

THE JOVEM ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA: ON BECOMING AN EXPERIMENTAL AND COLLABORATIVE LABORATORY

The Jovem Arte Contemporânea (JAC), organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo in Brazil (MAC USP) between 1967 and 1974, emerged from earlier debates on the new ideals of the modern museum. Under the rubric of the laboratory, it was transformed into a space of experimentation and collaboration. Among the editions, the 1971 and 1972 JACs were not only the most self-critical, but also, by focusing on matters of space and process, the most committed to challenging the foundations of its exhibition design and catalogue production. The following text recounts those pivotal transformations, highlighting the importance of the JAC's catalogues to both artists and art historians, then and now, in establishing the sought-after 'experimentality' and 'collaborativeness' of its own exhibition spaces and practices.

From its first edition in 1967, the *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (JAC), organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo in Brazil (MAC USP), sought to distance itself from the traditional art salons to become a more encompassing annual exhibition that would showcase emerging young artists. Led by an internationally engaged Walter Zanini, the JAC was a reflection on previous debates on the new ideals of the modern museum and, under the rubric of the laboratory, transformed the exhibition into a space of experimentation and collaboration. While it is the 1972 JAC that has gained notoriety within Brazilian art-historical literature, it was the 1971 edition that ignited the discussion on the main concepts that would shift the JAC and the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo away from more hierarchical, merit-based, and consecrated approaches, towards a more open and decentralized exhibition-making practice. Amid a violently repressive dictatorship, the 1971 exhibition served as the initial stage for a self-analytical discourse in search of freedom, culminating in the 1972 exhibition as a safe haven for critically engaged practices.

In both these short temporary exhibitions, space and process were at the focal point, matters which reverberated towards the rethinking of the design of the exhibitions and their catalogues. While the art salons that the JAC sought to distance itself from valued ordered, polished, two-dimensional displays, these renewed approaches were designed to reflect the critical thinking of the ti-

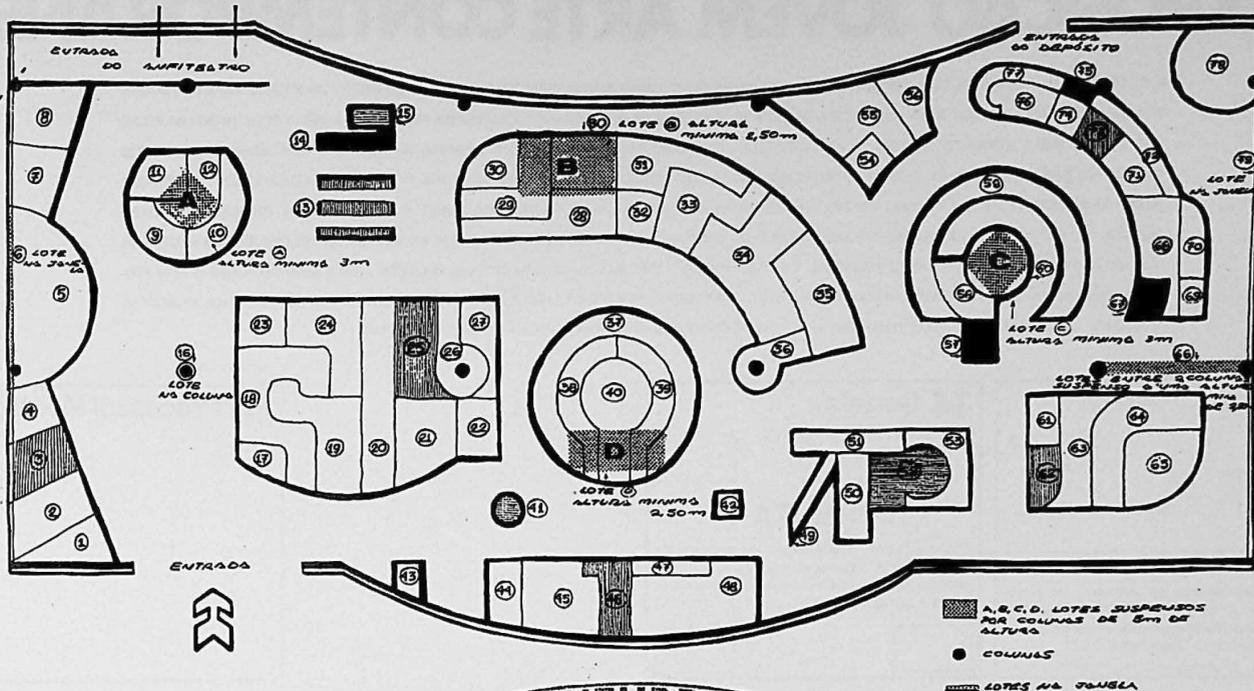
me, particularly those stemming from an already internationalized anti-white cube debate¹. Those, in contrast, perceived art and exhibition-making undissociated from the 'outside world' the white cube model sought to shun away and rather welcomed a more self-organising, open, participatory, and, thus, less standardised reorganizations of objects and spaces. The 1971 JAC reinforced these elements through the artwork exhibited and throughout the exhibition development phase, creatively documented within its catalogue, while the 1972 JAC made those more explicit within its design by dividing the exhibition space into randomly distributed open slots. For their particular exhibition and catalogue designs, both JACs have been compared to other more well-known approaches of the time, including the 1969 exhibitions *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at the Kunsthalle in Bern, the *Op Losse Schroeven* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, and the 1970 *Information* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York which, apart from its well-ordered spatial setting, already pointed towards a shift in presenting a new generation of artworks within exhibition catalogues².

This article narrates the tumultuous debates and events that transformed the JACs in the early 1970s, culminating with how a particular open spatial design allowed for the ideal of the exhibition as an experimental and collaborative laboratory to come to fruition. The text, moreover, argues towards the importance of space and spati-

ality to both 1971 and 1972 JACs, highlighting how the exhibitions' catalogues were (and still are) a key element to the understanding and reconfigurations of their design.

The *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (JAC)

The *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (JAC) was a series of temporary exhibitions held at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP) in Brazil from 1967 to 1974. Envisioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art's director Walter Zanini, the series was developed for emerging young Brazilian artists. In contrast to the art salons of the time "with their hierarchies of awards, their medals, their predominantly consecrated purposes"³, the JACs would instead take on a more "fomenting" role, by being more transparent, supportive, and somewhat democratic. The series would then have a jury, but it would be partially selected by the participating artists. It would still involve a form of evaluation of exhibited artworks for the purpose of allocating a prize, but this assessment would be public. The prize would take, instead, the form of an acquisition of artworks in supporting promising young artists while simultaneously expanding the museum's collection towards refreshing approaches. Artworks that would instead be sold during the exhibition would benefit from the museum's intermediation, who waived its fees. And, lastly, participants would have the chance to exhibit throughout the country, through the JAC's following itinerant format.



OUTUBRO

PROGRAMA							PROGRAMA
14	16	17	18	19	19	20	
INAUGURAÇÃO: SORTEIO DOS LOTES 15 hs. PERMUTAS - 1 das 16 às 18 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs. VERIFICAÇÃO DOS PRO- GRAMAS DE TRABALHO das 16 às 17 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs. APRESENTAÇÃO DE PROPOSTAS das 20 às 21 hs. VERIFICAÇÃO DE OCUPAÇÃO E EVENTUAIS CANCE- LAMENTOS DE LOTES das 21 às 22 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs. APRESENTAÇÃO DE PROPOSTAS das 20 às 21 hs. VERIFICAÇÃO DE OCUPAÇÃO E EVENTUAIS CANCE- LAMENTOS DE LOTES das 21 às 22 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs. PERMUTAS-2 das 19 às 21 hs.	
21	23	24	25	26	27	28	
PROCESSOS/ MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM das 14 às 19 hs.	PROCESSOS/MONTAGEM (encerramento) das 14 às 19 hs. APRESENTAÇÃO DAS PROPOSTAS (encer- ramento) das 19 às 21 hs. VERIFICAÇÃO DOS LOTES	APRESENTAÇÃO a partir das 20 hs.	DISCUSSÃO PÚBLICA DAS PROPOSTAS das 19 às 23 hs.	DISCUSSÃO PÚBLICA DAS PROPOSTAS das 19 às 23 hs.	ATRIBUIÇÃO DE VERBAS DE PESQUISA a partir das 15 hs. ENCERRAMENTO	

6ª EXPOSIÇÃO

JOVEM ARTE

CONTEMPORÂNEA

MUSEU DE ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA
DA UNIVERSIDADE DE SÃO PAULO

14 A 28 DE OUTUBRO DE 1972

PARQUE IBIRAPUERA

SÃO PAULO

BRASIL

pagina 79

Fig. 1 Page from the 1972 JAC catalogue, with the exhibition floorplan (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

These shifts went in line with the context in which the Museum of Contemporary Art was founded in 1963 when the University received a generous donation from the city's Museum of Modern Art (MAM) and, in consonance with its educational purposes and social-cultural responsibilities, set to expand the knowledge on those and further contributions to the art of its time. Composed by the collection of Yolanda Penteado and Ciccillo Matarazzo (Museum of Modern Art's founder), the donation included pieces from major national and international artists such as Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, Tarsila do Amaral, Anita Malfatti, Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, and Lygia Clark, as well as prized artworks from the São Paulo Biennial⁴.

It was only in 1967, however, that the Museum of Contemporary Art obtained a formal administrative status and ties to the University, along with the statutory aims of supporting and promoting creative practices, while conducting training and other University-related duties, promoting national and international cultural and artistic exchange, and maintaining and expanding a collection that would be representative of contemporary art⁵. This new phase of the Museum of Contemporary Art would therefore involve strengthening its relationships with University life, despite its difficulties in guaranteeing adequate budgets and sufficient staff. As promising as this integration looked like, the museum was still left to its provisory building at the Biennial pavilion, taking over five decades to achieve its final and proper space.

This spatial issue, of course, challenged the development of the museum's activities, leaving Zanini to hold exhibitions in other museums and related institutions⁶. The Museum of Contemporary Art also strategically made use of the itinerant format, starting with the *Jovem Desenho Nacional* [National Young Drawing] in 1963. This format enabled the museum to go beyond

the centrality of the Rio-São Paulo circuit, reaching a more diverse audience, from north to south. The Museum of Contemporary Art's itinerancy took on a more creative turn in 1968, when the museum proposed, together with the São Paulo railway company, exhibitions in an adapted train wagon by architect Lina Bo Bardi⁷. This *Trem da Arte* [Art Train], as it was called, would expand on Zanini's democratic beliefs of an art for all by circulating part of the Museum of Contemporary Art's collection across the country. This strategy consolidated, in curator and art historian Cristina Freire's view, Zanini's faith in "networks" as an operative element towards a "revolutionary museology"⁸.

This museological approach was also a product of the circumstances in which the museum emerged. With a reduced budget and staff, establishing a network of University professors, students, and associate artists was essential to its development. Zanini would extend this network further by proposing the creation of associations and other forms of cooperation between institutions, both nationally and internationally, such as done through the *Associação dos Museus de Arte do Brasil* [Brazilian Art Museums Association] from 1966 and the International Association of Biennials of 1981. These strategies were often combined with conferences and other gatherings and contributed to both the expansion and circulation of the Museum of Contemporary Art's collection and exhibitions beyond Brazilian territory.

Zanini's figure and own network were also fundamental to those early years of the museum. He was actively engaged in international committees and often brought up the relevance and richness of Brazilian and Latin American art to an international audience of museum directors and collectors. He frequently published and contributed in diverse ways to the disciplines of art history and museology, bringing back the debates

¹ Which was later summed up in Brian O'Doherty's seminal 1976 essay for *Artforum*, who perceived the wide-spread white cube exhibition design as an isolating and sanctifying device, "[...] constructed along laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church": B. O'DOHERTY, *Inside the White Cube. Notes on the Gallery Space. Part I*, "Artforum", XIV, 7, 1976, pp. 24-30.

² H. LOUZADA, *Contrastes na cena artística paulistana: MAC USP e MAM SP nos anos 1970*, dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de São Paulo, 2013.

³ W. ZANINI, *Apresentação*, in *1ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1967*, catálogo da exposição (São Paulo, MAC USP, 20 Setembro-19 Outubro 1967), São Paulo 1967, n.p.

⁴ An extended overview of the Museum of Contemporary Art's history and its collection can be found in A.G. MAGALHÃES, *Objecthood and Brazilian modernist narrative: the making of the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art and its primary collection*, in *The Challenge of the Object. Proceedings of the 33rd Congress of the International Committee of the History of Art / Die Herausforderung des Objekts. Akten des 33. Internationalen Kunsthistorikerkongresses*, conference proceedings (Nürnberg, 15-20 July 2012), edited by U. Großman, P. Krutisch, I. Nürnberg 2013, pp. 86-90.

⁵ S. KARPINSKI, *O MAC USP e seus Primórdios*, in *Biblioteca Walter Zanini*, editado por C. Freire, São Paulo 2017, 24-27.

⁶ C. FREIRE, *Museus em Rede: A Práxis Impecável de Walter Zanini*, in *Walter Zanini: Escrituras Críticas*, editado por ead., São Paulo 2013, pp. 22-102.

en vogue internationally to the national scene. This adds to his efforts in not only setting up a successful contemporary museum under inadequate conditions but in also strengthening Brazilian art locally and globally, leading the museum to be later referred to as ‘Zanini’s MAC’.

Overall, the creation of the Museum of Contemporary Art was set in a very different scenario from those of the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) and the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP), which were built by economically and politically powerful people, as independent institutions, and within a more favourable political context⁹. The Museum of Contemporary Art, in contrast, was founded just a year prior to a violently repressive twenty-one-year dictatorial regime, which would, particularly during its *anos de chumbo* [Years of Lead] from 1968 to 1974, censor and persecute members of the student movement and unions, shutting down key University directories.

The JACs addressed these social and political tensions not only through the exhibited artworks and artists but largely through its exhibition-making. Throughout the years, it shifted from a predominantly ‘traditional’ mode of displaying artworks on walls, as an observational and self-referential object, to a deconstructed exhibition space that made room for a much broader understanding of artistic practices – one that in fact reflected the art of its time. These changes were put forward partially by a growing need to ‘break free’ from all the repression that took over the nation, where any form of control or delimitation would be criticized and counterattacked. These tensions were then felt from both outside and inside museum walls and resulted in the questioning of its practices in all scales: from the juries, selection processes, imposed regiments and regulations, and spatial delimitations, to any other pre-defined concepts and methods that had not been open to collective debate and active partic-

ipation. These critiques were particularly heightened in the 1971 and 1972 *Jovem Arte Contemporânea*, leading the museum to take on a more self-critical approach and reconsider the JAC’s initial format.

While still maintaining a certain rigidity (with their juries, division of practices, acquisition prizes, and collection and market-oriented strategies), the initial format already suggested an awareness of a much-needed transformation of the art museum in the 1960s¹⁰, especially considering the debates that would follow the events of 1968 and the discourses on the anti-museum¹¹. Walter Zanini was no stranger to these discussions, having participated in several gatherings of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM) throughout the years, where key international figures gathered to debate over the changing roles of museums and their challenges. The editions of 1969 in Brussels, 1971 in Paris, and 1972 in Warsaw, Łódź and Kraków particularly informed Zanini’s perspectives on the need for museums to establish a stronger connection with its public, for which he saw the potential for change in the active presence of artists in the museum¹². These meetings would then shape the following activities of the Museum of Contemporary Art, especially in its goal to expand its roles from a “collection organ” to an “agent of transformation”, where the museum becomes a co-author together with the artists and the public¹³.

These debates were in line with a previous renewal in museology – the topic of discussion of the previous edition of this journal – and which can be traced back to as early as the 1920s. The idea of the ‘new’ museum that should, according to Siegfried Giedion¹⁴, allow for the art currently under discussion to be heard, would later be reverberated in approaches in the 1960s and 1970s by figures such as Jean Cassou, of the Museum

⁷ Who had projected the world-renowned building of the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP) in the late 1940s.

⁸ FREIRE, *Museus em Rede...* cit., p. 30.

⁹ The Museum of Art of São Paulo was founded by media mogul Assis Chateaubriand in 1947, amid the Brazilian economic boom of the post-war, while the Museum of Modern Art was founded by businessmen, politician, and art patron Cicillio Matarazzo and his wife Yolanda Penteadó just a year later.

¹⁰ A debate that was also present within the General Conferences of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), particularly that of the 1960 in Paris with recommendations towards a more accessible museum and of 1970 and its Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The period also corresponds to a series of internal institutional conflicts and crisis of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), which culminated in a radical change of its structures and regulations by 1974.

¹¹ For an extended overview of the discourses of the time and particularly that of the anti-museum, see A. FRANKLIN, *Anti-Museum*, London-New York 2019.

¹² W. ZANINI, *Novas Potencialidades*, in *6ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1972*, catálogo da exposição (São Paulo, MAC USP, 14-28 Outubro 1972), São Paulo 1972, n.p.

¹³ ID., *Introversão, Extroversão do Museu de Arte Contemporânea*, in *Walter Zanini: Escrituras Críticas...* cit., pp. 112-114: 112.

¹⁴ S. GIEDION, *Lebendiges Museum*, “*Der Cicerone: Halbmonatsschrift für Künstler, Kunstfreunde und Sammler*”, XXI, 1929, 4, pp. 103-106.

Fig. 2 Page from the 1971 JAC catalogue, with the artwork list (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).



of Modern Art of Paris, who reclaimed the motto of the *museum as a laboratory* as a model for its reconfiguration¹⁵. Zanini would, in fact, reflect on Cassou's approach in *Problemas Museológicos* [Museological Problems], by exposing the pressing need for the modern museum to become a form of "experimental laboratory" in order to present art in its vanguard¹⁶. From the late 1960s, the JACs would gradually incorporate elements of this debate, leading researchers and art historians to interpret the 1972 JAC through the prism of the museum, and more precisely of the exhibition, as a labo-

ratory. This particular edition, due to its radical format, critical debates, and contrasting design, was extensively addressed in literature, becoming the most well-known of the series¹⁷. Its development, moreover, marks a pinnacle moment in the history of the JACs, ending just two years later. Most of its key principles, however, had been developed and tested in the prior edition of 1971 – an exemplary multi-scaled exhibition where all facets of its development had been collectively questioned, experimented with, and creatively documented through its catalogue.

¹⁵ W. ZANINI, *Problemas Museológicos*, in *Walter Zanini: Escrituras Críticas...* cit., pp. 107-113: 107.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Among the key literature, are those by curator and professor of the São Paulo University Cristina Freire and Dária Jar-emtchuk. Among the international publications are S. MOURA, *Young Contemporary Art (1972): the exhibition as a forum during Brazilian dictatorship*, in *Histoire(s) d'exposition(s)*, actes du colloque (Paris, Centre Pompidou, Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, 6-8 Février 2014), sous la direction B. Saou-Dufrène, J. Glicenstein, Paris 2016, pp. 255-266, and E. SHTROMBERG, *Art systems: Brazil and the 1970s*, Austin 2016.



Fig. 3 Envelope of the 1971 JAC catalogue (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

In between artworks, there were gaps

Since its conception in 1967, the *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* published a catalogue with each exhibition, with a list of exhibited artworks. As part of its transparent approach, the earlier versions were accompanied by a short presentation by Walter Zanini describing the jury's selection criteria, followed by the regulations of the call for participants, and the disclosure of the jury members (fig. 6). The catalogues, therefore, had more of a documentation role than anything. It was only in the 1971 edition that the exhibition catalogues gained a significantly different role, becoming a central piece in the exhibition making as a canvas for critical reflection that fed and translated the discussions taking place throughout the exhibition.

Titled *Consumo de uma Situação Artística* [Consumption of an Artistic Situation] the edition transformed the museum space into an arena of collective debate on the artistic values and consumption of contemporary art. This was a period in which the emergent practices were at the forefront of what Zanini called a "hostile" battle with a more conservative view¹⁸. This hostility was already a reverberation of previous confi-

cts between artists and critics, particularly those that resulted from the groundbreaking exhibition of 1967, *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* [Brazilian New Objectivity], at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro¹⁹. The exhibition was accompanied by a statement from the artists, among them the renowned Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, and Hélio Oiticica²⁰, and a published catalogue with the basic principles and characteristics of the new vanguard. These highlighted a certain tendency towards a renewed appraisal of the object as art, in contrast to the hegemony of the two-dimensional canvas of previous traditions. Those emergent practices would stem partially from experiments with spatial structures and from a reinterpreted anti-art ideal, now perceived through art's 'openness' and its expanded communicative role. It would be driven, moreover, by art's collective character, not only in the sense of 'group works' but in its broader understanding of participation. Tying it all together would be a "general will towards construction" – an overall latent character of the Brazilian mode of creating, which, situated in its social and political contexts, would enable the country to identify its longed "cultural characterization"²¹. The-

¹⁸ W. ZANINI, *5ª Exposição Jovem Arte Contemporânea do Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo*, in *5ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1971*, catálogo da exposição (São Paulo, MAC USP, 25 Agosto-26 Setembro 1971), São Paulo 1971, n.p.

¹⁹ For a brief history of the exhibition and a further argument towards the importance of the *Brazilian New Objectivity* within the practices and discourse of the time, see C. DUNN, 'Experimental or Experimental': *Avant-garde, Cultura Marginal, and Counterculture in Brazil, 1968-72*, "Luso-Brazilian Review", L, 2013, 1, pp. 229-252.

²⁰ An overview of these and other key Brazilian artists of the time can be found in SHTROMBERG, *Art systems...* cit., and S.B. MARTINS, *Constructing an Avant-Garde: Art in Brazil, 1949-1979*, Cambridge 2013.

²¹ H. OITICICA, *Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade*, in *Nova Objetividade Brasileira*, catálogo da exposição (Rio de Janeiro, Museu de Arte Moderna, 6-30 Abril 1967), Rio de Janeiro 1967, n.p.

Fig. 4 Page from the 1971 JAC catalogue, with the key topics of debate (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).



se constructive modes would further be described as having a particular responsibility, especially amid a dictatorship, towards art's political, social and ethical positioning. Situated in the aftermath of the *New Objectivity*, the 1971 JAC contained elements of these principles, exposed through the artwork exhibited and through the catalogue's design.

Composed by artist Donato Ferrari – a recurrent collaborator of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo –, the catalogue became itself an artistic statement. It was composed of single pages, filled with round-shaped holes, and distributed in a large envelope (fig. 3) – a very different format from the traditional booklet

previously used. While those previous catalogues served more as a documentation of exhibited artists and artwork, the 1971 edition expanded its contents to include a self-critical analysis. Among those, we find Carl Andre's text from his *Questions and Answers* (1969), published in the Parisian magazine *VH 101*, in 1970²². The text translated a series of interrogations on the definitions of art, artists, and their political conditions, situating the making of the 1971 exhibition within that hostile questioning of contemporary art's worth and purposes. Andre's questions were aligned with another by Ferrari on the following page: "In or out?", followed by a series of images and their subtitles, illustrating the edition's key topi-

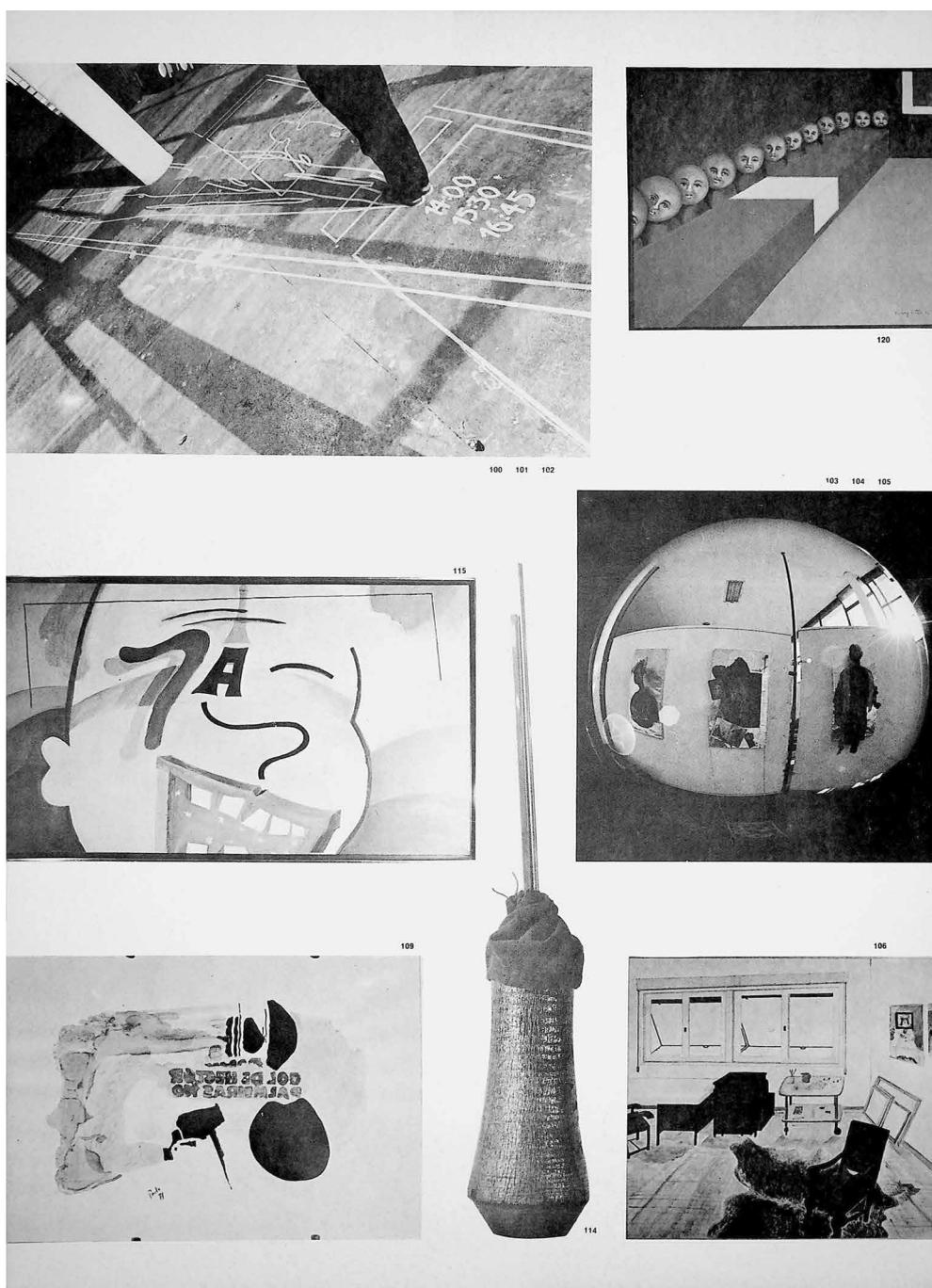


Fig. 5 Page from the 1971 JAC catalogue, with Okumura's artwork (top left) and other spatial and object-oriented practices (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

cs of debate: “The artworks”, “The jury”, “The situation”, “The consumption”, and “The cutting and cropping”²³. This last element was accompanied by what seems to be a detachable cut-out of an image of the jury (fig. 4).

The catalogue concludes with the usual list of artists, artworks, and their images, but now precluded by a last critical remark that stated “In the artworks’ relationships also a hole”²⁴, followed by another series of cut-outs, thus suggesting that there were missing elements and gaps everywhere, even among the artworks themselves (fig. 2). The elements highlighted in the catalogue corresponded, moreover, to a series of transformations set in motion during the exhibition’s deve-

lopment. To begin with, and as a result of heated debates between the artists and the exhibition committee, all applicants were to be accepted due to the “[...] subjective implications of the judgment and its cultural dirigisme”²⁵. This is perhaps what Ferrari’s ‘cutting and cropping’ referred to, as the selection process meant cutting some artists and processes out of ‘the picture’, much like the holes in the catalogue. It also suggested that the sense of transparency towards the selection criteria that the JACs promoted from its early stages was no longer enough: it now had to be cut off altogether. This dissolution of the selection process, therefore, meant that a certain curatorial role enacted by the jury and the exhi-

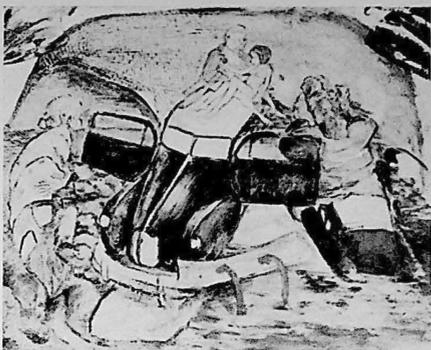
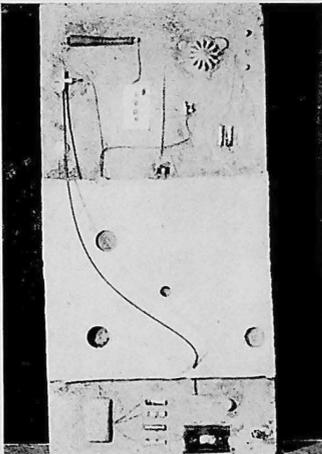
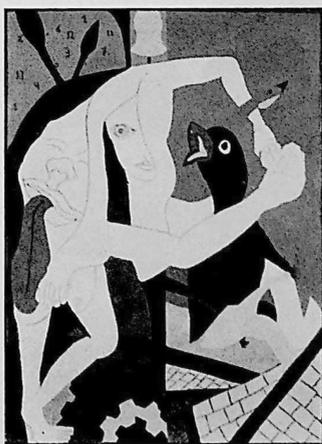
²² C. ANDRÉ, *Questions and Answers*, “VH 101: Revue Trimestrielle”, I, 1970, pp. 105-106.

²³ *Entra ou Não Entra?*, in *5ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1971...* cit., n.p.

²⁴ *Na Relação das Obras Também um Furo*, in *5ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1971...* cit., n.p.

²⁵ ZANINI, *5ª Exposição Jovem Arte...* cit., n.p.

Fig. 6 Page from the 1967 JAC catalogue with the list of artworks (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

<p>ACKER, José Antônio van Nasc. em S. Paulo, 1931</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tentação de Adão e Eva Óleo s/ tela — 41 x 50 2. Adão e Eva e o Demônio Científico Óleo s/ tela — 49 x 29 3. Expulsão do paraíso Óleo s/ tela — 51 x 41 	
<p>ALVES, Rudy Pythágoras Nasc. em S. Paulo, 1947</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Eletricidade Cimento e ferro — 100 x 50 5. Hidráulica Cimento — 100 x 50 6. Luz Cimento e visco — 120 x 40 	
<p>AMADEO Júnior, Ricardo Nasc. em S. Paulo, 1945</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Menino de ouro Guache — 86 x 61,5 8. Desespêro Guache — 77,5 x 59 9. Sonho Tinta plástica (P.V.A.) — 123 x 86 	

²⁶ Id., *Introversão, Extroversão...* cit., n.p.

²⁷ On the history of the group, their relevance and continuous collaborations, see T. MAIER, *De individualidade ao coletivo: Uma conversa com Lydia Okumura e Genilson Soares*, "Journal of Lusophone Studies", V, 2020, 1, pp. 140-171.

²⁸ The work in question, *A Cêrca da Natureza*, was described as an intervention piece set across the ramps of the museum in which the public had to uncover a hidden passageway through three consecutive 2x4 meters wooden panels in order to enter the exhibition space. The emphasis of the work was then not on its materials, but rather on the passage one had to take.

²⁹ For key historical accounts on Brazilian Concrete art and Popcretos, see W. CORDEIRO, *Concrete Art*, in Waldemar Cordeiro: *Fantasia Exata*, catálogo da exposição (São Paulo, Itaú Cultural, 3 Julho-22 Setembro 2013), editado por A. Cordeiro, São Paulo 2014, pp. 264-321; Id., *Semantic Concrete Art*, in Waldemar Cordeiro... cit., pp. 426-428; A. CAMPOS, *Waldemar Cordeiro: Points of departure and arrival*, in Waldemar Cordeiro... cit., pp. 462-467. For an extended overview on those, see N. BRIZUELA *et al.*, *Waldemar Cordeiro: Bits of the Planet*, online exhibition <https://www.bitsoftheplanet.net/> (last accessed 9 September 2024); and on conceptual art in Brazil, see *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, Cambridge 2000.

bition organisers (albeit the term 'curator' had never been used) was now perceived, through the prism of the gatekeeper, as questionable. The jury, however, was still responsible for the acquisition-prizes. But, for the first time in the history of the JACs, instead of buying an artwork, the museum assigned a 'research budget', and most surprisingly, to a collective.

These changes broke with the JAC's early foundations: it not only dismantled the basis of the selection process, but it shook up the pillars of what Zanini called the "collection organ"²⁶. In other words, instead of acquiring and consequently expanding the museum's collection with finished works by single artists as it had done

in the past, the museum bet instead on a work by the *Grupo Conceitual*, formed by artists Lydia Okumura, Carlos Alberto Asp, Genilson Soares, and Francisco Iñarra²⁷, which focused on process more than anything else²⁸. The artwork was, in fact, representative of the overall diversity of formats present that year, in contrast to the excessive two-dimensionality of the prints, drawings, and paintings exhibited in the previous editions. This diversity was a reverberation of the experiments with Concrete Art, Pop Art (*Popcretos*), and Conceptual Art in Brazil²⁹, but also a direct result of the *New Objectivity* outlined just a few years earlier with their tendencies towards participatory and collective practices.

These shifts in art-making were already being felt by Walter Zanini, who had recognized in the previous editions a growing number of objects and spatial structures³⁰. In the 1971 exhibition, this spatiality was particularly present in both Lyda Okumura and Genilson Soares's individual submissions. Okumura's work involved marking the projected shadow of her body onto the exhibition floors by making use of the natural light which entered the exhibition space through its large glass window panes, showing the shadow's transition in time (fig. 5). Soares's work also made use of the natural light to cast a shadow over a painting of a cloud traced onto the museum's windows but included the participation of the visitor who was then invited to imagine an additional landscape. An emphasis on the process can also be seen in these artworks, through not only its participatory traits and involving character but also through the temporal input of these pieces. These and other process-oriented artworks emphasized a much-needed reordering of the museum, as they required another use and understanding of the exhibition space. This, naturally, had a direct impact on its design. The museum building and its spatial structures were now part of the artworks, as they became more distributed, involving, and participatory. The exhibition's design needed to be less structured, in order to literally 'give space' for a new generation of artworks and their mutability, malleability, performativity and open-ended formats. This approach contrasts with a yet very present understanding of exhibitions as a space that merely contains and displays artworks and artefacts, when not perceived under the almost two-century-old conception of exhibitions as spaces to be experienced in a controlled and ordained manner, where predetermined passageways guide the transition of visitors and their gaze from one observational object to another³¹.

The title of the 1971 JAC itself, *Consumption of*

an Artistic Situation, would highlight this turn towards spatiality and the object. By aligning with the current debates on the rising art markets and its overspread consumerism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the title suggested an alternative form of consumption to be made, that is, one that perceived artistic practices more as situated processes, and less as objects to be bought. *Situations* was also the title of a series of talks during the 1971 JAC on the current context of Brazilian art. The talks were part of its newly expanded programme, which now included performances, poetry readings, concerts, and experimental film projections. Many of these were organized and composed by the collaborative efforts of the faculty and students of the University of São Paulo. This was, therefore, a much more involving exhibition programme, especially in regard to the academic and research community it was situated in. It was aligned, moreover, with Zanini's ideals of an open and democratic museum, one which took the public's active involvement into account. The 1971 JAC was, therefore, undoubtedly a decisive turn away from the art *salons*, but also from the idea of exhibitions as spaces for the mere display and contemplation of objects and from the 'fierce capitalist claws' of expanding commercial galleries, towards a more collective and process-oriented space.

Finally, the 1971 exhibition catalogue suggests that this particular edition was, more than anything, an exhibition *in process*. "In the artworks' relationship also a hole"³², echoed its pages. These "holes" were gaps, open wounds, in the relationships between the jury and the artists, the artists and the exhibition space and its public, and between the museum and its community – all set in motion through their shared relationship with the artworks to be exhibited. But, by opening up the debate early on to include the artists, it shifted its focus towards the dismantling of its own foundations and opened itself up to its

³⁰ W. ZANINI, *Apresentação*, in *3ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1969*, catálogo da exposição (São Paulo, MAC USP, 27 Novembro-23 Dezembro 1969), São Paulo 1969, n.p.

³¹ On which sociologist Tony Bennett has addressed and expanded through his seminal works: T. BENNETT, *The Exhibitionary Complex*, "New Formations", IV, 1988, pp. 73-102, and ID., *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, London-New York 1995.

³² *Na Relação das Obras Também um Furo*, in *5ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1971...* cit., n.p.

Fig. 7 Page from the 1972 JAC catalogue, with images of the artworks in their diversity (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

reworkings. By reviewing its own ‘situation’, the 1971 JAC sought to suture those gaps. This process, however, did not end there. It rather signaled a museum in the process of ‘opening up’ to become something else entirely: an ‘experimental and collaborative laboratory’.

On Becoming a Laboratory

In its exhibition catalogue, José Geraldo Vieira, a key member of the JAC committee and collaborator of the Museum of Contemporary Art throughout the years, argued that the 1972 exhibition was in line with the new duty of contemporary museums in becoming “operational research laboratories” that would bring into their centres “artists, critics, and public”³³. His discourse clearly stemmed from Walter Zanini’s earlier writings on Jean Cassou’s summoning of the laboratory as a model for a renewed museology that would allow for the art of the present to be experienced in its making³⁴. In this regard, Zanini was well aware that the laboratorization of the museum and its exhibitions, exponentially reiterated throughout the 1970s together with the idea of the ‘open museum’, was nothing new³⁵. In fact, the idea that the museum should become something like a laboratory can be found in the writings of Smithsonian Institute’s George Brown Goode on imagining the museums of the future, already in 1889³⁶. Later, the motto permeated the ideals of figures such as Richard F. Bach of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, of artists Kazimir Malevich and Aleksandr Rodchenko, followed by Hannover Museum director, Alexander Dörner – spanning from 1919 to 1920. In the late 1920s, we find it in the writings of Fogg Art Museum’s Edward Forbes, and later in the 1940s and 1950s in the works by Alfred Barr and Victor D’Amico for the New York Museum of Modern Art. Nowadays, we see the laboratory being extensively claimed in and as the museum, across the

globe, in different formats, and for a multitude of purposes³⁷.

A more prominent recognition of the 1972 JAC as a laboratory, however, would only be seen in the Brazilian literature at the turn of the twenty-first century, mainly through the work of Cristina Freire, but also in those by Dária Jaremtchuk, Tatiana Sulzbacher, and Heloise Louzada³⁸. Apart from Freire, all had attributed this laboratorization of the exhibition to the figure of Walter Zanini, although it was Vieira who explicitly says it on the 1972 catalogue and despite the laboratory’s long-standing relationship with museums. Zanini, in contrast, would describe the edition’s space through concepts such as the “work hangar”³⁹ and the “workshop of artistic practices”⁴⁰, while making an effort to establish a distinction between the exhibition ‘environment’ from that of the atelier and the enclosed spaces of art schools⁴¹. The interpretations found in literature, although misplaced, were nevertheless not far from the facts, as they also drew from Zanini’s shared visions of the 1972 exhibition in becoming a space where emergent and collectively-held practices would take place. Aligned with the diversity of ‘experiments’ conducted by both the organization committee and the artists, with the participation of the public, it is understandable that the 1972 JAC would be reiterated as an “experimental and collaborative laboratory” at the turn of the century (fig. 1).

The general ‘collaborativeness’ and ‘experimentality’ attributed to this exhibition in literature seem to also stem from the series of shifts that had been set in motion in the previous JAC. Those culminated in the 1972 edition’s full dissolution of the jury committee, promoting a less hierarchical and more decentralized production; in the division of the exhibition space into eighty-four oddly-shaped lots, unmediated and marked only by white lines on the floor which, aligned with a randomized draw system *in lieu*

³³ J.G. VIEIRA, *Verbete Ocasional*, in *6ª Jovem Arte Contemporânea 1972*... cit., n.p.

³⁴ ZANINI, *Problemas Museológicos*... cit., pp. 107-113.

³⁵ FREIRE, *Museus em Rede*... cit.

³⁶ G.B. GOODE, *The Museums of the Future*, in *The Museums of the Future. From the Report of the National Museum, institutional reports (1888-89)*, Washington D.C. 1891, pp. 427-445.

³⁷ L. CARREIRA, *The Exhibition Space as a Laboratory*, doctoral thesis, University of Southampton, 2024 (unpublished).

³⁸ D.G. JAREMTCHUK, *Jovem Arte Contemporânea no MAC DA USP*, dissertação de mestrado, Universidade de São Paulo, 1999; T. SULZBACHER, *Laboratório no Museu*, in *18º Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Artes Plásticas Transversalidades nas Artes Visuais*, anais do congresso (Salvador, UFBA, 21-29 setembro 2009), Salvador 2009, pp. 2856-2867; H. LOUZADA, *O museu como laboratório: Análise da exposição VI Jovem Arte Contemporânea*, “Midas”, 7, 2016: <http://midas.revues.org/1130> (last accessed 9 September 2024).

³⁹ ZANINI, *Novas Potencialidades*... cit., n.p.

⁴⁰ O. KRÜSE, *Lixo, Galinhas, Miolo de Boi: Uma Exposição de Arte*, “Folha de São Paulo”, 28 Outubro 1972.

⁴¹ ZANINI, *Novas Potencialidades*... cit., n.p.

Fig. 8 Page from the 1972 JAC catalogue, with images of the spatial divisions (© Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo).

of a selection process, resulted in a spatial distribution based on luck; in its implied refusal of any criteria based on merit or artistic standard, accompanied by an openness towards all ages, nationalities, and modes of production; in the active encouragement towards process-based, object and spatially-oriented practices, and collectively-developed works; and, lastly, in the refusal by all artists of the acquisition-prize who then collectively agreed on allocating its budget to the development of a catalogue that would be representative of the otherwise ‘unattainable’ experiences that took place that year, through a series of texts, but mainly photographs, diagrams, plans and sketches of the exhibition space, its proposed design and performed artworks (fig. 1).

Those experiences were marked by multi-layered and critically-embedded pieces such as those by artists Roberto Smith, Paulina Rabinovich, and Papa, which included twenty-five living hens, disturbing neighbouring artists with their odour, faecal matter, and ongoing clucks; by the decomposing ox carcass by Fernando Novaes Correia, later confiscated by local authorities, almost leading to a collectively-held barbecue as a form of protest⁴²; and by the several performances, happenings, and readings held amid an exhibition space filled with the most varied ‘materials’, including popping paper bag sounds, garbage, live rabbits, and putrefying fruits – all of which were open to public participation from day one of construction (fig. 7).

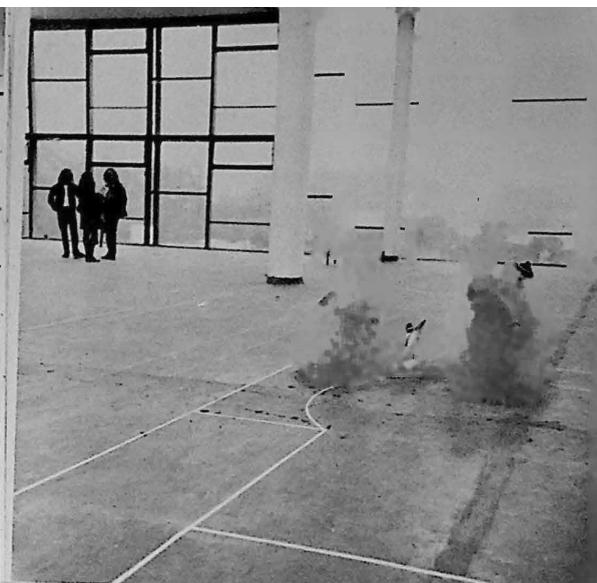
These practices all had, in one way or another, a strong spatial component, as the randomly allocated lots required artists to readapt or propose projects based on this delimitation. This particular design and division of the space, or the lack thereof, sparked disputes among artists and unmerciful reviews from critics, but also promoted a culture of collective gathering and contribution. Space was shared, redistributed, and even sold, making therefore matters of spatially a fun-

damental element of the exhibition design and its development. Its importance, however, did not gain the same recognition in literature which, in consonance with a certain “curatorial discourse of exhibition history”⁴³, centred their analyses instead on the figure of the curator, now attributed to Zanini, and in spite of the collective character of all the Museum of Contemporary Art’s activities. And, although the more contemporary readings of the events of the early 1970s at the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo did make use of the exhibition catalogues as documental resources, they delved more into text analysis and less into their material and spatial invocations. While the 1971 catalogue exposed both figurative and actual gaps found amid the display of the artworks through its paper cuttings, the 1972 catalogue brought matters of spatiality into the spotlight through those series of photographs, diagrams, plans and sketches of the exhibition space and the exhibited artworks (fig. 8).

Space, therefore, should have been a fundamental element in the conception of the exhibition as a laboratory, particularly when such attributions are often perceived through the ideals of the laboratory as a historically established space where experiments are conducted (and at times, collaboratively) and when the formats and mode of distribution of the exhibition were not only aimed towards but also a key condition of the artworks’ ‘experimentality’ and ‘collaborativeness’. Particularly as it was a certain ‘openness’ of the space – translated here through the exhibition’s design with its unique lack of walls and hard spatial divisions, along with the relative absence of rigid formats and standards, as well as through the artists’ active refusal of restrictions – that enabled the 1972 exhibition to become ‘experimental’ and ‘collaborative’ in the first place, thus contributing to the unprecedented exhibition design of the *Jovem Arte Contemporânea*.

⁴² Novaes’ artwork is perhaps the one that gained more public attention, both within local media at the time and later within Brazilian art-historical literature. For more details on its importance to the history of the 1972 JAC, see E. SHTROMBERG, *Enchanted Carcass (1972): Sensory Overload and the Institutional Challenge of Decaying Art*, in “Third Text”, 26, 2012, 6, pp. 665-674.

⁴³ F. VOGEL, *Notes on Exhibition History in Curatorial Discourse*, “On curating”, 21, 2013, pp. 45-53.



14 PERMUTA I

Somente serão consideradas se
devidamente comunicadas e es-
tradas pela comissão coordena-
dora nos dias e horários
fixados no programa.

