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## ABSTRACT

Through the Mixed Realities research group of the Faculty of Design, Communication and Fine Arts, Pereira Section, of the Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina, the research project creation (I+C) Invisible Giants was generated, whose objective is to understand why the monuments in the center of the city of Pereira have become a landscape and are invisible to the inhabitants and passers-by of the sector.

All this mediated by the interdisciplinary convergence generated through the collaborative work of teachers and students of the Audiovisual and Digital Communication, Architecture and Animation Technology and Audiovisual Postproduction programs.

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# Invisible Giants. The Research Seminar as a space of Interdisciplinary Convergence and Propitiation of Creative Research (I+C)

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## ABSTRACT

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## RESUMEN

*A través del semillero de investigación Realidades Mixtas de la Facultad de Diseño, Comunicación y Bellas Artes, Seccional Pereira, de la Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina, se generó el proyecto de investigación creación (I+C) Gigantes Invisibles, cuyo objetivo es comprender el por qué los monumentos del centro de la ciudad de Pereira se han convertido en paisaje y son invisibles para los habitantes y transeúntes del sector.*

*Todo ello mediado por la convergencia interdisciplinar generada a través del trabajo colaborativo de docentes y estudiantes de los programas de Comunicación Audiovisual y Digital, Arquitectura y Tecnología en Animación y Postproducción Audiovisual.*

**Palabras Claves:** investigación creación, convergencia, interdisciplinaria, semillero.

## I. INTRODUCTION

University life reveals interactions that strengthen its immediate environment. Its identity is defined by social and cultural dynamics that not only involve the university community, but also all the inhabitants of the area where it is located. The study of these dynamics is fundamental for the design and projection of future interventions, contributing to the sustainable and harmonious development of the urban environment.

From the academy, in this case the Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina Seccional Pereira, a university located in the center of the city, research is conducted on the social dynamics of the sector where it is located. This research seeks to strengthen the knowledge of the area and understand the social and cultural exchanges of

the entire academic community. Thus, the Mixed Realities research group, attached to the DICART research group, aims to provide tools in the study of the center of the city of Pereira, focusing specifically on the urban elements of the landscape.

The strategic location of the university and the social fabric that can be strengthened through urban projects generate a unique opportunity for intervention and reflection. The Invisible Giants project arises, which seeks to generate a reflection about the monuments located in the center of the city of Pereira, which have become part of the urban landscape and have lost their recognition by the inhabitants and passers-by. This project aims to revitalize the memory and cultural value of these monuments, integrating them back into the daily life of the city.

In 2003, the city of Pereira was ranked as the Latin American city with the largest number of sculptures. This distinction highlights the importance of studying these monuments, updating their detailed information, their location and their relationship with their immediate surroundings. This study is crucial to preserve and enhance the cultural and artistic heritage of the city, promoting greater appreciation and recognition by the community.

Pereira, a city located in the heart of the Colombian Eje Cafetero, is known not only for its coffee-growing wealth and economic dynamism, but also for its impressive collection of monuments and sculptures that inhabit its public spaces. These monuments, located throughout the city, embellish the urban environment and tell deep and meaningful stories about the cultural identity, history and values of the Pereira community. From the iconic Naked Bolivar in the Plaza de Bolivar to the imposing Christ the King on Cerro Canceles, each work of public art in Pereira offers a unique window into the city's historical and contemporary narratives, underscoring the importance of preserving and revitalizing these cultural symbols for future generations.

To mention a few gigantic inhabitants of the city center:

- *The Naked Bolivar*: Located in the Plaza de Bolivar, it is one of the most representative of the city. It was created by sculptor Rodrigo Arenas Betancourt and shows Simon Bolivar in a heroic and naked posture, symbolizing the freedom and purity of his ideals.
- *Monument to the Founders*: It is located in the Olaya Herrera Park and commemorates the founders of the city. It is a work of the same sculptor Rodrigo Arenas Betancourt and represents the colonizing deed and the efforts of the pioneers.
- *La vendedora de Mangos*: Located on carrera séptima between twenty-first and twenty-second streets.
- *The muleteer*: Located on the corner of Calle Quince and Carrera VIII, a tribute to the Antioquian settlers who came to the city.
- *Bust of General Rafael Uribe Uribe*: Located on 24th Street on the lake park, erected in honor of the general of the same name.
- *Gracias a la Vida (Thanks to Life)*: Located on Carrera Quinta between eighteenth and nineteenth streets, in honor of the newborns.
- *In Search of Light*: Located on Calle 20 and Carrera 10, at the foot of the El Diario del Otún building.

Among fifteen other monuments, since in the perimeter of the center of the city of Pereira there are about twenty-two monuments on pedestals, not counting those that are inside buildings, murals and/or busts protruding from the buildings, which were discarded because they are inside private property.

To address the challenge of the Invisible Giants project, three key conceptual categories have been defined to guide its development and methodology. These categories establish a clear and structured path for the work, in order to obtain a deep understanding and an effective intervention in the study and revitalization of Pereira's monuments:

- *Research Semillero*: Semilleros are academic spaces where students and teachers collaborate in research projects, fostering

active learning and the development of new competencies.

- *Interdisciplinarity*: The integration of different disciplines allows problems to be addressed holistically, combining different perspectives and methodologies to enrich the analysis and proposed solutions.
- *Creative Research (R+C)*: This approach combines academic research with creative practice, allowing the results not only to remain in the theoretical realm, but to be translated into practical interventions that have a direct impact on the community.

Through these categories, the project seeks not only to study and document the monuments of downtown Pereira, but also to revitalize their presence in the urban space and in the consciousness of citizens. This interdisciplinary and collaborative approach not only enriches the training of students, but also contributes to the strengthening of the social and cultural fabric of the city, promoting a more inclusive and participatory urban development.

## II. INVISIBLE GIANTS: CATEGORIES

### 2.1 Research Semillero

The interaction between teachers and students is not only developed in the classroom; there are university mission activities that go beyond academics, such as extension projects and research. The latter is strengthened by the research groups associated with the research groups, in this case, the Dicart group belonging to the faculty of design, communication and fine arts of the Fundación Universitaria del Área Andina.

Starting from the word seedbed, which insinuates the idea of sowing, planting and cultivating a great interest of the students in research and that its sprout unfolds in the best way during their university path, the seedbed seeks that the students can explore, investigate, learn, debate, use different tools and develop methods in the resolution of problems of their immediate environment as well as regional, national and even international ones.

Involving students in research processes allows them to broaden their knowledge in their field of study, strengthen teamwork and develop interdisciplinary relationships, an important concept in the development of this mission activity. For this, it is necessary to understand the micro-curricula of each academic program and carefully study both generic and professional competencies to guide students in the construction of their character and professional profile. In addition, students should be encouraged, from the first semesters, to participate in research processes, reiterating the importance of work outside the classroom in the generation and application of knowledge.

The research workshops bring significant benefits to the students, among them:

- *Development of Skills in Reading, Analysis and Comprehension of Information*: Students learn to review scientific literature, analyze data and draw relevant conclusions. In addition, they improve their skills in writing and presenting reports and results, which is essential for their academic and professional training.
- *Teamwork and Professional Networking*: Participating in research workshops allows students to collaborate with other students and professionals, strengthening their teamwork skills and developing a valuable network of contacts for their future career.
- *Cognitive and Technical Knowledge Development*: Seminars promote critical thinking and foster creativity by confronting students with real problems that require innovative and well-founded solutions.
- *Practical Application of Knowledge*: Through specific projects, students can apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations, which enriches their understanding and provides them with hands-on experience.
- *Innovation and Problem Solving*: Seminars allow students to use different research tools and methodologies to address both local and global problems. This not only contributes to their personal and professional development, but can also have a positive impact on the community and society at large.



## 2.2 Projects in Research Seminars

A key example is the "Sustainable Architecture" project developed by DICART students, where they researched and designed ecological architectural solutions for rural communities. This project not only allowed them to apply technical knowledge of architecture and design, but also to understand the social and environmental implications of their proposals. This approach aligns perfectly with research-creation, as it combines research rigor with creative practice to generate innovative solutions that not only contribute to technical knowledge, but also have a tangible impact on the community.

Another project is "Digital Narratives for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage", where Audiovisual and Digital Communication students collaborated with experts in history and anthropology to create documentaries and interactive platforms that promote and preserve the cultural heritage of indigenous communities in Colombia. This interdisciplinary work enriched their understanding of cultural value and allowed them to develop advanced technical skills in audiovisual production. Here, research-creation is clearly manifested as students research, document and use creative media to disseminate and preserve knowledge, transforming the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

### III. IMPACT ON THE INTEGRAL FORMATION OF THE STUDENT

By integrating these aspects, the research workshops not only improve students' technical and academic competencies, but also foster the development of a global vision and a proactive attitude towards professional and social challenges. This integrated approach prepares students to effectively and creatively face the challenges of their future careers and contributes significantly to their personal and professional development. The research-creation methodology is important in this process, as it promotes continuous exploration and experimentation, allowing students to apply their theoretical

knowledge in practical projects that have real and tangible relevance.

Finally, interdisciplinarity and active collaboration between students and teachers in the research seedbeds invite to leave academic biases aside, valuing the solution of confusing and complex research problems. They also create different perspectives that involve multiple actors, facilitating the exchange of knowledge as a visible and tangible impact on students, teachers, the academic community and the external sector. This approach not only enriches the educational process, but also generates results that can be applied in real contexts, demonstrating the practical and theoretical value of interdisciplinary research. Research-creation, when integrated with interdisciplinarity, enhances these benefits, as it fosters innovation and creativity, which are crucial to effectively address complex problems.

### 3.1 Interdisciplinary

A key concept in the structuring of any research project is interdisciplinarity, which has different views and approaches that seek to propose and develop research strategies in the Invisible Giants project. Research takes on a significant value as an articulating axis in the resolution of questions. From multiple perspectives, not only a result is obtained, but also the development of new methodologies and research methods is achieved.

Interdisciplinarity takes a leading role as an element that derives in multiple aspects present in a multifaceted research approach. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight the following aspects:

- **Comprehensiveness in the Assumption of Problems and Concerns:** Approaches problems from a holistic perspective, allowing for a more complete and deeper understanding.
- **Innovation through Collaborative Work:** Encourages creativity and the generation of novel solutions through collaboration among diverse disciplines.
- **Integral Knowledge Transfer:** Facilitates the dissemination and application of knowledge among different areas and contexts.

- Consolidation of Different Viewpoints: Enriches the analysis and interpretation of data, integrating multiple perspectives.
- Study of Complex Problems: Allows addressing issues that are too complicated to be solved by a single discipline.
- Teamwork: Promotes collaboration among researchers from different fields, articulating their efforts towards a common problem.
- Continuous Follow-up of Research Processes: Establishes mechanisms for the evaluation and continuous improvement of projects.
- Innovative Knowledge Dissemination Strategies: Develop new ways to communicate findings in an effective and accessible manner.
- Encouraging Co-creation: Involves different actors in the creation process, from the beginning to the implementation of solutions.
- Formulation of Results Monitoring Strategies: Design methods to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the interventions carried out.
- Academic Strengthening and Exchange: Promotes collaboration and knowledge exchange between teachers and students.

From the application and articulation of this concept as the main axis of the research, we intend to venture our students in the concerns that, from different objects of study, we can deepen thanks to collaborative work. This becomes the fundamental guideline to answer the multiple questions that may arise during the research.

For example, in the Invisible Giants project, students of Audiovisual and Digital Communication, Architecture and Animation and Audiovisual Postproduction Technique work together to address issues such as the representation of urban spaces that are invisible to the majority of the population. This approach not only allows them to apply their specific knowledge, but also to develop skills in collaborative research and complex problem solving.

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Now, how to relate research creation (R+A) with interdisciplinarity?

Research-creation emerges as an innovative approach that transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, embracing interdisciplinarity as a driving force of knowledge. In this paradigm, artistic creation is not limited to being a mere end product, but becomes a generative process of inquiry and discovery. Artists, researchers and academics from diverse disciplines converge in dialogue, intertwining their perspectives and methodologies to address complex issues from multiple angles.

Interdisciplinarity permeates every stage of research-creation, fostering a fruitful interaction between seemingly disparate fields. The visual arts, literature, music, design, social sciences, humanities and other domains intertwine, generating new ways of understanding and expressing reality. This holistic approach challenges established paradigms, encouraging research-creators to explore unexplored territories and question the conventional boundaries of knowledge. Thus, research-creation stands as a catalyst for transdisciplinary innovation, where creativity and academic rigor merge in a fruitful embrace.

#### IV. RESEARCH AND CREATION (R+C)

As proposed by Ballesteros, M., & Beltrán, E. M. (2018), research seeks to generate new knowledge that contributes significantly to the advancement of an area of knowledge. However, artistic creation also has an important role in human development, offering valuable contributions to the aesthetic world and to people's enjoyment. From the authors' point of view, creative practice not only involves the generation of new knowledge, but its product itself incorporates a

transformative perspective of the world around us.

In both scientific research and creative practice, experimentation is fundamental, since through the senses and the interpretation of external stimuli, human beings construct the world and propose new knowledge. Both processes, research and creation, share etymological roots and require imagination, passion and creativity, as well as structured, rigorous processes and high levels of conceptualization.

The Faculty of Communication and Fine Arts of the Areandina University Foundation, from the essence of its academic programs promotes the development of artistic, cultural, social and innovative expressions that systematically require the application of the previously elucidated concept, however, through creative research, the products obtained in the search for answers to problems raised extrapolate from traditional research to a creative complement.

For the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation - Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation - Minciencias, the research creation The processes of artistic creation, like research, manage disciplined and planned structures where constant experimentation plays an important role in achieving the final product, which is characterized by handling a plastic language (such as music, sculpture, dance, audiovisual, among others) that in countless cases, besides being original and unpublished (i.e. new knowledge), has moved the frontiers of knowledge of these disciplines. Minciencias (May 9, 2024): What is I+C? MINCIENCIAS. <https://acortar.link/DwrT3T>.

The versatility of R+C (Research + Creation) includes the implementation of different methodologies that can be adopted according to the context to be investigated. Indeed, this adaptation contributes directly to an ambitious and meaningful production. With the above, we can infer in an iterative creation process, i.e., it is not linear or predetermined; on the contrary, from these conditions it seeks to transcend and

articulate the disciplines in tangible processes of co-creation.

The use of different research techniques and methods is included in these creative processes, which not only lead to scientific academic publications, but also to tangible results that can be measured and that contribute to the solution of concrete problems. For example, the implementation of methodologies such as user-centered design, participatory action research and rapid prototyping allows researchers and creators to continuously adjust and improve their projects, responding to the specific needs and contexts in which they are developed.

During the development of the Invisible Giants project, the iterative processes and debates between teachers and students have been fundamental for the generation of critical thinking in students. This critical thinking has been strengthened by the interdisciplinary work that integrates all the academic programs of the faculty. For this project, the Mixed Realities seedbed brought together students from its three academic programs: Audiovisual and Digital Communication, Architecture and the Animation and Audio Visual Post Production Technique.

Working together, the students have been able not only to develop technical and conceptual skills in their respective areas, but also to learn to collaborate effectively in multidisciplinary teams. Through workshops, co-creation sessions and periodic evaluations, participants have explored diverse perspectives and approaches, enriching the creative process. The results obtained so far include prototypes of innovative solutions, audiovisual products that reflect the researched reality and architectural proposals that address urban issues identified during the project.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Although the research project is still under development, several partial appreciations can be taken into account, focused on the interdisciplinary interaction of both teachers and students.



First of all, there has been an enthusiasm for collaborative work among students, motivated by the amazement and discovery of processes of ideation, projection and materialization of specific designs, as well as by the research dynamics of each program. This interaction is reflected in the progress deliveries that have been satisfactory and have contributed significantly to the overall development of the research project.

The role of orienting and guiding the teachers in the research processes, framed within the objectives of the Mixed Realities research group, has been crucial. Through collective meetings, the generic and professional competencies that students must develop and strengthen in each academic program have been thoroughly reviewed. This has allowed a precise and effective direction of the students in each role and activity necessary for the development of the project.

Finally, a significant appropriation by the participating students is evidenced, fostered by the research + creation methodology. This methodology allows for greater exploration and experimentation both inside and outside the classroom. Although the process is supported by theoretical classes and specific concepts of each program, the collaborative practical work facilitates a better understanding of these concepts. In addition, this approach allows for tangible results and strengthens students' critical thinking. The combination of theory and practice in a collaborative environment has proven to be an effective strategy to boost students' academic and professional development, as well as to achieve significant advances in the research project.

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