

MARTA FERNANDES

*The following is a chapter from Ms. Fernandes' Master's thesis at the University of Oporto - Fine Arts College - Design Department - Multimedia Arts, Oporto, Portugal. 2004.*

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## THE ART OF MORGAN O'HARA

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"My art is both my awareness of time and the activities I pursue in order to increase that awareness"<sup>1</sup>

Morgan O'Hara was born on California (USA), in 1941. Between 7 and 13 years old, she lived on a post-war international community in Japan. In 1954, she came back to the US, but this displacement allowed her to establish a very close relation between east and west, on the plane of her way of life. This view of both cultures is perceived in the manner of how they diverge in life, on a day-to-day base, and in the way that that is transported to art.

Studied on the California State University, in Los Angeles, where she got the degree of Master of Arts, in 1970. The international nature of her work is something intrinsic, natural and organic for someone who lives between New York (USA) and Corneliano (Italy), and expresses in her work a temporal and geographic fluidity.

With the nature of her work comes from the necessity to communicate on a global way, creating a "non verbal language"<sup>2</sup>, and having as her object of study, life and the signs of life, being the "movement the most immediate of all".<sup>3</sup>

Movement, something so inherent to the human being (visible representation of action) isn't, usually, analysed in mundane terms. The interpretation of movement and body has been the object of study of dance, but circumscribed to an artistic performance, a trained choreography in a closed circuit. Actually, it was digital technology that allowed Merce Cunningham<sup>4</sup> to capture movement and a register, combined with image and choreography, crossed in real time, which is the case of *Biped*, 1999 (fig. 20).

On the analyses and register of movement, Morgan O'Hara (fig. 21) proposes, in a certain way, by means of capturing action, the study of daily life, that defines the people who are registered, in the most diverse functions and professions. The translation to image becomes visible, by similarity to mechanisms of drawing made in real time and real life. They make the register of movement of the hands (fig. 22), or the paths of people

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<sup>1</sup> O'HARA, Morgan. *Rencontre avec Morgan O'Hara*. Catálogo de Le Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Palais de Rumine. Lausanne, Switzerland. 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Comentário retirado de entrevista a Morgan O'Hara, em Corneliano, Itália, entre os dias 6 e 7 de Setembro de 2005.

<sup>3</sup> O'HARA, Morgan. *Live Transmission: attention and drawing as time-based performance*, in <http://www.morganohara.com>, acessado a 30 de Agosto de 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Ref. De Merce Cunningham

