ÁGORA
Encontros entre a cidade e as artes: Explorando novas urbanidades
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Thinking about ‘transcultural capital’ and ‘transnational artistic practices’ of migrant Portuguese visual artists

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Abstract

This article is inspired by the idea of a transnational art world focused on migrants and the visual arts and it delivers a preliminary theoretical discussion. The article discusses the notion of ‘transcultural capital’ as a perspective within the study of contemporary migrations of artist. It also looks at the concept of ‘cultural scenes’ as places of significant cultural and artistic activities and amenities. Linked to these are ‘transnational artistic practices’ and the production of translocal geographies drawn by an overlap of the migratory destinations of artists and networks of places of creation, production and artistic dissemination which enhance different art markets. This article discusses the ways in which these different theories can contribute to our understanding of the mobility of cultural professionals and, in particular, of the emigration of Portuguese visual artists.

Keywords: Transcultural capital; translocal geographies; transnational artistic practices; cultural scenes; visual artists.

Introduction

In this article, I have focused understanding the role of art in the transformation of cities (André et al., 2016). Art, artists and other cultural actors play an important role in the development of socially-creative spaces, thus encouraging the production of ‘new urbanities’ by inspiring and launching socially-innovative initiatives (André et al., 2017). Building on this, I focus on the emigration of Portuguese visual artists and raise important issues regarding the mobility of artists, transnationalism and artistic practices in the context of migration. The main question of is: how can emigration of visual artists challenge current understandings of migration? Then we ask why do visual artists move so frequently and what are they looking for in this mobility? What are the reasons behind their decision to migrate? What is the configuration of the geographical routes of this migration? What is the significance of their transcultural capital within the various periods and stages of the migratory process?

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