

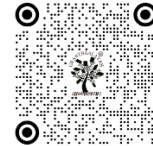


Original Article

ART AND CONTEMPORANEITY: CRIATIVE PERFORMANCE AND EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE ARTIST

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on an approach to contemporary art within the field of artistic expression, characterised by the use of everyday materials and a diversity of visual languages, which convey messages that relate to art as lived experiences. The main objective of this study is to establish the framework of contemporary art at the central intersection of culture, society and the individual. From a methodological perspective, it offers an innovative view of the world, allowing not only aesthetic representation but also critical reflection on the surrounding reality in which it is embedded. It is evident that contemporary art has, over time, evolved and incorporated conceptual transformations into the most varied forms of image construction, assuming multiple contexts and meanings on a global scale. In summary, this study aims to understand how contemporary art functions simultaneously as a form of aesthetic expression and as an instrument of critical inquiry, capable of revealing, problematising and reconfiguring the social, cultural and symbolic dynamics that structure human experience in the contemporary context.

Keywords: Contemporary Art, Artistic Expression, Artistic Movements, Socialisation, Creative Performance

INTRODUCTION

Art has been a form of expression since the dawn of humanity. Fischer (1987) states, “art has existed since prehistoric times”, whilst Duarte Júnior (1994) adds, “art has coexisted with humanity since the beginning of its existence”.

For Buoro (2000), “art is vital” and its production reflects the historical development of humanity, being considered an integral part of the cultural events of each era Buoro (2000). In the prehistoric context, the primary function of art was not to convey “beauty”, but to serve as a means of survival, representing collective beliefs, values and customs Fischer (1987). Coli (1989) observed that art performed social and economic functions, whilst Ledur (2005) asserts that the work was always created by the artist. Despite this, Barbosa (1990) emphasises that “art does not depend on culture”, suggesting constant renewal. The National Curriculum Parameters PCNs (2001) emphasise that “art teaches”, reinforcing Fischer (1987) view that “art is part of the history of humanity”.

It is evident that contemporary art enables us to understand the evolution of the visual arts, as demonstrated by avant-garde artists such as Duchamp, whose use of the ready-made and works such as Bottle Dryer Schwar, (2000), Vidal (2012).

These artists marked a shift in the aesthetic and conceptual perception of art, transforming symbolic-formal language into expression.

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Reflecting on the subject, we can conclude that contemporary art has always been an integral part of culture, gaining ever-greater autonomy and reaffirming itself as a practice of dialogue within the historical, social and aesthetic context in which it is embedded.

PROBLEM

STARTING POINTS

The theme of contemporary art and its relationship with the artist in environmental terms was a key factor in the development of this research.

Following this challenge, it was necessary to formulate a series of questions:

- From an ideological point of view, what is the status of the artist from an aesthetic, philosophical, moral and social perspective?
- What are the benefits of contemporary art in environmental terms?
- What is the impact of this type of art on the contemporary world?
- What are the potentials and limitations of the images produced by contemporary artists in the interpretation and understanding of the human being?

The research adopts a critical approach and, above all, one that is sensitive to the art forms studied here, focusing on the uncertainty and expectations of life in the world.

From this perspective, the research analyses the artistic forms under study, exploring the relationship between artistic creation, cultural perception and social reflection.

STATE OF THE ART

AESTHETIC CANONS IN CONTEMPORARY

Contemporary art is defined by its artistic avant-garde, styles, and techniques, fighting against traditionalism in art across various social, political, and technological contexts, among others.

Artists such as Yayoi Kusama have developed immersive installations that allow the public to engage with the artwork interactively, as observers within the artistic practice.

At the same time, digital platforms have emerged as strategic tools for the dissemination, appreciation and commercialisation of works in the virtual space, strengthening the contemporary art market. Following the Second World War (1939–1945), there was an evolution in globalisation, mass culture and technology, favouring new forms of artistic expression, such as performances, happenings, installations and video art.

According to [Rougé \(2003\)](#), in contemporary art “the classical is replaced by mixed media and multimedia”, whilst [Archer \(2001\)](#) highlights that contemporary art “has taken on different forms and names”, incorporating the “use of communication technologies” as an integral part of artistic practice. Furthermore, according to [Archer \(2001\)](#), aesthetic approaches emerged focused on social criticism, the appropriation and modification of objects, marking a break with modernism.

According to [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#), contemporary artistic production is characterised by large-scale works, albeit lacking traditional aesthetic qualities; formal aspects such as colours, formats and figurative representations, whilst conceptual art takes centre stage in the Duchampian era, in which artistic activity moves away from classical aesthetics, emphasising concepts such as singularity, genius and the specificity of the reality depicted. According to the author [\(2005, p. 80\)](#), “contemporary art retains aesthetic characteristics of practices that ‘put the artist at risk’” [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#). Thus, contemporary art prioritises creativity and innovation over formal technique, utilising new media and communication strategies [Archer \(2001\)](#). [Fusari and Ferraz \(1993, p. 105\)](#) emphasise that “the purpose of the work of art stems from communication with the universe”, reinforcing the relational, critical and conceptual dimensions of artistic production.

METHODOLOGY

From a theoretical perspective, the aim of this research falls within my area of interest regarding the artistic experience, seeking to understand the concepts and practices of contemporary art. From a methodological perspective, the contextualised theme links theoretical foundations with a critical analysis of current artistic expressions. To carry out this work, specific bibliographic research on the subject was required to enable the collection of information, the identification of schools of thought, and the establishment of artistic concepts across different approaches.

This research provided the basis for developing the theme through practical and theoretical questions aimed at understanding contemporary art within an interdisciplinary framework, the analysis of which contributes to reflection on artistic creation, reception, public acceptance and its integration into contemporary social, cultural and technological contexts.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT COMPLEXITY AND NATURE OF THE ARTISTIC FIELD

Over the past five decades, numerous critics, theorists, artists and researchers have made significant contributions to defining and examining the concept of contemporary art, highlighting the complexity and nature of this artistic field. Between 1945 and 1960, movements such as art brut, expressionism and abstractionism emerged which, by challenging the prevailing aesthetic and formal canons, created the conditions for the development of contemporary art as an autonomous paradigm.

This period is characterised by a progressive break with traditional models of art, opening the way for a multitude of experiments with new artistic languages, materials and practices.

The transformations that began at that time are evident, for example, in works that make use of unconventional materials and strategies for appropriating iconic images from art history. The large-scale photographic recreation of Gustav Klimt is *The Kiss* [Figure 1](#), produced from waste materials, constitutes a paradigmatic example of this redefinition of the concept of the work of art, emphasising the departure from traditional materiality and the emphasis on the conceptual process.

Figure 1



Figure 1 Gustav Klimt's Kiss

[Rush \(2006\)](#) identifies the historical antecedents of the art installation in Renaissance churches, where altarpieces — composed of painted images integrated into wooden architectural structures — were designed for public enjoyment and an integrated spatial experience (p. 33). In turn, [Pontual \(1987\)](#) establishes a relationship between contemporary art and Mannerism, highlighting multiplicity and a lack of harmony as characteristics common to both artistic contexts (pp. 27–28).

From this perspective, [Archer \(2001\)](#) describes how contemporary artistic production emerged from fragmentation, leading the artist to resort to the recombination of distinct elements as a creative strategy (pp. 155–156).

For [Thistlewood \(2005\)](#), contemporary art results from experimental practices deeply marked by the incorporation of new technologies, attributing to the artist an active role in social, political, economic and cultural contexts (p. 116). Artistic practice thus takes on a predominantly conceptual character, with less technical skill and a greater capacity for critical reflection. In this context, [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#) observes that many contemporary artists draw inspiration from Duchampian concerns, within a system that simultaneously values the figure of the artist and the institutional legitimisation of art (p. 116).

Consequently, traditional artisanship and aesthetics may become secondary or even irrelevant within the artistic field [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#).

[Bourriaud \(2009\)](#) adds that these practices contribute to the problematisation of classical models of production and consumption of the artwork, leading to the dilution of the notions of originality and creation (p. 8). At the same time, the exhibition space expands and takes on a multifaceted and flexible character, intertwined with the artwork itself. According to [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#), the space of contemporary art is not restricted solely to museums or galleries, as it possesses a system of codes that favours the

internationalisation of the artist and the mobility of the works (p. 120). However, in other artistic movements, contemporary art critically reflects its historical era Archer (2001).

In a context marked by globalisation, this art form promotes sharing and dialogue between different cultures, contributing to the reconfiguration of contemporary artistic practices Archer (2001). For Thistlewood (2005), contemporary art holds value by producing critical and challenging effects on current culture (p. 117).

Finally, Rougé (2003) emphasises that every historical period has its own contemporary art, with artists' work being essentially speculative in nature, through a critical interpretation of aesthetic, cultural and ideological meaning.

CONTEMPORARY ART MOVEMENTS / POLITICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Contemporary art movements develop within a context marked by political, social and cultural transformations, reflecting the tensions and discourses of their time. Among the major movements are Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Minimalism, Post-Minimalism and Neo-Expressionism, each revealing different forms of critical engagement with historical reality.

Abstract Expressionism emerged in the post-World War II period, characterised by a gestural, subjective and emotional approach, in contrast to figurative traditions. Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, as central figures of this movement, explored action, scale and expressiveness during a period marked by political and existential instability. Pop Art emerged as a critical response to mass culture and consumerism, appropriating images from advertising, the media and everyday life, Andy Warhol Figure 2 and Figure 3 Roy Lichtenstein Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Figure 2



Figure 2 Colored Campbell's Soup Cans (1965)

Figure 3



Figure 3 Campbell's Tomato Soup Can Campbell (1968)

Figure 4



Figure 4 It, S About Time: (1923) (1923)

Figure 5



Figure 5 Muchacha Con Lágrima III (1977)

Notable features include screen printing and the repetition of vivid colours, transforming commercial products and public figures into works of art. Thus, contemporary art plays a reflective and critical role, questioning social, political and cultural norms through visual language.

In the development of conceptual art, this trend intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, with the aim of emphasising the artistic object. Artists such as Joseph Kosuth and Yoko Ono used their works to question power, war, civil rights and economic crises, as well as ideology and personal values, in their artistic practice.

When it first emerged, contemporary art was widely contested for breaking with established artistic norms; however, over time, it has gradually become integrated into mainstream culture and the institutional art world.

POP ART

The emergence of Pop Art in the 1950s marked a significant transformation in artistic production, incorporating direct references to the world of consumerism and popular culture. The themes addressed reflect American social reality, represented by everyday objects such as Coca-Cola bottles, industrial packaging and images taken from newspapers. According to Archer (2001), “in Pop Art themes, banality defied the critics”, as ordinary objects came to assume artistic status.

The use of techniques such as screen printing and photography was associated with intense colours and repetition, particularly evident in the work of Andy Warhol. For [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#), Warhol “abandoned traditional aesthetics”, renounced “handcrafted skill” and distanced art from classical notions of taste, beauty and uniqueness, establishing an incompatibility between technical alienation and authorial hyper-personalisation.

MINIMALISM

Minimalism is characterised by formal reduction and an emphasis on the relationship between the artwork, the space and the viewer. This movement makes use of various industrial materials and emphasises the physical presence of the artwork within the exhibition space. According to [Archer \(2001\)](#), it is a practice that does not reject figuration, but uses it in an allusive manner. Frank Stella [Archer \(2001\)](#) states that Minimalist art is not speculative, but direct: “it is what one sees”, attributing to the artist a role as mediator between object and perception.

POST-MINIMALISM

Post-Minimalism emerged as a critical development of Minimalism, incorporating greater formal flexibility and the use of communication technologies. This period is characterised by a multiplicity of artistic languages and practices. Artworks are now frequently produced with the assistance of other professionals, in accordance with the artist’s conceptual requirements and market fluctuations, thereby reinforcing the processual dimension of artistic creation.

CONCEPTUAL ART

In the 1970s, the dematerialisation of the artwork intensified, becoming increasingly free in both thematic and technical terms. For [Danto \(2006\)](#), ‘viewing a work of art’ implies an experience focused on ‘materialisation and interpretation’. In this context, Brito (1980, p. 85) identifies a transformation in artistic thought, associated with a process of “celebration”. [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#) emphasises that in conceptual art, little importance is attached to the nature of materials, exhibition requirements or creative spaces.

Artists utilize documentation, visual and auditory means, employing landscape elements, often on a large scale. According to [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#), these works allow the viewer to become a co-author, particularly during the Duchampian period.

The installation is not understood as traditional sculpture, since the exhibition forms part of the work itself [Rougé \(2003\)](#). This practice is developed by artists such as Joseph Beuys, Katharina Fritsch, Louise Bourgeois, Martin Kippenberger, Annette Messager and Judy Chicago. In this context, the artist acquires conceptual freedom, taking on a ‘life of its own’ as a creative agent [Archer \(2001\)](#).

Finally, performance art and body art draw on a variety of artistic languages, in which the audience becomes an integral part of the work [Rougé \(2003\)](#). According to the author (2003, p. 36), body art artists challenged the prevailing attitudes of their time, using the body as a political, social and symbolic space of resistance.

CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The most important feature of contemporary art stems from the practice of creating works of art based on political or religious ideologies. Artists of the 20th century sought to redefine the meaning of art and the term ‘avant-garde’, applied to contemporary art in terms of what is original and modern, Marcel Duchamp with utilitarian pieces.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Allan Kaprow appropriated his own body in artistic performances, and in the 1970s, the American artist Robert Rauschenberg with his earthwork style. A large number of 20th-century artists, such as Grant Wood with his American Gothic style, rejected avant-garde art in favour of modern technology. At the same time, Pablo Picasso incorporated a new collage technique into his works, using newspaper clippings and other printed materials.

The artists Henri Matisse and Paul Klee drew inspiration from children’s drawings; Picasso by African masks; and Pollock drew inspiration from the sand paintings of North American Indians in his technique of splashing paint onto the canvas, as did Andy Warhol in his depiction of Campbell’s soup cans. The most important characteristic of contemporary art is the attempt to create works of art without institutional support, in order to imbue their works with personal meaning and originality.

As a contemporary form of expression, the installation—a reflection of our times—enables viewers to experience different sensations, some more interesting than others. The viewer collaborates with and interprets the artwork, which makes it difficult to define contemporary art. Contemporary art thus establishes itself as an autonomous field of symbolic experiences, in which the multiplicity of languages, media and interpretations reflects the complexity of artistic thought and its meanings within the contemporary socio-cultural context.

STATUS AND SOCIALISATION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

In contemporary art, the artist's transgression manifests itself in the very status of the proposed object, raising a sociological issue within the art world. The paradigmatic example of Marcel Duchamp's Fountain [Figure 6](#), dating from the First World War period, establishes a new aesthetic regime in which contemporary art history of traditional art as an affirmation of an aesthetic category centred on meaning and context, not merely on the exhibited object — in this case, a urinal presented at the Salon des Indépendants. According to Buren, the work of art results from the reorganisation of the environment as an 'outil visuel', shifting the focus from the materiality of the object to the relationship it establishes with the exhibition space. This perspective finds echoes in Gestalt psychology, whose experiments on visual perception demonstrate that the observer perceives the exhibited pieces as well as the environment in which they are situated. Such perception helps to understand the reactions of rejection and the symbolic protests directed at public institutions on behalf of the artistic and social community [Heinich \(1998b\)](#). In this paradigmatic context, the public's difficulty in recognising certain works highlights the rupture with the traditional criteria of aesthetic legitimacy that characterise contemporary art. According to [Buoro \(2000\)](#), art "consists of revealing to the public the relationships between human beings and nature and" (p. 23), highlighting the mediating role between the individual and the social environment of each era. [Coli \(1989\)](#) argues that the artist evolves in tandem with technological and social transformations through different 'phases' that influence artistic expression (p. 27).

Figure 6



Figure 6 Fountain by Marcel Duchamp

The author also notes that the very notion of art is not universal, as it depends on the specific cultural context in which it develops [Coli \(1989\)](#). This statement reinforces the idea that art must draw upon historical, social and symbolic conditions. In the contemporary era, [Fischer \(1987\)](#) attributes a transformative function to art, asserting that it is capable of bringing about changes in social attitudes (p. 231).

In a world marked by globalisation and profound cultural transformations, human beings are engaged in a constant process of exploring forms of expression. In this context, the artist embraces creative freedom, regarded as an essential tool for conveying their critical and interventionist engagement with society. Thus, for [Fischer \(1987\)](#), art represents an expression of its own social function, insofar as it reflects, questions and intervenes in reality.

ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN CONTEMPORARY ART

The relationship between art and society, enabling us to understand art as a reflection of the political and social. According to Bourdieu, the artistic sphere exerts an effect of restructuring or retracting social forces, in the face of specific rules [Furió \(2000\)](#). However, institutions do not interact directly with artistic production, which implies that "artistic and social relations are indirectly linked" [Furió \(2000\)](#). This perspective allows us to understand the autonomy of art in the face of social, political and economic pressures; as a form of social expression, it manifests itself through the diversity of styles, forms, materials and themes that characterise the different periods of art history.

Throughout history, art has played a fundamental role in religious expression, as evidenced by the temples and mosques of the Islamic world, as well as the mosaics and Gothic stained-glass windows of Western cathedrals. Society's interpretation of a work of art always takes place within a specific historical and social context, in which it is, attributed a symbolic and

intervening value. Paradigmatic examples include the Statue of Liberty in New York, as a symbol of the ideals of freedom and democracy, or the iconography of political power, such as the imperial eagle in the Bundestag or the architecture of Versailles, which reinforces the idea of the State centralised during the reign of Louis XIV.

The power of art lies in its ability to express social trends through specific political ideals. In totalitarian contexts, artistic production tends to be exploited, as art can serve as a means of protest and ideological resistance. In this sense, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (Figure 7) is an emblematic example of art's critical function, expressing the artist's solidarity with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, inspired by the bombing of the Basque town of Guernica.

The work highlights art's capacity to denounce violence and mobilise. Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) does not directly depict the historical event that inspired it, but evokes, through the images and forms adopted by the artist, the agony and violence inherent in war.

Figure 7



Figure 7 *Guernica*, 1937, Pablo Picasso

It is a vision of an almost prophetic nature, anticipating the devastation caused by the carpet-bombing that would come to characterise the Second World War.

The work does not merely narrate a specific event, but a symbolic reality that intensifies the experience of human suffering. Reality, understood in an ontological sense, is unique, objective and concrete; however, what we refer to as society constitutes a diversity of situations, individuals and diverse practices. The social structure encompasses religious beliefs and practices, markets, political actions, culture and conceptions of art. In this way, the visions, perspectives and modes of artistic interpretation of reality give rise to heterogeneous, socially and culturally coded symbolic realities. The artist assumes the role of interpreter of the community to which they belong, through sensitivity and thought, and through individual and collective experiences. The very concept of 'art' is diverse; the very concept of 'art' embodies diversity, giving rise to multiple artistic languages, techniques and materials that characterise the works. From the interplay between social reality and the thoughts that drive the artist—as a symbolic and expressive synthesis—other perspectives for analysing the relationship between art and society may be considered, as a sublimation of existence living rise to multiple artistic languages, techniques and materials that characterise the works.

Aesthetic norms tend to constrain new forms of expression, often driven by critics, whose views can influence the public's acceptance of works. A case that has become paradigmatic is that of *Édouard Manet (1832–1883)*, a recognised pioneer of modern painting, whose many works rejected in the 19th century are now exhibited in the world's most important museums *Furió (2000)*. In contemporary capitalist societies, access to the artistic field is increasingly restricted to specific social groups possessing the economic capital to secure prestigious aesthetic legitimacy. According to Herbert Read, "no one will deny the profound interrelationships between the artist and the community. The artist depends on the community" *Read (1968)*. However, Read asks: if art were merely a product of external qualifications, how could one explain the similarities between works belonging to different historical periods? *Read (1968)*. From this perspective, the artist perceives, shapes cultural patterns and defines their aesthetic perception, transforming it into artistic language.

A CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The period following the Second World War marked a turning point in the redefinition of Western artistic practice. Between 1945 and 1960, movements such as Art Brut, Abstract Expressionism and Abstract Art emerged, bringing about a break with the aesthetic, formal and institutional conventions of modern art. These movements valued subjectivity, spontaneity and experimentation with new materials, paving the way for the emergence of contemporary art.

Movements such as conceptual art, performance art, land art, happenings and installations contributed to the dematerialisation of the artistic object and to the prioritisation of concept over form. According to [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#), it was a period deeply influenced by Duchampian concerns regarding authorship, originality and aesthetic value.

The artist takes on a critical and interventionist role, often linked to social, political and cultural issues, whilst the museum and the gallery cease to be the only legitimate spaces for art.

The 1980s and 1990s are characterised by a rich diversity of artistic languages and the fragmentation of aesthetic discourses. During this period, there was a return to painting, particularly through neo-expressionism and figurative painting, which re-emphasised the expressiveness, subjectivity and materiality of the work. According to [Dempsey \(2003\)](#), Neo-Expressionism by its emotional intensity and expressive exploration of materials, whilst [Cauquelin \(2005\)](#) associates this trend with the affirmation of individual expression and the incorporation of references to popular culture. At the same time, [Archer \(2001\)](#) observes a transformation between art and public space, marked by the loss of the traditional aesthetic concept and its replacement by new artistic interventions. Currently, contemporary art depends on the processes of globalization, cultural mobility, and the integration of new technologies. The exhibition space extends beyond the museum and the gallery, integrating urban spaces, digital platforms and hybrid contexts. Artistic practice is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, drawing on installation, video, photography and digital media exploring issues related to identity, the body, memory, consumption, politics and visual culture.

According to [Bourriaud \(2009\)](#), these practices contribute to the redefinition of the notions of authorship, originality and creation, promoting a relational and participatory logic. Contemporary art thus asserts itself as an open field, in constant transformation, capable of critically reflecting the social and cultural dynamics of its time.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

Contemporary artistic production is characterised by a diversity of individual trajectories, by continuous experimentation with materials and languages, and by a critical examination of social, cultural and political realities. In this context, a number of artists stand out whose works reflect the complexity of the contemporary world, bringing together conceptual, symbolic and aesthetic dimensions.

- 1) **Carla Filipe** develops an artistic practice based on the use of multiple materials and devices, establishing a direct relationship with popular culture, collective memory and political activism. Her work challenges historical and social narratives, questioning power structures and the processes of memory construction.
- 2) **JULIÃO SARMENTO** creates work characterised by the fragmentation of the image and narrative ambiguity, exploring themes such as desire, absence and incompleteness. His visual discourse is characterised by a deliberate economy of information, which invites the viewer to engage in an open interpretative exercise.
- 3) **ADRIANA MOLDER** develops an interdisciplinary practice that brings together film, drawing and literature, exploring the relationship between image, narrative and subjectivity. Her practice reveals an intimate and reflective approach, centred on the construction of visual worlds with a strong poetic charge.
- 4) **CATARINA BOTELHO**, in her artistic practice, reflects on materiality, memory and timelessness, employing processes that highlight the permanence, transformation and durability of materials over time.
- 5) **FERNANDA FRAGATEIRO** expresses herself predominantly through sculpture and installation, exploring the relationship between space, architecture and perception. Her work distinguished by a subtle and rigorous approach, in which the formal dimension is closely with conceptual reflection.
- 6) **JOANA VASCONCELOS** uses sculpture and installation as her primary media to develop a critical perspective on contemporary society, addressing issues such as identity, gender, consumption and popular culture. Through the appropriation of everyday objects and monumental scale, the artist subverts cultural and aesthetic hierarchies.
- 7) **PAULA REGO** establishes a complex relationship between power, perversity and narrative, frequently using the female figure as a central element of her compositions. Her work revisits and reinterprets myths, traditional tales and social structures, revealing latent tensions in human relationships.

- 8) **SANTIAGO RIBEIRO** develops work centred on installation, addressing contemporary issues such as the human condition, spirituality and the tensions of today's world. His practice offers a critical reflection on the individual's place in a globalised and constantly changing context.
- 9) **VASCO ARAÚJO** structures his work around the deconstruction of historical, literary and musical narratives, questioning identities, discourses of power and cultural constructs. His work often takes on a performative and theatrical dimension, inviting multiple levels of interpretation.

In his artistic practice,

- 10) **MIGUEL PALMA** explores the impact of technology on the life of contemporary man, combining sculpture, installation and performance. His work reflects on the relationship between technical progress, memory and utopia, revealing a critical view of the promises of modernity.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Contemporary art is characterised by the absence of a dominant style, the use of multiple languages, and the constant questioning of its own status. Throughout its chronological development, a progressive shift can be observed from the object in a circumscribed space to an expanded space and from formal aesthetics to critical observation. As [Archer \(2001\)](#) describes, contemporary art carries historical time, playing an active role in the construction of contemporary culture.

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this study highlights the breadth and complexity of contemporary art, emphasising its ability to foster interactivity, expressiveness and creativity. The artistic movements examined — Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Minimal Art and Neo-Expressionism — clearly reflect the social, political and technological transformations of their respective eras, serving as vehicles for critical reflection and the expression of ideas.

It is observed that the influence of culture and politics on contemporary artistic production helps us understand how art becomes an agent of social change, capable of questioning norms, values and collective behaviours. At the same time, the incorporation of new technologies has enabled interactive artistic experiences, in which the public is not merely a spectator, but an active participant in constructing the meaning of the work. Emblematic examples, such as Yayoi Kusama's immersive installations, illustrate how contemporary art breaks with the traditional paradigm, bringing artists and the public closer together, and redefining the circulation and valuation of works in the art market.

In this context, contemporary art prioritises the idea, the concept and the attitude over the object or conventional aesthetic form, establishing itself as a multidimensional practice that encompasses painting, sculpture, performance, happenings, installations, video art and other artistic languages. The transition from the industrial age to the information and communication age has brought about significant changes in the artistic field, promoting innovation, experimentation and the sharing of artistic forms across different cultures and nations.

In summary, contemporary art constitutes a space for dialogue between tradition and innovation, between the individual and society, and between the artist and the public, functioning simultaneously as an aesthetic expression, a critical tool and a platform for cultural interaction.

This study demonstrates that understanding contemporary practices requires an interdisciplinary approach, one that takes into account the historical, social and technological contexts that shape both artistic production and public perception.

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