

---

This is an electronic reprint of the original article.  
This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.

Moreschi, Bruno; Bratton, Christopher; Benfield, Dalida Maria; Pereira, Gabriel; Falcao, Guilherme  
**\_rt movements**

*Published in:*  
ArtMargins

*DOI:*  
[10.1162/artm\\_a\\_00294](https://doi.org/10.1162/artm_a_00294)

Published: 01/06/2021

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Please cite the original version:*  
Moreschi, B., Bratton, C., Benfield, D. M., Pereira, G., & Falcao, G. (2021). \_rt movements. *ArtMargins*, 10(2).  
[https://doi.org/10.1162/artm\\_a\\_00294](https://doi.org/10.1162/artm_a_00294)

---

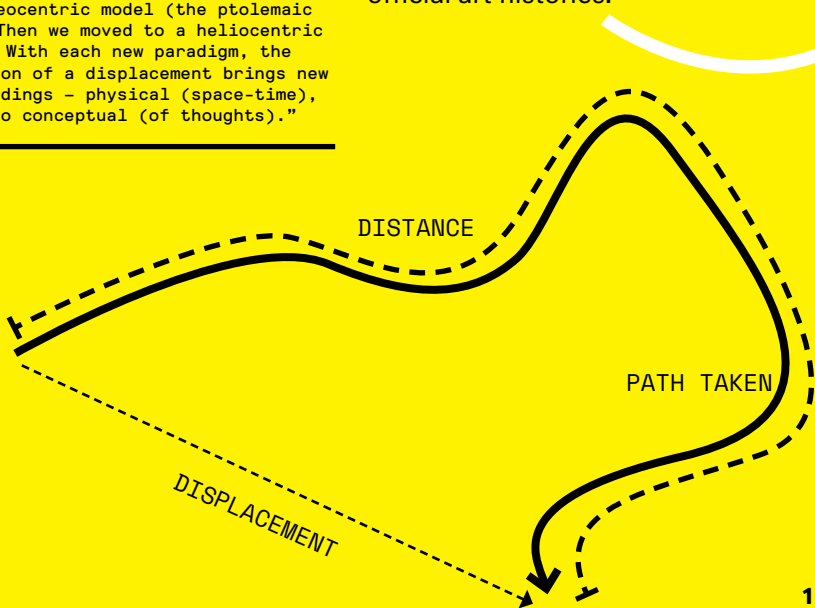
This material is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorised user.

# **\_rt movements**

## **1... movement, in other words**

**\_rt movements** is the second in a series of pamphlets on the meaning and uses of art, in its institutional forms and in its always-other radical potentials. The series was inaugurated with **HISTORY OF \_RT** (2016/2017) that evaluated the teaching of art history by analyzing major textbooks used in Brazilian universities and art academies. The analysis dramatically highlighted that women, people of color, and the Global South are absent from official art histories.

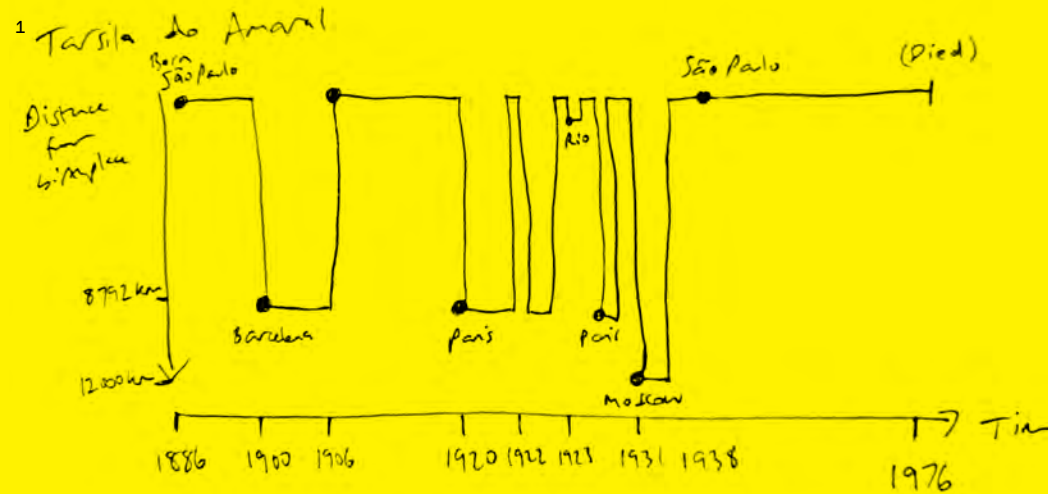
In physics, "displacement" is the vector that represents "the shortest distance between two points." This conceptualization is different from that of distance, as it is linear. Displacement is what remains after the experience of walking. João Ramos, a Professor of Physics in Caruaru (Brazil), helps us move beyond: "We used to think from a geocentric model (the ptolemaic system). Then we moved to a heliocentric model. With each new paradigm, the constitution of a displacement brings new understandings – physical (space-time), but also conceptual (of thoughts)."



This pamphlet, **Art movements**, uses these absences to challenge normative art history by denying the primacy of the individual artist, the singular art object, and to displace the historical narrative of art movements. Instead, it develops a relational understanding through the temporal and spatial movement of ideas, cultural practices, and people. As a continuum of activity, movement is thought in form – even though we leave space for formlessness and namelessness – and is a reclamation of the livingness of those practices known as art, as expressed in the political and social possibilities of their movements. To move is to become displaced and to displace; to become or to be put out of place is to be unstable, elusive, and febrile. Movement produces ever emerging meanings, circulating between peoples, places and histories, engaged with the past, yet fundamentally about the present, recombining and reimagining ways of knowing and making the world.

## 2... the space of art and power

Why do what is known as art and artists travel, and what are the transversal resonances of their travels? The trope of the artist as travelling flâneur is echoed in the chronological recitations of normative art history. The passage of cultural forms across the planet is a fundamental fact of coloniality and modernity. What is produced by these movements through time-spaces? What are the unexpected exchanges, antagonisms, and displacements caused by them? In other words: Are these not “art histories,” but histories of multiple cultural and economic entanglements and political magnetizations that compel people, practices, and objects towards, or away from, specific localities?



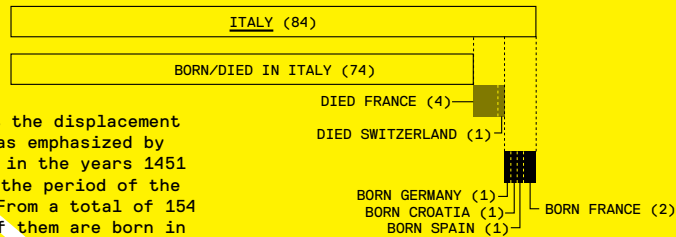
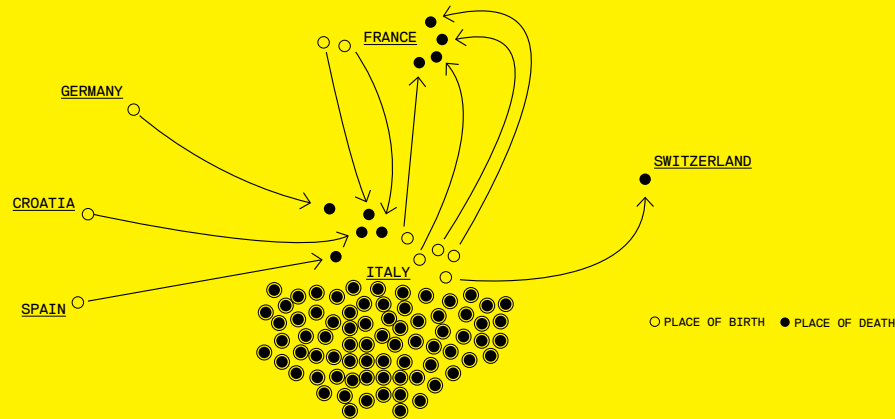
## Art movements

The Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral was born in São Paulo in 1886, and died there in 1976. A daughter of a wealthy Brazilian family, she had an education typical of her class, learning French at an early age and finishing her studies in Spain. Her ascension as one of Brazil's most influential modernist artists was fundamentally related to her life-long transit between Europe and the Americas. From Paris, in 1924, Tarsila wrote: "What they want here is that each one brings the contribution of their own country. This explains the success of the Russian ballet, Japanese graphics and black music. Paris had had enough of Parisian art." She both refused and embraced the ethno-nationalist label, placing herself and her work in a state of between-ness.



An artist's movement (and that of their communities, artistic and otherwise) can be spiritual and ancestral as well. Since 2014, Moisés Patrício has produced over 1000 photographs for the series *Aceita? (Do you take it?)*: "I produce one image a day as a way of reflecting my condition in the outskirts of São Paulo (BR). Always with my open hand." Exu, an Afro-Brazilian deity known as the Orisha of movement, is both an inspiration and the first to receive these offerings.

4



These graphs represent the displacement of European artists as emphasized by normative art history\* in the years 1451 to 1600 a.d. (roughly the period of the European Renaissance). From a total of 154 artists, almost half of them are born in Italy, the others are from other places in Europe, mostly present-day France, Germany, and the Netherlands. It shows the intense geographic concentration of the artists from this particular period and their displacement (from place of birth to death). Not represented in this typical account are the movements and their significance: it was at this time and place that modern banking was born and there was an unprecedented accumulation of wealth. It was the beginning of an economic revolution in Europe that yoked artists to new forms of power and produced what is now normatively recognized as art. In quick succession there were similar migrations of artists to the Netherlands and Great Britain, following the new wealth generated by colonial plunder and the transformed world it represented.

\* For this analysis, we used data from the THE HISTORY OF RT project, the first pamphlet of this series, which comprises an analysis of 11 books frequently used in undergraduate courses in Brazil. As such, it represents a particularly normative understanding of this history.

### 3... objects stripped bare

Artworks move, and are reappropriated and resignified in ways that challenge original intentions of whoever says they created it. They accrue and lose value, become political, aesthetic, desirable, or blasphemous. Even a work's author can change. The artwork moves, changes hands, breaks, is stolen, or even disappears.



The Mantle of the Annunciation, Bispo do Rosário (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). The artist desired to be wearing this garment when he was buried, but this did not occur. Instead, his creation became a work of art to be exhibited - an object stripped bare.

6

First staged in 1968, in Rio de Janeiro, Lygia Pape's social sculpture and architectural intervention Divisor, consisting of a large expanse of white fabric strips sewn together and animated by up to 225 human beings who put their heads through it and move with it together through the streets, was reperformed on March 25, 2017, as part of a retrospective of her work at The Met Brauer in New York. The reperformance abbreviated the work, only partially unfurling the fabric and containing it to one side of the street upon which its reperformers walked. This reincorporalization of embodied performance across the time and space of the global revolution of 1968, the dictatorship in Brazil, and the planetary globalization and global city of New York of 2017 stages what can be understood as a decorporalization of the political and social body; the production of a body art without organs. This institutional appropriation of work made outside, literally of institutions - on the beach, in the park, in the street - is discursively positioned as a disruption of the flow of art historical information from north to south.

An unauthorized re-performance of Divisor in 2018 by the Jararaca Collective, during the 33rd Sao Paulo Art Biennial. The performers changed the color of Divisor's fabric to red, protesting the Brazilian coup. Lygia Pape's family, perhaps in an attempt to dissociate from the complicated political questions that were emerging, and the red color, objected to this unauthorized re-performance.

## 4... transnational art-washing and the rise of festivalism



**art movements**

things, migrants are widely objectified as a problem to be solved, with their movements blocked, curtailed, policed, punished. Tourism and travel are privileges enjoyed by those who benefit from the spread of the neoliberal order.

These are the wages of a system that emphasize certain ideas of culture in general and creativity in particular. In fact, "creativity" was redefined to generate a wholly new political and cultural lexicon:

- "creatives" (those who make)
- "creative place-making" (where it happens)
- "creative capital" (the money that makes it happen)
- "creative economy" (its logic).

This highly formal and selective view of the world erases the social relations of exploitation that underpin it. Embraced by cities and whole states as policy this transnational art-washing enables gentrification on a world scale. Thus cultural institutions such as museums could claim new social relevance, even as their practices remain unchanged and, in fact, continue to reproduce wide-spread forms of inequality. They are part of a network of exchange, including, among others, international biennials and art fairs, that functions to integrate diverse cultures into a homogenized, exploitable global "whole":

Mobility is a privilege or a necessity. The human world has undergone multiple violent reorderings, most recently to enable the rapid and unfettered movement of capital. War and impoverishment impels the displacement of large numbers of people, made over as migrants and refugees. In contrast to the flow of

+

Rio de Janeiro  
22.9068°S, 43.1729°W  
New York - Met Brauer  
40.7734°N 73.9638°W  
Sao Paulo Art Biennial  
23.5880°S 46.6538°W

“To inject new energy into a dying society or save a declining place, people believe in FESTIVALISM, a popular strategy of city regeneration and rural reconstruction. Festivals of art, film, music, dance, food, beer, folk totem, traditional ritual, themed parade... break routines and create a collective sense of belonging, an almost religious-like moment. A carnival of several days may engage local people and attract tourists. It may result in capital in-flows and lead to the gentrification of the place, but FESTIVALISM is not a panacea for long-term economic revival or cultural revitalization. An exciting wave is not the same thing as a long flowing river. The short-lived passion is not enough to sustain your everyday life. To make a good place needs long-term daily efforts.” — (from the artist, curator, and writer Du Ning, personal correspondence)



Blurry and illegal: On the left, one of the amateur photographs of Picasso's Guernica posted on social media. These photographs differ greatly from the rest of those taken by visitors to the Reina Sofia, because it is forbidden to take them. The ban alters the compositions, but does not prevent their circulation – now part of a data network in the order of 102.864 GB per second. The prohibition also provokes ironic displacements, such as in Eugenio Ampudia's postcard (above), a 'certificate of proof' and viewership of the artwork.

YORNEL MARTÍNEZ ELÍAS  
El museo de los muertos  
from the series  
Esto no es un Museo

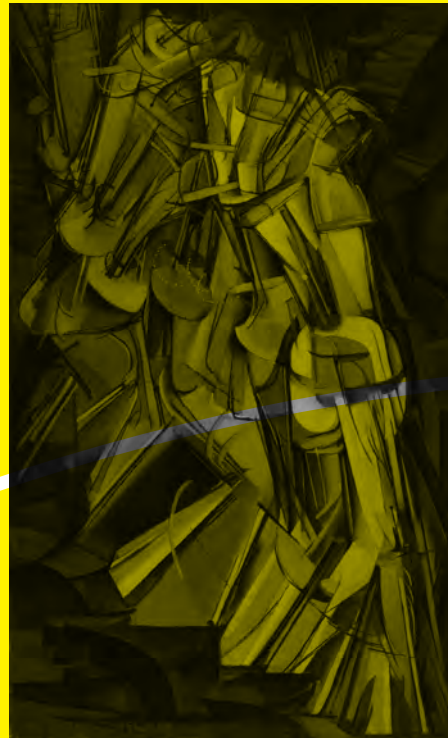


\_art movements

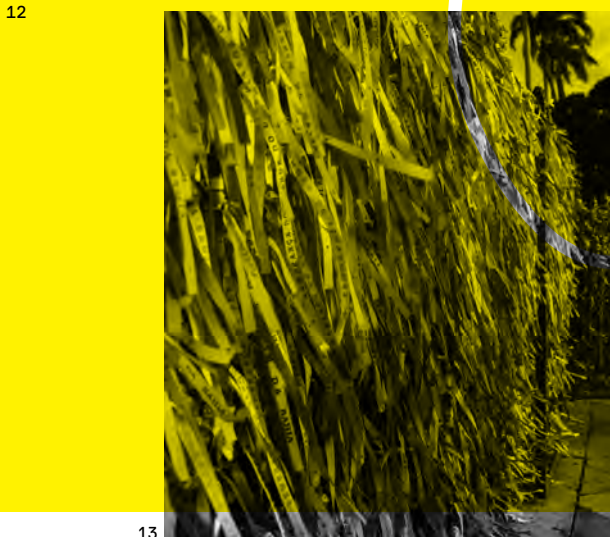
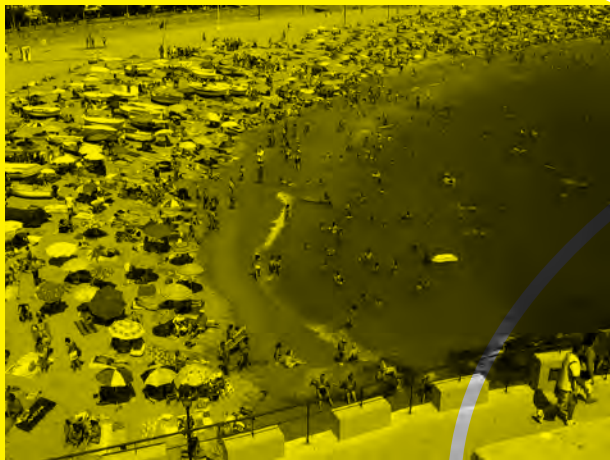


More than the decisive moment. Art works and exhibitions are also displaced as promotional materials and in souvenirs, which are altogether different things, another order of commodity. For example, the Cartier Bresson exhibition moved from the Ateneum museum in Helsinki to beyond, as stickers and images on coffee mugs, umbrellas, scarves, and notebooks. Here we show a selection of these in an official record made by Filipe Berndt, who has been photographing the life of works of art for more than 10 years. The history of art is also a history of these objects and photographs.





11 → **5... the future as connected and interdependent.**



[PREVIOUS PAGE] For the Brazilian artist Helio Oiticica, his “parangoles” and “spatial reliefs” (top left image) address “a vital need for disintellectualization, for intellectual disinhibition, a movement of free expression”. When situated in commercial computer vision (AI) systems, this image activates a version of Aby Warburg’s relational praxis, invoking other images due to their visual similarity without deference to time, authorship, or concept. It is positioned in proximity to works of art such as Marchel Duchamp’s “Nude descending a staircase” (1912) or, to more trivial or opaquely associative images, such as a crowded beach or offerings to Senhor do Bonfim in Bahia, Brazil.

We end with a thought on the history of art history, a return to a past that points to other futures. Aby Warburg (1866–1929) spent the latter part of his life on a radical project to demonstrate the essential role of images in creating common understandings called culture. The Atlas Mnemosyne (1924–1929) is an assembly of over 2000 images, ranging from artworks and antiquities to advertising and popular photography, displayed on large moveable panels to create constellations of connections and ideas. Warburg used the notion of movement to define culture itself, and The Atlas was his effort to capture the flux of culture in its complexity. In his own words, this was “a psychological story through images, which is able to illustrate the distance between impulse and action.” It was a challenge to the forms of art history that domesticate art by reducing it to a linear succession of styles, individual figures, and national schools. Instead, the Atlas entwines art and history, remaking each, as displaced images are resituated amongst diverse people

and periods. As some Indigenous cultures know, the future is in the past, a lesson that informs Warburg’s proposal to mobilize meanings across visual and social dispersions. His insistence on interdependence, with ancestral pasts and speculative futures, points to the urgent project of reimagining cultures and worlds.

### A project by

Bruno Moreschi, Christopher Bratton, Dalida Maria Benfield, Gabriel Pereira, and Guilherme Falcão, with special contributions from Eugenio Ampudia (p.8), João Ramos (p.1), Kerry Rodden (visualizations p. 2–4), Moisés Patrício (p.3), Ou Ning (p.8), Yornel Martinez (p.8), and Filipe Berndt (p.9). We’d also like to thank the ARTMargins editors, Ricardo Resende and Andrea Bolanho (Bispo do Rosário Museum, Brazil), Coletivo Jararaca, and Ana C. Roman.

This project was made possible through the generous support from the Center for Arts, Design, and Social Research (CAD+SR).

Image credits 1.Kerry Rodden / 2.Moisés Patrício / 3.Coleção Museu Bispo do Rosário Arte Contemporânea/ Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro – by Rodrigo Lopes) / 4.Coletivo Jararaca / 5.Divisor “29ª Bienal de São Paulo-Lygia Pape/Brasil” by Camilla Hamdan (Portfólio) is licensed with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>. Original image at <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/bb807885-0045-4552-b013-152ad5704e0a/> 6.Bruno Moreschi / 7. Eugenio Ampudia / 8.Yornel Martinez / 9.All pictures by Filipe Berndt / 10.“Protests against Netanyahu” by Nir Hirshman, and 13.“Fitas de Bonfim at Bonfim church, Salvador, Brazil” by Matti Blume are licensed by CC BY-SA 4.0 .[https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) - 12.“A typical crowded beach in “tosse de mar”, Spain” by Katonams is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en> - 11.“A photo by Billie Ward” (of artwork by Helio Oiticica) by Billie Grace Ward, and 14.“Un dia sin migrantes (Tijuana B.C. Mexico)” by tj scenes are licensed under CC BY 2.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en> 16.“Graveyard of Aeroplanes” by Faisal Akram Ether, and 15.“Calais – Refuges et Lieux de vie” by kakna’s world are licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/> - All other images are Public Domain