

wexner center
for the arts

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**PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENTS BY VANGUARD BRAZILIAN
ARTIST HELIO OITICICA FEATURED IN LANDMARK EXHIBITION**

**RARELY SHOWN MULTIMEDIA WORKS ILLUMINATE ONE OF THE
MOST INFLUENTIAL ARTISTS OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD**

*“That which is proposed is always given as play—chance-play—by the throw of the dice
and never as a fixation on existing models.”—Hélio Oiticica*

Interactive environments designed by Hélio Oiticica, a leader in the Brazilian avant-garde movement, will be installed in the Wexner Center this fall in a landmark exhibition organized by the center. ***Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas***, on view **September 18–December 30, 2001**, explores the artist’s unique relationship to cinema and his keen interest in the cinematic experience. By placing Oiticica in the context of filmmaking and by presenting these rarely shown works, the exhibition breaks new ground in the understanding of one of the most important international artists of the second half of the 20th century.

Oiticica used the term “quasi-cinemas” to refer to his experiments in film and slide projection, works meant to redefine the audience’s relationship to cinema. Three of the room-sized environments, designed by Oiticica and Brazilian filmmaker Neville D’Almeida, feature slide projections and elements from pop culture—from Jimi Hendrix music to images of Marilyn Monroe—plus such materials as balloons, sand, and hammocks that visitors are invited to use and inhabit. The exhibition will also feature other quasi-cinemas, as well as films about Oiticica and the only film Oiticica made.

Pronunciation: Hélio Oiticica=EH-lee-oh oy-tee-SEE-kah

news release

Opening events will be held September 20, with a symposium September 21. See the attached listing for all public programs.

This marks the first solo exhibition of Oiticica's work in the United States in seven years and the first exhibition of his work co-produced by a multidisciplinary institution. The exhibition is curated by Carlos Basualdo, the Wexner Center's chief curator of exhibitions, with assistance from Projeto Hélio Oiticica. It is co-produced by the Wexner Center for the Arts, the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, and the Kölnischer Kunstverein in Cologne.

The exhibition has received major support from BrasilConnects, a non-profit organization that supports Brazilian arts and culture projects around the world.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas explores Oiticica's interest in the cinematic experience, an aspect of his art that has received little attention internationally. The exhibition will feature his "quasi-cinemas," experiments in film and slide projections carried out in the 1970s that included in a series of nine *Block-Experiments in Cosmococa*. Developed by Oiticica in association with Neville D'Almeida, the *Cosmococas* are participatory environments combining slide projection, music, objects from everyday life, and images of counterculture icons, often superimposed with cocaine drawings.

The exhibition will include three of the *Cosmococa* installations: *CC1 Trashisapes*; *CC3 Maileryn* (with Marilyn Monroe's image from a Norman Mailer book); and *CC5 Hendrix-War*. *CC1 Trashisapes* incorporates mattresses and emery boards, plus projections of various objects from urban life, including images of Luis Buñuel from a New York newspaper. *CC3 Maileryn* includes sand and balloons, along with altered images of Marilyn Monroe. And in *CC5 Hendrix-War*, slides of altered images from the cover of Jimi Hendrix's album *War Heroes* are projected on the gallery's walls and ceiling; hammocks are hung web-like across the gallery, and Hendrix's music fills the space. With these works—which Oiticica called "a multi-media salad,' without the obtrusive dressing of 'sense' or point of view"—he and D'Almeida sought to question the relationship between the audience and cinema. D'Almeida will come to the Wexner Center to oversee the installation of the works.

Also on view are the quasi-cinemas *Neyrótika*—slides of young men taken by Oiticica in New York, and never shown in the United States—and *Agripina é Roma Manhattan*, the only film he ever made, also never shown in this country. A final component of the

exhibition is a gallery space where visitors can browse through materials by and about Oiticica, including books, CD-ROM, tapes, and duplicated images of earlier work.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Always striving for the “direct life experience,” Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980) was a prime force in Brazil’s avant-garde cultural scene in the 1960s and 70s, infusing pop culture, social issues, film, music, and experiential elements into his art. Oiticica explored issues of the image, the relationship between fine art and pop culture, and the relationship between artist and audience.

Oiticica was a member of the Neo-Concretist movement in Brazil—a group of artists and poets who were interested in moving art off the canvas into the realm of life—and was also an influence on the Tropicalism movement, a cultural phenomenon that reflected on the Brazilian identity in the context of contemporary culture.

By the mid-60s, Oiticica had abandoned traditional painting and sculpture in favor of free-form constructions (“parangolés”), such as banners and capes meant to be worn or inhabited. He started his involvement with cinema around this time, acting in the groundbreaking movie *Câncer* by Brazilian filmmaker Glauber Rocha. In 1970, after earning a Guggenheim grant and moving to New York, Oiticica began to experiment with pop culture and cinema, influenced by and responding to such artists as Andy Warhol and Jean-Luc Godard.

Until recently, Oiticica was little-known outside Brazil. His work gained international recognition in 1992, when the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris hosted a retrospective of his work. Since then, he has been included in many international shows, including *Documenta X* in 1997 and the most recent *Havana Bienal*. His last solo exhibition in the United States was in 1994, when the Walker Art Center showed the aforementioned European retrospective.

Oiticica developed many of his works in close association with **Neville D’Almeida** (b. 1941), an independent Brazilian filmmaker who directed such films as *Mangue-Banguê* (1970) and *Jardins de Guerra* (1968). D’Almeida will help install the *Cosmococas* at the Wexner Center, and will also participate in the symposium on September 21.

THE CATALOGUE

The softcover 176-page exhibition catalogue includes a selection of writings by Oiticica on his quasi-cinemas as well as critical essays by exhibition curator Carlos Basualdo; Brazilian film historian and critic Ivana Bentes; and Dan Cameron, senior curator at New Museum of Contemporary Art.

THE CURATOR

Carlos Basualdo has been chief curator of exhibitions at the Wexner Center since fall of 2000. Also a widely published writer, Basualdo was previously an independent curator and is currently co-curator of *Documenta 11*.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A symposium, discussions, a film series, and a Brazilian music concert will be held in conjunction with this exhibition. See the attached listing for details.

THE TOUR

Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas will tour to Kölnischer Kunstverein (Cologne) February 16–April 28, 2002 (dates to be confirmed); the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York (dates to be determined); Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, spring of 2002; and the Miami Art Museum June 20–August 31, 2003.

ALSO ON VIEW

On view concurrently with *Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas* is *Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City*, featuring three multimedia installations focusing on urban life by this filmmaker/photographer. The installation *Franz West: 2Topia* continues in the Wexner Center Café, and a second portion with his *Internet Bed* and a lounge opens in the galleries September 18.

Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas is co-organized and presented by the **Wexner Center for the Arts**, the **New Museum of Contemporary Art** and the **Kölnischer Kunstverein**.

The exhibition is presented at the Wexner Center with major support from **BrasilConnects**. Additional support provided by the **Wexner Center Foundation**.

CALENDAR INFORMATION: *Hélio Oiticica: Quasi-cinemas*

Description: Exhibition featuring works by influential Brazilian artist Hélio Oiticica that explore the cinematic experience. Includes room-sized participatory environments and other works.

Dates: September 18–December 30, 2001.

Location: Wexner Center galleries, 1871 North High Street (at 15th Avenue) on the campus of The Ohio State University, Columbus.

Gallery hours: 10 am–6 pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; 10 am–9 pm Thursdays; 12 noon–6 pm Sundays.

Admission: \$3 general public; \$2 for students, senior citizens, and groups free for members, and OSU students, faculty, and staff, and children under 12. Includes admission to *Johan van der Keuken: From The Body and the City*.

Opening events: Media lunch and opening reception September 20; symposium September 21.

Public programs: Events include films, discussions, a symposium, a Brazilian concert, a Family Day, and more. See attached sheets.

Parking: Convenient parking is available in the Ohio Union Parking Garage just south of the Wexner Center. Wheelchair access to the Wexner Center is available on the west side of the building, through the College Avenue entrance.

Public information: 614 292-3535 or www.wexarts.org

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The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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