

MARX'S COAT WORKSHOP: BETWEEN FASHION, ANTHROPOLOGY AND SEMIOTICS

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1 INTRODUÇÃO

The workshop was designed and developed by the proposer Maira Gouveia in 2016, after reading the book by the historian Peter Stallybrass, "Marx's Coat" (2012). From a practical-reflective approach, the activity seeks to elucidate through practical activities some of the issues raised by the book. The workshop arises, then, from the search to understand, how objects, in this case more specifically, clothing, are part of our social, affective and symbolic construction.

As a fundamental principle, the workshop seeks to understand the possible intersections that allow the creation of a semiotic and anthropological analysis based on design and fashion, unveiling the possible signs and concomitantly understanding the anthropological perspective of objects as endowed with "agency" (BARAD, 2007; MILLER, 2013; GELL, 2018) "life" (INGOLD, 2012) and the ability to "participate" (GELL, 2018). In other words, coats are understood, during the workshop, as active participants in the social and affective relationships that the participants experience and express.

Thus, what is proposed is the understanding of the processes of production of meanings woven into webs of relationships in which the artifacts are included and in which they are understood to be active in the process of creating possible semioses (SANTAELLA et al, 2011; FRANCO and NEVES, 2017), these understood as a process of producing meaning from the sign chain constructed from networks of "transversal relations between bodies, objects, animals, technology, materiality, texts, individuals, that is, between heterogeneous elements" (FRANCO, 2019, p. 151).

2 DEVELOPMENT

The book the Marx's Coat, written by Peter Stallybrass, starts from a simple premise: through the analysis of objects, especially clothing in their relationship with the human bodies that inhabit them as well as with the social webs in which they become entangled, as proposed by Barad (2007), the historian investigates our relationship with the surrounding material culture. He proposes to think of artifacts not only as objects of use or as goods; in the book, we mainly consider marks and memories that we print on objects and those that they print back, both individually and socially.

As Stallybrass himself describes, the book arises from the need to understand how, using the coat of a friend who had died, he was "inhabited by his presence" (2012, p. 10). He states that while he was wearing the jacket of his deceased friend, his friend was wearing it, that is, his memory had remained in the clothes that had once worn him, "he was there in the smell" (2012, p. 11). Therefore, Stallybrass rescues the concept of fetish as the magic contained in things to explain this "agency" relationship that objects build with us according to anthropology (BARAD, 2007; GELL, 2015; INGOLD, 2012; MILLER, 2013), or the emergence of an interpretant based on Peirciana semiotics (SANTAELLA et al 2014).

The workshop dealt with in this article, was created from the reminiscent memories caused by the reflections proposed in the book. In an attempt to bring the questions that arose with reading into a practical experience, a workshop was divided into six stages.

In the first stage, the exploration of the visual sense through the coat is stimulated. In the second, we invite participants to close their eyes and experience the coat from the other senses, such as touch and smell, to discover textures, smells and memory. In a third and fourth moment, the participants wear the coat, initially in the classic way and then in anti-ergonomic and unusual ways. During the fifth stage of the activity, we asked the participants the secret of the coat and in the final stage we asked the participants to register who the coat would be if it were a person or a living being. At each stage, participants are encouraged to take written notations and design everything that is being elucidated. We encourage creative and poetic writing as well as free drawing. At the end of each of these steps, there is a discussion in the form of sharing results between participants and other members of the group.

Questions are asked at each stage of the workshop related to the field of design and fashion, such as questions about form and function, global market, affectivity, memory, desire and communication through clothing, among others.

As a goal, the workshop aims to instigate reflections on the affective bodily memory that each object carries. We seek, in a practical way, to generate a new awareness and vision about everyday objects to rethink the way we consume, design and materialize objects. Bring new perspectives, not only about objects as utilitarian goods, but stimulate the apprehension of other values, signs and messages that the object can co-create. As Tim Ingold (2012) proposes, when considering that materials exist and present themselves in flux, we intend in a practical way to resume "this assertion in the form of a simple rule: follow the materials (...) matter in flux. To follow these materials is to enter a world, so to speak, in constant boil.", That is, to follow this ecceity that Deleuze and Guattari speak about (INGOLD, 2012, p. 38), in their paths and deviations.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the considerations in this article, it is possible to observe the workshop's proposal as an artistic resource capable of deepening the relationships that have been established with the object through the new perspectives launched by the studies of semiotics and anthropology when they propose ways to overcome the pair oppositional subject X object. This vision that interweaves sign and culture also reflects on the possibility of understanding the interaction described by Barad (2007) from this experience of reflective practice.

In this way, the invitation for design and fashion to join anthropology and semiotics in the recognition of the agency of objects is constructed, in order to establish a dialogical encounter that can assist in the construction of an expanded process of understanding and relationship with material culture.

The workshop inspired by the book Marx's Coat seeks to articulate these three perspec-

tives: that of anthropology through agency realism (BARAD, 2007), that of semiotics from the unveiling of the object, the sign coat, using the sentinel look of designer, the one who seeks to see beyond one thing to understand what is contained in the relationship that can be established with her.

As Latour states: "Defining humans means defining packaging, life support systems, the Umwelt that allows them to breathe" (2014, p.12). That is, socially we do not exist without the artifacts / objects / machines that surround us. It is important to use them to expand our sensory and relational capacities with the world, instead of atrophying them. Thus, a more affective relationship with the materiality of a coat is proposed, based on the interaction (BARAD, 2007), that is, on the mutual constitution of subject and object that start to constitute a new phenomenon from the encounter.

When reflecting on this interaction from the coat, it becomes possible to expand this perception to any everyday object. The perception of the agency of objects could generate other possibilities for relationships with objects, in addition to a relationship that ends in a consumption without reflection.

We hope that from this report it will be possible for other interested teachers and professionals to replicate their methodology and discover new propositional questions for a topic as latent and thought-provoking as our relationship with material culture and design objects.

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