

A Brazilian Panorama **Lucio Agra (São Paulo, Brazil)**

It has been always like low tech is high tech. Or thecnized barbarian, like it was put by Oswald de Andrade, the brazilian anthropophagistic poet of modernism.

There was this strange exhibition in 2001, old computers. I came to this country in may, september was another thing. I passed one day in New York. It was pretty like a film, it was frequently said after 9 11. A few years ago, when Laurie Anderson – one of NY's icon, in my opininon – launched a cd recovering Big Science experiment, her verses were considered "kind of" prophetic.

Anderson was one of my inspiring figures when I tried to connect with *l'air du temps* of the eighties. By this time, we watched Blade Runner in a cinemascope theater in Ipanema. We were dreaming about acid rain while beach's fresh air hit us. It was better to play punk rock+goth etc in places with names like Via Berlin or Madam Satan, than to work on our difference. Yet, performance art was something that dealt with it.

80's brazilian performance shocked itself against nationalized industry of computers and cars, overall analogic technical resources. But at the same time translations of russian poetry made by brothers Campos and Boris Schnaiderman were at the hype and conducted a general idea of avant-garde thing that connected the 80s with the 20s. Given were the conditions to make something that could bring us to a exotic tech poetry.

The expected end of the world did not happen but at the same time something new was happening beyond the fall of the wall, and this was the cyber era.

In 2001 I was working on Kurt Schwitters Ursonate, something that came to my hands through the generous donation of a copy of the originals of the score, given by Philadelpho Menezes. Though I was not connected to his group, he was more kind than me, by offering the chance I needed to explore new fields on sound and visual poetry.

But things like that had started several years before, as I was registering in a tape recorder some poems and when, in 1994, I met George Landow in Germany, purchased Storyspace. It was hypertext hype but the software never run well in my Pcs. BTW, had I brought here some of it, it would be the 2nd exhibition of old machines. That was the time when someone told me about Poetry in Motion, a CDrom produced by Voyager, the same company of another cd=roms, dedicated to *Understanding McLuhan*, to Laurie Anderson and to the *Residents Freak Show*.

Though mr. Bernstein tried to help me, I was only able to produce a floppy disc with something that would change itself to Ultramar, an e-book that followed my first paper book (and the last one) called SelvaBamba.

My friend Jorge Luiz Antonio, the guy who really wrote the history of Brazilian Digital Poetry after Waldemar Cordeiro, considered this floppy disc a historical landmark. Perhaps only it was only because I was one of the few users of Storyspace in Brazil.

I must confess I was almost giving up, when I arrived to Buffalo in that early month of 2001. But Wired magazine and the warm reception I had here put me in the trail again. After all, David Byrne would make an exhibition of Power point art, as it was announced at Wired. And, in Brazil, finally, my idols were at large getting into technological resources. After Haroldo de Campos, who published an audio CD called *Isto não é um livro de*

viagem (This is not a travel book), his brother Augusto released, in 1994, *Poesia e risco* (Poetry is Risk). Soon after, Decio Pignatari, together with Wilson Sukorski and Livio Tragtenberg put themselves in the enterprise of *Temperamental*, kind of Semiotic opera. From the 3 of the concrete poetry's founding group, only Augusto de Campos was the one who dedicated himself personally to produce his own poems in digital versions. By 2001 it was already going on, what made me produce some articles about this emerging situation, published in magazines that, to my surprise, would become, ten years after, historical analysis. All the non-books finished to be a subject of serious essays in paper books... This one, I show you now, was recently produced by FILE, the international electronic arts festival produced in São Paulo.

My friendship with Chris Funkhouser started when he went to present his work on FILE. His friendship with Brazil, tropicalism and anthropophagy also started then, due to his natural disposition towards an open minded way of thinking.

Together, we made some events, perhaps the one that was a straight collaboration, six years after, soon when we came back from 2007 Paris E-poetry. It was the occasion when me and my partner Paulo Hartmann met another Brazilian, by the time living in Paris, Giuliano Tosin. We founded an improvised music experiment called Orquestra Descarrego in a hotel room in Paris and it resulted in a collaboration, whose first step was made in Hartmann's garage. The "garage orchestra" gave the elements with which Chris would make this video and then we performed again in Campinas, a city 1 h far from São Paulo and used it as a basis to a series of improvised music performances, in the following years.

In 2007 me and Paulo started this (de)mo(li)tion project (notice the motion inside) which came again to light soon after we came back to São Paulo (these are images made by Funkhouser), and then we made several presentations, one of it in File's Hipersonica festival.

Form 2001 to 2007 I worked hard on the proposition of Digital Poems made with ppt. Even had some works like this, accepted as computer art in 2005 File Festival.

Doing that kind of thing was a sin in itself. Most part of digital poets were engaged in Flash poems. Some of these magazines show this disposition. I bring the example of Cronopios, and the magazine **Mnemozine**, made by the only people in Brazil I think are able to get the best with this technology. In fact, as always, this is made by one single guy, whose nickname is PIPOL. It is a whole web site, Cronopios (its name taken from Cortazar stories), in its most part dedicated to poetry.

2003 was the year we lost several good friends, among them Haroldo de Campos, Renato Cohen and among others some great important poets like Julio Plaza and Wally Salomao. But in this same year we made a magazine called Cortex, in which there was one of my power point poems converted to Flash language and the first experiment on digital translation of a recent book from Ronaldo Azeredo, brazilian concrete poetry genius who left us some years after.

It took much time until one major Cultural Center – in this case Instituto Tomie Ohtake in São Paulo – showed the disposition to receive a great retrospect over Concrete Poetry. This was an achievement that put together some of the people who have always been working on the field opened by the "bright brazilians blasting at bastards" like Ezra Pound said. I had the opportunity to translate my efforts on the readings of Schwitter's Ursonate

from 2000, 01 to the recordings for the exhibition, in 2008, together with poems of Khlebnikov and José Lino Grunewald.

My way with performance was punctuated by some strange situations when I was pushed to different ways of understanding it, from poetry to music. In a 2004 event I repeated my history with punk drumming and the zeitgeist of eighties. Together with some new groups that mixed up performance, shadow theatre, and other things the event *Underground* tried to give a slight idea of a time that the kids did not experience. The curious note about this was it was made in the subterranean part of a Cultural Center, near the area of a pool. The smell of chlore was mixed up with smoke and make up.

By 2004 on I started to collaborate with File Festival, at first giving lectures (2003, when I met Chris again), 2004 and 2007, back from Paris. Hipersonica festival teaches us the things we needed to push forward again in several events throughout the following years like Encuentro de Poesia Experimental Amanda Berenger in Montevideo (2008), Casa das Rosas (House of Roses, in São Paulo, a cultural center dedicated to the memory of Haroldo de Campos) and the anual comemorations of "Blomsday" at june 16, organized in a typical irish pub, since Mr. De Campos was still alive. Here you get me in the way to transform myself in a lepperd, reading a tale from Guimaraens Rosa. Or, in other part, playing drums with Alberto Marsicano, extraordinaire sitar player that translates Jimmi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin to his instrument.

It was once more Chris Funkhouser that brought me back to poetry in 2010, when I made my 50s and decided to celebrate it here. This performance was one at Poet's club was the first in a few years, after several works combining music like my second project (born, as I told you before in 2007, Paris). It is one of Orchestra Descarrego's performance.

I would not like to finish without mentioning a group which is for me the "hope into the future" in nowadays São Paulo. It was for these guys that I made a footage of myself speaking the verses of the strange 19th century Brazilian poet Joaquim de Sousandrade, one of the icons of post-Tropicalism in Brazil. It happens that Sousandrade is the main motivation of these 3 boys that are committed with the task of performing the final canto of Sousandrade's epic poem "O guesa". I think it is by far the most interesting thing someone is doing now with live poetics and electronics in Brazil.

In 2001 I was saying something like this: "I think that one of the most dazzling challenges in our contemporaneity turns to be not simply to deal with the relationship between poetry and digital age, but, instead, to deal with the limits imposed to it."

And Loss Glazier once said poetry is about movement. So do e-poetry. Why, then, are we still using so old interfaces guided by the ancient silent reading way?

Would not the musical devices, for example, which are farther complex, the ideal bodily interfaces to e-poetics in the near future? I am not referring to sensors of movement, nor written instructions.