, seeking exchanges and gazes because, as the artist points out, only as long as it is image “Narcissus never dies” (RESENDE, 2016, p. 363; STIGGER, 2020, p. 149).

However, as Groys (2016) reminds us, citing the influential philosopher Alexandre Kojève, the desire to desire the desire of the Other “produces self-consciousness and even the ‘self’ as such, but it is also what turns the subject into an object-ultimately, a dead object”. The tension between *eros* and death, which the myth Narcissus exemplifies, is indeed transversal in Hudinilson Jr.’s scrapbooks. Dead bodies, brutally killed, and Christs on their crosses are often juxtaposed with portraits of ecstasy and maddening excitement. But Hudinilson Jr.’s attempt seems precisely to problematize this tension so that neither the artist nor the images can finally become fixed as definitive objects. The pages continually renew an interplay that irreverently and erotically provokes a courtship that never finds rest, between multiple terms that mutually exchange roles. It is indeed to be considered that Hudinilson Jr.’s reflection on this interplay is deep and across the board. This dynamic is so central to the artist that it not only haunts his entire body of work – he even goes so far as to put it into words, calling it “loving position,”<sup>21</sup> and explaining it as follows: “the distance of human relationships; of contact, love and sex. The distant, inverse, opposite = the space of dream/conflict and solitude. tension” (HUDINILSON JR., 1982).

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

This essay on the *Cadernos de referências* addresses the communicative strategies Hudinilson Jr. employs to trigger the key themes of his poetics. Through an in-depth examination of process, layout and medium, light is shed on a practice that intimately reclaims the proliferating and anonymous mass media flow of the postmodern world. The constant appropriation and manipulation of ephemeral material reveals a profound work of archiving and resemantization capable of producing original and queer narratives that challenge heteropatriarchal normativity and mainstream imagery. Coming from different cultures and eras, scraps and photocopies converge together and outline what we propose to call a *scrapscape*, in which the body is the absolute protagonist. It is precisely on how bodies and the desires that inhabit them flow in the space of the double page spread that this analysis is based.

The layout solutions identified – *accumulating, mirroring, friezing, masking* – along with the transversal trajectory of Narcissus effect, show how desire might become practice. A practice that consists of material and analog techniques, where selecting, cutting out and pasting represent a necessity that punctuates the rhythm of the days, and touch is combined with the visual.

A practice that reveals formal recurrences, and iterative processes that enable us to postulate as one of the driving forces of the exercise a self-design impulse, a desire to be desired. Without any intention to over-interpret the practice, the concept of self-design was indeed approached to show how Hudinilson Jr.'s practice may prove symptomatic of a broader problematization concerning the relationship between body, self-image, and mass/social media, something as topical as ever. After all, scrapbooks can be understood as a kind of social media *ante litteram* and anticipate many of its issues.

Finally, through an examination of the interplay of Narcissus, this essay sought to highlight that it is precisely in its layered internal dynamics that the *Cadernos de referências* hides the ultimate meaning of Hudinilson Jr.'s quest. To lose and find oneself in a media stream that absorbs and recycles everything, where the body is fragmented, identity is torn apart, and only the gaze can flow within and likewise look at, with desire.

## NOTAS

- 1** Marcio Harum, Maria Adelaide Pontes, and Maria Olimpia Vassão later curated, at the CCSP, *Zona de Tensão* (2016), a monographic exhibition displaying a set of 50 works representing Hudinilson Jr.'s multimedia transit through photography, xerox art, postal art, installation, collage, graffiti, urban intervention, and performance. The interviews were also part of the key material for the only monograph published to date on Hudinilson Jr. (RESENDE, 2016).
- 2** From 1979 to 1982 Hudinilson Jr. was a member of the group 3NÓS3, along with Rafael França (1957-1991) and Mario Ramiro (1957). The group produced a series of important and critical urban interventions. For more details, see Ramiro (2017).
- 3** This neologism has already been used in an essay on the multifaceted contemporary scenario of artist scrapbooking (ROSSI, 2022b). Inspired by the “-scapes” used by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (1990) to describe global cultural flows, *scrapscape* refers to the constantly amassing landscape of scraps and ephemera produced by the contemporary consumerist and mass media system. We could ideally place scrapscapes among the flows that Appadurai calls “mediascape” and “ideoscape,” two image-centered and narrative-based scapes that deal with the distribution of media information, the construction of imagined worlds, and the dissemination of ideologies. In reference to scrapbooking, it reveals the peculiarity of the practice of laying out this flow within a design space.
- 4** 130 is an approximated number. In 2008, Hudinilson Jr. felt the need to begin cataloging his *Cadernos*. To this end he dedicated an entire notebook. In March 2008 he counted 88 *Cadernos*, but by his own admission 12 of them were missing from the list. For a definitive balance, it would be necessary to take into account also those composed from 2008 to 2013, the year of his death. Nowadays, the *Cadernos* are scattered in several places. They are housed in his family home, private collections, Galeria Jaqueline Martins (São Paulo/Brussels), South American institutions such as MALBA in Buenos Aires and MAC, Pinacoteca and CCSP in São Paulo, the Vera Chaves Barcellos Foundation in Porto Alegre, and in other museums such as MoMA in New York, and Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid.
- 5** His recognition is largely owed to the work of recovery and circulation of his artworks by Galeria Jaqueline Martins (São Paulo/Brussels), exhibitions dedicated by institutions such as CCSP and Pinacoteca in São Paulo, and the commitment of curators, artists and researchers such as Erin Aldana, Vera Chaves Barcellos, Tadeu Chiarelli, Marcio Harum,

Ana Maria Maia, Paulo Miyada, Fernanda Nogueira, Mario Ramiro, Ricardo Resende, João Spinelli and Veronica Stigger.

**6** Hudinilson Jr. uses many paperback minute books numbered in the upper right corner, counting the double page as the unit of reference. For an introduction to collages, see: BRENNER, Fernanda. How to Make Love to a Photocopier: Hudinilson Jr.'s Queer Body Scans. **FRIEZE**, 2019. Available at: <<https://www.frieze.com/article/how-make-love-photocopier-hudinilson-jrs-queer-body-scans>>. Accessed: 5 Apr. 2023.

**7** For a more detailed discussion on the use of the term postproduction, see Bourriaud (2010).

**8** The most recurring minute books employed for Hudinilson Jr.'s *Cadernos de Referências* measure 15.5 x 21.5 cm and 22 x 33cm.

**9** At least two occasions extolled Hudinilson Jr.'s pioneering queer and homoerotic approach to art in Brazil conservative and dictatorial 1970s-1980s scenario. The first is an essay investigating the homoerotic perspective in Brazilian art, addressing artists such as José Leonilson, Glauco Menta, Hudinilson Jr., and Marcelo Gabriel (GARCIA, 2013). The second is *Let X=X*, an exhibition curated by Paulo Herkenhoff that took place at the Kupfer project space in London in 2021, and featured Hudinilson Jr. in dialogue with Rio de Janeiro artist and art critic Alair Gomes (1921-1992). To access Kupfer announce to the exhibition, see: KUPFER, 2021. Available at: <<https://kupfer.co/viewing-room/2/>>. Accessed: 5 Apr. 2023.

**10** For further discussion on the practice and meanings of Hudinilson Jr.'s *Xerox Actions*, see Rossi (2022a), Jojima (2020), Nogueira (2016). On the topological implications of the relationship between original and copy in scrapbooking, see Rossi (2022b).

**11** It is no coincidence that in the anthological exhibition *Histories of Sexuality* curated by Adriano Pedrosa and Camila Bechelany at Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), the *Cadernos* feature in the "Sexual Games" section. For more details, see Pedrosa; Bechelany (2017).

**12** Using the conceptual dichotomy of "immersion" and "specularity," the intention here is to suggest a parallelism between art critic Michael Fried's interpretation of Caravaggio's painting (recurring in Hudinilson Jr.'s imagery) and the twofold interplay of gazes that characterizes the *Cadernos*. According to Fried (2010), Caravaggio's paintings metaphorically operate as

mirrors that generate both an effect of identification, in which the artist projects himself within the work, and an acute sense of separation, in which the artist becomes aware of his physical and psychological detachment from the work. In this scenario, Caravaggio's *Narciso*, probably the painting more often present in the *Cadernos*, plays an essential role. In Fried's opinion, that iconic Narcissus bending over his own image can be understood as the presentation of the very act of self-representation with its two moments: immersion and specularity.

**13** The first Brazilian zine is commonly traced back to 1965, with the launch of *Ficção* by illustrator Edson Rontani (ANDRAUS; MAGALHÃES, 2021).

**14** During the interviews (RESENDE ET AL., 2011-2012), Hudinilson Jr. used to call himself an "*autodidata com graduação*" [someone with a "self-taught degree"], precisely to mock the fact that his greatest skill was self-learning.

**15** Situationism, a philosophical, sociological, and artistic movement rooted in the artistic avant-gardes of the early twentieth century, and active throughout the 1960s in Europe, in its massive critique of the image-mediated consumer society after World War II, calls it "society of the spectacle" (DEBORD, 2014). Today, to describe the advanced state of capitalist spectacle, we would instead speak more properly of "biocapitalism," or cognitive capitalism, thus emphasizing the gradual penetration of the logic of profit into every sphere of human life, where not only the body has become integrated with the culture of consumption but also a whole biological, mental, relational and affective dimension (CODELUPPI, 2008).

**16** The use of handwritten text is not in conflict with scrapbooking. These marks on paper, as long as they remain ancillary to the supporting structure made up of clippings and appropriations, of pre-existing and manipulated material, do not distort the object or inhibit any of its semantic or symbolic functions. On the contrary, they can play a supporting role that is not only narrative but also hermeneutic.

**17** It happens, for example, that the described layout solutions are used blended, and it is no longer possible to identify an exact template; or that other peculiar characteristics of the medium or materials influence the narrative, and the final result of the composition no longer explicitly respects one of the four proposed design solutions.

**18** Not only glass mirrors. In his installations or performances, Hudinilson Jr. adopts mechanical "mirroring" tools, such as the xerox machine or the video camera. He clearly



states this by claiming: “Each image maintains the duality of the mirrored side of my body and the graphic transfer of the medium. It is my hand, but it is also the copy of the copy of the detail that is the detail of my body. It is not like looking at myself in a mirror, but a position of formal reflection on my parts / parts of a body / other bodies.” (HUDINILSON JR., 1983)

**19** In Latin, the expression “the one and the other” is translated as *alter et alter*, “the one” being identified with the other, emphasizing how identity inherently needs otherness to define itself. In this regard, the Roman poet Ovid, speaking of the very contradiction concerning the person who looks at themselves in the mirror, describes Narcissus precisely through the wordplay *quod non alter et alter eras*. For a deeper discussion on this aporia, see (ROSSI, 2019, p. 74-79).

**20** A small oval mirror is pasted on the cover of *Caderno de referências I*, as if to symbolically introduce the practice.

**21** Hudinilson Jr. collects under the title *Posição amorosa (Loving Position)* a multimedia series of works that brings together xerox, photography, mail art, installations, collages, and artist’s books. *Posição amorosa* is also the title of the monograph that Resende (2016) dedicates to the artist. The prominence of this series can be demonstrated by the fact that in 2020 the exhibition curated by Ana Maria Maia at the Pinacoteca do Estado, *Explícito (Explicit)* remounted precisely the iconic 1981 installation *Posição amorosa outdoor/art-door (Loving Position - Outdoor/Art-Door)* on the rear facade of Estação Pinacoteca building. This installation is linked to another indoor video installation that exemplifies the interplay between body/gaze/mirror. Hudinilson Jr. describes it as follows: “on a circular wooden board, covered with black carpeting, two diagonals will be drawn, with red tape, one perpendicular to the other. At the ends of one of the diagonals will be installed, back-to-back, two male mannequins, lacquered white. Each should have their faces turned slightly to the right. In front of each mannequin will be a closed-circuit camera connected to two televisions that, installed on the other diagonal, will reproduce the image of the mannequins’ faces. Although the televisions are turned inside the circle, facing each other, the faces will be facing opposite directions” (HUDINILSON JR., 1982).

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