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Cinema and Virtual Reality in Art Education: Tools for Social and Cultural Integration

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Abstract

This article discusses aesthetic experience mediated by technology in pedagogical practices involving cinema and virtual reality in art classes at Brazilian public schools. It departs from the issue of coloniality, framing it as a form of domination that perpetuates social and cultural inequalities in peripheral countries, employing visuality as a mechanism to classify, hierarchise, and aestheticise peoples and their territories. Museums and cinemas can contribute to restoring the 'right to look' by promoting contact with expressions of counter-visuality. However, one of the consequences of structural inequality is the difficulty of accessing these spaces due to problems with urban mobility and infrastructure. Education plays a key role in mitigating these effects by promoting aesthetic experiences through image appreciation and production technologies. The central hypothesis of this article is that pedagogical practices involving cinema and virtual reality, guided by image appreciation and production, may foster otherness and expand subjective perceptions by democratising and extending access to art. Through a bibliographical study, the article explores the ethical-aesthetic implications of image-making in pedagogical contexts. The discussion suggests that immersive aesthetic experiences allow students to develop and refine their viewpoints in pursuit of their "right to look", thereby enhancing a critical and inclusive engagement with culture. It concludes that, when properly mediated, such technological tools enable students to appropriate their own culture and create images that reflect their identities, making the teaching-learning process more inclusive and establishing a *habitus* that contributes to suspending social and cultural hierarchies.

Keywords

visual culture, right to look, art education, digital capitalism

Cinema e Realidade Virtual nas Aulas de Arte Como Meio Para Promover Integração Social e Cultural

Resumo

Este artigo propõe um debate sobre a experiência estética, mediada pela tecnologia, em ações pedagógicas com cinema e realidade virtual nas aulas de arte em escolas públicas

brasileiras. Parte-se da problemática em torno da colonialidade, configurando-a como um meio de dominação que perpetua desigualdades sociais e culturais em países periféricos, utilizando-se da visualidade como mecanismo para classificar, hierarquizar e estetizar povos e seus territórios. Museus e cinemas, podem contribuir na recomposição do "direito a olhar" por promoverem contato com expressões de contravisualidade. Porém, uma das consequências da desigualdade estrutural são as dificuldades de acesso a estes espaços devido a problemas de mobilidade urbana e infraestrutura. A educação tem um papel importante em minimizar esses efeitos, promovendo experiências estéticas com as tecnologias de apreciação e produção de imagens. A hipótese central deste texto sugere que práticas pedagógicas envolvendo o cinema e a realidade virtual, pautadas por ações de apreciação e produção de imagens, podem promover a alteridade e expandir percepções subjetivas ao democratizar e capilarizar o acesso à arte. Por meio de um estudo bibliográfico, explora-se implicações ético-estéticas da produção de imagens em ações pedagógicas. As discussões dos resultados indicam que essa experiência estética imersiva permite que os estudantes desenvolvam e qualifiquem seus pontos de vista em busca do seu "direito a olhar", potencializando uma conexão crítica e inclusiva com a cultura. Conclui-se que tais dispositivos tecnológicos, com a mediação adequada, possibilitam aos estudantes a apropriação de sua cultura e a criação de imagens que refletem suas identidades, tornando o processo de ensino-aprendizagem mais inclusivo e instaurando *habitus* que contribui para suspender hierarquias sociais e culturais.

Palavras-chave

cultura visual, direito a olhar, arte-educação, capitalismo digital

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1. Introduction

Coloniality is a form of territorial, cultural, and epistemic domination founded on the myth of a self-propelling universal reason, used to justify the exploitation of other territories that held resources either unavailable or already scarce in Europe. In the Americas, Eurocentric roots were established in the 15th century through a system that has been sustained by the classification of peoples according to objectives and territories, generating power structures that have founded ethnic and racial asymmetries that persist to this day (Dussel, 2008; Mignolo, 2005; Quijano, 1992; Walsh et al., 2018).

In contrast, decoloniality[1] — a perspective founded in the 1990s by the Latin American research group Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality — presents itself as a political praxis that seeks to expose and challenge these structures of colonial maintenance. It constitutes a "theoretical project aimed at critical and transdisciplinary rethinking, in opposition to dominant academic trends grounded in a Eurocentric perspective on knowledge production" (Walsh et al., 2018, p. 3).

[1] The critique of colonialism has been present in academic circles since the 19th century, with the term "decolonisation" used to denote political-geographical processes of power transition from empire to colonised territories in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. With the collapse of these colonial empires in the 1980s and 1990s, colonial studies began to address decolonisation as encompassing the social and cultural dimensions of each nation-State (Trajano Filho, 2024). The omission of the final "s" is an epistemological choice by the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality research group, signalling an understanding of colonialism as an ongoing phenomenon (Walsh, 2009).

Decoloniality also informs pedagogical projects that aim to decentralise content, knowledge, and methods to value the processes and knowledge of learners, understanding them as co-authors of knowledge and recognising the teaching-learning process itself as key to emancipation and social justice. This perspective also brings visibility to the knowledge of people historically subordinated to the logic of coloniality.

Visuality, as described by Mirzoeff (2016), is a tool of coloniality that generates power structures and exerts control over the imaginary. The author traces a genealogy of the concept, locating its origins in systems of surveillance over enslaved people in colonial territories[2]. The surveillant, or visualiser — the one who sees the whole — has historically and socially legitimised authority to classify, hierarchise, and aestheticise the other, producing visualities that have become intrinsic to history itself, such as in the roles of conqueror and conquered, embedded within a discourse of intellectual supremacy. This process has shaped and continues to shape global intersubjective relations and, consequently, social, economic, and cultural ties through mechanisms that are periodically updated.

In today's context of digital technological immersion, authors such as Silveira (2021) identify platform dominance and data exploitation as a new face of coloniality, further intensifying structural inequalities. Visuality is updated through the ubiquity of screens. This scenario demands a critical stance from education to ensure safe and equitable learning environments, particularly as children engage with digital devices such as mobile phones and tablets from a very young age. According to data published by the Internet Steering Committee in Brazil (Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2025), 44% of children aged 0 to 2 already use the internet; among those aged 3 to 5, the rate rises to 71%; and among those aged 6 to 8, it reaches 82%.

Recently, Brazil consolidated digital education guidelines and objectives under its National Policy for Digital Education, prompting reflection on the importance of articulating research and political action (Fresquet, 2025). Schools are spaces of socialisation in which children and young people, regardless of social origin, have time to engage with the world, making them privileged spaces for a form of digital education that is both democratic and territorially grounded. The experiences we discuss here illustrate some of the possibilities.

In light of this, the central hypothesis of this article suggests that pedagogical practices involving cinema and virtual reality — grounded in acts of image appreciation and production — can foster otherness and expand subjective perceptions by democratising and disseminating access to art. The expansion of visual repertoires through aesthetic experience may help to challenge visuality (Mirzoeff, 2016) by fostering identity-based perception, as the abundance of visual perspectives encountered through images expands the possibilities and modes of interpretation. We aim to describe practices that

[2] Mirzoeff employs the term "plantation complex", drawing on Curtin (1998, as cited in Mirzoeff, 2016), to refer to a type of large estate devoted to monoculture production for export, relying on enslaved labour in the colonies. On the plantation, "the imperial complex of visuality linked centralised authority to a hierarchy of civilisational in which the 'cultured' dominated the 'primitive'" (p. 755).

confront structural inequalities faced by colonised territories, particularly concerning access to art and cinema.

Methodologically, we conducted an exploratory bibliographic review (Gil, 2002) of books and articles to construct an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that could help us develop a more complex understanding of our object. We thus propose an examination of the ethical-aesthetic implications of image appreciation and production in educational contexts, with a focus on creative dynamics and the advocacy of a more inclusive and critically aware educational practice.

By way of example, we discuss experiences described in research and projects previously developed by the authors. Bugarin (2022, 2024a, 2024b) conducted an observation of pedagogical practices using virtual reality in a classroom in a school in Rio de Janeiro, a city located in southeastern Brazil. The aim was to support the aesthetic experience of students' engagement with artistic images through immersive appreciation. Low-cost devices were used — VR Box[3] and Google Cardboard[4] — in which the level of freedom during immersion is limited to head movements and gaze direction.

Martins (2017, 2020) carried out an intervention-research project in schools in Florianópolis, a city located in the south of Brazil, offering cinema workshops to children and young people. These included sessions of Brazilian film screenings and practical exercises in image production using semi-professional cameras. The results revealed the construction of participatory spaces through the appropriation of technological devices, cinematic language, and the reconfiguration of space-time, which enabled students to incorporate elements of their own cultures into their productions.

2. The "Right to Look"

Visuality is a regime that goes beyond the mere physical sense or sensory attribution of who can see. It is an imposition regarding who should be seen and how each subject ought to be seen, aligning information, imagination, and introspection, producing an aesthetics of the body, not merely in its form, but also affect and demand. Mirzoeff (2016) argues that visuality constitutes a "discursive practice for rendering and regulating the real" (p. 748). This practice permeates art and media throughout their entire ecosystem of production, preservation, dissemination, and formation.

Drawing from processes of decolonisation, Mirzoeff identifies a resistance to the mechanism of domination inherent in visuality through the affirmation of the irreducible autonomy of the subject. This countervisuality takes place in the space between the intention and execution of authority. Due to its complexity and deep entrenchment in the social fabric, the deconstruction of visuality fundamentally depends on how we relate ethically

[3] The VR Box is a low-cost virtual reality device that uses a mobile phone to provide an immersive experience. It presents itself as a more affordable option for virtual reality.

[4] Google Cardboard is a virtual reality device developed by Google in 2014 that utilises head-mounted display technology with smartphones. It is characterised by its construction from foldable cardboard, making it a low-cost device and therefore accessible for encouraging the development of virtual reality practices.

and aesthetically to images. One expression of countervisuality presented by Mirzoeff (2016) is the "right to look", the "performative claim" of autonomy, subjectivity, and political collectivity in the act of looking (p. 750).

Beccari (2020) expands and discusses the potency of the "right to look," demonstrating that it is a multidimensional action, not merely looking at the invisibilised subject whose existence is denied. Nor is it simply a discursive or representational claim to take the position of the viewer; rather, it is the pursuit of creating diverse pathways around the act of looking, involving the recognition and legitimisation of viewpoints historically denied or subordinated. The author observes this practice of confronting hegemonic visual forces in contemporary artistic works.

Very recently, Brazil has witnessed what authors such as Ayca (2021) and Paiva (2022) describe as a "decolonial turn" in art, establishing a political praxis that both reveals the structures of domination established since the 15th century and makes visible the knowledge invisibilised of peoples subordinated to the colonial system. An example is Brazil's official participation in the "60th International Art Exhibition Biennale Arte 2024" in Venice, entitled "Ka'a Pûera: We Are Walking Birds". According to the curators Arissana Pataxó, Denilson Baniwa, and Gustavo Caboco Wapichana (Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2024), the exhibition "narrates a history of Indigenous resistance in Brazil, adaptations in the face of climate urgencies, and the embodied presence in reclaiming territories" (para. 3). It is essential that such spaces be (finally) occupied by the art of the diverse Indigenous ethnicities of Brazil. However, who has access to these works? Who can access these spaces of countervisuality?

According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Museums (Instituto Brasileiro de Museus, 2023), just over 27 million people visited museums in the country in 2023. Although this figure seems high, it corresponds to only 12.93% of the population. Table 1 shows a significant regional discrepancy in the distribution of museums. While the North region has 189 registered institutions, the Southeast region has 1,570. This concentration of art circulation infrastructure in Brazil's economic centre represents the first of many obstacles to works such as *Dobra no Tempo Infinito* (Fold in Infinite Time), an installation by Glicéria Tupinambá featured in the Brazilian Biennale exhibition, being accessed in other parts of the country[5].

[5] The report by the Brazilian Institute of Museums does not provide more specific data on the infrastructure and logistics available in the units accounted for — factors that are essential for critically reflecting on the circulation of contemporary art beyond major urban centres.

	No. of Museums Registered by Federal Unit (2023)	No. of Museums that Completed the Annual Visitation Form	Percentage of Museums that Completed the Annual Visitation Form in Relation to the Number of Museums in the Region
North	189	34	18%
Northeast	877	192	21.9%
Central-west	284	58	20.4%
Southeast	1,570	449	28.6%
South	1,062	264	24.9%
Total in Brazil	3,982	997	25%

Table 1. *Museums Participating in the 2023 Annual Visitation Survey by Region*

Source. Instituto Brasileiro de Museus (2023).

By access, we understand not only the availability of artworks but also a set of actions involving the specific dimensions of an exhibition (curation, mediation, dissemination, accessibility), the right to the city (distribution of units, public transport, street accessibility), and the incorporation of *habitus*.

Bourdieu (1979/2008) defines *habitus* as the mental and bodily schemas shaped by inherited or acquired determinations and orientations throughout life, which unconsciously influence our perception, taste, and behaviour. The *habitus* is linked to socialisation spaces such as family, school, and the media. Thus, going to a museum, cinema, or participating in any artistic-cultural proposal that allows contact with the expression of the "right to look" depends on these different mediators.

In the following sections, we present several perspectives on technologies in the contemporary scenario, seeking to understand how they constitute both a challenge and a possibility for education, from a decolonial perspective that aims to incorporate *habitus* through aesthetic experience with art.

3. Technology: From Power Structure to Mediation of Experience

Since the 1990s, the media have been regarded as a sphere of socialisation (Belloni, 2009). Its rapid transformation has also triggered profound changes in social dynamics, which must be considered when analysing the relationship between technology, visuality, and possibilities for countervisuality in education. On the one hand, during the early 2000s, with the emergence of Web 2.0, there was a widespread belief in the creation of networks as a movement towards participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2009), the democratisation of communication (Castells, 2011), and the strengthening of civic action and both individual and collective empowerment (Fortunati, 2014). These narratives were based mainly on the potential for a free and at times subversive appropriation of technology, regardless of its original intended purpose.

In recent years, however, the structures underpinning the most popular networks and technological devices have increasingly revealed themselves to serve a new form of

exploitation and resource concentration by large technology corporations — the so-called big techs. These structures are supported by discourses portraying technology as uncontrollable, irreversible, singular, and universal, as highlighted by Hui (2020). This narrative ultimately reinforces the dominance of a Western worldview grounded in neoliberal values of productivity, in which human beings are rendered subordinate to technology, adapting to the demands and configurations set by it.

Several concepts help to clarify this scenario by addressing different aspects. Schiller's (1999) concept of "digital capitalism" traces the roots of the issue back to neoliberal discourses that framed telecommunications and the internet as neutral systems. Already in the 1990s, he diagnosed the growing power of large corporations, including their encroachment on the education sector[6].

Other terms highlight new facets of capitalism emerging from data-dependent structures. Srnicek (2017) defines the current moment as "platform capitalism", emphasising how big tech companies position themselves as intermediaries between "different user groups" in the extraction of labour. Zuboff (2018/2021), in turn, examines "surveillance capitalism", an economic model based on the exploitation of personal data harvested from platforms, often without full user consent. These data are used to predict and influence consumer behaviour, creating a self-reinforcing cycle.

Varoufakis (2025), however, does not frame this as a new phase of capitalism but rather its demise, drawing an analogy between big techs and feudal power. His notion of "techno-feudalism" describes a new socio-economic structure in which demand, products, and dependency are generated not only at the individual level but also for companies and governments, as seen in the case of digital repositories located in "clouds" outside national territories. These "clouds" become the new fiefdoms; users are the "vassals" who pay to sell or purchase goods and services, giving rise to a new category of "vassal capitalists".

A common thread across Varoufakis (2025) and the analyses mentioned above is the conclusion that we are all "serfs" — constantly feeding big techs with data from online navigation, app usage, posts, purchases, and other actions mediated by digital devices. The domination of technology thus becomes not only an economic power but also a political and cultural one — a highly valuable asset for both nations and corporations.

In this context, Silveira (2021) interprets this reordering around platforms and data as a new form of colonialism. The author argues that, in addition to data exploitation, there is a concerted effort by big techs to undermine the potential for digital sovereignty in peripheral countries, including strategic investments in the production of proprietary technologies.

Another method of intervention by big techs in nation-States involves lobbying for relaxed regulation of platforms and resistance to requirements for algorithm transparency, data collection practices, and accountability for disseminated content. In Brazil, for example, Bill No. 2,630 of 13 May 2020 (Projeto de Lei nº 2.630, de 13 de maio de

[6] For an in-depth analysis of the growing influence of EdTech on the Brazilian educational system, see Saura et al. (2024).

2020, 2020), which aimed to regulate social media to combat disinformation, was met with coordinated attacks by big techs, including direct messages to search engine users, sparking public backlash[7].

Cesarino (2022) describes how social media, once considered open and democratic, have become hyper-individualised spaces with blurred boundaries between the public and private spheres, dominated by "disintermediation". This process, driven by algorithms, does not balance discourses from various visual perspectives but instead generates individual bubbles that equate all content, regardless of its origin, contributing to a crisis in the legitimacy of sources. In this sense, social media platforms have assumed the role of contemporary visualising authorities, organising and classifying affects, habits, and memories of both personal and collective life, determining who is seen, how, and when.

In light of this, education must play a critical role by promoting digital inclusion and media literacy to improve how people consume and produce using available technological tools. However, this must also encompass social critique and a reflection on lived experiences with technology, including the impossibility of access, structural violence on networks, and algorithmic racism.

As Nemer (2021) argues, critical reflection makes inequality and oppression visible and "available for intervention and change" (p. 4). The author highlights the social production with and around technologies, which occurs in spaces of appropriation, reinterpretation, and subversion of functions and relations, even when there is no direct influence over the devices or their producers. Often, individuals appropriating these tools are far from centres of power — such as a public school in a peripheral area — and such contexts are rarely the focus of efforts to develop or enhance these technologies.

From this perspective, critical digital education should also stimulate the intellectual resources required for the use, improvement, and development of non-proprietary software, as well as promote the creation of alternative devices using local technologies. In this way, digital inclusion contributes effectively to building spaces for social participation with autonomy for the expression of countervisuality.

Hui (2020) emphasises that there is no such thing as neutral technology. Just as technological devices are programmed with particular cultural and political biases, each territory appropriates, uses, or creates its own technologies embedded with its knowledge systems, habits, traditions, and beliefs. In such gestures, we can observe the inseparable relationship between technology, nature, and culture, as seen in cinema production projects within rural, riverine, Indigenous, and quilombola communities across Brazil, such as *Vídeo nas Aldeias* (Video in the Villages)[8].

[7] In June 2025, the Federal Supreme Court ruled Article 19 of the Brazilian Civil Rights Framework for the Internet (Lei nº 12.965, de 23 de abril de 2014, 2014) to be partially constitutional. This article required a court order for the removal of criminal content, hate speech, attacks on democracy, among others. With the ruling, big tech companies may now be held liable for third-party content, thereby requiring active moderation by the platform (Richter, 2025).

[8] Audiovisual production project created by anthropologist Vincent Carelli. Ongoing since 1986, *Vídeo nas Aldeias* produces images in collaboration with Indigenous peoples from different ethnic groups, generating records of territories, languages, and daily life. This results in a film archive that also serves as a form of political struggle for the recognition and affirmation of Brazil's cultural diversity (Instituto Moreira Salles, n.d.).

Given the complexity of its language and its entwinement with various devices and political movements, cinema — and later audiovisual media more broadly — has proven a powerful ally in education. The digital realm has facilitated the expansion of cinema-based practices in schools, enabling an education both with and through media and technologies. This especially relates to the collective aesthetic experience the language offers, in both the appreciation and production of images (Fresquet, 2025).

Virtual reality also allows for both artistic appreciation and production simultaneously, offering broader and more participatory engagement in which meaning is constructed through aesthetic enjoyment. This creates a more immersive involvement between the viewer and the audiovisual work. Such a level of immersion transforms spectatorship, making the aesthetic experience individual, in contrast to the collective knowledge of cinema.

Based on observations during pedagogical activities using virtual reality in art classes at a school in Rio de Janeiro, Bugarin (2024a) identifies that this individual, immersive spectatorship fosters an engaged encounter with the image based on personal experience. Sensations arise through direct contact with the image, and the student's body becomes consubstantial with the image — both support and medium. It may be inferred that such meaning-making fosters a sense of co-authorship in the image's surrounding construction (Maciel, 2009).

The presence of the artistic image mediated by digital technology simultaneously involves symbolic practice — in how we interact with symbols — and cultural practice — in how the image is updated through an identity-based perception. In other words, students' appropriation of images encompasses both appreciation and artistic creation in a simultaneous, interactive reception of the image. Meaning is constructed from their own responses to the image through an embodied performance — the viewer's body acting as a language device and site of performative awareness (Imilan, 2018).

4. Art, Cinema, and Virtual Reality in School

At the heart of this discussion, the school is viewed, on the one hand, as an instrument for maintaining colonial roots and reproducing social structures — through the organisation of bodies and voices, the dissemination of an established curriculum, and the imposition of a standard language norm (Bourdieu, 1979/2008; Valle, 2014) — leaving little room for the knowledge originating from the diverse territories it occupies. On the other hand, the school is also a privileged space for multiple cultural expressions, particularly because it brings together a diversity of children and young people in a shared and dedicated time for their development (Masschelein & Simons, 2014).

In schools, the notion of cultural transmission and the incorporation of *habitus* functions as a levelling process, regardless of students' backgrounds, so that in the future they may compete on more equal footing for improved social positions. This positions schooling as "one of the main means of promoting democracy, equality, citizenship, and social justice" (Valle, 2014, p. 17). Nevertheless, for any meaningful levelling to occur, it is

crucial to offer experiences that can trigger the deconstruction of perspectives already embedded in the social imaginary. In this respect, aesthetic experience as a whole — and, in particular, cinema and virtual reality through art education — is considered fundamental.

Aesthetics, as a philosophical discipline, is concerned with the "knowledge of the senses" and the "reclaiming of corporeality and its particular cognitive and productive power" (Diodato, 2015, p. 19). Human understanding and production of the world occur through the body; therefore, the discipline can be seen as a heterogeneous network involving perception and creation between body and matter. The vastness of this network makes it difficult to express aesthetic experience through rational discourse, which is why it is often relegated to the realm of the imaginary or the illusory. However, when executed with rigour, aesthetic expression is capable of revealing the complexity of human existence in its relationship with society and culture (Buck-Morss, 1996).

For Dewey (1934/2010), the aesthetic experience is singular due to its active perception, which may produce resistance and internal conflict, and is not solely pleasurable. It reveals the structural relationship between subject and world, challenging the dichotomy of interior versus exterior and offering a more profound sense of reality. Through perception, emotion, creation, and reflection, aesthetic experience creates a relational and intense connection that allows the subject to shape the world, transforming these relations into something meaningful.

Visuality regimes have operated — and continue to operate — in this domain, establishing exclusive channels for experience and perpetuating dichotomous patterns that deny colonised peoples the capacity to represent themselves, by excluding their images from the mechanisms shaping the social imaginary.

According to Hermann (2005), sensitisation to cultural contrasts leads to a reassessment of our convictions towards recognising others and respecting differences. She argues that the tradition of attributing ethical action to human nature alone places the foundation of moral judgement solely on cognitive development, overlooking subjectivity. Through aesthetic experience — particularly through expressions of countervisuality — we may incorporate *habitus*, which in turn enables the constant renewal of our cultural repertoire and the challenge of symbolic reductionism, thus constructing new ethical principles for our engagement with the world.

Nonetheless, the teaching of art in Brazilian public schools — where such experiences typically take place — faces significant challenges to become a consistent and continuous project. Social inequality affects urban mobility, making it difficult for students to engage with cultural and artistic venues such as museums, galleries, and cinemas. Barriers to school visits include a lack of appropriate transport, insufficient staff to accompany outings, and infrastructural shortcomings such as the absence of supplementary school meals. Even in the classroom, there is often a shortage of materials, appropriate space, and most importantly, time, since art classes last only 45 to 50 minutes per week.

These experiences must take place during students' educational trajectories; if not accessed through school, the appropriation of cultural tools may not occur at all. This

leads to a disconnect in education and a failure to develop a sense of belonging to the city and its artistic life (Cheibub & Eugenio, 2020). Visits to cultural spaces are essential for promoting social integration, as experiencing diverse cultural expressions encourages the practice of citizenship through the act of re-signifying the individual's perception of otherness (Pinto, 2012).

Within this context, virtual reality can serve as a tool for aesthetic appreciation by offering immersive 360-degree recreations of historically significant paintings and contemporary art exhibitions. It thus becomes a technology for facilitating access to art and culture, bringing students closer to engaging with diverse artistic imagery. This immersive interaction occurs in an engaging and mobilising way, as virtuality is understood as a symbolic extension of the materiality of cultural spaces. The sensations of presence generated through immersion contribute to democratising access to art. According to Vergara (2011), "making art accessible to a diverse audience is to make it culturally active" (p. 9).

Aesthetic appreciation becomes less contemplative and more participatory, allowing students to create personal connections with artworks through experiences that expand their engagement. The bodily sensation of mobility during a virtual reality aesthetic experience enables students to exercise what Kaufmann (2002) describes as motility — "the way in which an individual appropriates what is possible in the domain of mobility and puts this potential to use for his or her activities" (p. 37).

Motility is shaped by a person's life trajectory, including financial, social, and cultural capital, and is affected by structural inequality. The school thus plays a central role in developing this aspect. As such, the "corporeal sensation of mobility experienced by the student during the aesthetic encounter allows them to exercise a motility otherwise constrained by cultural inequality, as a form of social inclusion and civic participation" (Bugarin, 2024b).

Based on classroom observations using virtual reality, Bugarin (2022) notes that students engage with imagery through simultaneous acts of appreciation, contextualisation, and creation — pillars of art education. These practices seek to emphasise meaning-making, encouraging students to engage with their perceptions as they arise in the experience. In other words, the interaction sparks a transformation in how they perceive their surroundings, fostering a more integrated and emancipatory understanding, positioning the student as a "discoverer of the artwork" (Oiticica, 2006, p. 86).

Similarly, the enjoyment of virtual reality films involves a form of cinematic editing that the viewer co-authors, as it depends on their sensitivity and choices to construct various compositions within a single work and form a cohesive whole. The film gradually reveals interrelated perspectives, constituting a totality of sensations in continuous alternation (Bugarin, 2024a). Moreover, virtual reality has the potential to stimulate cognition and challenge automatic responses, integrating human senses with technology to create immersive experiences and contribute to conceptual development through realistic and compelling scenarios (Bailey & Bailenson, 2017).

Concerning image production, cinema experiences in Brazilian public schools have demonstrated outstanding potential in fostering diverse aesthetic experiences that promote an ethics of multiplicity of perspectives. In recent years, perspectives on cinema in schools have shifted significantly, from being treated as a tool to support curricular content to becoming both content and form in its own right[9].

In school-based film workshops that bridge art and media education (Martins, 2017; Martins & Fantin, 2018), it is often observed that, alongside the teaching and learning of film language and techniques, there is a redefinition of aesthetic concepts. This redefinition moves towards the creation of alternatives and resistances that mark out visual perspectives historically marginalised by the colonial legacy. Generally, non-white children and young people continue to have limited opportunities for self-recognition through images, often facing stigmatisation based on race or social class, experiences that transcend the screen and permeate everyday life.

Providing varied visual repertoires fosters the creation of new individual and collective authorial expressions — for example, through experimenting with closer framing, using camera zoom and focus as strategies to see oneself and others (Martins, 2017). From the moment the subject is "framed" and occupies the screen, they may be seen through a more attentive and complex gaze. This allows for an ethical reassessment of the "institutionalised gaze". Thus, there is a revaluation of one's image, grounded in the mastery of technical aspects of the medium — framing, depth of field, or focus. In other words, technical knowledge is also essential to a project of aesthetic revision.

Aligned with this perspective and focusing on the participation of children and young people in schools, cinema enables the dismantling of bureaucratic barriers to engage with non-curricular topics. In this way, film workshops or school-based film clubs become spaces of mutual listening, emotional exchange, and affective sharing around images. Participation spaces are constructed as children and young people embed aspects of their own culture into image production, appropriating and reinventing equipment and exercises, inviting others from outside the group to create (Martins, 2020). Through experimentation, each individual learns and teaches about the limits of their relationship with images.

5. Projects, Pedagogies and Political Action

It is essential to highlight how approaches aimed at educational experiences that go beyond the learning of curricular content are usually the result of specific initiatives, whether internal or external to the school. Increasingly, public education networks have placed pressure on educational administrations, conditioning public policy and investment on outcomes from assessments external to schools (Marsiglia et al., 2017). Little or almost no institutional space or time remains for activities guided by aesthetic experience, such as art lessons involving cinema and virtual reality.

[9] For an overview of theoretical perspectives on the dialogue between cinema and education, see Almeida (2017).

On the other hand, the number of projects, programmes and research initiatives involving cinema in schools developed in Brazil over recent decades demonstrates cinema's potential to engage with and traverse the school transdisciplinarily, through actions in partnership with the surrounding territory. One example is the pioneering work of *Cineduc* in Rio de Janeiro. This non-governmental organisation has been active since the 1970s in teacher training and audiovisual production with children in school settings, building an exemplary trajectory nationally and internationally.

Universities also play a key role in the development of technologies and methodologies to bring cinema closer to schools. The project *Inventar com a Diferença* (Inventing through Difference), developed by the Kumã Laboratory at the Fluminense Federal University, created the "pedagogy of devices", based on creative exercises inspired by gestures of specific filmmakers, to establish or deepen relations between students and their territory. Funded by the Secretariat for Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic, the project ran workshops in approximately 246 schools across all Brazilian states, linking cinema, human rights and teacher training through an ethical, aesthetic and political lens (Migliorin, 2015). Although its duration was relatively brief, the project had a significant impact in the country, as many institutions continued to develop cinema-based initiatives using the pedagogy of devices.

Another example is *Cinead: Laboratório de Educação, Cinema e Audiovisual* (Cinead: Laboratory of Education, Cinema and Audiovisual; https://cinead.org), based at the Faculty of Education of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Since 2008, it has promoted a wide range of cinema and education experiences. Starting with the creation of a pilot cinema school supported by filmmaker Nelson Pereira dos Santos, the group has gone on to establish cinema schools in federal, state and municipal public institutions, in both urban and rural settings — including *favelas* (informal urban settlements in Brazil), hospitals and long-stay homes for older adults. Over nearly two decades, the group has been active in research and outreach, training teachers, researchers and students, and making a significant contribution to strengthening audiovisual practices in education.

From 2010 onwards, numerous other initiatives have emerged, based on institutional and community partnerships, which have expanded the reach of cinema experiences in schools. Many of these actions are connected through the Rede Kino — Rede Latino-americana de Educação, Cinema e Audiovisual (Kino Network — Latin American Network on Education, Cinema and Audiovisual; https://www.redekino.com.br/) — created in 2009 to bring together groups from different regions of Brazil and Latin America. The Network fosters practices related to teacher training, film clubs, school-based audiovisual production, curation, research and public policy. It has become a collective space for resistance, invention and circulation of cinema within and alongside the school.

The current Brazilian context is favourable to the institutionalisation of actions that ensure experiences with art and cinema in schools, fostering technological appropriation guided by decolonial perspectives. In 2023, the National Policy on Digital Education (Lei nº 14.533, de 11 de janeiro de 2023, 2023) was enacted, as well as the National Strategy

for Connected Schools, which aims to ensure universal access to digital infrastructure in public schools. The imminent launch of Plataforma Tela Brasil (Brazil Screen Platform), a public streaming service for screening Brazilian films in cultural and educational spaces, also promises to contribute to this effort. Additionally, Law No. 13.006 of 26 June 2014 (Lei nº 13.006, de 26 de junho de 2014, 2014) — still pending regulation — mandates the screening of at least two hours of Brazilian films per month as part of the school's complementary curriculum.

At the initiative of the Rede Kino, two public consultation forms were created in 2024 to revive the process of regulating this law, to enable its implementation and standardisation. During the "Encontro da Educação" (Education Meeting) at the 19th CineOP (Ouro Preto Film Festival), representatives of the Network presented the results of these consultations in meetings with teachers and representatives from the Ministries of Culture, Education, Human Rights and Citizenship, to discuss and draft a text structured around ten key points: pedagogies of cinema, collections and curatorship, teacher training, and production and exhibition conditions. This document became the Proposal for a National Cinema in Schools Programme (Fresquet, 2024), submitted to the Ministry of Education for institutional articulation.

Beyond this, mobilisation is needed to establish policies for curating audiovisual collections that ensure aesthetic quality, cultural diversity and pedagogical relevance in the materials available to schools. It is not merely a matter of making films accessible, but of building an ecosystem of mediation and access that enhances cinema as a formative language and a tool for critical engagement with the world — a means of questioning visuality itself. In the face of increasing digitalisation of education, it is essential to ensure alternatives that do not subject schools, teachers and students to the algorithmic logic of commercial platforms. The creation and dissemination of public collections, guided by educational and cultural principles, is a key strategy to affirm pedagogical sovereignty and promote an emancipatory aesthetic experience in schools (Fresquet, 2025).

6. Final Considerations

Visuality, effected both in art and the media, acts as a key factor in the construction of subjectivities and, consequently, in the understanding of oneself and one's territory, as well as in expression with and about the world. Cultural formation, of which the incorporation of *habitus* is a part, is one of the pillars of education — the primary means through which children and young people from peripheral countries with a colonial heritage have the chance to produce alternative visual perspectives. However, difficulties caused by social inequalities, such as precarious urban mobility, prevent access to museums, cinemas, and other cultural spaces that would allow contact with expressions of countervisuality.

Although we live in what has been analysed as a new colonial process (Silveira, 2021), characterised by the dominance of platforms and data exploitation, technological devices are also the means that allow us to circumvent these barriers to access, produce aesthetic experiences, and construct diverse images capable of including the

uniqueness of each child and young person. While many of these emerging technological devices remain largely inaccessible to the majority of the population, making them available in schools — especially in public education — helps to break down the hierarchies of socio-cultural apparatuses that result from an unequal society. In doing so, schools can promote the "disordering" of the colonial legacy and the re-signification of certain hegemonies over cultural goods and collections.

From this perspective, it is concluded that access to technological devices must be genuinely democratic, territorially situated, and committed to the dissemination of a diversity of viewpoints. The "right to look" (Mirzoeff, 2016) only occurs with the collective emancipation of visuality. Therefore, it is essential to consider social action, based on the experience of projects and programmes, in the construction of public policies that guarantee and expand practices of enjoyment and production, encompassing the various possibilities of viewing and creating images in basic education.

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