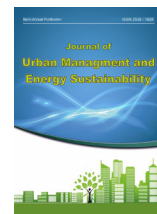


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CASE STUDY RESEARCH PAPER

A Reading of Enrique Oliveira's "Trans-arquitetônica", "Baitogogo" and "Tapumes" in Light of the Thought of Gilles Deleuze

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ABSTRACT

Gilles Deleuze was a philosopher who, with a creative and at the same time critical outlook, widened the boundaries of philosophy; his collaboration with Félix Guattari and the creation of key concepts such as openness, becoming, the rhizome and the body without organs exerted a profound influence on contemporary thought and offered new ways of perceiving the complex interactions between art and society. Among the outstanding figures of contemporary art is Enrique Oliveira, who, through a creative approach to installation and environmental art, fuses the boundaries of art, architecture and design. The aim of this article is to analyse three signal works by this artist and to read them in light of Deleuze's thought, pursuing the main research question: what relationship connects Enrique Oliveira's works to Deleuze's ideas on the basis of components such as the rhizome, difference-in-repetition and the body without organs? The study proceeds by a descriptive-analytical method, drawing on library sources and content analysis to read three works by Oliveira against Deleuze's concepts. The findings show that, through works built from a multi-layered system, Oliveira draws the viewer into discovering the hidden dimensions of his art, and that these works succeed in reflecting the concepts and ideas of Gilles Deleuze dissolving fixed form, center and hierarchy and staging becoming, rhizomatic connection and the body without organs. The study concludes that Oliveira's installations materialize Deleuze's thought and reframe art and architecture not as collections of fixed objects but as active, continually unfolding processes realized in the encounter with the viewer.

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INTRODUCTION

Gilles Deleuze is a French philosopher regarded as one of the most influential theorists of the twentieth century; his work embraces a large part of philosophy, cinema, literature and art (O'Sullivan, 2010). Deleuze is known for his theories on the concepts of “difference”, “repetition”, “the rhizome” and “discrete processes”, which allow him to evaluate complex subjects in more innovative ways. There are several approaches to applying Deleuze's thought in artistic analysis. Some scholars analyse their artworks by emphasizing Deleuzian concepts such as “becoming”, “rhizome” and “body without organs”, seeking to assess the processualism present in their works through these ideas (Pourkasmaei *et al.*, 2020). Another approach investigates why Deleuze's thought has influenced the ways art is created and experienced. Deleuze holds that art should act as a space that welcomes differences and diversities and makes it possible to move beyond established systems (Rajchman, 2007). Deleuze articulates the concept of the “body without organs”, meaning a body freed from fixed systems and open to unlimited potentials. In dialogue with the concept of openness, such thinking shows how spaces can become a ground for release from limits and for the discovery of new possibilities. Oliveira, too, by adapting the human body and its organs in his works, creates spaces that in some way recall the Deleuzian body without organs (Rajchman, 2007). Deleuze's thought shows us that, by transforming our view of space and structure, we may seek to create spaces bearing countless potentials for experience and change. Such an approach not only assists us in understanding art and architecture but also licenses us to perceive the world as an active phenomenon in a state of becoming. In this context, examining Enrique Oliveira's works from the standpoint of Deleuze's thought can advance a new epistemology within the field of art and architecture (Hill, 2002). By creating open spaces, Oliveira seeks to encourage audiences to interact and to enter into dialogue with one another, and in this way

to bring about an active, democratic community. This research examines the relationship between philosophy and art and shows how Deleuze's ideas can contribute to a deeper understanding of Enrique Oliveira's outstanding works.

Research Background

Ardalani and colleagues (2023), in a study entitled “Rereading the concept of the rhizome in the works of Peter Eisenman from the viewpoint of Gilles Deleuze; case study: the Galista cultural complex”, note that Gilles Deleuze is one of the most important contemporary empiricist and post-structuralist philosophers, whose theories on art are of great significance. One of the central pillars of postmodernist thought is the turn away from centrality or centralism precisely what Deleuze's rhizomatic mode of thought points to. That study attempts to reread the rhizome in the architectural works of Peter Eisenman (Ardalani *et al.*, 2023). Ardalani has likewise addressed Deleuze at length in his broader writings on post-structuralism and the philosophy of the arts (Ardalani, 2016) (Ardalani, 2025). Orfipak (2020), in her master's thesis entitled “An analysis of postmodernist photography with an approach to the ideas of Gilles Deleuze”, states that with the emergence of photography and its interaction with art a style-bearing system came into being. That research seeks to address questions such as which components of Gilles Deleuze's ideas can be found in postmodern photography, examining Deleuze's ideas in relation to postmodern photography through a descriptive-analytical study and critiquing the works of John Hilliard on the basis of Deleuze's theories (Orfipak, 2020).

Methodology

The research method in this study is analytical-descriptive. Within this method, library research and the examination of texts and the content of materials have been used. In analytical-descriptive research the investigator, in addition to

depicting what exists, also sets out and explains the reasons for the how and why of the state of the problem and its various dimensions. Gilles Deleuze, the French empiricist and post-structuralist philosopher, was born in Paris on 18 January 1925. He entered state school before the outbreak of the war and, during the German invasion, went to Normandy for the holidays, where he studied for a year; in that period, he came under the influence of his teacher and, for the first time, took pleasure in the study of philosophy. From 1944 to 1948 he read philosophy at the Sorbonne. In the 1980s Deleuze published important works on cinema. In 1987 he became acquainted with the psychoanalyst and political activist Félix Guattari, in collaboration with whom he wrote several outstanding works (Bagherinejad, 2009). Deleuze's intellectual trajectory may be divided into two parts: first, a period in which he worked alone, undertook deep studies in the history of philosophy and wrote books on philosophers such as Hume, Leibniz, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson, together with the theories he advanced on art and especially cinema in this period he inclined towards an empiricist philosophy with a new outlook; and second, a period of serious collaboration with the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, of which the creative idea of the "rhizome" is one of the most important results (Salahshouri & Haghverdi, 2015). Every thought takes shape within a particular temporal and spatial context. Philosophical and social debates arise through the critique of a method and an idea and, beyond the effort to bring about change, they reject, complete, reconstruct or renew earlier thinking (Dashti, 2005). One such critical current is post-structuralism, which appeared in the wake of, and as a critique of, structuralism. The origin of these critical ideas lies in the thought of Nietzsche; after Nietzsche, Heidegger was the first philosopher to challenge the foundations of Western metaphysics, and later Derrida, Foucault and Barthes continued along this path (Zamiran, 2004).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Rhizome

The rhizome is organized on the basis of no processual principle and is constantly dispersing and expanding. Deleuze's criticism was that philosophy, in discovering and expressing reality, has always presented the instance of consciousness, dependence and cognition in a formatted way: "The philosopher possesses in advance, as a presupposition, the will to think, and founds the whole of his enquiry upon a decision already thought through beforehand and it is here that the manner of philosophy springs from that very decision" (Deleuze, 1994). Becoming and continuity carry the force needed to shake and uproot the verb "to be"; ultimately, if we apply this expression to human actions and change "being" into perpetual "becoming", human actions occur in the moment and on the basis of their prior path. Although this does not mean possessing a center or a fixed destination, it means that, just as from any node on the stem of a rhizomatic plant a new stem may grow and open a fresh path in the plant's course, so a person's new experiences are built upon their previous experiences and open new paths. Those present in a performance place one another, in a back-and-forth manner, in a chosen situation of new potentialities entirely contingent and the other person has the opportunity, in response to the behavior received, to return their own reaction to the first person or to set them on the course of a new game. Such freedom of action in the enactment of an interactive performance is the best way of presenting what Deleuze designates by the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005).

Body without Organs

Deleuze first articulates the concept of the body without organs in his book Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation. He adapts the concept from Antonin Artaud. In a radio play entitled "To Have Done with the Judgment of God", Artaud writes: "There is nothing more useless than an organ. When you have given him a body without organs,

you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom" (Artaud, 1965). Deleuze says: "The body without organs is not without organs; it is simply without an organism" that is, it is a matter of ordering the organs, though in a particular way. The body without organs is thus introduced through indeterminate organs, in place of the organism, which is defined by determinate organs (Young et al., 2013). Later Deleuze uses the term, in his joint works with Félix Guattari, in a broader sense; together they introduce many bodies without organs, including the body without organs of capitalism.

Becoming

In Deleuze's thought, the concept of "becoming" stands as an active and transformative force in clear contrast to the concept of "being", which holds a foundational place in the Western philosophical tradition. In advancing the concept of becoming, Deleuze not only critiques the traditional modes of philosophy that sought a fixed essence and a determined identity but also seeks to present a new and radical theory of the world of being and of human experience. In this theory the world is not a fixed, static phenomenon but a perpetual hierarchy of change and transformation, in which nothing has finality and everything is in a state of becoming. In other words, on the

Baitogogo (2013)



Figure 1: Baitogogo (2013), Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Photo: André Morin (Source: henriqueoliveira.com)

strength of the concept of becoming, Deleuze frees us from the limits of the traditional ontological idea of being and licenses us to experience a fluid world (Massumi, 2015, p. 18).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Enrique Oliveira and the Analysis of Three

Enrique Oliveira is one of the most important and influential artists in contemporary installation art. By creating interactive installations, he not only broke the boundaries of art, architecture and design but also sought to bring into being spaces that call the audience to reread the surrounding environment and its modes of relation. With an innovative idea of space, material and human experience, Oliveira is able to establish his standing as one of the pioneers of contemporary installation art. His works have attracted attention not only in his native Brazil but also on the international stage, and have been introduced as key examples of installation art (O'Sullivan, 2010). In other words, Oliveira is not only an artist but also, as it were, a scientist and social activist who, through his works, seeks awareness, the stimulation of thought and the transformation of society. He holds that art should not be confined to formal spaces but must also become manifest in public spaces and in relation to people.



Figure 2: Linear analysis of Baitogogo based on Deleuzian concepts (Source: Authors)

Table 1: Specifications of Baitogogo

Title of the work	Baitogogo
Year of creation	2013
Dimensions	20.76 m × 11.79 × 6.74
Material	Wood and bamboo

One of Enrique Oliveira's outstanding works is a piece named Baitogogo. In this work he offers, in an innovative way, an approach to space, form and material. The work is made of recycled timber, arranged in a winding, interwoven structure in which the viewer who observes it finds themselves on a journey of discovery. Beyond its attractiveness, the work shows the viewer a different kind of space in fact, a space that is constantly changing. The recycled timber is a choice that both helps the environment and reminds the viewer that inventive works of art can be created even from discarded materials. Owing to its winding, spiralling form, the work presents a fluid structure and a dynamic, transformative experience of space that instils the concept of becoming. The use of wood as a natural material lends a feeling of warmth, intimacy and connection with nature; Oliveira in fact uses worn timber both to give the work a sense of authenticity and age and to recall that beauty exists also in decay and wear. Analysis of the work through the concept of becoming in Gilles Deleuze's thought: the timber form appears to be a shaped, fixed volume, whereas it presents itself as momentarily growing and expanding. The branches and masses of timber seem to have been arrested at an instant within a process of becoming; although they have reached a final state, they are not fully conceived as complete. This unfinished condition of the form is a tangible instance of "becoming" in Deleuze's thought, for in his thinking the concept of "becoming" is not only an active phase perpetually in change and transformation but is also inseparably fused with the notion of "moving beyond fixed identity". In effect, through the concept of

becoming Deleuze invites us towards processualism and dynamism and asks us not to strive after a fixed identity but to seek new paths of change and transformation. Analysis of the work through the concept of the body without organs in Deleuze's thought: here the interior space of the museum turns into a body without organs. The timber forms resemble organs but without any organ or function; they are neither columns, nor walls, nor ceiling. They are intensities that have come to flow through space. The body without organs is an attempt to escape the reduction of the body to a biological and material entity and to present the body as a continual process of becoming and change. In Deleuze's thought the concept of the body without organs is an invitation towards release, processuality and multiple experience; it reminds us that we should not pursue the fixing of identity.

Analysis of the work through the concept of the rhizome in Deleuze's thought: the structure of Baitogogo is wholly rhizomatic. The forms lack a centre, an axis or a linear path and spread horizontally and in branches through space. It is the viewer who is confronted not with a predetermined route but with a network of movement possibilities. The rhizome dismantles the processual order of the museum's architectural space and turns it into a multi-dimensional field for varied experiences. In the concept of the rhizome, and in this work, every point can connect to any other, generating multiple, non-linear relations. In advancing this concept, Deleuze frees us from the limits of hierarchical thought and licenses us to perceive the world as an active, complex and pluralistic entity.

Tapumes (2009)



Figure 3: Tapumes (2009), Rice Gallery, Houston, USA
(Source: henriqueoliveira.com)



Figure 4: Linear analysis of Tapumes based on Deleuzian concepts (Source: Authors)

Table 2: Specifications of Tapumes

Title of the work	Tapumes
Year of creation	2009
Dimensions	2 m × 13.4 × 4.7
Material	Wood

Another of Henrique Oliveira's outstanding works is named Tapumes. In this work he gives a de-constructive and creative treatment of space, form and material. At the Rice Gallery the piece takes the form of a vast wooden flow or wave that bursts out of the walls and ceiling and envelops the gallery space. The work in fact recalls the roots of a tree and the veins of the body. Tapumes prompts the viewer to reflect on the hidden potentials of art. The materials used are worn, recycled timber, which Oliveira employs in order to help the environment and to suggest to the viewer that discarded materials too can be beautiful. Tapumes is not merely a barrier or a wall but a multi-layered, interwoven space. The recycled timbers together form a tall, uneven wall; in this irregular structure both symmetry and geometric order are relinquished. Analysis of the work through the concept of becoming in Gilles Deleuze's thought: this work clearly displays Deleuze's idea of becoming. Here the timber forms are neither in a final condition nor able to be stable; they hold an intermediate state, seeming to have been arrested at a mo-

ment of growth or collapse. This suspension of form is a direct example of Deleuzian becoming a place where processuality and dynamism are in flow, where we are released from the effort to attain a fixed identity and seek new paths of change and transformation. In this image the concept of Deleuzian becoming is at work, for it is a dynamic, transformative force set against the concept of being.

Analysis of the work through the concept of the body without organs in Deleuze's thought: here the wall is no longer a neutral architectural surface but has become a body that is swollen and under pressure. The protrusions resemble organs, yet without determinate organs or specific functions. This is the realization of the Deleuzian body without organs an escape from complexity and from the reduction of the body to a biological and material phenomenon, expressing the body as a continual hierarchy of becoming and change. In this thinking the body is not an object but a phase perpetually becoming and changing; among the aspects of this work in relation to the body without organs is its fluid,

multiple experience.

Analysis of the work through the concept of the rhizome in Deleuze's thought: although in this image the rhizome is not shown as an expansive space, the concept of the rhizome is present in the structure of the work. There is no center or dominant point, and the forms are connected to one another horizontally and non-processually. The wall is removed from its own linear order it is in fact non-linear and becomes an unstable network of relations, a network that deprives the viewer of the possibility of a single



Figure 5: Trans-arquitetônica (2014), Museu de Arte Contemporânea, São Paulo, Brazil. Photo: Everton Ballardin (Source: henriqueoliveira.com)

reading. In Deleuze's thought the rhizome is not merely a botanical system but a philosophical model for understanding the world, organizing knowledge and experiencing being. Against arborescent structures, this work in the concept of the rhizome emphasizes a network-like, non-hierarchical structure without a fixed center, a determinate root or a predetermined path. In this work every point may connect to any other, generating multiple, non-linear interactions. In advancing this concept, Deleuze releases us from the limits of hierarchical thought.



Figure 6: Linear analysis of Trans-arquitetônica based on Deleuzian concepts (Source: Authors)

Table 3: Specifications of Trans-arquitetônica

Title of the work	Trans-arquitetônica
Year of creation	2014
Dimensions	73 m × 18 × 5
Material	Wood, bamboo, clay, PVC, timber board, tree branches

Another of Enrique Oliveira's outstanding works is Trans-arquitetônica. In this piece his creative approach to space, form and material is clearly displayed. The work is composed of wood, brick, bamboo, timber board and tree branches. It brings into being an organic, complex structure which, although it appears irregular, possesses an inner, hidden order. By deploying these materials, Oliveira creates an interwoven, indeterminate space that calls the audience into a dynamic relationship of discovery and experience. Beyond being a work of art, it is also a total space: Trans-arquitetônica is a visual sys-

tem and a summons towards experience and transformation. In it the work turns away from linear patterns and process; through these non-geometric, irregular and interwoven forms it creates multiple spaces that are constantly transforming and growing. Wood and bamboo are natural, sustainable materials; in Trans-arquitetônica Oliveira recalls that using such materials both helps to preserve the environment and reminds the audience that discarded materials can be beautiful. The work is, in fact, a dynamic, open space. Analysis of the work through the concept of becoming in Gilles Deleuze's

thought: this piece envelops the museum space in a horizontal, root-like and branching view. The timber forms are like a body in change and transformation not exactly a tree, nor an architecture, nor even a sculpture. The work stands in an intermediate condition. This is precisely what Deleuze means: becoming is the leaving of a fixed identity and the entry into an infinite process. It goes neither towards nature nor is it enclosed within architecture; the branches seem still to be growing, and no fixed state is to be seen. Deleuze frees us from the limits of the traditional ideas that sought fixed identities; the concept of becoming invites us to move beyond fixed, clichéd identity, holding that identity is not a predetermined fact but an active, perpetual hierarchy of re-creation.

Analysis of the work through the concept of the body without organs in Deleuze's thought: this work invites reflection on Deleuze's idea of the body without organs. The structure of the piece has no determinate center, head, or up and down. The branches spread in a dispersed, horizontal manner that entirely dissolves the ordinary order of architecture. The museum space is no longer merely a place for passage or display but becomes a surface that harbours the flow of forces. The work literally resembles a body without organs a body in which no organic organization is to be seen and which is defined only by pressures and intensities. The viewer stands before a body that can neither be easily understood nor controlled. In Deleuze's

thought the body without organs is among the most complex human concepts, challenging traditional approaches to the body, identity and human experience: it is not a physical body without organs and members but a conceptual body freed from fixed systems, predetermined identities and social and cultural roles just like this work. Analysis of the work through the concept of the rhizome in Deleuze's thought: this image is, in a sense, one of the clearest examples of the rhizomatic concept in Enrique Oliveira's works. The branches have no linear or hierarchical path and no point is primary over another. Growth has occurred simultaneously and from several points and has enveloped the whole space. Unlike the arborescent structure, which places root, trunk and branch in a determinate hierarchy, this work has a horizontal structure. The viewer's eye moves like a rhizome, sliding from point to point without a predetermined route. In this structure every point can connect to any other and generate non-linear interaction. Against arborescent and hierarchical structures, the rhizome recommends a network-like, non-hierarchical structure without a fixed center, a determinate root or a predetermined path. In advancing this concept, Deleuze licenses us to understand the world as a complex, pluralistic phenomenon. The rhizome took shape in the critique of arborescent structures, which in traditional thought were the dominant models for organizing knowledge and experience. (Tab. 4)

Table 4: Synthesis of the Deleuzian reading across the three works (Source: Authors)

Concept	Baitogogo (2013)	Tapumes (2009)	Trans-arquitetônica (2014)
Becoming	Spiralling, unfinished form arrested mid-growth; fixed identity dissolved.	Forms suspended between growth and collapse; an intermediate, unstable state.	Between tree, architecture and sculpture; branches still growing, never fixed.
Body without Organs	Timber masses act as organs without function; interior becomes a field of intensities.	The wall swells under pressure; organ-like protrusions with no fixed function.	Organic masses with no centre, head or direction; defined by pressures and intensities.
Rhizome	No centre or axis; horizontal, branching network of movement possibilities.	Non-linear, unstable network of relations; a single reading is denied.	Multi-path, horizontal network; every point may connect to any other.

CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

Deleuze's thought makes it possible to grasp transformation and movement in art in a creative way. Drawing on concepts such as "becoming", "rhizome" and "body without organs", we strive to regard art not as a collection of fixed objects but as an active, changing structure. On Deleuze's account, art is not merely a visual object but an active, perpetual hierarchy that acquires meaning in relation to the viewer. It must be said that there are shared points of view between Deleuze's thought and art. In emphasizing such concepts, Deleuze sought to present a dynamic, fluid view of the world; he used a poetic and metaphorical language in order to challenge the reader and to move beyond the traditional approaches of thought. Many contemporary artists use Deleuze's concepts to understand and analyses their own works. Among them, the contemporary artist Enrique Oliveira founded his own artistic style and, using recycled materials, was able to create spaces that invite audiences to interaction, discovery and experience. His works are usually composed of complex, multi-layered structures that invite audiences to move through space and discover its hidden dimensions. His works of art succeeded well in reflecting the ideas of Gilles Deleuze within themselves.

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