Inhabiting the Environment through Art:
the work of Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson in Inhotim Institute
as Instances of Environmental Aesthetics

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To Gustavo Scarantti Bremm, beloved husband and loyal partner in this overseas adventure.

To Leopoldo Comerlatto, beloved grandfather; who inspires me with his simplicity and love for nature.
Abstract

This thesis examines the role of the environment in the artworks of Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson in Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art and Botanical Gardens, in Brazil. This is done from the perspective of Environmental Aesthetics, which is the theoretical frame that allows the consideration of the environment not only as a subject matter for contemporary art. Rather, the important contributions of philosopher Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson in the field, acknowledge our understanding and engagement with the environment as intrinsic elements of the aesthetic experience. Therefore, this thesis looks not only to the materiality of Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* (2002), and Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine* (2001-2003). It also sees the constitution of the relationship between the viewer, the artworks and the environment in Inhotim Institute as constituent parts of how we perceive them. By emphasizing the active relationality in/with the environment, the scope of this research is extended beyond the traditional foundations of aesthetics as, for instance, the idea of the contemplation of a landscape, the subjectivity of the viewer, and the pleasure associated with beauty. Finally, this thesis shows that when perceiving natural environments in relation to art we are invited to enter a space in which our perception is always in movement between our cultural beliefs, the environmental conditions that affect us and the artwork. In engaging in/with the environment in the aesthetic experience, Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson offer us ways of disrupting our accustomed view, enlarging our experience in the world, and bringing art closer to the everyday life.
Introduction

An enduring encounter between art and nature understood as two important dimensions of human life in the same place motivated this research. The Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art and Botanical Gardens, in the city of Brumadinho, Brazil, is considered one of the country's largest foundations of contemporary art and also one of the biggest outdoor art institutes of Latin America (fig.1). It is constituted as a space that convenes a significant collection of art and a botanical compilation containing rare species from different parts of the world. Therefore it is internationally known as a place for the perfect integration of art and nature. In a commemorative publication entitled ‘Artnature’, celebrating Inhotim’s ten years anniversary of foundation, the executive director Antonio Grassi explains the junction of the words ‘art’ and ‘nature’ in the title of the book as a choice that represents the uncommon integration of living beings at the institute. To Grassi, the book is “a vegetized book of art or a book of artistic plants.” This is a sentence that indicates a clear intention in developing a space for the encounter between nature and art. However, to understand better how this relation occurs we need to consider what notion of nature, of environment, is supported in this context. In a first analysis, at the same time that Inhotim claims an integrated vision of art and nature, each one has its own delimited and carefully constructed space. Furthermore, it is possible to affirm that, in Inhotim, nature is located side by side with the artworks and, sometimes, is the subject of the creations, but does it represent an intersection? Can we assume that only by putting or cultivating plants and art in the same institutionalized space makes them relate to each other? Several academic publications have already approached the charming relation between art and nature in Inhotim. In another institutional publication, named ‘Futurememory’ historian Frederico Coelho explores in a series of articles the connection of Inhotim with the people, the social contexts, and facts that together constitute its history. One of his texts is ‘Landscape’ and,

3 Some of these publications have been used as reference for this thesis: Barcena, 2013; Weingarden, 2013.
as the title says, it approaches the relationship of Inhotim with the land. To Coelho, despite the
fact that our experiences with nature and the environment feeds our narratives about ourselves
and the world, there is still a clear distance between human and nature, that he calls “the negative
boundaries.” Coelho, then, delegates to the ‘power of art’ the mission to exceed “a merely visual
and discursive relationship with both of them.” In this sense, if our everyday life experience is
directly affected by the environment and our cultural responses to it, and if both art and nature
are part of our life, why do we tend to think of aesthetic experiences in art and in nature as two
different things? Are they really that different? And if they are, how can we approach
aesthetically something that is both art and nature, such as installation art in a natural
environment?

Inspired by the encounter with Inhotim Institute and the questions raised by Coelho, the
interest of this thesis is in taking a closer look at two artworks of Inhotim’s collection that, in my
view, can help us take a step forward in understanding the possible conversations between art
and nature through the question: In the perspective of environmental aesthetics, in which ways
the interface between art and nature in the artworks of Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson in
Inhotim can help us further explore the aesthetic experience in/with the environment, beyond
traditional aesthetics? In order to answer this question Dan Graham’s installation Bisected
3) are analyzed as artworks that create overtures to an expanded relationship with the
environment, one that goes beyond the physical approximation/insertion of a constructed gallery,
or pavilion, in the surrounding nature, as isolated objects. Instead, it is taken into consideration
how they enable an active relationality between artwork, the viewer and the environment, as
proposed by Philosopher Arnold Berleant. Berleant is a renowned scholar in the field of
environmental aesthetics as the emergent field of study that makes possible this attitude,
considering the environment not only as subject matter for contemporary arts but rather
acknowledging that our understanding and engagement with it affect our artistic experience.

5 Ibid.
6 Dan Graham, United States, 1942; Olafur Eliasson, Denmark, 1967.
7 Berleant, Arnold. “Introduction: Art, Environment and the Shaping of Experience.” In Environment and the Arts:
8 Ibid., 4.
This approach can help us to explore aesthetically different layers of, for example, the mirroring effect and the transparency of Dan Graham's pavilions and how they play with the viewers reflect, overlapping the inside or outside views, depending on the natural light. Or yet, how Olafur Eliasson also explores mirrors within natural landscapes, creating installations that invite the viewer to rearrange his relationship with the environment. In embracing the environment in its contextual configuration, we are opening and expanding the character of appreciation beyond the arts to consider dimensions of our everyday day life as an intrinsic constituent of the aesthetic experience.

The methodology is inspired by the artist, theorist and curator Benno Hinkes, that sees installation art as a space for transdisciplinary research practice, bringing artistic and environmental aesthetics approaches in conversation as an investigative activity. In contemporary times, the plurality of artistic mediums makes harder to specify clear borders. Hinkes, then, suggest that the talk about “fields of action” instead of “clearly identifiable genres of ‘art forms’. As will be further developed in the first chapter the specificity of installation art require a different aesthetic approach. This is especially important for Hinkes when approaching installation art such as Graham’s Bisected triangle, Interior curve and Eliasson’s Viewing Machine due to its character of spatiality, accessibility/participation of the viewer and direct relation with the place in which is inserted. In this perspective, both artistic and theoretical approaches are taken into consideration in the analysis, but the fundamental change proposed by Hinkes is related to how we approach art, overcoming the traditional binary approach in the study of the artwork as an object. This method also contributes to expanding the consideration of the environment in the aesthetic experience, for artists like Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson are seen as employing artistic-empirical processes to interrogate how their artworks disturb the viewer's perception. In this scheme, the interest is in also paying attention to the artistic working, inquiring “what artist who create architecture- and place- related installations do in

12 Ibid., 65.
their daily work” as described by Hinkes.\(^{13}\) This approach provides an expanded comprehension about the artist’s aesthetic and artistic contribution, which, in turn, will also help to support the analysis of the characteristics of the artworks that provide an understanding of how Graham and Eliasson explore the concept of environment in their work.

The approaches coming from the intersection between art and nature in the study of installation art can adopt different dimensions, for example: philosophical, psychological, political and ecological. However, in this research, I will approach the notion of environmental aesthetics, as brought by Berleant, to consider the effects not only of the installation artwork as an object of study but the “entire region” in which it is involved, and considering the environmental experience through a wider scope of sensory perception, beyond the supremacy of the view.\(^{14}\) Academic debates in contemporary art and environmental aesthetics, in relation, became only recently the emerging field in which the potential of art installations, environments, and the human element are studied to an expanded extent, as demonstrated by artist Samantha Clark in the article ‘Contemporary Art and Environmental Aesthetics.’\(^{15}\) Berleant’s participatory model of experience emphasizes the multiple relations between person and environment, where this last also imposes itself on the human person, creating a relationship of mutual influence.\(^{16}\) Therefore, the natural, cultural and urban environment became the resulting interest of this expansion, positioning a new aesthetic challenge, questioning the limitations of the traditional aesthetic theory and the modern arts matters. This can be especially important in times in which we hear constantly about how our environment is under threat from climate changes and we can notice some new awareness growing in relation to nature.

In ‘Chapter 1: Art and Nature Expanded: Environmental Aesthetics’ the expansion of the aesthetic field beyond the traditional notions of art and nature is explored, describing the conditions that lead to a broader understanding of the possible approaches to nature as an active element of the aesthetic experience in environmental aesthetics. Furthermore, Berleant together with philosopher Allen Carlson help us to see that, despite the fact that nature has almost always

\(^{13}\) Hinkes, “Approaching Aisthetics”, 62-63.
been an object of aesthetic study, it is necessary to expand the sense of environment, to include not only the natural but also the social and cultural dimensions, pointing to the extension and multiplicity of human relations in the world. Therefore, the possibilities and limitations of the traditional notion of landscape are also analyzed in order to clarify the need and effects of an expanded notion of environment toward a more intimate relation in our everyday life. The assumptions approached in the first chapter forms the theoretical foundations in which the artworks are going to be analyzed in the next chapters.

In ‘Chapter 2: Dan Graham: In-between Art and Environment’, I analyze how the two-way relationality of the different elements of Dan Graham’s Pavilion *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* in Inhotim Institute (mirrored glass, curved glass, inside/outside), in proposing an in-between the artwork, the environment and the viewer can help us to consider the natural environment as an intrinsic part of the aesthetic experience. Through a brief panorama of Graham’s work demonstrating how he explores the environment in different languages and spaces, I develop a foundation that able to understand how *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* can be seen as an interface for an expanded experience of the viewer with the mutability of the natural environment in Inhotim Institute, establishing a space beyond the bounds of binary relation between object and subject in the aesthetic experience.

A similar approach is developed in ‘Chapter 3: Olafur Eliasson: A Kaleidoscopic Sense of Environment’ in which I examine how Eliasson integrate the environment in his oeuvre, in which he surpasses a traditional notion of appreciation of nature to consider it as a cultural construction in the viewer’s perceptual participation in the world. In this context, the installation *Viewing Machine*, in Inhotim Institute is analyzed in the light of Eliasson’s solid career in exploring different materials and formats in order to create a more engaged and embodied relationship of the viewer with the world, culminating in the rise of awareness and a constant movement of the human posture and understanding of the world.

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17 Berleant, and Carlson, “Introduction (Environmental Aesthetics)”, 98.
Chapter 1: 
Art and Nature Expanded: Environmental Aesthetics

1.1. An Expansion of the Aesthetic Field

The interest in connecting artistic practices to our everyday life is related to a will to understand in depth the matters around our abilities as well as efforts in trying to understand our experiences in the world. This is a question that has been largely studied by philosophers from different epochs and disciplines. Philosopher Matthew Kieran observes how the concept of aesthetic is traditionally linked to the ideas of beauty and contemplation as its main qualities, arguing that the delightful is not necessarily beautiful (the grotesque in art can be a good example), which therefore, points to the need to rethink aesthetic as a broader category.  

If aesthetic is the word for defining the process by which we make sense of our world, Kieran shows us different ways of defining this association (relational, cognitive, grotesque) demonstrating that many factors are involved in this experience, enabling the idea that we may spend our efforts in analyzing the aesthetic experience beyond the pleasure associated with beauty, to a more expanded sense of our relationship with the world.

Philosopher Roger Scruton argues that to understand the origins of aesthetics’ “rise and fall” as perceived in the contemporary world, and consequently to be able to point to possibilities of expansion, we need to review its romantic roots, going beyond its Greek philosophy origins. Scruton makes us aware of the waves of idealism that were drawn in the first inscriptions of those interested in the aesthetic field in England and America. According to him, in these idealist theories, art has an end in itself and the previous distinction between object and subject are replaced by the idea that form and content are, together, part of its uniqueness and cannot be analyzed as separate things. With the advent of analytical philosophy, the duality between subject and object was acknowledged, and science and empiricism were alone responsible for the

answers of how everything is, leaving the cultural and historical aspects apart from the discussion.\textsuperscript{20}

Scruton makes us see that, despite the critical transformations in the definitions of aesthetics,– from the Kantian formation and status of aesthetics as a discipline with divisions based on rationality, to Hegel’s proposition of the necessity of a theory of art,– both philosophers agreed that the aesthetic judgment is not an arbitrary human capacity, but “a bridge between the sensuous and the intellectual, and an indispensable means of access to the world of ideas.”\textsuperscript{21}

Scruton then analyzes different schools in their attempts to develop an approach that considers the nature of the aesthetic experience but reinforces that it would be a “mirage” to point to a general theory.\textsuperscript{22} Within this framework, the philosopher argues that to consider the contextual aesthetic experience of the viewer instead would be a more fruitful movement in the study of our aesthetic relationship with art, since the aesthetic judgment is what makes the history of art as a discipline possible.\textsuperscript{23}

In the article ‘Contemporary Art and Environmental Aesthetics’, artist Samantha Clark also addresses the contributions of philosopher Ronald W. Hepburn in initiating the debates about the aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment, indicating his urgency in noticing its negligence since the eighteenth-century aesthetic debates, and focusing instead on the notions of the picturesque and the sublime in nature.\textsuperscript{24} To Hepburn aesthetics has been interwoven with the philosophy of art for centuries. However, this arrangement resulted in the negligence of considering nature and other aspects of our quotidian world in the appreciation.\textsuperscript{25} According to him, it happened because some specific elements of the aesthetic experience perceived as belonging to the artistic field cannot be found in nature; that is, the frame and the artist’s intention.\textsuperscript{26} Therefore, the artistic object would be the target of the traditional aesthetic theory, leaving nature and the context of this object without consideration. Hepburn helped to highlight

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20}Scruton, \textit{Recent Aesthetics in England and America}, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{21}Ibid., 3.
\item \textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 13.
\item \textsuperscript{23}Scruton, Roger. “Art History and Aesthetic Judgement.” In \textit{The Aesthetic Understanding: Essays in the Philosophy of Art and Culture}. 166-178. University Paperbacks; (London [etc.]: Methuen, 1983).
\item \textsuperscript{24}Clark, “Contemporary Art and Environmental Aesthetics”, 351-71.
\item \textsuperscript{26}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
the need to take into account a crucial area of human experience in natural environments, stating that the framelessness of nature is what challenges us to create our response, our own frame. As he says, “this provisional and elusive character of aesthetic qualities in nature creates a restlessness, an alertness, a search for ever new standpoints.”27 This active participation in our encounter with nature occurs during a visit to Inhotim in which the experience in the artists’ buildings and artworks in open spaces is interleaved with the natural setting. To be able to take into consideration the environment as a fundamental aspect of the aesthetic experience context in this research, I ask how the experience is in/with nature in installation art perceived in environmental aesthetics. Or, more specifically, from the perspective of environmental aesthetics, in which ways can the interface between art and nature in the artworks of Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson in Inhotim help us further explore the aesthetic experience in/with the environment, beyond traditional aesthetics? To provide answers, we should closely examine the context in which these installations are created and how Inhotim constructs this interface between the artworks and the environment.

In the aesthetic field, ‘environmental aesthetics’ is the term associated with anew theoretical approach to artworks that have been created or exhibited in a closed or open environment and that are directly involved in their location.28 According to Geographer John E. Thornes, the relation between aesthetics and the environment have resonance in our modes of experiencing the world, including in our feelings, but we usually take our surroundings for granted.29 Therefore, rather than attributing specific roles and places for art and nature, the assumption that these notions are in constant movement can help us review them beyond the presuppositions that regulate our everyday life.

The interdisciplinarity of environmental aesthetics is represented by the work of researchers from different backgrounds (i.e. geography, aesthetics, contemporary art, cultural studies) and is related to the character of an area of knowledge that can be approached from many different fields and sometimes merge its boundaries with other disciplines.30 Some examples can be found in the special edition of The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,

27 Hepburn, 49.
29 Ibid., 392.
volume 56, published in 1998, whose theme is environmental aesthetics in relation to subjects such as sounds, fact and imagination, vernacularism in Japan, the aesthetic experience in forests, domesticity and interior design. Nevertheless, all these studies point to the work of Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson as two major contributors in the debates around the field. According to them, environmental aesthetics is a relatively new approach in aesthetic studies and has two important characteristics. The first is precisely its possibility of being reached from many different fields, related or not. This makes it possible to develop interdisciplinary studies, in which the blurring of boundaries allows a further understanding of a determined subject, an important attribute in doing research in the contemporary world. Some of these examples can be found in the book edited by Berleant ‘Environment and the Arts: Perspectives on environmental aesthetics’, in which he introduces recent research that connects environmental aesthetic studies to fields, such as specific arts (music, literature, etc), scientific technology, ethics, urban buildings and ‘Front Yards’, and through conditions of everyday life.

Berleant’s and Carlson’s ideas on environmental aesthetics are addressed in this research to further expand the possibilities and relations between the artworks, taking into account the environment and viewer. According to them, the aesthetic appreciation in relation to the environment enlarges the definition of aesthetic appreciation, projecting it beyond the relationality that we commonly attribute to the arts, in the direction of a more “engaged and complete experience.” This expansion results in considering the environmental experience, as an “entire region” rather than focusing on an isolated traditional object, thereby devoting all our senses in a state of complete awareness (and not just the vision alone). Furthermore, this awareness is not stagnant, but varies according to the changes in the environment itself, making engagement and dynamism the characteristics that move our environmental aesthetic experience. All these characteristics of the perceptual experience in the environment are explored by Dan

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34 Berleant, Carlson, “Introduction (Environmental Aesthetics)”, 98.
35 Ibid.
Graham’s and Olafur Eliasson’s installations in Inhotim, creating a correspondence that contributes to establishing a dialogue between their artworks and environmental aesthetics.

In order to access Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine*, it is necessary to walk along paths in the middle of the native forest (fig. 4). By contrast, Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* is installed right beside a carefully composed scenery of a lake and gardens (fig. 5). Therefore, in Inhotim our aesthetic experience is constantly moving from the realms of nature to art, and the same happens to our knowledge references while perceiving them. However, to Clark, using our artistic familiarity to guide our experience in nature is possible, but alone, not plentiful because it supposes that art is more important than nature, and furthermore abbreviates nature as something culturally produced.\(^3^6\) After introducing the contributions and claims of Hepburn, Clark critiques the separation of the aesthetic debates within contemporary art and the environmental aesthetics studies since the 1960s and presents three important contributions that the intersection of both disciplines could have on each other. Like, Berleant and Carlson, Clark emphasizes the importance of the current developments on the interface between contemporary art criticism and environmental aesthetics to expand the aesthetic debates beyond the boundaries of traditional aesthetics.\(^3^7\) The author then explores other contributions to the debate that do not reinforce the segregation between “the human the natural”, but rather provide an approximation of both dimensions since both, art and the environment, can encompass aspects of our lives.\(^3^8\)

If experiences that give meaning to our lives can occur not only in the realm of art but in different spaces of our everyday life, philosopher Arnold Berleant asks us, “what, then, is the unique gift of the arts?”, pointing to the aesthetic experience as a possible answer.\(^3^9\) However, the specificity of such involvement has been the motive of countless academic debates in art criticism and philosophy since art became a field of philosophical interest. The philosophical study of the arts is traditionally part of the field of aesthetics, in which it not only emphasizes art’s independence and importance, but also its isolation from the other dimensions of life, including the environment.\(^4^0\) But what does it say about installation art that is created for an open

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\(^{36}\) Clark, 354.
\(^{37}\) Ibid., 370.
\(^{38}\) Ibid., 356.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., 3.
space, such as Inhotim? To Art Historian Claire Bishop, installation art is known by its character of addressing the viewer directly as a presence in the space and not just a static observer from a distance, “installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision.” Almost the same characteristics of this description can also be found in the definitions of environmental aesthetics to describe the aesthetic experience with the environment. Therefore, we can ask how environmental aesthetics can help us to further explore the aesthetic experience with art in/with the environment.

Despite its open character, environmental aesthetics has a center stated in its own name, the aesthetic approach to environment. Thus to Berleant, environment does not have the same meaning as nature, but rather, encompasses objects, places, and groups that go beyond the categories that we usually create when referring to ‘nature’, for instance urban configuration and design. As demonstrated by Berleant and Carlson, there is no agreement between scholars about one sovereign definition of the term in relation to aesthetics, but there are different approaches to the possible intersections between the notions of nature and environment, which makes it a fruitful field of study that remains open for further investigation.

The mutability of the natural environment was explored intensely by artists of landscape painting for instance, or impressionist painters such as Vincent Van Gogh (1853 – 1890) and Claude Monet (1840 – 1926), to mention some recognized names that employed all their knowledge and mastery in trying to understand, capture and represent the minutiae of the enchantment and instability of nature in a representative way. For these artists, beauty and contemplation were still the main features of their artworks and the sense of vision was at the forefront of other senses. By contrast, the work of contemporary artists like Andy Goldsworthy (fig. 6), goes beyond a romantic view of nature, creating “delicate battles with the environment”, in which he uses the physicality of his body to explore elements of the weather (wind, light, shadows, mist), and to collect and interfere in the elements of determined place (leaves, stones,

43 Ibid.
44 Berleant, Carlson, “Introduction (Environmental Aesthetics)”, 98.
mud), creating a collaboration between his instincts and earth’s own nature. Goldsworthy exemplifies an instance in which the distinction between environmental appreciation and appreciation of art is blurred. Berleant and Carlson help to reinforce this, defining environmental aesthetics as a platform that enables the connection between more traditional modes of perceptual appreciation and the acknowledgement of the important aesthetic value in other realms of our everyday life that otherwise would not be taken into account in the fine arts field.

To develop an approach that considers an enlarged sense of environment, together with the recognition of the whole range of our senses in the aesthetic experience, makes it inappropriate to use the term landscape to consider the natural setting or other spaces in which we inhabit in our everyday life. The traditional analysis of a landscape as a distanced position from the artistic object cannot be simply transposed to the appreciation of the work of artists such as Goldsworthy. Therefore, the use of the term environment is a choice that embraces a heightened sense of our relationship with the places and situations that we inhabit, which I further develop in the next sub-section.

1.2. Landscape, Environment and Inhotim

Landscape is the term frequently used to define the natural setting in Inhotim. However, the term can assume different meanings depending on the theoretical framework that sustains it. Proof of this is the great extension of recent studies in landscape from distinct perspectives in the book ‘The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies’, a reference for researchers, students and scholars in the field. As described by educator Brian Wattchow in his article ‘Landscape, sense of place: creative tension’, landscape’s etymological origins in the fifteenth-century Germanic term landschaft, or in the seventeenth-century Dutch landschap, have always embraced and projected the real human experience in a specific place, later being unfolded into interdisciplinary reverberations. To philosopher Isis Brook, its origins suggest a bond with the

46 Berleant, Environment and the Arts, 15.
land, as well as emphasizing the modes of life in a determined place as more than just a view, and therefore reinforcing a sense of interaction that is relevant to understand the term in contemporary landscape aesthetic studies.\textsuperscript{48} 

Despite the apparently open and contextual character of the term’s origins, today we seem to be more familiar with landscape as a painting genre and with some disciplines that have it as its main interest, architecture or design for instance. Here, we can understand it in its common sense, as described by Brook: “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.”\textsuperscript{49} However, a scholarly effort is being employed in order to expand this scope, proposing new connections without the interest of closing it in a stable definition. As a result, the European Landscape Convention recognizes that the understanding of the term is being expanded by academics in the field from a close sense of identification and preservation to consider aspects of our everyday life and ubiquitous places.\textsuperscript{50} 

In contemporary art, the work is almost never done until it becomes a part of the environment, growing and decaying with it, and therefore always expanding beyond the classical boundaries of traditional art (sculpture, painting, engraving, etc). Following this character of expansion, in some countries there has been a new wave of construction of great art museums as “architectural monuments”, positioning art in a distinguished place.\textsuperscript{51} The Inhotim Institute first opened its doors for the public in 2006 as a result of the growing interest of its founder, Bernardo Paz, to house his collection of large scale artworks (by Brazilian artists such as Cildo Meireles (1948- and Tunga (1952-2016)). In around 3.000 acres of land contiguous with the farm where Bernardo lived, Inhotim is described as a space to experience art together with the landscape, beyond the collective scope of average museums, as stated by its director and chief curator Allan Schwartzman.\textsuperscript{52} Therefore, the emphasis on the archetypal pleasing landscape is clear and constant, provided by the institute’s carefully planned gardens that surround its collection of contemporary art. With this in mind, our aesthetic judgment, defined as our critical consideration

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
and response in Inhotim, is constructed in the bridge between our personal impressions of the place and the qualities of the landscape presented to us. However, if we focus on the view, contemplation, and observation of the landscape, leaving behind other senses, we would miss its experience as a whole, as argued by Berleant.\(^\text{53}\) An experiential integration with the landscape is a push of the aesthetic experience, to expand its scope to a definition that allows reciprocity in a ‘participatory model of experience’, as he explains:

The environment is understood as a field of forces continuous with the organism, a field in which there is a reciprocal action of organism on environment and environment on organism, and in which there is no sharp demarcation between them. Such a pattern may be thought a participatory model of experience.\(^\text{54}\)

Together with Berleant, the acknowledgment of the landscape as a whole points to the use of environment as a term that contemplates an expanded aesthetic experience. Thus, in Inhotim, the environmental experience can move from the walk through the variety of paths, into gardens around artworks and galleries, paying attention to how all our senses respond, not only to the landscape, but also to the different aesthetic elements constituting the environment as a complete engaging experience. The specificity of Inhotim in congregating different natural and artistic elements that are part of our experience as interested visitors temporarily inhabiting that space points to a concept of aesthetic that is embodied in/with the environment in a meaningful relationship. Thus, in order to consider the contextual awareness required by environmental aesthetics, it is important to understand how Inhotim was thought up and constructed, and which notions of art and nature its practices are based on. This framework is also fundamental to understand the environmental context of the artworks of Olafur Eliasson and Dan Graham, since Inhotim was created taking the land into consideration, not only as an available space to build an art institution, but as a space for communication between artworks and location, an ‘interface’ to explore the encounter of art and environment.


To Schwartzman, the selection of artists and artworks, as well as the definition of their location in the institute, was a result of an innate procedure in which every institutional decision was grounded on the land. One of the priorities of this process was to provide a large spectrum of landscape (gardens, mountains, farms), creating different paths as scenarios to enrich the visitor experience in “narrative journeys.” This particular experience seems to have also been explored in some other artworks of its collection, such as the labyrinth installation *Vegetation Room Inhotim*, 2010 – 2012, by the Spanish artist Cristina Iglesias, or the glass dome *De Lâmina*, 2004 – 2009, by the American artist Mathew Barney. Moreover, Inhotim is located in a rural area of a small city named Brumadinho, in the state of Minas Gerais, which makes its remote location part of its aesthetic experience since the visitor has to devote a substantial amount of time to arrive there, distinguishing it from other art institutions in urban areas. Hence, the participation of the viewer is a clear concern for Inhotim as an environment, as seen in each one of the 23 single-artist pavilions or installation art and sculptures in open spaces (fig. 7). Consequently, it is the viewer’s aesthetic appreciation that guides its development “as a continuously evolving space”, in the words of its curator Jochen Volz.

However, if we want to approach the intersection of art and nature in an expanded sense, the term landscape no longer seems to hold the complexity of a new relation to nature because of its strong connection with the idea of being a certain distance from the object, with the passive observation of the world. According to Thornes, adopting the term ‘environment’ “implies the duality of nature and culture at a local level”, and therefore it is a notion that can be connected with interaction, with life, and by definition, belongs to living things. As argued by Berleant, in this new relationality the old duality between subject and object in art would then be replaced by the space between, as the focus of the aesthetic experience. As can be seen, Hepburn helped us to see the limitations of traditional aesthetic theory and its focus on the artistic object, leaving behind the environmental context. Accordingly, Berleant’s definitions of aesthetic engagement favor an experience that acknowledges a wide range of actions in everyday environments,

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55 Schwartzman, 19.
56 Ibid.
58 Thornes, 394.
expanding the traditional scope of art. This research intended to act in consonance with the approach proposed by these recent studies that point to the urgency and relevance of exploring the relation between contemporary art and environmental aesthetics, in a movement that goes beyond traditional aesthetic studies, and invites the natural environment to be part of the aesthetics debates in the study of the artworks. This framework indicates the importance of the space between art, its environment and the viewer, and forms a fertile theoretical background to the closer analysis of the Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson installations in Inhotim that are further explored in the next chapters.

61 Hinkes, 63.
Chapter 2
Dan Graham: In-between Art and Environment

2.1. Introduction

Having established a framework in which the environment is not only a subject for the artistic practice, but rather an active element that affects our aesthetic experience, allows us to develop an approach that considers an expanded view of the relationship between an artwork and its context. However, as developed in the previous chapter, from the perspective of environmental aesthetics, environment consists not only of the natural surroundings that are usually taken for granted, but also of the comprehension of how our sensory awareness changes according to its changes, and built spaces as installation art, for example. In this chapter, these assumptions form the basis in which Dan Graham’s installation *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* (*BTIC*) is analyzed in order to explore how it can help us consider the natural environment as part of the aesthetic experience. A better understanding of how Graham integrates the environment in his work, going beyond the traditional notion of the appreciation of nature, will also clarify the relevance of environmental aesthetics to further explore an expanded aesthetic experience with art and the environment. To this end, existent publications about the experience with the artwork are acknowledged as well as about the context in which it is inserted, that is, the Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art.

In an Inhotim institutional publication entitled ‘Transparencies and Silences’, Historian Coelho introduces the features of *BTIC* using a quote by Walter Benjamin, “glass is, in general, the enemy of secrets. It is also the enemy of possessions.” In fact, the semi-transparent and partially reflective inherent quality of glass panels is the dominant feature of Graham’s Pavilions, and to Coelho, its mirroring effect reflects the surroundings, inviting it to be part of the

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62 To make the reading more dynamic, from this point on the name of Graham installation *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*, is used in abbreviated form: “*BTIC*”.
The same happens with the viewer, who, after having his image reflected on it, is invited to be part of it together with the landscape. It is a relationality of no secrets in which all the environmental elements (natural or built) are in conversation through reflections, and despite the presence of walls, the mirrored glass makes the duality between subject and context multiply, as described by Coelho, “There are limits, walls, boundaries, but at the same time artwork, spectator, and landscape become part of a single movement, and the hierarchy of these elements is disrupted.” That is to say that the overlapping property of mirroring and transparency allows the viewer to see himself reflected in the pavilion together with the nature around it in a movement of constant exchange between the built and natural environment (fig. 8 and 9).

This introductory analysis raises some important aspects of BTIC that will be taken into consideration in this chapter. In analyzing Graham’s work, I intend to demonstrate how this two-way relation of the different elements of his work, in proposing an in-between the artist construct, the environment, and the viewer, can help us to consider the natural environment as part of the aesthetic experience. In order to examine this relationship from the perspective of environmental aesthetics, it is first necessary to examine the context in which it was created, that is, Graham’s artistic practice. From this framework, some concepts raised by the experience in BTIC and other Pavilions are analyzed to show how they contribute to establishing an expanded relationality with the environment in the aesthetic experience.

In order to do this, it is possible review Graham’s critical analysis of his own work from several publications in his name, followed by a selection made by other artists of this period. Graham’s writings about art are not only the result of his insertion in the artistic world, but also something intrinsic to his own practice as an artist. The majority of his work is followed by texts that demonstrate his motivations and analysis in relation to artistic movements and the frequent mention of aspects of Minimalist and Conceptual Art. The Minimalist movement was one of the first to introduce the mirrored surface as an object in order to emphasize awareness of

64 The use of the term ‘Pavilion’ in capital letter refers to the specificity of Graham’s work, to differentiate it from a general pavilion construction, as adopted also by Barcena and Weingarden, 2013.
65 Coelho, 110.
66 Some of Dan Graham’s publications that are a reference for this thesis are: Graham et al., Articles. (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1978); Graham, Dan, and Alexander Alberro. Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), and Simpson et al., eds., Dan Graham: Beyond, (Cambridge: MITPress, MA, 2009).
the viewer’s environment by negating traditional mirrored perspectives. However, in this research, while the history and effects of _BTIC_ are taken into consideration in the analysis, at the same time the focus is expanded to understanding installations also as a means of artistic working and investigating.

The blurring of physical boundaries and artistic categories was always a concern for Dan Graham. Since the 1960s, he has been exploring different media in his artistic practice, which makes him a perfect example for Hinkes notion of “fields of action”, as mentioned in the introduction.\(^{67}\) Despite the many labels related to his multifaceted work as a sculptor, photographer, essayist, performer, architect, curator, gallerist, teacher, and archivist, Graham has always sought the freedom to work with a look-of-non-art approach, making things as art but without resembling art. This mode of working represents an attempt to make art come closer to everyday experience.\(^{68}\) The necessity of working beyond categories, whether through his artistic practice, or through his personal posture, as well as his writing and research, is a key element that pervades all his work, and his own definition of art. All these characteristics help to establish environmental aesthetics as a consistent framework of analysis for _BTIC_, connecting both interests in expanding traditional artistic and aesthetic scopes.

As an architect, Graham has always had an interest in the environment as an expanded concept that goes beyond the effect of built spaces in people's lives, and of taking the surroundings for granted. Even his early artworks demonstrate his concern with the environment as an active element of the artistic experience. Graham was introduced to the visual arts by combining his interest in photography and writing, exploring the possible connections between words and image, acting in consonance with other conceptual artists of the same period, such as Sol LeWitt, Lawrence Weiner, and Robert Smithson.\(^{69}\) These artists exhibited in the John Daniels Gallery, an important avant-garde gallery in Manhattan, co-managed by Graham from 1964 to 1965, at the age of 21. The experience of conversations with other artists and the sharing of common interests in music and art theory were valuable for Graham, who started producing artworks in response to contradictions perceived by him in the relationship between the art

\(^{67}\) Hinkes, 62.


\(^{69}\) Ibid., x.
gallary and its artists. When the gallery closed due to bankruptcy, Graham started writing for art and music magazines. *Homes for America* (1966-67), one of Graham’s first forays into the artistic field, is a magazine publication that refers to his interest in photographing typical American houses in the suburbs of New York. Graham was interested in exploring the magazine as a supportive social and economic system, acting at the same time as an accessible and open space for the validation of art, and for the magazine to justify its own existence. Furthermore, in this project, Graham explored the social relationship of architecture and environment, criticizing the focus on economic development as the main motivation of mass production architectural projects. In exposing this process in a magazine, Graham is also exploring the system of art and public consumption, using its own hybridity as media to access art and the magazine as a writing genre. His only interest in this project was to appropriate unused land areas in the easiest way possible, disregarding nature as an active element, and therefore with no harmony or bond between the house and the land. Thus, *Homes for America* is a fitting example to comprehend how Graham’s own notion and concern with environment affect his work, in which he creates bridges between different artistic languages to explore the many layers of architectural, artistic and environmental issues.

Graham’s posture of creating new connections between traditional instances is also apparent in his writings, in which he is always proposing new links and comparisons about his artistic work, making it possible for the reader to create a dialogue between the characteristics explored in different artworks, media, and contexts. In the introduction of the book ‘Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art’, written by his friend, the Canadian artist Jeff Wall contextualizes Graham’s essays as occupying a borderland, a will to avoid specific categories and labels to describe his work, using his writing as a continuous effort to expand his artistic practice freely and beyond the need for affiliation to art institutions. The title

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74 Jeff Wall and Dan Graham worked together on the collaborative project the *Children’s Pavilion*, (1988–89), an unrealized project for a site in France.
of his text ‘Partially Reflective Mirror Writing’, is evidence of the intrinsic relation of Graham between writing and producing his work. The extension and dedication in writing about his own practice in dialogue with other artists, historical movements and aesthetic theories, makes his texts appear as fundamental pieces for the one interested in, not only his work, but also that of his contemporaries. Once again, it is possible to identify the multilayered character of Graham’s work and thinking. It is consistent with Graham’s own posture as an artist and his desire to blur categories’ boundaries, together with Berleant’s awareness of the multidimensional character of the human experience in the environment, that, in the next sub-section references of other Pavilions and artworks are used to help to expand our understanding about the specificity of *BTIC*.\(^75\)

2.2 *Bisected Triangle, Interior Curve* in Inhotim

To analyze how some of the aforementioned aspects of the multi-relationality of Graham’s work appear in *BTIC*, with the viewer and the environment, we need to understand the composition of *BTIC*. Additionally, we need to describe the ways in which it can be experienced, in a reciprocal relationship between these different instances, that are in constant movement of affecting, and being affected by the aesthetic experience in an intricate connection, as argued by Berleant.\(^76\)

As the name states, *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* comprises two basic shapes that dialogue with each other. From the exterior, the structure is shaped like a triangle, with a steel frame, and mirrored glass. The mirrored glass panels are transparent at some level, allowing light to pass through and penetrate the interior. A sliding glass door enables the viewer to enter. Inside the Pavilion, another curved mirrored structure is placed in between the viewer’s space and the triangle structure. The curved property of the reflective transparent mirror distorts the reflected image in different ways according to the angle of viewing. Once the viewer is inside, the vision of the surroundings is not the same as when outside, and is mediated by the distortions in the curved glass (fig. 10). The images of the landscape are now the reference of the viewer, who

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\(^76\) Ibid., 18.
cannot see the general structure in which he is in. The distorted reflection of the viewer and the landscape (and sometimes, of other people seeing the artwork) overlap, creating a singular visual moment that lasts according to the environmental changes that make the reflection possible (fig. 11). Consequently, *BTIC* is an interface for the encounter of aesthetic and environmental experience in Inhotim. In this Pavilion, the environmental and artistic aesthetic experience overlap, being both dependent on our human senses as a whole, with how we move and act with our body, according to Berleant.\textsuperscript{77} Additionally, in *BTIC*, our interpretation is directly connected to the way we interact with it, perceiving it not only visually, but also through sounds, smells, our skin and the cultural references that construct our views of the world.\textsuperscript{78}

As can be seen, in *BTIC*, the mirrored glass reflects the viewer’s image inside and outside the artwork together with the elements of the Inhotim landscape (fig. 12). This image is variable not only according to the location chosen by the viewer in *BTIC* three-dimensionality, but also in the interactions of other persons, and the natural environmental conditions of this precise moment, such as the sun, the clouds, the wind, the growing of the plants and the movement of the ducks on the lake. Thus, the notion of space is a construction based on the interaction of different elements of the aesthetic experience. To Berleant, it is in the junction of the mutable character of the environment and the incessant inquiring of the arts in the perception process that we can not only identify the volatility of our experience in the world but also discover an opportunity to exercise how to live as a constituent part of it.\textsuperscript{79}

As described by Architecture historian Beatriz Colomina, before exploring the environmental possibilities of the Pavilions, Graham investigated new spaces and temporalities with video and the already mentioned magazines in a reaction to the emphasis on the white cube gallery on Minimal art of the 1960s as a neutral frame for the artwork in a material relationship. In this process, the Pavilions arose from the search for ways to disrupt the standardized separation of viewer and work.\textsuperscript{80} In his text ‘Essay on Video, Architecture, and Television’, Graham keeps exploring the properties of these media in his own work.\textsuperscript{81} According to him,\textsuperscript{77,78,79,80,81}

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 19.
video “is a present-time medium”, that is, it allows the audience to see themselves seeing themselves.82 Following this line of thinking, in the same essay, Graham relates the video image and the mirror image, as instances that could rearrange some of the boundaries encountered in conventional architectural spaces. The mirroring effect would then dislocate the idea of the gallery as a neutral frame, to embrace the relationality of semi-transparent and reflexive glass structures. As he describes, “I wondered how you could deal with putting a quasi-Minimal object outside, and also wondered how these things could be entered and seen from both inside and outside.”83 Graham’s transposition from in-gallery video to the outdoor mirrored glass represents his constant effort to engage both environment and viewer in the artistic experience. The video brought to Graham’s work the possibility to transcend the idea of contemplation in the first step to a more engaging experience of the viewer with the environment, whose physical presence and awareness is incorporated in the aesthetic appreciation, as described by Berleant.84

In the 1970s, Graham continued articulating this two-way relationality in video, gallery installations, and models, until incorporating the exterior environment as an intrinsic part of the work in his first outdoor Pavilion, Two Adjacent Pavilions, built for “Documenta 7” in 1981, and was the materialization of a work that was previously developed as a model in 1978. Nowadays Two Adjacent Pavilions is part of the permanent collection of the Kröller-Müller Museum, situated in its sculpture garden, the Hoge Veluwe National Park in Otterlo in the Netherlands (fig. 17). In a significant movement, Graham was leaving the gallery to explore the landscape in order to incorporate it as a constant aspect of his work.85 In the light of this new relationality, the two-way mirror became a fundamental element of Graham’s Pavilions, as a new way of inquiring the double/mirrored relationality that he had always explored in his artistic work.86 The transparency and, at the same time, the reflective property of the glass both inside and outside, allowed him to explore a wide range of associations that have been developed in many variations of the

82 Graham, Essay on Video, Architecture, and Television, 52.
85 Colomina, 198.
Pavilions. Notwithstanding the use of the term landscape by Graham, his interest in incorporating the environment is clear when he does not consider the ‘outside world’ as static, or, to speak on his terms, not as a one-way element, but rather, it becomes part of the experience, and is relative to the viewer’s perception in a two-way relationality. Usually used in urban buildings to reduce energy consumption and allow the view from inside to outside, but not the other way around, two-way mirrors are often used in a one-way fashion, also making reference to the surveillance aspect of psychology laboratories and investigations of Bauhaus, an aspect that he had previously explored using indoor video installations. Nonetheless, with the Pavilions Graham was trying to reverse that relationality by focusing on its two-way character in an intersubjective way, that is, exploring in an interconnected approach its relation with the mutability of natural elements (the sunlight changes, for example) and the interaction with people being inside and outside, superimposing the views of each other and the material.

Since then, the fifty plus indoor and outdoor Pavilions that Dan Graham has built during his career are considered as interfaces for the encounter of artistic practice and architecture, functioning at the same time as sculpture and architectural constructions. Nevertheless, their importance for the aesthetic experience goes beyond categorizations and is located precisely in the possibility of instability, of never being the same, because the relation to the viewer and environment always exists. Colomina makes a poetic analogy between the meaning of the word pavilion, (coming from papillon, butterfly in French), and its forms, describing it as a flying sensation, or, “a pure image in flight, that is not fixed.” This analogy points to the movement of multi-relationality of the Pavilions, represented by their material properties and how they contribute to the aesthetic engagement, described by Berleant as a rejection to the dualist approach of the traditional aesthetic appreciation. To the author, engagement requires the

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87 Graham, *Mark Francis in conversation with Dan Graham*, 20; Bauhaus is a school of design founded in Germany by Walter Gropius in 1919, that still inspires artists, architects and designers nowadays. It was created as “a break with traditional ideas and old ways of life, and a new way of thinking in art, architecture, education and society”. Available in: https://www.bauhaus100.com/the-bauhaus/. Accessed on 19 May 2019.
90 Colomina, 191.
character of continuity, contextualism, and uncertainty in the artistic experience, all the elements that constitute the experience in Graham’s Pavilions.91

The outdoor set opened the possibility of exploring the Pavilions relation to the city, the urban environment, the suburbs, and at the same time the natural environment, in a conventional park setting, as we see in Inhotim. This multi-relational character encompasses different dimensions of the aesthetic experience: between urban and natural environments, the realms of art and the public, and the relations involved between the private experience and the “socialized experience of encountering yourself amongst others.”92 Therefore, the Pavilions expanded the scope of aesthetic relations beyond the psychological aspect of Graham’s Pavilion of “seeing your own gaze and other people gazing at you”, as a central feature that he has been exploring since his first works.93

BTIC is located near the entrance of Inhotim, alongside a large water pond and is surrounded by designed gardens and native flora (fig. 14 and 15), and in speaking of a hundred and forty hectares of park, its location can be considered privileged. Depending on the choice of the visitor between the different pathways suggested by the staff and identified by colors on the map (see fig. 7), BTIC can be one of the first or one of the last artistic experiences when visiting Inhotim. When inside Graham’s Pavilion, we are positioned in an in-between of being with others, with the artwork and with the environment. Notwithstanding, the Pavilions are still concrete structures with clear references from architecture and can remind us of corporate glass buildings mirroring the sky. This association came from concrete references of Graham in working with concepts that other architects neglect, but what differentiates his practice is exactly his artistic approach to architectural processes, understanding the building itself as a media, as argued by Architect Historian Colomina.94 However, despite the material resemblance to urban buildings, in BTIC the surroundings are reflected and distorted (fig. 16), creating a constant flux of blurring between reflections of nature and nature itself.95 If the aesthetic environment is “everyone’s medium”, as says Berleant, then it can be also considered Graham’s media.96 In

92 Hatton, 145.
93 Ibid.
94 Colomina, 203.
95 Hatton, 148, and 153.
creating the Pavilions, Graham converges the aspects of human living that have previously explored in his work and invites the environment to co-create the aesthetic experience and also be modulated according to our perceptions and values of the world. Art Historian Lauren Weingarden describes Bisected triangle, Interior curve as a space for the viewer to be absorbed by a constant state of play in which “the exterior and interior spectacles of nature and humanity are constantly multiplied, distorted, intermingled and transformed.”

In BTIC the viewers can see themselves against the reflection of the sky and the landscape. Therefore, in the perspective of environmental aesthetics, we can also see Graham’s work as a space of play with the environment as “nature experienced, nature lived”, since the whole range of human senses are used in the perception of the environment.

2.3. Conclusion: The Multilayered Environments of Dan Graham

It is possible to affirm that Bisected triangle, Interior curve is a space for an expanded aesthetic experience with the environment (and consequently with nature). This affirmation is based on the character of disruption of the formal and traditional relations between the artwork, the viewer and the environment in the context of Inhotim, through the creation of a kaleidoscopic relation of the viewer seeing himself in relation to nature in a singular relation amid artwork, the public and the space.

For Graham, the idea of building Pavilions in a park context is an inheritance of the Renaissance garden, in which it acquired a certain “Disney-like special effects” until it became more related with the modern utilitarianism of the present day. The character of entertainment effect is also mentioned by Graham when talking about BTIC: “Mirrored glass made it into a photo opportunity and the idea of an amusement park, a funhouse situation creating a kaleidoscope space.”

Art curator Bryan Barcena ascribes this effect to the location of BTIC,

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98 Berleant, The Aesthetics of Environment, 10.


100 Metz, 193.
that is, Inhotim as an entertainment space, wherein it presents a completely different context than the city surroundings, “transformed to represent an ideal natural environment”, and a “timeless environment.”

Inevitably visitors of Inhotim will identify themselves with this experience in a state of play. However, from the perspective of environmental aesthetics, the idea is not to put the artistic work into categories that could restrain its interpretation, but rather, to explore the artistic practice and the ways in which it considers the environment as an intrinsic element of the aesthetic appreciation.

The disruption of temporality is inevitable when entering an institution in which the landscape is so carefully cultivated, which creates a mismatch in relation to the social reality of the city of Brumadinho. Nevertheless, in its own specificity, Inhotim provides an environment that stimulates the perceptual experience of its public and artists, resulting in artworks that explore its multilayered dialogue between art and nature, in recurrent themes in its collection, such as the environment, the path and the time and place.

This posture of a constant association between human experience and the environment as something intrinsic to our life can also be seen in Graham’s article entitled ‘Two-Way Mirror Power’. Graham writes about Two Adjacent Pavilions, analyzing its connection with the sculpture park in which it is located as providing a way to reinforce and, at the same time, dissolve the indifference of the city: “an antidote to the alienating qualities of the city as well as a utopian metaphor for a more pleasurable city in the future.”

Graham supports his affirmation mentioning the 18th-century notion of the Arcadian ‘rustic hut’ that represented a return of man and architecture to nature, looking for a state of “own self-sufficiency.” As can be seen, the environment has a direct effect on the understanding of place in BTIC, and it cannot just be perceived as a background.

As considered in this chapter, a central element of Graham’s Pavilions is precisely the disruption of the relation between object/subject in art, in which the viewer participation becomes an essential part of the artwork. At the same time, the reflection of the viewer is always

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102 Volz, Unfolding an Institution, Discovering Inhotim, 30.
103 Graham, Two Way Mirror Power, 174.
104 Ibid., 174-175.
between the person and the Pavilion, also moving the viewer away from the object as the central focus of art. Furthermore, the concave, or, as stated in the name, the curved glass of BTIC together with the environmental aspects of the relation between artwork and its location, also contribute to disturbing a conventional relationality, with a multiple and anamorphic convex view of all the elements, as indicated by Graham.  

This is what happens with the present format of Graham’s Pavilions, creating a reflected image of its viewers together with the surroundings, as Graham describes, “the inside and outside views are both quasi-reflective and quasi-transparent, and they superimpose intersubjective image of inside and outside viewers’ bodies and gazes along with the landscape.” This two-way relationality is multiplied with the presence of the viewer in a way that the importance of the work goes beyond a binary relation between object and subject. To Berleant the dichotomization of the aesthetic appreciation only contributes to reinforcing a disinterested posture of the viewer, restricting his experience. The relationality offered by BTIC is contextual, that is, it enlarges the scope of the aesthetic experience beyond the experience with the art object as the center, and therefore acknowledging its environmental dimensions. With this analysis, we can understand the important role of the intrinsic and multiple relationships that Graham constructs between environmental issues as subject and object and his artistic practice. In BTIC the viewer’s active participation adds to the artist’s work, being both responsible for, and constituents of an expanded relationship with the environment. With BTIC and other Pavilions, Graham is blurring the distances between the aesthetic experience and the environment, surpassing the traditional notion of appreciation of nature.

In the next chapter, the analysis will continue from another part of Inhotim, the installation Viewing Machine, by Olafur Eliasson. The artist works with a similar form of materiality and concepts to Graham, but with a different approach and results. What both artists have in common, beyond being both architects and having artworks in Inhotim Institute, is a constant connection with nature and environment throughout their oeuvre. This correlation

106 Graham, Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube and Video Salon, 166.
makes their parallel study in this research a fortunate encounter to inquire about the role of environment in their work.
Chapter 3

Olafur Eliasson: A Kaleidoscopic Sense of Environment

3.1 Introduction

Like Dan Graham, the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson is also an artist that creates works that offer a space for the disruption or a rearrangement of our presumed perceptions of the world. Curator Henry Urbach points out to the connection between the artists, in which with the mirroring property Eliasson follows some assumptions initiated by Graham at the end of the 1970s, with the Pavilions as challenging spaces that change according to the light and its environmental configuration. In addition, both artist depart from architectural foundations but point to provocations that go beyond its scope. However, to Urbach, Eliasson goes one step further in developing big-scale projects and with a wider variety of visual effects. All things considered, in their own specific ways, both Graham and Eliasson offer to the viewer spaces to question our own position in determined space, challenging our accommodated senses in order to make us aware of our perceptual and social engagement with the environment. In this chapter, I further investigate, from the perspective of the theoretical framework of environmental aesthetics, the ways in which Eliasson integrates the environment in his work, and more specifically in Viewing Machine, going beyond the traditional notion of appreciation of nature. In order to do that, some publications of Eliasson and others (exhibition catalogues and interviews), are used to contextualize his practice. Furthermore, the article ‘Engaging Environments’ from Art Historian Anja Novak, is approached as an important reference for the study of Eliasson’s work as a study case in the light of environmental aesthetics.

The act of writing is also an intrinsic aspect of the artistic practice of Eliasson, in which he critically analyzes his artworks, which form part of a wide range of museum collections and public spaces around the world. The many publications, interviews, articles, and texts written by him and others demonstrate the solid development of his career as an architect and artist since

110 Ibid.
the mid-1990s. Having received a degree in Fine Arts in 1995, in the same year Eliasson founded his own studio in Berlin and, since then, has executed a great number of notable indoor and outdoor projects and exhibitions around the world. His school education also included an award-winning experience in breakdance, which demonstrates his early interest in how he could explore the space with the body. Later, in one of his first jobs as an assistant to the Canadian artist Christian Eckart, in New York, he became acquainted with a range of different conceptual fields including the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, which had a great influence on his approach. This experience had resonances in his early artworks that explored the dematerialization of the artistic object, and the study of natural elements of the environment in relation to human perception. One example of this approach is the artwork *The landscape series 1997* (fig. 13), in which Eliasson photographed thirty different landscapes under diverse climate conditions. With this artwork, he was investigating how human interaction in a determined scenario is connected with the perceptual possibilities of that place.

Since the first years of his artistic career, Eliasson has had a comprehension that his works can be considered “machines that create phenomena” and that the artist is a researcher working with different methods to produce spaces in which the viewer assumes a central position. In this chapter, *Viewing Machine* is analyzed as an installation that represents a synthesis to Eliasson’s approach, with its name pointing to one of the primary senses that the artist explores, the view, but, as will be further explored, also expanding it to consider an embodied experience of the viewer. According to art critic Daniel Birnbaum, this embodiment consists of becoming aware of our position as active beings that use all the senses of our body together with our subjectivity to construct our perceptual experience in the world. The subject of the aesthetic experience in *Viewing Machine* is always a movement between the embodied viewer and the mutability of his relation with the artwork and the environment.

113 Ibid, 9.
114 Ibid., 16.
115 Ibid., 17.
In order to expand the comprehension about how Eliasson approach the environment on his work, and to start drawing a brief panorama of his artistic practice, I would like to refer to Seeing Yourself Sensing (fig. 18 and 19), the title of an article and artwork by Eliasson. Made of transparent mirrors and transparent glass, he explores in a very interlaced way, the idea of self-reflection as “a two-sided human quality” in the act of seeing and the act of seeing oneself seeing. Similar to Graham, with the physicality of these works, Eliasson disrupts the fixed positions of subject and object in the artwork, destabilizing and moving their roles. In Eliasson’s works, the body has a central importance in this relationship, and it determines the overall aesthetic experience. The body also has a strong connection with nature, being part of it, and therefore his artworks are a medium to promote an encounter of the body with its origins, in which it becomes aware of its own position in the world. An example of Eliasson’s approach to nature is demonstrated at the beginning of the aforementioned article, in which he describes in detail how he perceives and imagines the landscape as a space, rather than as a static image, as a non-essentialist cultural construct:

Looking at nature, I find nothing… Only my own relationship to the spaces, or aspects of my relationship to them. We see nature with cultivated eyes. Again, there is no truthful nature, there is only your and my construct of such. Just by looking at nature, we cultivate it into an image. You could call that image a landscape.

Eliasson had always been interested in developing means for perceiving and comprehending the reciprocal relationship of the human with the living environment. This is done sometimes recreating natural phenomena such as sunlight, fog, waterfalls, wind, and so on, in order to explore our perception through a diverse range of artistic practices: photography, painting, sculpture, installations, interventions, and films. To Art Historian Anja Novak, the

118 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
relevance of this illusions of natural phenomena is precisely in the fact that they make us aware of our own role in perceiving them and thus we can engage in constructing them.121 However, he goes beyond the traditional notion of nature as an external landscape in which we simply look at what surrounds us, to consider it as a result of our human experience in/with the environment. For him “nature” as such does not exist and, at the same time supposes something ‘natural’, that is, presumed.122 To Eliasson what exists is a cultural relationship with the world, filtered through our minds and bodies. When this relationship is not established, we have the necessity to define it as something external, calling it nature.123 This approach pervades Eliasson’s oeuvre in general, which is characterized by a state of “attention to the changeability of our surroundings” and consequently, a deep awareness of our actions and effects in the world.124 Eliasson’s attitude is consonant with Berleant’s definitions of an environmental appreciation that acknowledge the human being as part of the environment in a relationship that involves physical engagement.125 Therefore, for both Eliasson and Berleant, the idea of duality between humans and their environment is baseless and can have feasible consequences for our life, as we can see with the reverberations in the climate crisis, for example.

The blurring of boundaries and the awareness of climate change is also present in the conception of the Studio Olafur Eliasson in Berlin, which can be seen as an interface between art and architecture, as an in-between artistic and architectural practice. It congregates about one hundred professionals, including architects, designers, specialized technicians, programmers, art historians, and cooks, and is a space to create, test and develop a large spectrum of projects with a common central concern of turning abstract concepts into tangible action/situations.126 Furthermore, social and environmental issues are constantly the subject of his work, which can be demonstrated by social initiatives such as the Little Sun project (2012), in which his studio

125 Berleant, Introduction: Art, Environment and the shaping of experience, 10.
created affordable light devices for communities without access to them; or one of his recent projects, *Ice Watch* (2014-2018), in which twelve ice blocks from floating icebergs that had melted and detached from an ice sheet in Greenland were transported to the courtyard of the Tate Modern Art Gallery in London, providing a tangible experience of facing the reality of melting arctic ice (fig. 20).\(^{127}\) The Studio Olafur Eliasson is a peculiar space for creation that articulates two *modus operandi* in the same place, “the projective impulse of architecture” and the artistic working in a will to “reveal what already exists.”\(^{128}\) It can be considered “a third space”, that is, a land for creation that works beyond categories, and that expands the very boundaries of what we call art and architecture, as described by curator of architecture and design Henry Urbach.\(^{129}\) As demonstrated by a solid career bridging both realms, Eliasson’s interest is not in nature itself, since it does not exist, as he says, neither in his installations, nor machines, but rather in the viewer as a perceiver in relation to his multifarious environment.\(^{130}\) It is precisely this focus of Eliasson’s work that facilitates a direct dialogue with environmental aesthetics, and more specifically with Berleant’s concept of incorporation of the environment, in which the encounter of the body in/with environment as a whole is considered as a more engaging experience of the aesthetic experience in/with the environment, than the ‘traditional’ experience that we commonly accredit to the arts.\(^{131}\) This expanded relation produced by *Viewing Machine* with the environment can also be revealed by its location in Inhotim, which is further analyzed in the next sub-section.

\(^{127}\) The Ice Watch was installed three times: “The first installation was in Copenhagen, at City Hall Square, from 26 to 29 October 2014, to mark the publication of the UN IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report on Climate Change. The second installation took place in Paris, at Place du Panthéon, from 3 to 13 December 2015, on the occasion of the UN Climate Conference COP21, and the third version of Ice Watch was on view from 11 December 2018 to 2 January 2019 at two locations in London – outside Bloomberg’s European headquarters and in front of Tate Modern”. Available in: https://olafureliasson.net. Accessed on: 20 April 2019.

\(^{128}\) Urbach, *Surface tensions*, 146.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.

\(^{130}\) Birnbaum, *Heliotrope*, 140.

3.2 Viewing Machine in Inhotim

The interactive installation Viewing Machine is located on the top of a hill in Inhotim, at a point where it is possible to see beyond the territory’s borders, into the rural area of the city of Brumadinho, with its mountains and dense tropical vegetation in dark green, creating a contrast with the blue sky (fig. 21). The interactive installation is made of stainless-steel mirrors, and the best way to describe it is as a huge kaleidoscope installed such that it can be spun 360 degrees by a person, in any direction (fig. 22). The kaleidoscope effect refers only to its properties of infinite mirroring that changes according to the viewers' movement. Its shape can be related to the idea of a large telescope, in which the viewer has the possibility to point it freely at something of interest, creating his own horizon view. The person can also take photos of his own image reflected in the kaleidoscope if standing very close to one of its openings (fig. 23). The installation functions as a tool that alters our vision of the world, inviting us to become aware of our actions and senses in the environment during the process.132

Invented in 1816 by the Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster, etymologically, the name ‘kaleidoscope” comes from the Greek words kalos (beautiful), eidos (form) and scopos (watcher), which Eliasson seems to have incorporated into the artwork title reinforcing the idea that the machine requires an interested action of the viewer in order to work.133 The natural light is reflected in the six mirrors that form a hexagonal tube, and through superimposed reflections, multiple images are formed.134 The view chosen by the viewer and reflected in Viewing Machine is multiplied, fragmented, composed and decomposed while the viewer slowly moves it (due to its size and weight), to make the transformation process constant. If it is pointed towards the Brumadinho landscape described above, the multiple mirrors that create the kaleidoscopic effect, where the view of the mountains occupy the place of the sky, which in turn becomes interwoven with the land. And here is the irony and also the force of its title, according to Eliasson: “This ironic play on words and expectations makes the impact of unsuspected fragmentation all the more extraordinary – if not shocking.”135 Thus for Eliasson, Viewing Machine is not an

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132 Eliasson, Take your time: A conversation, 53.
133 Eliasson, Surface tensions, 147.
134 This description of Viewing Machine is based on the author’s own experience with it and the description of the artwork available in Inhotim website.
instrument to reinforce, or maybe to contemplate the landscape as it is. Instead, it breaks with our linear organization of the world, establishing new ways of looking at what we take for granted, and where the character of multiplicity in life in new forms emerges before our eyes. To Berleant, these multiple character of the aesthetic experience in art must be taken into consideration, acknowledging an expanded relationality that goes beyond the duality of the art object and the viewer as “self-contained” elements. The environmental aesthetic experience would then be a state of no fragmentation between the different dimensions of the encounter with the artwork and its context, in a movement of constant fusion, the same as the unstable images formed by Eliasson’s Viewing Machine.

The kaleidoscopic effect encountered in Viewing Machine has been intensely explored in different formats in Eliasson’s work and provides movements of rupture and reconstruction of our views about the environment. From inside gallery installations and devices, to big architectural projects, such as the facades of Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre in Reykjavik, Iceland (fig. 24, 25 and 26), along with other architects, Eliasson explored the use of the quasi-brick in architecture (a possibility that he had previously explored with paint in artistic installations and site-specific artworks). Berleant defines architecture as a field of the arts that is intricate with social and environmental configurations of the world, in which a wide range of different features (location, history, culture) are connected to create the aesthetic aspect of a space. In-line with this assumption, the materiality of the quasi-brick gives an aspect of transience to the building that is never the same, and whose appearance is always dependent on the convergence of the physical space and the natural environmental conditions, such as how the light is reflected by the quasi-bricks at different times of the day. This insistence in exploring the same surface property in different formats and structures, once again demonstrates Eliasson’s concern about how our perceptual senses operate in processing and understanding the environment as a constant cultural construction. Furthermore, this awareness is intrinsic to our relation with the environment, establishing a solid space for the aesthetic appreciation of art and

137 “Originally developed by geometer and mathematician Einar Thorsteinn in the nineteen-eighnties, following fifteen years of research into the topic, the quasi brick is a twelve-sided polyhedron consisting of rhomboidal and hexagonal faces, and exhibiting fivefold symmetry.” In Köper, Unspoken spaces, 368.
139 Eliasson, Take your time: A conversation, 149.
the environment at the same level. This space can be described as opening the possibility for a mutual relationship being produced as a subject by the artwork and, at the same time, to produce it with our perceptual participation.\textsuperscript{140} This active role of the viewer and deep awareness of the environment have close resemblances to Berleant’s participatory model of experience, which considers “the constellational relationship between person and environment.”\textsuperscript{141} In other words, it is a relationship of double track force. The environment is no longer a passive object to contemplate and cannot be defined only by a subjective perspective of the viewer, but is precisely in the intersection of both, expanding the aesthetic experience in multiple directions.\textsuperscript{142}

\textit{Viewing Machine} says a lot about Eliasson’s oeuvre as an artist that makes his artwork have in mind the experience of the viewer, and therefore the viewer is the main part of the artwork.\textsuperscript{143} To Berleant, this awareness is also a demand for an engaged experience of appreciation, that can never be totally passive, but rather requires our interested attention.\textsuperscript{144} In analyzing the artistic practice of Eliasson as an instance of environmental aesthetics, Novak points to his conceptual similarity to Arnold Berleant in the exchange between person and environment, in which both refer to the notion of engagement to describe an “attention to time, movement and changeability”, in the words of Eliasson.\textsuperscript{145} For both Eliasson and Berleant, this state of constant movement is directly connected with the idea that our experience in the world is always a co-cultural construction in/with the environment, in which we affect and are affected by the spatiality of the place in which we occupy. These elements are present in \textit{Viewing Machine}, which in turn, can be considered as a tool that allows us to become aware of our role in this construction, and at the same time points to the different layers of our understanding of nature. Eliasson is fundamentally interested in the engagement as an in-between person and environment, in which a “subliminal border” merges our representational and “realistic”

\textsuperscript{140} Eliasson, \textit{Take your time: A conversation}, 138.
\textsuperscript{141} Berleant, \textit{Aesthetics and Environment}, 8.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Berleant, \textit{Ideas for a Social Aesthetic}, 26.
experience with the world. In *Viewing Machine*, these liminal operations that are enacted in between the work and the environment can be found when the viewer has the possibility to see the actual image of the landscape, at the same time that he sees this image deconstructed and multi reflected inside the kaleidoscope.

3.3 Conclusion: Engaging with Environment

Eliasson’s work is developed with the aim of reinforcing the position of art as an important agent in cultivating a more conscious relation with the world, understanding the political, social and aesthetic repercussions of our acts beyond the artistic field. There is another point of intersection between the aesthetic experience in *Viewing Machine* and in the environmental appreciation, since also for Berleant there is no dominant feature that is solely responsible for our aesthetic appreciation. Instead, multiple factors are combined to establish an enlarged experience, not only with the artwork, but with its whole context as a cultural construct, including the inherently social aspect of the aesthetic experience. Therefore, both instances can be considered a social process that goes beyond solely personal and subjective experience. To Berleant, this social character approaches an aesthetics of the environment due to its contextual relationality that recognizes the different factors as constituents of the aesthetic experience. To that end, Eliasson is interested in exploring the aesthetic experience with all the senses in relation to the viewer as an active participant of the artwork in a specific location. The physicality of both the viewer and the environmental characteristics and mutability are responsible for how we perceive the artwork, and consequently the world, in a process that seems to be given, but that in fact is a process that is constructed. Eliasson acknowledges that the kaleidoscopic effect of *Viewing Machine* allows us, through its playful effect, to rearrange and reconstruct the ways in which we see the world, exercising new forms of perception with different perspectives, in an

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active movement of affecting our reality. The wide range of ideas about our relation with the environment as a cultural construct is constantly fostered by Eliasson’s wish to make it transparent; that is, to reinforce our freedom to be aware of our relationship with the world. Not only in this, but in all the other viewing machines created by Eliasson, the kaleidoscopic effect makes the viewer recognize the mutability of what he sees, allowing through actions, our engagement with the construction of different perspectives and taking responsibility for our choices.

Berleant calls aesthetics of engagement the contextual encounter of nature and art in the aesthetic experience. It is an approach of non-dualism that considers the uncertainty and mutability of the instances involved in the act of perception. As developed in this chapter, Viewing Machine highlights an expanded sense of contemplating the environment as an active piece in the aesthetic experience in which “the difference between the work of art, its supporting medium, and its environment are obliterated in the act of perception.” To Berleant, environment can acquire different meanings but when treated in an expanded sense, must acknowledge the characteristics of the context that comprehend the viewer as a vital contributor to the aesthetic experience. This notion dialogues with Eliasson’s focus on the viewer’s role in producing the environment, developing a reciprocal relationship with the artwork and its surroundings. Given these points, it is possible to affirm that both Eliasson and Berleant recognize an expanded experience of the viewer’s body and all its senses in/with the environment as the core of the aesthetic experience, outpacing the traditional contemplative experience of art. In this expanded relationality, the passive observation of art and of the landscape give place to an experience that allows a conversation between the materiality of Eliasson’s artwork and how our senses respond to it, making the viewer take full responsibility in this process of our engagement in how we perceive the world. The artwork is therefore always

155 Berleant, Art, Environment and the Shaping of experience, 14.
156 Novak, 36.
relative to the relationship established by the viewer and the surrounding environment. The environment would then be, together with the artwork, the medium as “the art of human living”, expanding the boundaries of the aesthetic experience and finally reaching the common domains of everyday life. Despite both artworks being located in the same institution, this movement between art and environment assumed different forms and extension in both Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine* and Graham’s *BTIC*. Nevertheless, the main point of convergence of both artworks relies on the presence of similar elements that reinforce the intrinsic relevance of an expanded aesthetic experience between the viewer, the environment and the artwork.

158 Ibid., 13.
Conclusion:
An Environmental Dialogue Between Art and Life

My aim to introduce a dialogue between Graham’s and Eliasson’s artworks was motivated by the will to understand how the interface between art and nature in their installations in Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art and Botanical Gardens can help us further explore the aesthetic experience in/with the environment, beyond traditional aesthetics, and having environmental aesthetics as the main perspective and theoretical background. Therefore, the analysis of Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*, and Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine* was possible due to the artist’s historic interest in embracing the environment as an intrinsic element of their artistic processes. Furthermore, both artworks occupy the same location context, providing significant elements to trace a common ground for the analyses. In this sense, the investigative movement of this research made visible how the cited artworks enable a different relationality in/with the environment enlarging the scope of the aesthetic experience beyond what was traditionally ascribed to the arts.

During the analysis, the specificity of how Graham and Eliasson define the relation in/with the environment emerged, together with resemblances and differences between the artist’s approach, and in this conclusion, they are resumed emphasizing its relation with Berleant concepts that point to expanded forms of relationality with the environment. Furthermore, as an enlarged relation with the environment also acknowledges the contextual features of the location of the artworks, some important facts about Inhotim and the city of Brumadinho are intrinsically connected with the experience with the artworks, thus inviting the viewer to consider its reality. Graham and Eliasson installations in Inhotim Institute represent a space that goes beyond traditional boundaries by overlapping the layers of art and aesthetic appreciation of nature that were considered apart not only of the artistic experience but of the human experience in the world. *BTIC* and *Viewing Machine* have the viewer experience in/with the environment as the subject of appreciation in constant relation with one another.

As demonstrated in ‘Chapter 1’, the framework of environmental aesthetics contributes to establish an expanded perception about the aesthetic experience in/with the environment, considering the environment itself as a broader notion, and widen the scope of analysis beyond
the assumptions of the traditional aesthetic theory. Moreover, this constant movement between
the varied character of the environment, that is always mutable, and the “ceaseless searching of
the arts in the realms of perception”, as described by Berleant, presents us some tools to develop
a broader understanding of the human relation before the world as a whole. As emphasized by
Berleant, to embrace the mutability of the relation between the artwork and the environment is to
disclose the full engagement with the aesthetic experience. Therefore, this approach goes
against that new form of Kantian idealism (noted by Graham in the 1978s) in which the
subjectivity of the viewer is solely the center of the aesthetic experience. Part of the definition
of environment in both artworks cannot be detached from their connection with Inhotim as a
space constructed specifically to exhibit contemporary art. Inhotim has already been
characterized as a “utopic, hermetic and timeless” environment for the appreciation of art.
Regardless, even this idyllic configuration must be acknowledged in its specificity, with the
awareness of its history and dialogue with the artist's works.

As demonstrated in chapter 2, in Graham’s two-way relationality of the transparency and
reflectivity of his Pavilion changes constantly according to the natural light, disrupting the binary
of inside/outside, object/subject in art. Moreover, these elements reinforce the active position of
the viewer, that sees his own image reflected together in/with the environment and other people.
Therefore, in BTIC we can encounter a contextual relationship, that is, an enlarged aesthetic
experience that perceives not anymore the art object as the center of a disinterested participation
as stated by Berleant, but instead acknowledges the environmental dimension of an aesthetic
perception that is in constant movement between the different elements that are a constituent part
of it.

As developed in chapter 3, Eliasson uses mirrors to explore the kaleidoscope effect as a
provocation to our senses, multiplying and fragmenting what we take for granted, making us
aware of our own embodiment during the process. The movement of constant exchange between
the environment and the viewer is a common point of interest for Eliasson and Berleant that
believe in a more engaged relation of with our environment as an active process that

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160 Ibid., 18.
161 Bishop, 130.
162 Weingarden, 10.
encompasses all our senses in the aesthetic experience. *Viewing Machine* invites us to take this step in constructing a different form of experiencing our own existence in the world, acknowledging nature, as a construct and making us aware of the context in which it is inserted. Furthermore, this perceptual experience enables the viewer to become active and aware of how he affects and is affected by his choices in inhabiting the world.

From the architectural model as a way to give a tangible experience of an idea and space to the construction in the site, both Graham and Eliasson have the mirrored image as a common ground. Being in the multiplying character of *Viewing Machine*, or in the layering effect provided by the two-way mirrored glass of *BTIC*, both artworks go beyond the idea of a simple object to be seen, but rather, they are the act of seeing in itself, that is, they are spaces for the viewer to recognize his own act of perceiving the world.\(^{164}\) In some way, in making us aware of our own position as viewers inside Inhotim, the artists are also making us look beyond. As discussed in chapter 3, Eliasson *Viewing Machine* with its shape of a big telescope is more directly making us an invitation to look beyond the institute walls, wondering about the history of that land. Bernardo Paz, the founder of the institute, invited these artists intentionally, offering them his lands, willing to create a space that is not just a place but “a state of mind.”\(^{165}\) Nevertheless, this encounter longs for connection with the environment, that is not, in any case, just a landscape, because of its history and recent sad events, that are still very alive in the people of Brumadinho. Recently, the city had suffered profoundly with two huge environmental disasters caused by the irresponsibility of the same iron mining company, Vale. The first, in 2015 a dam disaster destroyed the small city of Mariana, located 149 kilometers from Brumadinho. Then, just four years later, in January of 2019, a dam located 9 kilometers east of the city, collapsed releasing 11.7 million cubic meters of toxic mud, causing catastrophic destruction in the environment and leaving 233 people dead and 27 still missing.\(^{166}\) To Berleant, the environmental aesthetic experience is not always pleasurable, but they can have a negative form, causing damages on us.\(^{167}\) Inhotim is located 18 kilometers far from where the tragedy occurred, but the institution was directly affected not only due to personal connections between employees

\(^{164}\) Colomina, 203.


\(^{167}\) Berleant, Art, Environment and the shaping of experience, 13.
family and recent public being between the victims but also by the fear of the future public, that connected the image of the destruction in the surroundings of the small city with the access to the institute. The work of the institution for months after the tragedy was focused on helping with the general support of the city and, later, in informing constantly its public on social media about the safety in visiting Inhotim. Berleant refers to the inherent sociability of the aesthetic experience, even in the case of an apparently disinterested appreciation, that sooner or later would drive to the social dimension. However, in taking into consideration the contextual character, its social importance becomes noticeable. The effect of the tragedy in Inhotim is a (sad) example of the social reverberations of a negative environmental aesthetic experience.

Graham and Eliasson are both artists and architects, and, as has been noted, their oeuvre is constantly bridging these realms, without the concern of establishing boundaries, but rather, their artworks show their will in blurring them. Their experience with creating different approaches to spaces and how they are occupied by people is the first step to develop a broadened sense of environment, that is not anymore, just a matter of passive contemplation. The architectural entail of BTIC and Viewing Machine allow them to get involved in a dance between some resemblances with sculpture and its physical structure, but they go beyond, incorporating the surrounding space into its own system, creating an extended space that comprehends the contextual area and pointing to beyond the limits of Inhotim. To Berleant, this is an opportunity offered by artists that create environments, inviting us to inhabit their works temporarily, and providing the tools for the viewer to expand his ideas about both, art and the environment itself, being an active participant that can trigger the environment while moves through it.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that BTIC and Viewing Machine are two artworks that provide us the tools for understanding that the appreciation of art and the environment, regardless of historical definitions, are “twin tracks” that can occur alongside, interfere with each other and occasionally mingle into a sole aesthetic course, as described by Berleant. As shown in the previous chapters, environmental aesthetics provides a conceptual platform from which we can develop a better understanding of the possible connections and tensions between artistic and environmental experiences. Such a possibility can be fruitful to

168 Berleant, Ideas for a social aesthetic, 25.
169 Ibid.
170 Berleant, Art, Environment and the shaping of experience, 19.
open a state of reciprocity between art and the environment to be sensed with engagement and studied as fundamental aspects of our experience in the contemporary world, as suggested by Berleant.  

In art and in nature our senses are used to create a relationship with environments and in building our perception. *BTIC* and *Viewing Machine* can be seen as spaces to experience the many layers of the different dimensions that create our existence in the world. If we consider nature as a cultural construct, like Graham and Eliasson do when perceiving natural environments in relation to art, it is possible to say that we are seeing ourselves seeing, becoming aware of our own presence and, at the same time, expanding the aesthetic experience beyond the traditional boundaries of the art object, the subjectivity of the viewer or the ideals of beauty. In both works we encounter a multilayered experience, that is never closed or limited by the artworks. Instead, we are invited to enter a space of availability in which our senses and thoughts are always in movement between our cultural beliefs, the environmental conditions that affect us and the artwork. In engaging and incorporating the environment in the aesthetic experience, Dan Graham and Olafur Eliasson offer us ways of disrupting our accustomed perception in a movement that overlaps the different domains of the human journey on earth, enlarging our scope of experiencing the world, and bringing art closer to the everyday life. Furthermore, as argued by Berleant, the aesthetic experience of value something (or someone), recognizing its qualities, guides us in the path of respect, and in times of climate change, respect for the earth is the first step in a tough but utterly necessary walk, in direction to a more aware form of inhabiting the world.

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172 Ibid., 18.
Further Research

Some references for further research are indicated below in order to expand the understanding of important concepts approached in this thesis.

Aesthetics, Phenomenology and Embodiment:


Installation Art:


Illustrations

Fig. 1. Aerial view of Inhotim Institute of Contemporary Art, Brumadinho, Minas Gerais - Brazil.

Fig. 2. Dan Graham, *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*, 2002, mirror glass and stainless-steel, 220 x 713 x 504 cm (Brumadinho - Brazil, Inhotim Institute).
Fig. 3. Olafur Eliasson, *Viewing Machine*, 2001, stainless-steel and metal, 190x530cm (Brumadinho - Brazil, Inhotim Institute).

Fig. 4. Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine* in Inhotim.
Fig. 5. Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve* in Inhotim.
Fig. 6. Andy Goldsworthy, *Handstand in cave entrance - Abersoch, Wales*, 1978. Black and white negative film. Film: Ilford FP4; AGA location: 78/7-20A; No. of images: 1/8; Archival Disk: 1978_011.

Fig. 7. Inhotim visitor’s map (Brumadinho - Brazil, Inhotim Institute).
Fig. 8. Author inside Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve.*

Fig. 9. Author inside Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve.*
Fig. 10. View from the inside of Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*.

Fig. 11. Author outside Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*. 
Fig. 12. Inhotim’s visitors viewing Dan Graham’s Bisected triangle, Interior curve.

Fig. 14. Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve location in* detail of Inhotim visitor’s map.

Fig. 15. Olafur Eliasson, *Viewing Machine*, surrounded by native and cultivated flora, in Inhotim.
Fig. 16 Distorted reflection in Dan Graham’s *Bisected triangle, Interior curve*, in Inhotim.


Fig. 21. Kaleidoscopic effect of Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine* in Inhotim.
Fig. 22. Author interacting with Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine*, in Inhotim.

Fig. 23. Author interacting with Olafur Eliasson’s *Viewing Machine*, in Inhotim.
Fig. 24. Façade for Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, 2005-2011. Reykjavik, 2013.

Fig. 25. Façade for Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, 2005-2011. Reykjavik, 2013.
Credits Illustrations

Fig. 2. Author’s photo.
Fig. 3. Downloaded 10 February 2019. https://cdn.cnn.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/161115160719-07-inhotim-minas-gerais-brazil.jpg
Fig. 4. Downloaded 10 February 2019. http://www.mineirosnaestrada.com.br/como-localizar-obras-inhotim/
Fig. 5. Author’s photo.
Fig. 6. Downloaded 13 March 2019. https://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/image/?id=ag_05392
Fig. 7. Downloaded 26 January 2019. https://www.inhotim.org.br/en/visit/map-of-the-park/
Fig. 8. Author’s photo.
Fig. 9. Author’s photo.
Fig. 10. Author’s photo.
Fig. 11. Author’s photo.
Fig. 12. Downloaded 13 May 2019.
http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-pqs7hDAkYE8/TiOGQbeujtI/AAAAAAAAGLQ/jCppja1IDTw/s1600/DSC02215.JPG
Fig. 13. Downloaded 13 May 2019. https://krollermuller.nl/en/dan-graham-two-adjacent-pavilions
Fig. 15. Downloaded 24 May 2019.
https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK101189/viewing-machine
Fig. 16. Author’s photo.
Fig. 17. Downloaded 24 May 2019. https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK101673/the-landscape-series
Fig. 18, and 19. Downloaded 24 May 2019.
https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK101202/seeing-yourself-sensing
Fig. 20. Downloaded 24 May 2019.  https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK109190/ice-watch

Fig. 21. Downloaded 24 May 2019.
https://olafureliasson.net/archive/artwork/WEK101189/viewing-machine

Fig. 22. Author’s photo.

Fig. 23. Author’s photo.

Fig. 24, 25 and 26. Downloaded 24 May 2019.


______. “Pavilion/Sculpture for Argonne”. In *Two-way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art*, Edited by Graham, Dan, and Alexander Alberro, 163-164. Cambridge, MA [etc.]: MIT Press, 1999.


