

Media Art in the Ibero-American Context ISEA2017

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Abstract

Any historiographic effort on Media Art shows the complexity of its own conceptualization regarding those artistic practices that it involves, since there is not unanimity between experts and researchers about this topic as it is shown in the media art history meetings (<http://www.mediaarthistory.org/>). Neither a consensual taxonomy in these artistic practices. However, one of the most relevant is the taxonomy completed by Professor José Ramón Alcalá, MIDE's director and a ground-breaking in the subject of electrographic art in Spain. Taking his taxonomy as a reference, we can resolve that Video art and Electrographic Art, both started in the 60's but developed in the 70's and 80's, were some of the artistic practices that brought the first ideas of Media Art in Spain and Latin America. Regarding to Video art, some of the pioneer artists and researchers were Eugeni Bonet, Joaquín Dols, Antoni Mercader and Antoni Muntadas, as can be seen in the historic book *En torno al video*. With respect to Electrographic Art, some of the pioneers were Paulo Bruscky, Clemente Padín, Humberto Jardón and José Ramón Alcalá with the International Museum of Electrographic Artworks (MIDE) in Cuenca, the most important example adding the collection of this unique museum.

Keywords

Media Art, Media Art Histories, Video Art, Electrographic Art, Ibero-American, MIDE.

Introduction

The *Media Art History* construction, is an essential work of our present time, which is defined to a great extent for the creative processes in which new media is nuclear.

To deal with this research, we should establish a taxonomy that restricts it and, at the same time, limits the research field. In this way, we are starting from the taxonomy carried out by José Ramón Alcalá Mellado, https://www.academia.edu/15188485/New_Media_Art_taxonomy- as a result of 25 years of experience as researcher, artist and MIDE (International Museum of Electrography) director. This taxonomy became a reality through the course of the National Research

Project: "Creation and Studies of the CAAC (Collection and Archives of Contemporary Art) of Cuenca as a methodological model aimed to an excellence research in Fine Arts (HAR2013-48604-C2-1-P), a project in which this poster's authors have been an active part. So what it is going to be explain in this poster is the result of some of those investigations which were develop by both authors.

The research carried out in the stated project has allowed to deepen in this taxonomy to narrate the beginnings of the Media Art in the Ibero-American context. Starting from this reference, two were the main experiences that marked the beginning of the Media Art besides to the computer: the Video art and the artistic practices with the photocopier

Video Art in Spain & Latinamerica

The beginnings of Video art in Spain were established by the artistic and research efforts made by those who are considered the parents in this country: Eugeni Bonet, Joaquim Dols, Antoni Mercader and Antoni Muntadas. The experimentation, research and discussions maintained between these four artists and researchers, were collected in the emblematic book titled *Around the video*, published in 1980. Thirty-five years later, a group of young Spanish video artists of reference met to interview them and develop their own history of video creation in Spain, whose result was the text *About Around the video*.

Both texts make up the history of video art from its beginnings to our contemporary times. The history of Spanish video was collected as a visual narration in the documentary titled *Course Video [Devenir video (Adiós a todo esto)]*. 2004-2005 (<http://www.hamacaonline.net/obra.php?mode=29>) by Gabriel Villota, one of the leading artists of the second mentioned text.

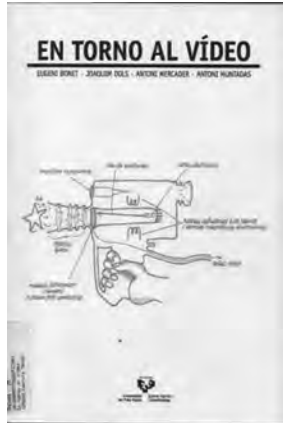


Figure 1. Around to the video, the book that marks the beginning of video art in Spain



Figure 2. About around the video, book edited 30 years after the first book considered starter of video art in Spain by the new generation of Spanish video artists

But if we focus in the main texts on Video art in Latin America, the main book is titled *Videoarte en Latinoamérica. Una historia crítica*, by Laura Baigorri. And as a reference video artist contemporaneous with the Spanish video artists previously mentioned, we must underline the name of the Mexican artist Pola Weiss.

The Photocopy Machine's Role in the Media Art

Although digital technologies settled in the 80s, the adoption of the automatic machine of graphic multi-reproduction –photocopy machine- as an artistic tool, meant some needs which reflected the artistic, social,

political and economic changes that were taking place. However, those resultant artistic practices have remained in a discredited place, developing their own access modes into the culture, through the management of spaces, exhibitions, workshops, and even collections such as the MIDE of Cuenca, by professor and artist José Ramón Alcalá. He was a definite driving force, along with his artistic partner Fernando Ñ.Canales, for the artistic development of the electrography in Spain, with the contributions by Marisa González, Jesús Pastor, Paco Rangel or Rubén Tortosa, among others; and for the compilation of international artworks.

Latin America Media Archaeology

One of the most significant geographical contexts with respect to these artistic practices was the Latin American ones, of which MIDE treasures artworks as a witness to it. Although having a tremendously activist character due to the political position of some countries, the Latin American Copy Art emerged having this technology as a muse, a medium and a creative objective. With a significant propagandist root, it sought to experiment through a creative process turned into an artistic artwork in its procedural sense and to break with traditional concepts, such as original, copy, unique and multiple.

One of the most productive centers was Brazil, with artists such as Paulo Bruscky, who was associated with performance practices on the machine and with the experimentation with video technology creating the *xerofilmes*, with humorous tone to survive political repression. And Luis Guimarães with his monochromatic tendency artworks that explore the degeneration technique and reflect on the temporality. Guimarães was a great cultural promoter because he organized the “1º *Studio Internacional de Electrografía de São Paulo*” within the “XX *Bienal Internacional de Arte*” (1989), inviting international artists.

Also Mexican artists, such as Félix Beltran and Humberto Jardón, investigated the alternative use of photocopiers, faxes, video and computers. Jardón organized “*Encuentro Otras Gráficas*” (1993) and coordinated the electrography section with Victor Lerma. As a result, they produced the *Arquetipo* artistic folder, as a continuation of the *Mimesis* proposal (1991), to legitimize artistic production with this technology. Other relevant artists were Santiago Rebolledo, Mónica P. Mayer, Fernando García, Magali Lara, and Marcos Gabriel.

Artworks by other artists who used the photocopy machine but remained more related to Mail Art were relevant too, as Uruguayan Clemente Padín and Argentines León Ferrari and Silvio de Gracia in reaction to authoritarian regimes. Some as a means of reproduction and others with an experimental approach linked to the development of different techniques and procedures.



Figure 3. Clemente Padín. *Autorretrato I*. 1987. Monochromatic xerography. MIDE Collection



Figure 4. Humberto Jardón. *Sin Título*. 1982. Chromatic xerography. MIDE Collection

Conclusions

This poster is a theoretical and visual approach to some historical artistic practices of the Media Art and those who marked its beginning in Latin America. Likewise, it pretends to witness the role played by MIDE in the development of Media Art.

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Beatriz Escribano Belmar. Bachelor of Fine Arts (2011) with a Research Master in Visual and Multimedia Arts (2012), she is FPI Research fellowship at the UCLM by the JCCM. She collaborated in the *Archive of Digital Art, ADA* (Danube University, Austria) and worked in the Musei Civici in Venice. Her last publication is *Processes: The Artist and The Machine. Reflections on the historical Media Art* (2016)