

An article by:

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Brazilian Visual Poetry

Historically, one must understand the course of Brazilian visual poetry as divided into three moments. The first is the period of *concrete poetry*, theoretically formulated by the Noigandres group at the beginning of the 1950s, but which found its typical compositional procedure, its aesthetic differentiation, after 1955 under the direct influence of the serial and combinatory poetry of the Swiss-Bolivian Eugen Gomringer, as presented in his book *Constellations*, already published in 1953. Until then the experiments of the Brazilian group had been characterized by the incorporation into regional poetry of the processes used by late French symbolism (Mallarmé), futurism and the English-language modernists (Joyce, Cummings, Pound), updating Brazilian poetry. From the second half of the 1950s until the beginning of 1964, the movement continued to be active, always showing features of what we now identify as concretism: the geometric and permutational ordering of words, grouped by sound similarities or semantic proximity.

After the conclusion of the concrete poetry movement, we enter the second phase of Brazilian visual poetry, characterized by

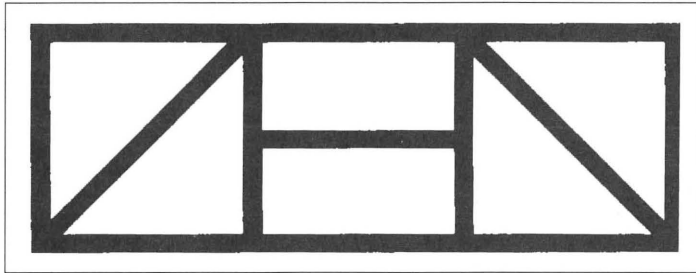


ADROGA
RIAADO
RARIAA
RROGAR
ADORDR
OGADO
ROGADO

Valnei Andrade

Druga

Drugs



Pedro Xisto

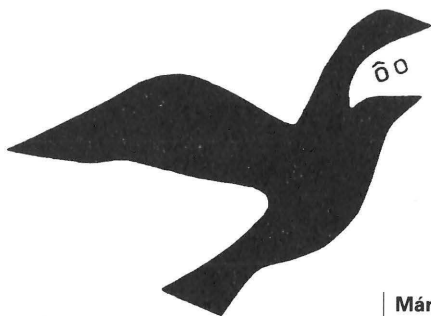
Zen

Zen

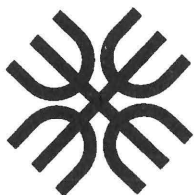
the search for a wordless poetry, culminating in *process-poem*. This movement had for its basis the interesting concrete poetry of Wladimir Dias-Pino, who is distinguished from the Noigandres group by carrying, already in the middle of the 1950s, graphic and visual elements over to the verbal sign. *Process-poem*, however, was marred by the grand, sterile error of trying to formulate a poetics with no semantic level, of the mere graphic coordination of visual elements deprived of all significance.

The third phase comes from the debacle of *process-poem* and has lasted to the present. It is marked by the absence of organized movements, by a theoretical and critical silence of the visual poets, and by a return to compositional modes already traditional in modern poetry, including a return to verse.

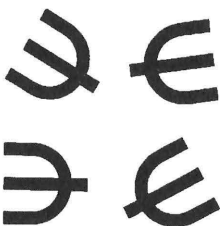
For example, present in this micro-anthology of Brazilian visual poetry are these revisionist currents that are also spread throughout the world at this time of crisis for writing. Hence the calligrammic forms of Luiz Sergio

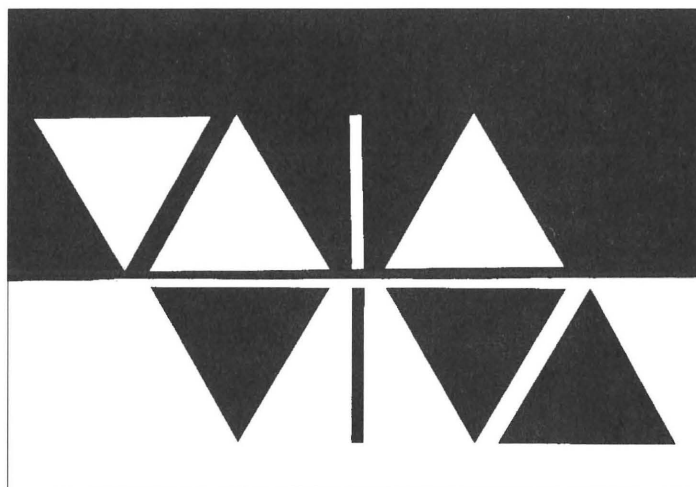


Márcio Almeida
Vôo
Flight



Hugo Mund, Jr.
Homem-Ra-Flor-Pássaro
Man-Frog-Flower-Bird



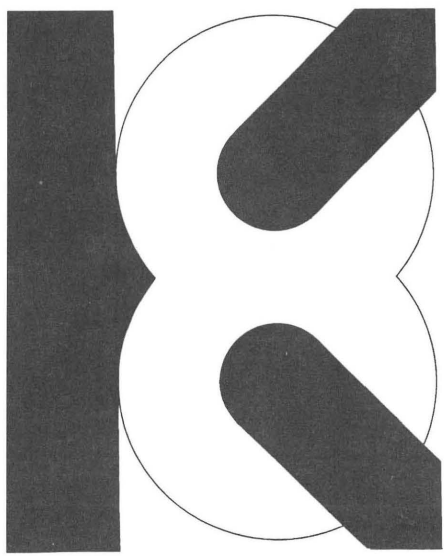


| Augusto de Campos, *S/Titulo*, Untitled

Modesto, orthodox concrete poems without retouching of Wladimir Dias-Pino and Franklin Valverde, the concrete poem as daring final-art of Augusto de Campos and the verbal poem of Valnei Andrade, disguised by a packaging which gives it a visual configuration, bearing witness to the revitalization of the traditional compositional modes of classical experimentalism.

On the other hand, there is an anti-semantic vice created by the graphic dysfunctioning that we see as a legacy of *Process-poem*, like the *collage* poem. Note, here, that this tendency partakes of a general panorama of international visual poetry, as a development of Italian *poesia visiva* of the 1960s, which fits with an anti-intellectualism and with the general tendency of an experimental society characterized by “synaesthetics,” in the acceptance of the Italian poet Lamberto Pignotti.

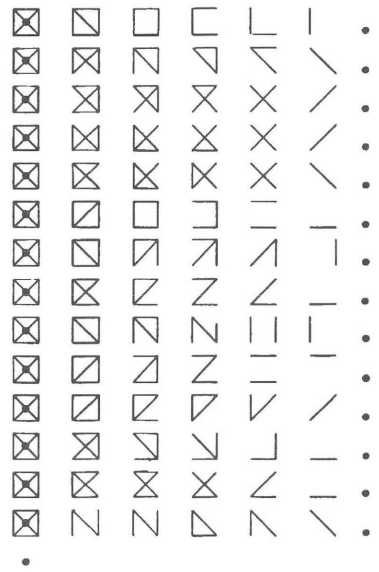
Yet, if it is possible for recent Brazilian poetic experimentalism to stand out, one can say that, on the contrary, this comprises a “semantic choice.” What characterizes this

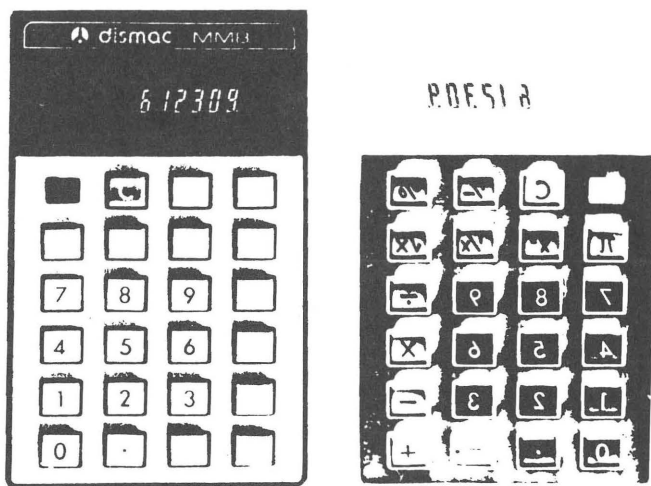


Villari Herrmann
Koito
Coitus

400

Neide Dias de Sá |
S/Titulo
Untitled





Philadelpho Menezes, *Poesia*, Poetry

semantic choice would be the recuperation of the dimension of signifiers that oblige the observer of the visual poem to move toward a kind of reading that attentively deciphers the sign combination presented in each work. In this poetry the iconic visual sign articulates itself with the verbal sign — in what we could call *intersign syntax*. The poem produces a chain of signifiers to be understood and read something like an *intersign semantics*.

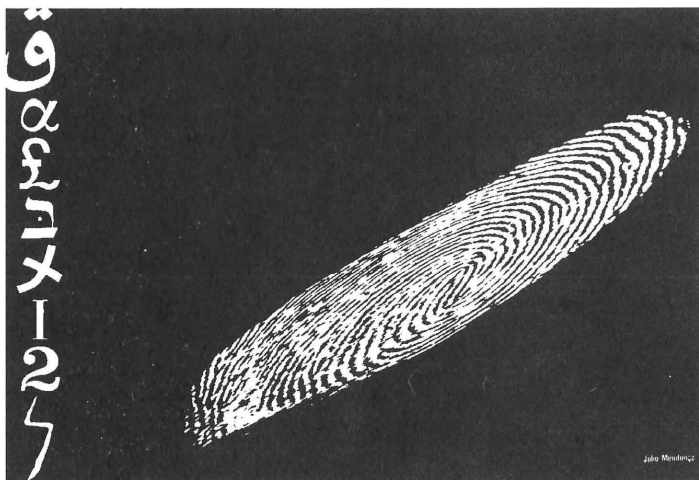
Some examples of this poetry are the poems of : Villari Herrmann (a coitus between the K and the number 8 = coito, in Portuguese); Florivaldo Menezes (a score caught in nature); Pedro Xisto (a symmetrical geometry composed of the word *Zen*); Ana Aly (the word *city* camouflaged in the buildings of a cybernetic metropolis); Julio Mendonça (a galaxy like a fingerprint or vice versa); Márcio Almeida (the word *flight* forming in a gestalt emptiness of the wings of a bird); Sebastião Nunes (bold humor against the bust of official culture); and mine (the word *poetry* found on the back of a calculator).



Sebastião Nunes

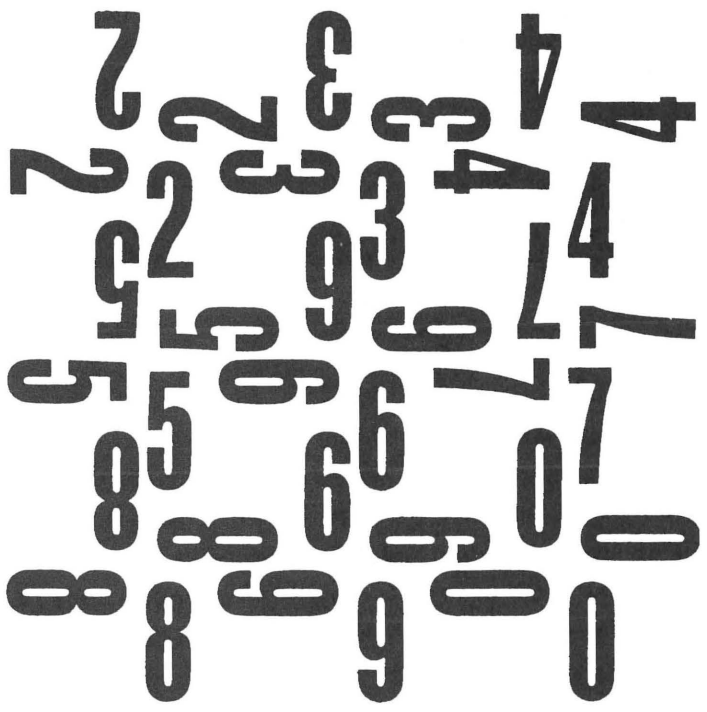
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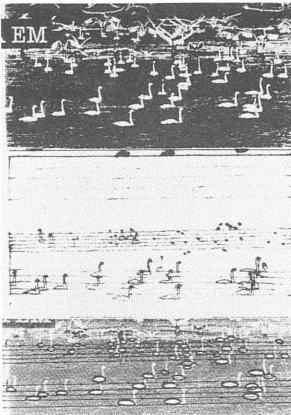


| **Julio Mendonça**, *Galáxias, Galaxies*

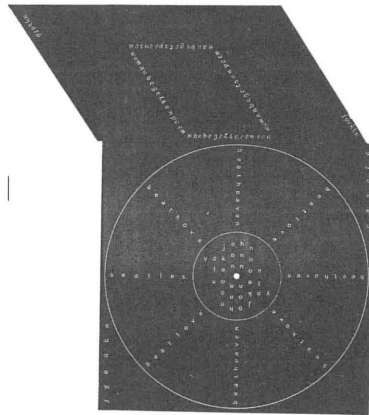
These works give an idea of a poetics whose sense of experimentation resides in the recuperation of diverse levels of meaning that are pulling visual poetry back from the exclusively sensorial and anti-intellectual sphere that the postmodern wave takes for normal. Pitting itself, in contrast, against the easy formulas of the classical avant-gardes, which culminate in the verbal geometricism of concretism, *intersign poetry*, “montage poetry” or even “semantic visual poetry” described above is a unique development that has formed itself in the interior of the Brazilian poetry of the last two decades. Today it is situated in what we could call the post-modernity of resistance, an avant-garde wave or project achieving its own integrity insofar as it confronts the aesthetics of the museological past and the present marked by the general rule of the sensory and anti-semantic schizophrenia. Leading to the semantic field, *intersign poetry* gives current experimentalism an ethical foundation for the projects of the avant-garde, a notion absent from the standard experimentalism of our time.



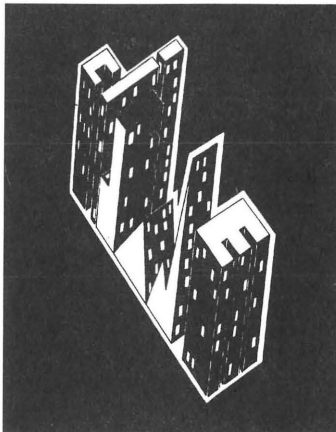
| **Wladimir Dias-Pino**
Numéricos
Numericals



Florivaldo Menezes
O Lago das Signos
The Lake of the Signs



Luis Sergio Modesto |
S/Titulo
Untitled



Ana Aly
Cidade
City

Poet Notes

Almeida, Márcio. Almeida is a poet and journalist born in Oliveira (Minas Gerais) in 1947. In the late 1960s he emerged as a member of the *process-poem* movement. He is the author, among others, of *Orwelhas Negras* (1985).

Aly, Ana. Born in São Paulo in 1959, Aly is a visual artist and graphic designer who has participated in exhibitions of visual poetry in Brazil and abroad. She is the author of *Objetos Diretos* (1982).

Andrade, Valnei. Born in Ribeirão Preto (São Paulo) in 1965, Andrade has participated in exhibitions of visual poetry in Brazil and is author of the book of poems *O umbigo/embigo ambíguo* (1985).

de Campos, Augusto. Born in São Paulo in 1931, de Campos was one of the founders, in 1953, of the Brazilian group Noigandres. Years later he participated in the creation of the international movement concrete poetry. He is the author of *Viva-Vaia* (1986).

Dinas-Pino, Wlademir. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1927, Dias-Pino participated in the founding of Brazilian concrete poetry in 1956/57 and organized the *process-poem* movement in 1967. He works in television programming and is the author of the book of poems *Numéricos* (1963), among other titles.

Herrmann, Villari. Born in São Carlos (São Paulo) in 1942, Herrmann is a prosecutor. He has taken part in exhibitions of visual poetry in Brazil and abroad and is the author of *4 poemas* (1971), among other books.

Mendonça, Julio. Mendonça is a young São Paulo poet and participant in exhibitions and publications of visual poetry in Brazil.

Menezes, Florivaldo. Born in Presidente Prudente (São Paulo) in 1931, he participated in international anthologies of visual poetry and is author of the book *Inverso* (1972).

Menezes, Philadelpho. Born in São Paulo in 1960, he is professor of communications and semiotics at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo. He organized the First International Exhibition of Visual Poetry of São Paulo and is author of several books, including *Demolições (ou poemas aritméticos)* (1988).

Modesto, Luiz Sergio. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1953, Modesto is a professor of law and author of the book of poems *Concerto de mente/ teatro de mente* (1985).

Nunes, Sebastião. A poet and publicist born in Minas Gerais, Nunes participated in the process-poem movement in the 1960s and 1970s and is author of *Antologia Mamaluca* (1988), among other titles.

Pignatari, Décio. Born in Osasco (São Paulo) in 1927, Pignatari was also a member of the Noigandres group and one of the founders of Brazilian concrete poetry. Professor of communications, he is the author, among other publications, of the book of poems *Poesia pois é poesia* (1986).

Valverde, Franklin. Born in São Paulo in 1960, he is a journalist and is active as editorial coordinator of EDUC (Editora de PUC-SP). Valverde has taken part in anthologies and exhibitions of Brazilian experimental poetry.

Xisto, Pedro. A poet and diplomat from Pernambuco who died in 1986, Xisto was a member of the concrete poetry movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He authored several books, including *Caminho* (1979).

Selected Resources

(organized by date)

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