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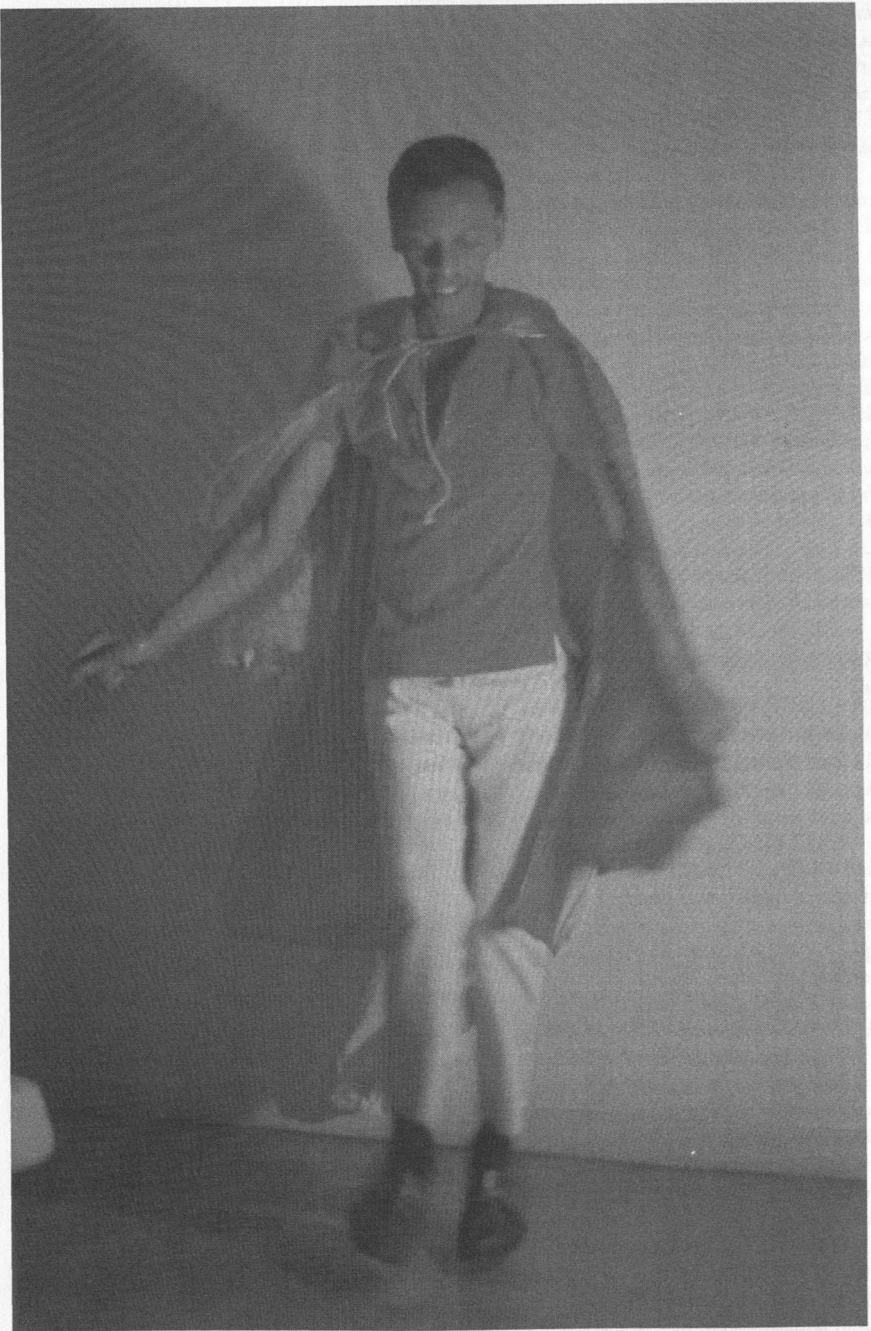


Fig. 1. Miro da Magueira dances with *P4 Parangolé Capa 1*, 1964

Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolé* capes: an anti-art will to cultural zero

Lara Demori

"NON-VERBAL corporal proposition taken to a level of open experimentalism absorption of time: end of fragmented display: to speak of cosmos should not imply something extra-concrete but the adaptation of power to invent the NON-FRAGMENTED."¹
Hélio Oiticica

Hélio Oiticica's *Parangolé* capes consist of colourful robes made from various materials, worn by the spectator/participant. The work attempts to absorb the participant into a full non-fragmentary collective. Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1937, Hélio Oiticica was trained as an artist at Ivan Serpa's studio from 1956. The *Parangolé* capes are closely connected to the artist's experience in 1964 with the First Community School of Samba located in the Mangueira shantytown in Rio de Janeiro. Considered by the artist as *totalidade-obra*, a total work of art, *Parangolé* capes are the culmination of Oiticica's experience with colour and space. The *Parangolé* enacts a fusion between colours, different fabrics, dance, words, pictures and music. Resisting classification – it might be called banner, tent, or dress – the *Parangolé* is activated through dance.

Looking at the pictures portraying the inhabitants of Mangueira dancing with those capes [fig. 1]² reminds us of Annabelle Moore's serpentine and butterfly dances recorded in the first hand-printed coloured films³. Shaking and twisting the wide drapes, Moore's body often disap-

peared, hidden by the brightness of colours in movement⁴. In his analysis of the *Parangolé*, critic and artist David Medalla stresses this connection with dance. He identifies *Parangolés*' sources in "the costumes designed by Robert and Sonia Delaunay using the orphist principle, the designs for Honegger's *Le Roi David* by Ferdinand Léger and the costumes designed by Oscar Schlemmer for his own productions at the Bauhaus"⁵. Drawing this parallel, Medalla attempts to emphasise the link between function and decoration and to interpret the *Parangolé* as a kinetic work of art. Indeed, in this view, only the body's movement is able to reveal the work's structure. As a result, *Parangolé* capes enable a different kind of participation from that usually enacted by a distanced viewer: overcoming a purely aesthetic engagement with the spectator, this work demands public action.

The combination of Samba dance and the *Parangolés* prompts a twofold process: the communion between the self and the environment and the genesis of a collective identity that potentially overcomes ethnic differences. A radical transformation of the idea of the author goes hand in hand with a novel participatory dimension. The artist no longer produces objects for passive contemplation but becomes the provocateur of situations lived by the public. The shift occurs from a mere intellectual involvement to the bodily inclusion of the audience in the work. Lastly, *Parangolé* capes are tools to express political dissatisfaction by showing phrases like "I embody revolt" or "I'm owned" and therefore attempt to establish empathetic axes between the author and the participants.

As a result of their complexity and multiplicity of meanings, *Parangolé* capes can be interpreted from diverse perspectives. In this paper I shall focus on two themes. Firstly, I shall examine the history of this

series, its premise and how it came into being. I shall demonstrate that Oiticica's *Parangolés* are the result of a tension between an anthropophagus attitude towards European constructivism and the anti-art will of a cultural zero. Secondly, I shall develop the connection between the *Parangolé* and Oiticica's notion of anti-art, examining the participatory process at stake in this work as well as its criticism of the Museum, understood as the institution of a specific aesthetic canon and hierarchical set of cultural forms.

The notion of Anthropophagy, or cannibalism (*Antropofagia*) plays an important role here. In Brazil, *Antropofagia* epitomised the desire for emancipation from European models, functioning as a *tabula rasa* in a new era. This cultural device was enacted by Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*, published in May 1928 in the first edition of the recently founded "Revista de Antropofagia" (São Paulo). Through its humorous language and literary influences the *Manifesto* became the speculative core of the homonymous movement and of Brazilian modernism itself, already inaugurated by the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (13-18 February 1922) and by de Andrade's *Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil* (1924)⁶. Featuring a constant tension between assimilation and contamination, *Antropofagia* ideology prompted Brazilian intellectuals to devour cultural models imported from abroad and to regurgitate those trends into something with an indigenous Brazilian voice. This tendency represented a search for identity based on the potentiality of a sacred ingestion. For de Andrade, *Antropofagia* became the main source for interpreting Latin American culture in the Twentieth Century and the only possible strategy to escape from a marginal position. Oiticica aligns himself to this theory, adopting a similar cannibalistic attitude to culture.

The tension between the appropriation of western models and 'cultural zero'

The notion zero (zero degree art or cultural zero) is not extraneous to the existing literature on Oiticica. Scholar Sônia Salzstein argues that the establishment of a cultural zero was necessary in order for Oiticica to "de-hierarchise the dependency between dominator and dominated"⁷. This zero state is therefore the "condition for a new culture" and "it is expressed by the constructive lineage of modernity [...] stemming from Mondrian, from Neo-plasticism [...] in whose heritage Oiticica would find affirmation for his deepest aspirations as an aesthetic revolutionary experience, capable of becoming totally blended in a *social form*"⁸. Art historian Sérgio Martins, referencing Salzstein, locates Oiticica's constructive will alongside the desire for a cultural zero to avoid any reliance on European practices. Furthermore, Martins affirms that "zero" is a recurring notion in Brazilian Twentieth Century culture: for example Oswald de Andrade's avant-garde program (epitomised by the *Manifesto Antropófago*) was also characterised by both a nationalistic approach and the drive towards a supposed new zero ground of infinite possibilities of creation⁹. I am thus adopting this degree zero perspective not only to call attention to Oiticica's attempted revolutionary will but also to reconcile the aforementioned inner tension between a devouring attitude towards international models, and the aim to create a modern Brazilian identity. Embracing such a new frame allows me to introduce different viewpoints on Oiticica's work, not yet present in existing accounts. The tension in Oiticica's thinking between appropriating western practices and what I have called the anti-art will of a cultural zero should not, I argue, be conceived as rupturing the artist's practice. Therefore, I will attempt to demonstrate how both stances coexist in Oiticica's project from

his 1950s production onwards. As art historian Luke Skrebowski has pointed out, Oiticica's work can be divided into phases. Each phase then raises specific challenges that are not necessarily resolved by the subsequent one. This movement can be read as dialectical, according to the Hegelian notion of *aufhebung*: each new concept stems from the sublation of the previous one in an almost fluid development, a cyclic *motus* of recurring elements¹⁰. Therefore, I shall emphasise the tension in Oiticica's project as the *impetus* of moving beyond restricted paradigms, arguing at the same time that this rupture is deceptive in respect of his whole artistic production, since the different stages of his practice are still, I think, linked to each other. In apparent contrast to the position outlined above, in 1972 Oiticica asserted: "there's no reason to take seriously my pre-'59 production"¹¹. Oiticica's sentence refers to the exhibition of the *Metaesquemas* (1957-58) and it is useful to unravel the artist's lack of confidence in his first pictorial experiments¹². Oiticica himself acknowledges his artistic development as follow:

"I started out with Ivan Serpa in the Grupo Frente in 1954... although, in my opinion, it wasn't until the Neo-concrete movement that I began to propose a way out into space: the disintegration of the painting and all that. That's when I really started to create something absolutely peculiar and mine"¹³.

Despite Oiticica's methodological desire to document every phase of his artistic production, the first years of his career – until he joined the Neo-concrete movement in 1959 – are marked by a lack of significant writings and therefore are more difficult to analyse in depth.

Between 1955 and 1959, Oiticica produced markedly different kinds of work: the Grupo Frente paintings (1955-56)

[fig. 2]¹⁴, the *Metaesquemas* (1956-57) [fig. 3]¹⁵ and the *White Series* (1958-59) [fig. 4]¹⁶. In the following section I will explain how these three series of abstract geometric paintings progressively evolve to the point of constituting the foundation of the *Parangolé* capes [fig. 5]¹⁷. Secondly, I will clarify why the *Parangolés* can be treated as degree zero works of art. Lastly, I will illustrate how *Parangolé* capes epitomise Oiticica's notion of anti-art by focusing on the significance of this way of thinking for Oiticica's practice.

Playing with physical and metaphysical possibilities of colour, the gouaches on cardboard Oiticica produced under the apprenticeship with Ivan Serpa show a clear influence of Paul Klee's lyrical abstraction. Only at a later stage, between 1957-1958, did Piet Mondrian, the master par excellence among Brazilian constructivism in the 1950s, become his primary source of inspiration: the geometric shapes that constitute Oiticica's *Metaesquemas* are organised according to the rational principle of the grid and follow a mirror effect. Regarding the prototype of the grid, scholar Rosalind Krauss asserts:

"Perhaps it is because of this sense of a beginning, of a fresh start, a ground zero, that artist after artist has taken up the grid as the medium within which to work, always taking it up as though he were just discovering it, as though the origin he had found by peeling back layer after layer of representation to come at last to this schematised reduction, this graph-paper ground, were *his* origin, and his finding it an act of originality"¹⁸.

The grid symbolises the link between zero and infinity: it embodies the archetype of representation and it endorses at the same time the serial limitless repetition of a shaped module. Embarking on this continuous movement, these forms reproduce

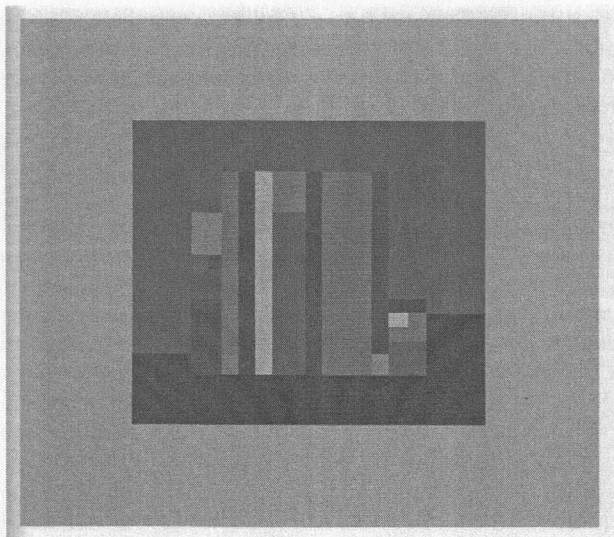


Fig. 2. *Grupo Frente*, guache on paper, 49,9 x 57,9 cm, 1955

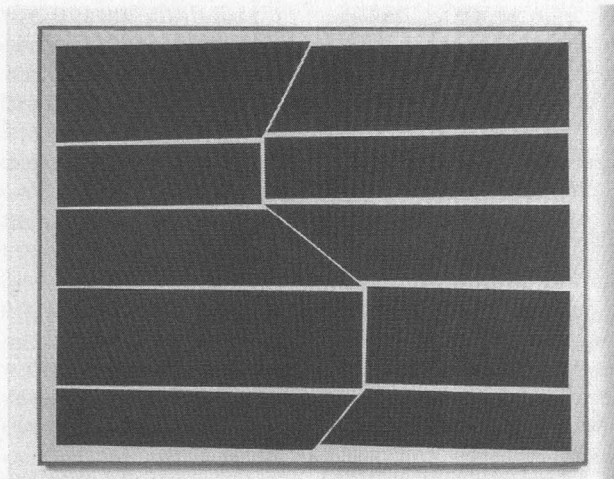


Fig. 3. *Metaesquema*, oil on canvas, 88,6 x 113 cm, 1958

a certain rhythm, based on the succession of presence and void. Often harmonised in regular patterns, these geometric figures are arranged on the canvas like notes on a stave. The music they produce is a monotone that stresses the seriality of a recurring gesture. Colour is a crucial concern for Oiticica in this phase, but not the only one. Being always associated with time and structure and scrutinised in its

components with an alchemical vision, colour emphasises the material and plastic qualities of the painting. Indeed, for Oiticica the structure doesn't exist *a priori* but it is generated through colour. All artworks produced during these years already appeal to the tactile gaze of the audience, revealing the supra-sensorial qualities of the object.

The shift between geometric abstraction

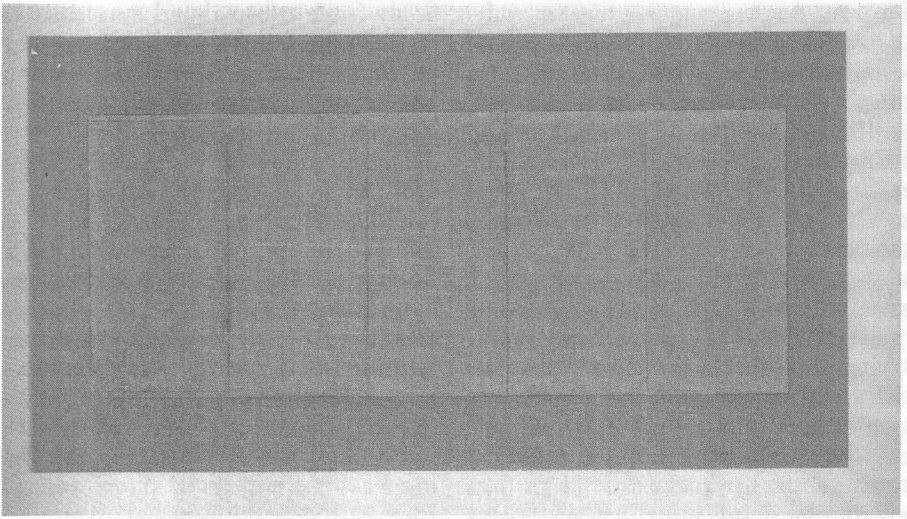


Fig. 4. *Pintura Branca*, guache on paper, 22,8 x 43,5 cm, 1959

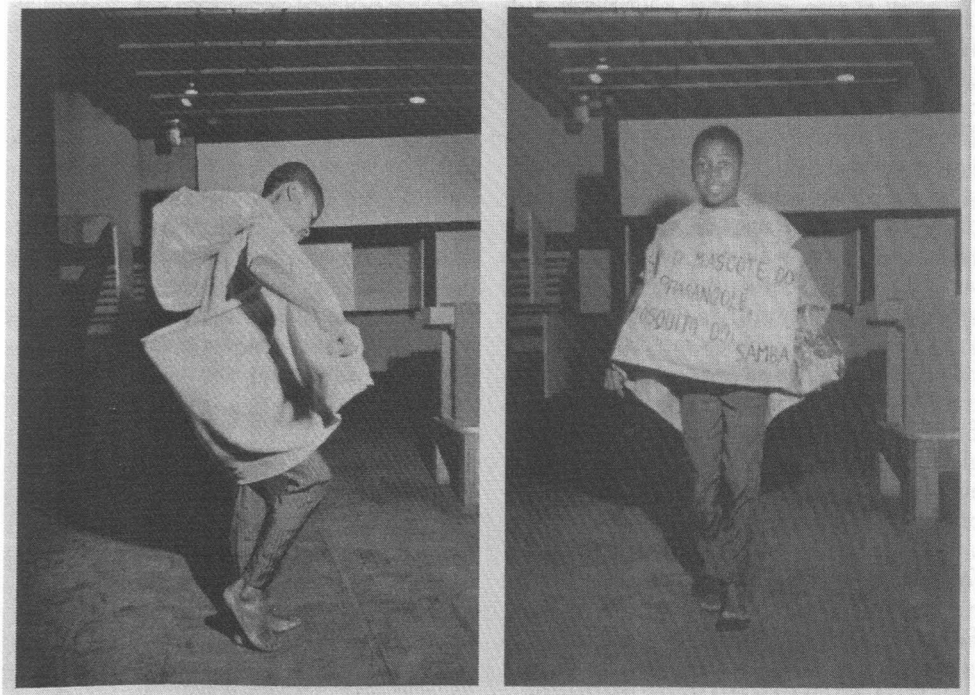


Fig. 5. Mosquito da Mangueira wears *P10 Capa 6* "Homenagem a Mosquito da Mangueira" during the exhibition "Manifestação Ambiental N. 1", Rio de Janeiro, Galeria G4, Rio de Janeiro, 1966

and a ground zero practice – which would lead to the conception of the *Parangolé* capes a few years later – is represented by Oiticica's white monochromes. Kazimir Malevič is the undeniable reference for the white paintings grouped under the label of *Série Branca* (White Series, 1958-1959). Notably, Oiticica doesn't refer to Malevič as the primary source of his *Série Branca*, speaking instead of Piet Mondrian. The Russian artist will gain greater recognition only during Oiticica's years in New York¹⁹. Carrying on with his research on pigments, Oiticica chooses white as the colour that light produces as the synthesis of all colours. What might be seen as the end of his research on colours actually develops into a new starting point: Oiticica appropriates from Malevič not only his formal reductionist technique but also the significance of the act of painting white on white by taking a step further. Why does he choose *White on White* (1918) and not the *Black Square* (1915)? As Martins argues, Oiticica's constructive will deals with history²⁰. Therefore, the dialectical *aufhebung* mentioned above, which demands continuity with the past, is guaranteed only by appropriating white (on white). The refusal to acknowledge Malevič's influence in the late 1950s is probably due to Oiticica's intention to distinguish his practice – and that of fellow Neoconcrete artists – from European modernism. The artist seeks to translate the Suprematist gesture into a Brazilian reality to avoid the risk of plagiarism and to solve the conflict between autonomy and imitation. The reclamation of the anthropophagic cultural operation within the appropriation of Malevič's zero forms provides Oiticica with the bases of his desired cultural zero of seemingly infinite possibilities of experimentation: pursuing a circular movement, the nothingness delivered by the *Série Branca* constitutes the impulse of a new beginning. Oiticica articulates this brand new start

firstly from a formal and empirical point of view by erasing from the canvas any superfluous content. Secondly, he pursues a zero ground of creation from a socio-political perspective through the invention and the performance of the *Parangolé* capes, as I will show in the next section. Indeed, a bi-dimensional artistic practice no longer fulfils the artist's will of creating collective situations. *Parangolé* capes, exceeding the boundaries of any aesthetic value system and being deeply rooted in the Brazilian tradition of the favelas and of samba, attack a social dimension that couldn't be possibly addressed by the employment solely of geometric abstract forms. Merging aesthetic and social dimensions, Oiticica performs the Brazilian aspiration of combining both a "local" and vernacular character with an international "avant-gardist" outlook.

Anti-Art or socially engaged art

This process of recovering Brazilian identity goes alongside the formulation of the notion of anti-art, epitomised by *Parangolé* capes themselves. Anti-art is a concept that pertains to the European modernist tradition – particularly the work of Marcel Duchamp and some aspects of Dada and Surrealism. But what forms and meanings does this idea assume in Oiticica's theory and practice?

"During the Brazilian dictatorship (1964-85), Hélio said he wanted to find a way 'to explain and justify the appearance of an Avant-garde in an underdeveloped country, not as a symptom of alienation but as a decisive factor in its collective progress'. He did not, he added, 'allow himself the luxury of holding naïve expectations about the influence of art, whose political validity is, after all, rooted in its existence as an experimental diagram of society'. In open

opposition to dictatorship, this theory of participatory art intended to make citizens agents of action.”²¹

As can be inferred from this quotation, the participation of the spectator made possible through the wearing of the *Parangolé* capes has an emotional function. According to a semiological reading, an emotional function occurs when “the message aims to elicit reactions in the receptor, to stimulate association, to promote behavioural responses that go beyond the simple recognition of what is indicated”²².

As already noted by other scholars, Oiticica’s intention exceeds the enactment solely of a supra-sensorial experience – despite not being abstracted from it. What I shall emphasise in this respect is the ideological foundation grounding this work of art. Oiticica’s political commitment is rooted in his background; he was deeply influenced by both his grandfather José Oiticica and the writer and theorist Ferreira Gullar. José Oiticica was a philologist and anarchist, a militant of the group *Ação Direta* and author of the book *O anarquismo ao alcance de todos* (*Anarchism available to all*). The latter was published in serial form in *Ação Direta* between 1946 to 1959. Notably, in this book José Oiticica addresses the major postulates of the anarchist doctrine in a simple language, fully accessible to all, discussing those theories with reference to contemporary historical situation. He also expands on electoral matter and on how to boycott elections, harshly criticising the state and the bourgeois economy.

Theorist and writer Ferreira Gullar was one of Oiticica’s mentors. I am referring to the Neo-concrete period (1959-1961) when Oiticica and fellow artists Lygia Clark and Lygia Pape among others, aligned themselves with Gullar’s *Teoria do Não-Objeto* (*Theory of the Non-Object*, 1959) which describes the work of art as a *quasi-corpus* able to engender an intimate

relationship with the viewer both from a tactile and visual perspective²³. Soon Gullar withdrew from the group, having become disillusioned with the arts and the role of the artist, which he saw as deeply dependent on the elitist commercial circuit enacted by the bourgeoisie. As can be inferred from a reading of his text *Vanguarda e Subdesenvolvimento* (*Avant-Garde and Underdevelopment*, 1969), Gullar adopts a militant position, arguing for a closer relationship between artists and the masses. As noted by Anna Dezeuze:

“Gullar called for artists to acknowledge that their apparent neutrality was in fact embedded in the ideological position of an oppressive bourgeoisie that praised and bought their works. Instead artists should assume responsibility as citizens and communicate with people in order to deal with the real problems plaguing Brazil”²⁴.

Hélio Oiticica never aligned himself to a fixed ideology promoted by a party. Nonetheless, he was equally influenced by both his grandfather’s democratic position and Ferreira Gullar’s novel political stance as well as by recent socio-political turmoil. In conformity with anarchic theories and the figure of the “organic intellectual” envisaged by Gullar, Oiticica discusses the *Parangolé* as the result of his progressive de-intellectualisation²⁵:

“First of all, it must be clarified that my interest in dance, rhythm, samba in particular, reached me as a vital necessity of de-intellectualisation [desintelectualização], of intellectual de-inhibition [desinibição intelectual], of the necessity of free expression, since I felt that my expression was threatened by excessive intellectualisation”²⁶.

According to this premise, the artist attempts to raise class consciousness throu-

gh an anti-artistic participatory practice. Emphasising the socio-environmental stance of his work, Oiticica ascribes socio-political changes to an individual ethical attitude that manifests itself in an anarchic situation. Anti-art takes on this anarchic position; it is not a fixed category; it doesn't define what art is or is not. On the contrary, it establishes a role and a program "in which the artist understands his/her position not any longer as a creator for contemplation, but as an instigator of creation"²⁷. Artistic creation "completes itself through the dynamic participation of the 'spectator', now considered as 'participator'"²⁸. Nonetheless, according to Oiticica, the emancipation of the spectator doesn't correspond to the actual death of the author. The participant is not "elevated to the level of creation", but is given the opportunity to choose among multiple ways of engaging or not engaging with the work. Adding signifiers according to his or her attitude, the participator gives meaning to the work, which is fully completed only on the behalf of his or her experience. The spectator has "innumerable possibilities" of reading and participating in the work, and whatever the path he or she chooses, the work will still remain a "creative realisation" proposed by the artist. In this creative process, the artist takes the first step: Oiticica calls it "appropriation"²⁹. He first chooses an object that for him has a specific significance and an "autonomous structure". The second step is left in the hands of the spectator: the object accomplishes a final configuration and a complete meaning only in a collective dimension. Being a collective oeuvre, the *Parangolé* embodies this creative manifestation. At the same time, by being worn by people living in shantytowns, according to the artist it engages in a democratisation of society – utopian I shall argue – making visible marginalised layers of the Brazilian society. It therefore takes place in the environment.

"Parangolé is the definitive formulation of what environmental Anti-Art is, precisely because, in these works, I was given the opportunity, the idea, of fusing together colour, structures, poetic sense, dance, words, photography [...] and I intend to extend the practice of 'appropriation' to things of ambient world, things which would not be transportable, but which I would invite the public to participate in. This would be a fatal blow to the concept of the museum. The Museum is the world."³⁰

"Appropriating the ambient world" and provoking a "fatal blow to the concept of the museum", the *Parangolé* attempts to erase the modernist conception of institution and constitutes a zero starting point of invention³¹. Here Malevič comes into play again. Oiticica's constructive method of rebuilding the forms and meanings of the work of art from scratch reciprocates the aforementioned radical act of painting white on white. The Brazilian artist devours Malevič's Suprematism in order to deliver an equally subversive art practice that deals with the engagement of the spectator and its body, still looking for a compromise with local traditions. *Parangolé* capes demand to be physically completed by the audience – "a *Parangolé* cape on a hanger is not a *Parangolé*" – and to be interpreted from the perspective of an external viewer³². Its nonconformist stance – anti-artistic I shall call it – is established by challenging both the status of the work of art – rejecting the artistic genre's traditional labels – and the institution. Indeed, if the *Parangolé* turns into a work of art through the audience's participation only, how can it be exhibited? This permanent critical position enacted by the *Parangolé* is grounded in the notion of anti-art.

To understand how this criticism takes place, we must refer once again to the roots of Brazilian modernism, particularly

to the novel *Marco Zero* (*Zero point*, 1943) by Oswald de Andrade³³. In 1964 – the year of the invention of the *Parangolé* – the theorist Décio Pignatari wrote an interesting commentary on the language and the aesthetic program of de Andrade's book³⁴. Pignatari describes de Andrade's creative process as based on chance and choice, collage and montage, and thus named anti-literature that comes from zero. This original and creative procedure is closely tied to the establishment of both a new language that enables a simple and direct form of communication and a critical meta-language more appropriate to analyse and comprehend it. Oiticica himself discusses Pignatari's commentary on de Andrade's novel, directly linking his practice to this approach and claiming that he sought to achieve a similar renovation project but in the field of the visual arts. According to Oiticica, the denial of the art of the past is driven by the search for a novel way of acting, free from any kind of social repression. Oiticica's emphasis on the necessity of a novel behaviour constitutes the ground zero reached through the emancipation of the spectator – who shifts from a passive to an active position – and through the revolutionary act of painting white on white. White is the canvas before the painting, zero, full of possibilities of creation and a symbol of the dismissal of the past. The intention to overcome the obsolescence of European modernist movements is ascribed not only to the artist but also to the participant. Participation is made possible through the wearing of coloured capes, the *Parangolé*. This neologism derives from slang and identifies the fusion between work and folklore – recalling the hybrid notion of tradition that characterised the Brazilian avant-garde³⁵. Oiticica affirms that:

“The word here assumes the same character as, for example, ‘Merz’ and its de-

rivatives (‘Merzbau’, etc.) had for Schwitters. For him they were the definition of a specific experimental position, fundamental to the theoretical and existential comprehension of his entire work”³⁶.

As I have demonstrated, the *Parangolé* disrupts traditional aesthetic categories and allows the engagement of spectators belonging to a specific social class, the Afro-Brazilian population living in the favelas at the margin of both the city and the society. Oiticica affirms that the *Parangolé* can be worn by any viewer; at the same time, this is contradicted by personal dedications and remaining photographs that shows the people of Manguera wearing the capes³⁷. The anti-institutional position and the subversive quality of this work is evident in the opening of the exhibition *Opinião 65*, when Oiticica and the participants carrying *Parangolé* banners were banned from the museum. This episode prompts a twofold consideration. On one side it stresses the institutional critique enacted by the work, in terms of both aesthetic and political concerns. On the other it underlines the difficult place occupied by the artist in between a socio-cultural ethnic minority and the elitist bourgeoisie monopolising the cultural scene³⁸. Oiticica's ambivalent position is noted by the artist himself³⁹. He neither fully belonged to the favelas' culture, nor considered himself an exponent of the cultural values linked to the ruling bourgeoisie. Despite the difficulties he met in working closely with the black minority, Oiticica translates into a social practice an anti-artistic stance based on an experimental practice⁴⁰. In its revolutionary role, the *Parangolé* evolves *ex-nihilo* and epitomises a “glocal” stance: it is a new kind of art work on a global scale because it anticipates the culture of participation in contemporary art practices, but it relies on Brazilian society and culture as well.

In doing so, it makes the accomplishment of a degree zero art possible.

Chasing the constructive will of a cultural zero as new form of beginning, Hélio Oiticica's art practice challenges traditional aesthetic categories of modernism but endorses responsiveness to vernacular traditions – such as Samba dance – and identities, creating collective collaborations with the community living in the shantytowns.

1. Quoted in Anna Schober, *Hélio Oiticica's Parangolés: Body-Events, Participation in the Anti-Doxa of the Avant-Garde and Struggling Free from It*, "Theory@Buffalo", IX (9), 2004, pp. 76-101.
2. Miro da Mangueira dances with *P4 Parangolé Capa 1*, 1964.
3. Annabelle indeed performed several times at the Black Maria studio and was featured in the Kinetoscope's first London showing in October 1894.
4. See Brian Coe, *The History of Movie Photography*, Westfield (N.J.), Eastview Editions, 1981; Paul Read, Mark-Paul Meyer, *Restoration of Motion Picture Film*, Oxford, Butterworth Heinemann, 2000. This comparison is inspired by Esther Leslie, *Plastic World, Coloured in: Synthetics and Politics in the mid-20th Century*, research seminar at the University of Edinburgh, 19th September 2013. See also Esther Leslie, *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry*, London, Reaktion, 2005.
5. David Medalla, *Space Suit by Fisher, Parangolé by Oiticica*, "Signals, Newsbulletin of Signals London", I (3), 1965, p. 14.
6. Many theoretical influences may be identified in the Manifesto: the revolutionary thinking of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the discovery of the subconscious by psychoanalysis and the study *Totem and Taboo* by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the liberation of the primitive element in man proposed by Surrealist writers such as André Breton (1896-1966), the *Manifeste Cannibale*, written by Francis Picabia (1879-1953) in 1920 and the issues surrounding the savage discussed by the philosophers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). The *Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil* was published in the "Correio da Manhã" in Rio de Janeiro in 1924. The Week of Modern Art witnessed the participation of the following painters, to name

a few: Anita Malfatti, Di Cavalcanti, Ferrignac, John Graz, Vicente do Rego Monteiro, Zina Aita, Yan de Almeida Prado and Antônio Paim Vieira, Alberto Martins Ribeiro. The field of sculpture included Victor Brecheret, Wilhelm Haarberg and Hildegardo Velloso. Architecture was represented by Antônio Moya and Georg Przyrembel. The poets included Graça Aranha, Guilherme de Almeida, Mário de Andrade, Menotti Del Picchia, Oswald de Andrade, Renato de Almeida, Ronald de Carvalho, Tácito de Almeida, and Manuel Bandeira. The musical programme featured compositions by Villa-Lobos and Debussy, interpreted by Guiomar Novaes and Ernani Braga, among others.

7. Sônia Salzstein, *Hélio Oiticica: Autonomy and the Limits of Subjectivity*, "Third Text", VIII (28/29), 1994, p. 123.
8. *Ibidem*.
9. Cf. Sérgio Bruno Martins, *Hélio Oiticica: Mapping the Constructive*, "Third Text", XXIV (4), 2010, pp. 409-422.
10. Luke Skrebowski, *Revolution in the Aesthetic Revolution*, "Third Text", XXVI (1), 2012, pp. 65-78.
11. Hélio Oiticica, *Metaesquemas 57/58*, in *Hélio Oiticica-Metaesquemas*, (São Paulo, Galeria Raphael Camargo, 1972).
12. I would like to clarify that the statement quoted above is dated 1972 but accompanied the exhibition of the works he made between 1957 and 1958; also, Oiticica's negative judgement doesn't refer only to the first gouaches on cardboard he produced around mid 1950s but also to the more mature abstract geometric paintings dated at the end of the decade.
13. Ivan Cardoso entrevista Hélio Oiticica, quoted in *Hélio Oiticica: The Body of Color*, (London, Tate Modern, 6 June-23 September 2007), curated by Mari Carmen Ramírez, Lucian Figueiredo, London, Tate Publishing in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2007, pp. 67-68.
14. *Grupo Frente*, 1955, guache on paper, 49,9 x 57,9 cm.
15. *Metaesquema*, 1958, oil on canvas, 88,6 x 113 cm.
16. *Pintura Branca*, 1959, guache on paper, 22,8 x 43,5 cm.
17. Mosquito da Mangueira wears *P10 Capa 6* "Homenagem à Mosquito da Mangueira", during the exhibition "Manifestação Ambiental N.1", Galeria G4, Rio de Janeiro, 1966.
18. Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, 1994, p. 158.

19. Cf. Sergio Martins, *White on White on White: Oiticica / Malevich / Nietzsche*, "Object", (11), 2009, pp. 65-85.
20. *Ibidem*.
21. Lucy R. Lippard quoting Hélio Oiticica, *Theory of the New Objectivity*, in *The Materials at Hand: Art, Work and Life*. Geco, Clark, Schendel and Hesse, in Héctor Olea, Mari Carmen Ramírez, *Versions and Inversions: Perspectives on Avant-Garde Art in Latin America*, Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, New Haven (Conn.), Yale University Press, 2006, p. 50.
22. "Il messaggio mira a suscitare reazioni nel ricettore, a stimolare associazioni, a promuovere comportamenti di risposta che vadano al di là del semplice riconoscimento della cosa indicata", Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta*, Milano, Bompiani, 1967, p. 65.
23. Gullar's *Theory of the Non-Object* was published in the Sunday Supplement of the "Jornal do Brasil" on December 19-20, 1959. The *Manifesto Neoconcreto* was published in the same year in the Sunday Supplement of the "Jornal do Brasil" but a few months later, on March 21-22. Cf. Michael Asbury, *Neoconcretism and Minimalism: on Ferreira Gullar's Theory of the Non-Object*, in Kobena Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, London, Institute of International Visual Arts, Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, pp. 168-189.
24. Anna Dezeuze, *Tactile Dematerialisation, Sensory Politics: Hélio Oiticica's Parangolé*, "Art Journal", LXIII (2), 2004, p. 64.
25. Here I am deliberately appropriating the notion of organic intellectual as developed by Antonio Gramsci.
26. Hélio Oiticica, *A Dança na minha Experiência*, in Rodrigues da Silva, *Hélio Oiticica's Parangolé or the Art of Transgression*, "Third Text", XIX (3), 2005, p. 214.
27. Hélio Oiticica, *Position and Program*, in *Hélio Oiticica*, (Rotterdam, Witte De With, Center for Contemporary Art, 22 February-26 April 1992 – Paris, Galerie National du Jeu De Paume, 10 June-23 August 1992), Paris, Jeu de Paume/Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1992, p. 89.
28. *Ibidem*.
29. *Ibidem*.
30. Hélio Oiticica, *Aspiro ao grande labirinto*, ivi, p. 78.
31. *Ibidem*.
32. Anna Dezeuze, *op. cit.*, p. 59. By "intellectual" here I mean something closer to "conceptual".
33. Oswald de Andrade, *Marco Zero*, Rio de Janeiro, J. Olympio, 1943.
34. Decio Pignatari, *Marco Zero de Andrade*, 1964, available at <http://seer.fclar.unesp.br/alfa/article/viewFile/3230/2957>.
35. "Like the word parangolé, a slang term from Rio de Janeiro that refers to a range of events or states including idleness, a sudden agitation, an unexpected situation or a dance party, the more than thirty objects so titled by Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica have an indetermined status", Anna Dezeuze, *op. cit.*
36. Hélio Oiticica, *Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé*, in *Hélio Oiticica*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
37. Cf. Anna Dezeuze, *op. cit.*
38. "At the main entrance of the museum, however, the group was forbidden to enter. A journalist described the incident: 'We comment on the fact that the MAM staff had not authorised the exhibition of "environmental art" at all. The performance of the *passistas* headed by Hélio Oiticica in the interior of the museum was not possible for reasons we could not understand: the noise of drums, tambourines and frying pans'. Outraged by the incident, Oiticica and the *Parangolé* performers, followed by the guests at the opening, stepped outside. Oiticica then made a harsh but well-received speech against the institution", Rodrigues da Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 230.
39. "Today I refuse to have any conditioning prejudice of some sort: I do what I want and my tolerance reaches every limit, unless a direct physical threat: keep oneself integral is not easy, especially in a marginal position: today I am marginal at the margins, not marginal aspiring to the petty bourgeois or conformism, but only marginal: at the edge of everything, which gives me an unexpected freedom of action, and for this I only need to be myself, according to my principle of pleasure..." Helio Oiticica, Letter to Lygia Clark, 8th November, 1968, in Luciano Figueiredo, *Lygia Clark-Hélio Oiticica, Cartas 1964-1974*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora UFRJ, 1998, p. 44, my translation.
40. Regarding the problematic relationship between Oiticica and Manguera see Micheal Asbury, *Hélio Couldn't Dance*, in *Fios Soltos: A Arte De Hélio Oiticica*, São Paulo, Editora Perspectiva, 2008, pp. 52-65.