Imágenes, hashtags y base de datos: la experiencia audiovisual del Taller Masp.Etc.Br

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1. Introduction

The portability of photo and video camera - features of any smartphone - connected in digital networks is fostering the digitalization of the everyday life in images. When these images are shared on social networks, they are centralized in a system, catalogued and stored in a database. Flickr, Google Photo, Instagram, Facebook, 500px, YouTube, Vimeo, among dozens of other platforms, can be understood as a database of photos and videos that gather a monumental amount of images. Categorizing the content is defined by the users who associate certain keywords, tags, or hashtags with the image. It is an individual process of production and organization of the image but results in a collective collection.

This paper analyses the database as a form of cultural expression, related to the informational context of network society. As a case study, it is presented the Workshop Masp.Etc.Br carried out by the research group "Aesthetics of memory in the 21st century" of the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP). The research group is coordinated by Associate Professor Giselle Beiguelman of FAU-USP, and formed by the researchers André Deak, Artur Vasconcelos Cordeiro, Didiana Prata, Erica Ferrari, Giovanna Casimiro, Lucas Bambozzi, Nathalia Lavigne, Renato Almeida Prado, Rodrigo Terra. The participants of the group are artists, architects, designers, and curators who investigate digital media related to the contemporary city, art, archive, memory, spaces of information and representation (Outros, 2017a).

The proposal of the Workshop was to work with the collective collection of images available in social networks to create audiovisual narratives. The experience of the Workshop will be discussed on the basis of Victoria Vesna's concept of "database aesthetics" (2000) and Lev Manovich's theoretical framework about the relationship between cinema and database from the book "The language of new media" (2002). Firstly it is presented the theoretical references and concepts that underlie the discussion of the paper. Secondly, it is presented works of researchers, artists, filmmakers that deal with the issues related to database, narrative, digital media and image appropriation as a reference. At last, it is presented the experience of the Workshop Masp.Etc.Br from the personal point of view of the author - who is one of the participants of the research group. The goal of this article is to discuss the creative potential of images catalogued in social networks, and how this repertoire can dialogue with urban space and understanding of the contemporary city.

2. THE OVERLOAD SOCIETY

The production of knowledge is interrelated with the database, with the organization of information. From the moment the information is produced, there's also an effort to catalogue it, to make it accessible. Victoria Vesna in the article "Database are us", comments that the invention of the press and the increase of the amount of book produced, also resulted in the creation of systems of categorization, organization and information retrieval, created by libraries and museums. Referring to the invention of the press as "the first wave of information overload", she compares digital communication networks and the creation of the internet as an informational tsunami (Vesna, 2000b: 157). Immersed in an ocean of information, it becomes fundamental to create an indexing system for data to be retrieved. As Lev Manovich states: "by the end of the twentieth century, the problem was no longer how to create a new media object such as an image; the new problem was how to find an object that already exists somewhere" (Manovich, 2002: 35). The popularity of Google's search engine demonstrates the importance of catalogued information, of the indexing systems that make it possible to find the searched data.

In Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Library of Babel", where all possible and imaginable combinations of 25 orthographic symbols are stored in countless shelves, the narrator, like all the inhabitants of the library, is a librarian who dedicates his life to the search of a book, the catalogue of catalogues, "the perfect compendium of all books" (Borges, 2007: 76) The figure of the librarian evidences the activity of managing the information in the processes of selection, acquisition, cataloguing, classification, indexing of the data. No longer restricted to library staff or museum archivists, the practice of navigating through databases in search of certain information has become a common activity in contemporary society. In addition to Boolean operators, which includes or excludes search terms, Google's search system is integrated with various applications such as calculator, weather forecast, dictionary, translator, currency converter, measurement converter, bibliography searches, geolocated places, flights, among other resources. As in Borges' tale, contemporary society is made up of librarians who are constantly browsing databases for information.

This context of *information overload* also concerns the human body itself, which is subject to digitization processes, as Victoria Vesna observes: "perhaps the most intriguing and in some ways disturbing trend of digitization and data collection is turned on ourselves, our bodies" (Vesna, 2000b: 169). The Visible Human Project of the US National Library of Medicine, begun in 1986, is a comprehensive collection of electronic images of the human body, including photographs of millimetre sections of the entire female and male body. Genome project goes further with the mapping of the human genetic structure, the informational code of the diversity of life, which "converted our understanding of the body, formerly understood as an arrangement of flesh, bones and blood, in an information map sequenced in computer"[1] (Beiguelman, 2013: 155). Giselle Beiguelman calls "informational bodies" the condition of the body as a data carrier and also as a source of information. When everything becomes classifiable data and the digitization of life manifests itself in the most diverse aspects, from cultural habits to the body itself, "we are increasingly aware of ourselves as databases" (Vesna, 2000a: 155).

The approximation of daily life with the database, with catalogued information, it is the subject of reflection and artistic practices that operate with methods of dialoguing with data as a form of cultural expression. This creative approach to working data in the field of art can be understood in the concept that Victoria Vesna describes as "database aesthetics" (Vesna, 2000a: 155). Working with a large amount of information, which becomes the media itself, the artist appropriates a methodological repertoire of classification, organization and selection that are typical of archive system and database to create representations and forms of expression.

Access to information is what gives meaning to the information itself, and the computational culture can be understood in this sense. Whether in software of text editing, video editor, website, application, game, all operate by accessing files locally, on servers, or in both cases simultaneously. Lev Manovich notes that in 1984 Apple introduced the metaphor used in the Human Computer Interface (HCI) that explicitly refers to the storage and manipulation of information such as file, folder, directory, library, and actions such as copying,

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[1] Citation translated from Portuguese: "converteu nossa compreensão do corpo, antes entendido como um arranjo de carne, ossos e sangue, em um mapa de informações sequenciadas em computador" (Beiguelman, 2013: 155).

editing, deleting, renaming, among others (Manovich, 2002: 69). In fact, the computer - at the various scales, desktop, notebook, smartphone - it is a data interaction tool, which appears to be in most cases cultural, as Manovich argues in conceptualizing the term "cultural interface" (Manovich, 2002: 70).

In this sense, the popularization of the computer implies in the popularization of interaction with cultural objects. Not only as an information consumer, as with newspaper, radio and television, but also as a producer, in the creation and manipulation of data. The production of images reaches monumental proportions. Only on Instagram are published per day an average of 70 million photos and videos (Omnicore, 2017). YouTube has an average of upload 300 hours of video per minute (Guardian, 2015). Walter Benjamin's phrase makes even more sense in the current context, "the reader is always ready to become a writer"[2] (Benjanmin, 2014: 81).

3. CREATING STORY WITH STORED DATA

How the great amount of information organized into categories can be manipulated creatively? How to use database to create narratives? The choices of categories, classification of subjects, modes of navigation, forms of visualizations, hierarchy, ordering and sequencing between parts are procedures present in the manipulation of the information in structured data systems. How such procedures are related to the creation of narrative can be answered by the logic of cinema, as Lev Manovich states:

> For cinema already exists right in the intersection between database and narrative. We can think of all the material accumulated during shooting forming a database, especially since the shooting schedule usually does not follow the narrative of the film but is determined by production logistics. During editing the editor constructs a film narrative out of this database, creating a unique trajectory through the conceptual space of all possible films which could have been constructed (Manovich, 2002: 237).

He cites Dziga Vertov's film "Man with a Movie Camera" (1929) as evidence of the intersection of the database with the narrative:

> In one of the key shots repeated few times in the film we see an editing room with a number of shelves used to keep and organize the shot material. The shelves are marked 'machines', 'club', 'the movement of a city', 'physical exercise', 'an illusionist', and so on. This is the database of the recorded material. The editor – Vertov's wife, Elizaveta Svilova – is shown working with this database: retrieving some reels, returning used reels, adding new ones (Manovich, 2002: 239-240).

In the film there are several scenes of the same subject being screened repeatedly, such as people waking up, automobiles coming out of the garage, people working, spinning machines, people practicing sports, as if they were objects from the same catalog. The arrangement of the data in a certain order, a process of going back and forth, repeating the scenes, using techniques of transition and manipulation of the images is part of the narrative of the film, which according to Manovich, aimed to decode the world through the camera's eye: "Records drawn from a database and arranged in a particular order become a picture of modern life - but simultaneously an argument about this life, an interpretation of what these images, which we encounter every day, every second, actually mean" (Manovich, 2002: 240).

In the field of photography, an example of approach to database aesthetics are the industrial collections of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Initiated in the 1960s, photographs of water tanks, mining towers, silos, gas tanks, facilities and machinery were displayed in a grid layout allowing another perception of the image. The systematic repetition of the object with a similar way of framing the images makes reference to the idea of catalogue. This characteristic of the rhythm of the images is a "disciplined commitment to a singular vision - a commitment that has been consistent over nearly half a century's duration, consistent across many different countries and regions, and consistent from each to the next of many thousands of photographs" (Stimson, 2004). Typical of a database system, in which there is a standardization and classification rules, the

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[2] Citation translated from Portuguese: "o leitor está sempre pronto para se tornar um escritor" (Benjanmin, 2014: 81).

organization of the images is also rigorous, the arrangement of the images is not based on date or place, but rather by typology, as defined by Stimson, "their system is based on the principle of the archive" (Ibid.).

This mode of displaying multiple thumbnail images in the same page layout is a standard of the Graphical User Interface (GUI). Whether viewing the contents of a folder in the operating system windows - the icon representing the file is the image itself in the thumbnail scale - as in the most diverse applications and online image sharing systems - they also use similar way of navigating the database by thumbnails of the images. Unlike printed information, which is limited by page size, the scrolling method enables continuous data flow. In online systems such as Flickr or Instagram, page scrolling sometimes seems to have no end, as more images are uploaded as the page is scrolled.

It is worth mentioning that when one is talking about files, invariably it is also speaking about memory. Both in the affective sense, personal and social experiences, as well as in the storage capacity of digital devices. As Giselle Beiguelman notes, memory has become quantifiable information: "how much memory does your computer have? And your camera? And your cell phone? All that? Only that? ... Memories are bought, memories are transferred, memories are erased and get lost" (Beiguelman, 2014: 13). There is a relationship between the objectivity of storage systems and the subjectivity of human experiences, especially when it comes to cultural data. The storage space, sometimes unlimited on online platforms, enables the registration of affections, memories, modes of representations and perceptions of the world. Not only human memories are saved in the memories of computational devices, but above all they are shared. Creating narratives with these databases is to "decode the human experience", as Manovich has pointed out.

3.1. Hashtag

The hashtag is a feature that enables the user to index their text, photo, and video messages posted on social networks with one or more subjects. Created in 2007 by Chris Messina, the hashtag arise in Twitter and was organically becoming popular until Twitter recognized the importance of the tool and hyperlinked the hashtags, as it is known today, enabling "people from all over the planet to share their voice and join global conversations" (Twitter, 2017). Later Google, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr among others, did the same. The hashtag allows one or more words, or even a phrase to be used, like a metatext, allowing users to organize and search for certain content. Didiana Prata notes that the hashtag can be used with different purposes, to participate in the collective, as part of a hashtag common to many users, or for the sake of exclusivity, by creating a unique hashtag (Prata, 2016c: 13).

In October 2017 a search on Instagram with the hashtag #city returned more than 50 million photos and videos. When using "city", a generic term, in the description of the image, certainly the objective of the user was not to obtain exclusivity, because practically the image disappear in a universe with millions of items. The Brazilian artist Ze Vicente created the hashtag #pela_rua_com_recortes to display his graphical collage work in the city, as artistic infiltrations in urban space and made Instagram his gallery (Prata, 2016b: 74). On the same date, the search with this hashtag returned 143 posts, most of them are from the artist himself and all of them is referring to his work.

Nevertheless, the hashtag is a hyperlink that groups subjects, and as Didiana Prata suggests, the use of written language as an image caption plays an important role in the construction of narratives with databases (Prata, 2016c: 28). With similar understanding, Giselle Beiguelman comments that new possibilities for narratives emerge with hashtags, which are related to the file logic of the database, and not to the traditional pattern of sequential linearity:

> Contemporary history is being written with hashtags. Much more than a simple keyword preceded by a hash symbol, hashtags are a fundamental resource in the process of content re-distribution on online networks. A type of 'data that depicts data', they are information added to the content, creating a curious architecture of files and their associated layers (Beiguelman, 2014).

As has been discussed in recent years about the big data, media corporations take ownership of user data to sell targeted advertising and services, Facebook is a classic example. Every interaction made, the like clicked, comments, social circle, places frequented, among other information are composing an exhaustive database on the users. Therefore, a post unfolds into a variety of metadata, over which users have little or no control. The hashtag is one of the numerous information fields, however it enables the user - minimally - to interact with this database, cataloguing its own content or browsing the collective file.

4. Poetics of database

Contextualized in this discussion about digital media, database and narratives, it is presented works by artists who dialogue with these issues as references. When using images in a social networking database, actually the images from third parties are being used that are probably not aware of it, in what way, what purpose, and by whom their images are being used. Thus, these works stress questions about the appropriation of collective images, images of public space, and the construction of urban imagery produced by multiple gazes, which Didiana Prata, referring to Jacques Rancière, calls images produced and consumed by anyone (Prata, 2016a: 17). In addition, by thinking in unconventional narratives, poetic experiments in the way images are produced, in the form of viewing and receiving images, permeates aspects of the visual language that Stan VanDerBeek called "expanded cinema" in his manifesto *Culture: Intercom and Expanded Cinema* (VanDerBeek, 1966).

The project *On Broadway* (2014) by Daniel Goddemeyer, Moritz Stefaner, Dominikus Baur, and Lev Manovich is an interactive installation about the Broadway Avenue in New York with information collected from Instagram, Google Street View, Twitter, Foursquare, travel information of taxi and economic indicators. The activity of hundreds of thousands of people created the representation of the city through a huge database. In the artists' words, the result is a "visually rich image-centric interface, where numbers play only a secondary role, and no maps are used. The project proposes a new visual metaphor for thinking about the city: the vertical stack of image and data layers" (Broadway, 2014). As there is no map, the location reference is the sequence of photos of the facades of the buildings and photos looking up to the sky, both collected from Google Street View. As the avenue is been travelled, the city is presented in a multifaceted way, with frames that combine different perspectives from the same region of the avenue, including the aforementioned images, Instagram photos and statistical data. *On Broadway* is more than a sophisticated way of perceiving the city, the project also reveals an uneven city, "in affluent areas, people make more money, take taxi, and post images on Instagram and Twitter. In poor areas, people make less money, rarely use taxi, and post much fewer images on social networks" (Ibid., 2014). At the same time that is possible to browse thru the imaginary of the city in the idiosyncratic images of Instagram, the real city is also revealed.

The work of Giselle Beiguelman *Unlooping film* is an installation with images of Instagram filtered from hashtags used simultaneously by antagonistic groups, and with different meanings. Among others, the hashtag #copa2014 was used - that refers to the World Cup 2014 held in Brazil - and it was used both by groups protesting against the use of public money in mega-stadium constructions, as well as enthusiasts and soccer fans. The result is "an endless slideshow that, in its contradictions, states the battle of language for visibility as one of the tightest political themes of our time" (Giselle, 2014). Images can be viewed in three modes, Darwinist, Proportional, and Filtered, in which different algorithms enable distinct ways of navigating the database. During the time that the work was exposed, from May 1 to August 10, 2014, Unlooping film was being built by approximately 2 million images, estimates Beiguelman. It was fed in real time by Instagram, the work appropriated images of a multitude of people with conflicting interests, "to compose a dynamic and infinite mosaic about the battle of language that permeates the aesthetic dimension of contemporary political experience" (Ibid.).

The *Aspen Movie Map* (1978) from the Architecture Machine Group of Massachusetts Institute of Technology - which included the participation of Nicholas Negroponte, Rebecca Allen, Michael Naimark, among others - was a predecessor of Google Street View, mapping the city of Aspen in United States. As the title suggests, the work is a map in film form:

> Not only did we drive down every street on a truck with four cameras in each direction, but we did it in three different seasons. We photographed every building in Aspen, matched historical photos of key buildings, made short films of certain locations and recorded binaural audio tours of downtown (Allen, 2017).

Produced almost forty years ago, when the storage and computational processing resources were still rudimentary, the project gathered a massive multimedia database for the time, as Michael Naimark explains: "In addition to the basic travel footage, panoramic camera experiments, thousands of still frames, audio, and data were collected. The playback system required several laserdisc players, a computer, and a touch screen display" (Naimark, 2017). *Aspen Movie Map* can be understood as an expanded cinema, in which the camera creates an immersive representation of the city, an experience that today is trivialized with Google Street View.

The photography serie *Street View* of Michael Wolf begun a few months after Google launched the Street View platform in 2007. It is a reading of the city in the everyday life from the comprehensive records made by Google's car cameras. Touring and photographing the streets and avenues of cities around the world, Google's project is an incredible geolocation tool and also quite controversial, when indiscriminately takes photo of the whole public space. Michael Wolf appropriated these databases to explore the city with a curious look, looking for unusual situations and moments, "walking" the streets, looking inside windows, sidewalks and architectures (Wolf, 2012). Just as Google cars scanned the city to create images, Michael Wolf scans the image to represent the city. His works are identified with the Dusseldorf School, with the documentary method of thinking the photograph present in the works of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Without hiding the Street View navigation interface, mouse cursor, monitor pixels, and giving up the printscreen feature, Michael Wolf photographs the screen and crops the image, creating new framing and composition, and therefore a new photo. It takes GUI language, pixelated image, blurred pictures, glitches and deformations produced by the Google algorithm, and creates collections of thematic images, such as *Eiffel Tower*, *Interface*, *Portraits*. Instead of telling a story, Wolf's photos suggest several possible stories by highlighting scenes and gestures of real people from the city scanned by Google cameras.

The filmmaker Ernesto de Carvalho had a conflicting experience with the Google Street View car, when he prevented the vehicle entering into his street, and recorded the event with a camera, which was also recorded by the car camera, inserting Ernesto in the map, in the database of Street View (Carvalho, 2016). From that experience he creates the film *It's never nighttime in the map* (2016) with the images of Google, constructing a critical narrative about the "street eye". Confronting the relationship of the real with the urban imaginary represented in the infinite Street View movie, Ernesto de Carvalho discusses the contemporary condition of the cities being digitized on the map, and the economics forces that drives these digital representations. Like Michael Wolf, Ernesto de Carvalho navigates through the database and recreates the image by proposing a new way of looking and perceiving the city.

The film *Cisão* (2016) from Yuri Firmeza is a narrative built entirely from surveillance camera videos found on YouTube. These videos show scenes of the public space been monitored, framing part of the façade, the sidewalk, the street. The camera records the presence and action of people who steal the camera itself, thus the surveillance image is turned into glitches and noises by the breakdown and loss of the video signal. The cameras observing the space of the city is an attempt of domestication and inhibition of illicit acts, potentially performed by anyone (Firmeza, 2016). Yuri Firmeza puts in question the view of surveillance and appropriation of the image. To whom belongs it? Could it be shared? Should it have been filmed? Despite it may concern different purposes, the attack to the omnipresent eyes of the cameras suggests an answer to these questions, the goal was precisely to destroy the image.

The work *IP Détournement* (2010) by the artist Tania Bruguera is a pirate collection of new media works from the archive of the Center Pompidou. As a participant in the museum's Voir / Revoir program, Tania Bruguera had access to the museum's collection and with the artists' consent, she filmed the original works, selling the pirate DVDs in the streets around the center for 1 Euro. The proposal of the project was to discuss issues related to free access to artwork:

Intellectual Property (IP) has been the subject of extensive recent discussion during these times of open source culture, the commons, and an effort to widen access to and appreciation of contemporary art. 'IP Détournement' wants to approach the idea of a collection not only as the place to safeguard and preserve artworks but also in its role as distributor of such materials and knowledge (Bruguera, 2010).

In creating copies, recording the museum's records, the artist confronts with policies of control of institutions in the art world. Tania Bruguera puts in debate the images produced by artists, who were somehow legitimized by the art circuit. However, the discussion of the ownership of images, and therefore of information, can be extended to the big data of images, as commented previously. Be it a crowd of people collectively feeding the database of a corporation, or a corporation feeding its database from the capture of people's images, such databases are repositories of memory, perception, and human experience.

5. The Workshop Masp.Etc.Br

The Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) held the exhibition *Avenida Paulista* from February 17 to May 28, 2017. The purpose of the exhibition was to reflect on the surroundings and the avenue on which the museum is located. As part of the *Avenida Paulista* exhibition, collectives, artists and architects were invited to hold workshops related to the theme of the exhibition, expanding the discussion about the museum and its surroundings, addressing issues related to memory, history, and complexities regarding the use and occupation of the spaces of the avenue. MASP invited the research group Aesthetics of Memory of the 21st Century of the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP), which conducted the workshop Masp.Etc.Br, with the proposal of collective audiovisual creation made by images shared on social networks.

5.1. The avenue and the museum

The Paulista Avenue is an important axis and has great symbolic value for the city of São Paulo. Opened at the beginning of the 19th century, the avenue was occupied by mansions of the coffee barons, underwent a process of verticalization throughout the twentieth century, nowadays it is place of financial institutions, commercial and cultural centers. It is also the scene of disputes and major political demonstrations, sometimes with visibility and relevance for the country.

Beginning in 2015, with the municipal program "Open Street", the avenue is closed on Sundays for car traffic, and becomes a leisure area of great cultural effervescence with participation of a diverse public, of various age groups and social classes. A little less than three kilometers long, Paulista Avenue is a space of contradictions and tensions in which informal and popular relations coexist with institutions of economic power and symbolic capital.

The building of MASP is an iconic project of the architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914-1992), the building has five floors and is characterized by a volume suspended by four lateral pillars, which open a large span at ground level of 74 meters of extension and 8 meters height, also allowing visual transparency of the avenue with the city. MASP is considered one of the most important museums in the Southern Hemisphere, with a collection that includes 13th century paintings of Italian and French schools, collections of the Portuguese, Spanish and Flemish school, English, Latin American artists, and important Brazilian artists (MASP, 2017).

In the free span, which intercalates the exhibition spaces of the museum, a traditional antiques fair, which mixes old articles, used products and handicrafts, takes place on Sundays. It is also in the free span of MASP the meeting point of various social and political movements, often gathering crowds of people. Due to the importance of its collection and its exhibitions, and the political dimension of the free span as a place of cultural and social convergence, MASP is an emblematic space for the city, especially its relationship with Paulista Avenue.

5.2. Concept of the Workshop

The proposal of the workshop Masp.Etc.Br was to work with the production of urban images in the relation of the avenue with the museum and the city. The idea of the title "Masp Etcetera" was based on questions from the research group about what meanings MASP has for the city. Although the MASP is a postcard of São Paulo and point of convergence of several social groups, not necessarily means that they visited exhibitions at the MASP. In this way, it was put into question what other possible "MASP" would be, what other meanings would have the acronym that could represent the relation of the museum to the avenue and its different ways of occupying the space.

Using keywords related to the context of the museum and the avenue was created a list with more than 50 acronyms "MASP" that somehow represent the tensions and situations that manifest in the relation between the museum and the surroundings. The objective in creating the acronyms was to highlight the multiplicity of meanings that MASP, as an architectural and museological equipment, may have with the city and more specifically with Paulista Avenue.

Fig. 1 – The acronyms of MASP. Fuente: Masp.Etc.Br

Starting from these questions, the idea of the workshop was to work with the representation of possible meanings and relations of the museum with the city through a survey of images, video and sound, recording the activities that take place on the avenue. As part of the investigation field of the research group Aesthetics of Memory in the 21st Century, the proposal was to carry out the survey of images and catalogue them in

predefined categories, and then construct an audiovisual narrative (Outros, 2017b). The Instagram was chosen as a platform for collecting and cataloguing the material using hashtags.

In the context of image database, Instagram is a particularly interesting application because it is very popular, and consequently, many people use it to make images. As already mentioned, the Instagram upload statistics is monumental, it is a big visual data produced incessantly by people on the most diverse subjects, situations and locations. How can this massive and fragmented record of collective memory, represented by information, metadata and images, express the daily experience of occupying and perceiving the city? How can the digitalization of the various views about the city compose a narrative about the urban space? These inquiries permeated the proposal and formatting of the workshop.

5.3. Collecting and loading visual data

The Masp.Etc.Br workshop was held on May 6th and 7th, and on May 11 a large projection was made in the free span of MASP, with an audiovisual narrative of the material produced in the workshop. The activity had about 35 participants collecting approximately 900 files of images, sounds and videos. The songs performed by the street musicians were recorded and used as soundtracks, and also were audio recorded the reading of acronyms by people circulating on Paulista Avenue.

The workshop began with discussion about aesthetics database and narratives, introducing concepts and presenting projects and artists working with these issues. The participants were asked to use the main hashtag of the workshop #maspetcbr followed by others such as #artepublica, #artistas_paulista, #manifestacaopaulista, #maspmuseu, #paulistaaberta, #vaolivre according to the content being registered. The idea to use a unique hashtag of the workshop was to facilitate the organization and retrieval of the collected material. Then, the participants started mapping the aesthetic manifestations, recording the street artists, craftsmen, performers, street dwellers, musicians, objects, the public, architecture, transits and movements that take place on Paulista Avenue. In addition to the images collected on workshop days, some participants added the workshop hashtags to previously captured images, thus becoming part of the #maspetcbr database.
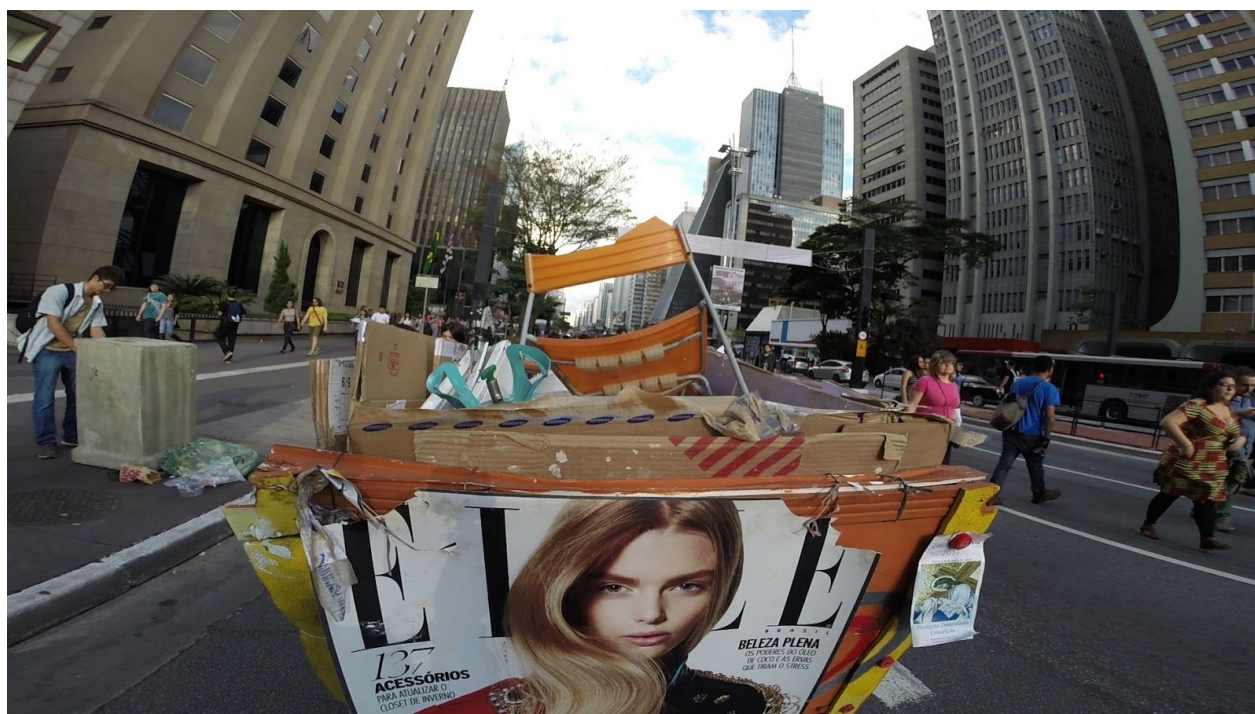

Fig. 2 – The Paulista Avenue. Fuente: Masp.Etc.Br

Without a very determined itinerary, groups were formed with the participants who photographed and filmed the diverse activities and situations of the avenue. Some of the registered subjects were: handicrafts objects, fashion articles, costume jewelry, paintings, toys, street vendors' products, theatrical performances, dancers, musicians, cover of famous artists, human statues, graphic arts, graffiti, stickers, messages, sign boards, architecture, facades, stairs, walls, gradis, details of the pavement, antennas, perspectives, automobiles; workers, peddlers, passers-by, animals, public, protests, street dwellers, cyclists, skaters, museum artworks, MASP architecture, public art.

To download the images from Instagram it was used the software 4K Stogram, one can specify the hashtags and the software saves the image locally on the computer. One possibility would be to use algorithms to download the images, but in 2016 there were changes in the Instagram API that made more restrictive the access to the posts feed, requiring an access code. Another option would be to use web scraping method to download the images. However, since the development of the algorithm was not the goal of the workshop and it would also demand more time, these options were not considered and it was chosen the free tool available.

On the second day of the workshop, the photos and videos were downloaded and the participants assembled sequences of images and videos according to a certain subject line. The workshop did not aim to teach specifically audio-visual production techniques, rather experiment narratives with creation of visual poetics from database. Along with the material produced by the participants, the research group created other blocks of sequences in the same working method. An algorithm was created to display dozens of thumbnails of photos and videos in a single frame in a random order. It was also create an algorithm to produce images and textual visualizations of the acronym "MASP". The algorithms were developed with Processing by the members of the research group, as a parallel activity.
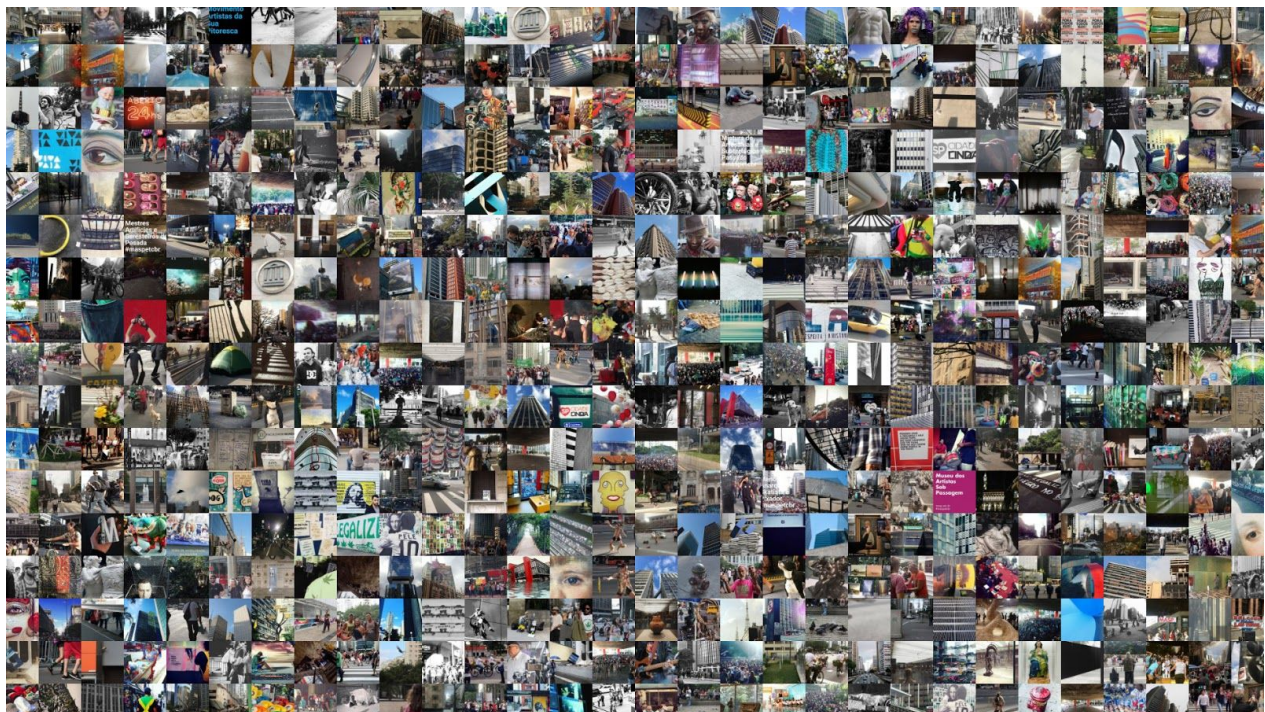

Fig. 3 – Miniatures of images collected in the Workshop. Fuente: Masp.Etc.Br

The exhibition of the material produced as a result of the workshop was screened on the ceiling of the free span of MASP. The images sequences were mixed in a live projection. The idea of exhibition outside of the museum, and more specifically in the free spam, was to establish a dialogue with the avenue, inviting the

passers-by to watch the projection. Conceptually, it also evidences the importance of the free span as a place of symbolic dispute by showing on the photos, videos and audios the clash with the city, the images claiming for attention, the relations of the museum with its surroundings captured by the camera's eye.

The Masp.Etc.Br project enabled an approach with the creation and development of audiovisual in urban scale. The participants experimented to work with database aesthetics collecting, organizing and producing images as a way of interpreting the urban space. Far from exhaust the possibilities of meanings, the imagery produced during the Workshop showed the potential to construct collective narratives from hashtags filtering. The environment, situations and activities in the avenue were interpreted with different points of view by different people. The photos and videos captured from Instagram - usually to be seen individually in a few inches screen - were amplified in size and audience showed in a public space. The Workshop put in discussion the author issue with the polyphonic and collective creation, as it is mentioned in the site of the project, it was produced "a cinema from everyone, with everyone, for everyone"[3] (Outros, 2017b).

Fig. 4 – The projection of the images at the free span of MASP. Fuente: Masp.Etc.Br

The images and videos posted with the hashtag #maspetcbr can be viewed on the Instagram website: www.instagram.com/explore/tags/maspetcbr. It was made a short documentary of the workshop that can be seen on the project page: www.masp.etc.br.

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[3] Citation translated from Portuguese: "um cinema de todo mundo, com todo mundo, para todo mundo" (Outros, 2017b).

6. Final considerations

The concept of *database aesthetics* of Victoria Vesna seems to be even more relevant nowadays as there are more devices producing and collecting data. The organization of the information is related to knowledge production and perception of the world, and Vesna suggests that the artwork should respond to these issues. She argues that "artists have long recognised the conceptual and aesthetic power of databases, and much work has resulted using archives as a deliberate base for artistic endeavours" (Vesna, 2000b: 171). The approximation of the database as a representation of the human experience is also defended by Lev Manovich. For him, the *structured collections of data* "present a different model of what a world is like" (Manovich, 2002: 219). The Workshop Masp.Etc.Br echoed these discussions, and explored the relation of database, digital media and images.

The Workshop proposed a creative use of database, asking how the big data of image production could be used to make a visual narrative. In the context of the MASP exposition, the idea to investigate the relations and meanings of the museum with the avenue and its surround was fertile ground to explore the database aesthetics digitalizing the visual data made by a multitude of people in the activities of daily life. The amount of images produced by the participants in a very short time demonstrates the potential of this approach to create narratives. The hashtag is a simple but very powerful as an archive tool, it was used not only to categorize but also to retrieve a collection of images. The perceptions of the city, the avenue, the museum are represented in files, made by and for anyone. The proposal of the Workshop also questioned to whom belongs the image of the city - besides, it is virtually impossible to deal with authorship when dealing with hundreds of images from unknown people.

In his manifesto of expanded cinema, Stan Vanderbeek imagines that "if an individual is exposed to an overwhelming information experience, it might be possible to re-order the structure of motion pictures as we know them. Cinema would become a 'performing' art and image library" (Vanderbeek, 1966: 48). More than half a century later, Masp.Etc.Br worked with an *overwhelming information experience* with digital media from social network database. This source of images is a consequence of the contemporary culture to multiply digital content unceasingly - creating, sharing, publishing - feeding the *image library*. Remains the question - as an invitation to explore the possibilities - what creative forms of narrative could emerge from database.

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