

Visual Arts research in academic journals

Alexandre Sá Barretto da Paixão^I, Mario Grisolli^{II}, Rayssa Veríssimo Correa^{III} and Rudolf Kurz^{IV}

Abstract: This article seeks to analyze, briefly, part of the production of Visual Arts academic journals in Brazil. Given the breadth of the theme, it was decided, at this first moment, to establish a small overview of A1 journals in the area, in order to establish relationships between the productions and their evaluation processes, as well as their connections with the economic, cultural and geographical structures and their respective institutional support. A quantitative and qualitative methodology allied to bibliographical research was used.

Keywords: *Academic journals. Visual Arts. Qualis. Indexers.*

I Artist-researcher, curator, art critic and psychoanalyst. Post-doctoral fellow in History at PPGH- UFF. Pro Scientist/ UERJ with the project The Visual Arts academic journals. Current director of the Institute of Arts and professor of PPGARTES/ UERJ. Member of the Brazilian Association of Art Critics. Member of ANPAP - Artistic Poetics Committee. Member of the National Association of History (ANPUH). Professor of the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - Rua São Francisco Xavier, 524 - Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 20550-013. E-mail: alexandresabarretto@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7846-5145>. Lattes iD: lattes.cnpq.br/0137944963846547. Niterói, RJ, Brazil.

II Artist, photographer and researcher. Undergraduate in Visual Arts at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Scholarship researcher of scientific initiation by CNPQ in the project The research in Visual Arts in academic journals, under the guidance of Alexandre Sá. Executive editor of the magazine Concinnitas, from the Institute of Arts at UERJ. Member of the research group A Arte Contemporânea e o Estádio do Espelho (The Contemporary Art and the Mirror Stadium), certified by CNPQ. Student at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - Rua São Francisco Xavier, 524 - Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 20550-013. E-mail: mariogrisolli@gmail.com ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4154-2848> Lattes iD: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6212338728777030> Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

III Undergraduate in Visual Arts at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), collaborator of the magazine Concinnitas and scholarship holder of the extension project A crítica, coordinated by Alexandre Sá, who guides her in the scientific initiation project A pesquisa em Artes Visuais nas revistas acadêmicas (Visual Arts research in academic journals), of which she is a volunteer researcher. Student at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - Rua São Francisco Xavier, 524 - Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 20550-013. E-mail: rayssaverissimocorrea@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8148-0840>. Lattes iD: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4242348471753455>. São Pedro da Aldeia, RJ, Brazil.

IV Visual artist, researcher and curator. Graduating in Visual Arts at UERJ and graduated in Economics from the same institution. He is part of the editorial team of Concinnitas magazine. Integrates the research group «Visual Arts research in academic journals» and the extension project «A Crítica», both coordinated by Alexandre Sá, the latter also coordinated by Renata Gesomino. Student at the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro - Rua São Francisco Xavier, 524 - Maracanã, Rio de Janeiro - RJ, 20550-013. E-mail: kurzjr@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3235-4933>. Lattes iD: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6717603488916587>. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

This article is the first movement of a research project that brings together scholarship students¹ of scientific initiation, complementary internship and extension about the academic journals of Visual Arts and their possible relations with technology, trying to problematize their reception within the virtual universe, through the majority use of the OJS platform, as well as the challenges that arise in the use of images, videos and other visual propositions, fundamental to the area, not entirely contemplated by a little extended process of scientific construction. However, if initially the concern with the visual practice in academic journals was the structuring element of this project, it is essential to explain that it was understood the urgent need for a more accurate investigation of such publications in the country, through an initial mapping in order to understand qualitatively what the particularities of these vehicles. It is then possible to state that, although the initial concern was specifically technological, it was necessary to go back a little in our objectives so that we could analyse in a more vertical manner part of the editorial process that erects them and in which way other elements, not strictly academic, may come to be definers of a considerable quality, capable of being proven, according to government metrics, through the Qualis Periodicals.

Thus, the objective of this article is the structuring of a current micro-panorama of the Brazilian research scenario in Arts, through the optics of part of its journals, based on the evaluation criteria of CAPES, being aware of the risk of such a mapping since these same markers may soon be modified.² In any case, it is important to explain that originally the Qualis Periodicals aimed to evaluate part of the scientific production of the existing Post-Graduation Programs, but throughout its process, the same served for personal, professional evaluations and in some cases, as a determining condition for teaching, concession of titles and research scholarships and for the maintenance of scholarships for master's and doctoral students. In the previous periods, available at the Sucupira Platform, the journals evaluated are classified as A1, A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and C. In the A1 stratum are the best qualified journals, according to an impact factor quantified through citations.

1 Mario Grisolli (scientific initiation scholarship holder - CNPq/UERJ), Rayssa Veríssimo (extension scholarship holder - UERJ) and Rudolf Kurz (complementary internship scholarship holder - UERJ)

2 In 2019, the Mid-Term Seminar of the 2017-2020 quadrennium took place, organised by CAPES, where new references for the Qualis were tested.

As research methodology, it was sought, firstly, to inventory the publications of excellence in the Arts area, highlighted as A1 in the Sucupira Platform³ in the most recent period available, the quadrennium 2013 - 2016. Our study notes the nationality, regional location and disciplines of concentration of the listed journals, subdivided into themes named Music, Art History, Performing Arts and Visual Arts⁴. In a second moment, it was presented a specific case study of some of these journals, observing some of the evaluative criteria of CAPES and notable singularities. Finally, it was observed editorial practices and their possible relations with evaluative criteria and with the indexers.

Although CAPES mentions the quadrennium 2017 - 2020, this period is not yet available for consultation. Therefore, in the first mapping movement of Brazilian academic journals in Visual Arts, we used as reference the information from the most recent evaluation period accessible in the system. Given this cut-off (2013 - 2016), the information collected may present discrepancies with the current moment, a fact that does not remove the usefulness of the data obtained for the analysis of the Brazilian scenario of scientific research in Arts.

The preliminary collection of data from A1 journals was the starting point for the construction of the panorama built with the crossing of information obtained from the websites of each journal and/or their platforms. This search presents an immediate contradiction: despite the Sucupira Platform informing that there are 26 records, only 22 can be visualized. This analysis also allowed us to identify a duplicity that occurs due to the transition of journals from print to digital media. With the change of the means of publication, some journals remained on the platform with two different ISSNs (International Standardized Serial Number), leading to the repetition of some data. Thus, discarding the repetitions and the records not shown, eighteen (18) publications are listed in the Arts area, classified as A1.

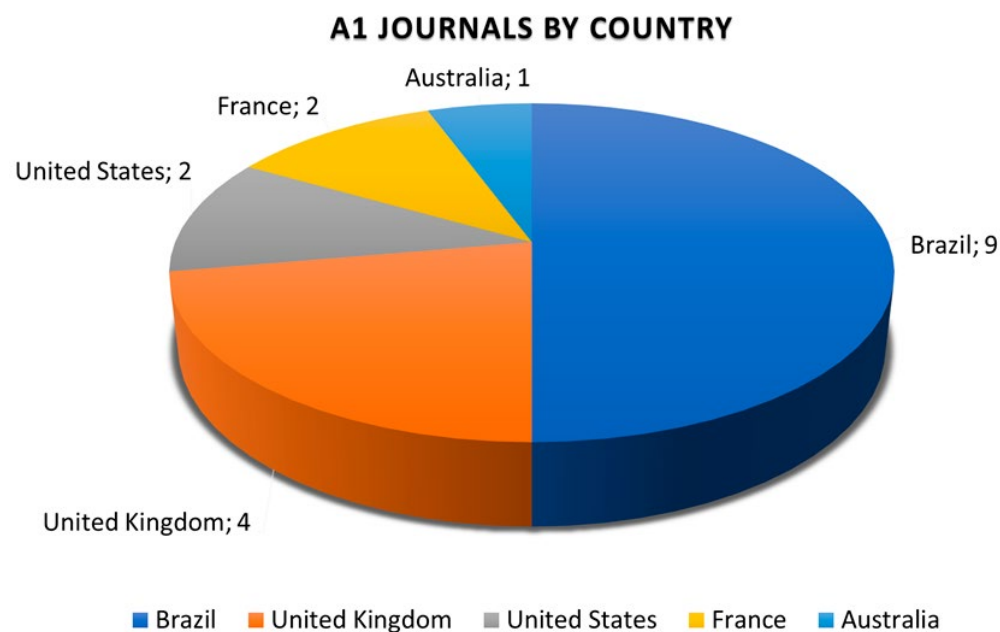
The organization of the data made it possible to visualize and understand the geographical distribution of these journals. From the total of eighteen

3 Basis of reference for the National Postgraduate System (SNPG).

4 CAPES's Table of Knowledge Areas, available at <https://www.gov.br/capes/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/avaliacao/instrumentos/documentos-de-apoio-1/tabela-de-areas-de-conhecimento-avaliacao>, divides the Arts area into several subareas, but does not make the classification of journals by subareas and specialties available on its platform. We opted then to subdivide the area into themes according to the self-declaration of the journals themselves.

(18) journals classified as A1 in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016, nine (09) are Brazilian and nine (09) from other nationalities, as presented in Graph 1. According to the Arts coordinator at CAPES, Vera Beatriz Siqueira (2020, 40'37"), the presence of foreign journals on the list is the result of the publication of Brazilian authors in these journals, leading to their inclusion in the classification list published on the Sucupira Platform. Contrary to international practice, all national journals listed adopt the Open Access policy.⁵

When we observe the Arts area in thematic subdivisions of action, the data points to another imbalance: the Visual Arts were represented by only one (01) publication: the ARS⁶ magazine. As presented in Graph 2, one may verify a greater concentration in the Music, Art History and Performing Arts subdivisions.



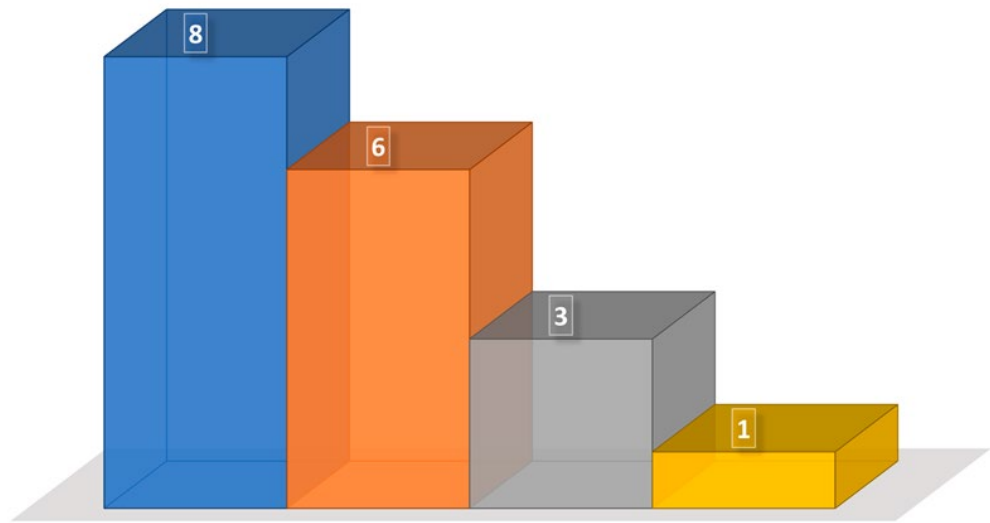
Graph 1
A1 Journals by country.
(Source: Plataforma
Sucupira, CAPES,
2021)

5 The Open Access policy promotes free access to the results of scientific research published in journals.

6 ARS is a publication of the Graduate Program in Visual Arts of the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (USP).

JOURNALS BY THEMATIC SUBDIVISION

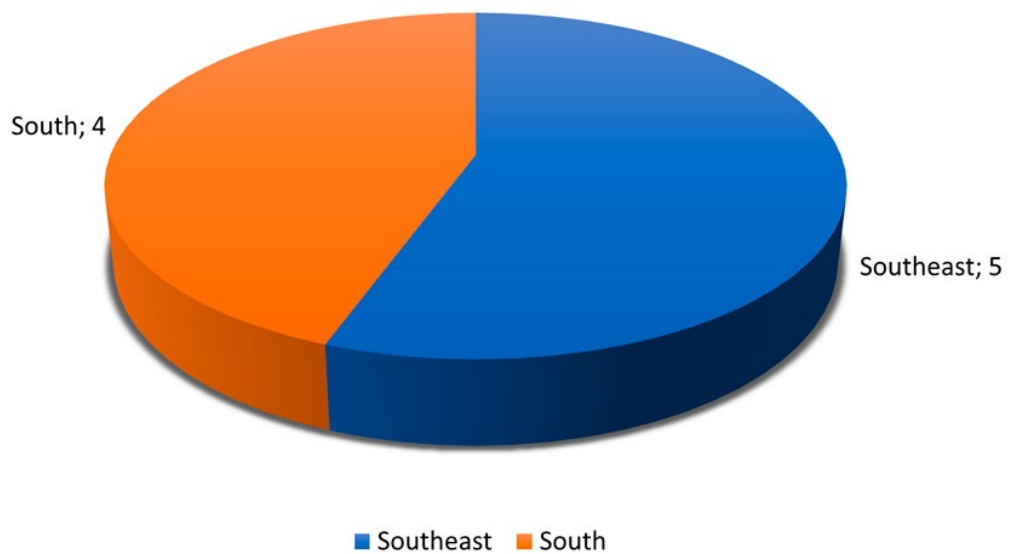
■ Music ■ Art History ■ Performing Arts ■ Visual Arts



Graph 2
Journals by thematic subdivision (source: Plataforma Sucupira, CAPES, 2021)

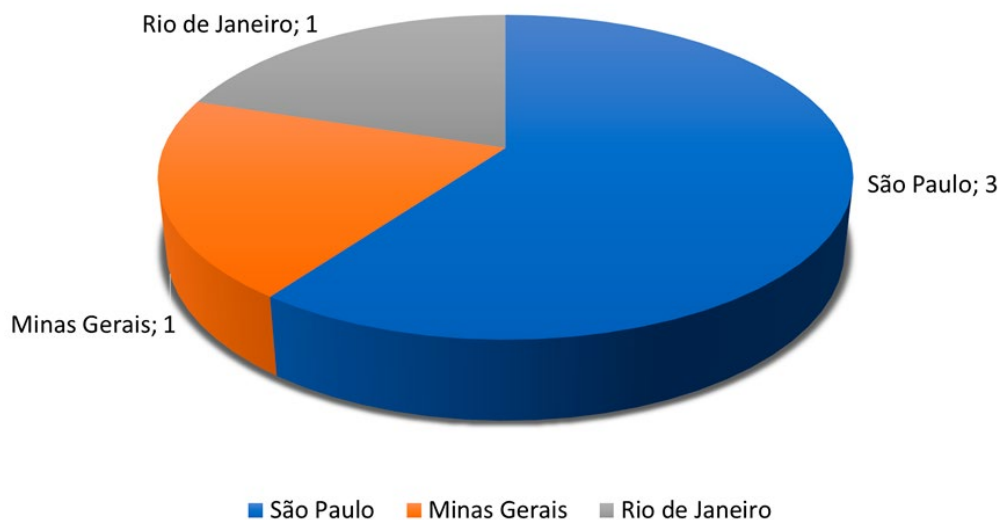
Disregarding the international publications, located in an economic and educational context different from the Brazilian, the analysis of the data reveals the predominance of the Southeast and South regions, these two being the only regions of Brazil represented by journals qualified as A1 by CAPES in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016. Furthermore, the State of São Paulo has a higher quantity of journals compared to the other States cited in the data.

BRAZILIAN JOURNALS BY REGION



Graph 3
Brazilian Journals by Region (source: Plataforma Sucupira, CAPES, 2021)

PERIODICALS OF THE SOUTHEAST REGION BY STATE



Graph 4
Southeast Region journals by State⁷ (source: Plataforma Sucupira, CAPES, 2021)

Overview of the Qualis Periodicals evaluation

The result of the observations obtained through the data from the 2013 - 2016 four-year period was subsequently compared to the data from the 2010 - 2012 three-year period. The analysis shows that the quantity of journals that have Arts as their mother area, qualified as A1 in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016, decreased 26% in relation to the previous triennium. The data are consistent in showing a shift from the A1 category to the A2 category, in a downward flow, indicating, despite this reduction, the entry of fifteen (15) new journals in the total listing, which represents an 18% increase in the number of journals A1 and A2 added from one period to the other.

Classification / Period	Triennium 2010-2012	Quadrennium 2013-2016
A1	35	26
A2	49	73
Total journals	84	99

Chart 1
Source: Plataforma Sucupira, CAPES, 2021

7 The State of Espírito Santo has no A1 publications in the data made available by CAPES.

The criteria for the next quadrennium (2017 - 2020) are still awaited and, up to the time of finalizing this article, had not yet been officially defined. At the centre of this debate, on July 18, 2019, the Qualis Periodicals Report was released, where the CAPES Arts Coordination expresses concern in balancing an absence or insufficiency of objective bibliometric indicators, when making tests for the new Qualis Reference, having as base the years 2017 and 2018. To compensate for the low citation index of the Arts area in the main indexing bases (Web of Science and Scopus), the model used in the testing makes a combination of data with percentages obtained through the h-index of Google Scholar. Furthermore, in order to encourage the professionalization and internationalization of the scientific production conveyed in academic journals, the following normative parameters were suggested in the document:

- Presence of ISSN and clearly defined editorial policy;
- Online dissemination of calls (continuous flows, thematic issues, etc.) and procedures for receiving articles;
- Description of the quality control system: plagiarism detection policy, blind peer review, obedience to editorial technical standards (ABNT or equivalent), forms of access;
- Data on the institution of publication, the responsible editor and/or Editorial Board and the Editorial Council with diversified institutional affiliation of its members;
- Regular and updated periodicity (serial, continuous, ahead of print etc.);
- Identification of the authors, with titles, institutional affiliation, e-mail, persistent identifiers of authors (ORCID or similar);
- Abstract in Portuguese and in at least one foreign language, followed by keywords;
- Identification of articles by DOI;
- Inclusion of the date of receipt and approval of each article;
- Availability of Open Access;
- Presence in indexing bases and search engines;
- Institutional diversity of the authors.

Source: Qualis Periodicals Report, CAPES, 2019

Specific case-studies

In view of the surveyed panorama that, among the nine (09) Brazilian journals classified as A1 in the Arts area in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016, presents only one (01) publication that is specifically dedicated to the thematic subdivision Visual Arts, it was decided to observe it more closely, together with a journal of long trajectory, founded in 1922, which, although it is commonly presented as belonging to other areas⁸, was also classified, at Plataforma Sucupira, as A1 in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016, in the Arts area.

Both journals are produced at the São Paulo State University (USP), the first institution to create a Postgraduate Programme in Arts in Brazil, in the 1970s. *Ars* is a young academic journal that began circulating in 2003 and, in 2017, became linked to the Postgraduate Programme of the School of Communication and Arts (ECA-USP), while *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* is almost one hundred years old and is linked to the Museu Paulista, also a unit of USP.

According to information from the Portal of Journals of USP, the two journals observed do not have Editor-in-Chief in their editorial bodies. *Ars* has four (04) editors (one external to USP); thirty-one (31) members in the editorial board [one in memoriam, Walter Zanini, ten (10) international, nine (09) internal and eleven (11) external to USP]. Besides, the team has one (01) professional for each of the following areas, without repetition of positions: institutional communication; graphic project; production and editorial assistance.

The *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material* has two (02) editors linked to the Paulista Museum of the University of São Paulo; thirty one (31) members in the advisory board [five (05) international, six (06) internal and twenty (20) external to USP]. Its editorial production team has five (05) professionals, one (01) with a repeated position, and two (02) service providers (Foco Digital Serviços Editoriais Ltda. and Tikinet Edição Ltda.) However, there is a disparity with the SciELO site, which reports that the editorial production team has six (06) people, one with a repeated position, and three (03) companies (Foco Digital Serviços Editoriais Ltda, Tikinet Edição Ltda EPP and MM Coutinho Auditoria Ltda. ME).

8 Presented in this stratum in: CAPES Journals (Human Sciences: History, Sociology); Scielo (Applied Social Sciences, Human Sciences); Redalyc (History); DOAJ (History of America: Latin America, Spanish America) and Latindex (History, Culture).

While *Ars* receives articles in continuous flow, holds occasional open calls and published biannually until 2017, when it became a four-monthly publication; *Anais do Museu Paulista* also receives articles in continuous flow but, as of 2018 it began to operate in the continuous publication system, compiling the production in a single annual volume.

Sharing the institutional infrastructure of USP, these journals meet most of the criteria of excellence that serve as reference for the evaluation suggested in the Qualis Periodicals Report mentioned above. They are published through the OJS platform, adopt double-blind peer review by ad hoc referees and the Open Access policy, besides benefiting from USP's Program of Support to Periodical Scientific Publications and using the anti-plagiarism tools available to the scientific community of this University.

Available for free at USP's Portal of Journals, both journals have important indexing tools, having in common SciELO, Latindex and DOAJ. Besides, *Anais do Museu Paulista* is also indexed by REDALyC. It is important to note that SciELO is one of the most rigorous indexing systems, together with Web of Science and Scopus, the latter not yet reached by any journal from the Arts area in Brazil. The presence of the journals in indexing bases is a relevant data, due to the citation weight in the classification of Academic Journals. Influenced by the lack of citations in the Arts area, CAPES suggests, in the 2019 report, the imputation of data extracted through the Google h-index, aiming at minimizing distortions and providing a better mapping of the national scientific production in the area.

The two journals receive financial support from the Program to Support Periodical Publications of the USP Agency for Academic Information Management (AGUIA). This institutional support program publishes calls for applications that aim to support USP editors' projects that have the objective of improving their journals in the following aspects: increase of the impact factor, internationalization and editorial production (including layout, translation, grammar review and, exceptionally, printing).

The call for proposals 2021, published in the USP Journals Portal, makes available a total of R\$1,600,000.00 (US\$312,762.06)⁹ to be distributed according to journal classification criteria. These criteria separate the bidders into three (03) bands. Namely, the journals that only meet the requirements

9 Rate on 16 July 2021 (1US\$=5.12 Brazilian Real).

of the announcement compete for R\$10,000.00 (US\$1,954.76); those that, in addition, have indexing in SciELO or in an international indexer of reference for the area of knowledge compete for R\$30,000.00 (US\$5,864.29); and those that add to all indexing in the Web of Science base and/or Scopus base may receive R\$60,000.00 (US\$11,728.58). On the portal, links to previous versions of the edict are available, since 2013. Until 2018, the call did not disclose the total amount of resources offered. Instead, it requested a table showing all revenues, respective sources, and expenses incurred in the previous year, with details of each item. There is no link to the announcement of 2019, and the 2020 announcement does not disclose the total amount of resources offered, but distributes the funds in 4 bands, according to the classification by indexation. This year, were offered R\$14,000.00 (US\$2,736.67) for journals that meet the requirements of the announcement; R\$40,000.00 (US\$7,819.05) for journals with Qualis B1 classification or higher in the quadrennium 2013-2016, in their main area of knowledge; R\$70.000,00 (US\$13.683,34) for journals that, in addition, were indexed in SciELO or international indexer of reference for the area; and R120.000,00 (US\$23.457,15) for journals that, in addition, were indexed in the base Web of Science and / or Scopus. It can be noted that there is a significant decrease in the values offered by the funding edict for scientific journals of USP from 2020 to 2021.

Conclusions

During the research process, difficulty was encountered in recognizing the thematic subareas of the Arts journals and in locating official data that would clarify the contradiction of the Sucupira Platform that does not explain four (04) records of journals listed as A1 in the quadrennium 2013 - 2016. Another obstacle was to locate the evaluation criteria of the Visual Arts academic journals in the periods investigated (triennium 2010 - 2012 and quadrennium 2013 - 2016), although there are efforts made by CAPES to give more transparency to the process.

The data analyzed, however, helped in the understanding of the editorial practice in Arts, a young area that faces ambiguities in relation to scientific practice and that, according to the CAPES report, presents deficiencies in professionalization, internationalization and citation. The correction of such scarcity seems to depend on institutional and economic support. Without such support, the journals are subordinated to voluntary work and operate with reduced teams. However, ARS and Anais do Museu Paulista present team distribution without repetition of positions and a staff that counts

on specialized service providers, facilitated by the support and financial incentive received.

The internationalization is related to the presence of the journal in a variety of indexing databases, being a characteristic of the Arts area the difficulty of insertion in these databases, considering the absence of journals of the area in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. These two indexing databases are highly demanding in relation to the publication of articles in English, requiring translations into other languages, especially English, making it necessary to hire qualified professionals to perform these functions.

In this sense, the lack of funding appears to be directly linked to the reduced number of translated national articles, impacting on the number of citations. Although the Arts area widely adopts Open Access in its academic journals, the difficulty in internationalisation results in the area's low position in the national mapping of scientific production. Although the practice of Open Access is beneficial to the Arts area, in the sense of giving visibility to production by disseminating knowledge free of charge, the area is faced with a serious lack of financial support for its maintenance. The economic capacity seems to be linked to the regional discrepancy found in the data analysis, since the excellence journals are concentrated in the institutions with greater financial availability, with São Paulo being predominant in the production of the journals observed.

CAPES's proposals, expressed in the Qualis Periodicals Report, express concern with issues specific to the Arts area and seek to reduce its deficiencies. However, other challenges are posed for the future, when the relations between technology and the variety of artistic languages that use images, videos and other visual propositions, fundamental to the area, are observed. The incorporation of new media may imply a negotiation with the evaluative criteria studied, as well as with the indexers and the possible difficulty of recognition of the area as a construction of scientific knowledge. How could these tools, which have an evident affinity with artistic languages, contribute to the production of scientific knowledge in the field of Arts?

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Article received on June 23, 2021 and accepted on September 13, 2021.

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