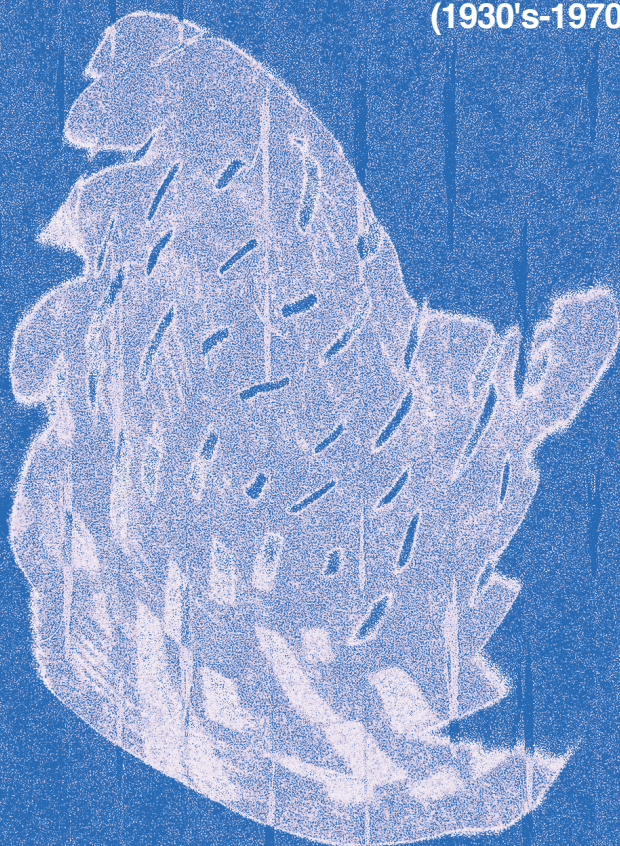


CRITICISM MEDIA MEMORY

(1930's-1970's)



Coordination Team:

Priscilla Alves Peixoto

Daniela Ortiz dos Santos

Elane Ribeiro Peixoto

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Rute Figueiredo



PROARQ

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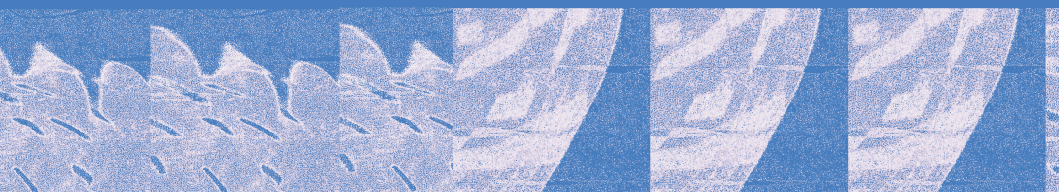
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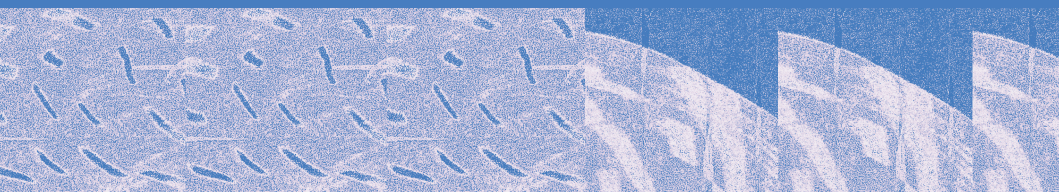


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FOREWORD

Ethel Pinheiro

Joël Candau, in his book *Mémoire et identité* (1998) [Memory and identity], reveals a possible social game of memory, with its structure comprising many identity elements, which should be exposed. As an observer of the French scene, Candau uses the value of history to demonstrate how the past can be mobilised and manipulated for different purposes by information vehicles and by structures that produce a culture of images/languages. He is interested in the memory as “action”, not the memory construed by stories or artefacts, but the memory that carves the future and is based on the marriage between the criticism of a given moment and the structuring vision of predecessor things. No memory is exactly faithful to the past, says Candau (1998), precisely because it is shaped and reconfigured into identity narratives of certain historical moments.

Candau does not mention directly the role of criticism as an action to review precedents, acting as a structurer of memory games and the media, which are the agents of dissemination, but enables to perceive between the lines what this book *Criticism, media and memory* renders clear, with no doubt: in order to make contemporary history, it is necessary to understand it and criticise it in its means.

The scientific posture towards criticism and its link with the dissemination of knowledge and construction of new narratives is precisely the starting point of the fifteen chapters that comprise this anthology. In a useful timeframe for global discussions – between 1930 and 1970 –, propositions, discussions and analyses are woven that equate the “transatlantic” dialogues, the idea of visual culture, criticism and politics of the analysed writings. In this social-historical hiatus, representing the fragmentation of things proposed by the end of a world war and the reconstruction of new worlds, in addition to signalling the beginning of “silent” wars and an unimaginable expansion of the power of photography and of the cinema, there is the consolidation of a comparative perspective between architectural spheres.

Therefore, it is no wonder that connecting criticism, media and memory sounds so good for articulating the role of the trafficability of information about architecture in that period. In this amazing “waist game” of articles led by exponent thinkers of various institutions, appears the outline of dialogues in the field of modernity, Latin American narratives, and thinking “by constellations” – which, in the words of Margareth da Silva Pereira (2018, p. 249) , is “[...] an invitation to an unstable and dialogical idea of knowledge that, even when made of configurations,

concepts, categories and notions, is understood as theorisation efforts, more or less accurate, but never neutral [...]”.

In a second moment, this effort is revealed in the unfolding of the role of visual culture, which, as organizer of a new communicative dimension in architecture, is based on analyses of images shown in mass circulation magazines and in the cinema. Architecture becomes, then, framed by a new form of criticism of the city.

The third act of this book leads us to think about the dissemination of information, its modes of reach and influence through specialised journals, their exponent theorists, the consolidation of a special criticism (focused on media analysis) and the hybridisms that, in Brazil, are based on French visions, which are still much perpetuated and which consolidate the imaginary of design – especially that of Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, memory is presented as an excavation work, as Pierre Nora would say in his book *Les lieux de mémoires* [The sites of memory] (1984–1993), bringing closer debates about archives and politics, the Brazilian vanguard in the field of arts and historiography, and the role of a critical memory, which acts as a form of knowledge in contemporary times.

Situating myself in everything that is discussed in this work, which reaches the hands of readers certainly eager for a critical vision of architectural history, I realise that the book functions as a device, in its best Foucaultian sense: institutional, physical and intellectual mechanisms that favour knowledge structures. The device is, if not only, the network that could be created between these three elements (criticism, media and memory). And how to face or understand a device? Simply by going through it.

Rio de Janeiro, November 2023

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INTRODUCTION

IS THERE A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM?

Priscilla Alves Peixoto

“Is there a history of architectural criticism?” At first, this question may seem overly simplified; however, posed at the opening of this book, it seeks to highlight an engagement: the need to think historically the metier of criticism. In other words, it intends to distance the relation established between history and criticism from the search for definitions, limits and purposes of each of these domains and frame criticism as an object of historiographic study.

In my case, this path was designed drawing on monographic researches (Peixoto, 2013, 2018, 2021) situated in the field of history (of architecture, urbanism, arts etc.) and focused on writing. Through research, there was a gradual development of the attention to authors and texts of a specific genre, produced “impulsively” and “reactively”, writings that sometimes were declared by the authors themselves as “criticism”. Actions that, on their turn, would not circumscribe to the text, but would also foment events, and engender radio programmes and editorial projects. Faced by this experience in daily research, I was led to broadening the attention to the set of authors and practices on which I was increasingly working.

To carry out these researches, regarding the approach, to start with I draw on studies focusing on texts as constructors of space (Choay, 1980, 2006); historiographic operations (Certeau, [1975] 2011; Ricoeur, [2000] 2007); the role of intellectual biographies (Dosse, 2005, 2010, 2018); and the materiality of texts (Chartier, [1988] 1991, 2011). Thus, enabling the elaboration of a cultural history of the social world (Chartier, [1988] 1991, 2011), in my case, a history of the architectural and urbanistic culture (Peixoto, 2021).

It was the search of a specific bibliography to fundament the study on the history of architectural criticism in Brazil, however, that raised another layer of questions. When starting the mapping of the critical fortune of authors who were dedicated to architectural criticism, in the 1930s and 1970s, I could verify two frameworks: one first set of works – such as those by Carlos Martins (1999), Nelci Tinem (2006), Ruth Verde Zein (2022), and Maria Beatriz Cappello (2016) – produced by scholars interested in the historiography of modern architecture, who mapped its main interpreters, diffusion vehicles and problematizing; and a second set of authors – in which are outstanding the researches by Aracy Ama-

ral (1981) and Otilia Arantes (1991) – who went from the studies on art history to the history of architectural criticism.

Regarding the first set of texts, one can observe a historiographic concern. However, the attention focuses on repositioning and interrogating the historical narratives on modern architecture in Brazil, rather than the practice of criticism as such, *i.e.*, it interrogates the historicity of discourses dedicated to modern architecture, but whose focus is not on the historicity of the critical activity.

On the other hand, regarding the texts of Aracy Amaral and Otilia Arantes, one can notice how the impulses of autonomization and distinction between the practices of architectural and art criticism – which marked the two fields, since the 1960s – seem to have contributed to the muting of research paths intuited by the two researchers who more actively aimed at the historicity of criticism production. However, regarding specifically architectural criticism, these texts are circumscribed to the figure of Mário Pedrosa.

In the past years, having worked on art critics who wrote about architecture in the 1950s (Peixoto, 2020, 2021, 2023) took me, precisely, to affirm that at the time when Mário Pedrosa wrote there were other actors and other critical perspectives, such as those of Jaime Maurício, Mário Barata, Quirino Campofiorito and Sérgio Milliet. In fact, these critics' contribution did not always have the same influence and repercussion in the public sphere as that of Pedrosa; however, when closely observed, there was a constituted field of debate, with various groups, issues, motivations, capillarity and movements.

Therefore, I invested my attention in this sort of gap that the writings of Aracy Amaral and Otilia Arantes, with an almost isolated presence, seemed to unveil. Although having sensed a research path from the observation of these two authors' work, I started to construct certain movements. If, as in their work, I thought to structure projects based on the relation between the critics' writings and lives, the attention to the debates on architecture was not taken as a theme, but rather as part of the construction of the research problem. A subtle change, which sought to set the tone of the commitment that was established. A commitment with a reflective action on the writing of the history of architectural criticism.

It was also the attention dedicated to art critics and their writings on architecture that led me, almost at the same time, to the Archives of Art Criticism (Les Archives de la Critique d'Art – ACA) and to reading the works of Hélène Jannièrre and Paolo Scrivano. This raised a second layer of questions. Besides the access to a series of sources related to the critics that I studied, the contact with the ACA showed me that, as from the late 1980s, there is an increasing and systematic concern about establishing a reflective action on the art criticism activity involving the work of art historians. This not only enabled updates of sights towards the writing of the history of art criticism, such as those presented by Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel *et al.*, in individual and collective works ([2015] 2016; Joyeux-Prunel, 2021), but also brought contributions to a reflec-

tion on the production of criticism memory. In other words, the need to constitute a material support for research production, a specific concern dedicated to its archives.¹

The effort of the ACA to safeguard the various vestiges of criticism activity – including plenty of material that I could use for my own researches on actors and debates held in Brazil, contrasting with the scarcity of sources in Brazilian archives – highlighted how a research that interrogates about the writing of history also requires a repositioning (and even a construction) of its sources and its places of memory. If, until then, to me it seemed relatively clear that architectural criticism could be an object of historical narratives, with this experience I could also see – by contrast – how much the lack of a specific attention to architectural criticism of/in the archives has an impact on researches.

The sensitisation to these questions seemed to increase its proportions insofar as in Brazil a series of events arose the debate on the frailty of its architectural archives². A hot debate but centred on architects' archives and on the documentation of architectural projects in their artwork statute. In this arena, it seemed that old discursive vices returned, in which, instead of understanding architecture as a cultural field, it was demarcated as a professional field only.

A series of texts by Jannièrè (2013, 2019) and, more recently, those published in partnership with Scrivano (2020, 2023), dialogued directly with the experience at the ACA. Partly, because Jannièrè's work is developed directly in this archive and seeks to contribute to a reflection on its own statute of memory place of architectural criticism. As from the late 2000s, Jannièrè's work is centred on specific questions on the historicity of architectural criticism. Reading her texts brought huge contributions to my researches. Through them, I was able to situate specifically the production of the authors I was studying (art critics who were interested in architecture in the critical debate of the 1950s) (Jannièrè, 2019, p. 55-70). They helped me to find the authors who, before us, had been interested in the history of architectural criticism, also identifying their limits (p. 108-112), and presented an agenda for the study of criticism as a research object in architectural history (Jannièrè; Scrivano, 2023).

The last aspect was undoubtedly the most significant. In this regard, Jannièrè and Scrivano invite us to surpass the interest in the speciali-

1 Jannièrè (2019, p. 113) presents how, since the beginning of the organisation of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA), in 1948-1949, there is a concern about the archive of criticism production for the establishment of a contemporaneous art history. In addition, in 1958, an analogous position is claimed by Pierre Francastel, who proposes the archiving of "*matériel vivant*" provided by "[...] critics' activity with the purpose of gathering the corpus and the necessary documents to write the history of contemporaneous architecture" [free translation]. AICA's funding are among the early donations for the creation of ACA's collection; however, we use the 1980s as an inflection point, because it is the moment when this archive is effectively constituted and starts to have a specific fundraising policy (Poinso; Leenhardt, 2015).

2 In this context we can cite Molinero (2020), Martí (2020), Lira (2020), Yoneshigue and Lyra (2021), and Costa (2022).

sed critical production and visit works of daily dissemination, made by generalists and journalists. They call the attention to the study of architectural criticism as “cultural field”, to the debates produced in the public sphere, thus, to the different relations established between its actors – who, as they underline, are not limited to the authors of criticism, but include editors, designers, photographers etc. As to the approach, Jannièrè’s texts signalise the contributions that sociology studies on art criticism may provide to the historiography of architectural criticism. Making a parallel with the notions that repositioned the historiography of art criticism, Jannièrè points out how those defined by Pierre Bourdieu – such as “field”, “values”, and “social distinction” –, can be managed by architectural historians and lead to studies of broader social phenomena. Together with the interest in this social and systemic dimension, however, Jannièrè (2019, p. 118) underlines the need to look at the construction of individual poetics. Jannièrè brings as support, as I had been already working on, dialogues with François Dosse’s books dedicated to “intellectual biographies”.

The path proposed by Jannièrè, regarding the dialogue with studies on sociology of art and their contribution to a historiographic review of architectural criticism, seems to echo aspects that are present in texts by Roger Chartier ([1988] 1991, p. 180-182), especially those in which he invites to the development of a cultural history of the social, therefore contrasting with a social history of culture. In Chartier’s works, the focus was certainly not the metier of architectural criticism, as such. By studying books, readers and reading practices, however, he already presented the need to be attentive to the materiality of the text (Chartier, 2011). In other words, taking the text not as an abstract entity, but rather as a collective production forged by those who write, edit, publish and translate it. And by approaching books as a construction negotiated between different actors, Chartier’s work helped me to remember that the sense of a text is not limited to that manifested by its author. It is the social field – where it is produced, edited, circulated, read, recited or acted – the place where its meaning takes shape.

It is noteworthy, though, that in the texts of Jannièrè and Scrivano this articulation is presented in the ambit of a tradition of the historiography of architectural criticism. Thus, reading the texts of these two authors seems to have established a sort of conversation with the researches that I had been conducting. Although through different paths, the concerns seemed to add up. In this example, of a shared understanding of the necessary attention to the social dimension of architectural criticism production and, moreover, the understanding of architectural practice as producer of a “field” – in the Bourdieuan sense, which is neither limited to architects’ production *strict sense*, nor is it mistaken as professional field –, the work of these two authors provided inputs to my studies as to relate them more directly to a tradition of architectural historiography and not only to cultural history.

Different starting points, however, also brought different considerations for the performance of research. Hence, it is worthy of note, how I started to dedicate greater attention to the movements of the authors I studied,³ *i.e.*, to emphasise the non-neutrality of the crossing of the Atlantic, or to the Tropic of Capricorn, in the critics' production. Crossing the Globe and experimenting cultures different from their own made them change or emphasise perspectives, at the same time leading them to create a sort of own ethos, a critical culture. These observations were certainly based on the sources I had worked upon, but also brought through other readings and research practices. For example, studies such as those by Daniela Ortiz dos Santos (2020, 2022) and Rute Figueiredo (2023), which invite to think the "moves" as research theme on the history of architectural criticism. However, Margareth da Silva Pereira's works, inviting to "think through clouds" (2018, p. 236-261), significantly demarcate my attention to movements. Her texts, present in my trajectory, moulded an attention to the production of historical research, observing the transiency of encounters, events, actions. Her metaphor, using images of clouds moving in the sky, draws attention to the investigation by means of chronologies, observing the behaviour of fragments of desires-projects-events-actions, as if they were trails of a cloud thickening in the sky before the storm. Pereira's texts, as well as the works of Jannièrè and Scrivano, are attentive to the notion of "actor". Pereira emphasises, though, the instability of an individual's social positions, when remembering that someone can be at one moment an art historian, at another moment a journalist, a professor, an editor, or an activist. That one same "given name", to use a term of Bourdieu ([1986] 2006, p. 186), can be someone progressive as an art critic and conservative regarding customs. Moreover, that these positions are unstable; they change with time.

It was this juxtaposition of questions that led me to wish to surpass the sphere of monographic researches and, therefore, initiate a collective debate. A shared dimension that, in its turn, would not be limited to researches about art critics who were dedicated to architectural criticism. Thus, a collective dimension that requires a plural and decentralised debate. It seemed increasingly necessary to answer (or to follow in the direction of answering) the questions: How diverse are the critical experiences? How does criticism manifest in cultures in which the written expression has a lower value than other representations? How much do political and social conjunctures alter (or not) the possibilities of publicly enunciating questions? How to work for the construction of a field of debates on a plural history of architectural criticism? How to stimulate that the transit state of studied actors is contemplated? What sources to use to write history?

3 This specific attention to movements in my researches, compared to the works of Jannièrè and Scrivano, is more of emphasis rather than effectively as a relation of presence and absence. Certainly, the works of Jannièrè and Scrivano are careful in exploring different criticism cultures, and they have a research network dedicated to mapping the architectural criticism production on a worldwide scale (Mapping Architectural Criticism). However, my works depart precisely from the moments of movement, the place of encounter, tension and conflict, placing them in the centre of the research.

Although the path until here has expanded what I learnt at the start, although the authors I had studied had been globalised and required that in the research I should surpass geographic frontiers that I had never crossed, this path still seemed to be a restricted cartography.⁴ This observation should not be mistaken as a call to the utopias of a total history, or which require an ideological engagement, as those that mobilised socialists and Trotskyists associations in the post-war, but rather of attention and need of openness to diversity and plural existences.

Even though still with partial contributions, this book faces this horizon: the need to think collectively about the history of architectural criticism, its modalities of discourses production, its shared objects and the construction of memory. A collective call that sought to treat it based on critical experiences produced in the South Cone of the Americas, understanding them as not restricted to a national framework, but rather as a practice of moving actors, constructors and participants of a cultural field of architectural criticism.

The collectivisation of this debate started with the organisation of the colloquium “Criticism, Media, Memory”, held on 13-14 September 2022, in a hybrid mode, at the Council of Architecture and Urbanism of Rio de Janeiro. It was organised through the research History of Architectural Criticism, of the Postgraduate Programme in Architecture of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. The colloquium gathered researchers based at universities in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, France, Germany, Portugal, and Switzerland.

Four discussion axes were organised for the event: transatlantic dialogues, visual culture, diffusion modes, and places of memory. The first axe aimed to think architectural criticism as a practice of transcultural origin. Based on the different mediation mechanisms (journals, published translated texts, and UNESCO’s large global meetings), there was the interest in understanding deeper their roles as places of encounter, exchange, interactions and mutual knowledge. The second axe aimed to frame photography and cinema as to intertwine them with the metier of criticism. In the face of static or moving images, the authors’ contributions sought to give centrality to the role of photographers, filmmakers and directors, who often seem invisible to the public. The third discussion axe brought researches that centre on published texts on architectural criticism and investigate how the specificities of audience, format, production and diffusion networks of different media had effects on the formulation and circulation of specialised journals, daily newspapers and cultural publications. Finally, the fourth axe presented researches that focus on the “places of memory” of architectural and art criticism.

4 This need of geographic openness seems to equally motivate the works of other contemporary researchers, such as those of Jannièrè and Scrivano, with the project Mapping Architectural Criticism; of Wilfried Wang, who in the recent book *On the duty and power of architectural criticism* (2022) presents an effort to contemplate different positions of researchers dedicated to architectural criticism, worldwide; or the project Atlas, of Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, which although oriented towards art (not architectural) criticism, presents the contemporary demand to expand the approach to the different geographic territories that study criticism.

By exploring the various apparatus – archives, exhibitions, books and journals –, the presentations lead to historiographic debates, working on the relation between the access to sources and the writing of history.

These four axes guided the debate at round tables, conferences and testimonies, which according to their specificities set up an extensive and heterogeneous panel of contributions. These writings are based on both punctual researches and long term extensive works. It is noteworthy that in the set of contributions, we opted to include also interviews, not only articles, so that the contribution format was not a limitation but rather an editorial decision that sought to show the specificity of the poetics of the interviewee and the addressed theme.

With the purpose of receiving and potentiating these different modalities of contribution and, still, bringing intelligibility and openness to the colloquium's audience, now having access to the book, we prepared this work by means of long, routine and careful talks. The material that composes this book is not limited to the colloquium's presentations, nor was it written in a closed format in monographic researches. It results from a greater effort that preceded and followed the event's punctual activity. During several months, the participants of each axe met in online sessions to construe the way the presenters would develop the themes and in order that the moderators could develop their contributions with some organicity. In addition, the moderators had periodical meetings with the coordination and among themselves to share the development of their discussions and to have updates on the developments of the other participants. Hence, we can say that these small discussion nuclei functioned, to some extent, as work groups. Each group had the autonomy to define its own routine and approach. This guiding principle – structuring an agenda by means of a long and mature conversation –, however, brought to the event and to this book a sort of diverse unity. Themes that intersect, talks that overlap, readings that meet among different approaches and development of researches.

In the book, this way of facing the work regarding criticism is part of its structure. The discussion axes of the event became its modules. In each module, its moderator – co-organiser of this publication – signs the opening text presenting the authors' contributions, as an essay that proposes a sort of texts binding. Some of these essays tell us about the working process established by the group, others present readings that illuminate collectively the contributions, and others reveal the delicate connections between the texts. The authors, on their turn, take us to deeper levels. If the conception of the event and the book draw on theoretical concerns centred on specific research dedicated to architectural criticism, the reaction of authors and mediators bring an expansion of the debate that is not only geographical, but also epistemological.

Finally, I would like to register that the working mode construed in the preparation of the colloquium “Criticism, Media, Memory”, which continued in the production of this book, was a sort of animacy. The event started to be conceived in 2021, when although the vaccine against Co-

vid-19 had already been available in Brazil, the university public at large still functioned online due to the pandemic. Furthermore, and especially, we still had a high number of deaths from the disease and due to a specific political context in the country, with a high level of social instability. A time when the role of criticism and the media was marked by polarised debates about the statute of truth, opinion, public opinion, report and narrative, and respective roles in the construction of democratic life. In 2022, the colloquium preceded in some days the presidential elections, period in which all this debate became even more acute. By the end of the book's preparation, between 2023 and 2024, when we started to live in a different context, I cannot see the theme proposed by the meeting as outdated. On the contrary, it seems to delineate, ever more clearly, an agenda of research and a platform of debates. Returning to feeling of animacy, in an almost incidental way, the experience of the construction of the colloquium "Criticism, Media, Memory" and this book showed that, if there is the wish to place criticism on the foreground of researches, there is no other way to undertake this task than to embrace the frank, open and continuous debate. And this is not done without active listening, disagreements, adjustments, resilience and patience.

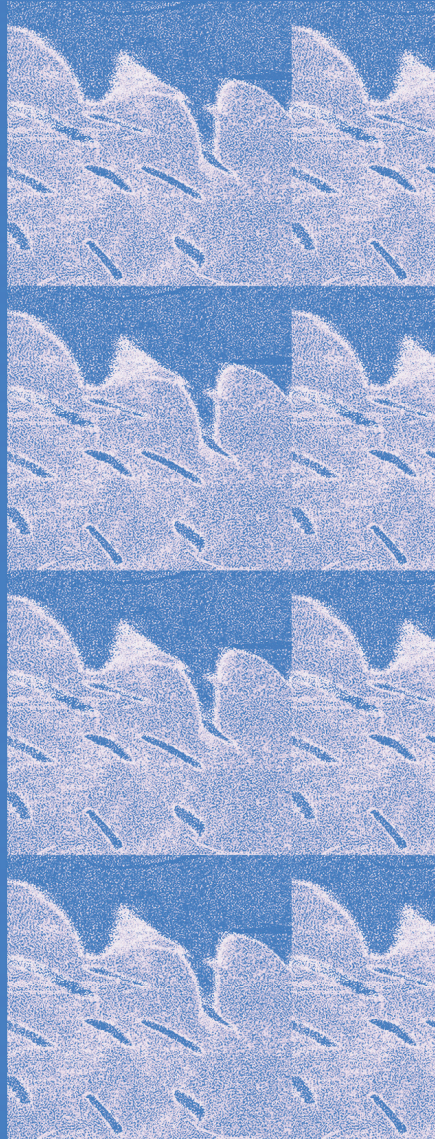
Here, it is worth returning to Jannièrè's texts, to that which she kindly prepared for this book, which regards aspects that have been the object of some of her recent works: the attention to the notions of audience and public opinion and historicity of the relation they establish with architectural criticism. Jannièrè's text helps us to remember that, although it is legitimate to clearly delineate the boundaries of architectural criticism – it is part of the struggle for the social recognition of an intellectual field – it is important that this practice is not confounded with architects' isolation in their own questions, nor with the understanding of the metier of criticism as architects' exclusiveness. A certain utopia is necessary – difficult to be attained, but important as horizon – that takes the interlocutor of criticism – the audience – as a concrete actor, active, and not as a vague abstraction or rhetorical resource. However the works presented in this book do not radicalise their researches in the study of this relation, the research practice and the writing of the works that are present here contain its germs. The legacy of this process – and the animacy of having experienced it in such a difficult moment – is the learning that criticism is not only a metier whose issues are perspicacious ideas, but also the active listening, dialogue and time. It is with legacy that we affirm and seek to broaden a reflection on the history of architectural criticism.

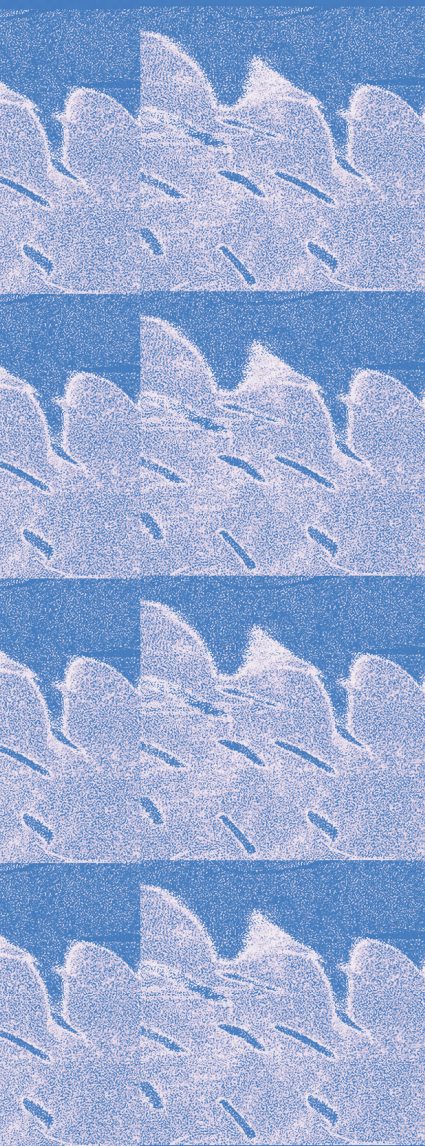
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I. TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUES

Rute Figueiredo

“ACTING BY ESSAY”¹

I like to suppose that we have to act by essay. That we must return to the experimental and essayistic character of things. (Margareth da Silva Pereira)

By situating the history of architecture in the notion of *nebula*, Margareth da Silva Pereira suggests that the critical operation takes place in a “lacunar moment” – at the precise point of uncertainty and doubt – and, immediately, traces the methodological and conceptual framework that sustains the essays gathered in the thematic axis *Criticism, media and transatlantic dialogues*. Indeed, the concept of *nebula* allows us, on the one hand, to think the history of architecture, the words employed to describe it and the concepts that confine it, as constellated bodies that acquire new configurations as they move through space and time; and, on the other hand, to look at criticism as an interruption in the course and configuration of this body in motion – as the author explains.

Along the interview published here, Margareth da Silva Pereira, professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, coordinator of the Laboratory of Urban Studies of the same institution and an incontestable reference in the analysis of historiographic discourses about architecture and the city, describes the several contributions that were at the origin of her work around the idea of *nebula*. She identifies some of the fundamental stages that have structured the approach to this notion in the field of the history of architecture and urban thought. As a starting point, the author recalls the intellectual context in which she was able to live in Paris, in the 1980s. It was at the precise moment when authors such as Bernard Lepetit, Michel de Certeau or Jacques Le Goff were reflecting on the epistemological guidance of history itself, or Reinhart Koselleck and François Hartog, who at that same time were invested with the historicity of words and concepts – namely in the common root

1 T.N.: The expression “acting by essay” borrows the words of Margareth da Silva Pereira in the interview published in this volume, under the title “Thinking through nebulae, the places of language. Interview with Margareth da Silva Pereira”.

of the notions of *criticism* and *crisis* (Koselleck, [1959] 2000). But it was, above all, at the *École des Hautes Etudes* en Sciences Sociales, in contact with the work of the French sociologist Christian Topalov in the description of the *intellectual nebulae* (1999) and, later, in the work she developed with him in “L’aventure des mots de la ville” (2010; 2014), that it became relevant to bring to the field of architecture the perception that “words are not neutral and the meanings they carry (or the meanings they displace) must be subject of criticism”, helping to understand the idea of *nebula* as a metaphoric figure, which puts in “suspension the meaning of things”.

Also the work of the Portuguese philosopher and essayist Fernando Gil, together with the Italian Ruggiero Romano, in the structuring of the “Enciclopédia Einaudi” (1985) – in which the concepts and the words are interconnected in associations of ideas, “bringing into evidence the production of sense as a construction of nexuses that become close or sustain one another ideologically or as figures of thought” – the coexistence with the field of art history or the reading of texts by Hubert Damish, with whom she studied, contributed to the introduction of this notion in the understanding of architecture and the city.

Therefore, a *nebula* differs from the rigid position that structures the notion of *network* – according to the vision of Manuel Castells (2010), in the scope of sociology –, or from the idea of *field* as a mere symbolic space of legitimation and struggle between actors – as proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1993) –, by introducing new plasticities that go beyond the conventional, hegemonic or unidirectional paradigms of historiography, normally focused on author-work, centre-periphery, North-South relations, or linear explanations of export, import or influence processes. “Traversed by blows”, unstable, in motion, the *nebula* is neither a concept, nor a method, but rather a “thinking in movement”, as stated by Margareth da Silva Pereira.

Through different paths, Guilherme Bueno, Ingrid Quintana-Guerrero, and Daniela Ortiz dos Santos reconstitute the *nebulae* that the authors of architectural criticism – in their social, geographical and intellectual networks – weave in an unceasing *game of scales* between the global and the local (and vice-versa), in the post-war period. Hence, they define different attempts of approach to the axis of *Criticism, media and transatlantic dialogues*, in which the various mechanisms of architecture mediation (translations, periodicals, publications and international meetings) are no longer considered as mere vehicles of circulating information, models or images, to be seen as “contact zones” – borrowing the interpretation of Avermaete and Nuijsink (2021), who transport to the architectural field a notion formulated by Pratt (1991) and Clifford (1997) in the scope of post-colonial studies. In other words, as spaces of production, negotiation and multidirectional knowledge, able to confer tangibility to the exercise of criticism – understood here both as trans-

national practice and as a product of complex processes of “transculturation” (Avermaete; Nuijsink, 2021, p. 354).

What might the idea of transnationalism or transculturation mean in the field of architectural criticism in the post-war period? What does it presuppose from a methodological point of view? In an epoch of deep social, economic and intellectual transformations, but also of great geopolitical tensions and global dilemmas, to what extent do the conceptual tools (used in that period and space) still confine our view, perception and understanding of criticism today? What place do the mediation mechanisms occupy in the formulation and resonance of the critical discourse on a transnational scale?

These interrogations are at the origin of this axis of reflection and draw on the observation of an absence. Although the work initiated by scientific projects and networks, such as “Mapping Architectural Criticism” (funded by the French Agence National de la Recherche [ANR] between 2014 and 2017) – launched at Université Rennes 2 and coordinated by Héléne Jannièrre and Paolo Scrivano –, is already a highly relevant contribution in identifying the critics, as well as in locating their archival collections. However, in this and in other scientific projects, there is still a need to cross the collected data and to situate architectural criticism in the context of global studies and the movement of transnational history. In the following pages, hence, the authors seek to observe actors, concepts, debates and dilemmas of criticism in a dimension that, though transatlantic, is not restricted to regional criteria. As we shall see, the *zoom in* and *zoom out* they propose help us with the review of narratives apparently stabilised, the critical analysis of sources and the consideration of criticism as a transnational practice.

With the title “The “V” Structure. A Translation Problem?”, the reflection that the historian, art critic and professor Guilherme Bueno bring us starts by analysing an architectural element in Brazilian architecture, namely the “V” column, and of the countless mutations undergone by the words – columns, pillars, posts and *pilotis* – according to the ideological or disciplinary understanding of those who enounces them. These variants delimit the concerns that, for one decade, between 1950 and 1960, were formulated by international actors placed in very distinct physical and conceptual geographies. However, between the architectural elements and their definitions there is not exactly a relation of direct or linear translation – their definitions comprise, as we will see, a critical dimension.

The author has been extensively working on the historicity of concepts and assumptions of the International Style, drawing on the writings of figures such as Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Giulio Carlo Argan, and Clement Greenberg – in the doctoral thesis he defended in 2005 at UFRJ, or in the study “A teoria como projeto” [The theory as project] (2007) –, *i.e.*, drawing on the great edifiers of the history of the modern movement.

In the essay published here, Bueno explains that the way by which international critics built up their arguments against Oscar Niemeyer's Brazilian architecture; formulated their derogatory interpretations of the modern "baroque"; and the language they used to legitimise their choices, was fixed both on disciplinary exogenous aspects and on the dogmatic logic of a modernist canon – which narrative the aforementioned authors helped to construct. To what extent would this criticism be "a way to point out the Brazilian architect's lack of understanding about the true problems of modern production?" – asks the author. Or, conversely, would it be a symptom of fear on the part of international modernist critics, who in this way sought to limit the scope of the "error" and the seduction that Brazilian architecture was arousing at the time?

Exploring the idea of *nebula*, this time not from the critical constellations defined by words, but rather by taking a printed object as a *contact zone* (as aforementioned), Ingrid Quintana-Guerrero – architect, architecture historian and professor at the Universidad de los Andes –, centres her reflection on the Colombian magazine *Proa*, which has remained in circulation from the late 1940s to the present day. As the title indicates, "Xenophile modernity: circulation and architectural criticism in *Proa* magazine – Colombia", her essay is about the complex phenomenon of reception and dissemination of models and images of modernist architecture that circulated internationally, and to what extent this xenophile modernity was a sort of "shared condition" among South American magazines. Taken as a "showcase of thought", in Quintana-Guerrero's words, the specialised magazine *Proa* makes evident that the choices of and the value attributed to the foreign works and authors resulted, on the one hand, from the network of social, academic or professional relationships in which its editors were situated. On the other hand, although presented under an uncritical way, the published foreign models corroborated the professional performance of *Proa*'s editorial team, in concrete interventions that transformed the urban territory according to a modernist logic – *i.e.*, by transgressing the pre-existing urban fabric.

Quintana-Guerrero stresses in her text that this tendency to publish international architecture was adopted along a transatlantic axis (of European import), as well as inside the South American continent itself (at a moment of the editorial agenda's turn), in which the impressive image of the Brazilian formulations became dominant in the magazine's ideas, as it is clearly perceived in the analysis of the quantitative data that the author uses for her reflection. The circulation of models and actors is inscribed in the author's trajectory of investigation; she has extensively analysed the displacement of Latin American architects in Paris, in the 1950s, namely in the study "Filhos da Rue de Sèvres: os colaboradores latino-americanos de Le Corbusier em Paris" [Sons of Rue de Sèvres: Le Corbusier's Latin American collaborators in Paris in the 1950s] (2016) or in "Origens da modernidade em arquitetura: dois arquitetos colombianos em Paris, na década de 1950" [Origins of modernity in architec-

ture: two Colombian architects in Paris in the 1950s] developed at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, in 2008.

The idea of displacement is, likewise, taken up as an interpretative reading lens by Daniela Ortiz dos Santos, in her reflection under the title “Latin America in its architecture. Culture, criticism and consensus”. Architect, historian, and currently coordinator of the *Centre for Critical Studies in Architecture*, at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Ortiz dos Santos reflects on the expression “Latin American architecture”, which has been generalized from the 1960s onwards, both inside and outside the region, in the language and in published texts. In this way, the author gives continuity to an extensive work in which she has explored the transatlantic relations, namely in the chapter “Italian Roots in Latin American Architectural History” (2022); or in the international symposium *Architectural History and International Organizations*, which she organised in Frankfurt, in the same year.

Here, the author takes as starting point a call made by UNESCO to international “specialists”, in 1969, on the occasion of the meeting of the International Union of Architects (UIA) in Buenos Aires, to reflect on the potential existence of a Latin American architecture. As we will see, a book (*i.e.* a printed object), edited by Roberto Segre and produced by exiled and immigrant architects, is at the centre of her narrative. It is then perceived how, in this movement of displacement, the author, herself an architect who emigrated to another continent, positions herself in a point of oscillation between exteriority-interiority, and how her work requires an extremely sensitive balance. In fact, because reflecting on the historical construction of the notion of Latin American architecture – widely popularised by architects and intellectuals both then and now – forces us to review criteria that have long been sedimented and reproduced in the history of contemporary architecture, while at the same time underlining the dynamic configuration that the nebulae of concepts, terms and expressions acquire in the unfolding of space and time. It therefore asks: “What is our state of attention to words and vocabulary when we write about architecture and its history?”. If, at the time, the operative idea of a Latin American architecture involved not only disciplinary knowledge, but also a political-ideological dimension, what do we mean today when we use this expression?

“Acting by essay” – as suggested by Margareth Silva Pereira –, in a constant negotiation between questions and hypotheses, testing variable angles and scales of reading, the reflections that comprise this thematic axis seek, thus, to contribute to the revision of methods and approaches to the study of architectural criticism, while at the same time suggesting that the evolution of the history of architecture necessarily presupposes the invention of a collective place, the crossing and sharing of knowledge, perceptions, thoughts and geographies, as the one this panel seeks to express.

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THE “V” STRUCTURE

A TRANSLATION PROBLEM?

Guilherme Bueno

The story of this text begins in Copacabana, “unforgettable”, with “the surf at the foot of the Copacabana Palace Hotel”, Gropius’ memories and reason for the indiscretion of Ernesto Nathan Rogers, who sees in them the “exuberant women”, perfectly situated there with their ostentatious “bracelets and other innumerable trinkets” (involuntarily, the tone of this remark says a lot about the verdict directed to Brazilian modern architecture) (*Architectural Review*, 1954, p. 237, 239). In this Copacabana, two personal insignificant episodes, moved by a fortuitous coincidence, took me back to an old theme, exhaustively studied among us, but that always reignites the investigation about the interpretations of our modernity.

Drawing on the anecdote: in a normal day, waiting for my daughter at Eugênio Jardim square, I stumbled on a concrete parallelepiped stuck on the pavement as a register of a municipality’s work. While I was there, I felt like a primate looking at the monolith in “2001: A Space Odyssey” and thought how something so small could be so heavy. Then I remembered of observing, sometime before, the effort of some men carrying Ivens Machado’s concrete sculptures to set up an exhibition and how at first sight those pieces seemed light for someone inexperienced (concrete is a material of inexact perception). Following the trajectory, a few hours later, when taking the child to school (also in Copacabana), my attention was caught by a building at the corner of Tonelero and Santa Clara streets, with its patio occupied by trapezoid supports in a full /V/ form. There was nothing special about them. However, it triggered reflections in the daily path: the first was the use of that form, almost as if it was for us as the classical orders for each region of Ancient Greece – as “our thing”, the proud and ubiquitous proliferation of a “Nyemeirism”. The second, the reason why I told this short story, was to think about how much load would it sustain (when pondered the weight of the small parallelepiped at the square), and how much the support *expressed* this tension, contracting and almost bending as a Solomonic column or an Atlas/Atlantis.

To my surprise, observing one day that hall undergoing renovation works, something made me feel embarrassed: those pillars, columns or pilotis in /V/ (or at least part of them) were hollow and sustained more tons of my imagination than of concrete. They might have had a function – hiding registers, pipes, or whatever – but it was not the one expected

and, the main fact, with that scenography it made an apology of an absent tectonics.

All this would seem like nonsense or a picturesque chronicle if at that time, because of other texts to be written, I would not be re-reading the well-known diatribe of Max Bill against Niemeyer and the discussions undertaken by Le Corbusier as well as the German architects in defence of the pilotis and cubic forms, between the late-1920s and early-1930s, followed by works like “Croisade, ou le crépuscule des Académies” by the French-Swiss architect and magazines like *Das Neue Frankfurt* (which in 1927 had an issue fully dedicated to flat roofs). Here we have our first movement towards the starting point.

If you are not expert in structures (like me), it is not easy to understand the difference between columns, pillars, posts and pilotis – because, discounting (perhaps) the structural functions, these three elements are redefined along the transformations in the history of architecture, implying value judgements. Le Corbusier touched the issue at least twice, in both occasions with clear didactic and moral purposes: in one of them, he did not explain – because there was no need for it, considering the available vast literature that preceded him –, he only categorized each one of these elements *per se* in the glossary that he organized in the second volume of his complete works, 1929-1934, listing them with the care to indicate the translation to other languages: pillier/Pfosten/poste; piloti/Pfeiler/pillar; poteau/Pfahl/pile. Le Corbusier does not even include “column” (colonne/Säule/column), perhaps for its obviousness, perhaps for *not wanting* to mix with old terms. After all, he had stated in “Vers une Architecture” that he did not like “to say ‘column’, it is a spoiled [abîmé] word”, preferring “cylinders” and “pillars” (Le Corbusier, 1923, p. 150) (if these translations are the most precise is a different issue that, although pervading our text, would deserve a sequential essay). He did not make something that could not be found in architecture dictionaries published since the mid-eighteenth century; on the contrary, he used exactly this separation to reinforce it, inverting, however, the historical perspective and scale of values. In the substantial “Dictionnaire Raisoné d’Architecture et des Sciences et Arts que s’y rattachent”, by Ernest Bosc, published in 1878, the author stresses in the term already included in a dictionary the noble and modest distinction between one thing and another:

[...] many authors have written that a round or cylindrical pillar was a column, which is inexact, because a column has the proportions, forms and members of architecture, such as the base and the capital, all things that a pillar does not have. It would be more logical to say that a cylindrical pillar is the shaft of a column¹ (Bosc, 1878, p. 502 – free translation).

¹ For comparison, cf.: D’AVILER, Augustin-Charles. **Dictionnaire d’Architecture civile et hydraulique et des arts qui en dependent**: comme la maçonnerie, la charpente-

When Bosc writes about columns, he does not even care to teach us what they serve for, presumably because it is a tacit understanding in his milieu, with the prevalence of the rhetorical counterpoint to the pillar: “COLUMN: Support usually in a cylindrical form, comprising three parts: base [...] that serves as the foot, shaft (or central part) and capital, which is the top of the shaft” (Bosc, 1878, p. 483 – free translation). Some pages further, the entry “Piloti” describes: “A series of posts stuck into the ground in greater or lesser distances and depths” (Bosc, 1878, p. 504-505 – free translation), a definition to explain how stilts liberate the block of unstable grounds and, as much as on the previous case, enable us to see the simultaneous move of Le Corbusier towards a primitivism (*piloti*) and in the direction of a flexibilised relation with the classical tradition (his pillars and *pilotis* are not columns, even though they create *colonnades*). It is noticeable, therefore, that at a first moment it is more the *aspect* and the *inscription* rather than the function that come into question, although the latter becomes progressively claimed. Le Corbusier would then take advantage of this to stress the separation between the old and the new procedures and plasticity, a theme highlighted in “Croisade” (1933), in which he polemicalizes with the nowadays obscure (but respected at that time) architect Gustave Umbdenstock. The latter condemned the “boxes made of cardboard”, “architecture of soap boxes” (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 8, 19) and the sensation of fragility and instability transmitted by the thin *pilotis*, which in his opinion produced an anti-aesthetic effect and lacked magnificence and grandeur. The uproar, initially about the survival of *metiers* in disuse due to new technologies, had led Umbdenstock in his conference to a double panegyric in favour of the magnificence and grandeur, directly proportionate to his criticism of the new methods, materials and forms (whose refutability originates Le Corbusier’s book), resulting in the defence of the architect-artist (in opposition to the “rationalist technicians or the engineers”),² and of traditional materials and the way of applying them. Taking the example of the stone, he states that

we should not allow the substitution of such an elevated ideal [expressed by the artist and the stone’s physicality] for a sectarian rationalism that randomly uses questionable materials, which in no way can ex-

rie, la menuiserie [...]. Paris: Charles-Antoine Jombert, 1755 (Free translation): “COLUMN. Sort of round pillar, comprised of a base, a shaft and a capital, that serves to support the entablature [p. 109] [...] PILLAR. Sort of round or square column, with no proportion, that serves to support the vault of any type of building [p. 285] [...] PILOT [stake, pylon] or PILOTI. Hydraulic architecture term. Piece of oak wood, round, used in its own thickness and sharpened at one end, sometimes armed with a pointed iron [...] that is stuck into the soil to firm the ground [p. 285]”.

2 “The architect-artist would be bound to disappear to give way to rationalist technicians or engineers, who are not interested in the subtle feeling of expressions of sound beauty” (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 85 – Free translation).

press and translate live analogies [...] (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 81 – free translation).

Umbdenstock states the same in other occasions, with the “monolith deeply rooted into the soil” (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 30 – free translation), condemning the visual impression resulting from the articulation of volumes conjugated to the absence of “heavy” materials:

Once we compare the architectural plans of all preceding centuries with those presented to us nowadays, it is no exaggeration to say that in our times often one verifies but a dust of plans and that the suggestive idea of stabilisation, which is nothing but the sane transposition of spirit, deliver a true architectural decomposition [...]. One should not build without respecting the normal thickness of walls to suggest the idea of a balance associated to the quality of materials – whether stone, stone blocks [moellon] or bricks, and this without very outrageously introducing metal and reinforced concrete in our residential and private buildings (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 82-83 – free translation).

This solution, added to the requirement of walls with 35 to 50 centimetres (“we would like that no private building could be designed except with reinforced walls [*murs de force*] or façades as in the time of our roman and gothic ancestors”) (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 27, 84), finds its last protest against the “concrete pillar”, which leads him to the conclusion:

[...] it suffices to mention as an example the current fashion of columns, a logical point of support, from which one excludes the pedestal and the base, supressing the flourishing and the expansion of the capitals, to create cylinders with no expressive character that evoke the idea of vulgar flutes [mirlitons] [our emphasis] (Umbdenstock *apud* Le Corbusier, 1933, p. 86 – free translation).

In this libel, Le Corbusier (1933, p. 86 – free translation) notes on the margin of his copy of the conference brochure: “Try a little, monsieur Umbdenstock, to introduce a base and insert a capital on a reinforced concrete pillar”. If we reach this last object of discord (it is noteworthy: what Umbdenstock calls column, Le Corbusier corrects, by writing pillar [*poteau*], pointing at the ignorance of his contender), Le Corbusier claims, to conclude his refutation, accusing Umbdenstock of still thinking in terms of “columns”, which need to materialize the old perception – or rather, in this case, “suggestion” – of weight, a problem that would not affect the new architecture and no longer corresponds to recent procedures.

This polemics was vivid in another converging debate, that of tectonics. Originating in the nineteenth century, with the inherited disagreements of Carl Bötticher and Gottfried Semper, it is illustrated, approximately at the same time of Le Corbusier's book, in the article of the German art historian Fritz Schmalenbach, entitled "Jugendstil und Neue Sachlichkeit", published on the May 1937 issue of the journal *Das Werk* (and previously presented at the *14th International Congress of the History of Art*, in Bern). In other words, it was a source certainly available for Max Bill and informs us of the current interpretation of the concept of tectonics. Schmalenbach resumes the polarization between Bötticher's "tectonics" and Semper's "stereometry", associating them respectively to "Jugendstil" and the "New Objectivity" architecture. About the latter, Schmalenbach concludes that

[...] instead of tectonics, follows an indifferent tectonics [...], inorganic, and, moreover, so to speak, a 'form without form, the cubic, or, to use Semper's polar category on 'tectonics', the 'stereometry'. This 'stereometry' or 'cubic' should openly correspond to formal point zero, as a formal element of Sachlichkeit [Objectivity] (Schmalenbach, 1937, p. 134 – free translation).

If the "Neue Sachlichkeit", which in one way or another directly addressed Bill, shifted to obsolescence a certain interpretation of tectonics, we should refer to another passage of Schmalenbach's article, immediately derived from Bötticher's work, published in 1852 (with a second edition in 1874), to understand what it is.

This 'tectonics' corresponds, in a few words, to the following: a constructive element has a true, effective function in the construction, which, however, is not made visible in its form. A concrete pillar nowadays may seem very indifferent. The effective function of the element can only be made perceptible [*versinnlicht*] from an organic analogy. The work form [*Werkform*] knowingly becomes a form of art, whose sense is its encompassed, expressive strength. It is widely known that the entasis of a column, similarly to a contracted muscle, visualises its load force (Schmalenbach, 1937, p. 132-133 – free translation).

It is this connotation that the column carries and the piloti does not. Allow me to suppose that this opposition, in which the tectonics occupies a rear position, surely influenced Bill's conception of the objective form of concrete art, whose manifesto he launched in the same journal the following year. We anticipate here some "precepts" that already suggest the fundamentals of his aversion to Niemeyer's solutions. However, to reach them we must first point out a short methodological note, which will be useful to better delineate the analysis.

Among columns and pilotis, there are issues of orders and *disorders*. They deserve different approaches. The first, more literal, is the proportionate organization of things in the space; *how* the elements are displayed. Leaving aside the rhetorical issues already exposed, in general, columns, pillars and pilotis preserve their mirrored rhythmic distribution, essentially changing their position in the volume according to the type of support they exert, meanwhile approving the importance of the scale (regulating lines, modulator). However, with the technological development of construction, a leeway is open in this implementation, resulting in solutions seen as originals – which may also pay a price for it.

By way of example, we have as a transitive situation (and, in the course of the text we will perceive its consequences), the famous “gracious dengue” (in Lucio Costa’s words) of the alternate evolution of the *columns* (in the definition of the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute [IPHAN]) of *Casa do Baile*, which support individually and diagonally the marquee, but, when varying the angle of perception, form a colonnade in the direction of the main body. On the opposite side, the *Galeria California*, by Niemeyer (whose presence will be implicit in our article), produces moments of asymmetrical “collage” between two silhouettes of different supports. If, apart from the human scale, the issue of distribution (here outlined) and the “consequent” and coherent visual relation with the programme is considered, making a free adaptation of the famous study by Joseph Rykwert (“The Dancing Column”, 1996), we would suggest that, in Niemeyer’s inventions – which distinguish an element firstly thought to be visually neutral –, regarding the silhouette we have a principle of “Modernist architectural order”, pondering the variations and the peculiarity offered to the plastic repertoire.

However, as much as the nomination and designation of the classical orders is an *a posteriori* fact attached to the ascension of academicism (as exposed by Rykwert), the same can be said regarding the “modern orders”, of which it is suspected of having been insinuated by its critics exactly for slipping into the same vice. Objectively, there would be a subliminal sense in the objections of Max Bill and his peers to the V support because, among others factors, it foments a signature and a stylistic individualization of architecture, suggesting the invention of bizarre orders. Moreover, its eclectic use would disrespect even a principle of order, by deviating from a logical (or rational) sequencing among elements.

Finally, instead of an articulation, there would be a mere succession of piled up parts, accused by Max Bill as a predominance of questionable taste on the respect to the *public* design of a space. Thus, the senses of order are surreptitiously summoned – as occurs in the historical example –, but now, to stress that there is no order at all, hence negating any vestiges of serious architectural value.

Therefore, these premises lead, considering the due temporal bounds, to Max Bill’s criticism (although outworn, it is the object from

where we extracted our true theme) published in October 1954 in *Architectural Review*, as part of a special dossier dedicated to the *Biennial of São Paulo* and the buildings setup on the wake of the commemoration of the city's 4th Centennial and other notorious realisations. In the dossier there are also testimonies of Gropius (from where we extracted the text's opening statement, part of a letter sent by him to the magazine's editor), Ernesto Rogers (actually, the English version of his article published in *Casabella* a few months earlier), English architect Peter Craymer, temporarily living in Rio de Janeiro, and Japanese architect and professor Hiroshi Ohye, giving the ensemble an international and supposedly impartial accent.

Keeping the important singularities of each of them in their respective judgements, there are common points, such as, quoting Ohye, the fact that the Brazilian architectural works "seem to be designed chiefly for the effect and to look well in photographic reproductions", or as he added, manifesting a "desire for show". This "desire to appear" finds echo in Bill's article (in the magazine it is placed just after Ohye's) and has as its critical point the rejection to the "V" piloti. Bill, who was well acquainted with Le Corbusier's works and was familiarized with the specialized literature, deliberately chose to describe the support as a "piloti" – a meaningful choice in the English text, since he did not choose "pillar", as prescribed in the introductory glossary of the "Oeuvres Complètes", by the French-Swiss master, and for the Gallicism not being common in German, at times not even comprised in specialised dictionaries³.

In the text resulting from Max Bill's lectures – held in French, for which he apologizes, "saying that [...] it was the first time he lectured in that language⁴ – at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM) and at the School of Architecture of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP), he launches the controversy whose allegory is symbolized by this incongruent "V". Since then, the text is known almost by heart by all scholars, for being so often repeated. Nevertheless, I quote some excerpts in order to develop an understanding that Bill's opinion is a condensation of various layers of discourse that immediately deny any validity to the self-bearing solution, which became indelibly associated to Niemeyer, for it triggers a narrative conflict between cultures:

Initially the pilotis were straight, but now they are beginning to assume very baroque forms. At first glance, they may strike one as an ingenious mode

3 For example, in the bilingual edition of the "Wörterbuch für Ingenieurbau und Baumaschinen", by Herbert Bucksch, published in 1955 (Wiesbaden: Bauverlag Wiesbaden), "piloti" is not included in both languages. "Pfeiler", which Le Corbusier finds is equivalent to "piloti" and "pillar", in the dictionary it is translated as "pier" and "shaft" (p. 224).

4 Visit to Brazil of the famous Modernist sculptor Max Bill. **Boletim do MAM do Rio de Janeiro**, n. 9, jul. 1953.

of construction, but it is one that has now become purely decorative. [...] In a street here in São Paulo I have seen under construction a building in which pilotis construction is carried to extremes one would have supposed impossible. There I saw some shocking things, modern architecture sunk to the depths [...]. Immediately you enter the building and you are struck by an awesome muddle of constructional systems. Thick pilotis, thin pilotis, pilotis of whimsical shapes lacking any structural rhyme or reason, disposed all over the places; also walls entirely of reinforced concrete pointlessly confused with the columns, cutting up and destroying all form and purpose. It is the most gigantic disorder I have ever seen on a job (Architectural Review, 1954, p. 238).

However, to get back to our analysis, let us observe that the junction between “pilotis of whimsical shapes lacking any structural rhyme or reason”, confused with columns intersected by concrete walls, as to reflect the “awesome muddle of constructional systems”, reveals two things. The first one we deduce from a previous paragraph, in which Bill introduces the issue of the pilotis (and its fashion). He detects the “modernized academic spirit” and their formal saga is not too far “roughly, from those columns of the Greek temples transformed into Renaissance and, later, in the so-called ‘classical’” (the history of the academicism of the “orders”, which would gain its modern version). The second, if we consider both this mention and the confusion between piloti and column in *Galeria California*, designed by Oscar Niemeyer (visited by Bill and targeted in his article), it was Niemeyer’s verdict to treat columns as pilotis and pilotis as columns, falling into a misshapen structural eclecticism, contrary to the assumption of regularity and delicacy preconized by the piloti, privileging massive effects and expressions of strength, not only in detriment of a construction clarity (concrete walls would not need columns; these, flanking them, besides being redundant, block the space; pilotis should liberate rather than interpose voids...) which, by reminding us of the necessary *demonstration* and *dramatization* of *weight*, fall on the conception of the old Umbdenstock about the *representational* role of the self-bearing elements, as well as on the criticism made by Le Corbusier on the occasion of the polemics of “Croisade”, also alerting against modern academicism. These are the sort of reasons that led him to believe that the Brazilian architect reproduced the “modernized academic spirit”.

However, the confusion about knowing (or saying) if (and when) Niemeyer’s V supports are columns, pillars, posts, pilotis, was generalized. The problem of nomenclature, in fact, was revealed since the discrepancy in the translations of Le Corbusier. In spite of the indication in his glossary, poteau = pile, we notice that the English version (1931 edition) of “Vers une Architecture” chooses “pier”. And, for “pilotis” (Le Cor-

busier, 1923, p. 45), “piles” is adopted (Le Corbusier, 1931, p. 59), instead of *piloti* = pillar. In the second monography of Papdaki dedicated to Niemeyer (“Oscar Niemeyer: Works and Progress”) there is “stilts” (for the same *pilotis* commented by Bill), substituting columns (“columns” – “the giant stilts, the bearing walls which eliminate the need for columns and hanging beams [...]. Each stilt supports two spears”), “V-shaped stilts”, “V-shaped supports” (an interesting *indefiniteness*), “free-standing columns”, and a junction of both (“The stilts transfer the loads carried by two columns to a simple point of support on the ground”). Hitchcock, surprisingly, bypasses the theme in the catalogue “Latin American Architecture since 1945”. Mindlin (1956, p. 196) uses “V-columns” when mentioning the *Palácio da Agricultura* [Agriculture Palace] at *Parque do Ibirapuera* [Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo] and “columns” and “reinforced concrete brackets with the feet of the struts connected at ground level”, when referring to the *Palácios das Nações e dos Estados* [Palaces of Nations and of the States], situated in the same park. This apparent indifference about the promiscuity of construction systems (or, perhaps, even of terms and variations), which for some resulted in the “awesome muddle”, reveals the type of international dispute in which Brazilian architecture was involved – at the same time that it defends its autonomy and originality, it becomes the target of polarizations between what could grossly be called a North-American party (the privilege of aesthetics and architecture as art, preconized by the MoMA) and an “European” party still tributary of a functionalist heritage, for which the priority relation between form and function remains an axiom. In other words, to which foreign orbit of influence should the Brazilian production be aligned *from then on*, opposed to the previous European primacy?

Returning to Bill’s rejection, when restituting his “archaeology”, we can understand his fear regarding Brazilian architecture: would it be a world problem that compromises the European hegemony, a rupture? If yes, would it lead the programme of the later to dilution, to a *cul-de-sac*?

Let us call in support of the argument another “typical” element refused by Max Bill the painted tiles. For him, the cultural reminiscence of the *past* did not redeem the decorative harm of camouflaging the structure (although Lucio Costa stressed that its use was meant precisely to indicate that it was not about structural walls). The painted *and* figurative tile was an updated form of applied ornamentation, a voluntary and nostalgic prison to the narrative figurativism. Besides, we must understand the “incongruence” in the light of Bill’s theory of concrete art. For him, concrete art is a stage further of abstract art, since the latter was born as tributary of derivations of naturalism (abstract art would derive from a simplification of nature and the figurative vision, while concrete forms do not depend on external referential, existing as purely mental and mathematical entities). Under this view, it is easily perceived that for Bill the use of figurative elements leads architectural geometry to

recede to this naturalist dependence, that it still performs a narrative of the landscape. In the same way as it occurs with the tiles, the same goes for the V shape. In extreme cases, the similarity of its silhouette (as well as, at times, its excessive frontality) to the shape of the trunk of a tree goes back to the naturalism and figurativism of the “primitive column” – and the recurrent international mirror of Niemeyer, Alvar Aalto, as well as the Park Hotel by Lucio Costa, seem to confirm it. Recapitulating, we are, thus, conducted to three problems: the V structure performs an illusory weight, it deceives as *effect*; it recedes the modernist linear progressivism with its naturalist analogy; finally, its frontal silhouette “flattens” the space, creating monocular spots in the perception of the architectural volume, i.e., framing the modern multiaxial volume to a Renaissance perspective point.

The problem would end here, if it would not be for two “archaeological remarks”: Niemeyer may well have invented the V support as we know it, but it did not come out of nowhere. There are some precedents in his own work (the marquees of the Casino and the Church at the Pampulha architectural complex – the latter deriving in semi-arches rebound in iota-shape), others were simultaneous to Niemeyer’s and appreciated by the international critics (the “exoskeleton” of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro and of the Experimental School in Asuncion, both by Affonso Eduardo Reidy), and not least significant, there are discreet “ancestors”, either in the “diagonal steel supports” – as described in the catalogue “Brazil Builds” (1943) – used on the canopy of the Seaplane Station, by Attilio Correa Lima (Rio de Janeiro, 1940), but especially on one of the supports of the access marquee of the Cité de Réfuge of the Salvation Army, by Le Corbusier, in Paris (1929) and on the Unité d’Habitation, in Marseille (1947-1952), with none of them having been discredited. The type of relation between a support and a support point was given (but if we wish to go backwards indefinitely, we can make bold leaps, reaching at least the geminate columns or, more recently, a common Niemeyer’s way of building his shapes by broadening “slices” of construction layers – in this case, to be specific, when finding that the V solution is a mere transposition cut out of a roof truss functioning as a pillar). Niemeyer, compared to these examples, would have, at the same time, the concrete “stuffed” and the “pushed” into the building, and this would be one of his sins. In addition to the luxuriance of curves and the elitist social use of many buildings, Bill summarized his disgust in one word: “baroque”.

There could not be a more emblematic term to examine the second “archaeological remarks”: the use of the adjective was current to situate the matrices of the Brazilian approaches, with a positive tendency of Lucio Costa, to whom this signalled an original and culturally authorial acclimatization, but assumed a deleterious value for Bill, who does not disguise how much he associates it to well-known clichés (disorder, turbulence, artifice, unrest, dissolution... decay). Even if resorting here to

an assumption, I believe in its plausibility: Bill, who had transformed the “Art Concret” of Theo Van Doesburg into “Konkrete Kunst”, surely had known the essay “Klassiek-barok-modern”, written and presented by the Dutch artist and architect in December 1918, transformed into a book two years later, and translated into French in 1921 under the auspices of gallery owner Léonce Rosenberg. Differently from art historians contemporary to Van Doesburg, like Wölfflin, Panofsky and Giedion, for the artist the baroque remained a negative and anti-modern value; it was the trans-historical phantom of academicism. More emphatically, he broadens the use of the adjective and classifies as baroque all manifestations throughout the history of art that “bastardise” true shapes in imitations, simulacra. For him, ancient Roman art was the “baroque” of the Greek art, as much as the academicism and the *Art Nouveau* would be for modern art:

The essence of baroque consists in an unbalanced relationship, due to the prevalence of the particular, which is expressed in baroque art by the predominance of fanciful natural forms and their arbitrary exaggeration. [...] All work in which there is the prevalence of the fantasy character is baroque [...]. The Romans discovered, took, combined, but did not create. [...] Therefore, what the Romans appropriated from Greek art was not the content, the essence, but the shape, the exterior [...]. With the Romans, the balance between interiority and exteriority, the universal and the particular was broken and started to dominate the particular, the exterior [...] The Roman art is, thus, baroque in its character, *i.e.*, the balance between the essence and the appearance was broken (van Doesburg, 1920, p. 11-12, 15-16; 1983, p. 115, 117-118).⁵

We affirm that Max Bill used the word “piloti” (in French and English, to avoid misunderstanding and leave no margin for doubts about his intentions) on purpose: with this, he refuted any chance that the V support be accepted as an “authentic piloti” and, consequently, the architecture that adopts it assumes, at its own risk, the responsibility of becoming automatically wrong and counterrevolutionary. This enables us to use the paraphrase of Van Doesburg about the Romans: the *Brazilians* discovered, took, combined, but did not *create* (or over-created). Therefore, what *Brazilians* appropriated from *modern architecture* was not the content, the essence, but the shape, the exterior. With *Brazilians*, the balance between interiority and exteriority, the universal and

5 The declination and porosity of the sequence of analogies baroque/Romans made by Van Doesburg finds other indications circulation among the European intellectual environment: his texts had a retrospective circulation again in the first half of the 1950s: in the retrospective dedicated to De Stijl at the Stedelijk Museum in 1951, a reduced paragraph of “Klassiek, Barok, Modern” is reproduced.

the particular, was *broken* and started to dominate the particular, the exterior. Brazilian architecture is, thus, baroque in its character, *i.e.*, the balance between the essence and the appearance was broken.

Would we actually be the Romans of the interwar period, the *baroque* diluting the program consolidated at the CIAMs?⁶ “One is baffled to account for such barbarism as this exemplifies being able to break out in a country where there is a CIAM group, a country in which international congresses on modern architecture are held, where a journal like *Habitat* is published and where there is a biennial exhibition of architecture” (Bill, [1954] 2003, p. 161), recalcitrated Bill. However, this indisposition, added (undoubtedly) to a mix of a dispute for space, professional jealousy, spite, incomprehension, ill-will and occasion for self-publicity mixed with criticism – even if sincere – is an advantageous polarization, for it reclaims protagonism after calculating its steps: criticise was important, recognised Lucio Costa, but Bill’s position was a comfortable one, because it was situated in a generational fight in which the figure coming from the “First World” arrives already having vantage points ammunition and support networks credited in his favour (the prestige of being the messenger’s voice) and whose chock of forces looked much more favourable than disputing terrain with the doyens of the between-wars, in the face of whom he restrained himself. Bill “renounced” to Le Corbusier, but did not give up on him; nor manifested the same forcefulness in the face of the luxury enterprises designed by Mies van der Rohe, as can be seen in the short impartial *and* reverent presentation that he writes for the German architect’s booklet, published in 1955, as emerges in his diplomatic caution:

I do not agree with all I have seen of your architecture. I find wrong things in your buildings and often in their conception. But I would like to know: who would surpass you? [...] His work does not make me cool; even in what I find wrong, I find a way to justify for its beauty. [...] I can demonstrate the absurd of your stairs and balustrades; nevertheless, I must reckon the clear beauty. [...] And he always surprise me with new proposals, always with the same subtlety, the same light of truth⁷ (Bill, 1955, p. 8, 23 – free translation).

6 Not even Argan escaped this historicist temptation, whose colonialist tints still vibrated in the analogies, in an article also published in 1954: “[...] considering the Brazilian architectural production as a flourishing colony of European architecture, with Le Corbusier as viceroy. It could also be remembered that the Brazilian baroque derives from the Spanish and Portuguese baroque [...]. However, the example of Roman architecture seems more appropriate; it certainly deduces much of its forms to Greek architecture and, nevertheless, is moves away from its pure, metaphysical proportionality to express or manifest, through a more severe and massive monumentality, the authority and stability of civil institutions” (*apud* Xavier, p. 170).

7 We draw on the Italian edition of Bill’s monography, which had also a Spanish translation, but to our knowledge it was not published in German or English.

Let us admit that history of art is written from personal preferences and requests from architectural original construction solutions. This is from human and intellectual nature. But it is from political nature that the error of one is pardoned due to its beauty and the *beauty's error* of another is belittled as “abuse”, “barbarism”, “anarchy”, “spirit devoid of all decency” (Bill, [1954] 2003, p. 161). Further, Bill assumes the scholarly authority to protect and explain the architect’s role to the audience, as if the latter had never known it (Bill, [1954] 2003, p. 161). By claiming his share of influence in the so-called Third World, he sought to extend the attraction of that environment to himself, taking advantage of the position conquered with his reception in the circuit of plastic arts, offering himself as leader and reference focus alternatively to those other actors who aimed at the same field, as we have previously pointed.

What are the implicit problems of “modern baroque”, what con-trarities does it raise? It considers, to a certain extent, emancipation and history that detains independent elements, which had managed to extract productive conceptions from a traditional repertoire considered inept for the genealogy constructed by the articulated industrialist perspective since the early twentieth century, creating a fissure into the link of correspondence between industry and morphology of modern forms (in other words: (a) what does baroque has to do with modern architecture? There remains an irony, because Van Doesburg was not so assertive regarding Rembrandt; (b) what is the consequence of having forms as modern as the Europeans, although born into a metropolitan environment, but semi-industrial?) It was a history *strange* to that constructed by the Modern Movement from its centres – strange due to its unusual articulation of temporalities, but *also strange, strangely familiar* for slipping into another original malaise of avantgarde – as we will see later – that modernism did not come out unscathed from the disconnection between a form *to be*, *to be possible* and *to seem possible* in originally unfavourable material conditions, leading to the promotion of myths as *faits accomplis*. It points, also, to a hypothetic “loss” of European control and the emergence of one more focus of occurrence (an issue of prestige that may or may not convert into other assignments, considering the flow of work requested to Niemeyer in Brazil and abroad since the second half of the 1940s). There is a latent turning point when, after the scholarly recognition of European masters in the two previous decades the paths could then compete for the protagonism, and the internationalism was exposed to new voices and solutions with its totality hesitant between cohesion or dispersion, with an autonomous nuclei hopefully horizontal, an anxiety of a renewed recognition – and even the deference –, but no longer the obligation to wait for the import of the ready answer coming from above, thus liberating the Brazilian environment from the restrict condition of metropolitan matrices epigone (Ítalo Campofiorito noticed this when emphasizing about Pampulha the passage of modern architecture *in* Brazil to modern architecture of

Brazil). When, once again, some of the collaborators of the *Architectural Review* panel insist that it is necessary to live in Rio de Janeiro to understand the circumstances to which such production responds, they expose the argument that Giedion repeatedly used (having as pretext Reidy's work) when simultaneously writing about the "new regionalism" and "universal architecture".

Visually speaking, the V support was showy enough not to go unnoticed and perhaps be adopted almost as an icon of the "new phase" by several young and future architects around the world, invading the sanctuary of sombre shapes and spreading all over, such as the moulded capitals (actually, as proven by the example of Copacabana in the beginning of our story or in presence of in Niemeyer's project in the Hansaviertel ensemble [Berlin, 1957]) – a colonisation of forms the other way round. "I tremble to think that even among you here there may be those whom this spirit attracts", continued the Swiss artist, architect and designer (Bill, [1954] 2003, p. 161).

Nevertheless, for now I leave aside these conjectures and return to the aesthetic issues unrepressed by the V structure, whether one wishes to name it column, piloti, pillar, post, sculpture or else, in that it brings to the surface modernity's taboos of the interwar period. By elaborating its "disorder", this "baroque" attributed to Niemeyer signified less the problem of it being the "modernized academic spirit", than the blind spots trigger of the "form follows function" creed, which more than once used scenographic solutions of austerity and more mythical purity than effectively functional. In fact, Niemeyer's production, at least since the Pampulha ensemble, systematically revealed with its choices, cutouts and redistributions of volumes (many of them originating from European referential) numerous functions that escaped to the vow of accuracy prophesied by the pioneers of the interwar period. It is worth remembering the surprise of the shape of an airship hangar be converted into a church's nave. Or, that this nave, not knowing it, adopted a form (the paraboloid) also used on a Soviet terminal (Grigorii Vegman, *Third-class Train Station*, before 1935), on an exhibition pavilion (Hermann-Gieseler Halle, Bruno Taut, 1921; Paviion A, Josef Kalous, 1927-1928), on an unforeseen repetition of the Roman model of the basilica. If this was merely a more *explicit* evidence, it opens the wound of the culture of modern shapes, by leaving in suspense the certainty of its tautology, giving room for other scenographies to be unmasked from their founding myths, for example, as Paul Turner makes a point in the 1980s about the artifices of the Dom-Ino system, when sentencing that its only distinct characteristics

[...] the really significant thing about the Dom-Ino design is the fact that its columns and slabs are completely smooth [...] The way the Dom-Ino system is designed, however – with neither rib-beams nor

columns-splay – would have been exceedingly difficult to construct at this time [...] Because of all these difficulties, it is apparent that the smooth, simple forms of the slab and the column in Jeanneret's design were the result of a purely aesthetic choice [...] Indeed, this formal simplicity and "smoothness" of the structural elements is the one really distinguishing feature of the Dom-Ino system [...] The fact that this simplification could be accomplished only by excessively complex (indeed almost perverse) construction method, was of no great concern to Jeanneret. The important thing was that the ultimate form should be the simplest, most pure expression of the concepts 'slab' and 'column'⁸ (Turner, 1977, p. 125-126).

It seems to me unlikely and ironical that Max Bill's sharp eyes, enough to be shocked with the *faux pas* of the "Brazilian modern-baroque architecture", overlooked the foundational Corbusier's artifice – Bill who had been the editor of one the volume of "Oeuvres Complètes". Hence, we notice that critics are not immune to hierarchies, nor geopolitics. And it is not inappropriate to repeat, how Bill never saw as inadequate the support of the Salvation Army's marquee.

Despite the difference of adjectives, the caveats of Niemeyer's production surpassed the pages of the *Architectural Review* dossier. From time to time, they return to the arena, especially when the principle of functionalism becomes close to its crisis. Nevertheless, his work, instead of being considered as a demonstration of the limits of that trend, is repeatedly pointed as guilty for its disintegration. The term is not actually used, but Niemeyer is, for the architectural Modern Movement, a "mannerist", according to what is deduced from an article published in April 1961 by Nikolaus Pevsner, which gives historical filling to the thesis of "modern academicism" accused by Bill. The text, entitled "Modern Architecture and the Historian or the Return of Historicism", the transcription of a lecture, raises the hypothesis that modern architecture would have entered in the post-war in a historicist attitude, whose reference matrix are the realizations of the first half of the twentieth century, pointing, through supposedly morphological similarities, to the "alarming recent phenomenon", namely, "he styles imitated now are never-before-imitated-styles", based not only on the passive use of styles "towards exteriors which are created not necessarily at the expense of function" (Pevsner, 1961, p. 230, 235).

The emergence of forms that tend to valorise the "architectural comment" find their target in different details (and ironically, even Nie-

8 This quote was translated from the French edition of Turner's book, published in 1987, which presents some adjustments, such as additions, in relation to the first English edition from 1977 (published drawing on the original text from 1970). In the English version, among other things, the excerpts are more succinct and more distanced from each other.

meyer is imitated in this state of confusion), leading Pevsner to state sarcastically (without mentioning Niemeyer yet, but it is easy to see his involvement in the descriptions made) that

[...] after the war, you had and you have for instance the canopies which curl up, or do a Hitler salute, or snake to the left or right, and in fact do anything they can do to avoid a straightforward statement of what a canopy is actually built for (Pevsner, 1961, p. 235).

The place reserved to Niemeyer appears some paragraphs later and it is outstanding if examined in parallel with all that we have seen arising from Bill's criticism. It is attributed to the architect one of the main responsibilities for the entry of modern architecture into its "historicist" phase, almost as the vortex of its crisis:

But the fundamental matter to explain the return of historicism remains the fact that a change of architectural style took place from about 1938 or so. It appeared at first innocuous enough [...] But it suddenly gathered tremendous vigour, when young Oscar Niemeyer got going in Brazil in 1942-43. His are the earliest buildings which are emphatically no longer of the so-called International Style, and they are buildings that have force, that have power, that have a great deal of originality, but they are, emphatically, anti-rational (Pevsner, 1961, p. 236).

In view of this verdict that exceeds in two years the chronological limit of this seminar, I allow myself to refrain from mentioning the details of Bruno Zevi's article ([1970] 2003, p.164), published one decade later (and known by us thanks to its reedition in the anthology "Depoimento de uma geração" [Testimony of a generation], organised by Alberto Xavier (Xavier, 2003), and still today a reference work), which just adds fuel to the fire, differing for the belligerent tone, at times rather insulting ("Brazilians [...] do not know how to refrain themselves"; Brazilians [...] are exuberant, they appropriated the motives of the pilotis and dissipated their fantasies on them"; "hysterical sought of profiles licentiously new" – here we remember Rogers in Copacabana...) and gratuitousness, by presenting again Bill's opinions (Zevi in fact mentions "exasperate Le Corbusier's mannerism").

However, our production could not claim absolute innocence either, since in its imaginary the principle of "appear" – appear that at times is also *resemble* – was not completely absent. We know that here tricks were also practiced (as in the contingencies faced by Warchavchik in his early houses-manifestos); it is more complex to observe that the gestation of modern architectural visibility coexisted surreptitiously with the *speech on appearance*, curiously even exaltingly. Something sensed, for example, in an unpretentious advertisement published on September 10, 1933, on the newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, of Rio de Janeiro, pla-

ced at the margin of a regular column of modern architecture. The add promises to potential clients to adapt “your old building to modern comfort”, i.e., a structure of the past is *recovered* and managed as to assume in its façade a modern make-up, serenely discarding the relational creed of convergence between technique, materials, structures, distribution of spaces, morphology of volumes and planes. Therefore, here we face an environment does not exempt from contradictions, actually reinforced by its apology to an aesthetics of machines where the heavy industrial park had only started to exist. Forcing the terms, the V is the first formal solution emerging in a technical-industrial culture authentically local, of an architecture that would no longer have to import *all* modern materials. In this aspect, it is meaningful in several senses: how it is willing to repeat a desire to *express* (express cultural values, I would say) that in the Western World seemed to have been left behind in the 1910s; that this theatricalising of the power game not only comprised a *drive*, a discursive impulse (it inscribed the baroque *contrast* in the modern volume), but that it *personalised* the “aesthetics of the machines”; and that this insinuated being an intrinsic demand to the very environment that produced it, which was no longer enough in the rationalist argument and escaped its model – interested in extirpating visual elements that “comment” – which could only result in perplexity when realizing that the first entirely local industrial form of that environment presented itself as *metaphor* and not as literality.

The “excessive” inventiveness of the V support, whether one likes it or not (and, personally, it is not my favourite solution) shows itself, again, after all, as an *aesthetical issue*. And, by saying this, I do not enter the merit of Max Bill’s preferences, but that of his complaint – actually, a frequent disapproval of Niemeyer and that will not escape from other collaborators of the *Architectural Review*’s dossier (let us remember: an architecture made more for the “show off”, mere exteriority; and the baroque is the unbalance towards exteriority... the arguments intertwine and entangle...) – revolve about one of the crucial issues of the professional field in the twentieth century: the statute of the architect, his responsibility and procedures of action. Loathe its silhouette, submerge it in the confusion between piloti, column, pillar – makes us feel doubtful about what it is (because it induces the viewer to an error of perception – *trompe-l’oeil*), demonstrating it as an error of principle, a misunderstanding and a bad path, is a manner of “cutting out the bad” and immediately refuting any margin for the architect’s “fantasy”, as in the baroque artist of Van Doesburg’s lecture.

It is not for nothing that, in the end, Bill has directed his argument to the relations between architect, architecture and society (actually, the title used in his publication in *Habitat*), infusing the architect with responsibilities greater than himself and refraining the individualistic and demiurgic temptation: it was a way of promoting the antithesis on the architect-artist or, roughly speaking (not to make injustice against him)

of “architecture as art”, with architecture understood here as a mere product of aesthetic choices, gratuitously or not (and, for him, Niemeyer’s were gratuitous). In this game board, it is not difficult to glimpse in which position Niemeyer was placed, repeating (even though in other ways) Umbdenstock’s situation. The reply that Niemeyer writes in 1955, as well as that of Lucio Costa (written immediately after the lectures, in 1953), was restricted to the local environment and did not have the same circulation, only reinforcing the disproportion of forces mentioned earlier. Anyhow, it is a debate that did not emerge in the twentieth century, but reached its apex then and profoundly affected the conception of its practice, as was verified since the interwar period in the discord between functionalists (personified in the figure of Hannes Meyer, seen as its most radical defender, by proclaiming new project bases in his article “Das Neue Welt”, de 1926) and the North American proselytes of the “aesthete-architect”, which has its influent position marked by Philip Johnson and his peers at MoMA (to be limited to the most extreme cases, among whom Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Oud, Gropius and others occupy intermediate positions). The emergence of Brazilian architecture led by the “artist” Niemeyer (and, it is noteworthy, the campaign made by the writers of the dossier in favour that the leadership become attributed to Reidy, equally talented figure, but of less ostensive presence, fomenting a local rivalry) testifies the amazement regarding the “modern baroque counterrevolution” for the destiny of architecture in the remaining twentieth century, a symptom diagnosed by Pevsner. Accepting the V support would mean to anachronistically consecrate the “artist-architect”, when the intention was to relegate him to the pre-First World War past and bury him there. The V *column* would be, from this angle, the icon of a counter-reformation within Modernism, as had been the Solomonic column centuries before, an emblem of a return to order, of an exacerbated dramatization that antithetically spreads a culture of contraction and contrition. This “culture of refraining” traversed an era in which were superposed reconstruction, Cold War, McCarthyism, conservative lurch (although Niemeyer was a staunch communist), promises and uncertainties.

My proposal was to tell the same story here, calling attention to other sub-texts that show that it confronts complex layers of reality principle. Perhaps it would not be necessary to call upon so many crossings and regressions to conclude that we faced a problem in which are mixed atavism, anticipated indispositions, self-indulgences, ambitions and (excuses for the term) “arrogance” – deserved or not, although we evinced the way they are justified; perhaps it would be necessary to bring them, dissect the less evident layers of the *confusion* and *disagreement* of stories, in the face of the ambition of a Universal History for the Modern Movement.

When synthesising these apparently irreconcilable attritions (I would add: intentionally irreconcilable) within an open agenda in the post-war

period, the V of the piloti was not the V for victory, nor the V of “The Victory of the New Building Style” (2000) [Der Sieg des neuen Baustils, 1927], emblematic title of the book by Walter Curt Behrendt (another publication with which Max Bill surely had contact), even though it could be the V of victory and maturity for the Brazilian circuit. Like its form, the V of this column/piloti is not a head of an arrow towards an aimed and unidirectional future, but a fork; not a confluence, a junction vertex, contact point, but a separation of paths and, if it affirms a “new style”, a new functionalism, nothing could cause more disturbance: the Brazilian triumph would declare that, in the end, what Modernism managed to offer as achievement and heritage was only *one more style*? If Modern *actually* becomes a style, it declares its own end, confessing itself as being merely one more family of forms with *adhered* contents, a less evident version of an image that *tells* something. The arrowhead in V reached an unforeseen target – opening a turning point in the history of Modernism, when waving with the same force to its impasse of no return and to the fading Enlightenment of its internationalism.

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XENOPHILIC MODERNITY: CIRCULATION AND ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM IN *PROA JOURNAL* – COLOMBIA

Ingrid Quintana-Guerrero

INTRODUCTION

In August 1946, the Colombian architects Carlos Martínez Jiménez, Manuel de Vengoechea and Jorge Arango Sanín launched the first issue of the journal *Proa: Urbanismo-Arquitectura-Industrias*. Directed to a specifically professional audience, *Proa* was not the only journal specialised in architecture in national circulation in its time,¹ but it was the one with most resonance, to the point of becoming, over the decades, the main instrument of modern architectural documentation in Colombia:² its succinct and sharp editorials, and its systematic register of recent projects and works – made by young architects or prestigious local firms – rapidly turned *Proa* into an indispensable medium for the consolidation of the incipient professional group in the country and, especially, in its capital.

Thanks to its incontestable condition of being a primary source for the study of Colombian architecture, the journal has been the object of academic research, among which stand out those by Hugo Mondragón (2005) and by the collective directed by María Cecilia O’Byrne and Luz Mariela Gómez (2020). The purpose of this article is not to ignore the fundamental role of *Proa* in the documentation, dissemination and criticism of Colombian architecture in the twentieth century, but rather to problematize one aspect until now little mentioned by the aforementioned authors, namely, the xenophile filter that mediated both the cura-

1 A comparative study of six national editorial platforms specialised in architecture and published between 1945 and 1965 has been provided by María Catalina Venegas (2017) in “Polémicas, debates, discursos. Escritos y visuales de la Arquitectura moderna en Colombia. 1945–1965” [Polemics, debates, discourses. Writings and images of Modern Architecture in Colombia. 1945–1965].

2 Although with format, contents and team completely distinct from its founders, the journal still exists as a web portal, available at: <https://proaarquitectura.co/>. Therefore, this study will focus on a review of the first 150 issues of the journal, published between 1946 and 1961: a cycle of uninterrupted fifteen years of publication, coincident with the broad decade of the 1950s, perhaps one of the most fertile of Colombian architecture.

torship of articles and projects by the journal's editors and the production of their own writings.

PROA AND ITS MANAGERS: THE ACADEMIC PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS WHAT IS FOREIGN

Much has been mentioned in the local historiography about the Colombian architects' Eurocentric regard in a period recognised as modern.³ This paper does not intend to refute this statement in order to force a decolonial narrative about the regional architecture of the past century, but rather illustrate the relation of such architects with the foreign world as a phenomenon of complex reception, and in some aspects, an opposing one. Firstly, it is necessary to point out the direct interference of the European training context in the constitution of the architect's figure and its relations of association in Colombia. Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, faced with the late conformation of an architecture curriculum independent from the disciplines of engineering and fine arts, a significant group of Colombian students – a considerable number of them originating in wealthy families – chose to seek an architect diploma in Europe, hence inaugurating a diaspora that only in the middle of the twentieth century moved strongly towards the south of the continent, mainly Chile and Brazil.

In addition to their privileged positions as professionals of a discipline strongly requested in Colombia and very few graduates (the first promotion of architects from the Universidad Nacional occurred only two years before the launch of the journal), the common aspects among the young founders of *Proa* were their posts as professors in the new Facultad de Arquitectura and their professional training abroad. Martínez, who was a director of the journal since its foundation and until 1976, took his studies at the Institut d'Urbanisme of Paris, and at the *École Nationale des Travaux Publiques*, where he received the diploma of architect and engineer, and at the Institut des Hautes Études, from which he received the title of urban planner. In his turn, De Vengoechea not only graduated as architect in France, from the recognised *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts*, but also was born and lived during his childhood in Paris. Arango was also trained within the beaux-arts tradition (in his case, at the Universidad Católica de Chile, in Santiago), and travelled to the United States of America (USA) spon-

3 As the discussion of the term "modernity" is not within the scope of this text, we embrace the proposal of Francesco Dal Co (1990, p. 31), also welcomed by Mondragón (2005, p. 16) during the writing of his research: "[they] have demonstrated the risks of continuing to work on a concept of modern architecture as if it was a set of homogeneous experiences, coherent and referring to one single origin. Instead, these authors propose not one, but many modern architectures from different origins, which do not necessarily keep relations of continuity or kinship between them".

sored by the State Agency of this country, where he attended master's courses taught by Walter Gropius at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) (Quintana-Guerrero, 2021). Arango's colleagues at the GDS, like Álvaro Ortega and other architects holding French and British post-graduate degrees, later joined the team of frequent collaborators. Among them, was Carlos Arbeláez Camacho, who years after his link with *Proa* carried out post-graduate studies at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and at the London School of Planning and Regional Research.⁴

However, the pioneering cohorts of architects trained in Colombia were not immune to the interference of a foreign pedagogical model. In the first structural reform of the programme of studies of the Universidad Nacional (whose campus and pedagogical structure had been conceived by foreign consultants)⁵ and in the subsequent creation of the Universidad de los Andes and its Facultad de Arquitectura, both based in Bogotá, one identifies a careful observation of the revolutionary curriculum of the *Bauhaus*⁶, which closed its doors in Berlin in 1933, a few months after the official opening of the first faculty of architecture in Colombia (1936).⁷ This is not a minor detail, since the editorial of *Proa* n. 19 announced the incorporation of a students' group of the Universidad Nacional into the journal's team, introducing dynamism and self-confidence. Thus, the predisposition of *Proa*'s founders, collaborators and readers, in its first epoch, towards the European and, later, the North American scopes – with the important turn made by the diaspora of Colombian apprentices of architecture towards the USA in the 1940s (Botti, 2017, p. 4) – was not only inevitable, but, to a certain extent, desirable in order to achieve an accurate connection with its contents.

4 Additionally, in 1953 he moved to Paris for a training period at the Ministère de l'Urbanisme.

5 It is noteworthy that Leopoldo Rother, a German architect working at the Ministerio de Obras Públicas in charge of the master plan of the Ciudad Universitaria and some of its buildings, exemplifies that in the national context not all foreigners were well-received, particularly those of German origin and possible Jewish background. A proof of this is his rare or no appearance in the pages of *Proa* (Ortiz dos Santos; Quintana-Guerrero, 2021). With regard directly to *Proa*, there were few collaborations of European migrants in comparison with that of their local colleagues; among these, one finds the article "La Cultura en Arquitectura" [Culture in Architecture], in *Proa* n. 29, by the Italian Bruno Violi (1949, p. 14), and a special one dedicated to the Swiss architect and designer Víctor Schmid (*Proa* n. 148).

6 In addition, the experiences in graphic design promoted by the German school formed the visual project of *Proa* (Fonseca apud Venegas, 2017, p. 231).

7 On the influence of this model in the formulation of the architecture programme reform at the Universidad Nacional by Eduardo Mejía Tapias, and that of Álvaro Ortega in the consolidation of the first undergraduate programme of the Universidad de los Andes – both programmes from *Bauhaus* affiliation, reinforced in the second case by the existence of a basic course (Quintana-Guerrero, 2019).

A MATTER OF IMAGE: LAYOUT

The xenophilia of the generation of professionals directly linked to *Proa* is reflected not only in the ideological aspects that will be discussed later, but also in apparently minor details such as architects' self-image, about which Arango and Sánchez (2020, p. 224) reflect, drawing on the advertising agenda included in the journal. This stereotype image was informed by the British context, thanks to the reiterated publication of translations into Spanish of articles originally published in *Architectural Record*. In *Proa* n. 135, there was a version in Spanish of "The Image of the Architect", with illustrations that associated this image with the multiplicity of architects' roles in the contemporaneous context and their respective utensils. Bow tie and thick frame glasses in these images result in an irresistible association with the iconic figure of Le Corbusier, to whose relationship with *Proa* we will dedicate a section of this chapter, due to his popularity among the journal's audience:

[...] in 1949, *Proa* published an article headed by what are probably the most famous glasses in the history of architecture, of which the previous ones are indebted. [...] the article was about the role of the architect in his professional group [...]. There was no reference to the peculiar image of the architect, but there was, opening the article, a self-portrait of Le Corbusier himself. The frown, the sharp gaze, the prominent nose, the thin lip, the raised chin and, of course, his unmistakable glasses (Arango; Sánchez, 2020, p. 226 – free translation).

With the increasing interference of the North American view of architecture in Colombia, the sporadic publicity and illustrations in *Proa* started to promote an image of the architect parallel to that of the European intellectual, now inspired by the North American group; an image reinforced by the cinematographic version of *The Fountainhead* (the mythic figure of Howard Roark imagined by the writer Ayn Rand in 1953 and popularly associated to the persona of Frank Lloyd Wright).

Both models [...] appeared in the journal *Proa* in several occasions as forms of representation of the level, even equivalent. The architect could be either the professional with glasses, a bow tie and a bohemian gesture or the strong and silent person with a tie. The first, more peculiar, linked to the characteristics and heritage of his discipline. The second, a model of success, close to the businessperson and the engineer (Arango; Sánchez, 2020, p.228 – free translation).

It is also not a minor detail that many of those advertisements corresponded to Anglo-Saxon brands, mostly related to the production in-

dustry, which had barely entered the national market, such as Du Pont, Standard, Sika, Otis, Schindler, Esso, etc.

The architect's image as a corporative agent is of utmost importance given that the adoption of organizational structures for the construction industry based on North American models was gradually made visible, both in the contents and in the advertising agenda of *Proa*. Venegas (2017, p. 38) points out that this international network was extended to the editorial field, with an important circulation of French and North American publications aligned with the interests of its editorial team⁸, and with those that in the future would establish agreements of journal copies exchange, as, for example, between Monica Pidgeon, editor of *The Architectural Design*, and Martínez Jiménez (Fonseca apud Venegas, 2017, p. 227). We are not certain whether the copies received through these exchanges remained in Jiménez's personal bookshelves or if they became part of universities' journal collections.⁹ What is certain is that, thanks to the circulation of those ideas, not only there was faster contact with the international architectural production of the other side of the Atlantic Ocean (and therefore with its plastic language), but also graphic and editorial strategies were configured in *Proa*.

Years later, with the consolidation of the journal in the local circuit, the exchange of copies would become exchange of contents. This theme is still unexplored due to the difficulty of access to the sources. However, Venegas (2017, p. 42) manages to provide an example: “[...] the journal *A Arquitetura Portuguesa e Cerâmica e Edificação* [...] in August 1952 dedicated its issue n. 2 to discuss the recent work of Colombian architecture with material that had been previously published in *Proa*”. This is how it is verified that its founders had the intention to disseminate, nationally and internationally, the Colombian modern architecture:¹⁰ a transcendental intention, but perhaps not the most important of *Proa*'s agenda.

Regarding the tacit network of journals with similar character and purposes as *Proa*, now in the Latin American framework, and its re-

8 This interest would be aligned with those of other fellow professors, who would have had news of these publications during their studies abroad (Venegas, 2017, p. 54).

9 “The public journals collections of the faculties existing in those days corroborated an extensive circulation of periodical material, architecture journals, which arrived in the country then. Mostly originating from France, England, USA, Brazil and the South Cone, those journals were indicators of what was being made in other places of the world” (Venegas, 2017, p. 227).

10 “Our architecture is little known abroad due to the lack of publications on the theme, books showing the panorama of our architectural production, exhibitions taking abroad the good works that are unknown, the regularisation and intensification of the architectural pages in the periodicals and, finally, the emergence of new architectural journals, something *Proa* would be pleased with, after years of struggle, efforts and perseverance, with the collaboration of professional firms of the nation that have helped it not to perish in this endeavour and the dynamic quixotism of its founder, director and owner, architect Carlos Martínez, who has sustained it against winds and tide, continuously, during 14 years, and is the only testimony of our modern architecture” (Martínez, 1960, p. 5 – Free translation).

relationship with the European editorial circle, Venegas states: “Another representative case [...] was the circulation of the journal *La Arquitectura de Hoy*, a version translated into Spanish of the French journal *L’Architecture D’Aujourd’hui* [sic]. Produced in Buenos Aires, this journal was the Spanish version of the French journal” (Venegas, 2017, p. 49). Although this appreciation is not entirely correct – there were many previously unpublished contents in the version in Spanish, including the polemic presentation of Le Corbusier’s Master Plan for Buenos Aires (Quintana-Guerrero, 2018) –, it allows us to bring up the French journal, not only as a source of contents to *Proa* that were published as translations, but also as a model for its visual project. In the first case, we find articles as “Un nuevo mundo del espacio” [A new world of space], a text by Le Corbusier translated into Spanish from “L’espace indicible” [The ineffable space], originally published by *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* in 1946, and published in *Proa* n. 24. The Colombian publication makes no mention to the original source of the document, which exposes the synergy between plastic arts and architecture to create an ineffable space; paradoxically, the two brief sketches by Le Corbusier that accompany the article illustrate his reflections on what the editors call the “horizontal city”, but little refer to the problem posed by the French-Swiss architect in his text.

Besides the inclusion of translations (nowadays still usual in the publication of academic journals), the striking similarity of the graphic design of both journals is remarkable, regarding the typographic selection, text boxes, page layout and relation between the size of figures (photos, plans and illustrations, tables and commercial guidelines) and white spaces on the page. This similarity is reiterated in other editorial products of *Proa*, as the book *Arquitectura en Colombia* [Architecture in Colombia] (published by Martínez in 1963), emphasising the persuasive discourse in both publications.¹¹ Even though *Proa* has not been the only case within this phenomenon at the Latin American level (the journal *Espacios de México* is just one of the several existing examples), it was the one in which the reproduction of composition patterns of *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* happened in the most literal way. A similar association could be made regarding the layout of the advertisement guidelines that, though scarce in the French journal, in both cases obeys the compositional tendencies that are replicated in most periodical publications of the time, either specialised or directed to the large audience, in terms of the use of illustrations, contrasts of fonts and nature of the persuasive texts. Also, the austerity of their bi-chromatic front page and without photographs, a pattern that persists in *Proa* until its issue number 36.

In contrast, in the graphic design of the French journal and *Proa*, the photographic composition in their inner pages is also a relevant aspect, although, in the Colombian case, most of the selection origina-

11 “The page is a game – or a battle – field in which are paralysed, though the different staging, tensions between texts and images” (Venegas, 2017, p. 89 – Free translation).

ted from material delivered to the editors by architecture firms: photographs affiliated to the German *New Objectivity* – in fact, one of its main authors was the professional photographer Paul Beer, specialised in architecture (Daza; González, 2018) –, which provided a proximity to the parameters of both the recognised French publication and the emblematic photos of North American architects of modernity, such as Julius Schulman. His images

[...] have a mainly horizontal reading condition that accounts for three horizontal composition and architectural layers: the plinth or basement layer, the central plan, and the upper plan of the work's cover or finishing. Generally, on the grid that divides the image into nine equal parts or thirds, is one of the elements that has most visual weight within the image. Thus, the composition obeys parameters that are also geometrical and depend on a substructure that acts as regulatory traces on the images. This composition parameter, used not only for architectural representations, was familiar to some photographers who worked between 1950 and 1965 in Bogota (Venegas, 2017, p. 216 – free translation).

PROA: SHOW-WINDOW OF THE NORTHERN ARCHITECTURAL THINKING

Proa's subtitle, indicated by three descriptors – *Urbanismo, Arquitectura, Industrias* [Urbanism, Architecture, Industries] – (of which two are identical with those of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'Hui*) expresses the main themes that pushed the reflections of the European vanguards during the early decades of the twentieth century. The contents of the publication were then synonymous of vanguard, which, according to Mondragón (2005, p. 20)

[...] it meant introducing to the local context the debate on the three themes to which the journal dedicated, in an intense, systematic and intended manner, a large number of articles and that are its three most outstanding focuses of interest: the relations between tradition and modernity, the city and the plan, and the house and the project [free translation].

Although the journal published texts with theoretical reflections on art and the history of architecture, the truth is that most articles – republished or, to a lesser extent, unpublished, thanks to colleagues close to the founders and living abroad, who served as correspondents – dedicated to the European context were related to these thematic axes, materialised to a large extent by actors and projects of the canonical modernity. In the period examined in this study, at least 20 articles cor-

respond to reflections on works in capital cities of Western Europe and/or projected in France and England by modern masters.

It is not surprising that in the first group most articles with foreign affiliation (which used to be one fifth of each issue's contents) correspond to operations in France or England, given the intellectual proximity of *Proa's* founding group and of Arbeláez with those countries: among these publications, stand out the articles of reflection dedicated to urbanism (the Parisian, in *Proa* n. 9, n. 34 and n. 115; the British, with a special report about urbanism in Edinburgh in *Proa* n. 18; another one on new towns for Great Britain), to the housing problem (the French housing appears in *Proa* n. 95 and the modern accommodation in London in *Proa* n. 44) and to prefabrication. About this last aspect, it is worth noting its assiduity in the journal's early issues, not only from an English perspective (*Proa* n. 4 and n. 53), but also North American, partly informed by Jorge Arango's visit to the agency of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in Knoxville, within the framework of his study visit to that country. In *Proa's* inaugural issue, Arango made a report on technical investigations on new construction systems and materials, as well as on developments for the improvement of transportation and infrastructure to favour social housing (Quintana-Guerrero, 2021). This interest is followed by the publication of a news about the approval by the North American Congress of a millionaire budget for the construction of one million houses for middle-class families (*Proa* n. 35). The reflection on this theme in *Proa* was probably motivated by Arango's visit to the exhibition "Wartime Housing", organised by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the National Housing Agency, during the same study trip (Quintana-Guerrero, 2021). Finally, but not a minor aspect, is Arango's interest in the concept of "Good Design" – promoted by the same MoMA –, tangible in *Proa's* pages thanks to the relevance that the furniture and home settings created by his firm Artecto achieved within the journal's contents and agenda, with a highlight to *Proa* n. 64 (1962), dedicated to the promotion of furniture of his own design and of competing brands (Quintana-Guerrero, 2021).

But the TVA was not the only North American experience exalted in *Proa's* pages: they included translations of texts by some of the most famous architects, by birth or by adoption, like Richard Neutra (*Pseudociencia en arte y arquitectura* [Pseudoscience in art and architecture], *Proa* n. 4) and Walter Gropius (we will mention later about one of his articles, written during his phase in Boston and related to the teaching of architecture). In addition, North American works in *Proa's* selection of projects include the Rockefeller Centre (*Proa* n. 7), the General Motors Technical Centre in Warren (by Eero Saarinen, in the special international issue of *Proa* n. 108, which also published a non-built project of skyscrapers at the 5th Avenue, in New York, by Mies van der Rohe and Phillip Johnson), besides a brief panorama of the North American production, from Californian colonial buildings to the sophisticated industrial plants in Detroit (*La Arquitectura Americana* [American Architecture], *Proa* n.

36) and an essay by Aline Louchheim about the tall buildings in Manhattan, in relation to the Vitruvian triad (*La moderna arquitectura norteamericana* [Modern North American architecture], *Proa* n. 71).

There is also a special interest for Germany, not only for its recent experiences in cultural equipment (the Saarbrücken University Library published in *Proa* n. 108), collective housing (*Proa* n. 56 and n. 133) and ephemeral architecture (*Proa* n. 68), but mainly for being the country that saw the birth of the Bauhaus and hosted its three headquarters. The critical voice and sharp comments of Max Bill, graduated from that school and a key player in the creation of the *Hochschule für Gestaltung* (HfG), in Ulm, found a space in *Proa* thanks to his international recognition not only as a specialist in modern art,¹² but also as an architectural critic, by reproducing in *Proa* n. 76 his famous criticism of the architecture of Rio de Janeiro during his visit to this city in 1953 and, especially, of Oscar Niemeyer's project for the Pampulha ensemble in the city of Belo Horizonte. We will return later about the special attention that architects of *Proa*'s circle gave to the Brazilian case.

On the other hand, the figures of Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer were noticeable in the journal's interests since, when migrating to the United States, they became fundamental actors in the reformulation of the discipline of architecture towards a collective production and the interdisciplinary relation with design. In the case of Walter Gropius, the founder of Bauhaus, *Proa* published in its first 150 issues a considerable number of sections referring to his architectural works, both in Germany (the Fagus Factory in Alfeld and the Bauhaus Building in Dessau¹³ are included in Gropius' profile presented by his disciple Álvaro Ortega in *Proa* n. 98) and in the USA (his own house in Lincoln, Massachusetts, had a review in *Proa* n. 26, which was entirely dedicated to houses designed by famous architects for themselves; the clinic in Boston designed together with his firm The Architects Collaborative is the object of an illustration in the international edition in *Proa* n. 108); also to his educational work, which is an aspect of special transcendence in the Colombian context. In this regard, stand out the translation of the text "Diez conceptos básicos para la enseñanza de la arquitectura" [Ten basic concepts for the teaching of architecture], by Gropius, and a column dedicated to the curricular training of Bauhaus, by Eduardo Angulo – one of *Proa*'s most frequent columnists – in the issue number 133 ("Gropius y el Bauhaus" [Gropius and the Bauhaus]).

In the case of Breuer, his relationship with the journal is more direct and, at the same time, more tacit than that of his mentor and partner. Starting by the direct: in addition to the inclusion of his house in Connecticut, in *Proa* n. 26, and of some of his paradigmatic works in

12 In *Proa* n. 44 a text by Max Bill was published with the title "Las matemáticas en el arte moderno" [Mathematics in modern art].

13 To this interest in architecture for learning, is added the selection of school buildings made by Willli van der Kerkhoff, an architect trained at Bauhaus, for *Proa* n. 77.

the USA¹⁴, a particular event was promoted by and published in *Proa*, the first Simposio Interamericano de Arquitectura (via radiotelephone), held on January 29, 1959. The symposium was moderated by Leonard Currie (director of the Department of Architecture of Virginia Tech and first head of the *Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeamiento Urbano* based at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia) from Ohio. Participated in the symposium internationally known architects, such as Ieoh Ming Pei and Ortega himself, then a consultant at the United Nations Organization (UN) on housing issues. Breuer was in Bogota and he too had been Ortega's professor at GSD. In the conversation (transcribed in *Proa* n. 175), the Hungarian was asked about factors that would configure a valid contemporary regional architecture.

The invisible relations with Breuer occur through projects formulated by architects of *Proa's* circle, within its agenda of planning for a Modern Bogota: the firm of Breuer's two Colombian pupils, Ortega and his partner Gabriel Solano, together with other local architects, had started the development of an ambitious project of urban renewal in downtown Bogota. Following the suggestion of Arango, then the director of the Oficina de Edificios Nacionales, besides being Breuer's brother-in-law, the firm requested a quote from the latter for his consultancy service. "Marcelino", as Breuer was named in Bogota, and the then Minister of Public Works, Luis Ignacio Andrade, exchanged correspondence on this and other consultancies after the Hungarian's visit to the Colombian capital, in August 1947. The unstable local politics at that moment was an obstacle to Breuer's action in Bogota, as can be perceived from his epistolary exchange with Ortega (Quintana-Guerrero, 2020). Nevertheless, in the catalogue of the exhibition "Marcel Breuer: Architect and Designer" (held at MoMA in 1949), Breuer included four supposed projects carried out in Bogota, in 1947: a hospitable citadel with 3,800 beds, a complex of 10,000 social interest dwellings, a hypermarket and a new presidential palace.

Very early in *Proa's* history, in its issue number 7 (May 1947), it published a proposal of urban renewal elaborated by a select team of the Oficina de Edificios Públicos, which included Jorge Gaitán Cortés (post-graduated from *Yale University* and mayor of Bogota as from 1961), Augusto Tobito (later linked to Le Corbusier's atelier and who wrote one of the articles about his mentor in *Proa* n. 8) and, of course, Ortega and Solano. It is the "Ciudad del Empleado", whose programme is extremely similar to the one described by Breuer in the catalogue. There is no certainty whether it was the former Bauhaus student (if not, it was very daring of him to include it in his own catalogue) or the prestigious French urbanist Maurice Rotival who served as project advisor. What is certain is that this operation not only consolidates the importance given

14 Among these are a residential house in Florida, in 1951 (*Proa* n. 49); another one of the vacation houses in Connecticut (*Proa*, n. 73); and the Saint John's Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Minnesota, in 1954 (*Proa* n. 84).

by *Proa's* editors to the foreigners' endorsement to the proposals made by their compatriots (apparently suggested by Rotival),¹⁵ but also what Mondragón (2005, p. 67) points out as the journal's intention to exert some sort of interference in the city's planning. For this purpose, it also uses criticism of proposals formulated outside of its circle for the local territory, regardless of whether they came from a European architect, such as the Austrian Karl Brunner. Therefore, "[...] the new criticism against the urbanists of parabolic and elliptical streets is not surprising" (Mondragón, 2005, p. 67).

On this theme – the double role of *Proa's* team as curators and published authors – it is necessary to say that, although the publications in the journal were not limited to urban projects (in fact, perhaps works on a domestic scale are much more frequent in its pages), it is through this type of operations that a formal repertoire is appealed to: adding to the aforementioned projects in Germany in the selection of projects of a rationalist affiliation published by *Proa* in its first epoch, is the publication of expressly theoretical material – with special relevance to the reproduction of the Charter of Athens, formulated in the 3rd International Congress on Modern Architecture (CIAM), in *Proa* n. 9 – to argue a tacit transformation of Colombian cities drawing on their consolidated tissues.

AN AMBIGUOUS OBSESSION WITH LE CORBUSIER

As we have mentioned, Le Corbusier was a constant presence in *Proa*, although not exempt from tensions. The appreciation that Jiménez and his team had of the French-Swiss architect as a theoretical beacon is irrefutable and the testimonies are the numerous articles approaching different facets of his career, besides those as thinker and critic of modern urbanism. Le Corbusier's facet as plastic artist, in *Proa* n. 2 (the text "El Otro Corbusier" [The other Le Corbusier] by the architect and journalist José de Recasens not only demonstrates this dimension of Le Corbusier's work but also the depth of the character that facilitates the continuous reflection on his trajectory), and in *Proa* n. 8 ("Psicogénesis de la pintura de Le Corbusier" [Psychogenesis of Le Corbusier's painting]), besides the mentioned reproduction of one of his texts in *Proa* n. 24; Le Corbusier as a revolutionary designer ("Le Corbusier Arquitecto" [Le Corbusier architect] and "El Modulor de Le Corbusier" [Le Corbusier's Modulor]), in *Proa* n. 8; "La Unité de Le Corbusier" [Le Corbusier's unity] in *Proa* n. 14; participation in the mentioned special international *Proa* n. 108, with the Housing Unit of Nantes-Rezé; "El Pabellón Phillips" [The Phillips Pavillion] in *Proa* n. 114); and, probably the most relevant for this study, Le Corbusier as critic and polemist (the reproduction of the letter of complaint to the contest ruling of the UN, in *Proa* n. 35, is the best example of this list).

15 "[...] you architects of Bogota do not need foreign technicians except as critics" ([s.a.], 1948, p. 11).

Le Corbusier's straightforward and contesting voice reproduced in his texts and publications, especially in those early years of his career, encouraged the spirit of denunciation of *Proa's* collaborators. Commenting on this dimension of Le Corbusier's action, Arbeláez (1947, p. 11) wrote: "therein lies one of his great qualities. His ability as a polemist". This voice was first stated in the journal *L'Esprit Nouveau*, of which the Colombian architect provided an opinion that suggests his perception of *Proa* as a reflection of it:

A publication with this spirit would certainly move the public opinion. It originated famous polemics, criticism, and above all the adherence of a countless number of young architects, who saw the opening of architecture's horizon, dark until then thanks to the academy (Arbeláez, 1947, p.11).

However, differently from *Proa*, which circulated within a specialized group, *L'Esprit Nouveau* was directed to a broader audience – artists and intellectuals who were potential clients too, not only of architectural projects but also of advertising assignments and graphic design – and enjoyed the interdisciplinarity of its editors: architect Le Corbusier, musician Albert Jeanneret, painter Amédée Ozenfant. Another difference is the direct relationship with publicity. Although *L'Esprit Nouveau* had an agenda, most of the illustrations of articles were extracted from other publicity materials (especially industrial catalogues). The balance of the persuasive discourse was inclined towards a structured visual shock as a sign of the cultural primacy of the image over the word. In this respect, Colomina (1994, p. 160) comments:

[Le Corbusier] did not take these images in a passive way: these drawings are testimony to a formal search directed ultimately to his design practice. But there is more, and here is where comes into play the second meaning of 'reflection'. Le Corbusier identified in the very existence of the printed media an important conceptual change regarding the function of culture and the perception of the exterior world by the modern individual.

Back to *Proa*, it is relevant to remember two factors: first, the vocation of this periodical publication was not merely informative but also critical,¹⁶ as expressed in the editorial of *Proa* n. 122 (1958), and persuasive. As other publications inspired in Le Corbusier – *Précisions*; *Vers une Architecture*; *Urbanisme*; *La Maison des Hommes* (and the list goes on) – *Proa* was a tool to promote its own proposals, which had the

16 "[...] a reflection is made on the need of a work of architectural dissemination and criticism, as there is of painting and art in general. The editor claims that this practice for these debates are necessary and contribute to the 'maturation and depuration of the artistic work'" (Venegas, 2017, p. 42).

ambition for structural changes in the city and in the country. According to Mondragón (2005, p. 25)

[...] the journal did not disseminate a strategy of a neutral mode, but rather, in trying to make it operative, found it necessary to do a local key translation, for which it came into a close relationship with the particular Colombian context of the 1940s. It is precisely due to this translation process that, little by little, a particular strategy was built in the journal's pages.

The same author mentions that the conditions for such an interchange were given, when a legislation was passed in the Congress of Colombia that obliged the largest municipalities to carry out a regulatory plan (Mondragón, 2005, p. 18) and that it coincided with the apogee of the pragmatic and rational urbanism (Mondragón, 2005, p. 31) promoted by the CIAM – it is not a mere coincidence that Carlos Arbeláez had been designated as the official representative of Colombia in this meeting (Quintana-Guerrero, 2013).

The second aspect to remember is that *Proa* n. 8, of which we have mentioned several articles dedicated to Le Corbusier, corresponded to an edition entirely dedicated to this architect in the occasion of his first visit to Colombia, invited by the Colombian ambassador at the UN, Eduardo Zuleta Ángel. The visit had been announced in *Proa*'s previous issue (article “Le Corbusier visita Bogotá” [Le Corbusier visits Bogota], *Proa* n. 7). About this and the following trips made by Le Corbusier in the context of the Pilot Plan of Bogotá assignment, there has been extensive writing in the historiography of Colombian architecture, with an emphasis on the tense relations between contracting parties, and the possible faults that may have been made, and in the transformation of the Plan into a regulatory plan under the tutelage of Paul Lester Wiener and José Luis Sert – partners of the firm Town Planning Associates (TPA). It was this firm that put together the plan, after a decree by the authorities of Bogota, although few of its guidelines were accomplished in urban development during the following decades (Vargas Caicedo, 2010; O’Byrne, 2010). Here it interests us to reflect on the reception in *Proa* of those visits, as key to understand that Le Corbusier’s direct action in the local territory was less desired than could be deduced from the enthusiastic articles written in his honour.¹⁷ Mondragón (2005, p. 67) indicates a first symptom of this:

Acknowledging the character’s importance and his ideological affiliation, from that moment on the journal’s editors promoted the assignment to Le Corbusier of an urban study for Bogota. However, for some reason, they did not request anything precisely, but

17 Other articles not mentioned yet of *Proa* n. 8 are “Le Corbusier y su visita a Bogotá” [Le Corbusier and his visit to Bogota] and “Le Corbusier urbanista” [Le Corbusier urbanist].

did it in a rather vague way, as indicate the words contribution or input, which seem to suggest more the figure of an advisor than a contractor, with which the editors seemed to give up the possibility of carrying out the plans for the city that they had published.

In addition to “Ciudad del Empleado”, in *Proa*’s first epoch, there was the dissemination of several urban plans with direct or indirect participation of its collaborators (“El Bogotá Futuro” [The Future Bogota] of *Proa* n. 6 and “La Reconstrucción de Bogotá, 1ª etapa” [The Reconstruction of Bogota, 1st stage] are just two of those), usually as a conclusion to a series of very hard critical reflections on the Colombian cities. Crude sentences like *Estado Actual: desaseo, miseria, contagios* [Current state: uncleanliness, misery, contagions] (published in “Bogotá puede ser una ciudad moderna” [Bogota can be a modern city], *Proa* n. 3) denote a strong rejection of the historical city, not so much for its aesthetics and typologies but rather for its major urbanistic failures, associated with sloppiness and overcrowding, illustrated by women in peasants’ clothes making transactions in the central market. The housing blocks separated by wide green spaces – an archetypal proposal of CIAM’s urbanism – would be in charge of bringing air, hygiene and, therefore, joy and optimism to the capital, according to *Proa*’s plans.

Le Corbusier’s hiring by the Colombian authorities seemed to take longer than expected¹⁸, and in 1948 the mayor Fernando Mazuera finally decided for it, including the TPA to carry out the Pilot Plan for Bogota. From that moment onwards, the travels of the famous architect to Bogota stopped being a matter of interest to the journal and the project received little follow-up, despite the designation of Carlos Arbeláez¹⁹ as director of the new Office of the Master Plan for Bogota – linked to the Office of National Buildings – succeeding Herbert Ritter. Martínez made only a mention in *Proa*’s editorial in support of mayor Mazuera’s decisión (Mondragón, 2005, p.67; the journal published only one article on the project, in April 1950 (“Reseña sobre el plan regulador de Bogotá” [Review on the master plan for Bogota], *Proa* n. 34). Written by Rafael Serrano Camargo, the two and a half pages review – of which one is dedicated to summarise the historical mistakes of the planning of Bogota and to recapitulate the circumstances of hiring the plan – was illustrated by no more than a diagram (possibly prepared by the author of the text) of the preliminary urban perimeter of the disordered capital. In the text, Camargo does not

18 In a letter of December 30, 1947 to Martínez, in addition to thanking for sending the *Proa* n. 8 issue, Le Corbusier affirmed that it seemed that the commission of Bogota’s mayor and the Instituto de Crédito Territorial insinuated during his trip to the capital would be signed one year later than agreed (Quintana-Guerrero, 2013).

19 Martínez also acted as director of a public planning agency, upon being appointed in 1959 as director of the Departamento Administrativo de Planeación Distrital [Administrative Department of District Planning]. From his administration, stands out the issuance of the law 163 of 1959 on the conservation of the historical heritage (Mondragón, 2005, p. 68).

question anything raised by Le Corbusier's atelier in Paris, concentrating in the advances of the diagnosis by the office of the Plan in Bogota:

The office of the Master Plan is divided into two large sections: planning and development. Both operate harmoniously and are constituted in such a way that the planning section – which is today the most important and with a larger number of professionals – can gradually reinforce and merge with the development section, which will further on be responsible to take to the terrain the definitive master plan. [...] There is already a lot of progress and colour graphics with extraordinary clarity are being made. [...] As can be seen, now urbanists try to get in contact, as much as possible, with all the points of influence, to fulfil their commitment as required by the conditions of this city, which are certainly very different from the Europeans, the North American and from Rio de Janeiro, for example (Serrano Camargo, 1950, p. 31-32).

Therefore, and now that the Colombian architects seemed to have the reigns of the Pilot Plan, for *Proa's* team it was important to distance itself from the architectural and urbanistic responses formulated in the Anglo-Saxon and even in the Brazilian context (we will dedicate the next section to the latter), which were the object of their praise and inspiration of a new imaginary for the centre of Bogota throughout the first issues of the journal.

A LATIN AMERICAN TURN (WITH A BRAZILIAN ACCENT)

Although the first issues of *Proa* showed a peripheral interest in Latin American architecture, with the sporadic publication of projects mostly of the regional main stream²⁰ (Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas, in *Proa* n. 2; Teatro Auditorium de Buenos Aires, in *Proa* n. 23; the seat of Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Obras Públicas in Mexico, *Proa* n.

20 The publication of Latin American projects less published by the regional historiography is an exception: the proposals of new social housing in Lima, designed by the founder of the journal *El Arquitecto Peruano* [The Peruvian Architect], Fernando Belaúnde Terry, as leader of a local team of prestigious architects – Velarde, Soane, Ortiz de Zeballos, etc. –, in response to challenges similar to those posed by *Proa's* editors for Bogota (“La Acción Social en Lima” [Social Action in Lima], *Proa* n. 4, and, two issues later, the illustration of advances in the development of large housing complexes and road infrastructure for the capitals of Peru and Venezuela (“Caracas y su progreso urbano” [Caracas and its urban progress] and “Amplias avenidas se construyen en Lima” [Wide avenues are built in Lima]). In the same issue of *Proa* there was also mention to the contest for the Capitol of Quito, because Jorge Arango participated with a proposal in co-authorship with Albert Karzner, a USA-based architect. The theme of housing in Peru reappears in *Proa* n. 7, with a note on the creation of a new corporation for housing and its first large assignment: to create an urban development for workers of the International Petroleum Company in the town of Talara (under the responsibility of Alfredo Dammert, Carlos Morales and Luis Dorich, with consultancy of Henry Churchill, from New York).

85; and several works by Félix Candela in Colombia, included in *Proa* n. 88 and n. 99), there were two events that boosted a deeper interest of the journal's editors in the Latin America subcontinent. The first one was the periodical holding of the Pan-American Congresses of Architecture: as president of the Sociedad Colombiana de Arquitectos (SCA), in 1934, Jorge Arango was a capital figure in the organisation of the event and, therefore, it was relevant for *Proa*'s editors to follow-up in its later editions: in the issues numbers 3, 4, 5 and 6, the journal made a special coverage of the sixth edition of the Congress, held in Lima in October 1947, when the themes addressed were such as the American baroque architecture, the construction of neighbourhood units, the teaching of architecture, architecture as a factor of social wellbeing, the new materials and the "typical" architecture. In the press release of the Congress, published in *Proa* n.5, an emphasis was stipulated that marked the distance from the idea of "tabula rasa" with which *Proa* had been associated: "It is the purpose of the Committee that the 6th Congress is held within the historical-architectural framework for considering that the foreign delegates will have a special interest in getting to know the Inca and colonial architecture of Peru" ([s.a], 1947, p. 28). Although the pre-Hispanic and the colonial architecture were themes not altogether alien to the interests of Martínez and Arbeláez (1947, p. 5), in the editorial of *Proa* n. 3 the ideas and efforts of the team were put at the service of the Colombian delegation to promote modernising ideas: "*Proa* [...] suggests that the Colombian delegation studies and proposes the foundation of a Pan-American Institute of Planning based in one of the Capitals of America [...]". Was this the germen of the creation of the *Centro Interamericano de Vivienda y Planeación* (CINVA), based at the Ciudad Universitaria de Bogotá, in 1952?²¹

As can be seen in editorials of *Proa* n. 104 and n. 109, there was great expectation regarding the organisation of the 10th Congress in Bogota, in June 1958, under the coordination of the former student at GSD, Gabriel Solano, and from its news in the journal, the SCA convoked professionals committed to the constitution of an assembly capable of ensuring the success of the meeting. Nevertheless, eventually the congress was held in Buenos Aires in 1960, with the theme "El Arquitecto frente a los problemas del habitar del hombre" [The architect facing the issues of men's dwelling] and answering the questions "what has been done?", "how to do it?", "where to do it?", "what to do it with?". The Buenos Aires congress, likewise, one held in Lima, was mentioned in the SCA news published in the last pages of *Proa* (n. 129, n. 133, n. 134, n. 137, and n. 138), although omitting an explanation about the cancellation of the congress in Bogota. In the editorial of n. 138, there is mention to the support that

21 "The CINVA, as a project of cooperation and technical assistance of OAS, was inaugurated in 1952 and developed its activities until 1972. Activities that were framed in the guidelines of three institutions: the OAS (1948), with the Pan-American Union as its secretary-general; CEPAL (1948) as one of the UN's commissions (1945); and the item IV of Truman's discourse (1949) on the cooperation and technical assistance in Latin America" (Montoya Pino, 2021).

the delegation received not only from SCA but also from the Ministerio de Obras Públicas and the Instituto de Crédito Territorial (ICT), whenever the Colombian exhibition focused on examples of social housing development, not only by this institution but also by the Banco Central Hipotecario (BCH), as well as some private “residences” (i.e., author’s houses for wealthy clients), with museography by Eduardo Angulo.

The second event that triggered a reorientation of *Proa*’s xenophilic predilections is related to the service as correspondent that Gabriel Serrano Camargo (Rafael Serrano Camargo’s brother and founder of the powerful firm of Bogota, the Cuéllar Serrano Gómez) carried out for the journal, taking advantage of a trip to Brazil assigned by the Banco de la República [Bank of the Republic] to Serrano, for the construction of its headquarters in the coastal town of Barranquilla:

Serrano travelled to seek architectural innovations designed by Niemeyer for the tropical climate (Ministério de Educação e Saúde and Banco Boa Vista, in Rio de Janeiro), as well as works by the brothers Roberto and by Lucio Costa in the same city. In this tour, he also visited the neighbourhood of Pampulha, in Belo Horizonte, illustrated with sketches of four buildings designed by Niemeyer around the Pampulha lagoon [...], unusual for having been made by a Cartesian engineer and designer, [even though this] was widely demonstrated by numerous projects of his own, Serrano’s drawings [published in *Proa* n. 11] became famous in the architectural panorama of his country, thanks to, besides their quality, the sensuality that is imprinted in them. Therefore, involuntarily, a door was opened, [...] to [...] Brazilianism, generating a wave in Colombian architecture [understood as the increasingly frequent use of brise-soleils, butterfly roofs, lightweight concrete shells, from parabolic arches and expressive pilotis in ground floors], which continued until the 1960s (Quintana-Guerreiro, 2017, p. 291-292 – free translation).

The publication in *Proa* of the most emblematic projects by Niemeyer was frequent: in fact, *Proa* n. 47 provided a special presentation of Brazil’s architecture, having Niemeyer as protagonist (figuring with the “Hotel de Turismo y Fábricas en São Paulo” [Tourism Hotel and Factories in São Paulo]). *Proa*’s constant interest in Niemeyer can also be seen in the special report on the Biennial of São Paulo, included in *Proa* n. 68, and the news of the creation of Brasília (together with Lucio Costa), in *Proa* n. 124 – illustrated only with reduced models –, in addition to the essay dedicated to him by the Colombian architect Edgar Burbano (*Proa* n. 106). Burbano stated about Niemeyer, when remembering Max Bill’s harsh criticism:

Much on the contrary, in Niemeyer there is a mind that has managed to express plastically the social profile of a people, a mind that, far from being carried away by his ability to achieve plastic eccentricities, has made the synthesis of reasoning and the form of logic and the feeling of material and spiritual values of man: a mind concerned with architecture; in addition to being function and plastic, it is the solution to the problems faced by our civilisation (Burbano, 1957, p. 20-21 – free translation).

Therefore, a xenophilia not centred on European masters seemed the most direct response to the admiration that the journal itself had professed for them. On the other hand, in *Proa* n. 83 (August 1954), the journal presented a special report on works in São Paulo by other authors, like Henrique Mindlin (his proposal for the Copan, not built), Armando Carvalho and Renato Villela (Hospital do Servidor Público [Civil Servants' Hospital]); previous issues had included longer articles on punctual cases, both in the capitals of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, mainly built by architects from Rio de Janeiro, as Mindlin himself ("Una casa en São Paulo" [A house in São Paulo], *Proa* n. 58); Sérgio Bernardes ("Casa en Petrópolis" [House in Petrópolis], *Proa* n. 76); Alfredo Mathias ("Edificio en São Paulo" [Building in São Paulo], *Proa* n. 108) and, of course, Affonso Reidy, who not only had the inclusion of his housing complex of Pedregulho in *Proa* special international n. 108, but also another building designed by him in Rio de Janeiro (*Proa* n. 76) and the Paraguay-Brazil school in Asunción (*Proa* n. 136). Finally, the publications related to Brazil started to include translations from Brazilian-Portuguese of theoretical reflections like "Acústica y Forma" [Acoustics and Form], by Rino Levi (*Proa* n. 113), including projects by Colombian architects presented in Brazilian architecture contests.

COLOPHON: XENOPHILIA FOR CONVENIENCE

The panorama presented in this paper enables us to formulate two conclusions: the first one, is that when observed from the outside, international plans and works received laudatory treatment from *Proa*'s editors and that, partly because of the compact format of the projects presentation, they appear largely decontextualized, which is an impediment to their critical reading. This contrasts with the reiterated negative diagnosis on Colombian cities, especially Bogota, with which was justified the urgency of the implementation of the plans presented by direct or sporadic collaborators of *Proa*. Thus, the journal had the function of disseminating concepts, but, above all, a plastic heritage fed not only by European but also Brazilian modernity, with which directly dialogue the local works included in the journal. Also outstanding is the journal's increasing interest in large urban operations that occurred in parallel

in other Latin American cities, in response to problems similar to those enunciated for the Colombian ones.

In a second instance, it is evident that this admiration for things abroad moved to the background when foreign actors intended to act directly in the local context – perhaps the exception was the attention received in *Proa* by the headquarters of the Banco de Bogotá, designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill and carried out by the local firm Martínez Cárdenas (*Proa* special n. 137). This was not an exclusive phenomenon of the Colombian context (one knows about the difficulties faced, for example, by Max Cetto and Hannes Meyer in Mexico to receive commissions and a certain recognition from the local group, and even from historiography), especially when considering the strategic positions of members of *Proa* in administrative or managerial posts, with which the possibilities of materialisation of their proposals became real and, therefore, their ambition to make an impact on the transformation of Bogotá (urgent in the face of the violent revolt of April 9, 1948, which destroyed a large extent of the centre, and of the exponential growth of the population caused by internal migration) and on the development of other regions.

There are many references and connections between *Proa* and the foreign context, both in the first 150 issues and in the following editions, that are unexplored in this paper. Among those that must be mentioned, is the interest of Martínez and Arbeláez for the built heritage and the pre-Colombian world – much of the historiography has unjustly accused them, as with Le Corbusier, of an absolute disregard for the history of architecture –, announced in the agendas of the *Pan-American Congresses of Architecture*, but palpable in *Proa's* articles, especially as from the special issue on Mexican colonial architecture published in *Proa* n. 140, on a travelling exhibition produced by the Colegio de Arquitectos de México. Another pending matter is the increasing publication of Japanese projects initiated in *Proa* n. 108 (house by Mizuki Yamada) and reaffirmed in *Proa* n. 132, n. 139 and n. 150. We can barely anticipate saying that over the years *Proa's* xenophilia is engaged with more zeal in territories outside Europe.

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LATIN AMERICA IN ITS ARCHITECTURE: CULTURE, CRITICISM AND CONSENSUS¹

Daniela Ortiz dos Santos

What should be the language of historians? Should they use the lexicon of the sources that protect them from anachronism [...] or the lexicon of their own time, which is the one that allows generalisations? (Topalov, 2014, p. 29)

What is our *state of attention* to words and terms when we write about architecture and its history? In the effort to make ourselves understood, not all the time we make evident to those who read us the decision-making as well as our own *consciousness-raising* that was necessary to *give meaning* to things and actions in which we are immerse. I wish to start this essay with a series of questions and I highlight some of Christian Topalov's reflections published in the introduction to the volume *L'aventure des mots de la ville* (2010). Topalov stresses the importance of historians to be *interested* in words. As Margareth da Silva Pereira states, words are born, they cross time and oceans, are re-signified, worshiped, politicised, made instrumental, capitalised, and also silenced. Thus, I propose a reflection not so much on the field of images, which is richly addressed by several authors who contribute to this volume. My focus is, especially, an exercise of concern about another mode of representation, namely, the written word as a privileged means of construction and preservation of memory in the field of architecture and urbanism.

In the past decades, collective works such as those by Choay, Merlin, Godard, Topalov, Coudroy de Lille, Rivière d'Arc, Bresciani, da Silva Pereira, Damon and Paquot, published in the form of cahiers² and

1 The author's notations made during classes of the course "Sobre as palavras e a cidade" [On the words and the city], taught by Margareth da Silva Pereira, in 2008, at the programme of academic Master's in Urbanism of the Postgraduate Programme in Urbanism of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

2 Among the efforts of this study network, drawing on the interdisciplinary research programme "Villes", coordinated by Francis Godard, I highlight the various volumes of the cahiers *Les mots de la ville*, edited between 1997 and 2003. The first volume published the

collections, have made possible to bring to light, for instance, the social, political, cultural and historical contexts, not only of terms that are common in our narratives, such as street, boulevard, road or highway (just to mention a few usually present in urban studies), but also expressions created to categorise moments and movements. In fact, it is not a natural process in the research of the disciplinary field to consider words used by urbanists, architects and critics as historical products and objects of study. As in this volume we propose to address the modes of memory construction about the different human relations with the built environment, it is useful to evoke here the efforts of the above-mentioned authors and insist on the idea that words have their own history. The starting point of this paper is to think about words not as mere linguistic terms, but, above all, as an intellectual exercise situated in space-time, in an intertwining of experience and expectation, as stated by Koselleck³ (1985), in which political, social, economic and cultural interests are strongly ingrained in their attributions and meanings.

For this volume, I concentrate my argument on a specific expression, namely, “Latin American architecture”.⁴ Presently, architects and critics usually identify Latin American architecture as a relatively coherent and institutionalised expression; however, we must bear in mind the various historical times and theoretical conflicts in its uses and attributions, as well as its ideological frictions and concurrent world views. The construction, circulation and consumption of this expression in the scientific literature comprises numerous authors with complex histories and agendas, throughout the past six decades.⁵ My proposal here is to be able to contribute to the studies on architectural criticism and history, drawing on the notion of *nebula* – borrowing the term used by Margareth da Silva Pereira (2020) – *i.e.*, an intellectual space in which world views are talked about, construed, conventionalised and shared. I concentrate

proceedings of the colloquium of the same name.

3 Originally published in German by the publishing house Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, in 1979, with the title *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. In 1985, *Futures Past: On Semantics of Historical Past* was published in Cambridge, by MIT Press.

4 This essay is a result of an ongoing post-doctorate research at the Art History Institute of the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

5 I do not intend to make a comprehensive list of authors and their more contemporary writings, especially as from the mid-1980s, which have been extensively delving into the historiography of the twentieth century architecture and urbanism in the region and whose discourses not rarely permeate a process of re-signifying the idea of Latin America. However, it is a must to mention the following authors: Manuel Castells, Ramón Gutiérrez, Marina Waisman, Jorge Francisco Liernur, Manuel Cuadra, Silvia Arango, Hugo Segawa, José Luís Romero, Adrián Gorelik, Anat Falbel, Patricio del Real and Helen Gyger, Arturo Almandóz Marte, Fernando Luiz Lara and Luis E. Carranza, Carlos Eduardo Comas, Jorge Francisco Liernur, Barry Bergdoll, Patricio del Real, Ana Esteban Maluenda, Rute Verde Zein. I also highlight the work of Carlos Alberto Ferreira Martins, who since 1994 coordinates the research group on architecture and urbanism in Brazil and Latin America, as well as José Lira's courses on Latin America, historiography and architecture. Available at: <https://youtu.be/4uEyJoMMjk4>.

on the early decades of the second half of the twentieth century, especially on the architectural critic Roberto Segre and on a publication that he organised in the 1970s, funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Under his coordination and edition, the book gathers a series of essays by internationalists in the fields of arts, restoration, anthropology, architecture, design and urbanism. Not only the publication as such, but also the debates and meetings initiated by these authors and their engagement in UNESCO's projects engendered deep echoes in the way in which we perceive Latin American architecture and how we use, in our narratives, the idea of an architectural and artistic culture in Latin America.

UNESCO AND THE IDEA OF CULTURE OF LATIN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE

If some projects from the late 1950s until the early 1980s helped to legitimise the construction of a Latin American identity on a global scale,⁶ they were also products of a period whose practices and discourses about the region were contradictory, ideological and under dispute.⁷ Along those years, an increasing number of publications, meetings and exhibitions started to have strong appeals for a movement of Latin American integration, operating among the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War.⁸ To understand the complexity of this term, it is critical to study

6 During the 1960s were created important organizations, associations and magazines focusing on Latin America. To mention only four critical examples, I highlight the formation in 1966 of the Italian-Latin American institute, based in Rome; under the initiative of the Italian government to promote the collaboration with Latin America in the areas of science, education and culture, the creation, in 1964, of the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas of the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo of the Universidad Central de Venezuela; under Graziano Gasparini's direction, the constitution of the academics' association of Latin American Studies Association, in 1966; and the creation of the magazine *Latinoamérica: Anuario de Estudios Latino Americanos*, in 1968, published by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). With the title *Identidad en América Latina* [Identity in Latin America], Leopoldo Zea, then professor at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras of UNAM, opens the first issue of the magazine with his essay.

7 The writings on the idea of a Latin American unity, Latin American roots, or a Latin American thought, among intellectuals living in the Americas and in Europe, were widely addressed in the second half of the twentieth century. I stress, especially, the broad production during the 1960s. While authors as Jean Casimir, Gustavo Beyhau and Leopoldo Zea, to mention a few, insist on a narrative promoting a movement of integration of the region, others, as Afrânio Coutinho or Darcy Ribeiro, evoke the dilemmas and contradictions in the use of this expression. Coutinho goes further, when he manifests not to identify with the idea of Brazil belonging to Latin America. See Jean Casimir, Afrânio Coutinho, Gustavo Beyhau, Darcy Ribeiro and Leopoldo Zea.

8 Among the pioneering authors in studies on artistic, architectural and urban Latin American cultures, whose work included collaborating in UNESCO's projects, publications or programmes, it is worthy to highlight the photographers Paolo Gasparini and Paul Almas, the art critics Mário Barata, Pietro Maria Bardi, Damián Bayón, Leopoldo Castedo, Jean Franco, Diego Angulo Íñiguez, Mário Pedrosa and Erwin Walter Palm, the anthropologists Alfred Métraux and Darcy Ribeiro, the sociologist Gilberto Freyre, the critics of urbanism

the fronts taken by UNESCO. In other words, the history of uses and meanings attributed to Latin American architecture, from the 1950s onwards and, especially, in the two following decades, is deeply related to several of the agency's initiatives and guidelines. During the late-1940s through the mid-1960s, the agency underwent a complex process of re-structuring and departmentalising of its initiatives and attributions.

In this process, I highlight here two important events. Under the administration of UNESCO's second director-general, the Mexican Jaime Torres Bodet, from 1948 to 1952, there is a strong turn in the so-called Latin America region, especially regarding educational and social projects. Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), headquartered in Santiago, Chile, was one of the first commissions created, in 1948. Despite the adoption of social and educational programmes on a global scale, with these actions divided into five large geographic regions, the precursor works were carried out in Latin America, as well as the studies on the region. In the agency's bulletin of June 1951, there is broad dissemination of the region's pioneering, evoking the advanced stage of implementation of programmes and projects, and comparing it with the other regions of the world. A special highlight is given to the creation of the first international centre for research and training of specialists in basic education, in Patzcuaro, Mexico. Inaugurated by Torres Bodet, the centre is described as a collaborative effort between UNESCO, the Mexican government and the Organization of American States (OAS). The bulletin *Courier* presents reports by the agency's special envoys, with large photographic material,

Jorge E. Hardoy, Philip M. Hauser, Jaime Dorselaer and Richard M. Morse, and the architectural critics Francisco Bullrich, Graziano Gasparini, Sylvio de Vasconcellos, Henrique Mindlin and, previously cited, Roberto Segre. Among the texts involving UNESCO or international organisations, I highlight: by Pietro Maria Bardi, Museums of Art and Education, paper presented at the 2nd Biennial Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in London, in 1950, and *Le Musée de Arte*, in *Museum*, quarterly magazine published by UNESCO; by Damián Bayón, *L'Amérique latine dans son art*; by Francisco Bullrich, *Arquitectura latino-americana: 1930-1970*; by Leopoldo Castedo, *A history of Latin American art and architecture: from pre-Columbian times to the present*; by Edmundo Desnoes and Paolo Gasparini, *Para verte mejor, América Latina*; by Jaime Dorselaer and Alfonso Gregory, *La urbanización en América Latina*; by Jean Franco, *The Modern Culture of Latin-America: Society and the Artist*; by Graziano Gasparini, *Continuar el diálogo*; by Jorge Enrique Hardoy and Carlos Tobar, *La urbanización en América Latina*; by Philip M. Hauser, *Urbanización en América Latina*; by Diego Angulo Iñiguez, *Algunas consideraciones sobre los estudios de Historia del Arte hispanoamericano*; by Henrique Mindlin, *Modern Architecture: Triumph of Latin America*; by Alfred Métraux, *The changing face of Latin America*; by Richard M. Morse, *Recent Research on Latin American Urbanization: A Selective Survey with Commentary* and *La investigación urbana latinoamericana: tendencias y planteos*; by Sylvio de Vasconcellos, *Brasil: protección del patrimonio cultural, el monumento y su ambiente*; by Erwin Walter Palm, *Die Museen Lateinamerikas* and *Urbanismo barroco en América Latina*. On Mário Barata's participation at the regional Latin American seminar, on the educational role of museums, held in Rio de Janeiro from September 7-30, 1958, organised by UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM), see Georges Henri Rivière. On the performance of Mário Pedrosa and Mário Barata at the 1959 Extraordinary International Congress of Art Critics, see Maria da Silveira Lobo and Roberto Segre.

emphasising the objective of “spreading the benefits of Patzcuaro to all the world”.⁹

A second movement was made by the department of mass communication, established in 1954, which would become an important arm of the agency. The department would then have a crucial role in the construction and dissemination not only of the internal activities, but also, and especially, in taking a stand of UNESCO’s commitment to propose, recommend and perform directly in the benefit of new objects of study, new approaches, new narratives and new guidelines, in the areas of education, science and culture. Some concrete changes appear in the agency’s bulletins¹⁰ and in reports, monographs, collections and audio-visual projects throughout the 1960s. Among these changes, we highlight a meaningful increase in texts and projects in favour of cultural studies.¹¹ As suggested by Françoise Choay in *L’Allegorie du patrimoine* (1992), during the 1960s, there is an extrapolation of a “cult of culture”¹² in the French language. Those were years when institutions of *culture* were created in the country, but, according to Choay, they did not escape a phenomenon of culture commodification. With its headquarters in Paris, the relations of UNESCO with France were strongly privileged, i.e., there was a link with French institutions, with their own French staff members (who, due to agreements with the French government, were the vast majority) and with the French language itself. Thus, the semantic and institutional change that occurred with the word *culture*, pointed out by Choay, generated deep echoes in the way the departments and programmes of UNESCO explored *culture* as a category. These move-

9 See the article “Half the World is in Darkness”, by an unidentified author, and the report by Daniel Behrman with the title “First Headquarters in the fight against ignorance”.

10 I consider the agency’s bulletins as a privileged source. *The UNESCO Courier*, created in 1947, are still in circulation. It used to be published in several languages, and it is currently available at UNESCO’s digital library in English, French and Spanish.

11 In fact, the notion and the use of the word *culture* were not always homogeneous among the various languages used in the publication of the agency’s bulletins. For example, the August-September 1952 issue is indicative. While Gilberto Freyre’s article’s title in English stresses the word “history”, “The Negro’s role in Brazilian history”, the French version concentrates on the idea of “civilization”, “Le Rôle des noirs dans la civilisation brésilienne”, and the Spanish version uses “culture”, “El Negro en la cultura del Brasil”. On Freyre’s work with UNESCO, see Maio, (1999).

12 Choay points out that, differently from the German language, the word *culture* in the French language had little recurrence and use until the years of the Second World War. However, in the 1960s, according to the author, the term was popularised, leading to a “cult of culture”. On the one hand, the creation by André Malraux of the Ministry of Culture and especially the House of Culture served as a model for several other countries, and European and international institutions. On the other hand, Choay sustains that this cult of culture precipitated a semantic change, no longer being only associated to a diversity of cultural studies (on daily life, popular, etc.), but becoming a commodity and, soon after, being incorporated by the market. It is in this context of a cult not only of culture, but also of an institutionalisation of cultural diversity and its capitalisation that the UNESCO programmes and projects are examined here.

ments would become the source for the cultivation of an idea of Latin American culture within the agency, during the post-war years.¹³

In fact, it was not by mere chance that the records of the Resolution n. 3324 of 1966, and the report produced in 1969 funded the creation and dissemination of programmes and studies of the so-called “other cultures”. The department of cultural issues, coordinated by the writer César Fernández Moreno,¹⁴ dedicated to the programme of cultural studies on Latin America, invites experts to examine the region’s literature and art, resulting in a periodical publication in volumes, under the title *Cultures*, and sporadic collections of essays and books, with transcriptions of interviews with several of the region’s figures. In addition, the cover of a thematic issue on Latin America, released in March 1972 in the *Courier* bulletin, displayed the expression “Cultural explosion”, evoking with emphasis the motto of the agency in those years.¹⁵ In architecture, more specifically, one publication stands out as a pioneer and would become a reference for Latin American architectural criticism.

It is a collectanea of essays in Spanish with the title *América Latina en su arquitectura*,¹⁶ aiming to address issues about the territory and the built environment. Published in 1975, the book comprises 14 essays, in which the authors present their reports and annotations, grouped in three parts. The volume includes an introduction by Darcy Ribeiro and a series of reports signed by Gui Bonsiepe, Francisco Bullrich, Max Ludwig Cetto, Emilio Escobar Loret de Mola, Graziano Gasparini, Jorge Enri-

13 The studies on “cultures” are present in several of UNESCO’s publications, in the 1950s and 1960s, but it was especially in the 1970s that the term gained full prominence on the covers of bulletins and reports, besides being widely adopted in the most varied languages. See, e.g., the following issues: March 1972, “America Latina: esplendor de una cultura múltiple”; December 1973, “Pakistan: 5,000 years of art & culture”; February 1976, “The Search for cultural identity”; August-September 1977, “Amérique latine: immense mosaïque de cultures”; July 1978, “Trésors culturels: la fin d’un exil”; August-September 1978, “Les slaves: culture et histories”; February 1979, “The Huichol: A pre-Columbian culture in Mexico today”; and October 1979, “Papua-Nueva Guinea: una vieja cultura para un nuevo Estado”.

14 The figure of Cesar Fernández Moreno, who since 1968 worked in the sector of studies on cultures at the department of studies and development of cultures, is greatly relevant for the success of UNESCO’s cultural projects on Latin America and the Caribbean. In an official note, Memo n. 30960, of May 9, 1972, René Maheu, in his service as director-general, takes a series of actions referring to cultural themes, among them, Fernández Moreno’s designation as head of the mission of the newly created regional bureau for culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, with headquarters in Havana, Cuba. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247512?posInSet=12&queryId=53094375-f77b-40c0-ace5-0a46f-21cf659>. Access on: Sept. 26, 2024.

15 In June 1961, Latin America had already been the focus of a significant amount of *Courier* bulletins, dedicated to the region’s social, historical and cultural themes, but it was in March 1972 that the idea of a “Latin American cultural explosion” was broadly problematized. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000078274.locale=en>. Access on: Nov. 8, 2021.

16 Edited by Roberto Segre.

que Hardoy, Rafael López Rangel, Diego Robles Rivas, Germán Samper Gnecco, Roberto Segre, Enrico Tedeschi and Ramón Vargas Salguero.¹⁷

Five years later, an English edition appeared with the title *Latin America in its Architecture*, published by Holmes & Meier,¹⁸ of New York. Although both volumes provide the contents organised by thematic chapters,¹⁹ in detriment of a narrative structured by countries, the English version goes through significant changes. Starting with the reduced number of authors,²⁰ besides having an introduction signed by Fernando Kusnetzoff. In a clear effort to contextualize and conciliate the discourse with the English language reader, Kusnetzoff stresses the collaborators' strong identification with Latin America, with this being an essentially political stand regarding publications on the theme from a North American perspective.

In the studies presented in both versions, however, there is a constant effort from the authors to compare projects, cities and experiences, from a South-South perspective. The way in which these analogies appear, though, is less clear between countries within the regions and more evident between the Americas and Europe. The authors compare buildings, places and transatlantic cultures, and they do it as a useful tool in the effort to construe new narratives. In the texts by Cetto and Gasparini, the Old Continent appears as a bridge between the different examples selected to be examined and compared. The evidence becomes more strongly present in the texts by authors who had their intellectual training and established scientific collaboration with scholars based in European schools that were going through educational and political agenda reforms, such as the *Hochschule für Gestaltung* (HfG) in Ulm, at the time situated in Western Germany, and the Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia, in Italy.²¹

17 According to Segre's introduction, Henrique Mindlin participated in the discussions at the meetings of the International Union of Architects (UIA). His contribution with a text in Brasília, which had been confirmed, was abruptly interrupted due to his death in 1971.

18 Edited by Roberto Segre and Fernando Kusnetzoff.

19 The thematic diversity is already evident in the sub-chapters titles of the 1975 version written in Spanish: "El proceso de urbanización" and "Las áreas metropolitanas", by Hardoy; "La marginalidad urbana", by Robles Rivas; "Las transformaciones en el medio rural" and "Comunicación y participación social", by Segre; "Ciudades creadas en el siglo XX. Brasília" by Bullrich; "Significado presente de la arquitectura del pasado", by Gasparini; "Influencias externas y significado de la tradición", by Cetto; "La crisis actual de la arquitectura latinoamericana", by Vargas Salguero and López Rangel; "Responsabilidad social del arquitecto", by Samper Gnecco; "El diseño industrial: una realidad ambigua", by Bonsiepe; and "El medio ambiente natural", by Tedeschi.

20 Besides an introduction by Kusnetzoff, the English version presents essays written by Gui Bonsiepe, Max Ludwig Cetto, Emilio Escobar Lorete de Mola, Graziano Gasparini, Rafael López Rangel, Darcy Ribeiro, Roberto Segre and Ramón Vargas Salguero.

21 The proposal of the present essay is not to analyse each one of these texts, nor to explore in detail the biographies of each collaborator of the publication. However, it is worth mentioning that for Gui Bonsiepe, Francisco Bullrich and Roberto Segre, the School of Ulm was an important institution, where professional, ideological and affection relationships were esta-

If, on the one hand, the 1975 version generated echoes until the late 1970s, in spaces of Spanish language, on the other hand, the English version, of 1980, took a global scale dimension, becoming a required reference for the studies on the field of Latin American architecture still nowadays. Despite being widely used as a secondary source, neither books have become, until today, themselves, objects of a thorough critical study that sheds light on UNESCO's role in the historiography of Latin American architecture. In other words, the construction process of the first book, as well as its collaborators' network, is placed here in the centre of a more complex problematization, in which ideology, architectural criticism and international organisations are intersected.

Initially commissioned to the architect Francisco Bullrich, the North American edition of the book takes a different path in the meetings of the International Union of Architects (UIA) that happened during the 1960s, especially the 10th Congress of UIA, held in October 1969, in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. As editor and reporter for both versions, the chosen one was not Bullrich, who had recently published a volume in the collection *New Directions in Architecture* for the publishing house George Braziller; rather, the chosen one was Roberto Segre, at the time a young professor of architecture established in Cuba since 1963. Instead of delving into the discourses of those pioneering essays, whose idea of Latin American architectural culture was determinant, I propose a detour, evoking the multiple relations that Segre and his collaborators had with the region.

When reading more attentively the biographical notes in both editions, the Spanish (Segre, 1975) and the English (1980), it is noticeable that two-thirds of the voices that presented themselves as Latin Americans, suggesting the production of an analysis "from inside the region", were from figures who had undergone complex experiences of displacement, either transcontinental or transatlantic, before or during the project of the books. While the notes on Germán Samper Gnecco,²² Diego

blished, both in the period directed by Max Bill and in the period when the school was under the coordination of Tomás Maldonado. The relations of Gasparini with the school of architecture of the Università Iuav di Venezia deserve to be highlighted. Not only because Gasparini studied there, but also because he had strong relationships with the scholars since the 1950s. Starting with Carlo Scarpa, who was his professor and boss in that decade, during the works for the *giardini* of the Biennale di Venezia, and their professional and personal relationship was of great importance for the commissioning of Scarpa by the government of Venezuela to design the country's pavilion. Leonardo Benevolo was also an interlocutor of Gasparini with Iuav during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. By Gasparini's invitation, Benevolo travelled to Caracas, in October 1967, to participate in the International Seminar of Latin American Architectural Historiography. See issue n. 9 of *Boletín del Centro de investigaciones históricas y estéticas*, directed by Gasparini at the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo, Universidad Central de Venezuela, published in April 1968.

22 In the first biographical lines on Germán Samper Gnecco, one reads: "Colombian architect [...]. Graduated from the National University of Colombia. Made studies and projects at Le Corbusier's bureau in Paris, the master plan for Bogotá and master plan for Chandigarh, 1948/53".

Robles Rivas,²³ Francisco Bullrich,²⁴ and Jorge E. Hardoy²⁵ make evident their stay in France, England (London), Western Germany and United States for studies or internship at architecture bureaux, the biographies of Max Cetto,²⁶ Graziano Gasparini,²⁷ and Enrico Tedeschi²⁸ shed light on a past of European emigration to the Americas, during the Second World War or in the early years of the post-war. Analogous aspects are found in the references of Emilio Escobar Loret de Mola²⁹ and Roberto Segre³⁰ regarding their bonds of immigration ancestry and, still, in Segre's case there is the political and militant movement of settling in Cuba as a young adult. Finally, in between the lines of the notes on Gui Bonsiepe,³¹ Darcy Ribeiro,³² and Fernando Kusnetzoff³³ transpire their experiences of political exile.

23 The note on Robles Rivas includes "Peruvian architect [...]. Graduated from the National University of Engineering, in Lima, Peru, [taking] post-graduate studies at the Planning Institute of Lima and at the School of Architecture of the Architectural Association [at the] department of tropical studies, in London".

24 Francisco Bullrich presents himself as an "Argentinian architect" [...], architectural critic and historian. He graduated from the University of Buenos Aires [and carried out] post-graduate studies at the Ulm School of Design, in the Federal Republic of Germany".

25 The note on Hardoy reads "Argentinian architect [...], theoretician and researcher on urbanism and planning. Graduated from University of Buenos Aires, [accomplished] Master's in regional and city planning and doctoral degree at Harvard University".

26 Cetto identifies himself as "Mexican architect, [born in] Koblenz, Federal Republic of Germany. Graduated from the Technical University of Berlin".

27 Gasparini identifies himself as "Venezuelan architect, [born in] Venice, Italy [...], historian of architecture and monuments restorer".

28 Tedeschi presents himself as "Argentinian architect, [born in] Rome, Italy [...], historian and critic of Architecture, PhD in architecture from the University of Rome and with a revaluated title at the National University of Tucumán [Argentina]".

29 The first lines of the note on Escobar Moret de Lora describe him as "Cuban architect, [born in] Lima, Peru".

30 The first words of the note on Segre, are: "Argentinian architect, [born in] Milan, Italy [...], settled in Cuba since 1963".

31 Bonsiepe is the only author whose citizenship is not identified. However, the date when he was forced into exile is externalised: "industrial designer, [born in] Glücksburg, Federal Republic of Germany. Settled in Chile until July 11, 1973. Graduated from Ulm School of Design (HfG)".

32 As a frequent collaborator in UNESCO projects, publications and periodicals, Darcy Ribeiro was invited to open *América Latina en su arquitectura* with a critical essay. Thus, his biographical note reflects this privileged place as an internationalist and highly knowledgeable on cultural studies and anthropology of Brazil and the Americas. It highlights his positions as the first rector of the University of Brasília, in 1961, as minister of education and culture of Brazil during the administration of João Goulart (1962-1963) and as an active member of international organisations and agencies (in the 1950s and 1960s). The note also presents the list of seminal works of large international circulation, all written and published between 1968 and 1973, during his political exile in Uruguay, Venezuela, Chile (of Allende) and Peru (of Alvarado).

33 Kusnetzoff collaborated as editor only in the English version. In the first lines of his biographical note, the issue of exile is pointed out: "Chilean architect (Temuco, Chile, 1929), residing in the United States since 1973". See Segre and Kusnetzoff (1980).

This approach reveals an intersection between historical and collective narratives, discussed and produced in a context of large circulation among internationalists, with the own personal experiences of displacement of its actors. The hypothesis that I sustain draws on two considerations. The first is supported on the spaces of displacement experience as a useful tool of analysis for the studies on the historiography of Latin American architecture in those decades.³⁴ The second insists on UNESCO's role as political and institutional actor in the processes of new signification and sense of the idea of Latin American architecture as a critical category and as subject in the political-intellectual debate during the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the agency becomes stage and protagonist, as well as a fertile field where spaces of experience intersect, horizons of expectation³⁵ are built and "contact zones"³⁶ are cultivated.

In this game, concurs a number of transnational and international strategies and interests in the region. During the 1950s, the idea of Latin American architecture was, until then, a category mainly encountered in discourses produced notably "outside" the region, *i.e.*, strongly funded and led by foreign institutions and whose programmes involving local co-participation were very small. In this context, UNESCO's project is a turning point, since it suggested co-participative and collective actions.

However, if, on the one hand, Segre's and his group's narratives presented in this pilot project – in a clear effort to promote the Latin American integration movement – aimed at evoking a strong feeling of identification of these authors with the region, on the other hand, these narratives underlined their experiences of displacement, or still, of "being foreign" to the region. The construction of a new meaning, sense and narrative of Latin American architecture traverses, hence, this personal, but also collective, movement, in which the experience of the narrator's displacement is a fundamental piece in the intellectual process of knowledge construction. Among the most representative cases in which criticism, displacement and ideology intersect, we find that of the book's editor, Roberto Segre. Focusing the analysis on the construction of the collectanea, starting by its editor, is useful because it allows revealing a series of pioneering efforts for the construction of the disciplinary field. Therefore, it enables putting into evidence the places of enunciation of its authors, their displacements, their shared worldviews and their poli-

34 There are still relatively few studies that make the intersection between displacement and historiography, especially the historiography of architecture. I highlight a selection of critical texts that contributed to the development of the present study. See Von Hanffstengel *et al.* (1995), Moravánszky (1998), Bozdogan (2001), Arnold *et al.* (2006), Dogramaci (2008), Scrivano (2013), Maniaque and Gaimard (2018), Falbel (2018), Singh *et al.* (2020), Siddiqi and Lee (2019), and Cardoso (2020).

35 On the concept of "space of experience" and "horizons of expectation", read Koselleck, *Futures Past* (1985 [1979]).

36 On the concept of "contact zone", see Pratt (1991).

tical stands, as well as the disputes in the participation of international organisations.

ROBERTO SEGRE: DISPLACEMENT EXPERIENCES AND LATIN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM

When the book's project was launched at the UIA meeting in Buenos Aires, Segre, then being 35 years old, had recently been appointed professor of history of architecture at the University of Havana, Cuba. As he himself points out in his biography, his writings on architecture, in the revolutionary Cuba, were already internationally prominent when the project of UNESCO's book was taking shape.³⁷ In fact, not only Spanish was his native language, but also Italian.³⁸ Segre had a highly privileged view of the cultures and contexts in which he circulated, having two citizenships, Argentinian and Italian, which facilitated transatlantic travels, studies and interchanges. Moreover, his presence in Havana contributed to a fertile period in the production, discussion and dissemination of an architectural culture among intellectuals, students and editors with a progressive worldview, in which many were, at that time, sympathisers or affiliated to communist parties of Europe and the Americas, or still lived in territories occupied by the Soviet bloc. Seven years before UNESCO's book "America Latina en su arquitectura" [Latin America in its architecture] took shape, Segre had already published his first book on the Cuban revolution architecture.³⁹ With the title *La arquitectura de la revolución cubana* [The architecture of Cuban revolution], this work had an Italian edition in 1970, by the publishing house Marsilio, which in the same period had published books by figures who were active in the field of architectural criticism, such as Aldo Rossi and Giancarlo De Carlo.⁴⁰ Besides being a pioneering in-depth study on the post-revolutionary architectural culture of the Caribbean Island, Segre, in his monograph *Cuba, l'architettura della rivoluzione* [Cuba, the architecture of revolution], provided an extensive original visual documentation, which became especially valuable for international studies. This means that, while his books in Spanish (all produced by editing houses based in the Americas) became references in the Ibero-American world, his Italian texts penetrated the broader academic sphere of the European continent, during the 1970s. In "Architettura e territorio nell'America Latina" [Architecture and territory in Latin America], co-written with Rafael López Rangel, published by Electa, in 1982, the authors directly addressed a European public.⁴¹ Hence, one can say that, if the texts by

37 Segre (2012).

38 On Segre's biography, see Falbel and Peixoto (2016) and Vilas Boas *et al.* (2014).

39 Segre (1968).

40 Segre (1970), De Carlo (1966), and Rossi (1966).

41 Segre's statement that the book *Architettura e territorio* was directed to a European audience appears in the introduction of his book *Tendencias arquitectónicas y caos urbanos*

Segre on Cuban architecture catapulted him to an international prominence and reverberated among left-wing students, intellectuals and editors, it was his involvement in the UNESCO's project, in 1969, that consolidated his place as an authoritative scholar on the broader topic of "Latin America". In other words, Segre's involvement with the Fernández Moreno's project of cultural studies for UNESCO marked his initial encounter with the theories and debates on Latin America, beyond the specific case of Cuba, turning it into a pivot in his international career, as he would later acknowledge.⁴² The closing essay, with 30 pages, which appears in both the Spanish and the English versions, shows important stances. His words make clear that cultural studies on architecture and political stand cannot be separated. By making a criticism of the "dominant cultural paradigm", which had moulded the existing architectural discourse, Segre adopted an ideological posture in the promotion of social participation and collective work. The result is a narrative that defends constructing an experience of rural and urban realities of the region, presented as socially situated, culturally incorporated and, most of all, political. This narrative contributed to the cultivation of a perception that this movement was produced within the region, in critical years in the geopolitical conjuncture of the Cold War. Hence, one can affirm that his work as author and editor in this ambitious project of UNESCO opened doors for him to a constellation of ideas, authors, and international institutions and funding agencies. A notable example of this diving is the use of the category "Latin America" as a critical and political instrument. In his texts on the revolutionary Cuba and modern architecture of the late 1960s, it was not "Latin America" that was part of his repertoire, but rather the idea of "Third World".⁴³ In 1975, when his UNESCO report was first published, "Latin America" became part of a privileged repertoire, taking great prominence in his future studies. Besides being his debut in the debates on Latin America, Segre's article of 1975 echoes a growing and influential group of intellectuals with a more progressive stand who led UNESCO's programmes, such as Darcy Ribeiro, Fernández Moreno, Gui Bonsiepe, just to mention his closest interlocutors. They shared the same circles within the institution, endorsing a political positioning of Latin American integration and cooperation in

en América Latina [Architectural trends and urban chaos in Latin America] (1986).

42 Segre (1991).

43 In the edition in Portuguese of *Arquitectura y urbanismo de la revolución cubana*, Segre presents his definition and use for the category "Third World". He writes: "the Congress [of the International Union of Architects of 1963, in Havana], achieved the development of close bonds between professionals of socialist countries and of the so-called Third World. It was defined what it means to belong to this world and its political and ideological characterisation. The awakening of the Third World – one of the most relevant facts of our century – does not correspond only to a process of economic liberation, of social transformation, technology and rising the standard of living. It implies a challenge to the nations without resources that intend to forge a human community based on social and moral content." See Segre (1987).

the disciplinary field of architectural criticism. By prioritizing this political aspect, however, he silences the subjective and historical dimension around the category “Latin American architecture”. In other words, the complexities, contradictions, controversies and disagreements on the idea and use of this category had to be pacified in favour of a discourse aligned with a series of the agency’s programmes of cultural studies. For Segre, insisting on a “Latin American culture” would mean favouring an operative concept⁴⁴ and, above all, a political stand. Following this logic, this positioning would consequently propitiate the construction of a body of disciplinary knowledge, while it would launch new platforms that would reposition the environmental and urban architecture and cultures at local and global scales.

LATIN AMERICA IN ITS ARCHITECTURE, TODAY: WORDS, HISTORICAL TIMES AND SUBJECTIVITY

Adopting the terminology of the past, ‘a quite safe procedure at first sight’, presents risks, because the vocabulary of the sources may deceive us: things change without the variation of words, without things being different (Topalov, 2014, p. 29).

Of which Latin American architecture do we speak today? Do we speak in the same way as the authors of *Latin America in its architecture*? And to what extent does revisiting these books organised by Segre and promoted by UNESCO help us to rethink the idea of displacement in the historiography of architecture and urbanism? In order to answer these questions, it seems important to reposition the starting points of its authors, i.e., as suggested by Paul Ricoeur, Reinhart Koselleck and Christian Topalov, to use a reflexive method on the historical times, the spaces of experience and the subjectivity of the authors: From where do they speak? Who do they speak to? And why do they speak this way? Starting with the very *becoming aware* of us as subjects in this process and the constant efforts we make to refresh the instruments in the process of re-signifying the historiographic operations in the narratives of the architectural and urbanistic thought.

Latin America in its architecture became more than a publication; it established platforms to share knowledge, projects and positions, engendering other collaborative projects.⁴⁵ “Latin America” seems to me,

44 Here I borrow the idea of “operative concept”, as explored by Martinière (2012).

45 Two important initiatives deserve to be highlighted: firstly, the bulletins, by Graziano Gasparini, of the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas (University of Venezuela), which published articles by Hardoy (1969) and Segre (1972); and the series of lectures on industrial design, organised by Segre and Fernando Salinas, in Havana in 1972, having as guests Tomás Maldonado, then professor in Milan; Gui Bonsieppe, head of Cybersyn, in Chile; Claude Schnaidt, professor at Unité Pédagogique d’architecture, in Paris; Martin Kelm, director of the Central Office of Design of the German Democratic Republic; and Yuri

therefore, to be much more than a series of useful essays on the region's architecture and urbanism, in the 1960s and 1970s. It is, in my view, a solid call to act, today. A call that incorporates the contradictions and consensus, as well as the commitments, of those who dared to make an intellectual and political stand about their present time and their reality and their close environment, without ceasing to update the horizons of expectations in their poetics. In other words, without ceasing to take the risk of making from themselves the other and making of their own experience of displacement their place of enunciation.

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Soloviev, director of the Institute of Research on Industrial Design of the USSR, VNIITE, sponsored by the government. See Fernández (2006) and Segre (2002). Notable collaborators of *CIIHE Bulletins* include Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, George Kubler, Erwin Walter Palm, Silvio de Vasconcellos, Fernando Chueca Goitia, Leonardo Benevolo, Paolo Portoghesi, Damián Bayón, María Teresa Gisbert, Carmen Aranovich, Jorge E. Hardoy, Enrique del Moral, Mari-na Waismann, Theodore and Ramón Gutiérrez.

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THINKING THROUGH NEBULAE, THE PLACES OF LANGUAGE⁴⁶

Interview with Margareth da Silva Rereira,
by Rute Figueiredo and
Priscilla Alves Peixoto

Priscilla Peixoto: The invitation to participate this interview was motivated by the theoretical-methodological contribution that your notion of *nebula*⁴⁷ brings to the theme on “Transatlantic Dialogues”.⁴⁸ The metaphor of *nebula* interests us as an image of thought, in your own words:

[...] to evoke these vaporous forms that aggregate to constitute themselves, in a dense mode in some zones, fluid and frayed in others, consolidating or diluting from the interaction of some of them with others or frankly in a situation of isolation. However, if we look at these configurations even closer, their

46 This article was published in the journal *Cadernos do PROARQ*: PEREIRA, M. da S.; FIGUEIREDO, R.; PEIXOTO, P. Thinking through nebulae, the places of language. Interview with Margareth da Silva Pereira. *Cadernos do PROARQ*, n. 43, 2024, p.186-224. Available at: https://cadernos.proarq.fau.ufrj.br/public/docs/CP_43_TEXTOS_ENTREVISTA.pdf.

47 According to Margareth da Silva Pereira (2022, p. 261 – Free translation): “Nebula. 1. Cloud. By extension [...], collective of clouds, considering them to be various condensations of mists of gases gathered in compact groups or mere sparse and isolated trails that are perceived by contrast and relationship. 2. Layers of any ether, gas or vapour characterised by their movement. 3 In a figurative sense, it designates a configuration known as a form but that is transitory. 4. Transient, moving form of thought and knowledge. The definitions of the word “nebula” as a collective noun, that is, as a term that designates a singular that is plural, are not found as such in any dictionary. They support an epistemic attitude and a theoretical-methodological way of thinking that are inseparable from an understanding of ways of being. They are not an applicable theoretical model, but a way of thinking about thinking and knowing”

48 This interview was conducted via video call on June 2, 2022. On the occasion, Priscilla Peixoto was in Rio de Janeiro, Rute Figueiredo was in Lisbon, and Margareth da Silva Pereira was in Salvador. In the following months, the interview was transcribed by Luiza Appolinário, Camille Oliveira and Natália Abdala, and revised by Sílvia Maciel Sávio Chataignier, Rute Figueiredo and Priscilla Peixoto. Due to health reasons, the interviewee could not participate in the colloquium, held on September 13-14, 2022. Nevertheless, the issues addressed in the interview were presented by Rute Figueiredo and incorporated in the round table debate. In the published version, we have decided to use the interview format, considering its important contribution to the theoretical-methodological fundaments, both of the axis *Transatlantic Dialogues* and the *Colloquium on Criticism, Media and Memory (1940s-1970s)*.

forms display several layers more or less ethereal, with their spots of concentration or fraying (Pereira, 2014, p. 202 – free translation).

When approaching historiographic research, you present this synthesis:

Thus, any critical exercise on the theme requires exploring layers of actors and voices active in the cultural field and research moving in a more or less interlinked or frankly independent way, according to the observed configurations. To be more precise, it is necessary not to forget that spots of concentration or fraying of these clouds practise history in various tones, which result from cultural constructions that are organized in different temporalities and change differently through time (Pereira, 2014, p. 202 – free translation).

Therefore, the invitation seeks to help us get closer to the study of social actors who shape and practice architecture criticism, drawing attention to the relationships they have established among them, as well as helping to problematize the different temporalities that traverse their relations.

However, we are conscious that the notion of nebula was not created specifically in the domain of architectural criticism studies, but our interest here is the historicity of language acts, thus inherent to any critical operation. We brought this notion to the discussion, considering that your research is not far from the issues to be debated when we frame the history of architectural criticism, since we do not approach it as a specialised knowledge. On the contrary, we sought to frame it as an epistemological, reflective state, about the practices of judgement in architecture, i.e., as a manner of reacting and thinking, a knowledge historically situated.

Rute Figueiredo [RF]: Priscilla Peixoto has introduced some of the issues that interest us, particularly in the scope of the transnational dialogues, namely the concept of *nebula* – “a thinking in movement”, in Pereira’s words. In effect, I took the three volumes of the series “Nebulas do Pensamento Urbanístico” [Nebulae of Urbanistic Thought] (Pereira; Jacques, 2018, 2019; Pereira *et al.*, 2020) – unfolded in modes of thinking, making and narrating – as a starting point and methodological base for the elaboration of this interview. The aim is to create “a pause to reflect on concepts, themes, methods, questions and debates that traverse the founding practices of cities’ forms, both built and immaterial, starting with those by historians and all who operate on the urban, between their memories, stories and their possibilities of becoming” (Pereira *et al.*, 2020, p. 11 – free translation). We would like to start by better understanding how this “pause to reflect” came about. What concerns,

challenges, or questions – either from the methodological or conceptual viewpoints – were at the root of your work on the notion of *nebula*?

Margareth da Silva Pereira [MSP]: I wonder if it will be possible to answer it all, because the questions you pose are immense and each one evokes a certain line of thought. The notion of *nebula* – actually, I prefer to use *notion* instead of *concept* – is constructed in a very slow process. In fact, a process that aimed at displacing the very sense attributed to the word *concept*. The origin of the notion of *nebula* has a first guiding thread dating back to over 35 years. It started when I was writing my doctoral thesis¹ and studied the modernization of Rio de Janeiro in the early twentieth century, associating it and comparing with Baron Haussmann’s works in Paris, fifty years earlier. I was living in France, where I spent five years dedicated to this study. I had already written two or three chapters of my thesis, when I returned to Rio de Janeiro to conclude some research and, seeing the city in loco, I immediately realised my mistake. “Oh God, it is all wrong!” – I said to myself. I tore all the chapters I had written and decided to restart. Why? Because the problem is that the Haussmann’s Paris, as a built materiality, was entirely there, it remained. In other words, in Paris, I went outside my house and could walk on the Boulevard Saint Germain, on the Boulevard Saint Michel, and the city was there. In Rio de Janeiro, on the contrary, I could walk on the axis of the former Avenida Central – the most important axis of the city reforms at the turn of the century – but there was nothing left of Pereira Passos’ works and, especially, of Lauro Muller. The buildings of the time, which I knew from books and photographs, no longer existed! This was how I realised that I was faced with a very serious historical and historiographical problem. After all, how do we think history in Brazil? What is the meaning we attribute to this word? What importance do we attribute to the past?

Thus, I started to be concerned about what, later, with Reinhart Koselleck and François Hartog, became known as *historicity of concepts* and *regimes of historicity*. Let’s say that, following other historians, who, at the same time, were trying to give more density to the reflection on the historiographic operation – works like those by Michel de Certeau and Jacques Le Goff –, which we call *epistemological shift*, I sought to understand why, in some societies, the city’s physical and built form remains and why in other societies this is considered “unimportant”. Would it be true, what was often read and said, at that time, that Brazilians had no history? I was particularly shocked when an Italian researcher said during a visit to Brasília (almost as Bruno Zevi did, many years before): “I do not understand these cities without history”. This

1 Margareth da Silva Pereira developed her doctoral thesis *Rio de Janeiro, l'éphémère et la pérennité: histoire de la ville au XIXe siècle* [Rio de Janeiro, the ephemeral and the perennial: history of the city in the 19th century], under the supervision of Marcel Roncayolo, at *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)*, in Paris (France), between 1984 and 1988.

was the key moment when I started to question myself about the way I was constructing my thesis: without reflecting on what I was doing, in the sense that it was a *historiographic operation*. What did it mean and what stability did the concept of history have? How was the word “history” confounded with a certain idea of past? How had it been thought of in other cultures?

From then on, for me, it was no longer possible to consider any notion (of architecture, history, city) without previously asking: Who are the actors? Who is speaking? Which is the system that legitimates or withdraws legitimacy of what is said? Certain views that became hegemonic, how are they construed?

I started, effectively, to observe a number of historiographic debates that were emerging in the 1980s. I wrote my thesis between 1983 and 1988. The act of taring the chapters occurred between the end of 1987 and early 1988. I said to myself: “I cannot make silent the way how we think history, architecture, urbanism and the city. I cannot disregard these issues. Are they universal issues? Could we say that a French person, a Portuguese person and a Brazilian person – if we adopt a national framing, because in the beginning I adopted it (only in the beginning!) – may think history in the same way? And, consequently, would they think of the past in the same way? And would they think about time in the same way?” These three questions, which are apparently simple – think of history, past and time –, continued to be, for me, an object of great dedication, during many years. Until, finally, I understood that they should be dissociated. I needed to fray the *nebula*.

RF: What authors and readings have you engaged with during the period of the researching, constructing and using the notion of *nebula*? What studies have you undertaken, in which this notion has become central or operative?

MSP: Firstly, the idea of *nebula* draws on the historiographic operation, which I just referred to, and the clash with research objects that led me to a reflection on the historicity of practices, the density of practices and the need to pay more attention to the actors. On this issue, it was also the reading of Bernard Lepetit (1995) that helped me, in a provocation that he introduced in a text written shortly before his death, in which he questioned how much historians were attentive to actors and if these were taken seriously.² Slowly, I discovered that we did not respect the actors on the scene – Who is speaking? Where? With whom and to whom are they speaking? What is the sense attributed to what is being said? Which conflicts exist at a given moment? How do some superimpose others? – It was drawing on these questions that the idea of constellation arose; these layers of significance, nexus, confrontation and conflicts that, inevitably, traverses all types of practice. In other words,

2 The text mentioned by Margareth Pereira is “L’histoire prend-t-elle les acteurs au sérieux?” (Lepetit, 1995).

the attention to *nebulae* was born before I actually enunciated them, when I was not conscious of this notion yet. Anyhow, they were born from this movement, from reflecting on concepts and, therefore, from the need that we – as teachers, researchers, intellectual field – should perceive ourselves as being in a field of conflict and, yet, practising the effort of possible consensus. Not to pacify them, but to show the effort that is necessary to, vaguely, be able to understand each other. Otherwise, if not even language, in its broadest sense, we are able to practice, let alone practice criticism.

However, I only started to truly think about the notion of *nebula* after writing the review of the book *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle: la nébuleuse réformatrice et ses réseaux en France (1880-1914)* [Laboratories of a new century] (Topalov, 1999), written by the French intellectual, sociologist Christian Topalov, whom I admire and with whom I have worked. He worked for a long time with Bernard Lepe- tit, at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS). At the time of the review, I was studying the concepts of history, architecture, urbanism and the city in relation to the “Haussmannization”, and Topalov developed another beautiful project about the words of the city,³ in partnership with Jean-Charles Depaule and Hélène Rivière d’Arc, respectively anthropologist and geographer. *Les mots de la ville* [The words of the city] was a project that took over 20 years to obtain its first results; in the beginning, the certainty of the stability of concepts was such, that those involved in the project were not able to understand that there could have been a time when the words had been invented, that the meanings had been invented. It was, in fact, very difficult for the researchers to understand that the word “city”, which we use with such freedom, could have so many distinct meanings. For example, when we speak about Paris, the Parisians do not say *la cité*, but rather *la ville*. Is *ville* the “city”? Up to what point is this word “city”? Why do they use *ville* and not *cité*? And why do we [in the Portuguese language] say “*cidade* do Porto” [the *city* of Porto] and “*ci- dade* do Rio de Janeiro” [the *city* of Rio de Janeiro]? What happened, at a certain moment in the sixteenth century, in the implementation of the city of Rio de Janeiro, or what happened in the Portuguese culture that led to the use of these concepts? Why do we say in Brazil “*câmara*” [council] and not “*concelho*” [council] as in Portugal? Why do we say in Brazil “*vila operária*” [worker’s village] and the French say *cité ouvrière* [worker’s village]? Why have the English forgotten that *commons* mean, in fact, *communes* and, therefore, “with the same rights and duties”? Many think that the word *commons* come from the Celtic culture, as I have had the opportunity to discuss, in the 2000s, with an English historian. He had forgotten about the Roman and the Norman occupations. Truly, no word has a stability of meaning. For

3 Programme of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) – UNESCO with the title *Les mots de la ville*, developed between 1995 and 2010. See Ivo (2020).

this reason, words are not neutral, and the meanings they keep (or the meanings they displace) must be objects of criticism. Furthermore, the words and their meanings must be objects of a reflective history about themselves. A history that, until the 1960s, did no longer ask about itself, was separated from criticism. In the same way that a criticism without history was practised. However, from that decade onwards, it became impossible to think about criticism without its historicity and, therefore, without inquiring about the vocabulary being mobilised.

RF: In the study “Laboratoires du nouveau siècle [...]” (1999), to which you referred earlier, Christian Topalov seems to make a distinction between *nebula* and network. How would you define these notions and in which way are they redundant, tangent or complementary? Up to what point does the notion of *nebula* add value (plasticity) to the conceptions already developed, for instance, in the field of sociology, by Manuel Castells (2004, 2010), around the idea of *network society*, or Pierre Bourdieu, in the notion of “field” as a symbolic space of legitimation, representation and, therefore, struggles between agents?

MSP: The concept of *nebula* comes from this idea that constellations are traversed by blows, traversed by winds. They are formed and deformed. It is a difficult configuration to capture, not only because there exists, as Shakespeare would say, numerous possible forms of clouds, which conform sets of clouds and, therefore, constellations, but also because they are transient. Thus, it is necessary that, when we make what is called a theoretical framework – *i.e.*, when we establish a field of observation on any theoretical object –, we do not forget the movement of these layers (as clouds) of meanings.

It was, indeed, when I wrote the review of the book *Laboratoires du nouveau siècle [...]* (1999), in which Topalov dissertated on the *intellectual nebula*, the reforming *nebulas* in France, from 1880 to 1914, that I started to think beyond the notion of network. Gradually, I understood that *nebulae* derive, precisely, from a critical reflection on the extreme rigidity of fixed positions that structure a network. The *nebula* enables us to elect or “frame” (we will use this expression) a field of observation, thus a certain configuration, up to a point, precise. However, the configurations require an increased attention, since they are unstable, are “moving” – as I like to say. In fact, at that time, Topalov questioned the relation actor/network, because when he studied the social “reformers” of Paris and certain associations that supported their claims, he realised that their members performed in different positions in the social field, and, at times, one single individual occupied, concomitantly, positions in different networks, configuring “fields” of convergent actions, but also of tension and conflicts. For us, Brazilians, this was an extremely interesting concept for the reflection on the cities, because often we easily refer to a given viewpoint as a “European thought”, as a totality, as if Europe were a homogenous mass, without scissions, secessions, infighting.

For example, we (and I include a certain Luso heritage, a Luso-Brazilian “us”), in the case of urbanization and the first moment of colonization of Brazil, established a “fixed” form of city. However, the native peoples of Brazil are hegemonically nomads. Presently, there are cities being discovered in the Amazon, in Manaus and in Bolivia. Settlements, villages, dating from before the sixteenth century, with a strong degree of investment on being perennial in their built form. However, in the coastal area, in general, the process is the opposite: first, cities were built, whose materiality arrived before the political practice, the daily practice. Thus, a movement occurred from top to bottom, and the architectural construction of the city precedes that of politics, the social as a whole. It is important to think, effectively, about this materiality and the problems it evokes, as I realized later on. Perhaps, because of my professional occupation (or a deviation of my occupation), I felt the need to anchor and situate the *nebulae* of social movements, worked by Christian Topalov – *nebulae* of individuals, working for the promotion of education, public assistance etc. –, on the idea of city. These individuals were in specific places. They were in a specific Paris. Here I return to the word “network”, because it still helps, in some cases, to clarify the argument. For example, the Rotary Club’s network.⁴ Portugal has a Rotary Club; Brazil has a Rotary Club; France has a Rotary Club; the United States invented the Rotary Club; Chicago invented the Rotary Club; Arequipa has a Rotary Club; Angola has a Rotary Club. In all these countries, i.e., in many of their cities, one can find a Rotary Club and its gearwheel as symbol. This network calls itself differently in each place. As a Brazilian, I started by questioning: did the institution of reformers that Christian Topalov was analysing in France – the Social Museum – try to exist in Brazil? Why is the Social Museum a strong and successful institution in Argentina, but not in Brazil? Why is the Rotary Club successful in a large part of Latin America, and it is not known in France?

The *nebulae* are constituted not only of individuals who move from one place to another, but also of actors who act from certain points. In other words, one can move from Lisbon to Porto, or, as in my case, from Rio de Janeiro to São Paulo, but this action is more or less situated within a certain intellectual environment. For this reason, I started to explore the notion of *nebula* beyond social movements, expanding the field of analysis to cultural movements, to movements of an aesthetic nature, situated in different geographies and with distinct densities. This idea gained depth thanks to the experience with the project *Les mots de la*

4 In this passage, Margareth da Silva Pereira mentions her works on the Rotary Club’s network, among which the following publications can be highlighted: “Localistas e Cosmopolitas: a Rede do Rotary Club Internacional e os primórdios do Urbanismo no Brasil (1905-1935)” (Pereira, 2011); “Construir cidades, construir homens, construir lugares sociais: Associativismo e urbanismo (1905-1935)” (Pereira, 2016); “Chicago e o caso do Rotary Club” (Pereira, 2016); “Localistas e Cosmopolitas: a Rede do Rotary Club Internacional e os primórdios do Urbanismo no Brasil (1905-1935)” (Pereira, 2009); “Internacionais e Localistas: o Rotary Club e as maneiras de pensar o urbanismo no Brasil (1905-1935)” (Pereira, 2007).

ville, which Christian Topalov had implemented and from which I realised that the *nebulae* mobilised groups of individuals (with social, urban, cultural affinities, among others), forming imprecise configurations, but that somehow enabled to have an intuition of its contours. I also realised that they mobilised worldviews, languages and ethical and aesthetical vocabularies. When I started to “take the social actors seriously”, I could observe new dimensions that, nonetheless, emerged from the very practices of these actors.⁵

RF: How did this notion start to be applied to your studies on the history of the city? And, ultimately, what is effectively a *nebula* within the urbanistic thought?

MSP: When you ask me what a *nebula* is and how is it applied, one must say that it is neither an applicable concept, nor a method. It is, above all, an intellectual attitude. Actually, it is an invitation to an intellectual attitude. Firstly, it is the acceptance of the mobility that I mentioned before, this move; secondly, the recognition that as researchers we are always making choices and provoking certain silencing. Naturally, because it is not possible to speak about everything, remember everything, or write about everything. We write about what somehow affects us, we experience or observe. It is important to understand the operation we make when working with history and memory: we analyse, precisely, what has survived and affected us, in the quality of sensible intelligence; we bring this experience to the foreground, hence constituting it as a theoretical object.

Gradually, I realised that in the historiographic reflection on our urbanistic culture, the concepts were so abstract that one did not reach the notion of neighbourhood, the notion of street. However, I intended precisely to understand since when in Brazil we started to use the word “*rua*” [street], “*alameda*” [avenue], etc. For example, how did the expression “*Rua Direita*” [straight street] enter the vocabulary? Since when? When did we start having the words “*boulevard*”, “*alameda*” and “*avenida*” [avenue]? What was the meaning given to these terms? Since when did one use the words “*estrada*” [road] and “*rodovia*” [highway]? How were these circulation “axes” (let us say it like this) introduced in our language? But not only... This was not a dictionary work; it included the social use of the word – as Christian Topalov insisted on reminding us. This was about social life, cultural life and their respective vocabularies.

There was, however, a second stage, which I owe to other authors. When reading Reinhart Koselleck, the attention became even more focused on the historicity of concepts and words. It is very useful to so-

5 Here it is worth mentioning Pereira’s partnership with the project *Les mots de la ville*, which consolidated in some publications and entries, such as: *A aventura das palavras da cidade através dos tempos, das línguas e das sociedades* (Pereira et al., 2014); *Jardim* (Pereira, 2010a); *Município* (Pereira, 2010b); *Subúrbio* (Pereira, 2010c); *Le temps des mots: le lexique de la segregation a São Paulo dans les discours de ses reformateurs. 1890-1930* (Pereira, 2002).

meone who makes and unmakes *nebulae* or starts to accept the invitations to study the action of individuals in their different temporalities. Interpreting them, drawing on their own rhythms and enunciates, respecting them. I say respecting them because what we see most is the authoritarianism, which we fight against in politics, often reproduced in our own texts. If we seek to respect the sources, we must allow the questions to emerge from them. A great help in this other stage, was the work of the Portuguese philosopher and essayist Fernando Gil.

Fernando Gil lived in France for many years, married a French woman, and was a professor and researcher at EHESS (Paris, France). With the Italian historian Ruggiero Romano, Fernando Gil made the “Enciclopédia Einaudi” (Gil, 1985), which only you, the Portuguese and the Italians, could understand. Perhaps, because you are not in the countries that created the “Encyclopédie” (in French), you could be insurgent, subversive. The “Enciclopédia Einaudi” was produced by an Italian publisher and printed by the Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda [National Press-Mint House], in Portugal.

These two authors – Fernando Gil and Ruggiero Romano – helped me to understand that words, concepts, or rather, notions (a term that helps us to remember that thought and the knowledge that we make from it are always moving) are not constituted in an autonomous way, which seems to be the case when they are organised in alphabetic sequence. One could say that the cultural use of words was made evident in a very strong manner. Many French authors contributed to the construction of this encyclopaedia, but (as incredible as it may seem) it has never been translated into French, although some isolated texts have been. In Gil and Romano’s encyclopaedia, a notion is linked to another through the associated ideas that unite them, showing the production of meaning as a construction of nexus that become closer or sustain one another, ideologically or as figures of thought. In the encyclopaedia, a word does not exist in isolation; the authors work the network of words that is sustaining a certain worldview. This finding has led me to affirm that now – when there is so much talking of “decolonisation”, epistemologies South-South, new epistemologies, other epistemologies – we will change, first of all, part of our vocabulary, because another way of thinking often requires a new vocabulary.

In the project *Les mots de la ville*, by Christian Topalov, for 20 years I witnessed the difficulty that we ourselves had to establish a conversation between English, French, Brazilian and Spanish researchers. Many researchers gave up this project, because it was not linear. We had to construct the interpretation bottom-up, learn how to find the sources. This is why we started to study the dictionaries. For example, until I succeeded in explaining at the counter of the National Library that I did not want the latest edition of a certain dictionary, on the contrary, I would like to read all the different editions, it was very difficult. Because the attendants did not think that dictionaries could be a research source.

Christian Topalov called attention to the social use of words, but the two other authors (Gil and Romano) helped me to think about the cultural use of words (which is not the same). The latter helped me to think, in an even clearer way, that words function in networks, in networks of meanings. Words are connected to one another, because we cannot enunciate, speak and answer without concatenating, in a system of synonyms and antonyms, words that are complementary, that are different etc.

On the subject of *nebulae*, a third stage was the fact that I began to explain (first of all to myself) that all this had to do with the history of art and architecture. In this aspect, the texts by Hubert Damisch,⁶ especially his book *Théorie du nuage: pour une histoire de la peinture* (1972), were very important to me. They helped me to understand “the cloud” as a theoretical object and, in its turn, thinking in *nebulae* could also become a question. I am telling this short story (which is already a long one) to show that it took me a long time before I constructed the thought in *nebulae* as a theoretical object.

In a way, I was using “the *nebula*” as a metaphor. Hence, the last stage was not so much with Hubert Damisch. It was about the problem of the metaphor. Rather, the construction of the thought drawing on it and its use. Why? Because the concept does not close itself, and, therefore, it is the metaphor, a figure of language that enables to leave it open, put in suspension the meaning of things, give this thought a pause for reflection. This was, in fact, the last stage I achieved in the past five, six years.

RF: In a more specific way, we propose to re-think the notion of criticism as a transnational practice, which goes through modulations in time and space. Drawing on different mediation mechanisms (such as magazines, published texts, but also UNESCO’s global meetings), we are interested in further understanding the role of these media not only as vehicles of circulation, information, ideas and models, but, overall, as global “contact zones” (Avermaete; Nuijsink, 2021), of exchanges, interaction and mutual acquaintance.

MSP: Returning to the theme proposed, the transnational dialogues and our *nebula*, it is important to seek once again the meaning and the historicity of words, because people not always think about the use of terms drawing on the way they are produced, as answers to theoretical problems or not. Although many Brazilian authors have sought the root of the term “transnational”, in the United States, in my understanding, it emerged in the 1980s, with the development of the studies on the history of cities, in some European circles and in their “contact zones”, including Brazil. The term “transnational” is associated with more transversal movements, which are not circumscribed to the concept of nation. What do I mean? It could be that São Paulo is more related with San Francisco

⁶ Margareth da Silva Pereira was Hubert Damisch’s student during her doctoral studies at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS – Paris).

than with Rio de Janeiro; due to the immigration rhythm, – both cities had rapid growth as from the late nineteenth century – it could be, perhaps, that Porto is more related with Bordeaux than with Lisbon, and that Lisbon, on its turn, is more related with some other city. With this, I wish to reinforce that, by limiting the study to the national framework, we might narrow the view and lose, because it leaves out of focus a series of other issues that could be pertinent, stimulating... Therefore, we must distrust adjectives: “Baroque town” or “Portuguese architecture”. We must question the excessive use of this practice.

I like your idea of “mediation mechanisms”. It is important to highlight the instances that give support to mediations, interactions, frictions, and that sometimes make the conflicts clear. It is not by chance that from the nineteenth century onwards, one could observe the expansion of a movement that crosses nations, crosses cultures. Hence, one could observe new mediation mechanisms: congresses, seminars, magazines and books of architecture (although the magazines were more agile in this process).

One cannot forget either the construction of certain notions created by law and that helped to organise social movements. In this scope, I studied a number of words related to the emergence of associative movements (Pereira, 2016). What moved me, at the time, were questions such as: How was the notion of association and club generated? When did the words union, mutual, cooperative enter the vocabulary? At times, when did these words become figures of law and of the Civil Code? How were created, in the Western world, the institutional actors – *e.g.*, institutes, foundations – that help in the stabilisation of struggles, in the diffusion of certain worldviews? The “mediation mechanisms” – to use Rute’s vocabulary – must be valorised and, among them, it is important to distinguish between those that constrain and those that, on the contrary, propel, push and expand.

One can think of schools as a “mediation mechanism”, however, a certain school can both discipline and punish, whereas another can be libertarian. In Portugal, the *Escola da Ponte* is a reference worldwide. In other words, the same grouping may serve to curtail, besides other purposes. In the case of architectural magazines, it is obvious that most of them were progressive, especially in the early twentieth century. However, in Brazil there were very conservative magazines. I am thinking, for example, of *A Casa* [The House], a magazine that I had to browse through recently. It is a Brazilian magazine from the 1920s, and it is very conservative. At the same time, around the same period, there is the magazine *Forma* [Form], which defends a completely different viewpoint.

When we talk about architectural magazines, another question that, to me, seems to become serious, is to think about the depoliticisation that happened to architecture and urbanism. Actually, I think it is important to ask ourselves why was urbanism put in the background; and, at the same time, there was an expansion of the discourse on architec-

ture that put it distant from the political issue. Therefore, these groups, instruments and tools – not only the mechanisms, those to which you refer in the title of the colloquium (criticism and its media) – help in the mediation process and in understanding in which side we stand in the world, with whom we struggle, or with whom we potentiate our agendas, and those who, on the contrary, curtail us. Hence, it is crucial to be attentive to both the mechanisms and the tools. It seems to me that the idea of “contact zones” can help to give attention to the process of contamination, hybridisation and mixture. Otherwise, the magazines are utterly important.

RF: How can this notion of *nebula* frame the debate on criticism as a transnational practice and the mechanisms of contact and exchange? Can we think of the architectural criticism produced in the post-war period as a practice of moving bodies – a *nebula* – that, at the same time, are created by more perennial specificities?

MSP: Evidently, criticism is associated with the concept of crisis. Criticism is always an operation of judgement, a term that is commonly avoided nowadays. However, thinking criticism as an operation of judgement helps us to approach it as a gap moment. When thinking of *nebulae*, it is necessary to pay attention to the gap moments, the abyssal moments of moving bodies. It is important to interpret processes and, within them, ruptures, separations, interruptions. This means ascertaining and observing a continuum, one spot after another, in a certain temporality, intersecting them with what occurs in other temporalities. It is in this come-and-go of interpreting actions and their *times* – i.e., their cadence and rhythm –, their chronologies, short or not, that the clouds form and differentiate themselves. Or, if you wish, that are formed by the layers of nexus and meanings that prolong themselves, distinguish themselves and seem to repeat themselves or to be detached. As I have mentioned earlier, the *nebula* is not only a notion. I do not like to define it as a very fixed image. I would like it to activate the imagination, more than to fix a form. The *nebulae* must be thought of as sets of clouds. More than it being an intellectual attitude, as I have said before, it is a collective, as the term “wolf pack” refers to a set of wolves, or “swarm”, for bees. In other words, a *nebula* is a set of clouds. A possible, probable, configuration... The critical operation takes place in a lacunar moment, because it occurs in moments of uncertainty. It is always an interrogation, a doubt. It means that what was there before is no longer satisfactory and what is yet to come is not under control either. So, we act in the abyss, we are acting in this abyssal moment, in this gap moment, which is the reflection in action. This is reflexivity, a practice required from the historian in relation to his/her object of study and that numerous authors have thematised since the 1960s. In short, it is about being in a permanent state of interrogation. To ask oneself: How are we thinking? Why, for some reason, do we feel that there is something there, even though it is still a germ? What is provoking us?

What is pushing us to question about the causes? Questions like these make me think that the crisis might have a positive aspect. However, we should ponder that, in the Brazilian case, we live in a permanent crisis and perhaps here, in our country, it is excessive.

RF: This idea of a “gap moment” somehow undermines a conventional and static view of architectural criticism. In face of the great global challenges and systemic problems of the early twentieth century, how are situated the actions of the new global public spheres of debate, representation and legitimation of architecture – with the increasing presence of the biennials, museums and the ubiquity of digital publications – in the formulation of critical responses and actions? How does the concept of *nebula*, developed during the three past decades, remain operative (or is even more robust) in these new spheres of critical enunciation?

MSP: I do not know if I have the answer to your questions, Rute! However, you pointed a sensible spot: the great global changes in the public sphere. In Brazil, I often ask myself about how many centuries are necessary for an idea to become a practice. Let us suppose: the abolition of slavery. When I move through downtown Rio de Janeiro, São Francisco square, Carioca square, I observe scenes that are similar to those made by the French artist Jean-Baptiste Debret, around 200 years ago. Some 150 years have passed since the social figure of the “poor” started to be treated as a theoretical and a public sphere problem. Here, in Salvador, I walk in the city and see people sleeping on the street while others pass by as if those people did not exist. What is, thus, the notion of “individual” and “poor” that was constructed in these city cultures? In general, there are changes in the public sphere, because, one way or another, we are not in the *Ancien Regime*. There has been democratisation, even if complex, even if with failures, even if the result of 200 years of struggle, perhaps 150 or 100 years of struggle, and even in our inner struggles, since we were born. All of us realise these changes. Hence the interest in the problem of the gap and the abyss, to learn to act using our capability of reflection, using our capability of judgement, with no fear of doing so, but without knowing exactly what the direct result will be. In the past 200 years, with the prevalence of a certain notion of science, we have become used to coexisting with the idea of forecast, in all senses, and the idea of a progressive action, in arrow (I act, and I know where it will lead). This idea is impregnated in our bodies. For this reason, we do not know how to act adrift.

I like to suppose that we must act by essay. That we must return to the experimental and essayistic character of things. It is an essay about what we are doing now: we are going to organise a colloquium, and what will be the consequence? How can we anticipate, foresee what will happen? What will the colloquium be transformed into, after its realisa-

tion? What will change for the young Camille,⁷ who is listening to us? Or, for Natan,⁸ who is also listening, while he works in front of me, though you cannot see him? We do not know, nor could we know. We can only experiment and imagine that what I am doing is a mere act of language, but not a self-absorbed act of language⁹. In other words, this is not a self-centred exercise; potentially, it affects others, even though we cannot know in what manner, nor in what circumstance or when. What we think and talk inevitably affects all of us here, because it results from a more extensive reflection on something that we share.

RF: In your point of view, how has the figure of the critic – situated in its social, professional and conceptual constellations – evolved since the 1960s and changed the conventional practices and scales of discourse mediation (such as the printed writing in periodicals, for example)? How have these changes in criticism and the critic's profile affected our understanding of the figure of the architect and the practice of architecture? To what extent do the critic's new socio-political and cultural agendas have an impact on the promotion of the new orders of thinking, both in the professional field and in the architectural research?

MSP: I agree, in fact, that this socially identifiable figure of the critic has ceased to exist! I have the conviction that the critic will no longer have a position of authority that in the past was present even in figures such as Bruno Zevi, for example. The climax of a certain notion of truth that traversed the critical discourse occurs between the 1940s and 1960s. The critics (who were not historians) spoke from a *tabula rasa* and thought that their perspective constituted a universal truth. In fact, they did not see themselves as socially constructed subjects. For this reason, they even disqualified cultures and their own knowledge. The critics, today, must know if they learn, alert, call attention (in the sense of interpellation and not of reprehension), must construct a field of modesty that, often, they did not have in the decades of 1950, 1960 e 1970. Moreover, the critics of those times also did not think of the plurality of knowledge that nowadays we know that are fundamental to the structuring of the critical discourse.

When I think of Lucio Costa, as a baroque figure¹⁰ that he was, I remember the sections he drew. It is perceptible that he had the awareness

7 Camille Oliveira, undergraduate student at the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, holder of a scholarship for scientific initiation, who followed the interview.

8 Natan Bastos, undergraduate student at the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Bahia, holder of a scholarship for scientific initiation, who also followed the interview.

9 T.N.: In this passage, Margareth da Silva Pereira used the Portuguese word *ensimesmada*, here translated as "self-absorbed", and pointed out as a very difficult term to be translated.

10 By making Lucio Costa's actions closer to a baroque poetics, Margareth da Silva Pereira articulates questions that she has addressed in some of her texts, such as: *L'utopie et l'histoire: Brasília entre la certitude de la forme et le doute de l'image* (Pereira, 1992); *Uma*

of incompleteness. He knew about the need for affirmation, but also for doubt. Of action, but also of hesitation. At a certain moment, perhaps, he might have been affirmative, at other moments doubtful, but looking at his drawings, it makes me think that he knew how to make it flexible in the action. As critics, we must also make it flexible.

It seems that we create names for everything, in excess. There is knowledge that has no name. Knowledge that has been practiced throughout the centuries, without the need to classify or arrange them in a certain small box, constructing them as a “critic” or as a “historian”. This is the opposition observed very clearly between 1950 and 1968 (so to speak, as to create an easy landmark). Or, from 1945 to Team X, in 1954. This chronology could also be extended, perhaps, until 1956 or 1958. Anyhow, this was the moment when the figure of the critic started to dismantle. In our days, the great difficulty will be, inversely, to understand what their contours are. Hence, it is important to discuss and review the possible configurations, those we have been able to think about until now.

PP: When we made the appointment for this interview, you said that you would like to approach readings on the Baroque culture that you have been revisiting for a course you are preparing. Although I could sense the aspects you would like to address, I must confess that it made me curious. I must ask: how did you imagine bringing together a reflection on architectural criticism and your *nebulae* of studies of Baroque culture?

MSP: This will lead us away from the transatlantic dialogues! Or, rather, they also depart from the attention to the transatlantic dialogues and the construction of critical sensibilities! As you know, I am very much interested in the culture in Brazil, as complex as it is. An asymmetrical culture, with its internal struggles. Brazil’s history is immensely rich, exactly because it needs to be constructed in the face of a violent experience of encounters, disagreements, relations of domination and subordination of worlds. Experiences that occurred in leaps, interspersed with doubts and operating deconstructions of a number of dogmas. Confrontation modes that I believe still are the object of interest of our contemporary reflections. This is where my interest in the Baroque universe stems from, because I understand it as a sensibility of crisis. Baroque is not a historical epoch. Baroque is not a style. Baroque is a critical state.

Did you know that 20 or 30 years before Rafael Bluteau (published between 1712-1721) wrote in his dictionary that “baroque” meant a rough stone, Antoine Furetière (1690), also a dictionary writer, wrote an entry presenting “baroque” as a jewellery stone? From the start, one realises that there is a problem of perception and friction in the understanding of history.

arte inocente: Pagus, país, paisagem (Pereira, 1995); *Corpos escritos: paisagem, memória e monumento: visões da identidade carioca* (Pereira, 2000); *Quadrados Brancos: Lucio Costa e Le Corbusier – Uma noção moderna de história* (Pereira, 2004).

During the classes I lectured this week, I sought to present the process by which the classifications of history of art and architecture were established. How the notions of Renaissance, mannerism, Baroque, rococo, etc., were construed. In the specific case of Baroque, I sought to debate with the students how did the understanding of “baroque” move from a valorised stone to another, devalued. I asked them: How was the valorisation of this stone constructed? How was the disqualification of a practice construed? From these questions, I sought to demonstrate how the Baroque was assimilated as a style.

As the Baroque began to have a negative connotation, of rough stone, culturally, it seemed important to construct a sort of counterpoint, a notion of positive value. Hence, we see the emergence of the notion of “Renaissance”, which opposed, in a violent way, science and art. Previously, the practice of science required imagination, and, in its turn, imagination required rationality. In other words, initially these ideas were not dissociated. However, with the need to institute counterpoints, reason was then perceived as abstract and incorporeal, and, on the other hand, the realm of imagination was constructed. The opposition between science and art was established.

When we make the history of the concept, it becomes clear that the notion of Baroque went through successive displacements. When the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin wrote his thesis defending the Baroque, he draws on the psychology of architecture, dissertating on an architectural practice that does not want to be form, but experience; does not want to be painting, but image; that wants to be something that comes, but whose presence is perceived almost as a phantom. Perhaps, inspired by Wölfflin, I defend that we should think of the Baroque as a porous culture.

In this fine attention to experience, the Baroque helps us to rediscover the bodies. In the Baroque sense, the body is everything. For example, when we read Salomon de Caus (1615), we realise that the body is the wind. This author’s sensibility is magnificent when thinking how to channel the wind and how to construct a sound garden. He leads us to perceive openings and closings in channels through which the wind passes, as if it were the sound of a flute. It is marvellous that we have reached the seventeenth century with this degree of reflection on the sensible.

I can bring yet another example: observe an illustration of a wind rose on a Portuguese nautical chart. We can recognize a rationality that has the sensibility to feel 14 or even 18 wind directions. The wind rose drawn on the charts demonstrates that there were bodies with such sensibility, that by feeling the wind on their skin, the edge of the ear or the hair, they knew to which side they should articulate the sails of a vessel. They could say if the vessel would reach some spot of the African coast or of the Brazilian coast.

This specific body of knowledge has been lost. Our knowledge became increasingly compartmentalised and our critical consciousness started operating from the concept of belief, truth, and dogmatism. I often observe that our students (and often ourselves) reproduce a vocabulary or an attitude unconsciously, without thinking. After all, words are also things that enter through the pores. However, the Baroque culture, in this plural world, in this porous culture of impregnation of bodies with other bodies (light, sound, wind, city, forest, water), makes me think of a possibility of mutual enrichment, because it has, even under the weight of an extremely fierce religious discussion, a great subversion. In what I call the “American experience”, I think we can identify a place and a moment when this becomes radicalised. In the territory inhabited by nomadic peoples in the Americas, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the religious issue was discussed to the ultimate consequences. It is not to say that this experience did not exist on the highlands, also in Mexico, but in certain geographies, this dispute was experienced in a more radical way.

Therefore, Baroque culture can teach us a great deal. I observe several traits of what I think about this culture in other authors. I have mentioned H. Wölfflin, but I could have cited Eugênio d’Ors ([1935] 1985), or all Brazilians who have written about the Baroque. In Minas Gerais, for instance, we have Affonso Ávila (1997). However, it was from reading Giulio Carlo Argan (2004) that I first understood that the debate initiated in the Baroque culture was not limited to a religious issue, but it was above all an ontological problem. A similar perception I see reverberating also in Lucio Costa. I perceive in his work the liking of the unfinished, his capability to think the problems of life with gestures of a scholar who was under the effect of the Baroque sensibility. In other words, he did not treat science and art as opposing abstractions, he rather realised them in a certain daily life. I believe that we have to struggle to make relevant how, after these authors, historiography and criticism made these relations become closer again.

PP: If I may, I would like to return to a previous moment, when you articulated the notions of “crisis” and “criticism”. Thinking them together made me remember the book by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, “Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society”. By studying the debates of intellectuals who preceded the French Revolution (and somehow helped to construct a favourable “conjuncture” for it), Reinhart Koselleck helps us to understand the emergence, almost in synchronicity, of four operations: the individual who perceives him/herself as an actor in society; the construction of the wish for freedom; the sentiment of an eminent crisis; and the moral judgement as mechanism of control (to avoid that the other three operations led to civil and religious wars). Reinhart Koselleck delves more specifically on the latter, the control. He demonstrates how moral judgement led individuals to project their wishes on the way of writing history – based on the idea of progress – marked by utopia. On the back cover, we can read what I called modern heritage:

The political crisis and the respective philosophies of history form one single historical phenomena, whose root should be searched for in the eighteenth century. [...] It belongs to the nature of the crisis that a decision is pending but has not been made yet. It is also in its nature that the decision to be made remains open. However, the general uncertainty of a critical situation is traversed by the certainty that, not knowing when or how, the end of the critical state is near. The possible solution remains uncertain, but at the very end, the transformation of the current circumstances – threatening, feared or desired – is certain. The crisis evokes the question to the historical future (Kosellec, 1999 [1959] – free translation).¹¹

MSP: It will be useful to get back to Reinhart Koselleck on the notion of individual and actor. This is a struggle that I must constantly face, it is not new. Some colleagues insist on stating that in the past decades we lived in a time of the death of the subject, the individual, the “I”. Between Barthes and Derrida, the same phrases are repeated, against or in favour of the uses and abuses of biographies... But, on the other hand, I observe that not only the names of most authors are still on the covers of books, as well as there is a growing subjectivism. In face of Koselleck’s strong discourse, once again I ask: does everything dilute and dismantle in an “I” anonymous and collective? I ask because there is a problem relating to this idea of judgement and insecurity that involves the crisis and criticism regarding the idea of death of the subject and we, in the area of architecture and urbanism, have not resolved it, or rather, do not know how to face it. However, does anyone know? In fact, this difficulty is not only ours; it is also of other areas. It is as if, to fight against an idea of authoritarianism – of critics, architects, urbanists – it would be necessary to kill all the subjects and all their constructions. However, what seems necessary is not to point out their negative sides. This is easy. The most difficult task, though, and necessary, is to see in them what they have helped us to think. This task is important for us to maintain the idea of freedom as an opening, as a possible detour that emerges in the operation of criticism, and for us to be able to exercise and expand it. In other words, what should be killed is authoritarianism (practiced by many subjects), but without losing the idea that, perhaps, what defines the subjects, above all, is their insistence in maintaining themselves as culture. In sum, take them out of their prepotency and, diluting them, replace them in the interior of history. After all, if the nature of the individual is to be culture, to be culture is to be critical.

PP: Your words, Margareth, – especially the way you invited us to think of *nebulae*, to act by essay and to define criticism as a gap moment – have made me reflect on the permanent attention we must have when dealing

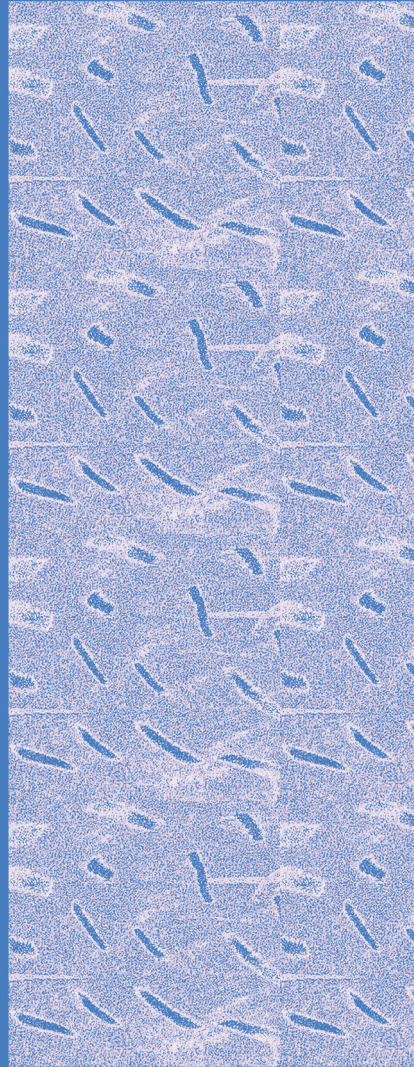
11 T.N.: This citation was extracted from the 4th cover of the Brazilian edition of Koselleck’s book, which does not appear in its English version.

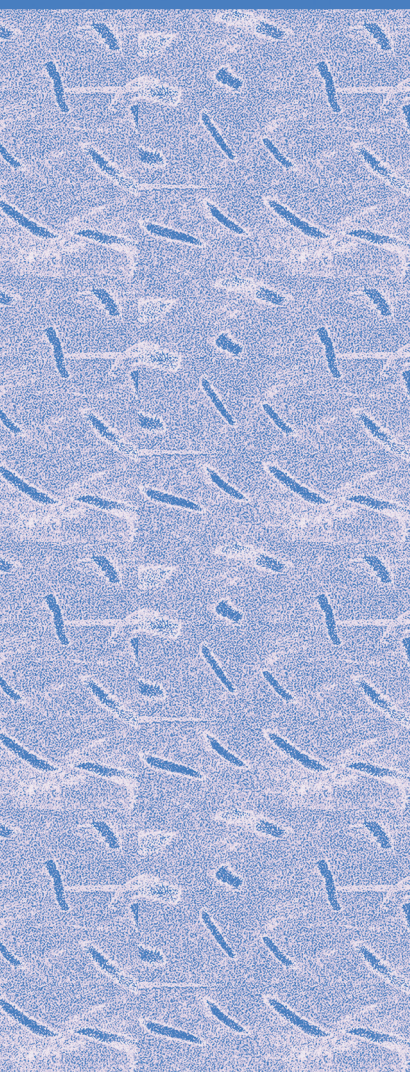
with our modern heritage (in the broad sense of the term). As in Françoise Choay's texts (that presented us to Alberti's texts on *De Re Aedificatoria* as a counterpoint to More's *Utopia*), it seems to me that your words invite us to consider non-modelling (non-utopian) perspectives of practicing criticism. This means, to examine reflectively what reaches our time. Differently from what Reinhart Koselleck could observe about the French Revolution, it helps to think about criticism as an acting in the present.

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II. THE ROLE OF VISUAL CULTURE

Elane Ribeiro Peixoto

The texts gathered here under the title *The role of visual culture* were written between December 2021 and May 2022, when the invitation was made to the authors and to me, as coordinator of the work. We proposed, then, to have virtual meetings for us to get to know each other and to discuss the ideas and texts. The connection Salvador, Brasília, and Zurich aimed at identifying the contact points between the themes addressed individually by the researchers Junia Mortimer, André Costa, Liz Sandoval and Ciro Miguel. The first meeting was an occasion to break the ice between the group members, when we introduced ourselves and read the summary of each author's proposal. Then, self-evaluations and adjustments were designed for the development of the works. At the subsequent meetings, we presented the texts, which were almost finished, and together we could raise questions that helped to specify each author's intention and, at the same time, we could discuss the contents. It was not always possible to have all members participating in these meetings, due to the different time zones and work schedules. The small inconveniences were overcome by the opportunity to listen and debate, inaugurating a working process that had not been practiced yet. Hence, I will make a personal approach on the process developed by the group and on how was my experience in it.

The talks with my colleagues were stimulating and led me to retrieve authors and books forgotten on my wooden bookshelves. With delight, I wished time would pass slowly, so I could meet again Benjamin (1985), Barthes (1984), Sontag (2004) and Burke (2016) – they were lying there, put away, and silently waited to be placed back in the agitation of life. Reading texts again always intrigues me; they trigger overlaid processes, while they require our memory, they appear as something new, for we are not the same as when reading them for the first time. I know this is obvious, but it was necessary to say it.

Among my illustrious deceased authors, I found a book by the historian Sandra Jatahy Pesavento. I remembered the opportunity of seeing her at the Seminário de História da Cidade e do Urbanismo (SHCU) in Vitória, State of Espírito Santo. Pesavento and another historian, Maria Stella Bresciani, provided an important contribution to us, the architects interested in the history of architecture. They opened the perspectives of approaches and cooperated with the fecundation of our researches, showing the diversity of sources and the way to problematize them and inquir-

re them as to awaken from their mutism. The text “O mundo da imagem: território da história cultural” [The world of image: territory of cultural history] was published in the collectanea *Narrativas, imagens e práticas: percurso em história cultural* [Narratives, images and practices: trajectory in cultural history] in 2008. As in a dining room, comfortably installed around a table, in the company of Agabem (2004), the only one alive, Aby Warburg (1990) and Ricoeur (1994; 1998), these illustrious deceased, they were all present and dialogued with Pesavento, the hostess.

The short text by Pesavento, who always excelled with her clarity effort, acted on me as the punctum of Barthes (1984), although it is no image. I like to think the punctum as Barthes defined it for the analysis of images as being that which catches us, captures us and hurts us. Pesavento’s text hurt me in many aspects, I remembered the author alive and vibrant, passionate about her calling; and later, when she was fragile, consumed by the disease, but still present at one more edition of the SHCU. As these memories faded, I continued captured by the text, this time by its contents. It is organised in four sections: the first, aims to define the image; the second, approaches image as narrative; the third, discusses the way in which historians deal with reading it; and the last one, exposes its alterity in the face of the text.

Here I quote the basic opening question of the first section of Pesavento’s text: “What are, after all, the images, these constructions aiming at different forms and contents by means of varied supports, like paintings, engravings, drawings, photographs, cinema, and computer graphics?” Her answers, in the plural, are woven: firstly, she indicates the anteriority of images in relation to the “complex world of words and texts”. *Seeing* and *representing* precede *speaking*. She continues, affirming that images are a sort of language and, as such, are endowed with symbolic character – “this means, they are bearers of meanings beyond what is shown” (Pesavento, 2008, p. 99 – free translation).

From Ricoeur, Pesavento aligns the images with *traces*, in the sense the French philosopher attributed to sources as being vestiges of something that happened, over which historians seek to construe their verisimilar interpretations. Those who produce them have in mind recipients who perceive them through vision. This act, however, does not end in itself, because images are semantic vectors, which lend themselves to reading. Hence, they trigger a complex operation: the visual image, to be resignified, resorts to our “memory archive” or our “imaginary museum” (quotation marks by Pesavento), whose collections comprise mental images gathered in our personal trajectories and, therefore, unique; and by other images, socially shared, involving social groups and our own historicity. In the substitution of what we see with our sense of sight for mental images in our accumulated collections, Pesavento (2008, p. 101) suggests that it is there where would be installed a “perception of the world through images”.

The author's next step is the affirmation of images as representations of reality and their ambiguity, because they are and are not the represented thing. Hence, as *mimesis*, they enable the identification with reality, and as *fiction*, its interpretation. The word used to express this ambiguity is "oxymoron":

[...] *mimesis*, the property of similitude that enables the recognition of the represented and of creation, and fiction, which points to metaphor, allegory and other manifestations with symbolic character, signalling beyond what is exhibited. From *mimesis* to analogy, the image is a "being as", a "being in the place of" (Pesavento, 2008, p. 105 – free translation).

Pesavento highlights the characteristic tensions of images: between the visible – form, composition, figure and colour – and the invisible – gaps and silences; between the view of the whole and the view of details and minutiae; between their authors' subjectivity and the social derived from the collective dimension; and, finally, between the time and space of their elaboration and other times and spaces, those of their reception.

The second section of the text addresses image as narration. Text and image find their equivalences, images are discourses and texts evoke visual and mental images, in a way that it would be possible to associate to both the Aristotelian definition of narrative – "a sequence [sic] of connected actions that tell a story, which unfolds in characters, plots and meanings" (Pesavento, 2008, p. 108).

The approximation of text and image, as narratives, opens to the relation between *mimesis* and *fiction*, to remind the images readers that they are not a double of the world, but rather a creation, an interpretation and a representation of the world. Thus, through the writing of Pesavento (2008, p. 111 – free translation), one hears Barthes' voice:

The reality brought by the photograph, for example, is always a reconstructed, simulated reality that implies performance and theatricalization. Hence, the classic statement of Roland Barthes (1980) about the photograph's character – *ça a été*, "this has been" – could give room to another assertion, as considered by François Soulages (1998): "*ça a été joué!*". In other words, it was the vision that created the photographable object, because it does not exist as image without the creation act of the photographer. Likewise, this creative vision of the photographic image makes it become a text or narrative, because it carries in it evaluations, judgments, emotions, reflections.

The reading of images is the text's third section, which aims to expose how cultural history researchers approach the imagistic document, in this case, the photograph. For them, the photograph should not be investigated as the record of what happened, but rather as how its produ-

cers perceived the reality in which they lived. Only in these conditions, Pesavento observes, the photographic document can be considered trace and vestige of what happened.

Therefore, the image relates to the sensibilities of an epoch, its way of perceiving and representing the world. The historian's attitude in the face of the image is that of refusal of the immediate data; it requires a hermeneutical posture that Pesavento makes explicit in a conversation with Paul Ricoeur, remembering the stages proposed by the philosopher of *Time and Narrative* (1987): prefiguration, figuration, reconfiguration.¹ This last stage, after delving into the image, postulates its way out to weave a "network of meaningful connections", with answers that consider its intrinsic meaning, the meaning of an epoch and its historicity; the meaning of subjective and social reception.

The last section of the text seeks to recognise the uniqueness of the image, its alterity, for, until then, it had always been considered in relation to the written document. The author enumerates what she considers characteristic of the image, starting by the immediateness of its apprehension. She uses the term *timing* to say that in the image, the scene and characters are given at once, enabling the capture of the general idea of its thematic. Another aspect is the image's force of acting in the memory, where it remains for a longer period than texts and is more evocative than the latter. Besides these attributes, two others are highlighted – seduction, which gives it priority in communication; and the limits to imagination, resulting from its own materiality. Its borders and frames indicate finiteness of space. This last aspect, which could be considered as a disadvantage of the image in relation to the text, is counter-argued, insofar as it also leads to thinking the abyss between what is seen and what is said – an aspect that translates the irreverence of the image.

I end the presentation of Sandra Pesavento's text lamenting for not having been more concise. I am very grateful for having met her again; she came in my support to fundament the reading of the communications made by those invited for this round table. I believe that retrieving this text is a way to pay her homage, to valorise the perspicacious contributions that she left us, concerning images as sources of cultural history for us, historian architects, who find in this material extensive documentation, comprising drawings of projects' conception, technical drawings, photographs and films.

Junia Mortimer, Ciro Miguel, André Costa, and Liz Sandoval, attentive to architectural photographs and cinema, approach images as

1 The author explains that the first phase of a hermeneutical analysis, the prefiguration, aims at the delimitation of the creative act's historicity, answering the questions – what, who, and where. The second phase, figuration, is the recognition of the theme, the what, and the how, of the analysed document, and its why. The reconfiguration is the moment of formation of the connection nets, when the reader is referred to outside the text or image and establishes, by analogy, the most diverse inter-relations.

traces and vestiges. They go beyond the immediateness to affirm them as language, whose symbolic dimension is passible of interpretation. By means of *mimesis* and *fiction*, the authors construe narratives expressing representations of the world, involving sensibilities, desires and affections, at a given time and place. The authors do not lose track of the historicity of the images; each one sought to weave the net of signifiers that their documents enabled at the time when they were conceived, and the reading that they make acts to complete the telling about the now of their reception, when other nets of signifiers are articulated. The texts in this section present historical interpretations illuminated by imagistic documents that fit, as the delicate pieces of a clock, to Sandra Jathay Pesavento's reflections.

Next, I briefly present the works that follow in *The role of visual culture*. Junia Mortimer discusses the performance of images in the configuration of architecture and urbanism criticism in the 1950s. She proposes three categorisations of images: synthesis-image, analysis-image and experiment-image. As representative of the first category of image, Mortimer elects a photograph of the Kauffman House, published in the April 1949 issue of the North American magazine *Life*. The message it conveys is the glamorisation of modern architecture. The second category refers to the resource of images made by professionals of architecture and urbanism aiming at spatial analysis. These are the 1950s and the pages are of the *Architectural Review*, dedicated to the researches of the Townscape movement conducted by the architect Gordon Cullen. The theme of the third categorisation is the record of daily life and the focus are the columns by Lina Bo Bardi, published in the daily newspaper *Diário de Notícias* of Salvador, capital of the State of Bahia.

Ciro Miguel discusses photojournalism in the construction of the imaginary about Brasília, retrieving the work of photographers organised around the magazines *Manchete* and *Brasília*. In black and white or colour, the photographs in these periodicals corroborate the heroic views of the construction of the country's capital, as well as they escape from them, insofar as they oppose Niemeyer's architecture to the rudimentary means of its construction and conditions of its workers.

The film *Amor e desamor* [Love and Unlove] is discussed drawing on the optics of affections. Shot in Brasília in 1966, André Costa and Liz Sandoval see in Gerson Tavares' work a convergence with the criticism of the modernist city, weaving the protagonists' tedium to the landscape of a city in its almost zero degree of existence.

The static or moving images, in the authors' words, are organised in narratives manipulated by invisible hands and minds, which at times affirm modern architecture's glamour, at other moments the epopee of a city's construction, at other moments the subjectivities that trespass the modernist voids. The authors focus on the details of the game of images, its subjection to the interest of authors and editors, but also to

the unpredictability and rebelliousness – this is where their fascination resides.

I should add to these contributions the text of Heliana Angotti-Salgueiro's conference, following the panel that I coordinated with works presented by Junia Mortimer, André Costa, Liz Sandoval and Ciro Miguel. The text by Heliana Angotti-Salgueiro is an outcome of her research at the engineer and urbanist Luiz de Anhaia Mello's library, comprising books, periodicals and other documents. Her study focuses on the images seen by Anhaia Mello in the international criticism's publications, especially the North American journal *The American City*, during the 1920s and 1930s. Images acquired, as from the 1990s, a new status as sources and documents for history studies, with specific methodological approaches. Since then, researches centred on visual sources have been presenting relevant outcomes. However, in the fields of architecture and urbanism this development has not received a balanced attention. Angotti-Salgueiro found that there are more researches using architectural images than those dedicated to urbanism; hence, she takes a detour and focuses her interest on the images of urbanism seen by Anhaia Mello in the publications collected in his library. The author verifies Luiz de Anhaia Mello's synchronicity with the international criticism, identifying in his own texts and books the issues that concerned the professionals of his time. The automobile and the exponential growth of cities are concerns that permeate his writings, imbued with a sense of pedagogical mission aiming to raise awareness among the cities' inhabitants about their risks. In order to fulfil his purpose, Anhaia Mello resorted to propaganda devices reinforced by the communication impact and immediateness of images.

With a time leap, Heliana Angotti-Salgueiro places us before the challenge of thinking images in the present time (2022). Are we ready to deal with the profusion of images to which we are daily exposed? How to read, handle and resort to the impactful power of images in the temporalities in which we are immersed? Researchers of traditional and new media are invited to find answers to these questions. Surely, there is no simple answer!

Here I stop, leaving the readers in the good company of the texts presented in this section.

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ARCHITECTURES OF IMAGE: ANNOTATIONS ON THEORY AND CRITICISM (1949-1958)

Junia Mortimer

IMAGE 1: LIFE MAGAZINE, GLAMOURIZED HOUSES. JULIUS SHULMAN, 1949

The photograph of the Kaufman residence, at dusk, occupies over two thirds of the composition of the double-page reportage. Against light we see, on the left, the sinuous contours of a woman's body lying on the edge of the pool and, on the background, the mysterious and crepuscular outline of the chain of mountains. In contrast, the residence, lit inside, is precise in its straight angles, succession of transparencies and its almost sacral furniture, for being untouched. Under the photograph, the appealing title "Glamourized Houses" conducts to the reading of a short paragraph on Julius Shulman's photography ability, started on the image of Richard Neutra's architecture, which we just described. Next to the text, another photograph by Shulman, this time a "row of modern houses", completes the composition of the first part of the reportage, whose continuation, in the following page, incorporates two other photographs by Shulman, vertically arranged, which desperately dispute the space with two other columns of commercial advertisement. We are seeing the April 1949 edition of the North American magazine *Life*.

IMAGE 2: ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, TOWNSCAPE. GORDON CULLEN, 1952

Five photographs, one sketch, legends and critic paragraphs occupy two of the six pages that comprise the reportage with the title "Cross at Focal Point", by Gordon Cullen. The photographs show columns or crosses as focal elements at crossings to where urban life converges. All the photographs are taken from the pedestrian's viewpoint, some more distanced, as the one in the upper left, or very close, as the two images in the bottom right. The sketch, as a tool of prospection of the future, signals the intervention work in terms of urban form and design. Tools of analysis of the present, witnessed by photography, and of the future, outlined in the briefness of the hand drawing, the images sustain the

theory that is constructed in fragments, around a “human urbanism” (Cullen, 1952). We are seeing the section “Townscape” of the February 1952 edition of the magazine *Architectural Review*.

IMAGE 3: "CRÔNICAS...", JORNAL DIÁRIO DE NOTÍCIAS, SALVADOR. LINA BO BARDI, 1958

The arrowed hand of a sculpture occupies the centre of the composition. Distributed around it, there is a photograph by Sílvio Robatto, of a colonial house in Nazaré das Farinhas, Salvador, another photograph of a donkey resisting to a peasant's effort to conduct it; besides these, there is jocular illustration of a distinction ceremony, an iron and glass skyscraper by Mies van der Rohe, and two sculptures, one a classical of Greek origin, and the other by Mario Cravo Júnior. For some of the images there are legends and explanatory texts; for others, there is none of the two. We are in 1959 and this is the eighth and penultimate column by Lina Bo Bardi for the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, of Salvador, with the title “Chronicles of art, history, costumes, life culture”.

* * *

The three images presented here are mobilized as triggers of a reflection we propose to delineate around the presence of the image in the construct of theoretical and critic debates in the field of architecture and city studies in the mid-twentieth century. We argue that, as splinters removed from broader documental bodies, these fragments enable us to set in motion a way of thinking by images the history of criticism and theory of architecture in the mentioned period. We take the risk of incompleteness, temporariness and failures when proposing to write history *in the company of* and *by means of* images, originating from distinct editorial situations. However, we bet on their insistence as perturbation of consensus in the field concerning differentiations in the theories of the period. What are the conditions of their emergence, what are the means of circulation, what are the subjects involved, both actors and consumers? How do these images corroborate or conjure against theories and criticism of architecture in the 1950s? What debates do they stage? To answer these questions, we are interested, on the one hand, in the formal and semiological aspects of images (their inside), as clues of criticism directions; but, also, especially the net of events implied in the regime of visibility conditioning its emergence, *i.e.*, its circulation and consumption, namely, actors, institutions, communication means and relations that interfere in the construction of these visualities.

We suspect that each of these presented triggers, as fragments of broader documental sets, participate in a theoretic and critic declination in the field of architecture and city studies in this period. They do not illustrate or stick to theories, but operate in their construct, either corroborating, or, also, not rarely, facing, defying and even betraying the arguments presented.

APPEARANCE SCENES: CONTEMPORARY PLOTS BETWEEN IMAGE AND ARCHITECTURE

In other opportunities (Mortimer, 2018, 2020), I defended the possibility of *thinking through images* as a methodological procedure for writing the history of urbanism. From that moment, when I focused on the documental source, from the study of a private collection of family albums, remained the learning of working with a document that constantly tensions the framing of horizontality or continuity of the historical discourse, insistently promoting abyssal cuttings (Navas, 2018), verticalised, characteristic of the aesthetic experience. This learning keeps the attention awakened for the sliding between different epistemic or regimes of knowledge production that photography can promote, something already discussed in the ambit of a tradition of thought, of which we highlight the contributions of Roland Barthes (2017) and Philippe Dubois (1998), in the 1980s, and Didi-Huberman (2010, 2013), since the early 1990s. The contributions of Susan Sontag (2004) and Rosalind Krauss (2002), also in the 1970s and 1980s, focused also on the “outside of images”, concerning their regimes of circulation and consumption, pointing to the effort of historicising images, as part of the process of situating them in their time, even though this debate only achieved more strength by means of the so-called visual turn (Santiago, 2019).

In this text, as we set ourselves the challenge to think a relationship between image and architectural theory and criticism in the 1950s, we will not be restricted to the isolated photographic image, but will consider its insertion in the editorial and expographic, among books, magazines and exhibitions. Despite the historical framework that announces a contemporaneity of these visualities, we have in mind the specificities of the conditions of its emergence. At the same time, we bet in this micro-constellation of extremes (Velloso, 2022) as a way of showing different uses and practices in the field of architectural theory and criticism in this period.

The editorial activity in the field of architectural experimentation and practice is one of the main developments of discussions raised since the 1980s by Beatriz Colomina. In the presentation of the collectanea “On Architecture Production and Reproduction” (1988), Colomina argues that there is a whole range of materials referring to representation and media reproduction of architecture, which are also architecture, insofar as they constitute this disciplinary field. Some years later, in “Privacy and publicity” (Colomina, 1994), by developing this argument, among others, the author reaches her thesis on architecture as mass media, ambiguously situating it on the threshold between privacy and publicity. The author bases her thesis drawing on examples, among which the editorial work of Le Corbusier in *L'Esprit nouveau* – the architectural magazine that he produced together with Amédée Ozenfant

and Paul Dermée –, and in his books, such as *Toward an Architecture* ([1923] 1973). Colomina's critical approach presents possible methodological paths for the challenge posed here, even though she extends it to other means, which exceed the scope of this article. Nevertheless, it is evident the work with images as architectural procedures of editorial and communicational nature, which condition the very act of designing – an architecture for photography.

Unfolding the researches developed by Colomina – having had her supervision for the doctoral research in Princeton –, Paul B. Preciado, in his book *Pornotopia* ([2010] 2020), proposes to move from the object of specialised magazines in the early decades of the twentieth century to *Playboy*, created in the post-war context, and brings new layers to the architectural editorial practice. Analysing the magazine's editions at the time of its foundation, in the 1950s, Preciado argues about the participation of architecture in the lifestyle promulgated by it – stereotyped in the figure of the hetero man, single or divorced, with a sophisticated taste and available for the pleasures of life, the *bon vivant*. In disregard of the public environment, the magazine fomented a modernist spatiality of the house, marked by the hedonism of private life, disseminating articles with architectural designs as part of a playboy consciousness of a “man of the interior space”, the space of home, in the sense of he who constitutes himself in the shelter of home. This consciousness did not identify with the traditionalist architectural standards of the suburban houses, nor with the home decor magazines, much more directed to a certain feminine audience socially framed in the role of the housewife:

While local magazines, as *Ladies Home Journal* or *House Beautiful*, had undertaken a crusade in the post-war period against the architecture of Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier, considering it alien to the North American autochthone traditions, *Playboy* published laudatory articles on Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Philip Johnson, Frank Lloyd Wright or Wallace K. Harrison and used its pages as support of “simple, functional and modern” design by Eames, Saarinen, George Nelson, Harry Bertoia, Knoll and other designers and architects who, at the time, were directly or indirectly linked to the International Style. During the Cold War, *Playboy* had been transformed into a platform of diffusion of architecture and design as central consumer goods of the new popular culture of the United States (Preciado, [2010] 2020, p. 13-14 – free translation from Brazilian-Portuguese edition, 2020).

With a humanised cross section of the three floors of the building, on a double-page, in a 1956 edition the magazine presents the model apartment for an urban bachelor: the *Playboy* penthouse, a theatrical

space to perform the rabbit's joyful sexuality "through the handling of several turning devices destined to fix the flexible, circular and reversible character of the rigid gender, social, and political norms that prevailed in the North American society of the post-war" (Preciado, [2010] 2020, p. 89 – free translation). In later editions, such as that of 1959, it is through photo-reportage, with abundance of colour photographs, that this spatial dimension of sexuality, a "pornotopia", according to Preciado, continues to be investigated, this time presenting the Playboy Mansion: with "colour pages made by Bunny Yeager, dedicated to the interior of the bachelor Harold Chaskin's house, Hefner's friend, on the Biscayne bay, Miami. [...] the centre of representation is the architecture of Chaskin's house and the life that it enables" (Preciado [2010] 2020, p. 109 – free translation).

In another geography, more expographic than editorial, but that also links way of life and architecture, through visual resources, there is the exhibition "Architettura, misura dell'uomo", designed and setup by the Italian architect and critic Ernesto Rogers, for the 9th Triennial of Milan, in 1951. Perhaps even more radical than Rogers' proposal, by expanding the quantity and different natures of the images used, we highlight the exhibitions of the Independent Group, "Parallel between art and life" (1953) and "This is Tomorrow" (1956). According to Olivier Lugon (2016), these exhibitions exacerbated something that was being already practiced in several publications, from Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant to Sigfried Giedion and László Moholy-Nagy: "They also brought to light a massive but also inventive use of extra-artistic illustration through an abundant assortment of documents of all kinds, with which these authors liked to scan their books" (Lugon, 2016, p. 125). It was not the case, according to Lugon's argument, of illustrating or condensing a verbal idea in the image, on the contrary, "the insertion of these disparate documents is supposed to cause as many effects of rupture and surprise in the progression of the argument" (Lugon, 2016, p. 126).

In the case of "*Parallel...*", images of X-ray and microscope, photographs of native peoples and chronophotographs (à la Eadweard Muybridge or Etienne-Jules Marey), besides dripping, as in Jackson Pollock, signalise to daily life by means of various images that fill the day-to-day and constitute it – but here without a more critical perspective yet, as that which would develop later, in the late 1960s, in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* ([1967] 2021). The expographic strategy of suspending the reproductions ended up by disconnecting the images from any legend, tensioning that which, some decades earlier, in 1936, Walter Benjamin alerted to as a necessary procedure to situate photographs in an increasingly visual world. By creating a "pool" of images, which made it impossible to identify source, date, means, and

dimensions, the artists and architects involved made these documents become, according to Nigel Henderson, “multi-evocative”. Reyner Banham, theoretician of the Independent Group, published a commentary on the exhibition in the *Architectural Review*, in October 1953, drawing on André Malraux’s “imaginary museum”, a concept idealised in 1947. Banham defended that “the essential quality of photography consisted in its ability to draw ‘similarities and parallels’ between objects, technologies or cultures, which might in reality have no connections” (Lugon, 2016, p. 139). As presented in the press release of the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London:

In this exhibition an encyclopedic range of material from past and present is brought together through the medium of the camera which is used as recorder, reporter, and scientific investigator. As a recorder of nature objects, works of art, architecture and technics; as a reporter of human events the images of which sometimes come to have a power of expression and plastic organisation analogous to the symbol in art; and as scientific investigator extending the visual scale and range, by use of enlargements, X-rays, wide-angle lens, high-speed and aerial photography.

The editors of this exhibition [...] have selected more than a hundred images of significance for them. These have been arranged in categories suggested by the material which underline a common visual denominator independent of the field from which the image is taken. There is no single claim in this procedure. No watertight scientific or philosophical system is demonstrated.

In short, it forms a poetic-lyrical order where images create a series of cross-relationships (ICA Press Release, 1953).

Nigel Henderson, Paolo Paolozzi, Ronald Jenkins and the couple Alison and Peter Smithson, editors of the exhibition, gathered 122 photographic panels for the event, arranged in an uncommon way for that time, with images from floor to ceiling, and in different angulations. The images, of different nature and in different dimensions, hung in the space without an apparent order and refusing a linear and synthetic narrative. Expanding Malraux’s imaginary museum from the book to the gallery, “Parallel...” (1953) and later the exhibition “This is Tomorrow” (1956) promoted relations with the public that demanded greater participation and even implication in the experience of the space, a theme also valued by the theoretical movements of architecture at that time, especially in the 1960s. Thus, the exhibitions moved from a place of presentation or

“showing” to be assumed as a space of architectural experience – which culminated in the exhibition Strada Novissima, in 1980, held in the ambit of the 1st Venice Architecture Biennale, organised by Paolo Portoghesi, with the theme “The presence of the past”. In the critical view of Otília Arantes (2021, p. 25), around the fanciful and extravagant aspect of the exhibition, “such façades did not hide the cardboard and wood from which they were constructed in the Cinecittá studios – all well-signalled so that, from surprise to immediate recognition, the visitor of the show could have the flattering feeling of appearing in a Fellini’s film”.

The expographic dimension of architecture gains projection and visibility as from the mid-twentieth century, but especially in the 1970s and 1980s, when it is configured a platform of architectural thought and practice of the so-called postmodern architecture. This is the argument of Véronique Patteeuw and Léa-Catherine Szacka (2018), when gathering several authors around the mediation practices that sculpted postmodern architecture, an approach quite convergent with that of Beatriz Colomina in “Architecture Production and Reproduction”. This perspective is sophisticatedly unfolded by means of the contributions of Eduardo Costa (2021), when delineating a contemporary horizon of architectural practices that, from the 1980s and 1990s onwards, expand in three fronts, beyond the tectonic: archives, exhibitions and books.

It is important to point that we focus on the photographs in publications and exhibitions, having in mind not only the “outside” of the images, in the sense of networks of circulation and consumption, but also the “inside” of the images, in what concerns its framing and *mise en scène* – which is also, according to Azoulay (2019), a separating line. Elizabeth Edwards (2020) calls attention to the performance of the photograph that, although instituting this separation mentioned by Azoulay, is not restricted to this. The subject photographically captured also rebels in the face of a horizon of expectation: if there is a separation line established by the photographic event, which lays out the actors and the power game, there is in this same threshold the glimpse of existence and life, not only of subjugation. Observing this insurgence, Lilia Schwarcz and Maria Helena Machado (2018) show the rebel life in the collective and individual gestures of enslaved persons in coffee estates in the inland of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, photographed by Marc Ferrez, by commission of counter-abolitionist coffee plantation owners. With the purpose of constructing a harmonious imaginary around that social environment, the photographs witness the tension moving their subjects from some subaltern place of capture, established by the imperialist shutter (Azoulay, 2019), to the potent place of existence – breastfeed the child at the centre of the photograph, hold in the hands the image of revolution, with the tools up in the air. The insurrection is launched and will be harshly repressed in the post-abolitionist policies, which did not enable any reparation and that explain the land concentration in Brazil and the superposition of race and social condition in the country.

Our purpose is to situate, in the threshold of the “inside” and “outside” of the images, the operability of these surfaces as participants of the enunciation of theories and criticism of architecture and urbanism, either hegemonic or marginal. Our interests, when thinking by means of the images with which we began this text, is to show a theoretical and critical field in architecture and urbanism, with different declinations in the direction of the production and consumption of architecture, urban analysis and intervention and, finally, experience and daily life.

ARCHITECTURES OF IMAGES ICON IMAGE OR THE GLAMOUR OF PUBLICITY

Studies on the construction of visualities in architecture by means of technical images in the 1940s and 1950s attest the expansion of the professional field of architectural photography and show the success of frequent partnerships between photographers and architects, like the collaboration between Le Corbusier and Lucien Hervé, Richard Neutra and Julius Shulman, Oscar Niemeyer and Marcel Gautherot, Lina Bo Bardi and Peter Scheier (Costa, 2017; 2018; Espada, 2020; Gouveia, 2008). These partnerships are also extended to the pair photographer and historian, as stated by Gouveia (2008) when analysing three important publications of the same period, the 1940s and 1950s, “Brazil Builds”, by Philip Goodwin and G. E. Kidder Smith, “Latin American Architecture since 1945”, by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, and “Modern architecture in Brazil”, by Henrique Mindlin:

The formula historian + photographer was used both in “Brazil Builds” and in “Latin American Architecture”. In the former, Philip Goodwin, architect and historian – president of the Foreign Relations Committee of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and of the Department of Architecture of MoMa, also honorary member of the Institute of Architecture of Brazil –, got together with George Everard Kidder Smith, architect and photographer. In the latter, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, historian, united with Rosalie Thorne McKenna, photographer, under the supervision of the president of the Department of Architecture of the MoMa, Philip Johnson. As for Mindlin, he used the photographs of architects’ archives (Gouveia, 2008, p. 84 – free translation).

The exhibition *Brazil Builds*, held at MoMA in 1943, in fact called attention to the expansion of the place of images – for some authors, they were understood as mediations or representations of architecture – and to the importance of catalogues in the construct of theoretical and historiographic stances in architecture, through curatorial choices, which reinforced what was on the discourses of modern critics, as Philip Goodwin. According to Claudia Costa Cabral (2021, p. 8 – free translation),

[...] we know that architectural catalogues are bibliographic products in which images usually have a preponderant role over texts; in a way, they are not distant from a photographic album. Actually, it has never been alien to the reception of the catalogue “Latin American Architecture since 1945” the criticism of a formalist-based historiography. Real examined Lewis Mumford’s reaction to the exhibition, in an article in the North American media (*The New Yorker*, February 1956), in general critic of the lack of context of the buildings in the show and the reduction to “pure formalism, to pure aesthetical experience”.

The lack of context mentioned by Mumford is also attributed to the visual framing of photographic images. In the case of *Brazil Builds*, for the show they were under the responsibility of the photographer Kidder Smith, and for the catalogue they were complemented with images by other photographers. The framing concentrated on the building, in terms of a visual framing and composition of the image, supports a way of seeing and understanding architecture, in a formalist historiography, in which one observes among all the buildings photographed, a supposed convergence of principles – verified even in the photographs that are not by Smith, such as those for the catalogue by Marcel Gautherot, Eric Hess and Peter Scheier (Gouveia, 2008). The repetition of certain pictorial attributes and technical parameters, as the centrality of the building, the absence of distortion, the increment of qualities of the photographed form and the dramatization of the object, with light and shadow effects, operate in the creation of a given visuality for the Brazilian modern architecture in this exhibition. The *Latin American Architecture since 1945* exhibition held at MoMA in 1955-1956, had as curator Henry-Russell Hitchcock and was installed by Arthur Drexler. There is a survival of formalism in the choice of visual framing for the display of the works in “large-scale photomurals, plans and 3-dimensional color slides in individual viewers [...]” (MoMA Press Release, sp. 1955). According to Patricio del Real, the reason for this lies in the importance of the dimension of the *modern appearance* that is crucial for the construction of the exhibition argument:

The intent of the exhibition, as Drexler points out in the preface to the catalogue, had a double provision. First, it intended to expose the most significant examples in the development of individual architects’ work. Second, it attempted to *present the predominantly modern appearance of Latin American cities* and give the US public the ability to ‘observe the effects which we ourselves still only anticipate’ (Hitchcock, 1955a: 9). This extraordinary statement, which makes *Latin American cities appear – and the key issue is appearance – more modern than US cities*,

sets the exhibition and the book within the general debate on modern architecture in the US, specifically within the crisis of functionalism and the rise of corporate modernity. (Del Real, 2007, p. 98, our emphasis).

Cabral (2021, p. 15) endorses the dimension of appearance when analysing that the expographic solutions present the works as visual arguments for the construction of a narrative around modernity in Latin America: “the exhibition suggests a series of relations between the works, as ‘visual arguments’, potentially open, depending on the visitor’s ability to recognise them”.

Concerning the photography commissioning of these exhibitions, especially of *Brazil Builds*, the concentration of extensive works of documentation and dissemination of architecture in the hands of few professional photographers also happened, in the same period, with the project Case Study Houses, from 1945 to 1966, of the magazine *Arts and Architecture*, directed to the proposition of models of efficient houses and, in principle, affordable: Julius Shulman was responsible for the photographs of most of the prototypes, situated in South California, working directly with the architects invited to participate in the initiative, all considerably well-known in the North American scene. Shulman’s images had broad circulation beyond the magazine and contributed to the creation of an imaginary of glamour and social distinction around these projects. These aspects became evident in 1949, with the publication of the “Kaufmann House” (1946), by Richard Neutra, in the magazines *Life* and *Architectural Forum*: the image chosen as the main register of the building in both magazines – the house in the twilight of dusk – placed the building in the status of modernist icon. According to Simon Niedenthal (1993, p. 101):

By 1953, when Dione Neutra sent a number of clippings to the client, the image had been published in India, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, and Argentina, as well as in some of most widely circulated consumer and trade publications in this country. Years later, in an oral history project, Dione Neutra testified to the importance of Shulman’s photographic treatment to the prominence of the Kaufmann house in her husband’s canon: ‘Mr. Shulman made some very beautiful and stunning photographs, and then Mr. Neutra made some very beautiful and stunning slides. [...] I mean, this just simply became his most famous house; that’s how it developed.’ Neutra’s biographer Thomas Hines further confirms the belief that the single Shulman image, “one of modern architecture’s most brilliant and famous photographs,” was responsible for the success of the house: ‘Shulman’s interpretations were internationally ac-

claimed.’ The image is, indeed, widely held to be a ‘modernist icon’ – ‘an object’, according to Websters, ‘of uncritical devotion’.

Some decades later, we saw the term “icon” circulating intensely in the architectural environment, especially a propos of the criticism formulated in the late 1980s, as can be read in the text “Arquitectura simulada” (1988) [Simulated architecture] by Otilia Arantes and later in Charles Jencks’ book “Iconic Building” (2005). These authors do not address the modern production, but rather the production situated in the post-modernist period, specifically from the 1980s onwards in the case of Arantes, and during the 1990s in the case of Jencks. In the case of the Kaufmann House, what interests us is that the idea of icon, as an “object of uncritical devotion”, was constituted only *from the photograph*; specifically from the house’s photograph made by Shulman at dusk and, later, from the circulation of this image concomitantly in a magazine of broad consumption, *Life*, and a specialised magazine, *Architectural Forum*. Our argument is that the construct of an icon-image or of a synthesis-image was not restricted to the “inside” of the image, *i.e.*, to the composition modes of the photograph – which obviously also has great effect – but, mostly, to the editorial architecture, over which there was strong control from the architect Frank Lloyd Wright, as demonstrate the analyses made by Simon Niedenthal (1993, p. 104) addressing the correspondence between those involved – Kaufman, Neutra, Wright and Shulman:

This letter is a good example of the way in which the various interests engaged in the publication of architecture are delicately balanced. Neutra’s interests may have favored early and wide publication, as a means of drawing upon the novelty value and obtaining immediate commissions, but Wright presents the publishing program as being the will of Neutra’s client, and the architect has no choice but to acquiesce. The house is treated like some classified automotive prototype, and the strategies here – to control the access to the images of the house, to manage scarcity as a means of maximizing impact – are those of advertising.

Niedenthal publishes his study on the Kaufmann House and Shulman’s photograph in 1993, one year before the publication of “Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media”, by Beatriz Colomina, a work whose central argument is that of architecture as a means of wide reach, *i.e.*, as mass media – an approach that also guides the analyses of Preciado, as we have previously seen. In the ambit of this approach of architecture as mass media, it interests us to call attention to the use of photographs according to an editorial architecture that seeks to forge an icon-image, *i.e.*, the image as an object of devotion.

The creation of these objects of devotion obviously does not underestimate the photographer's technical and poetic knowledge, whose testimonies are often mobilised to understand the stories of the production of the images and show an acute visual sagacity, as narrated by Shulman (*apud* Niedenthal, 1993, p. 102) a propos his famous photograph:

I had been in the house with Richard Neutra for three days, photographing interiors and exteriors around the clock. Towards twilight I looked out-side towards the east [...] of the house [...] towards the desert [...] I saw the light fading and it looked beautiful. [...] I ran out and looked back at the mountains and saw the twilight was forming [...] and I ran back in the house, got my camera, and set it up out here [...]. I got the camera focused and set it on the composition I wanted. When I was running out with my camera and shoulder bag, Neutra called me [...]. He said 'wait a minute, where are you going?' I said 'well now Richard, come on outside, it's beautiful [...]. He said 'no we don't do it, we haven't got the time, we have got to do more interiors.' I said we can't stop this.

However, the creation of the icon is not completed in the photograph as a surface resulting exclusively from photographic technique and poetics. In the image that triggers the reflection that we proposed, the double-page of the 1949 *Life* magazine, stands out that the scene created by the image does not centralise the architecture and creates a mysterious atmosphere; added to these aspects, there is the use of adjectives such as "glamour" and "drama", which "establish its iconic authority in relation to Hollywood and the film industry" (Niedenthal, 1993, p. 104). As in the photography of fashion or films stars, the attributes of "glamour" and "drama", strengthened in the title and the text, are added to Kaufmann's architecture, by means of the photographic treatment: architecture, star of the new mass culture of the North American post-war.

IMAGE, ANALYSIS OR THE PARTS AND THE WHOLE OF THE URBAN SCENE

According to the December 1949 *Architectural Review* editorial, its new section "Townscape" would be about the neglected virtues of the vernacular design of cities and countryside, which would be documented as critical and practical framework, in a series of case studies. The editions of "Townscape" were part of an environment critical of the rational functionalist urbanism, seeking to evince, by means of a markedly visual perspective, the emotion attributes of urban form and fundamental the debate on landscape. However, the nuances of the relation of "Townscape" with the Picturesque Movement in England (Davey, 2011), as Matthew Aitchison (2010) thoroughly analyses drawing on the interactions of Hubert de Cronin Hastings, Nikolaus Pevsner and Gordon

Cullen, render unfounded, for the author, the approaches that declare “Townscape” as “purely an exercise of historicist urban design” (Aitchison *apud* Pevsner, 2010, p. 14).

In our argument, it interests us to point out the use of the photographic technology in the magazine’s editions and its incidence in the creation of a field of debate on urbanism, through the idea of urban landscape. According to Cervin Robinson:

For the most part the photographs reproduced in these publications, which were taken by different photographers, were described by a word or phrase that was amplified in a short paragraph. The word might be ‘thisness, intricacy, bluntness and vigour, entanglement, metaphor, noticeable absence, building as sculpture, geometry, scale’.

Most ‘Townscape’ pictures were taken with the dominant camera of the late forties and fifties, the twin-lens Rolleiflex, held at waist level, from which vantage point there was an inevitable emphasis on street pavements, steps, bollards, and other street furniture (Robinson; Herschman, 1987, p. 137).

In Robinson’s interpretation, nothing was distanced and this proximity with street furniture, pavement and – I add – people, suggests an approach on the life of the streets with a criticism of the functionalist urbanism, according to a certainly vernacular trend. It is meaningful to our argument Robinson’s analysis on the type of camera used for the registers of “Townscape”, considering that the type of relationship between the body and the apparatus also affects the relationship between the body and the city – thus, the urban experience that one seeks to delineate and defend. It is not by chance that most of the photographs are made at the waist height and focusing on elements of urban design: as vestiges of a pedestrian urban experience, the photographs contribute to the defence of a theory that prioritises environmental urban qualities, as qualities for the encounter and appropriation.

In the “Townscape” publication of February 1952, Gordon Cullen addresses spatial situations around crosses or obelisks as intersections with high agglomeration power (“Cross at focal point”). Arguing around the humanity’s gregarious need, Cullen criticises the absence of encounters, which he verifies in society at that moment, and uses the analysed examples as sources for his defence of how urban design could propitiate people’s congregation.

Men are gregarious and expect to meet. In all ages but ours, that is. Today, partly from hurry, partly from worry, partly from pressure of motor traffic, we are forgetting to meet, and the various kinds of policemen, in and out of uniform who direct our af-

fairs, are busy making it impossible for us to meet, by making little gardens of such of our open spaces [...], railing them round, ornamenting them into islands of rustic absurdity and then, if possible, locking them up (Cullen, 1952, p. 109).

In order to explore a case study presented in the section, the closing of the access to the steps of a cross in front of a church, Cullen manipulates a series of images: one, in the distance, situates the focus of analysis in the urban space; the others, all from the pedestrian's viewpoint, place us quite close to the urban elements under analysis. Cullen defends the appropriation of the city, made impossible due to various spatial devices of access control:

The actual focus of interest, the steps of the cross around which people congregate, is decisively isolated by concrete posts and flower beds. It is just as though a notice had been put up 'Commit no nuisance', but this nuisance is the perfectly innocent one of sitting around chatting or standing on the steps at weddings (Cullen, 1952, p. 114).

The discussion is often circumscribed to a debate on urbanism as urban ambience, which, if on the one hand propitiates an approach "from near" and "from inside/within", on the other hand appears as rather tied, in the case of "Townscape", to quite formalist intervention procedures.

In 1961, the same Gordon Cullen, who was editor in chief of the "Townscape" section, launches the homonymous book. Before that, in 1960, Kevin Lynch had launched the book "The Image of the City". In both, there is a common concern about the ensemble of buildings that constitute the urban landscape. For Cullen (1996), "as much as a meeting of people creates a surplus of attractions for all the collective, also an ensemble of buildings acquires a power of visual attraction that can hardly focus on an isolated building".

This visual attraction of the ensemble, of the urban landscape, is central in both works: "The urban landscape is, besides other things, something to be appreciated, remembered and contemplated. Giving a visual form to a city is a special design problem, also a recent problem"¹ (Lynch, [1960] 2018, p. 6). The centrality of the visual aspect occurs, however, in consonance with a dimension of relation, of proximity, of ensemble, which did not appear before this moment. It is about dedicating oneself to perceive, especially visually, an environment, an urban ensemble, and not strictly one building, and from this perception identify images and intervene through what these images inform, named by Lynch as environmental images.

¹ T.N.: All citations by Kevin Lynch are free translation from the Brazilian edition (Lynch, [1960] 2018, p. 1).

According to Lynch ([1960] 2018, p. 6), the environmental images “are the result of a two-way process between the observer and his environment. [...] The image so developed now limits and emphasizes what is seen, while the image itself is being tested against the filtered perceptual input in a constant interacting process”. Considering this participative dimension in the formulation of environmental images, Lynch has a special interest in public images, in which the perception is collectivised for a large number of people, because it is in these images that, for the author, urban planners can intervene seeking a better orientation and experience of the city. Decomposed in identity, structure and significance, the environmental image is a conceptual device of analysis, through which what is seen will be unravelled, disassembled, with the purpose of “constructing cities for the enjoyment of an immense number of people from extremely diverse backgrounds and experiences”. According to the author, it is necessary to affect the physical objects with a high degree of imaginableness, *i.e.*, with a high probability of “evoking a strong image in any given observer”. Hence, one traces an urban diagnostic framework in which identifying an environmental image and delineating its structure are stages of a process of approaching the city, with the purpose of generating interventions that operate in the direction of a “continuity with many distinctive parts clearly interconnected”.

As a conceptual operator of proximity with the urban environment, the visual appears to Lynch as a platform of diagnosis, being an operator of analysis, but also assumes a prospective and propositional dimension, which has as parameter the perception of a totality (urban), tough constituted of many parts. A discussion becomes evident around learning to see and the possibilities of this apprenticeship in the field of urbanism and the effort of making available an instrumental that uses photographs, maps, graphic schemes and many accounts, as to fundament the work with *form*, with urban design.

We perceive here a distinct declination from that which we saw before, of icons-images, around the “Glamourized houses”. In this micro-constellation of events around the “Townscape” and “The Image of the City”, the image enters as a procedure for decomposition and re-composition of the landscape, used as a binder of an instrument of urban analysis and prognostics for a theoretical and practical strand directed to the urban form and design, in a perspective that valorises an emotional dimension. In this framework, the bet is on a survival of environmental images as strong images that give support to our guidance in the world, in a way that the transformations should not interfere in this totalizing continuity. Photographs and other visual resources participate in the processes of critical and theoretical elaboration, as we have seen in the section “Townscape” and in Lynch’s book, as instrumental of analysis and prognosis, decomposition and re-composition of the image of the city.

EXPERIMENT IMAGE OR CHRONICLE OF IMAGE'S LIVES

The exhibition boards proposed by Lina Bo Bardi for the 1961 exhibition “Arte como história”, held at the foyer of the Teatro Castro Alves, in Salvador – where under her coordination functioned the Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia – refer to the 63 boards of the *Atlas Mnemosyne*, developed by Aby Warburg in the 1920s. In both works there is an approximation exercise of numerous visual reproductions seeking to create arguments or present stories, according to a general theme, by means of this proximity. Lina’s boards also refer to Maurice Jarnoux’s photography, in which we see André Malraux observing numerous photographic reproductions of paintings and sculptures arranged on the room’s floor, in reference to the “imaginary museum” discussed by the French thinker in his homonymous book. The manipulation of images is in fact a very present practice in the Italian-Brazilian architect’s work that situate her in a historical moment, as we have seen, attentive to the use of image in the theoretical and critical field also of architecture. In this article, as we have announced, we have taken as trigger the montage of the Sunday columns “Crônicas de arte, de história, de costume, de cultura da vida” [Chronicles of art, history, costumes, culture of life], published by Lina Bo Bardi in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, of Salvador, from August to October 1958.

At the centre of the page, the arrowed hand stands out in the display of the penultimate of the nine editions produced by Bo Bardi. With a short legend about human hands and machines, the photograph does not illustrate any text, but through the nexus built between it and the other parts of the page’s composition there is the construe of an argument – a recurrent strategy in chronicles. In the case of this edition, the argument lies in the defence of an industrial art, criticising some notions of craftwork and defending the survival of popular art by means of industry. Other images, as the donkey and the peasant with a straw hat, and an illustration named “Condecoração” [Distinction], establish perhaps more subtle and lateral relations with written content, and constitute provocations, probably directed to a public resistant to the debates placed by the net of subjects mobilised in the construction of this column – among them Koellreutter, who signs one of the texts of the edition; Mario Cravo Júnior, who has one of his works published on it; and Silvio Robatto, the author of the photograph of Nazaré das Farinhas (on the right side).

In the two first editions, both with photographs by Silvio Robatto, one of the old city centre of Salvador and the other of Cachoeira, Lina Bo Bardi delineates her critical stand in the face of the erudite culture, which tends to disregard popular architecture as being worthy of study and reverence. Attentive to the movements in Bahia, she calls attention of architects and planners to “the soul of a city” as “spiritual heritage of a people that is not the so-called local colour, but the very essence

of the culture” (Bardi, n. 1, 1958). Already in these editions it is possible to observe how some images do not appear as a direct illustration of texts, but with an amplification effect of the issues posed there. Bo Bardi’s drawings, signed B.B., at the centre, to the left of the page, and some images, as the photograph of Pelourinho, in Salvador, are some examples. In this game of relations, the large dimension of the photograph of a street in Cachoeira contrasts with the small image of the model of the National Congress, in Brasília, which visually amplifies the architect’s criticism of what she defines as self-critical testimony of Oscar Niemeyer, published in that same period in the number 2 of the magazine *Módulo*, of 1958: “Architect Niemeyer’s position of revolt, for doing the opposite of what he could have done, facing real estate speculation to use it as an arm against speculation itself (his celebrity would have enabled him to), is a position of the artist disconnected from the social problems, a position of *l’art pour l’art*” (Bardi, n. 2, 1958). Bo Bardi also announces a critical stand to abstraction and being attentive to the city in the dimension of its daily life reality: “The designer looks at architectural magazines sitting on his drawing desk and has no eyes for reality; he will be a creator of abstract cities and buildings, designed for an humanity that exists only in his fantasy, and the real men [will be] forced to inhabit houses and cities in which they will be foreigners [...]” (Bardi n. 2, 1958). With an eye on Bahia, as she names one of the sections, the architect defends the architects’ social responsibility and the house as a condition of human life dignity, alerting for the need of combating real estate speculation, a menace that she foresaw in the horizon of Bahia, and that would imply the withdrawal of the popular subjects who appear in Robatto’s photographs.

In the third edition of the *Chronicles*, of September 21, 1958, for the first time appear two photographs by Pierre Verger, another important interlocutor of Lina Bo Bardi in this proximity with Bahia. One of them illustrates the section “Olho sobre a Bahia” [An eye on Bahia], in which the architect develops the defence of a heritage conservation that would occur in integration with life, not restricted to the built monument. In the photograph occupying the central portion of the page, we see a child playing with a newspaper, next to a newspaper stand on the sidewalk. The legend, due to its proximity with the photograph, suggests the child’s voice and enounces the child’s liking of large trees and its claim of someday being “noticed” by society. The legend, in today’s critical lenses, points to a rather paternalistic posture that, despite the efforts to reach proximity, draws a separation line between the reader/editor and the photographed, seen only as a destitute, even if a dreamer. There seems to be a tension between the effort in the direction of valorising popular culture and an approach by the absence, which prevails in the face of the potentiality of dream and creation. Lina returns to the children actors, who appear once again in the “*Chronicles*” number 5, with a photograph by Leão Rozemberg at the centre. There is an insistence

around the presence of children and the reiterated request that they are perceived: “Misters architects and urbanists, do not forget us”. Or, still, again we identify this presence in number 7, in which a photograph of a child swimming is followed by the legend: The Moon, the Sea, the Sun, for us, still poetry. And tomorrow?”. It is noteworthy that also at that time, the 1950s, Nigel Henderson made photographs of children playing in the periphery streets of London, where he lived with his wife. The photographs were used by the Smithson couple in the presentation they made at the 9th CIAM, in Aix-en-Provence, in France. The presence of children in the columns is in alignment with the increasing debate on education, promoted in the fourth edition, a propos of a censorship committee in the University of Paraná, which would have eliminated titles of that library, among which by the writers Jorge Amado and Anísio Teixeira. The author uses the opportunity to present the Escola Carneiro Ribeiro, with architecture by Diógenes Rebouças, a result of Teixeira’s work around an education project in which “the school should not be the antithesis of life, it must be life itself”.

Lina Bo Bardi assumes the place of critic, commenting with greater or lesser discursive density events of Brazil and the world at that historical moment, also attentive to the debate in the field of architecture. This place of critic of daily life, of culture, expands the reach of the column beyond the prominently specialised audience, considering the newspaper’s broad circulation and Lina Bo Bardi’s pedagogic endeavour to present architectural culture as daily life culture. The necessary conditions for architecture are to develop critical contents with a comic tone, circulating “findings”, as the advertisement of Casa Virgem, also present in the column number 5, or the advertisement of the zoological broker, present in column number 6, both highlighted in yellow colour. The jocose tone appears again in the right-and-wrong game, the author’s strategies of modern pedagogy, and completely disappears in column 9, probably edited with little participation of Lina Bo Bardi, which is evident in the pagination and layout of images, in this case quite illustrative.

When explaining the ending of Lina Bo Bardi’s contribution to the *Diário de Notícias*, column number 9, of November 2, 1958, recapitulates the architect’s effort: “We sought to point out several aspects of Bahia: streets, squares, baroque churches and common daily architecture and that, for this reason, are not less interesting. Aspects that everybody knows and that, for being of every day, are not ‘seen’ and disappear in the daily life”. Daily life and the popular Black practices, of Salvador and Bahia, gave a substrate to Lina Bo Bardi’s editorial and critical activity, delineating some fields of debate from a cultural viewpoint, in a broader sense, but eminently modern, technical, architectural and urbanistic: the children and the city, the erudite and the popular, the extraordinary in the ordinary, the potency of daily life – these are some of the discussions raised by the chronicles, by means of an articulation not always obvious between text and image, in a way that requires from the reader

an effort of active observation in the creation of nexus and relations, in the face of images that are themselves chronicles of a daily life.

CONCLUSIONS AND UNFOLDMENT

The theoretical system delineated in this paper is a way of articulating reflections around the relation between image and critic in architecture and urbanism in the 1950s. Thinking *by means of* and *in the company of* images, with special attention to those we took as triggers for our argumentation, we sought to outline possible densifications among numerous events of this period in which we perceive the meaningful use of photographs and other visual sources as starting points, procedures and/or products of an extended architectural performance, in which the editorial and expographic practice are recurrent.

This complex system, as Edgar Morin warns, is moving and unstable, in a way that the densifications are not useful for universal categories, since they result from the set of events gathered there and would have other aspects in the face of other choices. At the same time, this effort of theorisation, which accepts the instability of the theoretical gesture itself, intends to signalise to the different declinations with which we can apprehend different mobilisations of image throughout the 1950s.

By means of glamour and drama, made explicit in the reportage of the 1949 edition of *Life* magazine, from Julius Shulman's photograph of the Kaufmann House, by Richard Neutra, we slipped to the exhibition *Brazil Builds*, in 1943, and advanced to the project *Case Study Houses*, configuring a micro-constellation in which we identified a performance of the photographs not as resistance and perforation (Edwards, 2020), but rather a performance of seduction and persuasion, as media attributes, elaborating iconic syntheses of a "new" urban and domestic imaginary based on the values of the post-war society (Preciado, [2010] 2020). Here, we highlight that the creation of an icon-image occurs not exclusively due to the formal qualities of the isolated photograph, but from a set of editorial and publicity procedures that, by moving with different audiences and circulation circuits, projects architecture as an object of consumption and, therefore, also of distinction.

In the elaboration of the concept of urban landscape, drawing on Gordon Cullen and Kevin Lynch, we identify the practice of photography, with other drawing and representation techniques, as procedure of apprehension, analysis and decomposition of the urban environment, for later intervention in the city. We identify here foresights of an approach of the image as methodological instance that systematises the experience and appropriation of users of the space and preconizes paths for the guidance of urbanistic interventions – as we will see, for example, in a more prominent way in the 1960s and 1970s, through the works of Denise Scott Brown and Steve Izenour, in the Las Vegas debates. From this micro-constellation, we understand the operation of the

image as an analytical-conceptual procedure, which enables to decompose and recompose a landscape, in an approach of urbanism directed to form and urban design.

Finally, drawing on Lina Bo Bardi's chronicles in the *Diário de Notícias*, we identify an experimental dimension in the mobilisation of images as, the images themselves, chronicles of life: images with residues collected in an imaginary bag (Le Guin, 1989), in which the architect kept various fragments, and through which she operated her criticality. Partly made by Pierre Verger and Sílvio Robatto, the photographs selected for the editorial montages are, also, registers of daily life events, testimonies of an urban experience of wanderings and detours of these bodies-photographers. It is true that, in the content of the discussions, predominates the heroic tone of modern narratives, in which Lina Bo Bardi assumes a posture of cultural agent holder of the knowledge to be transmitted – teaching “right” and “wrong” paths of taste and cultural education. However, we argue that, betraying this posture, the photographs, drawings, and add cuttings in the chronicles become material remains of daily life with which the reader critically formulates in the open space left between the presentation and the absence of explanation. These remains, as in Nigel Henderson's solarisations in the same decade of 1950s, signalise to a posture that is not exactly that of a collector (with her husband Pietro Maria Bardi), but rather, a “splasher” and “scavenger” who, as in the film directed by Agnès Varda (2000), displaces the things of the world and insufflates other lives (Ingold, 2012).

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ARCHITECTURE AND CINEMA: FICTION FILMS AS ARCHIVES OF AFFECTIONS

André Costa and Liz Sandoval

THE CONTEXT OF THE EARLY FILMS ABOUT BRASÍLIA: BETWEEN THE PROJECT'S DIVULGATION AND THE AFFECTIVE ELABORATION OF THE SPACE

Brasília, a city extensively publicised since its design phase, was seen by the first camerapersons as an immense construction site, a great amount of people involved in its accomplishment and the certainty that they were experiencing a unique moment. In fact, an entire city under construction in great speed was something that in the view of reporters, photographers and camerapersons caused great impact and fascination. Among the numerous audio-visual records of the city, from the inauguration until the 1980s and 1990s, three different cinematographic narratives can be observed.

There was a flourishing of films about Brasília in the 1970s and 1980s, after overcoming an officialistic phase initially imposed by the conjunctures of the city's legitimization and by taking a critical stance regarding the main questions posed by the city (Carvalho, 2003, p. 10). The official narrative comprises the documentation ensured by law, responsible for gathering a large collection of images and initial discourses regarding the construction and consolidation of the city, as well as several commercial films, both documentaries and fiction.

Brasília arouse a strong interest for the production of films, including from abroad, but much of this material of the early years was lost and some of it is impossible to view. This is the case of *Les pionniers* [The pioneers, free translation; Os Bandeirantes, in Portuguese], a film by Marcel Camus shot in 1959, whose negative is in France. This film, which represents the foreign view on Brasília, is about “a mythological imaginary regarding the enchantment and curiosity that remained alive for many years among foreign documentarists and fictionists” (Moriconi, 2012, p. 33). *The pioneers* and *O homem do Rio* [The river man], by Philippe de Broca (1963), are films that update the “myth of the paradise” to be colonized.

From the beginning and still today, there is a continuing interest in presenting in the films about Brasília the urban form particularities of the modern city's innovative project, highlighting the open, free spaces between the buildings, the vehicles' lanes and respective axes, which emphasize the monumental character of the most representative constructions. These images were widely disseminated on photographs and films in which the camera moved like the view of an observer who went through the city by car. The official images, produced to publicize Brasília, explored the iconography and the plastic expression of the modernist architecture, as well as the presence of speed, machines and cars.

In scenes of films produced in the first decade after the capital's inauguration, such as *Brasília, planejamento urbano* [Brasília, urban planning], by Fernando Cony Campos (1964), and *Brasília: contradições de uma cidade nova* [Brasília, contradictions of a new city], by Joaquim Pedro de Andrade (1967), there is a noticeable concern in exhibiting the traffic of vehicles and the organization and sectoral distribution of the city, showing it as an organism resulting from a thorough and precise planning. In addition, the capital's symbolic buildings are praised, while touring the city by car or aircraft, and the voice-over presents it to the spectator, probably a non-resident. The presence of movement and speed in the trajectories through the city is part of the representation of modernity in the cinematographic discourse.

Another outstanding feature of the 1960s and 1970s films about Brasília, influenced by the Brazilian movement *Cinema Novo* [New Cinema], is the concern with showing the reality of construction workers and the segregation of space that was established since the beginning of the territory's occupation. As narrated in *Brasília, contradictions of a new city*, construction workers – who travelled for roughly three hours to/from the satellite towns, criticized for being actually used as dormitory towns – were portrayed in scenes inside buses at the central bus station, representing the “founding imaginary of the new capital that feeds itself from the country's contradictions”, as pointed by Tânia Montoro (2012, p. 200).

However, in 1964, the military coup gradually established censorship and some subjects were no longer addressed. In the post-1964 films, the focus shifted to the urban middle classes, particularly to the situation of intellectuals and artists. The films of this period, such as *Terra em transe* [Entranced Earth], by Glauber Rocha (1967), and *Os herdeiros* [The Heirs], by Cacá Diegues (1969), still strongly linked to *Cinema Novo*, tended to be extremely pessimistic in their reflections about the failure of the progressive movement, the impotency of intellectuals and the threatening future of Brazilian politics. At that moment, there were in the Brazilian arts the movements *Tropicália* [Tropicalism] and *Neoconcreto* [Neoconcrete], both frustrated by the installation of the dictatorial regime. *Cinema Novo*, due to its possibility of internationalization, followed a trajectory of “institutionalization” with the

co-optation of its language for the strengthening of a national identity. Other movements also took to portraying life in Brazilian cities, such as *Cinema Marginal* [Marginal Cinema] and a subjective-existentialist cinema from European influence, as for example the works of filmmakers Walter Hugo Khouri and Gerson Tavares, both of them fond of the Italian Neorealism and French Nouvelle Vague cinematography.

Under the dictatorial repressive control, in 1965, aiming to create the Course of Cinema at the University of Brasília, Pompeu de Souza, director and founder of the Faculty of Communication, invited Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes, Jean-Claude Bernardet and Nelson Pereira dos Santos, all with well-established careers, to form the first higher education filmmaking course in Brazil. In this context, *Fala Brasília* [Speak up Brasília], by Nelson Pereira dos Santos (1966), was the first film made at the Filmmaking Course; it could be considered as a “Manifesto of the *Candango* Culture” for producing a summary of the different accents heard in the city as a result of the recent migration flow of people from various Brazilian states.

For Montoro, during the 1960s, when Brasília had become a reality, cinema reflected its melting pot of different discourses, influences and resistances. The filmography on the city contemplated, at the same time, the ideological discourse of the newsreels; the utopian effervescence of Darcy Ribeiro’s dream for the University of Brasília; the intellectual movement around the creation of the Filmmaking Course at the University of Brasília; and the sociological denouncement that involved the Cinema Novo movement, in which Brasília had an outstanding participation.

When analysing the ensemble of films produced during the sixty years of Brasília’s existence, one can state that the cinema about the city testifies the attempt to create a landscape and the recognition of the identity of a city with great symbolic capital. Brasília’s filmic landscapes are built in the intersection of historical facts, the community’s ordinary life, promises and dreams, fictions and criticism. The condition of its landscape, therefore, is in these multiple temporalities: “The memory linked to the desire to dwell and the promise of something permanent in the face of the anxiety and the feeling of homelessness imposed by the modern world” (Saboia; Trevisan, 2021, p. 2).¹

A specific trait unites several films of Brasília’s first decade, when there was a multiplication of cinematographic productions – both documentary and fiction – paying tribute to the city, films praising the grandiosity of the utopian achievement or its urban qualities, reactivating the imaginary of the Eldorado, narratives full of hope for the opportunity of a new life. To have an idea of how the city stimulated the imaginary of filmmakers, from 1957 to 1960 there were as many as twelve films with the word “Brasília” on the title. Most of this production, as the titles

1 T.N.: Free translation for all citations in the text from references in Portuguese.

testify, is either enthusiastic or fascinated films, commissioned, funded or stimulated in some way by the State, or uses excessively patriotic discourse by local producers.

Quite often, these films seem to reiterate the argument of Thomas Elsaesser (2018) about cinema operating as media close to publicity, pervaded by all sorts of ideology. Surely, there is a certain parallel between this specific trait of films about Brasília and what Dianne Harris (2011) states about architectural photography used as ideological publicity media in the USA in the 1960s. In the same way as the cinematographic discourse on Brasília, the North American photography also served to convince the public about the transforming capacity of modern architecture and was especially useful to “sell architecture as a lifestyle” (Harris, 2011, p. 18). Amidst the publicity and almost pamphleteering tone of several films of the time, there is, however, one that is out of tune, which is the second fiction feature film by Gerson Tavares (1966), *Amor e desamor* [Love and unlove], thought of here as a critical discourse of the city.

LOVE AND UNLOVE AS ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM: MODERN VOIDS AND AFFECTION UNFOLDMENT

Gerson Tavares’s film was made in a context of intensive critics and debates directed at a modernism of hegemonic ideas and great paradigms. According to Sérgio Marques (2002, p. 60), “the utopias directed to the masses, [...] the unification of values, the homogenization of thoughts” were the main targets of the critics, which ultimately promoted a shift in focus: from a discourse pervaded by universal and hegemonic discourse, to a search for the meaning of the place and its identity, when the city becomes recognised also for the individual or collective experiences that it provides. To what extent is *Love and unlove* an example, in cinema, of this critical revision directed to the new city emerged from the late-modernist architecture?

The black-and-white film narrates the love encounter during one night in the life of two characters. Alberto, an architect, artist and architecture professor, interpreted by Leonardo Vilar – it is inferred that he could be a professor at the University of Brasília –, and Norma, interpreted by Leina Krespi, the wife of a civil servant, who she expects to return from a trip – possibly a diplomat or a politician. Between the initial encounter at an elegant bar of Hotel Nacional [National Hotel], the visit to Alberto’s home and breakfast in the upper platform of the central bus station of Brasília, the characters talk about love and unlove – part of the dialogue turns around Alberto’s failed relationship with Selma, interpreted by Betty Faria, who appears in mnemonic flashes during the conversation.

On an apparently incidental layer of the dialogues, however, they talk about the sense of displacement that both feel in relation to Brasília – part of the dialogue, in this case, is about the need they both feel of fleeing

the city and returning to Rio de Janeiro or any other metropolis “where things happen”. “Goodbye, Brasília! My liberation. Two years away, at least! Conferences, trips, enough of this, I’ve had it!” boosts the professor of some course that will soon take him to Europe (22’31”). Having migrated to Brasília – possibly both originally from Rio de Janeiro – because of job circumstances in his case, and in her case to accompany her husband, they affirm the boredom and the sterility of the city. “Nothing happens here, it’s amazing, everything is still”, Norma laments (12’35”).

Drawing on a formalist and sociological analysis, James Holston (1993, p. 31) states that this is a usual discourse of that time:

The first generation of immigrants to the newly inaugurated Brasília [...] created the term “*brasilitis*” to describe the impact of Brasília as a trauma [...]. The negative aspects of “*brasilitis*” are linked to a rejection of de-familiarising intentions comprised in the conception of Brasília. These immigrants not only considered the similar façades as monotonous; they also thought that standardization did not produce equality, but rather anonymity among the inhabitants. They complained that the absence of streets and street corners eliminated something they liked in cities, the gathering of people. Brasília seemed cold to them, without the excitement of the streets. Although the spatial separation of functions – work, dwelling, leisure and traffic – produced clarity in the urban organization, at the same time it reduced the use of space. From this viewpoint, they used the term “*brasilitis*” to refer to their feelings in relation to a daily life destitute of the pleasures of life – distraction, talks, flirtations and small rituals – found in the streets of other Brazilian cities.

It is noticeable in Holston’s text the mention to a lexicon characteristic of a subjective investigation, using terms such as “feelings”, “trauma”, “monotony” and “pleasure”. In this sense, Mário Pedrosa’s texts on Brasília, written in 1959, when the city had not been inaugurated yet, nor had been occupied or experienced by the new residents; James Holston’s criticism of the city and its utopia, publicised in the 1990s; and, above all, Clarice Lispector’s restlessness about Brasília’s artificiality, written in 1970, all of these writings help to perceive the differences and similarities between the conceived city and the lived city. These texts try to understand the human being who occupied the city in the early years, operating as a criticism of the city by confronting the universalistic planification of the project and the cultural differences, the different life stories, the *candangos*’ expectations, hence, texts that address a vast universe of emotions disregarded by the utopian project.

Beyond the exaltation of the original project’s qualities and the excessively patriotic enthusiasm around the inauguration, it is necessary

to understand the *Stimmung* [in German] or atmosphere of this historical moment when people came to Brasília. After the enthusiasm of the inauguration, during the 1960s – not only because of the 1964 military coup – the city started to be occupied under a state of crisis that the critical revision of the modern movement had initiated. *Love and unlove* pioneers an attempt to understand this state of crisis and its reflections on the emotional condition of the inhabitants/characters. Filming daily life in the early years of newly inaugurated Brasília, its *mise-en-scène* seemed seduced to understand the city’s voids, made evident in the outdoor takes showing characters in front of large, still unbuilt areas, but also made evident in the wide interiors occupied by stylish furniture, rather than by human presence, and almost hyper-dimensional due to the camera perspective and framing (Figure 1).



Figure 1: General plan of the lobby of Hotel Nacional where Alberto and Norma first meet again (3'59").

The function conferred to Brasília’s void is present in all four scales created by Lucio Costa, namely, bucolic, residential, gregarious and monumental. These scales are partially related to the four functions of the modern city of Le Corbusier/Charter of Athens: living, working, recreation and transport. The void can be understood as a landscape cohesion element of the Pilot Plan, promoting an understanding of unity between the different urban expressions of the city, or as a protection membrane, preserving the city from urban expansion. The void can be considered as a key-element of the scales, permeating the totality, providing a connection between the built areas and facilitating its understanding. Mainly, the void establishes a semiotic relation in the apprehension of Brasília’s landscape.

In the city’s daily life, one observes how much these “void”, “vague”, “wandering” spaces of boredom and strange freedom are fundamental in the search of constructing a sense of place, at the same time as they produce a discomfort on the level of (non-)belonging. In the film,

Brasília's voids bring the following question: what can we understand about life in the new city and the emotions it evoked at the time of the ongoing occupation?

Not only the most explicit dialogues between the characters, but also some of their movements, reveal those emotions. The final scene of *Love and unlove* is the one that explicitly shows the relation of the subject with the void of the still predominant natural landscape and the type of affection that can emerge from it. After the night spent together, when Alberto steps out of Norma's car in the neighbourhood of Brasília Palace Hotel, by the lake, alone in the wide *cerrado* landscape, he walks in circles as if being strayed, without knowing where to go. In fact, for Carlos Teixeira (2017, p. 15), "the city is like a sea of space, a vegetal desert that ignores the advance of architecture, remaining indifferent to all undertakings that intend to occupy the territory in a conventional way". The author states that the city's void is from the order of the natural and not the constructed. Brasília is thought of as a "bush city", the work of an entropy of landscape design, where architecture performs a coadjutant role.

The spatial void instigates the characters, above all, to the desire of fleeing the city. This is evident in several of their lines: "This is why people here travel so much. I also miss the sea and the mountains", says the character Alberto (53'48"). However, the existential void and the monotony that hovers above their existences also promotes in them, unable to leave due to the circumstances, the imperative of a movement on a local scale, a movement translated into the need of transposition and fulfilment of this "expectant void" (Solà-Morales, 1995), movements of using places as alternative to boredom. This explains the dilettantism of the characters about the city (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Breakfast at the upper platform of the central bus station of *Eixo Monumental* [Monumental Axis] (70'22"). This frame is part of the general plan that starts at 69'51", showing *Setor Comercial Norte* [Commercial Sector North] and part of *Asa Norte* [North Wing], both not built yet.

The *mise-en-scène* of the film shows another revealing type of body movement: from outside to inside, from public to private, a movement that leads the characters through the city's empty avenues to the main setting of the film, Alberto's house, where they will perform the plot to its maximum subjective extension. It seems coherent, as a criticism of the restlessness emerging from the city, that the film's narrative promotes this scenic movement, *i.e.*, that the characters transport themselves to the house in search of refuge.

The choice of the scenic places, according to the film's critical logic, shows the contrast of the city's straight, clean and minimalist lines with the aesthetics of the house to where they are going. It does not seem fortuitous that the architecture of the house is not austere in terms of modernist aesthetics, not complying with Le Corbusier's concept of the house as a machine for living. Designed by Zanine Caldas, it is a modern house, but it holds historicist elements of Brazilian colonial tradition: the use of apparent wood and the veranda with eaves under the sloping roof, some references that, like in Lucio Costa, mark Zanine's works. Perhaps, in the choice of the scenery lies a sign of the film's filiation to the criticism of modernism (Figure 3).



Figure 3: The “modern handmade” house designed by Zanine, main setting of the film (53’46”).

The house is treated as the place of comfort, intimacy, almost a palliative for the malaise in the city, a sort of privileged refuge: comfortable, ample, with a fine distanced view of the Pilot Plan. However, the house is in Brasília, the city to which they will have to deal with when going back outside. Only inside the characters feel at ease to make their confessions. In the morning, on the balcony that overlooks the still empty North Wing, the two of them, before the landscape, seem to say, silently: “We must go out and face this city”.

This movement from outside to inside – a sign of criticism that can be in the selection of the scenic spaces – finds resonance in authors like Robert Venturi, who, in a post-modern attitude, retrieves historicism in architecture as criticism of modernism. In “Complexity and contradiction in architecture” that appeared in 1966, Venturi confirms the house as a place of feeling welcomed, criticising the absolute continuity and non-differentiation between inside and outside, one of the main points of the orthodoxy of the twentieth century modernism. The author defends the tradition of the building as a shelter that separates the inside from the outside. The modern house should partially reveal an inside with multiple, complex functions, but still accommodate the domestic scale and the mysteries related to the sense of privacy (Venturi, 1966).

In 1970, only four years after Gerson Tavares’ film and twenty-three before James Holston’s criticism, Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, in the chronicle “Brasília”, makes some subjective reflections about the city, which she had visited in 1962. The text, beyond Holston’s anthropological analysis or a critical viewpoint of architecture, still sounds as a pioneer in attempting to make a phenomenological apprehension of the affectivity of a person, non-native of Brasília, when confronting the city’s space to which he/she will have to adapt.

Clarice starts her chronicle, quite close to a poetics of the space à la Gaston Bachelard (Bachelard, 1957), narrating the artificiality of Brasília: “So artificial as would have been the world when it was created. When the world was created, it was necessary to create a human especially for that world”. She named “Brasiliarians” the human created for this city. In the writer’s view, the modernity that the city represents does not find a relationship between the place and its inhabitants. “Brasília does not have the human of Brasília yet”, a clear allusion to the feeling of non-belonging to the city evinced in the words and movements performed by the characters. It is legitimate, thus, the relation between the “*brasilitis*”, treated by James Holston, and the “Brasiliarians” named by Clarice Lispector: they are like Alberto and Norma, placeless subjects.

Anyhow, besides arguing that the film is a criticism of Brasília’s modernism, in consonance with Holston’s and Clarice’s writings, it could be stated that there is its own critical awareness – not only regarding the choice of the house as a scenery, thought of as a welcoming place in relation to the outdoors of the city, empty and bewildering. What other signals of this critical awareness can be perceived in the film’s stylistic of performance?

Love and unlove (1966) and *Antes, o verão* [Before, the summer] (1968), the two fiction films by Gerson Tavares, are distant from the political unrest of the period, not communicating with the socially committed works of filmmakers as Glauber Rocha, Leon Hirszman and Paulo César Saraceni, who are dominant in historiography for their relevance in the way of viewing the country’s moment. Differently from the social-anthropological realism of *Cinema Novo*, Gerson Tavares’ film be-

longs to a cinematography influenced by Sartre and Camus' existentialism, which elaborates characters marked by the anguish and malaise inherent to being in the world. Tavares' feature films followed the dangerous terrain of "interior realism" (Braga, 2021).

Most of all, the film dialogues aesthetically and thematically with the international imaginary of the Italian Neorealism and the French Nouvelle Vague – paths of modern cinema that marked a counterpoint to classical cinema. The film exercises flirtations with the contents and stylistics of *Les amants* [*The Lovers*], by Louis Malle (1958), *À bout de souffle* [*Breathless*], by Jean-Luc Godard (1960), *La Notte* [*The Night*], by Michelangelo Antonioni (1961), and *Jules et Jim* [*Jules and Jim*], by François Truffaut (1962), especially regarding the *noir* aesthetics, duration of long takes, silences, incommunicability or vacillating attempts to talk about emotions. The relationship with these references is such that it can be affirmed that *Love and unlove* was produced as a sort of Brazilian version of Antonioni's *The Night*, an "undramatic cinema" whose contents and narratives, beyond the psychological melodramatics, turn around the characters' subjectivity.

The characters of *Love and unlove*, bored with the repetitive trajectories by car determined by the rationalist city, in a Nouvelle Vague style, or loosed in the void and monotonous landscape, as in Antonioni's films, perform alternative, dilettante and ludic routes – in the Situationist sense –, movements that disarticulate a modern rationality, compensating the discomfort to which they are conditioned by the city. Perhaps one can also speculate that Alberto's unrestfulness regarding Brasília is the same as Tavares' in relation to the political-aesthetical directions of Cinema Novo, with which he did not identify himself.

One can also think that it was a style constructed from his education: Gerson Tavares was a student at the *Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia*, in Rome, the origin of the Italian cinematographic education. His contact with Michelangelo Antonioni's cinema and with Neorealism seems certain, especially regarding the use of the city's spaces as authentic sceneries – as in *Roma, città aperta* [*Rome, open city*], by Roberto Rossellini (1945) – and the treatment of the characters' subjectivity, disoriented subjects amidst the post-war ruins. Combined with this, Tavares' original education as a painter provides his two films with strictly pictorial compositions. This style of Tavares is notable in *Love and unlove*, in which the spatial appropriation of a newly inaugurated Brasília creates planes with composition lines and a geometrical rigor that reveal Antonioni as reference. Tavares' pictorial abilities helped him to compose the void landscape of the city.

Another stylistic trait of Gerson Tavares' work is also revealing: its adequacy to the North American suburban drama (Braga, 2021). In a similar way to the character of his film *Antes, o verão*, Alberto is a successful man whose house is the utmost symbol of domestic stability,

isolated as a sign of suburbanisation in the Californian style. Not only *Lago Sul* [South Lake], an affluent neighbourhood beyond the Paranoá Lake, where the house is located, functions as the typical North American suburb, but also Brasília is treated as a distant and prosperous place. *Love and unlove* shows the bourgeois lifestyle – the fashionable places where the characters go to, their liking for bohemian life and sexual adventures, the houses they live in, the signed furniture, the elegant clothes and the cars they flaunt – of part of the early privileged residents who migrated to Brasília due to work opportunities. Thus, the film's criticism of modernism is also about the criticism of the characters' lifestyle. It is symbolised, as a reflection of the sterility the city represents, in Alberto's psychological impossibility to build a family and the fact that Norma represents infidelity. The criticism is especially in the fact that their lifestyle results in subjectivities that are bored and non-belonging to the place.

The aesthetics behind the discourse of elitist suburbanisation in the USA was constructed by means of images made by architectural photographers of the time, who registered houses as film sets, placing models and design objects in strategic positions for the composition of the *mise-en-scène*. The house should appear as the place where the promise and the dream of emancipated lives would be achieved, in ambiances conceived to produce satisfaction, order and happiness, the dwelling of prosperous ways of life. With a discourse addressed to white upper-middle-class, those architectural photographic registers did not hide their elitist trait. The elegant compositions of the photographed houses, exactly like Gerson Tavares frames Alberto's house in *Love and unlove*, with the city having the function of a distant background, reaffirms the isolation culture of those middle classes in comfortable suburbs surrounded by nature.

CINEMA AS STORIES OF AFFECTION: THE NON-BELONGING IN LOVE AND UNLOVE

What makes Tavares' fiction films interesting as historical documents is that, because he did not take a stand in the political engagement of *Cinema Novo*, nor did he embark in the adventure of *Cinema Marginal* of the 1960s and 1970s, his films add to the list of those that fell into oblivion very soon after being launched. These documents usually carry smaller, non-official and forgotten stories. As a historical document, *Love and Unlove* anticipates both Holston's criticism and Lispector's phenomenological impressions, helping us to understand, by means of fiction, the relationship created between immigrated subjects and a new modernist capital.

Cinema as a legitimate source of history achieved a proliferous debate drawing on the ideas of French historian Marc Ferro, a pioneer in theorising the relation cinema-history in the article "Le film, une contre-analyse de la société?" [Film: A Counter-analysis of Society?], first

published in French in 1973. Ferro considers that historians have always disdained cinema, which reflects a negligence of the official historiographic culture regarding information that is different from writing, as for example, gestures, expressions, the unsaid, laughter, emotions, data from another reality that escape the historian's view due to sociological, ideological and technical reasons, information always presumed as useless discourse, not comprised in the historian's education, initiated into "so-called valid research techniques" (Ferro, 1975, p. 21).

As unfoldment of the expansion of epistemological fields in social sciences – including the architectural field –, the acceptance of cinema as a historical source announces a change in the statute of historians in society, with a broadening of the scope of possible documents. Not only novels, poems, theatre and cinema scripts, but also, as the investigations of Ann Cvetkovich (2003) show, today they comprise archives with ephemeral supports such as performances, visual arts installations, exhibitions and Internet sites. Historians should perceive issues that until then escaped their competence: the emotions of an epoch, abstract and subjective expressions, instead of transcribable and reportable facts. "Beliefs, desires, intentions, the imaginary of an epoch and a specific culture are as much History as History" (Ferro, 1975, p. 37).

According to Morettin, Ferro goes beyond, placing fiction cinema in advantage in relation to documentary cinema. The opposition between fiction and documentary, based on their relations with reality, should be relativized by the historian, who must be willing to analyse all types of films, because both genres are capable of capturing a "reality index" as historical documents (Morettin, 2003).

On the one hand, the film seems to evoke, on the image level, the factual; on the other hand, it presents itself, in all senses of the word, as a manipulation [...]. Which supposed image of reality does it provide [...]? Of which reality is cinema the true image? (Ferro, 1975, p. 6).

The objectivity of the documentary and its guarantee of immediate relation with reality would be associated with the neutrality of the viewpoint and the impersonal narrative of the filmmaker. However, according to Ferro, whether it is a documentary or a fiction film, there is always a mobilizer point of view of the narrative/narrator, which prevents the intended historical distancing and the narrator's discursive neutrality. "The ideology of a film is more transparent through a comment [of the order of fiction] than through interviews, because it [ideology] is masked behind the truth required in the testimony [of the order of documentary]" (Ferro, 1975, p. 9).

With the information that the director places in the film – apparently unimportant objects on the scene; gestures, silences and social behaviour in the actors' interpretation –, a fiction film brings "a whole sort

of information of the same nature as the documentary, even if it does not have the same function in both types of film” (Ferro *apud* Morettin, 2003, p. 24).

Ferro argues that fiction cinema is a complementary way to history performed by writing and traditional supports of documentation and memory. It is about a type of archive that works with what is not shown, with the invisible aspects of a society.

In the film there are lapses all the time, because the reality that is wished to be represented does not actually hide a reality that is independent of the author’s will [...]. The film produces a tension of its own, [...] the camera discovers the secret [...] takes off the mask, shows the reverse of a society, its lapses (Ferro *apud* Morettin, 2003, p. 14).

The objectivity of fiction cinema is, therefore, of the order of subjectivity, which opens the possibility to think of filmic archives in other terms. The analysis of a fiction film, supposedly distant from reality, reveals an abstracted reality in the film and not the reality that the film represents – *i.e.*, the unexpected, involuntary part of the story, the creator’s lapses, the concordances with and discordances from an ideology, the latent behind the apparent and, equally, an entire field of emotions and affections. The fiction film, particularly in its encounter with architecture and its intimacy with the field of subjectivity, has a proximity with what Ann Cvetkovich (2003, p. 8) named “unorthodox archives”.

Beatriz Colomina (1994), in consonance with Cvetkovich, argues for an expansion of the notion of archive based on the transformation of the field of architecture and its production, no longer exclusively centred on designing and constructing, but rather oriented by an expanded field of architecture resulting from the enlargement of its epistemological field. When analysing the parallelism of the histories of cinema and the modern city, the author proposes that we think about architecture itself as a medium. The building – the constructed architecture – should be understood in the same terms as design, photography, written texts, publicity and cinema. Not only because these are media on which architecture is evident, but because the building and the city, as much as these other forms of archive, are “representation mechanisms of immaterial fields”.

The abstract field of affections probed in the film *Love and unlove* refers both to the style of the “cinema of affections” and to the notion of “archive of feelings” elaborated by Cvetkovich (2003). According to this author, archives of feelings are repositories of feelings and emotions: the many forms of love, rage, pain, shame, and affections caught in the various archives, specifically of the LGBT culture, which the author investigates in CDs, theatre plays, pamphlets, performances and exhibitions.

Cvetkovich explicitly relates diaspora and emigration as traumas that are at the origin of the feeling of non-belonging. The author reflects

about the notion of trauma in a distanced way from the pathologising medical discourse, to place it as a type of event of tension and malaise, producer of “bad affections”. Exactly as in the case of the characters of *Love and Unlove*, who feel in exile for having to be in Brasília due to family or professional circumstances. In this sense, the film can be thought of as an archive of affections that tells the story of the sentiment of rootlessness in relation to the place, the newly inaugurated Brasília.

Therefore, it is in the wake of the theorisation on architectural films as archives of affections that the following aspects are proposed about *Love and Unlove*: non-belonging, boredom and apathy are a reality index about a non-visible aspect of the society at the time, a feeling shared by subjects who migrated to Brasília. These bad affections, produced by the trauma of going to Brasília, emerge from the relation of the characters with the newly founded city. The film operates as a sort of counter-analysis of modern architecture’s history, because it hints at the new capital, still in the 1960s, as a psychosocial urban space that produces such affections – insofar as the city’s voids seem to invade the characters, their existential voids mirror the city’s void.

Such perceptions can only be inferred drawing on the sense that emerges from the film’s structure, which is on the formal relation of the subjects – the characters – with the spaces captured on the image, spaces treated as sceneries. Marc Ferro states that the historian should face the issue of the filmic analysis and the form analysis as a method. This means not isolating the work from its context, in the sense of unveiling the ideological projects with which the film dialogues; it means redoing the trajectory of the narrative to evince the film’s movements of thought (Ferro, 1975, p. 38-40).

It is in this sense that the ideology caught in many films of that time (films about Brasília as an accomplished utopia, a new modern city, organized, attractive and full of opportunities) is consonant with the ideology manifested on the male character’s bourgeois lifestyle (a professor at the university, living at Lago Sul district, in a house designed by renowned Zanine Caldas, a convinced bachelor and a bohemian); divergent, however, from real life, lived daily facing the empty landscape or in the inside spaces filled with design furniture, but equally empty of human presence.

Drawing on this paradox imposed by the Brasília lived in, there are still some conjectures suggested by *Love and Unlove*: would Brasília and the boring privileges of a lifestyle enabled by the city have become a sort of “golden cage” for the immigrated subjects? To what extent the findings provided here did not represent a shared affective reality? Can one speculate that these shared affections are recurrent feelings in the relationship established between the immigrated and the city?

Archives of affections document moments when affection is explicit in the actors’ lines, or moments when it is not possible to translate

feelings into words and they are abstracted through silence, by what is unsaid. The affections found in those archives can be generalized: “Its feelings can belong to one nation or many, and they are both intimate and public. They can make one feel totally alone, but in being made public, they are revealed to be part of a shared experience of the social” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 286).

Besides *Love and Unlove*, how many other non-official documents, equally forgotten, could have registered in silent photographic images or in letters, unknown literatures, recorded testimonies or homemade films, the same feeling: the void of the urban landscape internalised as an original trauma, externalised in the way of exile in relationship to the Brasília of the early years?

The first films by José Eduardo Belmonte, a recognized filmmaker educated in Brasília, are about understanding the city and detecting the common trait in the characters, the identity of the city’s residents as “a people who miss their native land”.

I came very young, in the early 1970s, because my father chose to be transferred to Brasília. He brought the family along and we stayed. There was a lot of discomfort from part of the family, because it was a city under construction. The news arrived with much delay, few cultural options, away from the sea (my family comes from Rio de Janeiro); all dry, empty. As a child, I felt the echo of this discomfort, but in fact, as I had no previous reference, this view of the world in Brasília was my first definition. At the same time that I felt a melancholy for the exile, I also felt great freedom. [...] The sky and the permanent wide view of the horizon. I think that this friction between melancholy and the possibilities of the novelty stimulated my imagination and led me very early to the arts (Daehn, 2020).

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BUILDING IMAGES: BRASÍLIA'S CONSTRUCTION SITE ON THE PAGES OF BRASÍLIA AND MANCHETE MAGAZINES (1957-1960)

Ciro Miguel



Figure 1: Newspaper kiosk.

Source: FONTENELE, Mário. Newspaper Kiosk. Photograph (Arquivo Público do Distrito Federal, Brasília). ca. 1957-1960.

A black and white photograph found in the public archive of Brasília shows an ordinary urban scene, four kids in front of a wooden structure resembling a kiosk. This humble construction was probably located in

the so-called Cidade Livre [Free City], the tax-free commercial zone in Brasília's construction site. On its shelves were soaps, medicines, cigarettes, matches, and on its doors, several magazines. Poorly framed, the photograph was perhaps discarded and forgotten. A similar structure appears in an image published on the Brazilian illustrated magazine *Manchete*, with construction workers gathering around it, flipping magazine pages. Ignoring the builders' high rate of illiteracy, the caption underneath celebrates the expansion of printed media and modern publishing to the remote construction site: "it is already possible to buy on the first newsstand publications from all over Brazil" (*Manchete*, 1960, p. 19 – free translation).

The American philosopher Susan Sontag once wrote that "a society becomes 'modern' when one of its chief activities is producing and consuming images" (Sontag, 1978, p. 153). In Brazil's far-away hinterland, next to piles of red earth, steel, bricks and cement, the arrival of modernity was embodied by the constant presence of a multitude of cameras, photographs and illustrated magazines. This paper argues that through the material encounter between modern photojournalism and Brasília, its frenetic construction site was transformed into a mass-media stage, choreographed to be photographed and transportable to illustrated magazines' pages. Photojournalists on site were the vanguard sent by newsrooms thousands of kilometres away, shooting photographs that would require several intermediaries to be accessible to the public: editors, journalists, politicians, films and printers.

The ensemble of these mass distributed images composed visual narratives that dramatized and amplified Brazil's modernization project and its symbolic modernist "architecture on a larger scale" (Kubitschek; Pinto, 2009, p. 52 – free translation). Simultaneously, they also challenged the static image of Brazilian architecture, foregrounding hidden actors and exposing geopolitical intentions. Using archival photographs, oral history, newspapers and magazines, this paper advances the idea of "modern architecture as mass media" (Colomina, 1994, p. 15), following the intricate network of image construction by media tycoons, technologies, photojournalists and architecture.

ONLY DUST AND MUD

During his initial flights from the capital Rio de Janeiro to Brasília's construction site in 1957, President Juscelino Kubitschek invited the influential journalist Murilo Melo to accompany him. After four and a half hours on board of a DC-3 airplane (Bloch, 1978, p. 107), with a stop in Belo Horizonte, they finally landed on a bare earth airstrip in Brasília. The invitation was strategically orchestrated by the government to persuade Melo about Brasília. He was one of the founders of the prominent illustrated magazine *Manchete* in 1952, and chief editor of *Tribuna da Imprensa's* political section, a newspaper that was notorious for its fierce opposition to Kubitschek.

Wearing a jacket and boots, and riding a Rural Willys Jeep, it was Juscelino Kubitschek himself who showed Murilo Melo the future locations of the capital's main public square, the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate, the presidential Palace, and the Supreme Court. The journalist was appalled, "I looked, and I could only see dust and mud" (Melo Filho, 1998, p. 15 – free translation).

After his visit, Melo foresaw the journalistic opportunity and Brasília's business potential to *Manchete's* owner Adolpho Bloch, his brother, the director Oscar Bloch and the editor-in-chief Arnaldo Niskier. From then on, *Manchete's* photo essays would not only support Brasília's construction, but also make it visible to a mass audience. In 1998, Murilo Melo declared that, at that specific moment, the role of printed media had the potential to transform Brasília's construction into a widely shared experience:

How many Brazilians were we then? Fifty million? How many had the chance to go to Brasília to see if this was for real or not? Eight hundred, five hundred? It was difficult to fly, and even more difficult to stay in a hotel because there were none. So, we started to show the works in Brasília every week (Melo Filho, 1998, p. 16 – free translation).

PRESS MACHINES

Published on April 26, 1952, the editorial of *Manchete's* first number showcased a black and white photograph of a 4-colour offset printing press Webendorfer. The ostentatious display of the machinery up-front indicated that *Manchete* was an illustrated magazine produced by professional printers. The editorial proudly highlighted the printing expertise of the Bloch family, who emigrated from Ukraine to Rio de Janeiro in 1917:

After thirty years working as printers, we decided to condense the results of our technical experience into a weekly magazine, gathering a team of first-rate writers, journalists, photographers and illustrators to make the most of it. *Manchete* was born at the exact moment in which we considered that we were equipped to deliver to Brazil a magazine of current events, correctly and modernly printed (Manchete, 1952, p. 1 – free translation)

It was not a particularly extraordinary start. As former *Manchete* editors recalled:

The magazine was an industrial consequence, not a planned or thought-out cause. Always attuned to the modernization of his printing facilities, Adolpho

Bloch had powerful machines. Even though he was overloaded with orders – from labels, posters, leaflets, to industrial packaging – [...] with the market driven by the post-war economic boom, the print shop was idle on Saturdays and Sundays. The businessman Adolpho Bloch [...] accepted the challenge of turning on the presses full time and publishing an illustrated magazine (Gonçalves, 2008, p. 27 – free translation).

Colourful, dynamic, and emphasizing high-quality printing, *Manchete* was designed to compete with *O Cruzeiro*, an established illustrated magazine founded in 1928. *O Cruzeiro* was part of the mighty news conglomerate *Diários Associados*. It was owned by media tycoon Assis Chateaubriand, an influential figure in the political scene and the arts, being close to former president Getúlio Vargas and founder of the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, designed by the architect Lina Bo Bardi. Produced in a building custom-designed by the architect Oscar Niemeyer, *O Cruzeiro* published 500 thousand copies per week, had a large distribution, and lots of advertisements. It was a difficult competitor to beat.

However, against all odds, *Manchete*'s sales kept rising (Gonçalves, 2008, p. 30). Only five years after the first issue, on May 5, 1957, *Manchete* published a self-congratulatory photo essay entitled “Manchete towards the Future” (Manchete, 1957, p. 8-9 – free translation). The reportage referred to the opening of their newly built installations, a 40,000 square metre press facility in a northern neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro. Despite being attended by more than two-thousand people, including high-rank politicians, journalists, artists and celebrities, the magazine once again highlighted its new machinery: an enormous state-of-the-art German Frankenthal press, capable of producing 800,000 copies of multicolour magazines a day.

Coinciding with the beginning of Brasília's construction, the inauguration of the printing facility echoed the mediatic celebration of factories, power plants and machines as symbols of the industrial progress promoted by Kubitschek's administration. For Adolpho Bloch, a supporter of modernization and Kubitschek's Target Plan, success was measured in Kilowatts: “When we arrived in Brazil, the first machine we bought could work with a motor or a crank... Now, we have installed 6,000 kW... How this country has grown!” (Bloch, 1978, p. 210 – free translation).

The high number of publications coming from Bloch's facilities, such as *Manchete*, *Fatos e Fotos*, *Jóia*, and the state-sponsored *Brasília* magazine, effectively created a sort of instant “architectural experience” (Carpo, 2017, p. 13) on the scale of the nation. Frankenthal's superior printing capacity was fundamental to improving the publicity and communication of the new capital to the mass public: one exclusive

number of *Manchete* about Brasília, for instance, sold 760,000 copies in just 48 hours (Siqueira; Murilo, [n.d.]).

In 1960, an editorial celebrated the success of sales and the approximation between *Manchete* and Kubitschek: “The president himself, receiving from the hands of the editor Adolpho Bloch a copy of the magazine, enthusiastically commented: ‘My congratulations and thank you very much [...] it was the best thing you could do for me and my government’” (Martins, 1960, p. 3 – free translation).

MANCHETE AND BRASÍLIA GREW UP TOGETHER!

In contradiction to the official accounts and discourses by Juscelino Kubitschek, there was, in actuality, no popular demand for Brasília (Rodrigues, 1990). In a fragile political scenario in Brazil, with uprisings and a recent military revolt in the Amazon against the government, the bold fantasy of transferring the capital to a new modernist city and colonizing the interior territory seemed, above all, as an attempt to pursue stability internally and geopolitically. In the post-war context, with the financial support of the United States, the occupation of Brazil’s “resource-frontier” (Tsing, 2003) through industrial technologies meant not only the exploitation of natural resources, but also the eradication of poverty, and the fear of communist guerrillas (Long, 2015, p. 25-73).

Because Kubitschek’s political reputation relied heavily on “material things that people could see” (Maram, 1990, p. 42), such as roads, factories and prestigious architectural works, modernist architecture was the opportunity to enhance his popularity and unify a fragmented society. Kubitschek “sensed the appeal of building a new capital, Brasília [...] the symbol of Brazil’s ability to build a strong, developed, and prosperous nation” (Maram, 1990, p. 39). As the Getúlio Vargas government had done before, Kubitschek also tacitly promoted a close association between modernization and modernism. As Holston (1989, p. 94-95) writes:

As modernism was the innovative force in architecture and planning, developmentalists found an elective affinity between modernist design and their own project of modernization. As an aesthetic, modernism was the style that best symbolized the innovative spirit of their programs; as a doctrine of development, it appealed to their desire to transform society radically through an exercise of state power at its centre.

For the mobilization of this modern public, established by the circulation of printed news, the government crafted the belief of an imaginary modern nation on mass media through Niemeyer’s heroic moder-

nist architecture under construction. This was achieved with mediatized representations of a gigantic construction site in the country's "desolated" interior. As such, "architecture was recruited for its power to work against abstraction and disembodiment, [...] as an emblem of communal unity" (Wittman, 2008, p. 4). The printed images of Brasília under construction on *Manchete* not only generated a sort of shared collective feeling in favour of the capital, but also sold magazines. With a whole department dedicated to photojournalism and its own photographic laboratory, *Manchete* promoted an extensive, exclusive, and optimistic visual coverage of the construction site with first-rate photojournalists such as Nicolau Drei, Gervásio Baptista and Jankiel Gonczarowska. The strategy to have a branch office with Murilo Neves and photojournalist Jäder Neves on-site proved to be a success. As Adolpho Bloch (1975, p. 58 – free translation) recalled:

Every week they sent me great reports on the progress of the city. Therefore, millions of Brazilians learned to admire the new capital. We were fortunate to believe in Brasília from its very first moment. *Manchete's* circulation increased. Each new Palace, each new avenue [...] made the editions sell out quickly. Brasília and *Manchete* grew together.

Brasília represented a unique business and journalistic opportunity to overcome its main competitor. *O Cruzeiro* was the leading magazine in the market and, for political reasons, mostly ignored Brasília's construction site (Muggiati *apud* Santos; Oliveira, 2013). Bloch, on the other hand, after seeing some photographs of the ongoing construction, wrote: "I was thrilled. Thousands of *candangos* working day and night, building the new capital Brasília was much criticized. I saw in it the awakening of the giant. We bought the cause of Brasília and Brazil's development. It was at this moment that *Manchete* became a national magazine" (Bloch, 1977, p. 22 – free translation). Endorsing Brasília, and the capacity of Niemeyer's architecture to mobilize public interest, *Manchete* became an official part of Kubitschek's presidency (Muggiati, 2017). From the first mass on-site to the sumptuous inauguration, *Manchete* amplified the new capital's epic screenplay with small stories, photo essays, and full editions dedicated to the construction. It was a symbiotic relationship. While Brasília depended on *Manchete's* spectacular reports, *Manchete* depended on Brasília.

On-site, the photojournalists followed the magazine's demand for photo essays, mosaic narratives composed of photographic reproduction, words, and graphic design. This commercial format, perfected by *Life* magazine in the 1930s, was based on many photographs that would be later assembled by an editorial team. The result would be achieved through several manipulations of the photographic material, which would not necessarily include the photographer, such as developing, editing, framing, sequencing, and captioning. William Hicks, legend-

ary *Life* editor, once wrote: “Photojournalism is made up of a group of complexes [...] the photojournalist [...] is not, strictly speaking, one individual, but three: the photographer, the writer, and the editor” (Hicks, 1973, p. 7).

In 1959, with the advances of Brasília’s construction and *Manchete*’s exponential growth, Adolpho Bloch brought in a new photo editor to improve the magazine’s aesthetic. With a cinematic approach, Justino Martins was a former collaborator who was specially hired to update *Manchete*’s visual content, select the photographic material, and increase sales. Attuned to high-quality publications in Europe such as *Paris Match*, Martins suggested many changes to Bloch’s publication:

I had to tinker with everything, making it a modern, different publication... I started by improving the photo selection and preparation of the layout, I implanted more journalistic aggressiveness in *Manchete*. It was aesthetic beauty plus good information (Niskier, 2012, p. 117 – free translation).

Because of his distaste for long texts, Martins favoured lavishly illustrated photo essays with full-page reproductions, colour images, and impactful typography, elevating Brasília’s imagery to a new status.

Manchete’s full support brought Adolpho Bloch close to Juscelino Kubitschek. Bloch, a self-made man who shared the confidence about Brazil’s industrial future, admired Kubitschek’s audacious personality and megalomaniac projects. Their connection was such that, during the presidential campaign, Bloch even crafted the famous slogan “50 years [of progress] in 5”, to describe Kubitschek’s Target Plan, of which Brasília was the main symbol. Due to Kubitschek’s close collaboration with Oscar Niemeyer, Bloch also became closer to the architect, publishing favourable articles about his work, and later becoming an important client.

It was known that there was a large-scale State-sponsored propaganda initiative using all means necessary to promote the image of a modern Brazil in printed media, including paid articles in several magazines and newspapers (Rodrigues, 1990, p. 94). Still, Adolpho Bloch always denied any sort of financial compensation from Kubitschek: “I thought the work was so grandiose that it was *Manchete* who should pay the government to be able to publish this report” (Bloch, 1978, p. 22). However, the close relationship between political power and mass-media press in Brazil was part of the game. Samuel Wainer (2003, p. 3621 – free translation), the media mogul behind the newspaper *Última Hora*, explained the entanglement:

As the resources obtained from newsstand sales and subscriptions were insufficient, the media had to rely on other sources of income, using their weight in public opinion as a bargaining chip. Thanks to this asset, the press barons have always maintained spe-

cial relations with the government, which both provided them with direct favours and benefited their friends – friends who knew how to repay the help they received. To secure the support of the media, or at least to prevent them from openly opposing it, the government provided newspapers and magazines with tax exemptions, subsidized dollars, facilities for importing paper, and eventually advertisements.

Similar to Adolpho Bloch, Wainer was sympathetic to Kubitschek's adventure and profited from the proximity with the president. The prosperity of construction companies in charge of Brasília's buildings transformed them into important actors in the political dispute and for the media. In exchange for continuous media support, for instance, Wainer's company was saved from bankruptcy by one of Brasília's contractors (Wainer, 2003, p. 3621). Their economic power also extended to architectural publications as key sponsors of Niemeyer's magazine, *Módulo*, a multi-lingual publication founded in 1955 to disseminate his work and Brasília to the world (Zettel, 1989).

A MASS-MEDIATIC CONSTRUCTION SITE

Brasília's construction started in February 1957 (Niskier, 2012, p. 132). Attracted by the optimistic pronouncements of President Juscelino Kubitschek on the radio, thousands of people from the impoverished Northeast region migrated to Brazil's central plateau to work on Brasília. Far from a *tabula rasa* condition, the *Cerrado* landscape, one of the richest biodiversity ecosystems on the planet (O Coração, [n.d.]), was suddenly transformed into a colossal building site. Overnight thousands of workers (known as *candangos*) and hundreds of machines began excavating trenches for infrastructural networks, performing clearings and earthmoving. It was on this "battlefield" that the photojournalists sent by magazines and photo agencies from all over the world landed to create images of the city's architecture in the making.

The continuous production and consumption of images about Brasília's construction was the result of the consolidation of photojournalism after World War II. After 1945, better and cheaper printing technologies, and the founding of influential photo agencies, exploited the profitable market of illustrated news. As the "vernacular language of the post-war world" (Bair, 2020, p. 572), photojournalism and its main vehicle, illustrated magazines, transformed the construction of Brasília into a "global media event" (Von Moos, 2007, p. 36). During the years of construction, the simultaneous effort of builders and photojournalists were inseparable. Sharing the dust, the mud, the scorching sun, and the precarious life in the frontier, their encounter on the construction site was crucial to producing the modern image of Brasília, building the new capital both physically and symbolically (Oliveira, 2006, p. 96). While

one used bulldozers and shovels, the other used cameras and airplanes. While one constructed emblematic buildings and infrastructure, the other constructed their mediatic representation, disseminating stories and visual narratives to a mass audience.

For a city conceived from scratch, located on a site insistently described by Brasília's main protagonists as a "desert", a land deemed to be devoid of humans, animals, vegetation, and culture, to build and narrate was part of the same effort. According to Lorenzo Mammi (2010, p. 99 – free translation), the construction of this history

[...] was supposed to be epically narrated. Moreover, this seems to be present, more or less consciously, in all the artists and photographers who worked on its documentation. It was not just about architectural photography, nor photojournalism: what was being built there was an essential part of the national imaginary, a new identity.

As such, they seemed to be in tune with Niemeyer's own impression: "We all felt we were on a great crusade: to build the Capital of this country" (Niemeyer, 1978, p. 43 – free translation).

The effort to produce a modern identity for Brazil, both in architecture and in the media, can be summed by the activities of the state superagency Novacap, responsible not only for the planning, administration, police force, and execution of the construction of Brasília, but also for the dissemination of information (Montenegro, 1989), with a Department of Cultural Dissemination dedicated to managing Brasília's media presence both in Brazil and abroad. They constantly distributed information to the press, financed exhibitions, lectures, films, and facilitated the access to photojournalists and journalists on the construction site. They also edited their own magazine, *Brasília*.

Novacap organized several "media events" to be registered by photojournalism, transforming the construction site into an active mediatic stage. Besides a sequence of buildings inauguration (Rodrigues, 1990, p. 34), there was an official program to sponsor the visit of illustrious intellectuals, architects and urbanists as a complimentary approach to disseminate Brasília.

Brasília's construction site, denounced by workers, historians and architects as low-tech, archaic and violent (Sousa, 1983; Ferro, 2002), was in constant contact with the media. As a mediatic stage, it affected how architecture was built, publicized, and experienced by the public.

MEDIATIC ARCHITECTURE

The first permanent buildings programmed to be constructed in Brasília in 1958 were a hotel, a church, and the president's Palace. They were strategic samples of Oscar Niemeyer's architecture and a testing laboratory for the construction of the city. As Niemeyer (1956, p. 12 – free translation) presented them on *Módulo*:

They will not be temporary buildings in the exact sense of the word: on the contrary, the idea is that they will meet all the requirements of modern technology, so that they can become a landmark or starting point for new buildings to be erected there. Only the hotel will initially be used to house those who will work on the project and official guests and will later become a tourist hotel.

Since Novacap emphasized the importance of frequent visits to the construction site, the hotel played a fundamental role. Chartered army planes would take journalists, photographers, broadcasters, academics, artists, architects, politicians, heads-of-state, and celebrities (Rodrigues, 1990, p. 85) who would stay in the hotel and tour the recently completed buildings, the ongoing work, and of course being photographed. Because the hotel was meant to be completed fast, the project was straightforward: a long horizontal prism in steel structure with an annex for services. Located outside the Pilot Plan and far from the noisy construction sites, the hotel offered generous spaces and modern comfort (Niemeyer, 1956, p. 12), designed to seduce those visiting the Central Plateau.

Next to the hotel, the presidential residency was inaugurated at the same time. With its repeated iconic columns in the main façades, the Alvorada Palace by Oscar Niemeyer immediately became the symbol of Brasília, reproduced on advertisements, official commemorative stamps, envelopes, flags, temporary pavilions, and souvenirs. The communicative power and popularity of Niemeyer's architectural image in mainstream media were such that copies of the Alvorada column infiltrated the informal building culture (Lopes, 2019, p. 184-185), fashioning a sort of “vernacular modernism” (Lara, 2009).

The Alvorada's façade is non-load bearing, in other words, the columns' functions are visual, not structural. This condition seems to be representative of the fact that Niemeyer might “have favoured in his design an architectural idiom conceived for photographic representation” (Casciato, 2007, p. 20) within commercial networks of printed media. As Niemeyer (*apud* [s.a.], 1957, p. 21) writes: “We dedicated greater attention to the columns, [...] studying them carefully in its spacing, form, and proportion, following the technique and the plastic effects we would like to achieve”. Niemeyer's working methods not only absorbed the sta-

ged architectural photographs of his buildings, but also explored their potential in mass media (Brett, 2002). In an article entitled “Imagination in Architecture” published in *Módulo*, Oscar Niemeyer (1959, p. 7 – free translation) wrote:

In designing a building, the architect is always led to imagine the work as it is intended to look when finished, placing himself mentally in the position of a visitor who is examining it carefully and critically. [...] In the palaces of Brasília, the idea of the finished work was always with me while the plans were being carried out, so that I elaborated them mentally, seeking to design forms in the function of this variable point of view of the future visitor. Hence, certain solutions were adopted for the structures, structures that have been modified plastically in the function of different points of view, to take on changing aspects, richer and more varied.

From this portion of his discourse, one could expand the concept of visitor, as not only the people on-site, but also those spectators elsewhere, seeing the building from different photographs as they flipped through the magazine pages.

In 1959, the Alvorada Palace was the stage set for a photographic advertisement campaign for a textile company on *Manchete*, anticipating the commercial appropriation of Brasília in the 1990s by global capitalism (Sunil, 2000, p. 88). Amid the dust, a “fashion operation” turned the construction site into a runway with twelve female models posing for photographer Otto Stupakoff with Niemeyer’s modernist architecture and non-native palm trees as an “aesthetic backdrop” (Sunil, 2000, p. 92). The photographs were formally arranged as a photo essay, blurring the lines between advertisement and photojournalism. According to editor Justino Martins, this campaign was such a success that, from then on, *Manchete* had more advertisers and the overall print run increased (Niskier, 2012, p. 116-117).



Figure 2: Rhodia advertisement as a photo essay in *Manchete*.

Source: *Manchete*, n. 389, 9 Oct. 1959. Available at: <http://memoria.bn.br/>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

Among the published material, one small photograph stood out from the rest. With architecture in the background, white models identified as Pamela and Anne posed next to Black unidentified workers. As a sort of “offstage” photograph, both the clothing and racial contrast seem to illustrate the social and spatial division of modernity. While the well-dressed models seem to fit the brand-new modernist space, as “ornaments to the architectural jewels of Oscar Niemeyer” (Martins, 1959, p. 49 – free translation), the Black skin workers in dusty clothes appear incompatible with the glowing white architecture. Reinforcing the illusion of the construction site as a period of equality, Niemeyer (1961, p. 35) wrote with nostalgia:

With the change of the capital, Brasília changed a lot. We see with regret that the atmosphere has been completely transformed, losing that human solidarity that used to distinguish it, that gave us the im-

pression of living in a different world, the new and just world we always wanted, at that time we lived as a large family, without prejudices and inequalities. We lived in the same houses, ate in the same restaurants, and went to the same entertainment places. Even our clothes were similar. We were united by a climate of fraternisation arising from identical discomforts.

While Oscar Niemeyer ignored the racial question, the photograph, on its own, seems to confirm Brasília's exclusivity, and Black writer Carolina Maria de Jesus notes in her diary ([1957] 1996, p. 78 – free translation): “I heard that in Brasília no Black people will enter [...]”.

BRASÍLIA'S GROUND ZERO ON *BRASÍLIA*, THE MAGAZINE

The Frankenthal press machine owned by the Bloch family printed not only *Manchete*, but also many other magazines. Among them, there was *Brasília*, a state-owned publication with around 6,000 copies distributed free of charge in universities, events, and Brazilian embassies (Brasília, [n.d.]).

First published in 1957, *Brasília* was the result of a national law that required a monthly bulletin about contracts and administrative acts of Brasília's construction. Instead of a bureaucratic document, Novacap decided to explore the mediatic possibilities of editing their own illustrated magazine. According to the first issue's editorial, it was “[...] convenient to add to the bulletin, to which the law refers, some initial pages, with the usual and common magazine format, and printed in them a news item, mainly photographic, on the progress of the construction of the new capital [...] to keep the public always informed of what is being done and what we intend to do” (Brasília, Jan. 1957, p. 1 – free translation). As Stanislas von Moos (2007, p. 36) comments, “Brasília, the city and *Brasília*, the magazine, are a powerful reminder that architectural history, in the last fifty years, perhaps more than ever, is also media history”.

The photographic reports from the construction site on *Brasília* were done by Mário Fontenelle. Formerly a mechanic of the presidential airplane, he became the Novacap's official photojournalist after receiving two 35mm Leica cameras as a gift from the president and vice president (Cavalcante, 1988, p. 10). Differently from the educated and detached photographers from Europe, generally trained in art or architecture schools, Fontenelle did not see himself far from the *candango* condition (Cavalcante, 1988, p. 15). He was self-taught and from humble origins in the Northeast, like most of the workers.

As the magazine production advanced, architect Oscar Niemeyer would have a final word on the layout and visual content, and even design a few covers. Because Niemeyer disliked Fontenelle's images, complaining that the chosen angles were not the ones he wanted (MON-

TENEGRO, 1989), the magazine would also include images by French photographer and free-lancer Marcel Gautherot. A long-time collaborator and a friend, Gautherot knew the architect's favourite angles and types of the sky (Montenegro, 1989) and, therefore, was commissioned by Niemeyer himself to photograph Brasília (Espada, 2016, p. 16). As Niemeyer put it:

For many years, Marcel Gautherot was our favourite photographer [...]. How well we got along and together we laughed, satisfied, with this old and dear companion! And the photos he took [...]. How Marcel knew how to find the adequate points of view, the contrasts of the architecture that he understood so well (Niemeyer *apud* Titan Junior; Burgi, 2001, p. 7 – free translation).

Hired to perform as an architectural photographer in Brasília, Marcel Gautherot would sometimes go off-script. He extensively photographed impoverished wooden settlements around the official Pilot Plan. This material, possibly deemed ugly by Niemeyer himself, was not published at the time (Angotti-Salgueiro, 2014, p. 57).

Fontenelle's material formed the bulk of Novacap's main photographic archive. Besides *Brasília*, his photos were also distributed to many other magazines, including architectural ones, both in Brazil and abroad. As well as being the main photographer of Brasília's early years, Fontenelle was a key figure *en chantier*. With the experience of wandering around such an enormous territory with construction sites far from each other, Fontenelle was the native guide and local informant for many visiting photographers and photojournalists invited by Novacap (Bizerra, 2022).

Unlike Niemeyer, Lucio Costa seemed to understand Fontenelle's photojournalistic gaze. Because Costa decided not to be at the construction site, it was through magazines and Niemeyer's correspondences that he followed the construction from his office in Rio de Janeiro. In his biography, Lucio Costa wrote that Fontenelle's photographs "[were] precious because they registered the first moments of this contemporary adventure that was to build Brasília in the solitude of the Cerrado" (Costa, 1997, p. 329 – free translation). One of these early photographs that impressed Costa was the "crossing of the monumental avenue with the road axis", published on *Brasília* (1957). Shot from an airplane, it was a precise interpretation of Costa's hand-drawn sketches for Brasília's masterplan, "two axes crossing at right angles" carved by bulldozers. If Costa's sketch gave "[...] the vague idea of Brasília [...] the basic conception that it lacked, its physical structure, its plastic form, its first visual image" (Pedrosa; Arantes, 2004, p. 396 – free translation), Fontenelle's photograph situated the cruciform shape in the existing landscape. The photographer ingeniously identified the mediatic and transcalar effect of the "sign of the cross" seen from above, cropping the photograph so

that the architectural gesture was in an unlimited space. It was through this highly symbolic image designed by Fontenelle that Lucio Costa reflected for the first time on the environmental impact that his project represented:

Fontenelle has an exceptionally good picture [of] that straight path and then the other, the curved one from the road axis. This photograph demonstrates the panic feeling I had. The project had been approved, but this was the first time I had contact with the environment. It was when I felt the scale; it seemed to be something on another scale, different from the one that I had conceived of the city, which mentally was more compact. [...] that desert, that savannah, I was terrified: My God, that's crazy, where did I get myself into (Costa, 1984, p. 1 – free translation).

Detached from its original publication, this photograph acquired a second reality on its own, a free-floating artifact that reappeared many times in Costa's work, including his biography and as a physical print on the wall of *Espaço Lucio Costa* under Brasília's Three Powers Square. Nowadays, this image by Fontenelle continues to circulate in books, magazines, lectures, blogs, and Google images illustrating all sorts of arguments about Brasília.

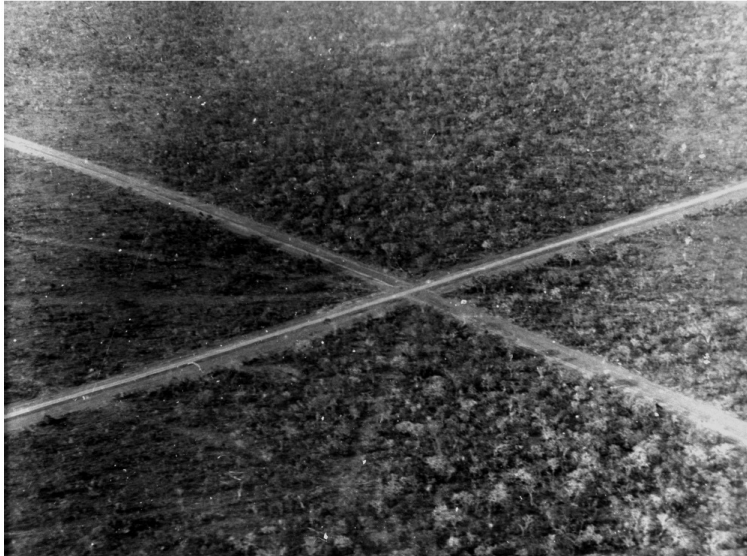


Figure 3: Brasília's axis from above.

Source: FONTENELLE, Mário. [n.t.]. Photograph (Arquivo Público do Distrito Federal, Brasília). 1957.

DARKROOM IN THE DUST

A few negatives from Mário Fontenelle's archives stand out. Although they appear to be test shots generally taken at the start or end of a film roll, these images offer an insight into the photographer's everyday life. These images detour from his official commission and register his main working space in Brasília's dusty construction site: the darkroom.¹



Figure 4: Fontenelle's darkroom.

Source: FONTENELLE, Mário. Darkroom. Photography (Arquivo Público do Distrito Federal, Brasília). ca. 1957-1960.

Installed in one of the temporary wooden dwellings destined for Nova-cap workers, the darkroom was the space where Fontenelle handled, developed, manipulated, retouched, printed, enlarged and duplicated films. Despite the improvised location, it was well-equipped with Leica Fotomac enlargers, a projector, safelight, photographic paper and chemicals.

In a passage from his diary, Fontenelle briefly describes his fast modulus operandi when Portugal's President General Craveiro Lopes visited Brasília's construction site in 1957. He wrote:

I photographed with three Leica cameras with black and white film and colour film for copying on colour slides. In Brasília I photographed the arrival at the airport, the visit to the construction site, developed and at night projected [the slides] to them next to the famous *Catetinho*. After the projection, the president [Craveiro Lopes] thanked me and said good night (Fontenelle *apud* Cavalcante, [1957] 1988, p. 130 – free translation).

¹ Because of the light-sensitivity of photographic material, the darkroom requires total darkness.

From his notes and photographs at the *Brasília's* archive, it is possible to say that while most photojournalists sent their negatives to professional labs by plane, Fontenelle shot and developed the films on-site. The images of Fontenelle's darkroom also reveal that he was probably involved in other sorts of printed material production, from photographic invitations to propping exhibition boards.

Although it is difficult to comprehend Fontenelle's opinions on the construction site only through his images, one hand-written note behind one of his photographs presents a valuable glimpse on his sensibility. Commenting a photograph of a builder carrying heavy iron bars on his shoulders, Fontenelle subverts the promotional tone of *Manchete* and *Brasília's* captions and defiantly writes: "Dr. Oscar [Niemeyer], I had this idea to ask you if you know how many tons of iron this man transported from the construction site to the final building site. Dr. Oscar, I am not kidding with you [...]"(Cavalcante, 1988, p. 74 – free translation).

A NEW IMAGE?

Up until that moment, the overall image of Brazilian modernism had been created by two highly influential publications featuring extensive photographic material from several photographers. The first was the exhibition catalogue "Brazil Builds: Architecture New and Old 1652-1942" produced by *New York's Museum of Modern Art* and photographer George E. Kidder Smith in 1943 (Espada, 2016, p. 120). The other was "Modern Architecture in Brazil", a book conceptualized by architect Henrique Mindlin as a follow-up to "Brazil Builds", published in 1956. Contrary to "Brazil Builds", "Modern Architecture in Brazil" featured material from several photographers, including renowned photojournalists who also worked for architects as architectural photographers, such as Peter Scheier, Jean Manzon, and Flavio Damm. While the images on both publications are closer to the concept of architectural photography, with geometrically composed photographs that fix the building as a sleek, autonomous entity, it is possible to identify influences of photojournalism and illustrated magazines.

In the late 1950s, claims about photojournalism's contribution to architectural representation were already circulating. In his foreword to a book on Sullivan, photographer and curator John Szakowski wrote:

In our own day, perhaps the best architectural photographs have been the casual products of the photographer-journalist, where the life that surrounds and nourishes the buildings is seen or felt. If to such an approach were added an understanding of architectural form, photography might become a powerful critical medium, rather than a superficially descriptive one (Szakowski, 1956, p. 1).

Photojournalism on *Brasília* and *Manchete* inaugurated a drastic shift in the way Brazilian modernism was being photographed and re-presented up until that moment. From a mediatic construction site, the visual vocabulary of photojournalism did not only capture the architecture in a continual state of newness, but also presented images that dealt with the context, the material reality of construction, the incompleteness and maintenance. If the finished buildings in Brasília, and its shiny iconic black and white photographs, erased all traces of labour with smooth surfaces clad in white marble (Ferro, 2003, p. 210), this new mode of representation depicted architecture in the making. Unlike architectural photography, which presented modern architecture as an autonomous entity, with a perfect climate and no people, these photographs were messier, registering traces of the material reality and labour. Debunking the modernist purity myth, wooden scaffoldings, formworks, temporary settlements, mud, dust, machines and builders were all juxtaposed, like photomontages, to the abstract forms of Oscar Niemeyer.



Figure 5: Photograph registering traces of the material reality and labour.

Source: BAPTISTA, Gervásio. Onde em 1956 era ainda a solidão deserta começa a existir uma metrópole do futuro. Brasília. Manchete, n. 387, p. 23, 19 Sept. 1959. Available at: <http://memoria.bn.br/>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

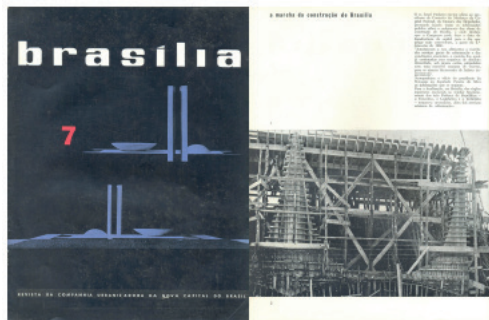


Figura 6: Revista Brasília

Fonte: Brasília, n. 7, July 1960. Available at: <https://www.arquivopublico.df.gov.br/revista-brasilia/>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

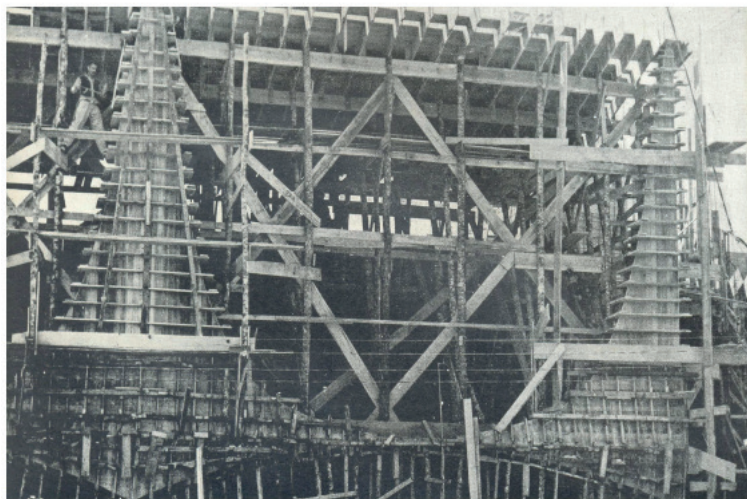


Figure 7: Photograph registering traces of the material reality and labour.

Source: FONTENELLE, Mário. Brasília, n. 7, July 1960. Available at: <http://memoria.bn.br/>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

Through the lens of photojournalism, architecture was occasionally pushed to the background, becoming a stage for stories to unfold. Photojournalism's tendency to human interest stories following visual formulas such as “disillusionment of the promised land” and “modern peasantry” (Cahn; McCombe, 1971, p. 128-132), encouraged photographers to exploit the contrast image of anonymous builders with their improvised clothes, temporary settlements, and traditional ways of living with the futuristic architecture.

While the hegemonic architectural history of Brasília ignores the workers (Jacques; Almeida Júnior, 2017, p. 480), photographs taken by photojournalists, for better or worse, registered their presence in the modern capital. However, these aestheticized images² appropriated by the press either as propaganda or a denouncement of the worker's living conditions, remove their identities, negate their experiences and active contribution to the invention of Brasília's architecture.

Recently, sixty years later, some of these archives from photojournalists have been revisited by historian Ana Flávia Guimarães Pinto in the exhibition "Reintegração de Posse: narrativas da presença Negra na construção do Distrito Federal" [Repossession: narratives of the Black presence in the Federal District's construction]. The visual material acknowledged and recovered microhistories of Black people and their role in the capital's construction (Freitas, 2019). It also exposed racial and class tensions that were suffocated under universal messages of progress.

Using photographs from *Arquivo Público do Distrito Federal*, the exhibition subverts the exploitation and commodity value of photojournalism into restitution to those portrayed. As Azoulay (2021, p. 41) puts it, "abolish [photography's] imperial rights acquired at the expense of others and make the accumulated visual wealth held in the institutions of the academy, the archive, the museum, private property, and the law into a site of repair and reparations".

BRASÍLIA AS A CONTINUOUS CONSTRUCTION SITE

Brasília was far from being completed when it was inaugurated on April 21, 1960. Its precarious state was such that it could barely be considered a capital or a city (Oliveira, 2006), but remained a construction site. While celebrated in special numbers and sumptuous photo essays on *Manchete*, *Brasília* and other illustrated magazines around the world, one could still identify images with incomplete buildings, dust, and workers moving around. Even in the photographs published in the official booklet distributed at the inaugural event, scaffoldings had not been removed yet. At the same time, newspapers critical of Brasília emphasized similar photographs of unfinished buildings, criticizing the lack of infrastructure and the dust clouds still emanating from the construction. In an interview on *Manchete*, Oscar Niemeyer (1961, p. 120 – free translation) commented:

Brasília needs to be understood within the limitations of a city under construction... Many things need to be accomplished. The neighbourhood units, for example, are not complete. Almost all of them lack indispensable additions, such as gardens, play-

2 Susan Sontag (1978, p. 112) points out: "Contrarily to what is suggested by the humanist claims made for photography, the camera's ability to transform reality into something beautiful derives from its relative weakness as means of conveying the truth".

grounds, commerce, schools, markets, and so on. Those who know Brasília's pilot plan cannot consider it inhuman, but only a city under construction.

The geographer Milton Santos (1963, p. 74 – free translation), writing three years after the inauguration, identified this incompleteness as part of Brasília, and not as a temporary condition as Niemeyer defined it:

Brasília is both a political capital and a construction site. It emerged as a construction site and continued to be, after the installation there of the Brazilian government. [...] The administrative capital and building site, these two realities – the planned reality and the real condition for the first – will contribute to giving it a character, a rhythm of life, a content. Ideally – and this was the planners' claim – the planned reality would replace the reality condition. Brasília would be more and more a voluntarily built capital city and less and less a building site. This complementary evolution, in opposite directions, could continue to mark the life of the city, if along with the two, a stronger factor of complexity would not remain: the underdevelopment of the country and all that goes with it.

After the inauguration, the media interest in Brasília's architecture declined, and Brazilian modernism was also abandoned in Brazil and abroad (Deckker, 2001, p. 2). The magazine *Brasília* discontinued soon after the inauguration. *Manchete* continued to promote photo essays of the city for the next 20 years, as an homage from Bloch to his friend Juscelino Kubitschek.

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CRITICISM OF THE CITY, NARRATIVES FOR ANOTHER URBANITY THE VISUAL UNIVERSE IN PERIODICALS AND THEIR INTELLECTUAL REFERENCES THAT CIRCULATED IN SÃO PAULO (1920-1950)

Heliana Angotti-Salgueiro

Most of us are naturally ‘visual minded’, but comparatively few of us are ‘visual worded’. There is no need, therefore, that we train ourselves in the power to receive visual images; there is every need, however, that we make some deliberate effort to train ourselves in the power to create and transmit visual images (Overstreet, 1925).

Following one of the proposals of this event, that of an “expanded dialogue”, I wish to focus my considerations on the role of visual culture (not in relation to architecture), but moving them towards urban issues and their representation in criticism texts about the city, with a retrospective view of urbanity themes and solutions proposed as from the 1920s-1930s. The problems of the modern city were already published in various media, being broadly debated and disseminated by critics who were active in that period. I am referring to Luiz de Anhaia Mello, a representative figure of urbanistic criticism, who lived in São Paulo. His texts present issues older than one thinks, formulated previously to the debates for a new city in the period between the two world wars, a period of new postures and visual experimentation, which still circulated when emerged the idea of moving the capital of Brazil.

It is known that the history of periodicals and the history of criticism are interspersed and associated in the construction of intellectual

biographies¹. In the 1990s, scholars turned to **social actors** in various areas of knowledge and in this movement of ideas, besides their trajectories inscribed in specific urban situations, and researches on their ideas and affiliations, periodicals were considered likewise privileged sources of criticism discourses from professional milieu (Jannièrè, 2002).

In this sense, my focus will be on the research I have been developing for a number of years on the **universe of visual and intellectual references** shared by Luiz de Anhaia Mello, an engineer-architect from São Paulo, a scholar who reproduced lines of thought of urbanistic criticism (especially the North-American) in his articles and conferences published in local specialised journals, revealing a transnational communication of ideas and images. (The consciousness of the power of images, a topic I will especially refer to, was a reality already in the 1920s, as Anhaia Mello makes evident in his first book, which I will comment on later).

However, I observe that the literature on the intersection of urban studies and printed images is not as rich as that of architecture and photography, in the sense that the graphic layout of periodicals on urbanism cannot be considered as “artistic” as those on architecture. The latter showed on their pages the languages of vanguard and I have written about their relationship with the forms of modern architecture, in the case of Brasília. (Here I make another parenthesis to say that in my research on Marcel Gautherot, I made unprecedented associations with Constructivism, the Nouvelle Objectivité, and the Nouvelle Vision in the photographs of Brasília, and others produced in series along this photographer’s career in Brazil. Actually, Professor Priscilla Peixoto, organizer of this event, had requested me to focus on the theme of photography in this conference. However, as I had addressed it both in the catalogue of the exhibition on Gautherot and in several subsequent texts² –, I chose not to repeat myself here, and we agreed that I would bring reflections from my most recent researches).

Returning to the periodicals on urbanism, and the critics’ discourses and iconography they presented as from the late 1920s, it is important to highlight the role of images to understand the urban culture of an epoch – therefore my interest in collecting figures of books and magazines related to the research on Anhaia Mello’s time, images that were seen by

1 For these relations, see JANNIÈRE, Hélène. **Critique et Architecture**: Un état des lieux contemporain. Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2019.

2 ANGOTTI-SALGUEIRO, Heliana. **O olho fotográfico**: Marcel Gautherot e seu tempo. São Paulo: MAB-FAAP, 2007 (contributions by Lygia Segala and Olivier Lugon). The research on Marcel Gautherot inexistes until our work with Lygia Segala for The Getty Research Institute. Beside this catalogue of the exhibition I was the curator, see my articles: “Marcel Gautherot na revista *Módulo* – ensaios fotográficos, imagens do Brasil: entre a arquitetura e a cultura material e imaterial”, **Anais do Museu Paulista**, v. 22, n. 1, São Paulo, Jan./Jun. 2014, p. 11-79 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0101-4714v22n1a02>); and “Brasília, ‘ville radieuse’ photogénique”, in: IMESH, Kornelia (dir.). **Utopie et réalité de l’urbanisme**: La Chaux-de Fonds, Chandigarh. Brasília. Infolio Editions, CH, 2014.

him, recognizing them as one of the main forms of thematic representation in his texts and courses.

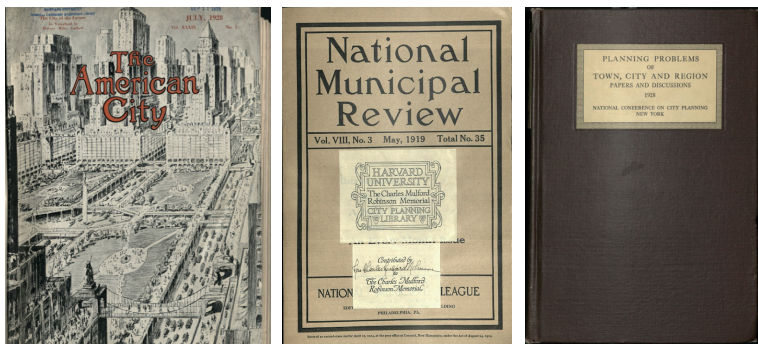


Figure 1 – Covers of periodicals read by Luiz de Anhaia Mello: *The American City*, New York, 1928; *National Municipal Review*, 1921; *Planning Problems* of Town, City and Region/NCCP, 1928. These periodicals constitute the bases of criticism of the city and of the proposals for urbanity. (Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA).

Among the illustrated communication vehicles that show the **visual universe of criticism**, I highlight some North American periodicals on city planning (Figure 1), especially *The American City*, published in New York and disseminated among Brazilian professionals (engineers and architects), actually considered “the best” by Anhaia Mello himself. Members of national leagues and associations, city managers and scholars participated in these vehicles. I consulted *The American City* in Harvard (because in the specialised libraries of São Paulo there remains only sparse and poorly preserved copies) in the ambit of a research as Visiting Scholar of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. This periodical showed in its illustrated pages all the thematic that would virtually dominate the urban discussion until the 1950s.

I reiterate that the research on the visual universe of the epoch revealed that criticism was reproduced in representations of various kinds, such as propaganda, city plans, diagrams, cartoons and photographs, besides posters and folders, remembering also the crucial role of educational films and their power of “visualisation” and dissemination.

Before dealing with some key themes of criticism, I highlight the idea of the **molding of public opinion** on problems of the modern city, whose clarification depended on propaganda, on the “visualisation” (precisely this term already existed: a booklet of 1918 that I found in Harvard had the title “Visualizing Citizenship”). The clarification through the diffusion of problems afflicting urban daily life and the need of “urbanistic education” so that citizens became interested in them and acted on the city, would be the function of national associations in the municipalities. These would be created aiming at a broad participation of citizens in conferences, meetings, “urbanistic crusades” by engi-

neers, architects and landscape designers, imbued of a true “civilising mission”, in which were expected individual sacrifices in favour of the collectivity. Anhaia Mello, as a spokesperson of this message, always denounced the indifference and lack of civic spirit of his compatriots – as an example of this practice, the cartoon making irony of the theory and practice of urbanists, in the periodic *The American City* in 1929, which I found translated in the *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, in 1935³ (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Cartoon of the *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, 1935, reproduced from the North American periodical *The American City*, of 1929. (Collection of IPT-USP)

Other frequent themes, present in the reiterated representations in periodicals in the name of an ideal urbanity, are summarised in planning for balancing the known **four functions of urban collective life** consecrated in the Athens Charter, but that were already previously mentioned as “principles of urban planning”:⁴ *circulating, recreating, working and dwelling*. In the images of the periodical and in films, *circulation* refers especially to traffic jams, traffic accidents, crowds – hen-

3 This periodical *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, in which Anhaia Mello published most of his articles, was disseminated in the milieu of academics and engineers. It started to circulate in 1917, and from 1945 onwards its name became *Engenharia*. I do not know specific studies on this publication. Thus, here is a suggestion for future studies.

4 See among others: LEWIS, Nelson. **The Planning of the Modern City: A Review of the Principles Governing the City Planning**. New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1916; BARTHOLOMEW, Harland. **The City Plan of Memphis Tennessee: a Comprehensive City Plan**. Memphis: City Plan Commission, 1924; LOHMANN, Karl. **Principles in City Planning**. New York/London: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1931.

ce Anhaia Mello considers the car one of the “urbanist’s nightmare”. Follows the imperative need to create recreation spaces – the importance of areas for leisure, equipped parks and green areas as components of the city and the habitat, and its close relation as response to the mentioned problem of accidents. Spaces that also served to the attempt to dissociate circulation from housing. Consequently, the theme of neighborhood unities imposes itself, aiming at the humanisation of urban community life, and connecting work and habitat⁵.

Scholars know that the “four functions of urban collective life” did not lose actuality throughout the history of urbanism and architecture, and were objects of debates when the new capital of Brazil was idealised, permeating the criticism by the group of international visitors to the famous 1959 congress about Brasília. (I mention that event *en passant*, because this colloquium of today, according to the invitation that I received to participate, is an unfolding of previous reflections in this sense).

And, about Brasília, I remember that the urbanist Anhaia Mello from São Paulo took part in the *Comissão de Estudos para a Localização da Nova Capital do Brasil* [Commission for the Studies on the Localization of the New Capital of Brazil], in 1948. He declared himself peremptorily against the construction of it and the refusal is based on his intellectual affiliations⁶ – Lewis Mumford among others. However, in 1960, in a special edition of the newspaper *Diário de São Paulo*, by the time of the inauguration of the city, Anhaia Mello manifested some enthusiasm in only one sentence, when he opposed Brasília, an “organic city”, planned, and with a “maximum limit of growth”, to the disordered city of São Paulo, an irrational and tentacular megalopolis (I will return to this issue in the conclusion).

In Luiz de Anhaia Mello’s first book (1929), which presents conferences made at the Rotary Club, the first chapter discusses the “problems of urbanism” in the line of the referred four functions of collective

5 In the second part of my conference, I showed “animated narratives” in video, gathering media on these topics, which circulated on the pages of journals consulted by Anhaia Mello.

6 Anhaia Mello justifies that the arguments for the transfer of the capital are not sustained with the advance of networks of transportation, communication and technological progress – “electricity, airplane, car, instantaneous transmission of intelligence to every spot of the country, means of simultaneous printing, such as telegraphy, telephony, multiplex systems, radio, broadcasting, television, press, cinema [are] inventions that suppressed time and distances” – these nullify the arguments of distance, interiorisation, centralised position: “what is valid is a National Plan [...] a programme of government, action, and not position”. He defends “natural, and not artificial, nuclei of human concentration” or “balanced distribution of the population” with “natural demographic expansion” and a “national network of roads”. The federal capital would be “an artificial, parasitic city, of sheer consumption, whose only industry would be the public service [...], a city of bureaucrats [...] and that would cost a great deal to the national treasury”. The epigraph of his text is by Lewis Mumford (from the book *The Culture of Cities*) and refers to the primacy of “biological organisms”. Cf. *Comissão de Estudos para a Localização da Nova Capital do Brasil. Relatório Técnico*. v. II. Rio de Janeiro: Barlow, 1948.

life associated to the criticism of São Paulo – he always defended the city’s *degrowth*⁷, unlike his peers, preconizing the control and urban and regional planning, functional zoning, the limitation of growth both in extension and height, the healthy habitat, the improvement of public transport, the creation of parks and neighbourhood unities, the decentralisation into garden-cities. He manifests, I repeat, against the “two nightmares of the urbanist, the car and the skyscraper”, themes of the critic iconography of the epoch disseminated in the North American periodicals, as we will observe in the images of the video. The knowledge of international references by Anhaia Mello reveals his ideology of innovative proposals for public policies – references quoted and reiterated in his texts, when he defends the citizens’ opinion in the debates of the city’s problems.

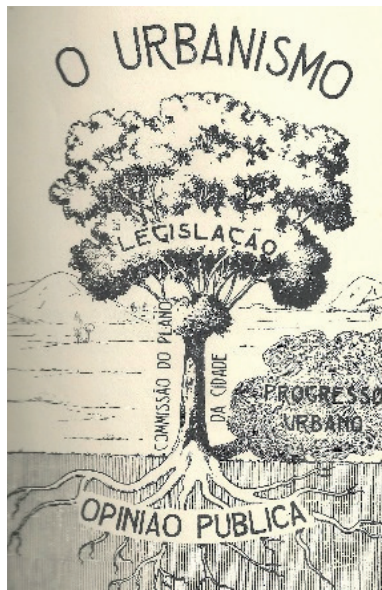


Figure 3 – “Árvore do Urbanismo” [Tree of Urbanism], from the book by Luiz de Anhaia Mello, *Problemas de Urbanismo. Bases para a resolução do problema técnico* (1929). Notice the importance given in the drawing to “*opinião pública*” [public opinion]. (Private collection)

The image that opens the chapter of his first book is the “tree of urbanism” (Figure 3), one of the rare figures of his publications (think of the printing difficulties of the time). His drawing comes directly from

7 Expression borrowed from the title of a series of small books edited in France some years ago (Les Précurseurs de la Décroissance), among which I highlight the one by Thierry Paquot, *Lewis Mumford, pour une juste plénitude*. Neuvy-en-Champagne, Éditions le passager clandestin, 2015. The intellectual affiliation of Luiz de Anhaia Mello to Lewis Mumford is one of the themes of the intellectual biography that I am writing of the former.

the literature of the North American *city planning*, whose source I could detect in my research in the United States, before it appeared on the Internet. The appropriation is from Harland Bartholomew and Associates' plan for the city of Evansville, state of Indiana, and it is particularised on Anhaia Mello's drawing, with *public opinion* occupying all the rooting. He sought to explain and incentivise citizens' participation, a fundamental stand in his discourse, because he believed that it was the role of urbanists to "awaken the population's civic consciousness" and sensitise it by means of intense propaganda⁸. By proclaiming his dedication to *common good* and defining *urbanism as cooperation* of citizens in municipal life to resolve urban problems, he responds to the "mission" of the profession of engineers and their pedagogical action as opinion former. The image of the "tree of urbanism" makes even more explicit Anhaia Mello's suggestions for the creation of the aforementioned associations or commissions for *city planning* (bases of the North American urbanistic organization) that formed the tree *trunk* – commissions that would be independent from political interference in defence of community interests. The *legislation* for organising the city in *comprehensive plans*, to be created by civilians and technicians, is at the *treetop* – legislation that, according to Anhaia, would be capable of bringing *urban progress* to all citizens (immaterially represented by the *shade*).

To complete the issue of retrospective criticism on the molding **and attaining the public opinion by visual means**, whose reach is presently a fact, it enables us, also, to relativize the temporality of certain debates and their long duration. If today the history of architectural criticism complains about the restricted space in the media and the public opinion's indifference regarding the problems of the city,⁹ this was also the great concern of urbanists as from the 1920s, an object of educative "psychological campaigns", of which Anhaia Mello thought built on the North American references. "Attaining the public opinion" would be a question of *selling city planning*¹⁰ – he observes that one already lived under the "tyranny of advertisement", and that people acted "irrationally", "intoxicated" by advertisers – hence the practice of propaganda¹¹ "by

8 To delve deeper into this issue, see: ARASAWA, Claudio Hiro. As raízes da árvore do urbanismo de Anhaia Mello: a conquista da opinião pública. In: ANGOTTI-SALGUEIRO H.; SIMÕES JR.; J.-G. (org.). **Luiz de Anhaia Mello: um pioneiro do urbanismo paulistano**. São Paulo: Editora Mackenzie, 2020.

9 See on this theme, in the field of architecture, in: JANNIÈRE, Hélène; SCRIVANO, Paolo. **Débat public et opinion publique**: notes pour une recherche sur la critique architecturale. In: *Clara. Architecture, Recherche*, n. 7, éditions de la Faculté d'Architecture La Chambre Horta de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 2020. To my knowledge, there is no similar thorough study in Brazil on urbanism criticism and on periodicals of the field.

10 HUNT, Carl. **Selling City Planning**. *Planning Problems of Town, City and Region: Papers and Discussions at the 18th National Conference on City Planning*. St Petersburg/Palm Beach, Fla, Mar. 29-Apr. 1, 1926, p. 175-190.

11 In texts from his maturity, he highlights the relation "education/propaganda", and that the latter should be "real, honest and not a cheat". He quotes as a positive example what was

all means: the press, the tribune, posters, folders, exhibitions, cinema, radio and personal contact”, through conferences – as he himself did.

When reading today Anhaia Mello’s criticism, I think of how distant his audience would feel from his discourses and texts filled with citations in French and especially in English, the names of urbanists and architects discussing the city far away from here at that time, and who were so familiar to him, were probably unknown to most of his compatriots. There would probably be a discrepancy between his erudition and his audience’s level of knowledge, and the dissociation was not only in relation to the public, but also among the other critics and those responsible for the urban management. There were conflicts with his peers, when he occupied positions in the municipal administration of São Paulo,¹² raising critics about the general indifference regarding the accelerated growth of the city (applauded by many) and the problems resulting from it. Furthermore, Anhaia struggled, often in vain, to formulate regulatory by-laws and proposals.

The study of the “cultural field”, in the Bourdieusian sense, of the critic discourse of architecture and engineering professionals, seeking distinction and voice in their field, is indissociable from the limits of information, often restricted to few individuals, as well as from the cultural limits of their own conjunctures. (In another register, it has been asked what knowledge of Brazil did foreign critics have when they disembarked in Brasília, still under construction, in 1959, as to judge it... hence the prejudices and misconceptions that marked their texts, due to the lack of understanding of the context.)

Anhaia Mello represents the intellectual engaged in the criticism of the city where he lived and worked. I have been studying his publications in the light of the references of his library (he did not leave a personal archive, hence I have made use of this strategy proper of a classical history of reading to be able to understand him).¹³ The demarche of the research regarding the urbanist’s library and his sources of reference presents a certain originality, because architects’ and engineers’ libraries, and especially their marginalia left on the books, are not, with few exceptions, objects of studies. In the light of theories and urban liter-

done in Chicago, with the edition of the plan being distributed in elementary schools, and of manuals and films produced against the “civic illiteracy” (Anhaia Mello, 1961, p. 34; 1957, p. 3).

12 To understand the historical political context of Anhaia Mello’s time in São Paulo, see: CAMPOS, Candido Malta. **Os rumos da cidade: urbanismo e modernização em São Paulo**. São Paulo: Ed. SENAC, 2002.

13 See my articles: ANGOTTI-SALGUEIRO, Heliana. Crossing Texts, References and Images. A Survey of a City Planner’s Personal Library in São Paulo (1920-1960) (1/2). *Matériaux de la recherche. Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale urbaine et paysagère* [En ligne]. Paris, 2023. Available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/craup/12281>. And ANGOTTI-SALGUEIRO, Heliana. Crossing Texts, References and Images. A Survey of a City Planner’s Personal Library in São Paulo (1920-1960) (2/2). *Matériaux de la recherche. Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale urbaine et paysagère* [En ligne]. Paris, 2023. Available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/craup/12334>.

ature disseminated everywhere on his time quoted by him, I read his texts, which reveal, besides a solid erudition, an extraordinary actuality on what was being internationally debated and published in this field.

Here we have no time to comment in details on the intellectual bases of his criticism, the references to architects, urbanists and public figures whom he admired – a sample of authors read and repeatedly cited by him speaks for itself and explains his stances: Patrick Geddes, Raymond Unwin, Ebenezer Howard, Donat-Alfred Agache, Gaston Bardet, Pierre Lavedan, Marcel Poète, José-Luis Sert, Auguste Perret, Gio Ponti, Walter Gropius, Sigfried Giedion, Eric Mendelsohn, Pier-Luigi Nervi, Herbert Hoover... And, especially, Lewis Mumford (one of the most cited), Clarence Perry, Cleveland Rogers, Patrick Abercrombie, Nelson Lewis, John Nolen, Harland Bartholomew, Thomas Adams, Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, Le Corbusier (besides his books, principles of the Ascoral), Robert E. Park, Louis Wirth, F. J. Osborn, Eliel Saarinen, Clarence Stein, Pe. Lebreton... (Figure 4)

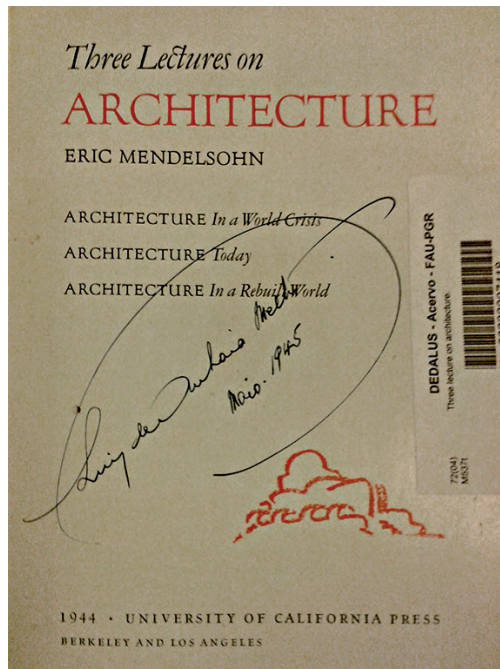


Figure 4 – Book by Eric Mendelsohn, *Three Lectures on Architecture* (1944), from Luiz de Anhaia Mello's private library. The choices of readings and the marginalia he made on his books make evident his criticism not only of urbanism, but also of architecture. (Collection FAU-PGR, USP)

In sum, he was aware of an indispensable international bibliography for his generation, in which some authors' genealogies are evident and

others reveal “incompatibilities”, which some critics rapidly placed in opposite fields (as with Bardet and Le Corbusier),¹⁴ even though each of them, in their own way, criticised, as himself, the wrongly led urban growth and the lack of a policy that took into account humanist values and urbanity for the cities. Thus, in Anhaia Mello’s criticism one should seek to understand the mechanisms of appropriation of texts, the conceptual differences between them, the affinities and distances.

Anhaia Mello communicates his ideas in conferences and lectures – he was a professor at the *Escola Politécnica de São Paulo* since 1922) –, publishing most of them in periodicals or gathering them in books, based on the international historiography and focusing on various explicit issues in the references he accessed (books he acquired abroad by mail and in downtown bookstores). Since one cannot say there was a local cultural tradition in a discipline that emerged, urbanism, and of which he was the creator of a chair in São Paulo, in 1925, being one of the main theoreticians in the country. Thus, he practises the public intellectual’s “mission”, the role of mediator of international discussions, and his texts will be one of the bases of this incipient, or rather, little known until some thirty years ago, historiography of Brazilian urbanism.

Although I focus here on the urbanistic criticism, which dominated Anhaia Mello’s thought and production, I make an observation that his references and stances in the area of architecture are those of a “modern” thought, thus of a critic of “decorativism”, ornamentation, eclecticism, favourable to the use of new materials and an architecture “open to light and to the landscape”. Let us remember that he participates of the foundation of the *Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo* of the *Universidade de São Paulo* (FAU-USP), in 1948, considering that urbanism should associate to architecture and urban sociology, and become separated from the Polytechnic School directed to engineers¹⁵.

We have seen that the issue of **visual pedagogy**, present in the representations of the criticism of urbanism, which Anhaia Mello was perfectly acquainted to, refers to the impact of image and propaganda in influencing and clarifying the public opinion on the urban problems. He precociously realised this impact of the *mass media* on the debates on urbanism (I apologise for the anachronism in the use of the expression that appeared later, around 1965). In one of his first lectures published in his book of 1929, he incentivised the development of organisations “to educate the masses”, to attain the audience with propaganda (e.g., the National Municipal League, of New York, among others). His concern was to “maintain the population’s civic awareness awaken and

14 VOLDMAN, Danielle. Les architectes reconstructeurs, forment-ils une génération? **Les Cahiers de l’IHTP: Générations intellectuelles**, n. 6, Nov. 1987, p. 69. See positions of these authors in my paper “Luiz de Anhaia Mello – em busca de um urbanismo humanizado: ideário e autores de referência”, in *Atas do XIV SHCU*, São Carlos, 2016, online.

15 Some of his choices in architecture are defined in the article “Morfologia da arquitetura contemporânea”, **Digesto Econômico**, n. 37, Dez. 1947, p. 87-90.

vigilant”, elevating “the moral temperature of the environment”, an expression referring to the old positivist historian Hippolyte Taine (*Philosophy of Art*)¹⁶, but actually directly inspired in authors of his time, such as the North Americans Carl Hunt and H. A. Overstreet, who taught how to make a community become interested in the issue of planning by means of psychology related to the use of images. Thus, Anhaia repeats Overstreet’s motto: “Seeing is easier than thinking”, to which he ironically adds: “And has the advantage of also interesting the illiterates...”¹⁷

Therefore, it would be a matter of “publicity” to convince and sensitise the indifference and selfishness of the general public – especially the “municipal servants”, as demonstrates the cartoon above mentioned. And, as pointed by Charles H. Wacker, president of the Chicago Planning Commission, in the magazine *City Planning* in April 1925, a direct source (among others of the North American literature on urban issues evidenced by images) in Anhaia Mello’s lectures, as well as in the various representations that converge with his knowledge on the city.

For example, “movies for city campaign” was a leitmotif in the texts of the epoch – “visual education” by means of civic films, theme of the interesting folder found in the Harvard collections, I showed. Among the films quoted by Anhaia Mello that had broad audience, verified in the *Proceedings* of 1921 and in urbanism books of his time, include “A Tale of one City”. – projected in Chicago and distributed in sixty neighbourhood movie theatres – the film shows the same scenes of photographs of the cities. Citizenship education and the exposure of urban problems and achievements in the films were some of “the ways of using visual means to express intellectual concepts”, as observed nowadays by Jeffrey Schnapp to address the digital humanities.

This author takes us to another strand of my current research, the **option for working with intermedia on urban studies**, or to be able to communicate its past and present history by means of new methods of digital visualisation, thanks to computer software that transform archival documents of images and texts into “animated narratives”. I have been sharing this experimental methodology that associates research/design and media, and leads to theoreticians as Jeffrey Schnapp and Lev Manovich, since the exhibition “Urban Intermedia: city, archive, narrative”, focusing on Berlin, Boston, Mumbai and Istanbul, by curators Eve Blau and Robert Pietrusko of *Harvard Graduate School of Design*, in 2018 (Blau, 2019) (Figure 5). We are reworking principles of this methodology with the research group I coordinate since 2019, around themes of historical evolution and contemporaneity of São Paulo and Buenos Aires, with the purpose of setting up an exhibition at *Museu Paulista*.

16 ANHAIA MELLO, Luiz de. A cidade problema de governo. *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, n. 43, 1928, p. 285; ANHAIA MELLO, Luiz de. O governo das cidades. *Boletim do Instituto de Engenharia*, n. 44, 1929, p. 4-5.

17 Chapter 2, “Ainda o problema psicologico”, in: *Problemas de Urbanismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.



Figure 5 – Cover of the folder of the exhibition **Urban Intermedia. City, Archive, Narrative**, Aug.-Oct. 2018, Druker Design Gallery - GSD, Harvard University.

Why did I make this choice? Well, I have always worked with images in all areas of knowledge of my researches and curatorship – art history and urban culture, history of architecture and urbanism, human geography and modern photography. I started to seek alternative methodologies to produce and especially present knowledge, when realising that the new generations of students, who were *born digital* (Palfrey; Gasser, 2009), accustomed to the “experimental and immersive perambulations” of algorithms in their daily life, require the digital visualisation of ideas and present abilities for the manipulation of technological innovations, which we can no longer ignore or underestimate. These innovations present advantages in understanding the dynamic processes of cities’ evolution. Today, there are other “ways of knowing cities” (Kurgan; Brawley, 2019) (borrowing the title of this book), and for any theme one can use digital technologies in processes like *mapping*, with more attractive communication languages, especially for the young people. If “the limits of libraries, archives and classrooms have become porous, interconnected and extensible worldwide”, and in the face of the documental mass to be manipulated for each theme, fixed categories and traditional curatorship no longer provide the bases for the understanding of urban processes. “The digital humanities provide new challenges and possibilities for the traditional institutions of memory, such as archives, libraries and museums” (Schnapp, 2015, p. 236, 239).

Therefore, the **digital visualisation of ideas** in the exhibition *Urban Intermedia* draws on the creation of micronarratives as an “animated archive”, with multiple thematic entries intrinsic to the history of each city; the presentation unfolds in successive topics on the city’s evolution, showing, as Jeffrey Schnapp said, “the city as archive, the archive as city” (from his lecture at the panel on the exhibition in Harvard, on September 5, 2018). The juxtaposed layers of historicity and the multidisciplinary aspects that particularise the cities are overlaid in visual sequences immediately captured, whose textual explanation would not be capable of communicating and making relations with the same clarity and speed.

A still taken from one of the videos of the exhibition “Urban Intermedia” relating to Berlin (Figure 6) shows layers of the historic narrative of one of the city’s district and its modifications – the logics of transformations, one of the great topics of urban history, is presented in the simultaneous visualisation of the city’s different temporalities. The digital image is composed of maps, photographs, films and other juxtaposed documents that move in the projection, forming a multiplicity of scenes that coexist with other forms of expression (sound is also used besides image).



Figure 6 – Plan of Berlin with overlays of various documents of its history. The digital image enables the composition of a series of “animated scenes”. (© Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative, Urban Intermedia, 2018)

This methodology proposes, in the dialogue of images, a new perception of the changes in the city, the territory, the landscape, and the challenges that characterise it: the planned and the non-planned (formal and informal), the modalities of inclusion and exclusion (migration and mobility), the inter-relations of nature and technology (infrastruc-

tures)¹⁸ – the sequential series of representations are associated (assemblage), leading us to the mapping of spatial and temporal layers, whose transparencies reveal narratives inscribed in a dense historicity, combining knowledge, software design, such as After Effects among others, and media originating from archives and various collections¹⁹.

The scanned research material was gathered in series of “animated narratives” (presented in a short video at the colloquium) related especially to the representations of the four **functions of urban collective life**: dwelling, working, recreating and circulating, aforementioned, consecrated by modernists in their texts, but present earlier, in historiography, as “principles of city planning”, to which our urbanist referred numerous times in search of the ideal city, postulating its harmonious balance in the name of the citizens’ common good. The video showed the circulation referring to traffic problems that Anhaia Mello found deplorable, especially because of the automobile accidents with children (he himself had lost a child this way). I verified the impressing frequency of the theme in awareness campaigns, on posters, articles and even on covers of the periodical *The American City*. Films of that time show crowds, traffic, many cars on the streets and the difficulty to cross them (as in the documentary “The City”, of 1939, with comments by Lewis Mumford); and especially on photographs, as that of *rua Direita*, in São Paulo, by Alice Brill, reproduced in Anhaia Mello’s article published in *Habitat* in 1957.

The theme of circulation, in its turn, is linked to that of *public recreation* (“of body and spirit”), considering that there was always a complaint that the *only playground was the street* – a complaint that is expressed in the images of the mentioned film, and in figures of so many other books and periodicals of the early decades of the twentieth century, and years later – to mention another example, the photographs in the book *Can our Cities Survive?* (by José-Luis Sert, from Anhaia Mello’s library). Follows the issue of the “new concept of park”, of creating places for *recreation* with equipment instead of the “useless” and “unused” lawns of São Paulo, according to Anhaia Mello. The consciousness of the importance of recreation areas and green spaces as components of the city (equipped playgrounds and the “organised active recreation”) and its close relation to attenuate the moral harms of delinquency, criminality and solitude, go beyond the mentioned risks of accidents, reiterated in the representations.

To complete, the recreation areas and open spaces are associated to the new conceptions of *housing*, separating it from *circulation*. The four functions are complementary and refer to one another harmoni-

18 Cf. the text of the exhibition folder: “Urban Intermedia. City, Archive, Narrative”. Druker Design Gallery, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, Aug./Oct. 2018.

19 During my conference at the colloquium, I presented a short video, amidst a Power Point presentation, in this line of associated intermedia around the visualisation of issues of the critic ideology and visual universe of Luiz de Anhaia Mello about the city in his time.

cally – , thus, in the topic *dwelling* is stressed the necessary proximity of habitat and work. The neighbourhood unities appear as a model among the solutions of the *new housing* movement, one of the most important modernist flags, which in Brazil isolated voices defended with few results. Anhaia Mello is one of those voices, in the face of the anarchical growth of Brazilian cities – he was one of the organisers of the *Primeiro Congresso da Habitação* in São Paulo, in May 1931. He denounced the housing deficit and defended themes such as “healthy, accessible and agreeable housing” and the rationalisation of urban occupation through **zoning**, up to his latest texts, in the 1950s, based on authors and solutions of other countries²⁰. In a long article of his maturity, in *Habitat*, in 1957, he deplores the *favelas* and *cor-tiços* [tenement] of São Paulo, the uncontrolled demographic explosion and real estate exploration with the verticalization of areas whose “free green spaces for active and passive recreation are relative to one square metre per person, and the social and educational equipment equals zero”.

From Anhaia Mello’s quotations, I highlight North American authors like Clarence Perry, on neighbourhood unities, that he defended as alternatives for the reconstruction of deteriorated urban areas in large cities; and the Swiss-Frenchman Le Corbusier and his “code of licit occupation of the ground”, of which he includes in the article of *Habitat* a drawing from *Propos d’urbanisme*, referring to walking (*marche à pied*) and the urgency of providing every citizen with “his inalienable quota of fresh air and sun, a healthy body and joy of living”. Furthermore, precociously adept of ecology, he deplores the destruction of the country’s forests “treated with iron and fire”, and “the pollution of sea and rivers with human and industrial waste” (Anhaia Mello, 1957, p. 7). These referred “principles of planning” (or the four functions) are ideals of urbanity that every scholar knows... and that would be important to map in the texts of others Brazilian planners to construe a critic historiography of urbanism in the country, an extension that is outside the limits of our research.

Finally, two words about the paradoxes of Brasília in relation to these ideals, since the colleagues of Round Table 2 have referred to its representations. The crowd in the streets of megalopolises shown in films and photographs of previous decades certainly disappeared from the

20 He continuously cited the classical “Garden Cities of Tomorrow” (his 1946 edition had Lewis Mumford’s preface). Anhaia Mello referred to the green-belt towns of Roosevelt’s administration, Radburn (New Jersey, 1929), Broadacre City, by Wright, and in 1936 he wrote two articles on “Um programa de habitação para os Estados Unidos” [A housing programme for the United States] in the *Revista Polytechnica*. In 1947 he published in the *Digesto Econômico* the article “Cidade-Jardim” [Garden-City], in which he proposes the foundation of garden-cities for 60 thousand inhabitants each surrounding São Paulo, which already had one million *favelados* [*favela* dwellers].

wide lanes and axes of the new capital, in which the infrastructure for pedestrians was not a priority – however, the car, which Anhaia Mello criticised, became indispensable in the Brasília’s daily life. Nevertheless, despite the modernist ideals having been applied in the residential sector –, the new forms of associations of collective neighbourhood unities in the superblocks enabling the connection between architecture, urbanism and landscape design, and the desired security regarding traffic –, the egalitarian logic of its occupation did not last long. Thus, the greatest criticism of the new capital was the lack of planning of affordable housing, which caused the anarchic growth of the surrounding satellite-cities, whose aerial view reveal the disproportionate dimension in relation to the core of the city. The polynuclear city that Anhaia Mello defended in his texts never functioned in Brasília, for the lack of a comprehensive urban and regional planning.

The peripheries and the unhealthy housing denounced by him in all Brazilian state capitals grew together with the new federal capital, theoretically thought to be an “organic city”. He, who always wrote that cities should only exist to bring happiness and well-being to all citizens, in one of his last texts, in a special edition about Brasília in the newspaper *Diário de São Paulo*, on April 21, 1960, was virtually silent about the city, about which he stated his radical opposition twelve years earlier. In this article, “Cidades tentaculares e cidades orgânicas” [Tentacular cities and organic cities], there is only one sentence in the introductory paragraph (which we do not know if it his or the editor’s), which mentions the counterpoint between “tentacular São Paulo” and “organic Brasília”, while the entire article is a generalised criticism of cities that grew without plans and “without harmony and balance of the four functions *dwelling, working, recreating and circulating*”, leitmotif for decades in the literature and in the images that circulated in the Americas (Figure 7).

São Paulo had a disorderly growth. When the city was born, over 400 years ago, nobody foresaw its expansion. And in the following centuries, it continued to grow without a rational plan. Several insoluble problems resulted from this. Brasília, however, is an organic city. Before it was born, it was already established how it shall be and the maximum limit of its growth. In this city it will be possible to live and breathe freely. (Anhaia Mello, 1960, p. 135 – Free translation).



Figure 7 – Article by Luiz de Anhaia Mello. “Cidades tentaculares e cidades orgânicas”. Special edition on Brasília of *Diário de São Paulo*, April 21, 1960. (Biblioteca Mario de Andrade)

The last sentence of this paragraph – “above, two aspects of São Paulo, focusing the Republic square, in different epochs” – refers to the two contrasting aerial views that illustrate the article, showing São Paulo’s verticalization, characteristic of the successive “discarding”²¹ that mark the city’s landscape. In the body of the article the counterpoint disappears, as well as the nominal reference to the two cities. The sentences are generic, but harsh on the imperative limit of urban growth, expanding without discipline and control. On the tentacular city, Anhaia Mello mentions the French poet Émile Verhaeren, author of timeless reference in his texts, as well as the stages of inorganic growth and the “decline of civilization” described by Geddes and Mumford, reiterating the criticism of conurbation without regional planning.

21 On the central area’s intensive verticalization and the marks of the “discarding” of the city’s architectural landscape, see the research of a member of our group, “São Paulo, Buenos Aires Intermídia” – BUENO, Beatriz Piccolotto, “Laboratório São Paulo: exercício de arqueologia da paisagem”, paper presented in Nov. 2022 at III Congresso de la Asociacion Iberoamericana de Historia Urbana, in Madrid, from her “A cidade como negócio. Mercado imobiliário rentista, projetos e processo de produção do Centro Velho de São Paulo do século XIX à Lei do Inquilinato (1809-1942)”. (Habilitation Thesis in Architecture and Urbanism), FAUUSP, 2018.

In this text and others of the 1950s, the practice of compiling authors of various times are maintained, and although the construction of Brasília was a theme of Anhaia Mello's time, he never refers to the new capital, focusing on the denounces of the megalopolis São Paulo, in a criticism marked by the pessimism of the humanistic intellectual at the end of his career, disillusioned in the face of the "civic illiteracy" of his peers and the failure of urbanity in the city. In the conference published in *Habitat*, one of his last texts, he uses contrasting images, like one of the "chaos" of verticalized São Paulo and the "savagery" of *Guernica* by Picasso, on the same page.

Awareness of his contribution to the history of urbanistic criticism in the country is mostly limited to readers and scholars from São Paulo. From the mid-1950s onwards, in the opposite direction of the prevailing ideology of progress and developmentalism, intellectual critics as Luiz de Anhaia Mello no longer had the same voice as in the previous decades, and at that moment the urban policies became even more distant from the academic criticism.

* * *

I hope the visualisation of all these issues proposed in the video (an experimental essay yet) that brings the mixing of visual and textual data of the criticism and references of Anhaia Mello, contextualised in the media of his time, but with tools of our time, represents the new forms, currently available, of transmission of urban culture, besides those we inherited from the traditional academic structures. When achieving this in-person and online colloquium at a time when we live connected to "lives intensely intermediated" and in situations that enable "the incorporation of the visual into the real" at all moments (Schnapp, 2015, p. 239), we are ready, I believe, for new challenges and new collaborative possibilities to produce and communicate knowledge cities.

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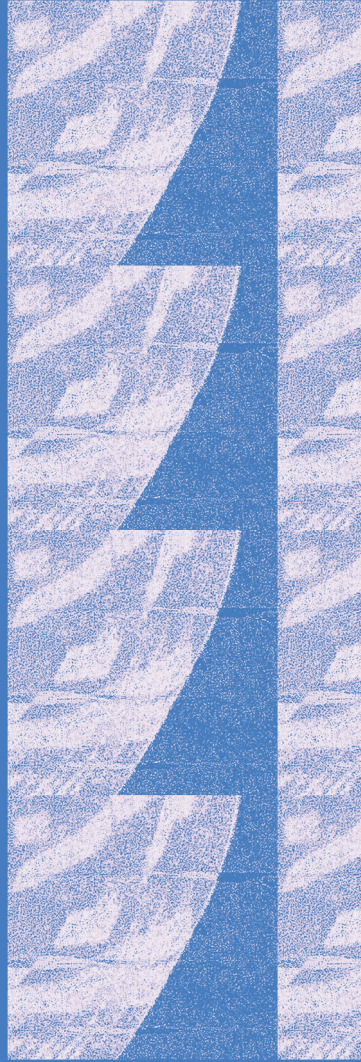
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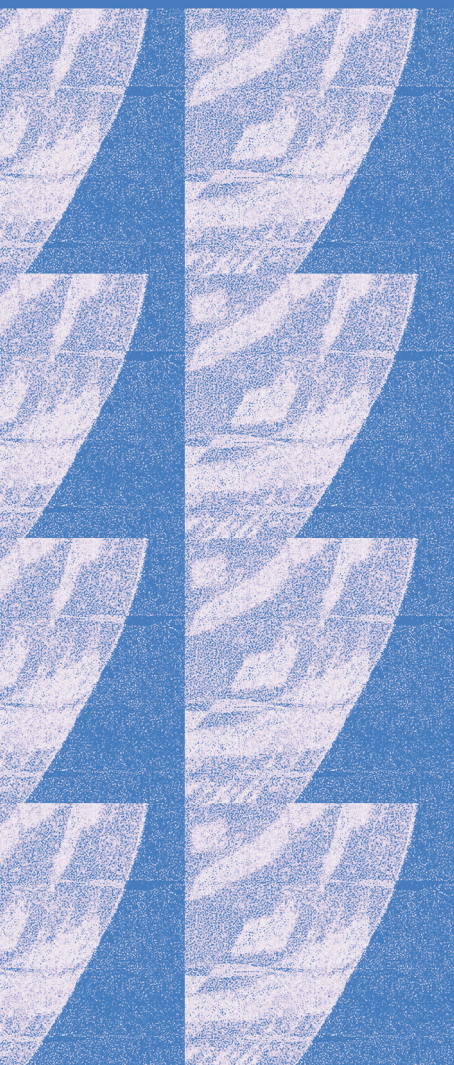
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III. DIFFERENT MODES OF DIFFUSION

Joana Mello de Carvalho e Silva

THE ROLE OF CRITICISM IN THE DEFINITION AND EXPANSION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL FIELD IN LATIN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The texts comprised in this module investigate how the specificities of audience, format and networks of production and diffusion affected the formulation of architectural criticism between the 1940s and 1970s in Latin American and European countries. The authors show that the frontiers and contents of that criticism, diffused in specialised magazines, daily newspapers and cultural publications, were gradually woven, drawing on a practice of writing, in which the motivations varied according to the vehicle and the interlocutor.

Among the specialised readers, criticism served as an important instrument of consolidation of the professional field, *i.e.*, of constitution of “a relatively autonomous system that integrates production, reproduction and diffusion, and consecrates a market of symbolic assets”, which from its instances of conservation and consecration ensures “not only the production of receptors willing and apt to receive (at least in the mid-term) the culture produced, but also the production of agents capable of producing and renewing them” (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 117). In this context, criticism acted as an instrument of mediation between architects and public opinion, with the aim of orienting the understanding of the discipline and its social contribution. At the same time, it served to expand the public and private clientele, especially in Latin America, responding to the intention of diffusing and firming certain architectural strands in detriment of others.

Regarding the large-circulation newspapers, although these motivations were present, one observes an interest of the critic and the audience for the city’s direction, contemporary challenges and artistic production in general. In this case, one can think that criticism had other interests, not limited to the professional field, more engaged with the information, the cultivation of the intellect, the cultural renewal or, still, the social intervention. Despite the difference between the groups, there are contact points through professional, political, economic or affection bonds and through the general understanding of the discipline in each one of the countries under analysis.

If the dialogue between the different Brazilian actors, periodicals and newspapers is visible in this set of texts, it is also interesting to observe the interlocution with international productions, of Latin America and Europe, as well as of North America, or between the architectural field, criticism and the practice of building design with daily newspapers, cultural publications and other fields of knowledge, dedicated to thinking the city and the dilemmas posed by the reconstruction of urban centres destroyed during the Second World War and/or by the intense metropolitanisation process. In all the cases, it is important to note the fact that these dialogues involved transculturation processes, in the sense proposed by Ángel Rama (1982), *i.e.*, exchanges, discards, inclusions and transformation of proposals, then adapted to local, material, cultural and disciplinary conditions. Hence, what comes from outside or from another field is modified, creating new discourses and new productions, in a way that discourse and practice are mutually affected.

Seeking to shed light on these transits, emphasizing the contact points, and without losing sight of the local specificities and those of each one of the vehicles of production and diffusion of architectural criticism, we open the module with the text “Architectural criticism in the Latin American horizon: an argumentative condition in certain specialised magazines (1940-1967)”, by Patricia Méndez.

The author concentrates her researches on the analysis of the Latin American architectural criticism through means of diffusion during the twentieth century, with special attention to the specialised magazines. Her most recent publication on the theme is the book *Ideas, Proyectos, Debates: Revistas Latinoamericanas de Arquitectura* [Ideas, Projects, Debates: Latin American Architectural Magazines] (2020), a catalogue of periodicals produced between 1874 and 2015, which also presents texts by Claudio Galeno-Ibaceta and Ramón Gutiérrez. In the essay that she produced for this other publication, with the title *Revistas Latinoamericanas de Arquitectura: Fuentes Infinitas de Ideas, Proyectos y Debates del Siglo XX* [Latin American Architectural Magazines: Infinite Source of Ideas, Projects, and Debates in the Twentieth Century], Méndez defends that the specialised periodicals are rich historical vestiges for the recognition of social and intellectual trajectories, encounters, fierce debates and a wide ensemble of architectural ideas and principles.

Being aware of the centrality of this documental source for the history of architecture and the importance of its conservation, the author develops a set of activities that extrapolate the ambit of academic research. As an example, the foundation of the Asociación de Revistas Latinoamericanas de Arquitectura (ARLA) or the technical coordination of the Centro de Documentación de Arquitectura Latinoamericana (CEDODAL). Created in 1995, CEDODAL is dedicated to the protection of architects’ collections that comprise drawings, photographs and other office and private documents, besides books, catalogues and magazines. Articulated with these initiatives, the Centre has been dedicated to the

diffusion of its collection, thus, to the architectural culture preserved there, by means of publications, exhibitions, among other communication actions. The association between research and management activities, as well as the contact with magazines from different countries, supervision and groups of investigation, enables Méndez to construe panoramas about the Latin American criticism, trying explanations and pointing to very instigating paths of investigation.

For this publication, the panorama presented by the author considered the magazines published in Spanish, in Latin America, between 1940 and 1967, a period of intense production, in which one can observe, as pointed by Silvia Arango (2012) and the authors that participate in this table, a “synchronicity between magazines and disciplinary background”, both in Latin American and European countries. In this sense, it is interesting to make a relation between the works of the four authors, because their analyses illuminate and are illuminated by the researches of the colleagues, constructing a debate that guided, from the start, the proposition of the seminar that originated this publication. This guidance is based on the belief that knowledge is made in a collective and shared way, from the writing to the reading of the texts.

A second cut-out in the ensemble of Latin American periodicals was made in Méndez’s text to make her analysis more precise. Therefore, she left out magazines dedicated specifically to technical issues, besides yearbooks and bulletins, as well as those produced by students’ movements. This delimitation makes clear the diversity of publications in that space and time and the importance of recognising their specificities in the various Latin American countries. The decision to circumscribe in a stricter way the set of specialised magazines was motivated by methodological reasons. In other words, by the necessary articulation between the institution’s promoters of the analysed architectural magazines and their format, circulation means, discourses and actions, from production to diffusion.

Allied to this methodological attention, the focus of her investigation on the specialised magazines produced by public institutions or private groups of architects is related to the fact that these periodicals performed a central role in the formation of the disciplinary field, in the education sphere, including the practice. It is noteworthy that the conflicts for the definitions of the architectural field, besides being remarkable in the magazines created by groups linked to university institutes and the recently-created schools, independent from the engineering and fine-arts schools, also traverse those magazines with a more commercial character, produced with private funds, although in the latter there are clear efforts to expand the audience and the diffusion of a specific language, *i.e.*, the modernist language.

In order to show the achievements of this question and form of analysis, Méndez initially focuses on the magazines *Nuestra Arquitec-*

tura (Buenos Aires, 1929-1986), *Arquitectura y Arte* (Bogotá, 1955-1964), and *PROA* (Bogotá, 1946-2007). Through these magazines, the author discusses the supposed lack of commitment of their editors with the architectural criticism, at least a declared one, and the fact that in the process of edition there are always choices and value judgements that influence the debate. In the sequence, she analyses another set of periodicals, all linked to education institutions, such as *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* (Cidade do México, 1937), *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* (Buenos Aires, 1948), *Fascículo Informativo del Instituto de Historia de la Arquitectura* (Montevideu, 1962-1976), *Boletín de Informaciones* (1959), *Apuntes* (Bogotá, 1966-), and *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas* (Caracas, 1964-1997).

These periodicals raise a third aspect of interest in Méndez's text: the fact that, in the process of constitution of the professional field, there is a gradual establishment of a specific area, that of history, whose frontiers with theory and criticism are, in Méndez view, nomads. The porosity of these frontiers is discussed in other texts of this book and traverses the reflections of the authors gathered in this section, although not always convergent.

In the magazines analysed by Méndez, one observes the bond between the editors and modernism, from which were construed definitions in the architectural field that were supposedly hegemonic. In these cases, the bond was established mostly because their editors were architects involved with the project practice or with the education and training of future professional colleagues, which is noticeable in the other case studies that comprise this module.

However, besides the periodicals, as shown in the studies by Paula Dedecca and Rute Figueiredo, there were other paths of valorisation of the modern movement, explored by architects and lovers of the arts in general, in the period. This valorisation occurred through the interlocutions between the criticism that circulated, contemporarily, in national and international magazines, specialized or not, and exhibitions, congresses and trips. However, such interlocutions happened through the relationship networks of editors, architects and critics. And, in this ambit, in which we can include the newspapers, there is the production of an architectural culture that strongly marked not only Brazil, but also other countries in Latin America, Europe and the United States.

This circuit is also investigated by Paula Dedecca, who has been studying criticism and the constitution of an architectural field in Brazil since her under-graduate studies. Initially, her researches were on the specialised magazines of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro,¹ and later included

1 Dedecca addressed this theme in her scientific initiation study *São Paulo's criticism on Rio de Janeiro's architecture: reception and differentiation of modern Brazilian production in São Paulo's specialized journals (1945-1960)*, concluded in 2006, and later in her Master's

the institutions of professional representation in the country, namely the *Instituto Brasileiro de Arquitetos* (IAB),² and more recently significant professional events, like the *Seminário Internacional Criação de Novas Cidades*, in 1958. In these studies, the author mobilised a large number of documents – specialised magazines, official documents, letters and newspaper cut-outs –, seeking to retrieve debates from that epoch, to shed light on characters and issues forgotten in time and/or obscured amid the disputes for the definition of the architectural disciplinary field, as well as the narratives consecrated by the historiography of the profession and its production between the 1920s and 1970s.

In these academic studies, the articulation construed between criticism and the professional field by means of a diligent documental survey, as well as the teaching activity in the history of architecture at the Escola da Cidade, in São Paulo, guided the making of the study *A year, a critic, a column: Jaime Maurício and architecture in the itinerary of plastic arts (1958)*. In this study, stands out the interest of integrating the daily press to the discussions on “Criticism, media and different ways of diffusion”. According to Dedecca, this interest is justified by the fact that columns, such as the one published by Jaime Maurício in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, of Rio de Janeiro, may have contributed, on the one hand, to the consolidation of an audience that in the mid-twentieth century was autonomously constituted, and on the other hand, to the diffusion of a specific architectural language, the modernist language.

Jaime Maurício was contemporaneous to authors like Antônio Bento, Mário Barata, Carlos Flexa Ribeiro, Vera Pacheco Jordão, Mário Pedrosa, Ferreira Gullar, Geraldo Ferraz and Flávio Motta, but differently from these, he did not publish conventional criticism, *i.e.*, analytical texts compromised with specific value judgements. As Dedecca shows, this was because Maurício’s interlocution was less directed to the professionals of the area, and more to the lay audience. Hence the attention to news and objective information that characterised the production of his critical texts.

However, despite this (so-called journalistic) posture, Maurício’s interest for modernism is noticeable. His columns and, as a significant part, the photographs published in them, publicised nationally and internationally consecrated works, hence contributing to the circulation of the modernist language and principles, inside and outside the specia-

dissertation *Socialibility, criticism and position: architectural setting, specialized journals and the debate on modern in São Paulo (1945-1965)*, defended at Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo (FAU-USP) in 2012, supervised by Prof. Dr. José Correia Tavares de Lira, funded by Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP).

2 This was the theme of Dedecca’s doctoral thesis, *Architecture and engagement: IAB, professional debate and its transnational arenas (1920-1970)*, defended at FAU-USP in 2018, supervised by Prof. Dr. José Tavares Correia de Lira, funded by FAPESP.

lised circuits. Therefore, it is interesting to look at Dedecca's argument, following the path opened by the researchers Eduardo Costa (2018) and Fernando Lara (2001), in favour of thinking how these images – visual and textual – affected, on the one hand, architects' production and, on the other, their appropriation by the private clientele, considering the links between production and consumption. Worthy of note is the proximity of this perspective with the one assumed also by Rute Figueiredo in her analysis on the criticism of Portuguese architecture presented in this book, when considering that “the architectural periodicals construed a universe of visual and conceptual values that formed the architectural culture in the 1960s, with a direct impact on the professional practice of the architect-reader”.

Dedecca also shows that in Jaime Maurício's “Itinerário das Artes Plásticas” [Plastic Arts Itinerary], he opened the space for architects, especially those connected to IAB, to present a definition of the profession, one more technical and multidisciplinary. In this action, Dedecca observes the effort of some professionals of the area to construct unprecedented links with the State, which are not always noticed by the historiography. At the same time, she points out how the understandable endeavour to affirm the disciplinary autonomy, unexpectedly resulted in a certain isolation that, since then, characterises the profession in Brazil.

Rute Figueiredo, in her study presented here, *Architecture and the principles of critical indeterminacy*, reveals processes similar to those analysed by Dedecca. As the two previous authors, articulating teaching activity, at Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa and Escola Superior Artística do Porto, with research, Figueiredo has published articles and books on architectural criticism, such as *Arquitectura e discurso crítico em Portugal (1893-1918)* [Architecture and criticism discourse in Portugal (1893-1918)], published in 2007, which was granted the Prize José Figueiredo, in 2008. Besides writing texts, the author has been promoting scientific events, such as the series of international workshops *Mapping Architectural Criticism | Meetings*, as well as organizing exhibitions and structuring and leading the project *The Site of Discourse* (funded by the Portuguese Foundation for science and technology, between 2012 e 2015).

In the text presented here, Figueiredo mobilised documents collected in this and in previous investigations on the “editorial culture of architectural periodicals in Portugal during the 20th century” and “the spaces (formal and informal) of encounters and exchanges of architectural criticism in Iberian and Latin American countries, during the 1950s and 1960s”. Taking as temporal cut-out the years 1957 and 1967, thus, the editorial production made between the resumption, or the launch, of two important specialised periodicals and the I Encontro de Críticos de Arte, in Portugal, the author adjusted the focus of her analysis on the magazines *Arquitectura* (1957-1974) and *Binário* (1958-1976); on sections of large-circulation daily newspapers, such as *Suplemento*

literário (*Diário de Lisboa*), *Artes e Letras* (*Diário de Notícias*), *Literatura & Arte* (*A Capital*) and, especially, *Cultura e Arte* (*O Comércio do Porto*); and finally, on periodical publications in the cultural and artistic spheres, as *Colóquio-Artes e Letras* (1959), *O Tempo e o Modo* (1963), and *Jornal de Letras e Artes* (1962).

The option to bring close such different vehicles resulted from the perception that the architectural criticism in Portugal was consolidated in that period, drawing on the *conversation* “between publications of various scales and natures, with objectives, audiences, rhythms and enunciation modes also differentiated from each other”. Similarly to Méndez and Dedecca, the author analyses the specificity of each one of these mediation supports, following the action of architects, artists, historians and art critics, the way in which they crossed and interacted, to retrieve the space of reflection in which this criticism was able to establish itself, generating, as emphasised by Figueiredo, new orders of thought on the disciplinary practice and representation.

In this dialogue, two architects stand out for the centrality they had in the Portuguese critical production of those years, namely: Pedro Vieira de Almeida (1933-2011) and Nuno Portas (1934-). Both enable the author to reflect on how the scale, format and nature of the supports of publication affected the published contents, transforming the practice, having an impact on society at a moment of intense transformation, and expanding the architectural field with the recognition of criticism as a professional activity, pertinent in that country as well. The thorough approach to the production and performance of these two characters also enables the recognition of concepts, conventions and models, both consecrated and in transformation in architecture.

If in the texts by Dedecca and Figueiredo there is an emphasis on the exchanges between the specialised and the lay criticism, in the chapter *1964. French criticism and its discontents: à propos of a special issue of L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* the author Hélène Jannièrè highlights, in the beginning, “the opposition between specialised criticism and journalism, between art criticism and architectural criticism”, and in the sequence points out another aspect of the isolation of the French architectural field, namely, the resistance to dialogue with the intellectual field.

Jannièrè is an architect specialised in the history of architectural criticism and has been focusing her researches on France in the period between the 1950s and the 1980s, articulating the history of criticism with that of planning and urban landscape in that period. The author is the head of the international network and research programme *Mapping Architectural Criticism* together with Paulo Scrivano, with whom she co-edited the special issues *Architectural Criticism and Public Debate and Committed, Politicized, Or Operative: Figures of Engagement in Criticism from 1945 to Today*. Jannièrè has published important reflections on the critical production in France, such as the article “Critique et

architecture: un état des lieux contemporain” [Criticism and architecture: a contemporary state of the issue].

These reflections are mobilised in the text published here, drawing on the analysis of the special issue of the journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (L'AA) published at the end of 1964, dedicated to architectural criticism. Approaching this publication from different entries, Jannièrè formulates potent questions, surpassing the mere identification of a crisis established in the field of criticism at that point in time.

To start with, the author presents those responsible for the publication, the editors Alexandre Persitz and André Bloc, founder and director of L'AA, and the critics chosen by them for the issue: the French Michel Ragon, Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, Pierre Joly and Marc Gaillard, and the foreigners Thomas Creighton, Jürgen Joedicke and Julius Posener. Their articles showed the reiteration of commonplaces in the critical production until then, besides the resistance of architects to accept and give space to journalists and art critics, hence the repeated concern about defining the specificity of architectural criticism and reserve it for the field's professionals. This could be the reason why the 1964 special issue had project presentations, thought as another type of critical reflection, whose narrative was also construed through design. Their descriptive character reinforces the understanding that the French critical production was stagnated. As Jannièrè seeks to show, this stagnation was not only the result of the disputes for the field of criticism and the lack of thorough reflection on it by architects; it resulted also from another crisis, that of modernism.

Supported by the editors and authors of the critical dossier of the 1964 L'AA, modernist architecture had found unprecedented space for realization with the *grands ensembles*, which was the outcome of the social mass housing policy implemented from 1954 onwards. The low adherence and even the rejection of its results constrained architects, who were defensive and disqualified the critics and the general public opinion, arguing that the problems found there were political and, therefore, external to the discipline, whose essence they were not able to reach. Hence the reinforcement of specialisation and the educative sense of criticism by architects.

Besides revealing the persistent endogeny of the French architectural criticism – when comparing to the North American and European production, especially German and Italian –, the limitations of this posture also point out the aversion to a more qualified theoretical debate, increasingly construed in dialogue with human sciences. By identifying them, Jannièrè contributes to the reflection on this double isolation of architectural criticism, which in France assumed features that are different from those analysed by Méndez, Dedecca and Figueiredo for Argentina, Brazil and Portugal, respectively.

Nevertheless, by reading the four texts we notice the synchronicity, in Latin America and Europe, between the creation of specialised journals and the affirmation of autonomy in the professional field of architecture, with the constitution of new areas of activity, such as criticism. We learn that criticism, more than the history of architecture, was produced not only by architects, but also by artists, lettered and journalists, in cultural magazines and journals of different circulation scales, not without disputes and tensions of various types. We also learn that this practice was crucial for the consolidation of architectural criticism and the construction of bridges between the professionals and the lay audience, both in the ambit of the disciplinary debate, in the articulations with various cultural and political activities, and in the ambit of consumption and constitution of new private and public assignments for architecture. The retrieval of this critical production, as well as the effort to qualify what is understood as public opinion, enables to look into the debates of the epoch, recognize the common aspects and divergences, besides the transits, consensus and conflicts that are about the social place that was sought to be constructed for architecture, in the period from the 1940s and the 1970s. Finally, the articles bring us to think about the present condition of the architectural production criticism, which today is based on other parameters, but does not seem to have overcome a certain endogeneity, although in the discourse it continues to seek the construction of bridges between architects and the public.

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ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM IN LATIN AMERICAN HORIZON A HIDDEN ARGUMENT IN SPECIALIZED JOURNALS (1940-1967)¹

Patricia Méndez

Latin America is a continent of journals (Tarcus, 2020, p. 15).

This definition, expressed by the contemporary Argentinian historian, reveals a reality currently verified in all sciences that through journals it is possible to expose the communication systems used in our continent in the twentieth century. In other words, differently from the general press, a journal proposes through its contents a space for reflection, a scope in which the social and intellectual trajectories are intersected, texts that signalise limitations and show the concerns of an epoch and, in one way or another, always reveals its purposes as an indispensable vehicle, which is privileged and brilliant in the intellectual scene in which their editions have transited.

A thorough analysis of the Latin American editorial and disciplinary panorama immerses us in an ambit that lacks neutrality and transcends its own limits. It is about a journalistic scene that maintains some structures and that should be observed through the interpersonal, political, editorial and cultural relationships of its interlocutors, as well as those of its protagonists and readers. If journals, as in Pluet-Despatin's words, are a crystallised desire for collective expression, with the purpose of recruiting new converts (Tarcus, 2020, p. 67), they lack full objectivity, even if, at the same time, they enable a path that covers from the conflict to the commitment and that, differently from books, facilitate the retrieval of the production and expose the social relationship network of their actors.

Architecture in general, and in Latin America in particular, was not oblivious to these phenomena. This is observed in a general panorama

¹ The author specially thanks the availability of the digital newspaper collections of the Centro de Documentación de Arquitectura Latinoamericana (CEDODAL), in Argentina, and Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, in Germany, without which this study would not have been possible.

of the specialised publications, which confirms that in the twentieth century just over nine hundred titles were published throughout the continent (Méndez, 2020; Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2000). Those pages are the outcome of cultural projects that granted each one of the publications a professional status and put them in a privileged place as the principal medium of communication with the social collective that they informed.

This study intends to bring the opportunity to delve into the contents of some journals published in Spanish in Latin America from 1940 to 1967, analysing their editorial nature from a selection within its journalistic category,² observing the institution behind the publications and reviewing their discourses and actions. This purpose is about producing knowledge on the studies of the evolution of Latin American architectural criticism, becoming independent from the traditional and canonical models of analysis. Nevertheless, it leaves pending the worthwhile specific study of the titles presented here and excludes from this text those journals expressly dedicated to the technique and/or different construction or technological guidelines, those listed as “Yearbooks”, the “Bulletins” originating from governmental institutions, journals of the students’ category or engendered in the students’ centres.

The time frame of this study starts in the 1940s and extends until October 1967. Knowing that disciplinary journals were published in Latin America since the late nineteenth century and coinciding with the proposal of Silvia Arango (2012), who periodises the profession and signals the possibility of conducting a historiographical reading based on the journals published in the continent, we find it appropriate to highlight some of those moments that emphasise the synchrony between journals and disciplinary training in the period under study. Therefore, this study starts with the restructuring stage undergone by the schools of architecture and their emancipation as Faculties.³ In addition to the interest in the study and the circulation of professors, those circumstances increased the quantity and the variety of institutional and academic publications; at the same time, this indicates a polyvalent relation and a constant dialogue between these editions and the teaching of architecture. Other distinct moments are those of the arguments that close this analysis. On the one hand, the event of the *Seminario Internacional sobre la situación de la Historiografía en la Arquitectura Latinoamericana*, held in Caracas in October 1967, at the request of a convocation

2 In the set of Latin American architectural journals of the twentieth century, we have detected at least four categories that emerge from the analysis of their editorial platform: 1) from universities (academic institutions); 2) from students (engendered by centres or groups of architecture students); 3) institutional (emerged from private institutes, trade unions or NGO and, at times, integrated to centres anchored at universities); and 4) private (created with an independent spirit within autonomous organisms, with an individual or group root, and usually, having a commercial support) (Méndez, 2020, p. 20).

3 Until then, except for the training of Architecture at the Universidad de la República (Montevideo, Uruguay), the disciplinary education was in the format of “specialisation” anchored on other programmes, as Engineering, Mathematics or Exact Sciences.

by a specialised university institution and the journal published by this centre. On the other hand, because in the early 1960s other publications⁴ were launched on the market that became landmarks of architecture in the second half of the twentieth century, the same ones that established reflective and declarative models of criticism in the continental disciplinary scope. Although we detected around one hundred and fifty journal titles circulating in the analysed period, other facts should be signalled for having affected, in one way or another, the contemporary view on architectural theory and criticism of the time: it is about the publication of books on the international history of architecture in Spanish⁵ versions, which were justified with the information published in journals, as well as the creation of multiple specialised institutes at universities, besides conferences and courses given by specialists.

REMOVING THE VEIL, THE PRACTICE OF ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM

In the 1940s, in addition to the political and social vicissitudes inherent to each Latin American nation, the continental map had to accommodate to the different industrialisation processes, the technification promoted by the central countries, the vanguard trends in art and the modern architectural language that insisted in being installed in these latitudes. This conjuncture, besides the meritorious outcomes demonstrated by the first Faculty of Architecture in operation since 1915 in Montevideo, turned on the alert of change: several requests from the professional organisms and claims emerged in students' movements required a restructuring of the academic training according to the global context and urged a radical change in the system of architecture training.⁶

The results materialised in the organisation of schools and faculties that became definitely independent from other disciplines, enabling the autonomous study of architecture. The tendency took hold almost simultaneously in the entire Latin America and was achieved with the creation of the faculties of architecture, many of which exist until today. For example, there was the one in Rio de Janeiro in 1945, those at University of Chile and in Pernambuco in 1946, the Mackenzie in São Paulo and at the University of Buenos Aires in 1947, and at the University of São Paulo in 1948. It was necessary to wait until 1951 for the opening of the faculty of San Juan and one more year for Tucumán (both in Argen-

4 *Arquitectura Cuba* (La Habana, 1960-1998 with 378 editions), *Escala* (Bogotá, 1962-2015 with 232 issues), *Summa* (Buenos Aires, 1963-1993, with 300 editions), and *AUCA. Arquitectura Urbanismo Construcción Arte* (Santiago de Chile, 1963-1986 which reached 51 publications).

5 In 1951 were published for the first time the Spanish editions of *Saber ver la arquitectura*, by Bruno Zevi (Buenos Aires), and, by Enrico Tedeschi, *Una introducción a la historia de la arquitectura. Nota para una cultura arquitectónica* (Tucumán).

6 These advances were analysed in the research Project funded by FONDECYT Regular 1201550.

tina), in 1952 appeared the faculty at the University of Rio Grande do Sul, and in 1953 at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, among others that make up an extensive list. With this, an interinstitutional network was also created that linked the training in architecture from different levels. This pedagogical opening not only ensured students' growth and teachers' exchange networks, but also extended the horizon by facilitating the formalisation and consolidation of various specialised institutes.

It is also true that several of these research centres already operated within the universities prior to the creation of the faculties, but they did so acting as nodes, implementing theories of their mentors through ideological proposals, in addition to bringing together professors and, certainly, making public their purposes in journals. The list is extensive, but in the range of examples created in this period we can mention, among others, the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Unam) (1936), the Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas at the Universidad de Buenos Aires (1946), two years later the Instituto de Historia de la Arquitectura at the Universidad de la República, the Instituto Interuniversitario de Especialización en Historia de la Arquitectura⁷ (1958), which held a federal bias by gathering faculties of architecture from different universities⁸ and had its initial headquarters in Córdoba, the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas (1962) led by Carlos Arbeláez Camacho at the Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá, and the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, which started its activities in mid-January 1963.

These contexts promoted publications that forged the theoretical and critical contents of Latin American architecture. Here converge in this first group those journals that responded to intellectual collectives and that clearly exposed some strategies of hegemonic dispute (Tarcus, 2020, p. 21). Those were institutional publications, aligned with the mentioned training processes of the academic platforms, showing in their pages not only the professional maturity of a generation that adhered to a new pedagogical system and to the vanguard imprints in design, but, in addition and simultaneously, coincided with the importance achieved by the publications emanated from the specialised institutes within the universities.

There was another editorial set, which balanced the disciplinary information between the academic platform and the general audience; a sphere in which were installed the commercial journals or those originated from private capital. Jorge Rivera indicated those as perform-

7 Also recognised by a shorter extension of its denomination Instituto Interuniversitario de Historia de la Arquitectura, or by its acronym IIDEHA.

8 Comprised professors of history at the national universities of Buenos Aires, Cuyo, Nordeste, Litoral, La Plata, Rosario, Tucumán and the department of Humanities of the Universidad del Sur. The first administration was under the presidency of Enrico Tedeschi and the secretariat under the supervision of architect Marina Waisman.

ing from the “objectified cultural capital of a society, outside of the institutional channels” (1995, p. 16). Clearly, these were not alien to the disciplines because they were usually led by a professional individual or group; however, its public impact overcame gaps or linked opinions between ordinary spectators and the academy. Listing the totality of those productions in the period under analysis would take out of focus the object of this study. Nevertheless, this editorial revolution merits concentrating on certain places that struggled for a theoretical independence outside the local, in those in which the mediatisation of architecture became the common place between institutional and social intersection. Either for the amount published or the contents of their issues, among the journals listed in the latter group and chronologically by date of publication, we can mention *Nuestra Arquitectura* (Buenos Aires, 1929-1986, with 532 editions), *El Arquitecto Peruano* (Lima, 1934-1977, with 357 issues), *Acrópole* (São Paulo, 1936-1971, with 391 editions), *Arquitectura* (México, 1938-1980, (with 119 editions), and from Bogotá, *PROA* (1946-2007, with 455 editions) and *A. Arquitectura y arte* (1955-1964, with thirty three editions). Nevertheless, and even if they escape from the central object of this study, other titles are worthy of mention for their quality of signalling the transit of Latin American architecture in the late twentieth century. Some publications, even though having a short existence, stood out for how urgent their discursive proposal was by integrating the architectural contents with other ambits of design and/or popular culture, e.g., *Espacios. Revista integral de arquitectura, planificación, artes plásticas e ingeniería* (México, 1948-1957, with 43 editions), *Nueva Visión* (Buenos Aires, 1951-1957, with 9 issues) and *Integral* (Caracas, 1955-1959, with 16 editions).

With the purpose of informing the professional audience, *Nuestra Arquitectura* was a journal created and led by the North American engineer Walter Hilton Scott from its Editorial Contémpera. The journal appeared monthly since the late 1920s and initially concentrated its articles on the promotion of Argentinian domestic architecture. Its mentor’s expectations were revealed since the first issue, when he aspired “[...] to serve the art and the industry is the purpose that brings to life *Nuestra Arquitectura* and by being incorporated to the Argentinian press linked to construction, trusts that its profitable activity justifies the goodness of the reasons that precluded its birth” (*Nuestra Arquitectura*, 1929, p. 1). A radical change in the tone of its publications occurs in the 1950s, when its pages start to report news from Scott’s place of origin and were revealed through translations of texts of various authors – Wright, Neutra, Hudnut, Le Corbusier in his visit to Buenos Aires or comments about the International Congress on Modern Architecture (CIAM), to mention a few. It was also perceived in the dedicated layout, with a content that was more pictorial, photographic and in favour of a society that, in fact, was very distant from the Argentinian reality of the time. The ideological editorial boundary was very clear from the beginning, to the point

that the editor evaded the foment of criticism and stated that the journal was “consequent with its norm to suppress all comment on the works it publishes with the purpose of leaving to each professional the praise or disapproval” (*Nuestra Arquitectura*, 1929, s/p). Thus, in almost all editions of the period, this central argument is transparent, every time that efforts were made to interpret architecture as a social problem and not as art. Nevertheless, there was no lack of accomplice signals with the academic world, whenever it was possible to oppose the current institutional modality or complain about the professional practice. Another quality in addition to the characteristics of this series is about the concision of the explanatory texts and the absence of descriptive reports of the works; such conditions enabled the expansion of the new mode of making a journal, thanks to the incorporation of illustrations with great aesthetical care. Although the preference of the examples published was on Richard Neutra’s works installed in California, the issue of April 1932, in which Wladimiro Acosta’s ideas were made visible starting on the front page, turned the editorial consent towards the local modernity. While the editorial position was expanded with the systematic publication of works by other architects engaged in the Argentinian modernity, comprising even the publication of the Austral group’s manifesto, the architecture on its pages remained being read “packaged” in images, in a sort of silent album visually indicating the convenient and adequate, albeit its context was not always its own (Méndez, 2012, p. 105).

Surely, *Nuestra Arquitectura* was not the only publication that openly rebelled against the “critical” concepts. The same happened with the Colombian *A. Arquitectura y arte*, which in its inaugural presentation also expressed the purpose “[...] of creating a cultural, logical and true awareness”, while assuring that from that place there “would not lavish undeserved praise, these pages will not serve as tribune for any kind of resentments” (*A. Arquitectura y Arte*, 1, p. 6). Its intentions were rooted in differentiating from its peer, *PROA*, and for that, it aspired to reach the broad audience declaring its distance from the academic world and including in its news some disruptive journalistic columns (Duran Rocca, 2017, p. 109). Such as in the previously mentioned Argentinian case, the Colombian publications were not innocent, nor determinant in terms of distancing from criticism. On the contrary, architectural criticism translated into the implementation of different and loquacious dimensions and formats to the point that it sought to consolidate and encourage other ambits, as they turned out into “[...] intangible assets of modernity, [and promoted] intellectual networks that anticipated new *imaginary communities* [...]” (Ehrlicher; Ribler-Pipka, 2014, p. 2).

Therefore, the mid-twentieth century found the Latin American environment of architectural journalism immersed in a designing effervescence moving towards “modernity”. Several publications of the time point to important inflexions in their development and often a number of them were simultaneously dedicated to the personal promotion

of their editors, who accommodated their discourses and, in this way, ensured their own professional achievements in their setting and elsewhere. These symptoms are verified not only from the observation of the geographic coverage of the journals, but are also uncovered in the silent insinuation that each publication aspired to “journalistic conviction” of the environment where it circulated, not to mention that in this way, in addition, the profession was accredited. In the words of Leidenberger (2012), the architectural journals performed from two levels: one was the universal medium informing through the contents that they could or not include local aspects, while the other level added a key condition of the actors participating in those pages, through the self-awareness of those professionals, architects, in settling into “being modern”, thus, becoming “mediatic”. Hence, the original journalistic projects of each journal improved and achieved such a point that this “modernity”, encouraged from the shadows, simultaneously favoured an active interpersonal relationship between editors and architects whose works were published. This coincides with the programmatic condition underlying every periodical publication and that is no other than that inscribed in a field of forces, an ambit in which disruptive theories compete and are installed at each edition as subject and cultural vector of its own conjuncture. However, if the journals originating from private funds counted on architecture professionals directly linked to the commercial environment to publicise the most innovative in the discipline, another flight was taken by publications born under the support of universities. These groups, which gathered professors and theorists dedicated to the history of architecture, highlighted in their texts the training and information limitations that their schools were experiencing and, at the same time, they struggled for the urgent need to integrate their efforts into the rest of the world. It was rather a situation that revealed temporal irregularity, since, if the purest language of architectural modernity had already shown some signs of obsolescence in post-war Europe, it had barely installed a few landmarks on the Latin American mainland. This situation caused some concern to more than one of the academic journals, especially when, for the most part, their directors had been trained or specialised in European or North American universities. This group, of an academic nature, brings together the publications promoted, many times, by the same founders of the centres that each journal represented (although many of these centres were created prior to the formalisation of the faculties of architecture). Among these, we can mention *Anales*, founded in 1937, one year after its promoter created the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of Unam; its Argentinian homonym, *Anales*, founded in 1948 by the architect Mario J. Buschiazzo at the Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas of the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA); and the one published as *Fascículo Informativo* del Instituto de Historia de la Arquitectura of the Universidad de la República, in existence between 1962 and 1976. In addition to this list, there are the *Boletín de Informaciones* of the Instituto Interuniversitario de Especialización en Historia

de la Arquitectura that was published since 1959; Apuntes, created at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of Universidad Javeriana since 1966; and the *Boletín CIHE*, directed by the Italian-Venezuelan architect Graziano Gasparini, published from January 1964 until 1997 and whose initial pages arrived “[...] to clear up the debate on the methodology of architectural analysis” (Gutiérrez, 2000, p. 293).

Although the *Boletín de Informaciones* of Instituto Interuniversitario de Especialización en Historia de la Arquitectura (IIDEHA) had the small amount of nine issues and its contents provided news about the faculties that integrated the IIDEHA, it is not less important to review the thought emanated from the group that periodically announced its activities through the *Boletín*. There was information about the seminars held, annually and alternately, between the cities of Córdoba and Tucumán. These were initiated in Córdoba with the presentation of *Arquitectura del siglo XIX*, by Nicolás Pevsner, during July and August 1960; continued by Giulio C. Argan with *El Concepto del espacio arquitectónico: del barroco a nuestros días*, in July 1961; the turn of Joshua Taylor analysing the *Génesis del arte moderno (1920-1930)* was in 1963; the *Arquitectura medieval española* was presented by Fernando Chueca Goitia in August 1964; Vincent Scully concentrated on his proposal of *La tierra, el templo y los dioses. Arquitectura sagrada de los dioses*, in 1965; and the others, not less important, held by Banham and Eco, successively, exceed the time frame of this article. These presentations transcended the local scale and, at the same time that they paved the way of historiography in the Latin American disciplinary training, they opened paths that guided towards the emerging Latin American context in the disciplinary universe. It is also clear that the objective of IIEDEHA was concentrated on pedagogically improving the teaching of history of architecture, but at the first meeting of professors (1957), the publication of a conclusive text signed by a young Marina Waisman warns about the inaccuracies that override the contemporary definitions of the field of “architectural criticism” of that time. About this, the author commented that frequently the appreciations were erroneously linked to art, or were extended to technical and functional problems of a building, which she stressed by explaining that this conceptualisation “lacks a general value as a criteria of valuation, because its strict application would oblige us to refrain from formulating judgements about most of the architectural works” (Paterlini; Gutiérrez, 2007, p. 115-116). Undoubtedly, Marina Waisman preannounced the direction that, years later, her strong writing would take to consolidate the path of Latin American criticism as from the publication of the journal under her direction, *Summarios* (1977-1990, with 135 issues).

The editorial panorama exposed concludes with the review of the news published in the *Boletín CIHE*, created at the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas (CIHE), at Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo of the Universidad Central de Venezuela, which reached

thirty-one issues. The journal lacked editorial texts declared as such, was tacitly based on the theoretical field of the discipline, making clear the perspective of opinion held by its director regarding the continental approach, as expressed in the *Boletín 1* that “[...] there is still much to be done in the field of criticism and the history of American architecture” (1964, p. 9). With the intent to fulfil this and the aspirations of growth in the historiographic field, Gasparini convoked and gathered in the volumes a diversity of authors, published contemporary theorists of distinct disciplines and different nationalities, in a perspective of amplitude and equanimity. This constant promotion in making known the continental panorama reached its zenith at the occasion of the call for the International Seminar on the situation of the historiography of Latin American architecture. The meeting was organised by the CIHE, under the auspices of the Consejo de Desarrollo Científico y Humanístico of the same university, and was held in the period of October 9-14, 1967. The purpose of the meeting was to break the isolation in which, at that time, historians of continental architecture⁹ were immersed, and that was not something different from the concern that repeated identical causes already met in the previous decade in the formation of the IIDEHA in Argentina.

The analyses and proposals that emerged from the event were published in the following year, in April 1968, in the ninth issue of the *Boletín*. Its pages show some of the conferences, as well as the recommendations that, once again, and continuing the route initiated at the meetings in the distant Córdoba, consolidated the path followed by the studies on the historiography of Latin American architecture, of which one can say that they reached maturity twenty years later, at the occasion of the *Seminarios de Arquitectura Latinoamericana (SAL)* held since 1986.

CIHE’s convocation was broad and participants arrived from Europe (Spain and Italy) and the United States, but few countries of the continent were represented (only Peru, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela). Traditional names linked to the global historiographic studies were present, although the absence of participants from the Latin American Southern Cone was noticeable, especially considering that there were already declared positions on the themes of the meeting. Stood out in the conferences the position defended by the architect Juan Pedro Posani, professor at the local university, who shared – besides the origin – many common aspects of education with Gasparini. His presentation, with the title *Por una historia latinoamericana de la arquitectura moderna latinoamericana* (1969), shows a justified criticism of the texts and positions established by several authors as universal. This situation gave Posani the opportunity to highlight the denial of Latin American architecture manifested by Henry-Russell Hightkock, in his *Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1958), by Bruno Zevi in his *Historia de la Arquitectura Moderna* (1950), and by the homonymous edition of

9 “Continuar el diálogo”, *Boletín CIHE*, n. 9, 1968, p. 9.

Storia dell' Architettura Moderna (1960) by Leonardo Benévolo, who was present at the congress. Posani accused Benévolo of presenting in his texts only an “epidermal portrait of Latin America and its modern architecture”. Such statement was justified when understanding that the discrimination against the continental architecture was based on “the lack of knowledge or of methodology for the approach, while until [this] moment they are only aesthetical or superficial”. For this reason, he strongly demanded the duty to assume an active disciplinary maturity, encouraging the participants to reverse the traditional method, because “if history is criticism and criticism is commitment, there is no doubt that it is also possible to reverse such a conceptual sequence” (Posani, 1968, p. 189). Finally, he proposed a methodology of analysis in which he insisted on the gravitation provided by the journals and their essential need while they constitute indispensable mechanisms to know architecture in a global way (Posani, 1968, p. 192).

Under Gasparini’s perspective, the same edition also made place for the conclusions reached by the fifteen participants¹⁰ in the meeting. Six fundamental ideas are presented in the edition, from which arise another nine items in a condensed form, among which, the same *Boletín CIHE* assumed the commitment to establish itself as a means of communication between the adherents. Two aspects can be taken into account here, the first one regarding the valuation and detailed intention to conclude the outline of “a future historiography”, with special emphasis on the continental concern, and, the second, the insistence that the texts presented are enrolled in a symbolic scenario, which combines various architectural elements, but often derails, concentrating in central countries, and only get back on track when the development and crystallization of comparative and integral studies is encouraged.

A SHARED EDITORIAL AND JOURNALISTIC HORIZON

Josep M. Montaner compares the practice of architectural criticism with a nomadic transit, endowed with a dynamism that only the spatial quality can allow (Montaner, 2022, p. 15). It is then necessary to think about how to avoid equivocal results, concentrating on the difficulty imposed by the limits of the analysis of an architectural object and on the attention to be maintained when reviewing mechanisms inscribed in a local reality.

Therefore, if we talk about interpretation or elaboration of judgments about a work, do not architecture journals essentially have that

10 Among those who signed the declaration were: Sibyl Moholy Nagy and George Kubler, from the United States, the Spaniard Fernando Chueca Goitia and the Italians Paolo Portoguesi and Leonardo Benévolo. Among the Latin Americans, participated Germán Tellez from Colombia, José García Bryce and Frederick Cooper Llosa from Peru, from Mexico arrived Ricardo de Robina, Pedro Rojas Rodríguez and Salvador Pinoncelly, while Alfonso Vanegas Rizo, Carlos Raúl Villanueva, Juan Pedro Posani and Graciano Gasparini represented the host country.

capacity? The journalistic nature, similar to an editorial programme, allows the veil to be removed from the opinions and images that appear on their pages. However, it should not be disregarded that, in the eyes of an editor, architectural journals often chose to publish any material that alert and encourage the audience's curiosity, since "[...] it is trusted that, when published, it will acquire the value that justifies the appropriateness of its dissemination" and, many times, "something is not disseminated for what it is worth, but precisely so that it is worth" (Piñon, 2005, p. 9). In this sense, the journals were spokespersons for illusory ideals and banners of the generation they represented, but also, thanks to this same condition of ideological swing in which the press immerses us, its own nature can distort both the present and the desire for a common horizon.

The Latin American editorial production of the period analysed here is vast, the reason why this study considers that there are still pending other alternatives worthy of further investigation. However, it can be affirmed that both the spirit promoted by commercial journals, that of institutional ones, incipient ones as from Córdoba or maintaining a unifying discourse like that of the CIHE, the milestones produced in these areas are noteworthy.

With the exercise of dissimulation or aloud and declaratively, several of these journals exhibited in their pages the concern to make transparent the practice of Latin American architectural criticism. As can be observed, the process was intensive and extensive as much as it was complex, but it is also true that the final decades of the twentieth century illuminated a possible shared horizon. However, the discipline struggles to amalgamate the plurality of ideas and insists on ascending to that step – if there is one – that allows the criticism of Latin American architecture to be installed in the well-deserved place and arises as an outcome of a task of "historians from within" (Posani, 1968, p. 191).

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A YEAR, A CRITIC, A COLUMN: JAYME MAURÍCIO AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE “ITINERARY OF PLASTIC ARTS” (1958)

Paula Dedecca

This chapter seeks to think the space dedicated to the subject of architecture in the column “Itinerário das Artes Plásticas” [Itinerary of Plastic Arts], written by Jayme Maurício (1926–1997), published in *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro, 1901–1974), following it during one single year: 1958.¹ Regarding architecture, it was a turbulent year, still immersed in the euphoria and discontents about the construction of the new federal capital, with the expansion and consolidation of the profession in the country, and an obstinate national and international criticism of the so-called “Brazilian modern architecture”, among many other factors that turned it into a subject for the public at large.

This focused view and on a short time span has the intention, besides reflecting on Jayme Maurício’s criticism, to think the potentialities of the approach on large circulation newspapers as object of study and documental source for the historical research on the area. On the one hand, it is a reflection on the daily press’ position in the networks of architectural debate; on the other hand, it considers its role in the interlocution of this disciplinary field with the non-specialised readers. Furthermore, this article seeks to propose some discussions on how this broad and serial documental set, with a considerable circulation and geographically delimited, with accentuated degree of dispersion and different types of textual and non-textual registers, implies, or does not, other theoretical-methodological contributions to research.

It is possible to say that printed matters are already a relevant object of study and documental source for the historical research on architecture, urbanism, the city and the profession – especially magazines, both specialised and of mass circulation, and the books, either directed to

1 Part of this text originates from the doctoral thesis *Arquitetura e engajamento: o IAB, o debate profissional e suas arenas transnacionais (1920-1970)* [Architecture and engagement: the IAB, the professional debate and the transnational arenas (1920-1970)]. The author acknowledges the financial support of Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) and FAPESP.

the field or not. Rarer are scholarly studies using daily newspapers, in general concentrated on the history of the city and urbanism. It is true that Jayme Maurício's column is by no means unknown to researchers on the architectural field. However, they tend to a punctual use of a piece of news, generally mobilised to answer something intended to be investigated or to check in advance – and, as we will see, interpreting periodicals as mere receptacles of information to be selected, extracted and utilised is a manoeuvre that carries risks or, at least, misses out on good opportunities.

Therefore, here we will look at the texts of the column as an ensemble and in its time distribution, approaching them in the rhythm of production, and above all, of reading. What happens in the course of one year? How can we think this gradual approach to architecture by a non-specialised, common reader, drawing on a daily relationship established with Maurício's column? What does the history of architecture achieve by addressing a systematic look to how architectural and urbanistic subjects are disseminated on a daily basis by newspapers of large circulation? What are the narratives construed daily about the profession? How does this help us, or not, on the long term, to think about the bonds construed by the discipline with the social and political field?

It is interesting to think that the same reasons that, at some point, downgraded newspapers in the qualitative hierarchy of documents, presently, with the fading of a total history, transform them into relevant records for the research of historical processes of the built environment, whose boundaries, fortunately, become increasingly more difficult to precise. The growing interest for the episodic, the differences, the mechanisms of erasure, enable us to approach in another way the fragmented records of daily life, produced under the influx of interests, compromises and passions, the intempestive and hurried writing, the partial, subjective images previously discarded for their inaccuracy or impartiality (De Luca, 2006). These are old issues, for they are placed since the 1970s due to the epistemological tremors suffered by the discipline of history, but did not imply the wide and immediate recognition of the potentialities of the daily press for the architectural historical research.

Here are some warnings regarding this article. There is no specific reason for the choice of the year 1958. It appears in a quite arbitrary way, for being associated to another research that I conduct, concomitantly, about the *Seminário Internacional Criação de Novas Cidades*, an event intensively discussed by Maurício (Dedecca, 2022). Furthermore, what happened in 1958 cannot be taken indiscriminately as an assumption of other years, nor can Maurício's column be taken as a habitual manner of writing about architecture in daily newspapers. It is also noteworthy that in one same day, the column gathered notes on several different subjects. The analysis of this daily ensemble was not made here and it may bring other questions. Finally, with such a timeframe, some discussions are found only halfway, others are abandoned, and we do not know

their possible outcomes. The aim of this article is not to concentrate in one or another discussion, but rather to discuss the role of journalism in the daily construction of the audience's understanding of architecture and the content of the criticism formulated to dialogue with the reader. Therefore, the reflection does not build on the news as such, but on what they raise as questions to think this specific type of media and their relations with the making of history.

JAYME MAURÍCIO, THE COLUMN "ITINERÁRIO DAS ARTES PLÁSTICAS" AND CORREIO DA MANHÃ

Jayme or Jaime? It is necessary to say, beforehand, that this reflection draws on the material collected at the Hemeroteca Digital of Biblioteca Nacional [digital newspaper archive of the National Library] and, therefore, on a documental set that was not collected from the continuous browsing through the 306 editions of the *Correio da Manhã*, published in 1958, but rather from an on-line search by keywords. Namely: Jayme Maurício; Jaime Maurício; Itinerário das Artes Plásticas. As the most varied types of media become digitally available, previously unthinkable fronts are opened to historical research, as well as new traps accompany them. About the latter, I mention here two directly associated with this article: the multiplicity of spelling registered by the newspaper (proper names of persons or institutions, of events, etc.), as well as possible failures in the recognition of characters of an original image. In both cases, there can be failures when the series is relevant from the viewpoint of the method adopted for the research. Furthermore, the absence of the materiality of the digital document should be considered, since one loses the touch of the pages, which gather "machines, inks, paper, text and iconography", associated to the technical conditions of current production and that imply different reading practices (De Luca, 2006).

Jayme Maurício was born in Caxias do Sul, in the Southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, in 1926, and as from his youth he was engaged in the study of plastic arts, the reason why he moved to Rio de Janeiro, then the country's capital. In 1949, he started at the *Correio da Manhã* as cultural reporter. Six years later, in 1955, he started to sign the column "Itinerário das Artes Plásticas". In the column, without assuming an explicit agenda from the programmatic viewpoint, Maurício oscillated between a practice of cultural journalism and of criticism, by writing voluminously about arts, theatre, music, radio, television, cinema, dance and architecture. In parallel, he carried on with his practice of painting and scenography (Cavalcanti, 1973).

Having a good transit among artists and architects, in 1958, Maurício was 32 years old, was at the beginning of his trajectory and found himself within an effervescent art criticism in Rio de Janeiro, mainly disseminated in the large circulation press. At the time, Antônio Bento wrote his column "Artes" [Arts] in *Diário de Notícias*; Mário Barata,

“Artes plásticas” [Plastic Arts], in *Diário de Notícias*; Carlos Flexa Ribeiro, “Notas de Arte” [Notes on Art], in *Jornal do Commercio*; Vera Pacheco Jordão, “Coluna de Artes Plásticas” [Column of Plastic Arts], in *O Globo*. In parallel, Mário Pedrosa and Ferreira Gullar occupied pages of *Jornal do Brasil*, and Quirino Campofiorito, *O Jornal* (Vasconcelos, 2019). Many of these art critics, among others not residing in Rio de Janeiro, as Geraldo Ferraz or Flavio Motta, were attracted in those years by the enthusiastic debate on contemporary architecture. However, few of those editorial spaces opened their pages to the architectural day-to-day as much as Maurício did in his column.

It is not the case, here, to review the trajectory of architectural criticism in Brazil, its multiple theoretical senses and programmes. It is a fact that the boundaries between architectural history, criticism and theory have been increasingly dissolved, since objectivity and subjectivity, temporal distancing and contemporaneity, use or not of documentation, and other aspects, are no longer exclusive of one modality of enunciation. Anyhow, the notion of criticism conventionally spread – and widely shared in those years of Jayme Maurício’s activity – regards a value judgement about architectural works, involving interpretation, judgement, evaluation, valuation and, occasionally, notions of taste, at times with the intention of explaining it to the audience, other times dialoguing with the specialised reader. The critical operation, in this sense, is interested; it engages in the defence of trajectories, consciously intervenes in the professional field, adopts convincing strategies, associating or not with programmatic intentions of the publication that disseminates its opinion.

In contrast with this notion and the performance of the aforementioned art critics, we can think that Maurício positioned himself in another interlocution place, pending much more to the reporter side, especially in architectural subjects, in the sense of prioritising the news report, its objective information, instead of the judgements about the contemporary production. There are in his texts opinions about a few works and the intention to publicise the novelty, which aligns often with one of criticism’s facets. However, he does not seem to wish to intervene in the specialised architectural debate, it is not with those readers that he established a dialogue. As we will see, perhaps one can think that Maurício, at times, makes architectural criticism for non-architects, raising flags and amplifying opinions that were, to some extent, consensual to the discipline at that moment.

Thus, “Itinerário das Artes Plásticas”, judging from the material published in 1958 regarding architecture, is more an informative rather than an analytical column, closer to the news than to criticism. With intense periodicity, though oscillating, the space commanded by Jayme Maurício not always comprised only texts written by him. The city of Rio de Janeiro was highlighted. However, in this same space, there were from short notes to long news about the main cultural events, with

few thorough analyses. Perhaps, this is Maurício's posture specifically in relation to architecture, since not rarely he announced not to feel himself authorised to give his opinion on the theme. Anyhow, this accessible journalistic language, as opposed to the more essayistic criticism, is an important feature to think different modes of reception of architectural subjects by the audience, either lay or specialised.

It is reasonable to assume that the column reached a considerable number of readers, since the newspaper had a daily circulation of 50 thousand copies at the time, attaining, mostly, the literate middle class. With the circulation mainly circumscribed to Rio de Janeiro, *Correio da Manhã* was conceived originally as a collaboration space, gathering different and divergent columns. It rapidly expanded its solidity and recognition, becoming one of the Brazilian newspapers with larger circulation in the 1950s – a decade of the daily press modernisation, abandoning, in the discourse, the opinion journalism, starting to follow the United States' model of news as commodity, of the information as a consumption product (Garzoni, 2011).

Even though regarding the journalistic patterns of the time there is a recognition of *Correio da Manhã*'s independence, it is evident that the editorial reorientation of the daily press in the 1950s did not make its discursive practice effectively devoid of interests. The many studies on the history of this newspaper exemplify the limits of its discourse as an objective, impartial and neutral “vehicle of information”, and show how such institutions participate as agents in the political, social and cultural fields, performing a fundamental role for the transcription, representation and production of events (Biroli, 2004; Rioux, 1999).²

We have few elements that help us to think about the relationship established between the periodical and its columnists and, therefore, the discursive alignment between the *Correio da Manhã* and Maurício. Although one cannot ignore the existence of a possible hierarchical relation with the editorial policy, from the contents of his opinions and the apparently frank way in which these are expressed, it is reasonable to suppose that the critic had a relative autonomy – as well as other columnists with an opinion opposed to that of the newspaper, like Antonio Callado and his defence of the peasants' leagues in the following year. Such freedom of expression was essential to the so-called liberal periodical. For now, perhaps the best thing is to say that, occasionally, there was an evident alignment (either in the support of Kubitschek, or along the broad campaign in favour of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro – MAM-RJ), and at other times, it was distant (as demonstrates the chock of his defence of Brasília with the newspaper's firm opposition to the construction of the new capital). Finally, it is noteworthy that the column “Itinerário...” did not have a prominent place within the newspa-

2 As when opposing Getúlio Vargas and the political practices identified with him, as well as when declaring its support to Juscelino Kubitschek's candidacy against a conservative liberalism.

per, although it was published between pages 14 and 18, next to columns such as “Escritores e livros” [Writers and books], “Vida cultural” [Cultural life], “Flagrant” [Blatant] and, at times, “Horóscopo” [Horoscope].

AN AUDIENCE FOR ARCHITECTURE

“January 1st, 1958. New year, new life and the incorrigible optimism of the occasion.” This was how Maurício opened his first column of the year. Suggesting to leave behind “bad recollections, smaller claims and negative feelings”, the critic convoked “those of the visual world”, “dearest temperamental ones”, for the effort of elevating the artistic standard in Brazil, “such a favoured country regarding the arts” and making available the “Itinerário...” for the dissemination of their work “with the modest intention of making them be loved and admired” (Maurício, 1958a).

As expected, considering the column’s contents and Maurício’s interests, in “Itinerário...” the practice of architecture was presented as an artistic practice. Except for the *International Seminar on the Creation of New Towns*, architecture was dealt with regarding the building’s dimension, with few associations to urban issues and the contemporary debate on cities, even in the case of the new capital, which was under construction. It is noteworthy that this was just one among the possible frameworks on what could be understood as architecture at that moment. This subject, far from being consensual, was a polemic theme in professional interlocution spaces. The central discussion was on the equilibrium point between function, technique and form; the architect’s place in the production of the built environment; its relation with other disciplines; and the possibilities of the social function of its practice.

Looking at the titles of Maurício’s reports on architecture published in 1958, we can understand the tone of the columnist’s approach. All gravitate around a given building, an architect or an architectural programme: “Os peruanos modernizam os cemitérios” [Peruvians modernise the cemeteries] (Jan. 16); “A basílica subterrânea de Lourdes” [The underground Basilica of Lourdes] (Jan. 17); “Projeto de Reidy: casa de madeira na lagoa” [Reidy’s project: wooden house by the lagoon] (Feb. 27); “Mies van der Rohe: monumento em bronze” [Mies van der Rohe: bronze monument] (Mar. 9); “O pavilhão da Holanda: exemplo de gosto e inteligência” [Holland’s pavilion: an example of good taste and intelligence] (May 10); “Saarinen, um grande arquiteto moderno” [Saarinen, a great modern architect] (Jul. 11); “Novo projeto de Niemeyer: museu monumento” [New Niemeyer’s project: a monument museum] (Jul. 30); “Visita ao edifício da UNESCO” [Visit to UNESCO’s building] (Aug. 2); “Bruxelas revela um arquiteto: M. S. Fehn” [Brussels reveals an architect: M. S. Fehn] (Aug. 3); “Niemeyer: a catedral de Brasília” [Niemeyer: Brasília’s cathedral] (Oct. 9); “Monumento a Lauro Sodré” [Monument to Lauro Sodré] (Oct. 9); “As igrejas modernas na França” [Modern churches in France] (Oct. 23); “A influência de Neutra nos

EEUU” [Neutra’s influence in the USA] (Dec. 2); “Stone e o chamado novo estilo na arquitetura” [Stone and the so-called new style in architecture] (Dec. 21).

As we can see, though similar in their focus and generic defence of an updating of the modernist design lexicon, the subjects were diversified. Besides the generic defence of modernity, from where do these themes emerge? What motivates their election? Did the critics esteem them? Were they included in an agenda? It does not seem to be the case, except perhaps for Brasília’s projects, due to Maurício’s close relationship with Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer; but, following some hints left in the writing of such notes, we can think that chance, daily contingencies and the need to produce reports more quickly, were also relevant factors. Some of those texts were secondary outcomes of the author’s trips, such as to Lima (to where he travelled for the setup of an exhibition on Brazilian contemporary art) and to Brussels (which he visited for the international fair). Others are due to visiting exhibitions, to some printed matter that he received or some interview made, such as “Martin Gonçalves e a arquitetura de teatros” [Martin Gonçalves and theatre architecture] (Oct. 4).

A more systematic investigation on the terms mobilised by Maurício to address architecture in his column, his prioritisation of a certain aspect, can be an interesting front to discuss the construction of an audience for the practice. Here, we will look preliminarily at: the indication of his emphasis on the solution given to constructive elements and finishing; the simple description of spaces, especially regarding the agency of the architectural program, and seldom using specialised expressions or notions; the frequent reproduction of the architect’s explanation for a more conceptual approach to the senses attributed to the work (always brief); and the recurrence of words and expressions such as “imitation”, “wrong tradition”, “heritage”, “bad taste”, “contemporary taste”, “rise of aesthetic standards”, which indicate Maurício’s interest in visuality.

The reproduction of texts written by others, already published in other vehicles, was a common practice in the press at the time, which also seems to function in this logic. We can mention “Integração ou síntese das artes” [Integration or synthesis of the arts] (Feb. 7), an excerpt from the book by Paul Damaz, *Art in European Architecture or Synthèse des Arts*, of 1956; “Frank Lloyd Wright imprime sua marca à paisagem de Nova York” [Frank Lloyd Wright leaves his imprint on New York’s cityscape] (Mar. 16), a condensed version of the interview by Aline Saarinen to *New York Times Magazine*; “Arquitetura e música” [Architecture and music], by Frank Lloyd Wright (Jul. 1), originally published in *Saturday Review of Literature*, in 1957; “Como pode a esposa melhorar o arquiteto” [How can the wife improve the architect], account of Diane Neutra to the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (Aug. 26). In some cases, the authors are identified, in others there is

only the name abbreviation, as in “Teatro da Áustria” [Austria’s Theatre], by O. M. C. (Feb. 27).³

It is reasonable to think that throughout the years, Maurício created his own systematics for the production of the column and that there was something like a “news bank”, especially in periods of holiday or his absence from Rio de Janeiro. Two news published sequentially, on December 20 and 21, point to this possibility. “Stone e o chamado novo estilo para a arquitetura” [Stone and the so-called new style for architecture] is the title of the interview with Maurício Roberto, whose theme – architects’ struggle for autonomy in the legislation of their practice – has no relation with the column’s heading. On the following day, the same title introduced the text on Edward Durell Stone’s trajectory and works. Besides the anecdote, this fact reveals the importance of looking at the columns in a sequence, because, many times, considerable rectifications were informed between one and another, answers and additions were disseminated. Moreover, it is frequent that one reportage clarifies another: at a first moment, there is only a short mention to some fact, which will be continued some days later.

Daily events of the architectural world also occupied a considerable space in the column, whether they were local, national or international: death notes; announcements of exhibitions, debates, courses and contests; registers of arrival and departure of architects, alone or in groups, as well as short impressions of such trips; notes on certain buildings (like “Casa das Canoas vai ser alugada” [Canoas House will be rented out]; mentions to commemorative dates; announcements of new publications of books and specialised journals. In this sense, it is worthy of note the effusive scenario of the Brazilian editorial activity focused on architectural magazines, in the 1950s. The increasing number of professionals redefined, expanded and agitated the architects’ fields of interest and activity, simultaneously multiplying the audience for such a diversity of specialised publications amid an environment still short of other editorial offers on the theme (Dedecca, 2012).

Considering the column’s more agile rhythm, when comparing to the specialised magazines (usually monthly), it is reasonable to think that for the specialised audience the column was a relevant channel for pragmatic information on the daily professional life. Perhaps, this audience was not so much interested in the reports that, compared to the contents of debates provided in other spaces of interlocation, were considerably simpler, express and less deepened. In other words, it is possible that the column reached two types of public, the lay and the specialised, who consumed two different types of information – a hypothesis that deserves being investigated more calmly and with other instruments of analysis.

3 From the viewpoint of its mobilisation by the historical analysis, it is interesting to remember that often, in the process of filtering, translating and editing, the nature of those texts were modified. Hence, the preference for one text over another, its integral use or the publication of selected parts, transforms this procedure into an intellectual construction.

Maurício's understanding of architecture as an artistic practice also has a direct relation with the iconography of the columns. Substituting the prevalence of the artistic perspective as a usual way of architectural representation in the newspapers in the previous decades, there is a predominance of photographs (of the building or the model), usually without the publication of technical drawings and never accompanied by contents written by the professionals. No news was found that had cross sections, floor plans or elevations. In almost all of these images, the intention was to present the building, in its formal and spatial aspects, usually seeking to exhibit it as a whole. We see no human scales or people in these spaces (Figure 1).

Those images were not different from the architectural images that circulated, at that moment, in other more specialised press. Except for the registers made by Jayme Maurício in his trips, the other photographs, which have no authorship attribution, are not specifically produced for the column, being often extracted from other press vehicles. It is interesting, drawing on annotations by Eduardo Costa, to indicate the importance of photography for the circulation of ideas about architecture, within and outside the professional circuit. It was much more through the visual reading of photographs, and not necessarily through technical drawings, that architects and other Brazilian intellectuals visualised what modern architecture intended and produced (Costa, 2018).

Thus, if at that moment the magazines led the process of disseminating images of the architectural vanguard for the whole community of architects, it is worth considering that, perhaps, for architects the images reproduced in the column would be no novelty, and that they may have had a relevant role in building, among the large audience, the idea of architecture, drawing on the visuality. Moreover, another type of iconographic register present in the column, in which the built space appears "accidentally" or at least does not assume it as the foreground subject, disseminates an architectural imagery of modernist lexicon.

As an example, there are the many reports on the recently inaugurated *Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro* – an institution with which Maurício built an active bond –, which narrate in details its daily activities, presenting a great number of photographic registers having as subject these activities, but in the background show the new architecture. The list is extensive. Here are some titles that illustrate the contents of those news: "JK sobe a rampa do museu" [JK walks up the museum's ramp] (Jan. 21), "No terraço do museu" [At the Museum's terrace] (Feb. 9), "O presidente da Sears visita o Museu de Arte Moderna" [Sears' president visits the Museum of Modern Art] (Feb. 11), "Arquiteto americano no museu" [American architect at the museum] (Feb. 23), "Diretor da Rockefeller Foundation visitou o museu" [Rockefeller Foundation's director visited the museum] (May 11), "Arquitetos argentinos no museu" [Argentinian architects at the museum] (May 13), "Bailarinos visitam

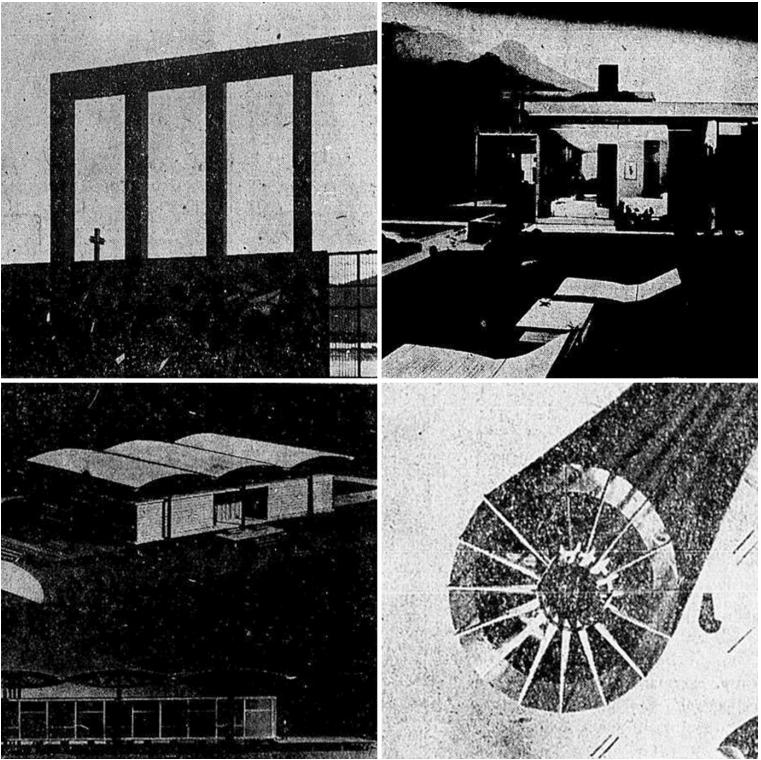


Figure 1 – Four images published in the column on architecture, in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, in 1958. From left to right, top to bottom: Peruvian cemetery, in “Peruvians modernise the cemeteries” (Jan. 16); Headquarters Pavilion of Lagoas, by Reidy, in “Reidy’s project: wooden house by the lagoon” (Feb. 27); and Brasília’s Cathedral, in “Niemeyer: Brasília’s Cathedral” (Oct. 9); photographic reproduction, by Julius Schulman, Kaufmann House, by Richard Neutra, in “Neutra’s influence in the USA” (Dec. 2). Source: Collection of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

o museu” [Ballet dancers visit the museum] (Jun. 10), “Visita ao museu” [Visit to the museum] (Jun. 14), “Jornalista americana no museu” [American journalist at the museum] (Jun. 15), “Famoso arquiteto visita o museu” [Famous architect visits the museum] (Jun. 27), and “O presidente da República empossou o conselho do museu” [The president of the Republic installed the museum’s council] (Oct. 2).

On the black-and-white photographs next to the texts, behind the people portrayed on the foreground and who are the main subjects, one can see fragments of architecture: the ramp, the pergola, the apparent tile, the apparent concrete, the pillar, the independent structure, the zenithal lighting, the perforated brick, the shutter, the metalwork guardrail, the gravel path. These architectural elements appear separately, rarely as an ensemble, often with their presence stressed by the legend (“JK walks up the museum’s ramp”). Could it be that the recurrence of these accidental registers fulfilled some role in the visual conformation

of an architectural culture? It is difficult to analyse such images with a contemporary outlook. How much novelty, or not, did these registers carry? If yes, it is interesting to think that, differently from the representation of space made in reports directly focused on the subject, here the approach of the reader to architecture happens through constructive elements, apprehended separately from each other (Figure 2).⁴

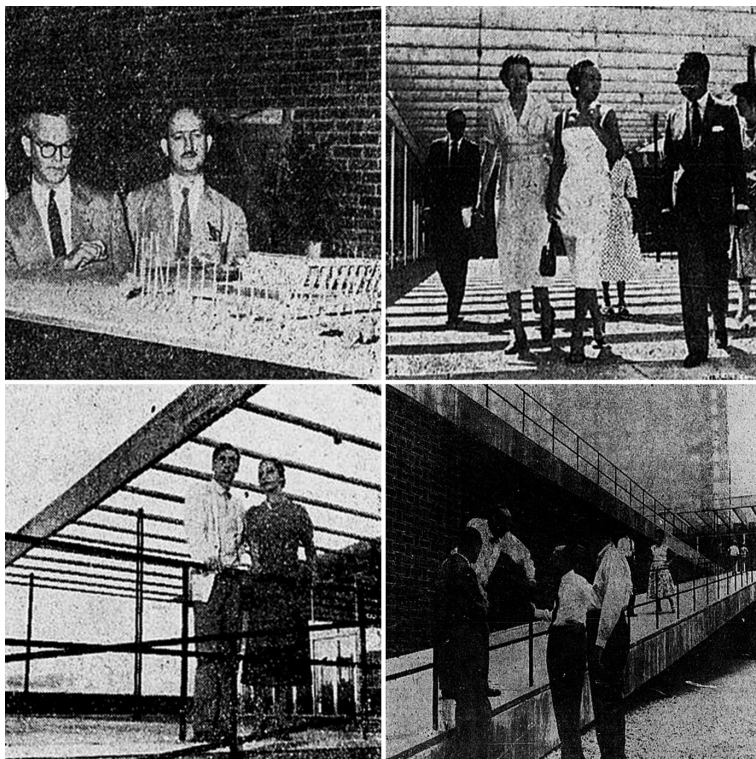


Figure 2 – Four images published in the column, on events held at MAM-RJ, in the newspaper *Correio da Manhã*, in 1958 (author's montage). "The acoustics technician at the museum" (Aug. 21); "Ms. Frondizi" (Apr. 10); "Ballet dancers visit the museum" (Jun. 10); "Berent Friele: American friend of the Museum of Modern Art" (Mar. 26). Source: Collection of Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brazil.

It is historically attributed to the rise of the press a central role in the emergence of the audience, a modern phenomenon, which enabled people to share ideas, even when being geographically distant. The rational

4 Furthermore, drawing on those registers it is possible to view another potentiality of the iconography disseminated in the daily press for the making of architectural history, which increasingly expands the interest in the analysis of spaces in their post-occupation stages. Although many of those photographs are composed, with people posing, in some of them there is the register of the daily use of the space. It is possible that in the most different situations reported, one will find photographs of the spaces being used.

enthusiasm for the news built collective bonds that did not rise from the in-person relationship, but rather from the simultaneity in reading the printed pages and the increasing homogenisation of interests. In this perspective, it is interesting to notice the tension, pointed by Gabriel Tarde, and retrieved by Biroli, between the process of audience building, correlated with that of the press, which meant the constitution of more intellectualised and prudent groupings and the perception of the risk of homogenisation. It is, simultaneously, an ambiguous activity of clarification and levelling (Biroli, 2004).

Focused on sociology and history of politics and journalism, Biroli and Tarde are not concerned with the disciplinary issues discussed in this article, but it is interesting to mobilise this reasoning to think about the relation between the column and the formation of an audience for a type of architecture, one of a modernist lexicon, and for a type of architects' practice – it was, in fact, a relatively new profession, in its autonomous character, in its modes of liberal performance, and in the reach of its activity. These news reports consolidate and legitimise, regarding the non-specialised reader, the notion of architecture as art, as practice of building design, introducing great professional names in the imagery of the broader audience, especially around the keys of style and brilliance. Furthermore, they operate in the process of validation of the so-called “Brazilian modern architecture”, especially from the many news reports on its international success.

Although it was an important moment for the broad diffusion and normalisation of the modernist architecture in urban life (which does not mean it was accessible, largely accepted or present in the daily life of large parcels of all strata of the population), it is nevertheless interesting to think that, intra-disciplinarily, this appropriation and unorderly spread had been, recently, in the mid-1950s, a reason for warning about the risk of abandonment of its true purposes and misunderstanding of its principles (Dedecca, 2012). Undoubtedly, the newspapers contribute to this diffuse and complex process of circulation of a vocabulary that, according to Fernando Lara (2001), had a high degree of penetration in the middle and upper classes, which made the re-appropriation, revision and selective application of the modernist aesthetic, throughout the 1950s.⁵

5 To this process contribute the numerous mentions in the column to the foreign consecration of the “Brazilian modern architecture”, intensely promoted by the agenda of international events provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 1958, institution with which Jayme Maurício seems to have built a strong bond. A “success” of an “internationally famous” architecture, which became an argument for the internal legitimation and adoption, on a large scale, of the lexicon of this production, mainly associated with its roots in Rio de Janeiro.

AN AUDIENCE FOR THE ARCHITECT

So what did it mean to the non-specialised reader to be an architect? What did this professional do? How should he/she act? What distinguished him/her from the other professionals? What were the scales of intervention of his/her knowledge? Even in the discipline's internal spaces of debate, it was a non-consensual issue and in the legislative sphere there was a turbid distinction between the disciplines of engineering and architecture. The dissatisfactions with this coincidence and the fight for the establishment of a social and legal view of the profession's specificity were central in the architects' struggle for the definition of the contours of their activity, throughout the twentieth century, which motivated, to a great extent, their grouping around the Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil (IAB) – an entity that was, at that moment, a relevant node in the national and international interlocution between architects (Dedecca, 2018).

Curiously, despite the lack of consensus on the limits and conceptions of the discipline, it can be said that an ideal professional identity lasted, almost homogeneously, until 1960, and it was reverberated in 1958 by Jayme Maurício's column. Such an identity corresponded to a liberal activity providing services paid solely through fees, being at the top of the construction hierarchy, having full domain of the building design and production process, commercially uninterested, being civic and rejecting whatever publicity, besides being oriented by ethical principles, respect to professional sociability, advocacy of the architectural cause and of the collective interest overriding the individual (Dedecca, 2018).

On January 3, commenting on the first individual exhibition of Flávio de Carvalho's drawings in Rio de Janeiro, Maurício presented him as one of the “most authentic pioneers of modernism in Brazil”. Soon after, he reproduced Carvalho's answer to his questioning on the absence of previous shows of his work in the city:

I have always made my movement alone, including my projects of 27 that are the first ones of modern architecture in Brazil. All are one man's job. The social clown useful as a gregarious element does not attract me: to me, it is an outdated thing. [...] To me, the society operates as a negative control and interests me more as a guinea pig for experiments (Maurício, 1958b).

If such a statement reveals Carvalho's intention to occupy the place expected from a vanguard artist, in the following month, the column opened a large space to reproduce the text “Honrar a profissão servindo à arquitetura” [Honour the profession by serving architecture], a speech held by architect Jorge Moreira to the class graduating from the Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade do Rio Grande do Sul (FA-UFRGS). In his speech, Moreira presented architecture as “a profession as beautiful as it is difficult”, stressing the small fraction of buildings

designed by architects in the Brazilian built environment as a whole, as well as the difficult barriers to be transposed (such as the incipient industry of building materials, the changes in the project during the construction and the lack of understanding of the profession by the public). In Moreira's view, the way out of this should, on the one hand, be made collectively and, on the other hand, review what was understood and disseminated as the architect's practice. According to him, it was about time to overcome the concept of the architect as a "visionary" – as had been praised by Flávio de Carvalho in the previous month:

It is also important to consider that the technical development and the economic requirements of today's life recommend a teamwork, in which the architect should necessarily be the coordinator. The time is gone when the architect could perform all the tasks of a construction work by himself (...). We have the obligation to be good professionals and not creative geniuses (Moreira *apud* Maurício, 1958c).

These are two examples of discourses, among others made during that year, which can be listed to expose how the column helps us to apprehend some of the intra- and interdisciplinary tensions in the dispute for the legitimacy of modes of thinking and practicing architecture. If these were years when architects became socially legitimised as a professional group capable of assuming the great tasks of building the environment in the most varied scales, they had to, on the one hand, conciliate their habitual operation mode – much associated with the liberal, generalist identity and the individual genius – with a perspective of specialisation and multidisciplinary and, on the other hand, negotiate their place with professionals of other disciplines, who also sought to have voice in the debate.

It is possible that the space opened to architecture by Jayme Maurício in his column, larger than in other contemporary printed spaces with the same contents, could be explained by his apparent proximity to this professional group.⁶ During 1958, even though Maurício voiced the opinion of various individual architects, it is interesting to observe the space he opened to the professional collective institutional representation, especially through the dissemination of manifestations and actions of IAB, which started to use the column as an express means of communication among its members, making open calls for architects to send

6 According to Konder Netto, the columnist was "very close to the old school of architects" (Barbosa, 2022) and participated in many of their moments of debate and sociability, formally and informally. In order to answer this hypothesis, it would be necessary to perform a more thorough research on the other years of the column, as well in his personal archive, which is under the guard of Instituto Moreira Salles (IMS). Anyhow, some hints can illustrate this transit. It was Jayme Maurício who, in 1954, started a campaign against Lucio Costa's social withdrawal (Nobre, 2008). In 1956, the journalist was among the first group to visit the Catetinho, in Brasília, under construction, together with Niemeyer. It was also him, years later, in 1964, who became the main promoter of the work "Riposatevi", by Costa.

materials for exhibitions and convoking for meetings and assemblies. On April 29, in the section *Letters to the chronicler*, Maurício declared his joy for having received a letter that constituted “a stimulus, a valuable applause to our daily efforts”. It was written by Maurício Roberto, a “great urbanist and architect” who, at that moment, was the president of the Rio de Janeiro section of IAB (IAB-RJ):

You, the owner of the most read specialised section of Rio de Janeiro, have been providing an invaluable service to architects. This uninterested support, coming from an informed man, is what helps us to be sure of the final victory, encouraging us to continue fighting against the campaign of misunderstanding and unwillingness that is launched against us. Dear Jayme Maurício, we continue to count on you and thank you very much for everything until now (Maurício, 1958f).

It is possible that this note was an acknowledgment to the various columns written by Maurício in the previous month, in which he publicised the conflict between IAB and Clube Militar concerning the definition of the contest terms to select the Club’s new headquarters. Echoing the institute’s criticism of the contest notice and its threats not to recommend the participation of its members, after the unsuccessful negotiations, a short comment of Maurício declared that this was a “courageous and dignified” attitude from a professional category whose situation was “unique, splendid” (Mar. 12; Mar. 14). During 1958, the columnist also publicised two other similar disputes: the contests for *Monumento ao Imigrante Japonês* [Monument to Japanese Immigrants] (Jun. 27) and *Casa do Trabalhador* [Worker’s House] (Sep. 4).

Maurício assumes a similar posture in the fight between the municipal administration and IAB-RJ for the concession of a plot for its new headquarters. For him, it was incomprehensible that the “only class” that gave Brazil, at that moment, “pride” and “cultural dignity in the world’s eyes” continued to have a denial on the concession of a space for the development of its activities (Nov. 4). Revealing the importance of the press at moments of the architects’ negotiations with other spheres in the social and political fields, some weeks after this manifestation, once again IAB sent a note thanking the columnist. A few days later, on Christmas eve, IAB held a “happy and agreeable meeting” to thank the press, with the presence of representative names of Rio de Janeiro’s journalism, including Paulo Mendes Campos, Rubem Braga, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito (Dec. 24). To Maurício, IAB declared:

We are sure that your support has strongly contributed to the mayor’s decision, when he announced yesterday, in an audience with architects, the signing of the concession term of the plot at Rua do Passeio. [...] On behalf of Rio de Janeiro’s architects, I thank you for your extremely valuable collaboration,

being sure that we can use it again every time we must struggle for another fair cause (Roberto *apud* Maurício, 1958i).

A similar movement occurs with the many pages dedicated by the column to the defence of the draft bill for the regulation of the architects' autonomous profession presented at the end of 1958 to Brazil's president, Juscelino Kubitschek. The idea of using the press to support the architects' struggles outside of the disciplinary field is interesting. In the late 1950's, the professional environment became a complex one, with a myriad of possible spaces for internal and external interlocation. Therefore, it is possible that different strategies were adopted for each dispute, considering each type of interlocutor. For those interested in disciplinary debates, the manifestations publicised in spaces of the more specialised press may perhaps provide greater performance as documental source. In fact, in 1958, there is nothing in this sense in Maurício's columns. However, for studies focused on the history of the professional interlocation with the political field, the daily press seems to be a valuable source.

Historically, facing issues on the transit between architecture and urbanism professionals and the political decision-making spheres is a front little explored by historiography. It is likely that a deeper understanding of this relation and its disputes provides elements to think about the eternal fragility or "crisis" of the profession, its constant lament regarding the failures of interlocation with the social environment and the political field.

In another opportunity, I have explored the organisation of the *International Seminar on the Creation of New Towns*, held in October 1958 in Rio de Janeiro, and how, drawing on this transnational, multidisciplinary and interinstitutional event, we can relationally situate performances, discourses and strategies disputing to have a voice, regarding the new, planned towns. It is interesting to notice how, in those years, at the same time that architects achieved a new position regarding the public sphere and the broader audience, when they sought to consolidate and guarantee the boundaries of their performance, they were in a thorough dispute with other disciplines. I will not retrieve here the debate, but I take some of the intrigues that emerged during the preparation to illustrate how, drawing on less compromised opinions, it is possible to apprehend fissures that remained submersed in the periodical press of longer preparation. One of the possible funders of the event, who withdrew during the process, was Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho. He justifies his decision to Jayme Maurício in this way:

Finally, after much back and forth, much susceptibility, I was asked why should I get involved in architectural and urbanistic matters. Only the Institute of Architects could do it. So, many more things that I will not tell you, but that led me to completely abandon the idea. [...]. I closed my contacts for good with the architects' class. I will be friend to many, whom

I admire and esteem, but never again in my life do I wish to have any initiative, any work that takes to the collective contact with architects. And this you can say clearly in “Itinerário...” (Maurício, 1958g).

Next, Jayme Maurício corroborated: “Once again one concludes that our very dear architects are individually excellent and collectively something very delicate, temperamental, difficult, really impossible”. Then, he stated that everyone, including the columnist, “regarded the class of architects, in their ensemble, as something totally impractical”. According to him, it was “a great shame”, since from such characteristics of professional positioning resulted “several ills”, among which “a tremendous absence of good architecture acoustics in the social environments”, which remained as a “phenomenon of elite, isolated, depending on individual preferences” (Maurício, 1958g).

Many other examples of intrigues could be collected, such as the “neighbourhood rancidity” of the magazine *Habitat* when being alarmed with the possible transference of the Art Biennial to Rio de Janeiro (Jan. 12); the rumours of Lucio Costa’s dispensation in the process of the new capital’s installation (Oct. 21); or, Sergio Bernardes’ “bared access to university!”, by Archimedes Memória (Oct. 25). Can we assume that Maurício wrote his column expecting that the text had a day and a time to cease to exist? Did he expect his texts to be discarded the next day? How much of untimeliness is there and, to a certain extent, lack of commitment with the long term and a preference for the interference in the present? Anyhow, it is in this daily register, often with informal language, that perhaps it is possible to suspend certain historiographical montages (or understand some of its triggering elements).

The issue of how the daily press can help us deal with erasures, either made in their own time or by historiography, also deserves a note. As other researches have demonstrated, it is precisely the fresh news, the decentralised making, among other traits, that makes the media be a valuable document for the retrieval of names and facts made invisible. However, this does not seem to be the case of Maurício’s column. There are few unknown names that emerge from it. Perhaps it is not a column to discuss erasures, but rather consolidations, legitimization processes. Something that possibly occurs from the critic’s relationships circle and from the typical characteristics of a column, much more personalised than the news.

It is a common criticism that by suppressing conflicts and establishing a teleology, historiography masks the many contradictions present in the cultural discussions of the epoch. By mobilising precisely the *Correio da Manhã* to think the field of the arts in the 1920s and 1930s, Rafael Cardoso points to the possibility that historicising events beyond the specialised sources would enable us to surpass some simplistic views by facing the little justifiable posture of fixing an artificial separation between art and society. By privileging other documents beyond those produced by the very actors, it would be possible to obtain a more

complex perspective, taking into consideration how certain movements were seen by the entire society (Cardoso, 2015). Jayme Maurício, when closing the year, made visible the turbulence:

It is usual that columnists make at the end of the year a balance of the activities they follow and animate, stressing the more expressive aspects, the most relevant events and personalities. Therefore, we must follow the habit. This 1958, however, makes this task extremely difficult due to the richness and effervescence presented in the field of visual arts. A lot has happened in 1958. It was a fertile, remarkable year. [...]. The reader who observes daily the reactions of his informer has forcibly noticed that the initial resourcefulness begins to give in to a certain somewhat scarred shyness. We are dealing with things that are too serious, dense and beautiful (Maurício, 1958).

In 1958, we cannot see in Jayme Maurício the intention to position himself as a great architectural critic. The ideas disseminated in his column, compared to the fervour of the architectural debate of the moment, are commonplace, conventional and consensual. Therefore, his texts do not help us to think the circulation of great ideas – for this purpose, we have the production of other critics of art and architecture, more original, radical and disruptive. It is this prosaicism that makes Maurício's writing interesting as subject and source, since, from this daily narrative, we can think the gradual construction, long and rooted, wide and nebulous, of a public understanding about architecture and the architect's profession.

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ARCHITECTURE AND THE “PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL INDETERMINACY”⁷

Rute Figueiredo

INTRODUCTION

What I name conjuncture may be understood as a temporal constellation or a constellated time; in other words, a time when different times coexist, oeuvres constituted of different durations, or transporting the differentiated temporalities they traverse (Gusmão, 2000 – free translation).

In Portugal, a country that until April 1974 remained politically isolated from the then emergent Western democracies, an ideological agenda – opposed to the authoritarian regime of *Estado Novo* [New State] – structured the thought of young architects in the formulation and understanding of architectural criticism. They also sought, in the precise choice of the mediation mechanisms they used, to inscribe their discourse in the renewal movement emerging in the Portuguese intellectual setting, in which criticism became invested in an interdisciplinary dimension, ideologically committed with the problems of society.

Presently, we have several readings on the social and political circumstances (Cabrera, 2006. Sousa; Hohlfeldt, 2017) that have shaped the critical debate on architecture. In recent years, we have also become used to reflecting on the history of architectural criticism according to the relationship it has established with the specialised media (Janniére; Vanlaethem, 2008; Figueiredo, 2007) – considering architectural journals as documentary sources able to reconfigure the contexts in which they were framed (Méndez, 2020; Schmiedeknecht; Peckham, 2018; Parnell, 2011; Colomina, 2008) and the profile of the authors who outlined, produced and supported them (Alves, 2020; Esteban-Maluenda, 2016). More than just a series of printed objects, isolated from each other, architectural periodicals are, effectively, both intellectual and vi-

⁷ This work was funded by Portuguese national funds through Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), I.P., within the projects UIDB/04041/2020 and UIDP/04041/2020 (Arnaldo Araújo Research Centre).

sual *sites* “capable of generating new orders of thought on disciplinary practice and representation”, and *episodes* in a broader narrative (Figueiredo; Seco, 2022) that allow us to read the evolution and fluctuation of concepts, conventions and models. It also enables us to identify constellations of relationships between critics, architects and editors, and the way in which the configuration of such constellations evolves over time and space.

Nonetheless, there are important aspects that have been overlooked in the study of architectural criticism, particularly regarding the value of the contributions published in mass-circulation newspapers and cultural periodicals for the disciplinary debate and, above all, for the delimitation of the field of criticism in post-war Portugal.¹ If, on the one hand, in the layout of a generalist newspaper – “an index of the way modernity has produced both fragmentation and continuity” (McQuire, 2012, p. 602) – architectural articles were placed side by side in the “mosaic” of daily events, political-ideological slogans or broad cultural themes, on the other hand, this fragmented approach surpassed the mere notion of occurrence, as we will see. As Pedro Gadanho reminds us, the generalist written press “plays a central role in the creation of opinion networks – and also in the formation of that public sphere in which we are interested in locating architectural culture”. Indeed, the resonance of its content and “the chain of information it generates” have “insidious repercussions on the social whole” (2010, p. 31).

This essay seeks to understand the extent to which what has been identified as the re-foundation of art criticism in Portugal in the 1960s (Barão, 2015; Esquível, 2008), resulted (in the case of architecture) from an extensive *conversation* between publications of different scale and nature, which also had different objectives, audiences, rhythms and modes of enunciation. In exploring this idea, this essay focuses on the specificity of each of these mediating supports, that followed the actions of architects, artists, historians and art critics; how they intersected and interacted; and whether this *conversation*, based on multiple focal points (either disciplinary or ideological), wove new configurations for architectural criticism in Portugal.

The essay argues that the regular collaboration of architects with mass-circulation newspapers or periodical publications in the cultural and artistic spheres, besides their editorial activity in the specialized journals *Arquitectura* (1957-1974) and *Binário* (1958-1976), was fundamental to create a reflexive circumstance in which architectural criticism could find a space for discursive expansion and concrete action in society.

1 Although there are few studies, it is important to mention the contribution of some authors in this domain, namely: Tiago Lopes Dias with *Teoria e Desenho da Arquitectura em Portugal, 1956-1974: Nuno Portas and Pedro Vieira de Almeida* (Lopes Dias, 2017); or Nuno Correia, who compiled a selection of texts produced by Pedro Vieira de Almeida in *Jornal de Letras e Artes* (Correia, 2018).

Without neglecting the relevance of the actors, the printed texts are here at the centre of this narrative, which proposes to analyse the activity of criticism from 1957 – the beginning of the third series of the magazine *Arquitectura*, immediately followed by the publication of *Binário* – and the 1^o Encontro de Críticos de Arte Portugueses (ECAP), held in 1967. The ten years analysed form a “constellated time”, as the epigraph suggests. Such a constellation resulted from the interaction between the individual and collective *times* of its agents and the different methodological and procedural *times* of the publications that strengthened the practice of architectural criticism in Portugal, in the 1950s and 1960s.

It should also be pointed out that the documentation supporting this essay has a broad range, exploring new data collected in the scope of different research paths. Firstly, when analysing the editorial culture of Portuguese architectural periodicals over the twentieth century,² it was possible to draw up a thorough cartography of all the actors, articles and specialised journals that have shaped criticism. Secondly, when studying the (formal and informal) spaces in which architecture critics from Iberian and South American countries met and exchanged in the 1950s and 1960s,³ my research focus expanded not only geographically, but also disciplinarily – transcending the strict approach of the architecture journal and calling for a reflection on other printed spheres, such as mass-circulation newspapers and publications of literary and artistic culture.

1957-1967: CRITICISM IN THE CONSTELLATED TIME OF THE EDITORIAL CULTURE

In a period of about a decade, beginning in the late 1950s, there was a whole constellation of events that would corroborate the construction of the critical space. With the actions of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation – which in the 1960s launched a programme of scholarships for the training of young artists and critics abroad and created a prize for art criticism in 1962 – as well as the organisation of the “Free Course on History and Aesthetics” at the *Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes*

2 The research project *The Site of Discourse* (PTDC/CPC-HAT/4894/2012), was funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (2013-2015) and developed by an institutional partnership between the *Institute of Art History, School of Social and Human Sciences*/New University of Lisbon and DINÂMIA, of ISCTE/IUUniversity Institute of Lisbon. The project was designed and coordinated by Rute Figueiredo, author of this article, and carried out by a multidisciplinary team. The project resulted in the construction of a database with approx. 28,000 entries.

3 My post-doctoral research project entitled *Transnational Practices: Architectural Criticism in the Iberian and South American World (2018-2019)*, was developed under the scientific supervision of Professors Hélène Jannière and Paolo Scrivano, in the scope of the research program *CritArch – Mapping Architectural Criticism 20th and 21st centuries: A Cartography* at Université Rennes 2. This project was supported by Région Bretagne and the postdoctoral program of Université Bretagne Loire.

(1964), art criticism began to offer an institutional configuration, in which architecture was inscribed. The impact of these initiatives can be well illustrated by looking at the careers of some of the most important architects of the period who were active voices in architectural criticism, such as Pedro Vieira de Almeida (1933-2011) and Nuno Portas (1934-) – both of whom received the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation’s scholarships to study abroad, and Portas won the Art Critics’ Prize with an article published in the *Jornal de Letras e Artes* on 8 May 1963 entitled “Arquitetura integrada?” [Integrated architecture?].

However, the professional statement and identification of architectural criticism required from the architects-critics the effort of dealing with a game of scales in the editorial field, which was limited to the domain of the community of specialist-readers, adapted to the intellectual-reader, or expanded towards a large audience, *i.e.* the generalist-reader. This required, likewise, the use of different ways of expressing architecture’s discourse and representation.

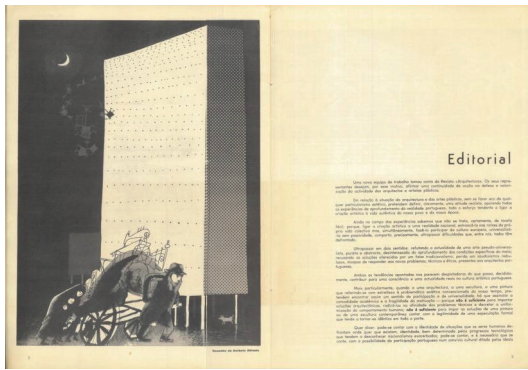


Figure 1 – Drawing by António Alfredo, next to the Editorial of the third series of the journal *Arquitetura*, n. 1 (1957).

The image used by the journal *Arquitetura* to open the first pages of its third series, in 1957 (Figure 1), immediately identified the focus of the new editorial team’s concerns. Both the unease engendered by the image and the words that follow it in the introductory Editorial, alluded to the malaise that was being felt in various sectors of society, reinforced by the expression highlighted twice in the body of the text – “it is not sufficient”. Indeed, it was not sufficient the answer given by architecture to the increasing demographic pressure on urban space and the dramatic emergence of both housing and social problems in the large cities. Nor was it sufficient to “import solutions”, to “standardise human behaviour” or to engage in formal speculation in the field of arts (Duarte et al., 1957, p. 3). Also was not sufficient the uncritical position maintained by architects and the absence of space for the confrontation of perspectives up to that date. The architects and critics of the new editorial board

were, therefore, less interested in debating the definition of criticism than in the “possibility of the practical exercise of its functions” (França, 1966, p. 638) in a cultural and social conjuncture whose dilemmas went largely beyond the professional and disciplinary fields.

Thus, the creation of a new mechanism for mediating architecture enabled the renewal of ideas and the “broad debate of viewpoints, free from doctrinal sectarianisms” (Duarte et al., 1957, p. 3). For this reason, the editorial group, coordinated by architect Carlos Santos Duarte (1926-2019), was made up of members of a “newest generation” of architects,⁴ in the words of Nuno Portas (1959, p. 13) – one of the most active architects-critics in defining the journal’s editorial agenda. Besides Portas, that generation included, among other architects, Arnaldo Araújo (1925-1982), António Freitas (1925-2014), Nuno Teotónio Pereira (1922-2016), Raul Hestnes Ferreira (1931-2018), Vasco Lobo, Daniel Santa-Rita, Rui Mendes Paula. It comprised also figures from other domains, such as landscape architect Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles (1922-2020), artist Nikias Skapinakis (1931-2020), historian and art critic José-Augusto França (1922-2021),⁵ and later the writer José Saramago (1922-2010) – who was awarded the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1998. Although diversified and heterogeneous, the reflections of those actors introduced new methodological approaches and ways of formulating problems into the field of architectural criticism. In addition, the ideas of authors as diverse as Bruno Zevi, Alison and Peter Smithson, Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes, Georges Candilis, André Malraux, Manuel Castells, Christopher Alexander, among others, also circulated in the pages of the journal and formed an intellectual network, in which the architects and critics situated the structure of their thoughts and actions – also drawing on the epistemic cultures of sociology, phenomenology, anthropology or imbuing their discourse with a certain socio-political activism.

Yet, the specialised architectural press was not limited to this methodological and disciplinary experimentation. On the contrary, the journal *Binário*, founded in the following year by the brothers Manuel Tainha (Architect) and Jovito Tainha (Engineer), did not have an inherent ideological motivation, nor was it aimed exclusively at a professional or specialised audience. Instead, it presented national and international

4 Tiago Lopes Dias refers that the expression “newest generation” followed the line defended by the French cinema critics, in *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, which Nuno Portas collected (Lopes Dias, 2017, p. 179).

5 Holder of a scholarship from the French government, in Paris (1959-1963), and disciple of Pierre Francastel at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, José-Augusto França later became the president of the Portuguese section of the Association Internationale des Critiques d’Art, in 1969, and was one of the most relevant figures of Portuguese culture in the twentieth century.

architectural models and considered architectural, urban and engineering projects as equal domains. Until the mid-1970s, *Arquitectura* and *Binário* were the only professional journals in Portugal and, although very different from each other, they reinforced the professional identity of architects, while providing access to updated and constantly revised information. Extensively illustrated, with good-quality photographs (especially in *Binário*), technical drawings and other graphic material (*e.g.*, in the covers of the various issues) (Figures 2 and 3), the architectural journals built up the universe of visual and conceptual values that shaped architectural culture in the 1960s, with a direct impact on the professional practice of the reader-architect.

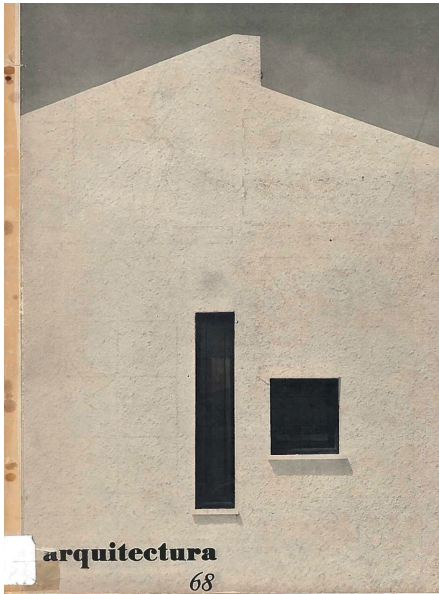


Figure 2 – Cover of the journal *Arquitectura*, n. 68 (1960).

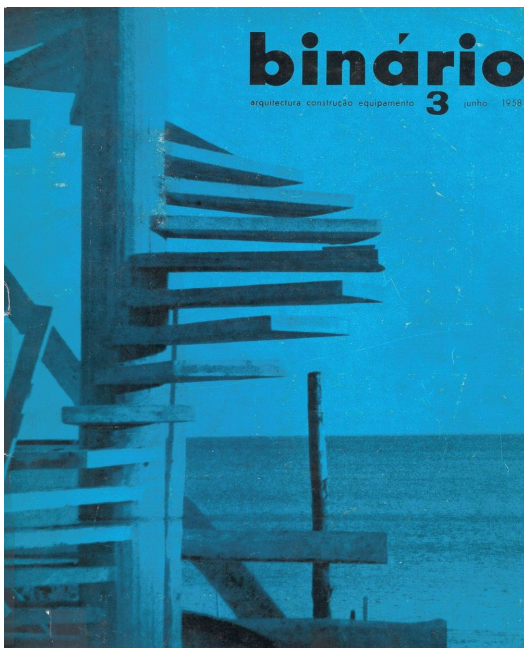


Figure 3 – Cover of the journal *Binário*, n. 3 (1958).

In addition to the intense editorial work carried out at *Arquitetura* and *Binário*, the regular collaboration of the same group of young architects and critics, either in artistic and literary publications, or in the cultural supplements of the daily newspapers, enabled the expansion of the architectural subjects' dissemination and the entry of architectural criticism into the public domain. Deeply connected to this process, there was also the intellectual and artistic renewal movement promoted by an expressive range of cultural publications that played a leading role until the 1970s. In these publishing spaces, it was clear a sort of attempt to organise an intellectual elite, independent of the political-ideological system (Martins, 2007), from which architects did not want to be absent.

In 1959, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation launched *Colóquio - Revista de Artes e Letras* (1959-1970), conceived as a multidisciplinary project, that would overcome “dependencies from schools, sectarianism or proselytism” and would be “open to all thoughts that remain loyal to the essential principles of our civilisation and reflect the ideals and concerns of several generations, whose synthesis represents the historical moment in which we live” (Primeiro Colóquio, 1959, p. 1). In the disciplinary, geographical and ideological diversity of its collaborators, there were a number of architects: Francisco Keil do Amaral, who wrote about the built environment (1961); Pedro Vieira

de Almeida, dedicated to the exhibition of new churches in Germany (1964) or to the analysis of Le Corbusier's life and work (1965); Nuno Portas, proposing a critical interpretation of the works of Antoni Gaudí (1965) and Raul Lino (1970). In 1964, Carlos Duarte wrote about the English architecture and two years later dedicated an eight-page article to German architecture, elaborating on the master plan for the reconstruction of German cities in the post-war and the urbanistic dilemmas engendered by this reconstruction – “brutalist’ experiences under the influence of Le Corbusier’s final works”, as he states (Duarte, 1966, p. 53). The article opened with a half-page photograph (Figure 4) with a view on the city of Berlin in which the building of the Europa-Centre complex, designed by architects Helmut Hentrich and Hubert Petschnigg, confronted with the reconstruction of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche, by architect Egon Eiermann. This tense relation between the past and contemporaneity moved to the journal *Arquitetura*, in which Carlos Duarte published one month later the dossier “Alemanha 66” [Germany 66], whose cover presented a critical reading of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche and the new memorial church, by architect Egon Eiermann (Figure 5). In the *Colóquio – Revista de Artes e Letras*, the architectural critical articles had few images, but of high-quality, usually made by great photographers such as Mário Novais, Teófilo Rego, Elisabeth Schwenk, Paul G. Almasy, Rubens Andersen Leitão, E. Glesmann and Pierre d’Otreppe.



Figure 4 – Pages 48 and 52 of the article “A arquitetura alemã hoje” [German architecture today], *Colóquio – Revista de Artes e Letras*, n. 38 (1966).

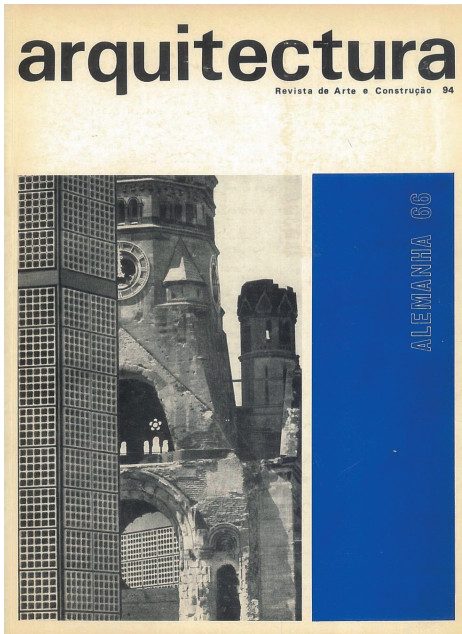


Figure 5 – Cover of the dossier “Alemanha 66” [Germany 66], *Arquitectura*, n. 94 (1966).

At the beginning of the 1960s, the launch of the weekly *Jornal de Letras e Artes* reinforced the presence of architectural subjects in the cultural sphere. However, it was more focused on “dignifying thinkers, writers and artists”, seeking to “surround them with prestige, make them authentic stars of noble ideals and elevated feelings”, since critics would be the great “instruments of evolution and progress” (Azevedo, 1961, p. 1). Some architects-critics, belonging to the editorial core of the journal *Arquitectura*, such as Carlos Duarte, António Freitas and Nuno Portas, once again published in this weekly journal. Nonetheless, it was another figure, the young architect and critic Pedro Vieira de Almeida who would direct the biweekly section “Página de Arquitectura” [Architecture Page], until 1968. Vieira de Almeida contributed very little to the specialised journals,⁶ but he is undoubtedly among the most active and creative Portuguese critics in the 1960s⁷.

6 Outstanding: the extensive “Ensaio sobre o espaço da arquitetura” [Essay on architecture’s space], published in the issues 79 to 81, Jul. 1963/Mar. 1964; “Uma análise à obra de Siza Vieira” [An analysis on Siza Vieira’s work], n. 96, Mar./Apr. 1967; “A crítica de Pedro Vieira de Almeida” [Pedro Vieira de Almeida’s criticism], n. 100, Nov./Dec. 1967; “A retrospectiva de Raul Lino” [The retrospective of Raul Lino], reply by Vieira de Almeida, transcription based on *Diário de Lisboa* of Nov. 21, 1970, and on *O Século* of Nov. 24, 1970.

7 On the deepening of the theoretical and practical work of these two architect-critics, see the doctoral dissertation of Tiago Lopes Dias (2017).

In “Arquitectura como disciplina interdisciplinar” [Architecture as an interdisciplinary discipline], which opened the section, Vieira de Almeida recalled that the permanent collaboration of architects in this cultural journal sought to take the problems of architecture beyond disciplinary or professional boundaries. It targeted an audience that, “despite being well-informed from other points of view, is often less informed – I would almost say, scandalously less so – regarding architectural problems” (Vieira de Almeida, 1965, p. 5). In the space of this journal, he tested new categories of critical reading, such as the notion of “lost-space” (p. 19); and in the article “Estrutura crítica – condição base de criação” [Critical structure – a basic condition for creation], published in dialogue with an interview to Mário Pedrosa (Figure 7), he speculated on the link between *research* and the *making* – “research is the basic condition for artistic activity, and the latter is a sufficient and adequate consequence of the same search” (1966, p. 5).



Figure 6 – Pages of the interview to Mário Pedrosa and the article “Estrutura crítica – condição base de criação” [Critical structure – basic condition for creation], *Jornal de Letras e Artes*, n. 224 (1966).

Another journal of “thought and action”, *O Tempo e o Modo*, was founded in 1963. Directed by the novelist António Alçada Baptista (1927-2008), the journal was formed by a group of young intellectuals, progressive Catholics, strongly involved in the Portuguese literature and culture, who sought to formulate “some questions and experiment some answers, which would polarize the general anxiety hanging over the common time” (1963). This group opened space in the journal for other

collaborators, Catholics, non-Catholics, agnostics, expanding voices that enlarged to the architectural domain.

In the pages of this journal, Portas wrote extensively on tradition, progress and regional urbanism, as well as the humanisation of the city. In 1965, he dedicated an article to Le Corbusier on the occasion of his death, in which he apologised: “I found it would be more useful to critically revisit the potential relevance of his [Le Corbusier] doctrinal and/or constructed contributions in a publication of interdisciplinary interest, such as this one” (Portas, 1965, p. 798). It is a quite meaningful tone, in which Portas begins this article, justifying its publication not in a space of specialised press, but in a cultural journal⁸. Definitely, we cannot leave aside the fact that Portas belonged to the editorial group of the journal *Arquitectura*, which openly criticised the “simplifying and schematic ideology” and the “purist plasticity” of the modern movement, which added nothing to the creative plan and quality of dwelling, as he defended (Portas, 1963, p. 799).

Other architects contributed to this journal with long written essays, without any image, drawing or graphic annotation other than words. Thus, the word becomes the form of representation and expression of architecture. Terms such as “tension”, “solitude”, “environmental hostility”, “concrete cages”, “crisis” and “passivity” mapped the critical discourse of architects in the dossier published by *O Tempo e o Modo* in 1966, under the title “O urbanismo” [Urbanism]. In this dossier, Carlos Duarte, Nuno Portas, Luís Vassalo Rosa (1935-2018), landscape architect Ribeiro Teles and psychologist João dos Santos (1913-1987) put into perspective the city’s problems, from different disciplinary angles. The complex phenomenon of the city’s humanisation was a topic widely studied and discussed in scientific journals in the fields of sociology, psychology, ethnology, design and art criticism. These journals sought to capture the problem in “its entirety and with care of method in its explanation”, Portas commented, which was not easily found in the architecture and urban planning journals themselves (Portas, 1966, p. 67). The architect and urbanist Luís Vassalo Rosa, in his article on the evolution of the urban habitat, stated that it would be everyone’s interest to get “a global and dynamic view of the tasks of their [architects] responsibility, which enabled an active attitude in an extremely demanding world in constant mutation”. Thus, it would not suffice to “analyse” – as he states –; it was “indispensable to create” and everyone should guide their “perspectives of action in this common field” (Rosa, 1966, p. 23).

⁸ The article published in September, however, was partially reproduced three months later in the journal *Arquitectura* (n. 89 and n. 90, Dec. 1965, p. 141-144). The article, published on the occasion of Le Corbusier’s death and, one year later, the translation of an article by Reyner Banham, “Reyner Banham escreve sobre Le Corbusier no aniversário da sua morte” [Reyner Banham writes on Le Corbusier’s death anniversary] (*Arquitectura*, n. 94, 1966, p. 151-152), were the only articles dedicated to this architect in almost 20 years of publication.

Also in 1963, *O Tempo e o Modo* published its first special issue. It included a wide range of declarations from novelists, poets, playwrights, painters, sculptors, composers, filmmakers and the architects Fernando Távora and Vasco Lobo. They addressed the cross-cutting question of whether art should aim at practical truth by emphasizing the role of architecture in “preparing” and “anticipating” socio-cultural progress (Figure 7). It seems evident that a convergence of forces from very different fields sought to challenge the prevailing norms of academic conformism, advocating for the renewal and democratisation of society. These endeavours were notably propelled by the cultural journal of the period.

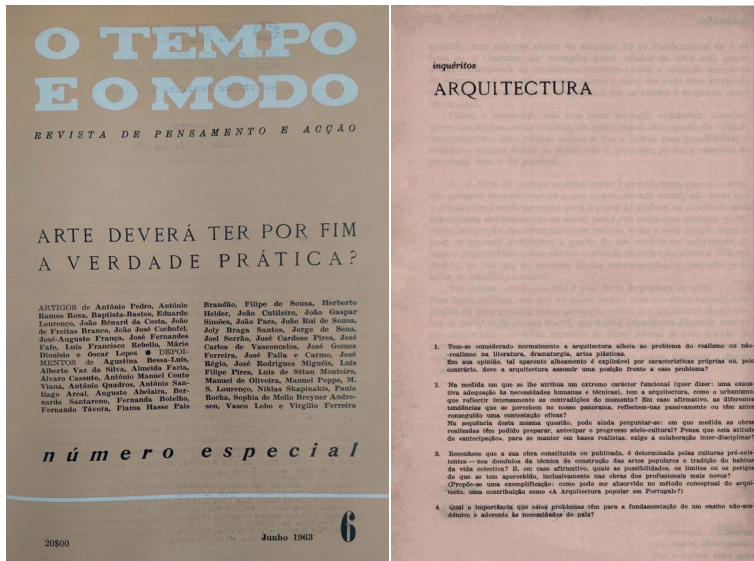


Figure 7 – Cover and page of the dossier “A arte deverá ter por fim a verdade prática?” [Should art have the practical truth as its purpose?], *O Tempo e o Modo*, n. 6 (1963).

In addition to this set of literary and artistic publications, there were journals structured around other fields of knowledge, such as *Análise Social*, which since 1963 has been publishing theoretical reflections or essays resulting from original empirical research within the Social Sciences. The sphere and scale of these journals were, evidently, different from those already analysed (situated in the scientific field, aimed at the scientist-reader), but it kept an interest in open dialogue, a *conversation* (as above mentioned) with other disciplines and methodologies, integrating contributions from architecture and urbanism. Consequently, surveys on the quality of housing, studies and critical readings on the scarcity and public promotion of social housing, the impact of housing policies, the “failings” and “mistakes” of land use density patterns (Cunha, 1964), as well as models of urban or large-cities planning were all subject of scientific and critical analysis – including components

typical of the social sciences, such as analytical chronograms, synthetic cartograms, survey sheets, tables of quantitative data, planning models, graphs and spatial organisation schemes (Figure 8).

In 1967, both Vieira de Almeida and Portas published studies and sociological analysis on the housing space. In the article “Da utilidade social da arquitectura” [On the social utility of architecture], Vieira de Almeida inquired about the socio-economic conditions in which the architect’s activity was carried out and what type of responsibility did architecture have in its “social profitability”. These issues were situated at the “crossroads of crises”, either in quantitative terms, regarding the housing shortages, or in terms of internal developments within the field of architecture, specifically in regard to the evolution of its language and typologies (Vieira de Almeida, 1964).

In the framework of housing policies, the term “design” meant, first and foremost, “defending users’ needs” and those of the “public client”. The central challenge could not be defined in terms of costs, but rather in relation to the cost “to meet certain requirements” pertaining to social and qualitative aspects of urban and living space (Portas, 1964).

Por estes exemplos verifica-se que a variabilidade da densidade urbana se repete de modo muito mais acentuado na densidade residencial, por virtude da sua rigidez, que no equipamento colectivo.

Densidade combinada

Em virtude da evolução sofrida pelas técnicas da construção civil e da necessidade de alojar cada vez maior população nos terrenos urbanos, não só é suficiente o que expusimos sobre densidades para o inteiro conhecimento das realizações recentes. Estas são constituídas, em regra, não só por edifícios de habitação de um ou dois pavimentos, mas também por outros que podem conter, entre os quatro e os vinte pisos. Os imóveis de grande altura tomam a forma de gigantescos paralelepípedos ou de torres de acentuada conformação vertical, fazem parte da moderna paisagem urbana. A densidade geral de uma zona deste tipo obtida a partir do cálculo das densidades residenciais parciais podem chamar *densidade combinada*. A sua utilização é hoje imprescindível na determinação das condições de habitabilidade das zonas novas, pois todas elas são compostas de edifícios de diversas alturas, conforme os programas habitacionais que encerram e as disponibilidades existentes em terreno livre. As densidades destas conjuntas, onde predominam os edifícios de 10 ou 20 pisos, podem atingir valores que rondam as 100 habitações por hectare, o que corresponderá a uma população aproximada de 500 pessoas. Habitualmente, e se

não existirem fortes imperativos para que se adoptem densidades muito elevadas, não são ultrapassadas as densidades de 100 habitações por hectare ou sejam cerca de 350 a 400 habitantes conforme a composição familiar média. Nos conjuntos residenciais não localizados nas zonas centrais estas densidades são ainda mais fracas.

Segue-se um quadro em que se apresenta os efeitos sobre a densidade geral resultantes da combinação de habitações em alta confinada de dois pavimentos, cada uma, com outros edifícios de vários pavimentos sobrepostos. Para o efeito considerou-se que as habitações com rés-do-chão e andar estarão agrupadas segundo uma densidade de 112 pessoas por hectare, enquanto nos sectores de edifícios múltiplos a densidade seria de 200 pessoas por hectare.

Uma fórmula relativamente simples para a determinação das densidades parciais de dois tipos de agrupamento de habitações, de modo a obter-se uma densidade combinada, é dada na obra *The New Towns* e qui se transcreve:

$$i = \frac{a}{h} + \frac{b}{h} = 1$$

a (houses) = Número de unidades (p. ex. casa, pessoas ou quartos) do primeiro tipo

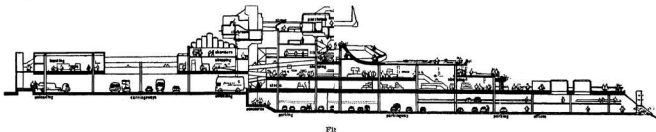
b (flats) = Número de unidades (por ex. habitações em andar, pessoas ou quartos) do segundo tipo

h = densidade por hectare do primeiro tipo

i = densidade por hectare do segundo tipo

f = número total de unidades

l (ou outro número) = Área do sítio em hectares (obviamente $l = h \cdot f$)



O desenho mostra o interior do centro projectado para a zona cidade baixa de Chamberland, visto segundo um corte transversal. Pode observar-se a sobreposição das actividades que se concentram neste local. A nível inferior situa-se um amplo parque de estacionamento de veículos, automóveis, em andares sucessivamente mais elevados, em vista de acesso para

entrançada, um centro comercial, biblioteca e outras instituições locais; a cultura e do espaço, tudo rematado por algumas pequenas habitações e por um terrapço ricamente arborizado no âmbito de praias. (Reproduzido da revista *Urbanística*, n. 38, 1963, Turim).

Figure 9 – Cover and double page with graphic schemes, *Andlise Social*, n. 6 (1964).

Also in the 1960s, the daily newspapers of large circulation started to publish cultural supplements, such as “Cultura e Arte” [Culture and

Art] (*O Comércio do Porto*), “Suplemento literário” [Literary Supplement] (*Diário de Lisboa*), “Artes e Letras” [Arts and Letters] (*Diário de Notícias*), and “Literatura & Arte” [Literature & Art] (*A Capital*). In the supplement “Cultura e Arte” of the newspaper *O Comércio do Porto*, Vieira de Almeida wrote about very different themes. In addition, Carlos Duarte, Nuno Portas and, above all, José-Augusto França, who published a considerable volume of articles between 1960 and 1973, also wrote regularly in this and other cultural supplements in the generalist press. It was precisely this dynamic articulation between very different scales of dissemination, formats and readers that built a space for the legitimisation and representation of architecture criticism in the public sphere.

CRITICISM AND ITS “INDETERMINACIES”

In 1967, Vieira de Almeida published, in the cultural supplement of the daily newspaper *O Comércio do Porto*, an article with the humorous (or, perhaps, provocative) title “A técnica do avestruz e a indeterminação dos princípios da crítica” [The ostrich technique and the principles of critical indeterminacy] (Figure 9), in which he specified:

To criticise is not to find proper shelves in the mental larder, it is *reading* and reading searching for broader referential than the directly proposed by the oeuvre. This larger net in which we frame the oeuvre will enable, on the other hand, its re-reading, which will hand a new oeuvre that on its turn will have other ramifications that must be framed again and so forth, until reaching a resistant synthesis – [...] predominantly critic – that function in parallel, but without overlapping [...] (Vieira de Almeida, 1967).

Vieira de Almeida’s conceptualisation of criticism as a process of reading leaves no doubt about the references that inform his approach. In this view, there are aspects that suggest a relationship with post-structuralist authors, such as Roland Barthes, who was in the same period publishing the article “The Death of the Author” in the North American *Aspen Magazine* (issues 5 and 6, 1967). “It can be initiated in the core of the critical work, the dialogue between two stories and two subjectivities, those of the author and of the critic”, Barthes stated. Criticism thus transcended the mere classificatory or judgemental gesture; it was no longer an act of ‘homage’ to the truth of the past or to the truth of the ‘other’ (Barthes, [1963] 2009, p. 295). Instead, it assumed a creative dimension, open to the active interpretation of the *critic-reader*.

and understand this line of thinking. Instead, they were presented in the supplement of a widely circulated daily newspaper, indicating a deliberate targeting of a generalist-*reader*. Moreover, Vieira de Almeida did not adapt his discourse to a non-specialist audience, nor did he employ journalistic or informative language.

In fact, it is crucial to consider the context in which that article was published. The “indeterminacies” of criticism, expressed in July and August 1967, were a consequence of the debate promoted a few months earlier at the ECAP,⁹ in which Vieira de Almeida played an active role. This event marked a pivotal moment in the history of architectural criticism, witnessing the emergence of a new professional and institutional identity. It also saw the advent of a more active role for critics in society at large, a development that would later contribute to the renewal of the Portuguese section of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) in 1969.

The programme of work, which was the subject of extensive discussion “in the afternoons and evenings, taking much longer time than originally planned” (Gonçalves, 1967, p. 12), was structured around four principal themes: relations between history, sociology, aesthetics and art criticism; perspectives on Western art; the role and position of the art critic; and perspectives on art and artistic culture in Portugal. It thus becomes evident that the “indeterminacies” of architectural criticism were partially a synthesis of the reflections that the four topics raised to Vieira de Almeida (1967a). The author concluded the article as follows:

It is also from this commitment of architecture with reality that results more evidently the critical relativity, justified by the principles of indeterminacy; and it is from this assumed responsibility of critical relativity that it appears as a coherent proposal of an activity of dialogue; and it is finally this need for dialogue that cannot accept, in any case, sectorial techniques of ostrich (Vieira de Almeida, 1967).

Therefore, we can infer that criticism was, from then on, clearly identified as “commitment” with reality and “dialogue” between actors – reader-author, reader-critic and reader-reader –, who could no longer remain closed off within their specialised niches, epistemic, methodological and ideological fields, as it was clear in the organisation of the

⁹ The 1^o Encontro de Críticos de Arte Portugueses was held on March 28-30, 1967, at the Centro Nacional de Cultura. The idea that the institutionalisation of art criticism in Portugal has its refounding moment in the celebration of this meeting has been defended by several authors in the field of art history, who take this moment as the turning point from which art criticism begins to exhibit an institutional identification. Namely: Ana Luísa Barão, who analysed the history of the professional recognition of criticism in the Portuguese section of AICA (Barão, 2015); and Patrícia Esquivel, who reflected on the “new power of criticism” in painting, in the 1960s (Esquivel, 2008).

ECAP – by art historians and art critics José-Augusto França and Adriano Gusmão (1908-1993) and by architect Nuno Portas. Overall, the participating artists, historians and critics, with whom the group of young architect-critics shared “intellectual complicities” (Lopes Dias, 2016, p. 175) in the Lisbon cafés and social gatherings, gave the informal places of criticism a new institutional configuration.

The resonance of the meeting was widely disseminated throughout the press¹⁰, reaching the various editorial spheres that were predominantly occupied by critics, including mass circulation newspapers, cultural publications, and specialised journals. In *Colóquio – Revista de Artes e Letras*, art critic Rui Mário Gonçalves (1934-2014) suggested that, at a time when art was in search of itself, criticism would have to “emerge from within”, not only from a theoretical standpoint, but also by transforming the very means of its action. This is because, as Gonçalves (1967, p. 12) observed, “a critic has to be also a person of action”.

For this reason, the journal *Arquitectura* promptly initiated a survey among its readership,¹¹ emphasizing that no creative endeavour could “advance without a discussion of ideas,” as Carlos Duarte asserted in the editorial commentary on that occasion: “Silence and the absence of criticism and a critical spirit are compensated for by irresponsibility and stagnation” (Duarte, 1967a, p. 147). From the outset, it was apparent that the audience desired the input of experts in evaluating and guiding the construction of their discourses and interpretative readings. It also became evident that architectural subjects should focus on the great dilemmas of the contemporary city, including territorial planning and social housing problems, while maintaining a balance between “doctrinal and cultural” guidance and a “technical and informative” approach¹² (Figure 10). Thus, it was required from a critic to be not only an active voice in society, but also a specialised expert in the field – *i.e.*, a professional. Indeed, among the numerous motions put forth and endorsed by the attendees was a proposal to bestow a professional designation upon the critic: “newspapers and journals, particularly those with a wide circula-

10 Among others: “O 1º Encontro de Críticos de Arte Portugueses”. *Diário de Lisboa*, n. 15.903, Mar. 28, 1967, p. 2; FRANÇA, José-Augusto. Encontro de Críticos. *Flama. Revista semanal de atualidades*, n. 997, Apr. 14, 1967, p. 43; GONÇALVES, Rui Mário. O primeiro encontro de críticos de arte portugueses. *Colóquio – Revista de Artes e Letras*, n. 44, Jun. 1967; FRANÇA, José-Augusto. Notícia do I Encontro de Críticos de Arte Portugueses. *O Comércio do Porto*, n. 160, Jun. 13, 1967; FRANÇA, José-Augusto. Há dois anos, o 1º Encontro de Críticos de Arte. *Diário de Lisboa*, n. 557, Apr. 3, 1969.

11 DUARTE, C. O primeiro encontro de críticos de arte portugueses. *Arquitectura*, n. 96, Mar./Apr. 1967, p. 86-87.

12 The results were published in n. 99, Sept./Oct. 1967, p. 188-189. In a universe of approx. 300 readers, there was a substantial support to the domain of criticism in the appreciation of architectural works (92,7%), stressing, among the issues of greater interest, the areas of construction technology and urbanism (77%), and regarding the architectural programmes, housing (90,3%), especially of lower costs, dominated architects’ attention. Moreover, it became desirable that the journal *Arquitectura* would keep a balance between a “doctrinal and cultural” guidance and a “technical-informative” approach (84,3%) (Duarte, 1967b, p. 189).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS CRITICISM AS COMMON GROUND

In contrast with the situation that prevailed in the early twentieth century, when Portuguese criticism found the possibility of its existence in the publication of specialised journals (Figueiredo, 2007; 2020), in the 1960s it was the articulation of different spheres of publication and the interplay of dissemination scales that enabled the construction of architectural criticism in the public sphere, as we have seen.

Therefore, criticism functioned as a kind of transversal field, common language, or collective project of a generational conjuncture, strongly invested in a project of cultural, political and ideological renewal of society. The “vice of interdisciplinarity”, as recalled years later by Nuno Portas (quoted in Lopes Dias, 2016, p. 175), contaminated the production of those young critics, shaping the understanding of criticism and of the critic’s profile in the field of architecture.

As much as architects entered the field of social sciences, humanities, literature, and cinema, in the same way art historians, artists, sociologists, and writers also wrote articles, commentaries and news in the journals *Arquitectura* and *Binário*. Following the inaugural ECAP, José-Augusto França, for example, started to collaborate more intensively with the editorial structure of the journal *Arquitectura*. This involved essays in the fields of arts, exhibitions and essays related to AICA’s activities, but also essays on *Casa Portuguesa* [Portuguese House], Neoromanticism, the City and its Images, eighteenth century Lisbon (*Pombalina* and Romantic). From 1969 onwards, França becomes responsible for “*Pintura & Não*” [Painting & Not], a section devoted to criticism and exhibitions, which was published almost until the journal’s closure, in 1974.

The actions of the young architectural critics were informed by a vision that was not constrained by disciplinary or ideological considerations. The decision to use a non-specialist press was thus driven by the urgency of providing the common public-reader with conceptual instruments to facilitate their engagement with the discourse on urbanism and the emerging challenges pertaining to the nexus of architecture and society.

Hence, it would be more useful to disseminate “methods of thinking and acting”, than to engage in the conventional diffusion of oeuvres and authors, situated “in the sphere of more or less acquired facts and concepts” (Vieira de Almeida, 1965, p. 5). Perhaps for this reason, Vieira de Almeida sought to seize the opportunity to discuss and confront opinions on other scales of diffusion, while at the same time introducing new practices of reading architecture that went beyond the spheres of disciplinary action. In fact, in the programme that introduced the bi-weekly section of the *Jornal de Letras e Artes*, which he directed, the author made it clear that this was neither a “page to disseminate solu-

tions”, nor to clarify the “possible ways of reading existing works”. It was, above all:

A page to disseminate problems, and even more to publicise doubts and working methods that need to be applied now, but which in themselves raise other problems – technical ones if you wish – difficult to control. The intention is to bring to knowledge the real situation of architecture today, which is certainly one of impasse and crisis, but also one of analytical endeavour and methodological explanation (Vieira de Almeida, 1965, p. 5).

In fact, Vieira de Almeida sought to avoid “the closed and self-sufficient world of architecture”, instead striving to foster an openness to alternative perspectives: “That of method and the need for criticism and research” (p. 5). In other words, criticism would necessarily have to be interdisciplinary, active, and establish a “common ground” between different epistemic fields. The terms “problems”, “doubts”, “impasse” and “crisis” made it evident that it would be, surely, a challenging task.

In the late 1960s, the very notion of criticism was, as we have seen, a topic of debate and a subject of exploratory essays. These interrogated the “principles of indeterminacy” in architecture and attempted to adopt methodological perspectives that evoked referents from other fields that went beyond the professional and disciplinary spheres. This opened the possibility of an interdisciplinary and inclusive debate. In May 1966, in advance of the meeting scheduled for the following year, *O Tempo e o Modo* published a thematic dossier on the topic of “criticism” (Figure 11). In a brief introductory note, the journal’s editors outlined the rationale behind the selection of texts and presented a summary scheme, which demonstrates that this was a pivotal moment in the development of a field of knowledge.

If, among the set of authors and topics, architecture did not appear as a specific area of inquiry, this was because, at that time, art and architectural critics constituted a unified elite of actors. José-Augusto França subsequently discerned that all forms of criticism were predicated on a fundamental issue: “see and let see.” As França asserts:

The act of seeing a painting or an architectural work (or even an entire city) implies engagement with the domain of culture, which is simultaneously psychological and sociological. One does not see by chance, nor does one interpret by chance, but as a result of an essential training. First and foremost, the critic must know what matters or what he wants to see, he must know how to interrogate the object he is looking at (França, 1966, p. 637).

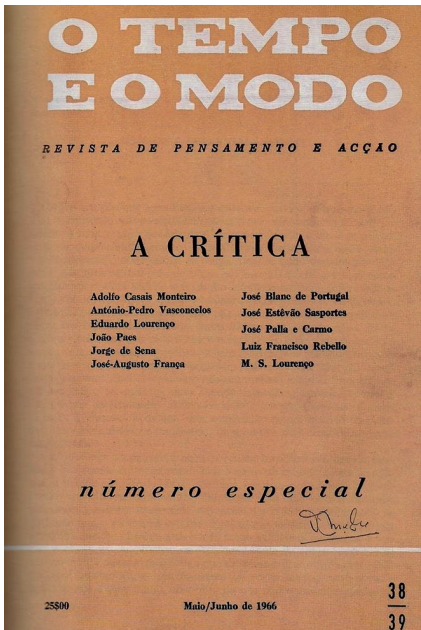


Figure 11 – Cover of the dossier “A Crítica” [Criticism], *O Tempo e o Modo*, n. 38 and n. 39 (1966).

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1964. FRENCH CRITICISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS: À PROPOS OF A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *L'ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOURD'HUI*

Hélène Jannière

In their statements in favour or against criticism over the years, architects and critics have repeatedly mobilized the notion of public opinion – although they often failed in mobilizing public opinion itself. In 1886, at a time when the journal *La Construction Moderne* had been in existence for less than a year, its founder and editor-in-chief, the engineer Paul Planat, entitled his editorial “*L’architecture et le public*” [Architecture and the Public]. Planat warned in particular against the risks of “spreading out in the audience” – that is, in the general press – polemics or controversies confined to the “men of art”. However, despite this prudence, probably meant to preserve the professional interests of architects, by instituting his column called “*Causeries*” [“Talks”], Planat aimed at establishing a dialogue with the readers of his journal. In the first edition of 1885 of this column, Planat indeed wrote that this new weekly publication was a possible and worthwhile “link” between the architect and the public.

Several decades later, during World War II, the historian Nikolaus Pevsner invoked “the man in the street”, in a column of *The Architectural Review*¹⁴, to build a critical outlook towards the city’s architecture. The aim was to provide the readers with a visual education, in order that they could recognize and appreciate the historical values of vernacular or 19th century architecture of London, which at the time were threatened to be destroyed by German bombardments. Pevsner did this by setting up a game called “Treasure Hunt” – the column’s title – in the pages of *The Architectural Review* (Hultzsch, 2014, p. 382-401). Another example of such attempts to mobilize public opinion takes place in France during the postwar period: generally poorly received by the general press, the policy of mass housing gave rise

14 The term “the man in the street” as an actor of criticism appears in Richards’s words; using the pseudonym of James MacQuedym, he was responsible for *The Architectural Review*’s column “Reilly’s Criticism”, before Nikolaus Pevsner took over in the summer of 1941 (Hultzsch, 2014, p. 382-401). Pevsner continued Richards’ work; though not using the term directly, he seemed to operate it through his text and corresponding photographs.

to calls from architects to “educate” the public opinion, which should have been committed to the cause of large urban interventions. In the eyes of the professionals who built the so-called *grands ensembles* (the mass social housing policy implemented as from 1954), critics should have played a leading role in such a task of forming opinion (Jannière, under press). Finally, at the beginning of the 1980s, at the time of the diffusion of Postmodernism, the specialised press has witnessed a flourishing of special issues of journals focusing on the “critics and the public” and on “architecture and public opinion”. Such an insistence on the relation of architecture to the general public revealed the need to let architectural language (a main issue of Postmodernism) be accepted and understood by the general public, in opposition to the modernist language, sometimes largely rejected.

Although distant from each other in time and meaning, these four examples seem to demonstrate that the critic has often been seen as a potential mediator in the service of architects. And that the relation to public opinion has constituted a permanent concern for architects: but, if summoning the public opinion is a constant trait of architectural culture, it is at the same time an indefinite and somewhat incantatory reference, as evasive as the notion of “general public”.

The notion of “public opinion”, on its side, has been elaborated by several disciplines. It has therefore no univocal meaning.¹ Hence, how to transfer this very malleable concept into the domain of architectural criticism?² And, does the address to a “lay public” make criticism become “public”? As if opposed to a criticism made by experts (learned or professional criticism)? In order to illustrate these issues, this paper retrieves one of the aforementioned examples: the debate carried out by French post-war criticism on the *grands ensembles* in the 1960s. By doing so, it will also tackle the issue of the so-called “crisis of criticism”.

This starting point is situated in a context in which relatively few stances on criticism were taken within the French architectural milieu between the 1950s and the 1970s. However, beginning in the first half of the 1960s, debates within the innermost circles of the profession and within the editorial boards of the journals reflect a certain concern for the topic. Are these manifestations symptomatic of that *Anxious Modernism* – to quote the title of Sarah Goldhagen and Réjean Legault’s book (2001) –, an anxiety that would belatedly touch France? The debates on criticism might as well stem from a specific French situation. These “discontents in criticism” may be the symptoms of a

1 See among many other studies on this question: Brigidou (2008), Neumann (1984), Reynie *et al.* (2001). This issue of the journal *Hermès* retraces the different studies dedicated to the notion of public opinion in the United States.

2 For further developments, see Jannière e Scrivano (2020).

crisis of French modernisation. In fact, modernisation was a forced march under De Gaulle's rule from 1958, and somehow badly received at that time (Ross, 1995).

At the end of 1964, the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (hereafter L'AA) devotes an issue to architectural criticism. Does the publication of this issue testify a "crisis of criticism", or at least its awareness? If this is the case, the crisis is by no means unprecedented. It has come into the fore since the mid-1950s in other European countries: in Italy, the most important journals like Ernesto Nathan Rogers' *Casabella-Continuità* challenges the concept of continuity of modern architecture; in Great-Britain, *Architectural Design* shakes up the established environment of British architectural publishing (Parnell, 2011). At the same time, questions about the nature, the boundaries and the content of criticism, about its quality or its efficiency are regularly being raised in foreign architectural press. The hypothesis is that the 1964 issue of L'AA witnesses a transitory situation. In France, it takes place between a long period of non-critical dissemination of the *grands ensembles*, on the one hand, and a subsequent phase of political and social contestation of the urban and dwelling policies at the end of the 1960s.

In the mid-1960s, a radical questioning of architecture as an institution, profession and of the urban space as an expression of political and economic domination is still to be developed. The aim of this article is to consider the published issue of 1964 as a "symptom" of a discontent within the French architectural milieu towards criticism and critics. It may equally reflect a period of uncertainty between the end of modernism, even "anxious" or unquiet, and a more radical questioning.

Analysing this dossier is also interesting and urgent, because recently several articles have been widely re-published and quoted (DEBOULET; HODDE; SAUVAGE, 2008). However, in these recent publications and quotations, they are considered as statements on criticism and used to outline some definitions on criticism, and their historical context of production is largely overlooked. This article also aims to shed light on this point, and to highlight some of the controversies about the role of criticism that might have motivated the publishing of this special issue.

THE 1964 SPECIAL ISSUE OF *L'ARCHITECTURE D'AUJOURD'HUI*: AN UNUSUAL ATTEMPT WITHIN FRENCH ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

In 1964, Alexandre Persitz,³ co-editor-in-chief alongside the magazine's founder and director, André Bloc, commissions to several critics an article about their own conception of their profession, as well as on the current state of architectural criticism. Persitz is a Russian architect who immigrated to France and had been a collaborator of L'AA since the interwar period. From 1947 to 1964, he was in charge of every second issue, alternating with André Bloc. Besides Bloc, Persitz and Pierre Vago (himself a former editor-in-chief from 1932 to 1947), the 1964 issue brought together several French art critics who answered Persitz's call:⁴ Michel Ragon, Gérald Gassiot-Talabot, Pierre Joly and Marc Gaillard. At the time, Michel Ragon (1924-2020) and Gérald Gassiot-Talabot (1929-2002) were two well-known art critics, both writing in the art magazine *Cimaise*; Michel Ragon also acted as an architectural critic since 1958 (Leeman; Jannièrè, 2013). Pierre Joly (1925-1992) was a critic of art and architecture, and architectural photographer, who worked at the popular magazine *Jardin des Arts* (Jannièrè, under press). Marc Gaillard (1937-2011) was a journalist, art critic who was equally active in architectural journalism. Alexandre Persitz also invited contributors of foreign periodicals: Thomas Creighton, a former editor-in-chief of *Progressive Architecture*, the German critics Jürgen Joedicke (1925-2015)⁵ and Julius Posener (1904-1996), one of the most influential critics of L'AA during the interwar period. In Germany, Joedicke had just published a synthesis of post-war architecture. As for Julius Posener, he had played a leading role in the editorial board and as the correspondent in Germany in the 1930s.

Except for Creighton's article and a few cutting remarks by the art critics, the issue reiterates several commonplaces on the current state of criticism. In the first place, L'AA aims to outline the so-called "specificity" of architectural criticism and, more specifically, to differentiate it from art criticism. This claim is, in fact, a common concern amongst architects, and even more at the beginning of the

3 Alexandre Persitz (1910-1975) had been Auguste Perret's student.

4 PERSITZ, Alexandre. Carta para Michel Ragon. 28 set. 1964. *Archives de la Critique d'Art*. Rennes, Fonds Michel Ragon, MRAGO XE 005/28.

5 Jürgen Joedicke was the author in 1958 of a history of modern architecture: *Geschichte der modernen Architektur* (1958) and *Moderne Baukunst: Synthese aus Form, Funktion und Konstruktion* (1959). He was an editor of *Bauen + Wohnen* and editor-in-chief of this journal from 1967 to 1979. He began to publish a collection of decisive monographs on contemporary architecture, *Dokumente der Modernen Architektur*, which counts 15 volumes, from 1961 to 1987. Amongst the published books are the monographs of Reyner Banham and of Georges Candilis.

1960s in France. In the 1950s and 1960s, art critics have bridged a gap in the field of architectural criticism, left unoccupied by architects. These do not easily accept the participation of art critics in architectural writing.

Therefore, the 1964 issue raises multiple questions: the opposition between specialised criticism and journalism, between art criticism and architectural criticism. It also interrogates the evaluation criteria. It attempts to identify the required skills and professional competencies of a critic. However, the dossier does not put forward any very original analysis, except in the words of some (few) of the selected critics. On the contrary, the assembled texts generally reveal a rather empirical approach to criticism.

This dossier also brings together works of architects who accepted to submit their projects to an *in vivo* critical exercise. By assembling the presentations of these works, the editors claimed to experiment new methodologies of analysis and presentation of the buildings. But it is sufficient to examine the pages of L'AA, and read the rather descriptive commentaries, to conclude that also here, nothing is really new in publishing architecture. A few months later, reporting on the special dossier of L'AA in his own magazine *L'architettura – cronache e storia*, Bruno Zevi did not comment on the critics' statements on their activity; he focuses instead on the part encompassing this "in vivo" attempt of criticism. He observed with acuteness:

The attempt of L'AA n. 117 is commendable more than it is successful. The remarks on the selected buildings are so bland and generic that they become by no means efficient. It's not by making an exercise on a prudent and veiled criticism of such and such a minor work that we will solve the problem (Zevi, 1965, p. 2-3 – author's translation).

In spite of Zevi's judgement, severe and yet well-argued, the issue of L'AA is one of the rare contributions, before 1968, to the reflection of the French architectural press on its own practice. One may wonder about the underlying motivations of the dossier. Is this special number an attempt to address the issues of reception of the *grands ensembles*, and the difficult relation between criticism and its audience regarding this particular problem? Does this dossier attempt to provide an answer to the "crisis of criticism", which is flourishing in the international context? To which extent does the quest for "another" modernity, a burning issue in the 1960s, affect these inquiries?

RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS OF THE “GRANDS ENSEMBLES”: A PUBLIC ISSUE, A CHALLENGE FOR CRITICISM

This is, in fact, the first interpretation that can be provided of the 1964 L'AA's issue, published a decade after the launch in 1954 of the policy of *grands ensembles* by the Ministry of Construction and Housing. In order to outline the situation of French criticism in the professional circles, and to understand its awkward silence about the mass housing – the *grands ensembles* –, the art critic Pierre Joly illustrates the situation and brings to light the absence of a public discussion about this housing policy:

(...) for all these years, the lack of any appropriate criticism has come near to nonsense. Millions of homes, dozens of thousands of schools, churches, factories and offices could rise up out of the ground without any debate. In France, we did rebuild entire cities but these extraordinarily large-scale architectural exploits resulted in nothing but a few “objective” publications in specialised, and sometimes small, low circulated, magazines – with no overview and no evaluation effort. At the time of the “grands ensembles”, new, vast agglomerations have emerged pretty much everywhere in the midst of a distressed silence. Such a silence resembled complicity. (...) Or maybe these discussions actually took place, as no science, no art could progress without a debate of ideas. But they remained internal to the discipline (Joly, 1964, p. 44 – Author's translation).

Pierre Joly is not only deploring the lack of criticism. More than that, by referring to “the discussions that remained internal to the discipline”, he points out its endogamous nature. Pierre Joly is raising several crucial and burning questions: the relation between criticism and its audience, the critics' professional profile, and the need to open towards other disciplines. He also underlines the critic's social (and political) responsibility. Therefore, he presents arguments that opposed those advocated by L'AA's editors, who in their turn claimed a criticism *by* and *for* architects and refused to acknowledge validity of criticism produced by non-architects.

Joly stresses that such reconstructions as Le Havre have been badly received by the public.⁶ He reminds us that, since 1957, the *grands*

6 T. N.: The port city of Le Havre, in France, was destroyed during the Second World War.

ensembles have prompted harsh condemnation and raised numerous questions in other professional circles and in the media, for instance in journals of medicine, social psychology and sociology. After all these condemnations and questions, how is it possible – Joly asks – to insist in a specialised criticism, a criticism that is confined within the architectural field and milieu? These are, in Joly’s opinion, the reasons of the growing gap between the architects and the public.

At this point, it is necessary to underline an inherent feature in the French context. The criticism of the *grands ensembles* – in the general press – resulted in a discomfort in the architectural milieu, as well as in the small world of specialised periodicals. In 1959, one of the debates of the Royaumont symposium⁷ on the *grands ensembles* had focused on the widening divide between the criticism, written by experts for the experts, by architects for architects, and the criticism faced with the public debate. Knowing this context is crucial to understand the topics raised by the L’AA’s issue.

Unlike the general press, the French specialised magazines managed nothing more than, in the best case, a “distressed” silence on the *grands ensembles*. Still, most frequently, professional periodicals such as *Techniques et Architecture* or *L’Architecture française*, circulated the images of the new neighbourhoods without questioning the housing policy of the Ministry of Construction, nor the *grands ensembles*’ urban functionalist principles. Furthermore, a number of architects, designers of these *grands ensembles*, actually were part of the editorial boards of these French magazines. This certainly did not facilitate any hindsight, nor to take stances against the national housing and planning policy. Their very descriptive articles, offering technical documentation on prefabrication processes or faithfully reporting on a state policy, contrast sharply with the criticism of daily newspapers, cultural and political weeklies. A professional periodical like *Urbanisme*, which was partly the organ of the Ministry of Housing, largely echoes the Ministry’s words.

Between 1953 and 1958, L’AA published a few dossiers on the *grands ensembles*. Its first critical remarks surfaced in September 1959. This year also marks the beginning of a series of harsh critical observations in the general press, from all political tendencies, from the conservative daily newspaper *Le Figaro* to the leftist weekly magazine *France Observateur*: the latter published the famous article by Françoise Choay “*Cités jardins ou Cages à Lapins*” [“Garden Cities or Rabbits cages”], 1959. Educated as a philosopher, at that time Choay was mostly active as an art critic. In L’AA, in 1960, a reportage entitled “*Les grandes*

7 The *Cercle d’Études Architecturales*, a professional association, organized at the Royaumont Abbey a symposium on architecture, on October 30-31, 1959. One of the sessions was dedicated to the “problems” of the *grands ensembles*.

réalisations: dispersions, médiocrité” [“The great developments: dispersion and mediocrity”] (L’AA, 1960) presents a tough visual state of the art. In 1961, the journal publishes an issue on Sarcelles, featuring Jacques Windenberger’s photographs. The commissioner of the housing district of Sarcelles⁸ complains about this article: Windenberger’s photos expose the isolation and the living conditions induced by this new urbanism. By doing so, they denounce socio-racial asymmetries; therefore, pointing to a categorical condemnation.

This means that in L’AA the criticism of the *grands ensembles* does not directly target the architecture of the buildings, slabs and tower-blocks; rather, the magazine targets the absence of an efficient territorial and urban planning policy. Until the end of the 1960s, but as a matter of fact since the end of World War II, L’AA claims that the French reconstruction had been a “missed opportunity”, and especially a missed opportunity for an actual planning policy at a territorial scale. Like in the 1930s, the journal addresses the powerlessness of the State. André Bloc writes in 1961:

The system has become more generalised in the last fifteen years, all over France and more specifically in the Parisian region: with a few exceptions, *cités* without soul and with no architectural interest have been created pretty much everywhere. In the Region of Paris, the *grands ensembles* have spread with no other reason than the existence of available areas [...]. This is planning by chance (Bloc, 1962, p. 2-3 – author’s translation).

FRENCH CRITICISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The difficult reception of the social mass housing in France resulted in a few reflections on criticism. Since the end of the 1950s, these discussions between the critics of the general and cultural press, between architects and the professional magazines’ editors-in-chief, revealed the discomfort of the architects of the *grands ensembles* when faced with criticism, particularly the ones the general press. Architects involved with the *grands ensembles* sensed in the so-called “public opinion” a threat (Baker, [1990] 1993, p. 220) against modern architecture. Meanwhile, they questioned the methods to win over the public opinion and to educate it in regards to architecture. They assigned this role to critics, notably to those of the cultural press, of the art magazines, and of the daily and weekly press. On the other hand, and quite paradoxically, they cast doubt on the legitimacy of journalists and art critics to write on architecture. Although these discussions highlight the interactions

⁸ The *Société Centrale Immobilière de la Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations* (SCIC). See Landauer (2010).

between criticism and the public sphere, they reveal a weak conceptualization of architecture criticism. While focusing on the troubled relation between criticism and the public, as perceived by architects, these exchanges hardly dealt with the relations between criticism and the theoretical issues that post-war architecture was confronted with.

To that extent, the openness of L'AA to the debates about criticism abroad may be questioned. In fact, the journal published the special issue shortly after the seminar co-organised by the Association of Collegiate School of Architecture and the American Institute of Architects, at Cranbrook's Academy of Art in 1964. Was the dossier composed by L'AA on criticism somewhat an echo of this international event? The Cranbrook seminar brought together some of the most influential critics of the beginning of the 1960s: Reyner Banham, Bruno Zevi, Peter Collins, Stephen W. Jacobs and Sybil Moholy-Nagy. And, while the role of history in the field of teaching was at the core of the discussions at Cranbrook, many contributions questioned the boundaries between history and criticism. In the mid-1960s, what appears as a consciousness of a "crisis" of criticism simultaneously in several cultural contexts had come to the fore in different ways, for example, in the *Architectural Forum* as a relation of criticism to "popular taste".

On the contrary, in France most of the discussions were not on a theoretical layer. This condition partially reverberates in the L'AA's arguments. For instance, Pierre Vago, the president of the influent editorial board, advocated in the 1960s for a criticism "made by experts for the experts". But he does not define its modalities. In his view, criticism should in the first place, on a theoretical level, take part in the definition of a "doctrine": not a theory, but a statement, a position in architecture. Moreover, criticism should generate some effects on the quality of buildings. Vago outspokenly rejected a criticism of architecture meant as a political and social fact. According to him, it is also inconceivable that this criticism draws from other disciplines: Semiology, Sociology or Anthropology.

For the art critic Pierre Joly, architectural criticism must not only first reach out to a "laymen" audience; it must reach out to "the man of the street" (as Pevsner had stated as early as 1940 in *The Architectural Review*). It also needs a scientific basis: for Joly, the critic's intuitions have to be confirmed by a historical approach. The same goes for Julius Posener, who also believed that criticism is historical, which enables the framing of architecture as a historical construct. In Posener's eyes, the function of architectural criticism is "far more vital" than art or music criticism: it has to fight "against the hideousness of the rebuilt cities, the missed opportunities, (...) the real estate speculation" (author's translation). In his contribution, Thomas Creighton, a former editor of *Progressive Architecture* from 1946 to 1963, offers a more international

panorama. He is the only author in the dossier to severely point out the lack of a theoretical foundation for architectural criticism.

CHALLENGING THE STATE OF CRITICISM IN FRANCE

For L'AA, another reason to edit this issue in 1964 is likely to have stemmed from its loss of influence on the international scene: on the side lines in regards to the critical discourse, in terms of elaboration of notions and concepts, it is equally set back with respect to its influence as a relevant international magazine. On the French scene, the journal is also challenged by a new generation of architects, who started their activity after World War II.

The 1964 dossier can be interpreted as a response to this uncomfortable condition. However, it does not only reveal a moment of crisis for the journal, between the difficult renouncement to Modernist architecture and its radical contestation at the end of the 1960s in France. The main concern, in fact, was to define which would be the architecture of the 1960s, once the urgency of reconstruction and of mass housing were no longer a burning issue. As a matter of fact, a process of critical revision, similar to the one fostered a decade earlier by Ernesto Nathan Rogers in *Casabella-Continuità* (1953-1964), was not undertaken in France. Neither a clear-cut critical line, like the one by Pevsner at *The Architectural Review*, can be found. And, incidentally, no new magazines were founded in France at the beginning of the 1960s. The possibility to carry on, or to accompany new lines of developments of modernism is the core of L'AA's preoccupations; however, by that time it was challenged by the foreign developments of theory and new orientations of architectural practice and discourse.

For the journal, this evolution was mainly embodied in two directions: technical virtuosity and plastic research. These two directions reflect the interests of the two editors, Alexandre Persitz and André Bloc. Until 1967, L'AA promoted plastic and sculptural architectural approaches, in line with the new "synthesis of the arts" supported by André Bloc since 1949, in its own magazine *Art d'Aujourd'hui*, then *Aujourd'hui, Art et Architecture* (Braschi, 2019). Persitz, who like Pierre Vago had been a student of Auguste Perret, militated for a form of French modernity that would be embodied in constructive experimentation. This evolution was expressed in L'AA through light structures: the geodesic domes of Buckminster Fuller, the three-dimensional structures of Robert Le Ricolais and the polyhedra of the architect-engineer David-Georges Emmerich.

And, in fact, the word "structure" is therefore omnipresent in L'AA. Still, mainly consigned to the domain of constructions, it did not trigger any reflections on the structural analysis of architecture and the city. With one exception: in 1967, Françoise Choay presented in L'AA the methods of urban semiology. That same year, the *Architecture Mouvement Continuité* (AMC) editor-in-chief, architect Philippe Boudon, highlighted in

the first issue of this newly created periodical the link between structuralism, its influence on several disciplines and the concrete meaning of the word structure (in its architectural sense). Boudon writes:

This year, structuralism was in fashion. Rare were the magazines that did not devote a special issue to the problem and tried to clear up the confused notions of the word, overworked in different domains. Now, it is curious to acknowledge that, in parallel with a general lack of interest of the public towards architecture – giving free rein to an architectural criticism of the least responsible – several other disciplines make a disproportionate use of the term structure, which, giving credit to its definition by the dictionary Littré: ‘the way a construction is built’, draws its name from the building activity of men (Boudon, 1967, p. 16 – author’s translation).

The journal *AMC* was founded on the ancient editorial structure of the conservative *Bulletin de la Société Centrale des Architectes*: it reveals nevertheless a disruptive editorial project. It reflects much more faithfully the aspirations of the generation of 1968; it initiates a debate on the weaknesses and the tools of criticism. In 1967, its first editorial asserts the “necessary pluridisciplinarity” of architecture, and establishes that architecture is not as much *at the* crossroads, as it is *the* crossroads itself between human sciences and exact sciences. In keeping with the revision of architectural education in France, between 1967 and 1969, *AMC* gives voice to the new methodologies of interpretation of architecture and the urban space. For this purpose, this young magazine accounts for foreign researches in order to suggest new investigations. Two directions prevail: firstly, the structuralist reading of architecture, analysed as a language. In the second place, the design studies of Christopher Alexander. Philippe Boudon states that the juxtaposition of these different methodologies has in itself a heuristic value.

THE DEBATES OF L’ARCHITECTURE D’AUJOURD’HUI’S EDITORIAL BOARD BETWEEN 1967 AND 1974: AGAINST PLURIDISCIPLINARITY?

At the end of the 1960s, under pressure from a young generation of architects, as well as in response to the intellectual context and political climate of contestation, French architectural criticism opens up to social sciences. Nonetheless, this evolution is slow and troubled in the main architectural periodicals. On the contrary, several magazines of human sciences, such as *Espaces et Sociétés*, give a prominent space to the analysis of the city, in terms of class domination. As already evoked, the 1964 dossier on criticism published in *L’AA* mirrored above all the sensitive issue of the relation to the public. It also sought to proclaim loud and clear, vis-à-vis the art critics and the political and cultural press, the

professional and disciplinary specificity of architectural criticism. Still, while the alternative between aesthetic criticism and social criticism were recurrent in the committee's internal discussions, other tools were implemented on the eve of the 1970s.

An issue about urbanism is emblematic of a twofold editorial line. On the one side, this issue confirms the significant relevance of the *International Congresses of Modern Architecture*, confirming in this way the legitimacy of modern architecture and its development. On the other side, it opens towards new themes; for instance, it features the American advocacy planning, the contestation of urban renewal operations, and it gives an already prominent position to semiology, to an architectural analysis based on literary criticism, as well as to spatial anthropology. Such an opening towards protest projects and towards new theoretical and political approaches to architecture intensifies when Marc Émery takes office as the editor-in-chief in 1968.⁹ The editorial board probably considered that the son of Swiss architect Pierre-André Émery, who was close to some of the CIAM members and a former collaborator of Le Corbusier, could remain faithful to L'AA's post-war guiding principles.

But things turned out differently. Émery studied in the USA under Louis Kahn's supervision: this may explain, in the first place, his interest for new American theoretical approaches, such as Robert Venturi's. Under the direction of Marc Émery, L'AA provides different tools for reading urban space. The 1970 issue devoted to the city makes yet another point on urban semiology (Françoise Choay, Roland Barthes). It presents the Italian typo-morphology, as well as Lynch interpretations. It sums up Henri Lefebvre's hypotheses and identifies slums, "*bidonvilles*",¹⁰ as a "new" object of study.

Many articles on underdevelopment, on architecture in the Third World, give space to the issue of *L'Autre*. These ideas resonate with those promoted by the Team 10,¹¹ featured two decades earlier in L'AA. In fact, L'AA was the only magazine in France to give space to this group. Between 1953 and 1962, the reception of the Team 10 and the interest for the dwelling issue ("*Habitat*") was shown above all through Michel Écochard and Georges Candilis's projects in Northern Africa. Still, in the wake of May 1968, to promote such topics as the

9 BLOC, Marguerite. Carta para Pierre Vago. *Archives d'Architecture du xx siècle*. 21 jun. 1966. Fonds Pierre Vago, AN 64 Ifa 246.

10 With the famous study "Le bidonville. Phénomène urbain direct" (Herpin; Santelli, 1970-1971).

11 Created in the post-war reconstruction of Europe, Team 10 originated within the International Congresses of Modern Architecture. Architects Aldo van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, Georges Candilis, Giancarlo de Carlo, Alison and Peter Smithson, and Shadrach Woods are recognized as major voices, who argued that human experience served as a point of departure for design. According to Max Risselada and Dirk van den Heuvel, Team 10 was "named after the CIAM committee responsible for planning the tenth congress, which took place in Dubrovnik in 1956" (Risselada; van den Heuvel, 2005, p. 17).

slum issue also meant to challenge the traditional conception of the profession of the architect, seen as a “creator”, an interpretation that L’AA had built on since the 1930s. This casts doubts on the legitimacy of the social function and of the architect’s practice in France; architects were directly involved in the State’s policy since the Reconstruction (after the Second World War). Also, it indirectly jeopardises the role of architectural criticism and its possible impact on clients and the public opinion.

The L’AA’s permeability to the upheavals of theory, that were underway in other countries since the 1950s, and therefore to an architectural criticism drawing from other disciplines, is not an easy path. This struggle is reflected in the editorial boards discussions. The opening of the magazine towards sociological analysis, prompted by Marc Émery, was confronted with the opposition from almost the entire editorial board (except for Candilis, and Jean Perrotet, who was a member of the architects team of *Atelier d’urbanisme et d’architecture* (AUA),¹² linked to the Communist Party). The editorial board kept advocating for architecture as creation and artistic approach: Claude Parent, for instance, in 1971 deplored that “the magazine seems to intentionally forget the meaning of the word creativity”.

That same year, 1971, Pierre Vago edits an issue named “*Doctrine*”. The issue recalls the positive role of the pre-war and post-war CIAM. On this occasion, Vago commissioned a few articles to critics already active before World War II, such as Julius Posener. Their shared preoccupation was the need to “enlarge the scope of the modern vocabulary”, through the search for new shapes. But most of all, the aim of that issue was to counteract the upheavals caused by the rise of social sciences in architectural theories, as well as in the architectural education, after the end of the *École des Beaux-arts*’ architecture section¹³. To this twofold earthquake, Vago opposes the need for a doctrine to orientate the “stray souls” after May 1968. In his opinion, this disorientation had an impact both on architecture and on society.

Thus, Vago’s article – “*Du chaos à l’espoir. Vers une architecture*” [“From chaos to hope. Towards an architecture”] (Vago, 1971, p. 62-67), we can spy here an echo of Le Corbusier’s title *Vers une architecture*, from 1923 – speaks out against the recourse to social science in criticism. This text, reactionary and self-defensive, also takes a stand against social and political architectural criticism. In Vago’s opinion, this is

12 The “*Atelier d’urbanisme et d’architecture*” (AUA) was active from 1960 to 1985. It was formed by a pluridisciplinary team gathering architects, interior designers, engineers, urbanists and sociologists around a common project. Its members had significant political and cultural activity. See Cohen and Grossman (2015).

13 ¹⁴ On the upheavals of the *École des Beaux-Arts*, see Diener (2022) and Chéneau-Deysine (2019).

unproductive and leads to the negation of architecture itself. Besides being the instrument of the public's education, which has been a recurrent concern in L'AA since the 1930s, for Vago criticism is a tool of control – one which his generation is losing grip on – of the developments of modern architecture, seen as a discipline and as a profession.

CONCLUSION

Called into question in 1971, Marc Émery points out that the best European magazines (he takes *Architectural Design* as an example) are changing their editorial lines, and through this remark he goes after L'AA's immobility. During a meeting of the editorial board, he observes the lack of "fair play on the part of the architects who never accept it, while they are always clamouring for it". He concludes that this is a reason for the struggle of criticism. Yet, largely thanks to the intellectual references provided by Émery, the L'AA's actual pluridisciplinarity endures until 1974, when Émery was replaced by Bernard Huet. The period of Bernard Huet's editorship is, on its part, far more documented by scholars (L'AA, 1990; Pommier, 2010; Cohen, 1984).

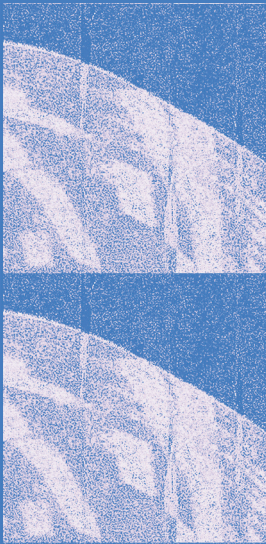
As a conclusion, I would like to underline the two-sided isolation of French criticism: in relation to foreign theoretical renewals, but above all, since the end of the 1960s, in regard to the French intellectual context in turmoil... As soon as 1984, Jean-Louis Cohen had qualified this isolation as a "divide between architects and intellectuals",¹⁴ opposing the French architectural milieu, rather resistant to change, to the Italian intellectual turbulence, underway since the 1950s. In my opinion, we have now to put into question this "divide", and to try to render a more precise image of these relations, between the intellectual field and the architectural one. This is, in my view, a condition to insert the history of criticism in a larger cultural and intellectual history.

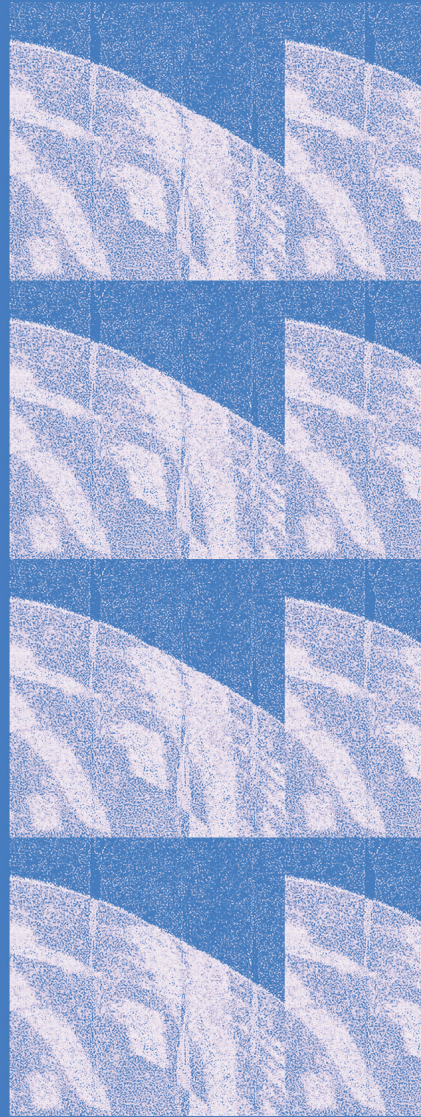
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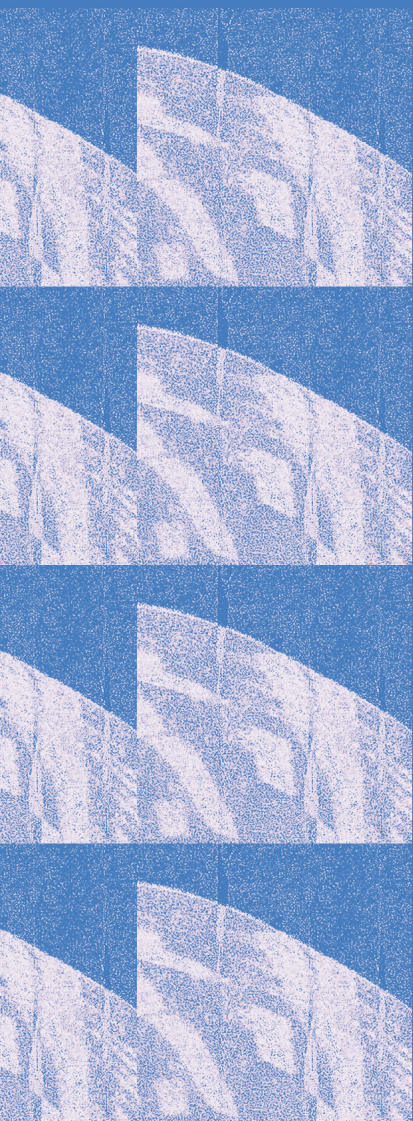
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14 Author's translation for: "une coupure entre architectes et intellectuels".

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IV. PLACES OF MEMORY

Daniela Ortiz dos Santos and Mário Magalhães

OPEN LETTER: NARRATING BY CORRESPONDENCE, AN INVITATION FOR AN INTIMATE COEXISTENCE

Dear reader, you are probably imagining what is the reason for highlighting the idea of correspondence as a practice and privileged source for this volume on architectural criticism, media and memory. Here is our answer: an essay on possible narratives drawing on and by means of correspondences. Although the epistolary practice is broadly acknowledged as a fertile space for knowledge construction among poets and figures of the literary field (Berranger, 2018; Diaz, 2010), the same is not recognised for the studies on visual arts or the field of visualities.

The favouring of the work itself, its drawing, photograph or even the moving image as documental body to be celebrated, permeates an abundant production of the field. However, we perceive a recent movement of authors who, delving into historiographical issues of architecture, urbanism and arts, propose to evoke a sensibility drawing on the writing and specifically the epistolary, either by choosing correspondences preserved in archives as research material, or by experimenting the epistolary practice as a method and a poetics.

It is from these sensibilities that it seems important for us to highlight the efforts of Ivair Reinaldim, Priscilla Alves Peixoto, and Ruth Verde Zein. In an essay on the historiography of Brazilian art in the 1970s, Reinaldim proposes a thorough analysis on the debates of art historians Aracy Abreu Amaral and Ronaldo Brito around the curatorship of the exhibition “Projeto construtivo brasileiro na arte” [Brazilian Constructive Art Project], held at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, in 1977.

In the case of Peixoto, the epistolary presence is manifested in a more subtle way, though equally potent. By shedding light over the criticism of arts and architecture in Brazil in the period between two state-of-exception regimes, *i.e.*, during the late-1950s and early-1960s, Peixoto makes the exercise to put into words a mode of conversation with the reader that, instead of presenting certainties and results, exposes a praxis that sustains the gravity of the being in crisis, either as narrator, historian or critic. By sharing a questioning, she invites us to a reflection on the unequal modes by which the heritage of the critics Mário Pedro-

sa, Mário Barata, and Quirino Campofiorito were objects of discourse, conservation and remembrance, or of silences.

The last text of this sections refers to the transcription of a conversation by Priscilla Peixoto and Sílvia Sávio Chataignier with Ruth Verde Zein about memory, criticism, and the history of architecture and urbanism in Brazil.

Although addressing apparently distinct themes, the texts by Reinaldim, Peixoto and Verde Zein traverse issues that are inherent to the epistolary practice. On the one hand, Reinaldim looks into the correspondences to uncover the processes, disputes and consensus around the preparation of an exhibition project. On the other hand, Peixoto speculates an open essay to potentially exalt the argument that archival and critical practices are intrinsically political practices. Finally, by traversing issues of the field of Brazilian architectural criticism in the past forty years, Verde Zein's positions and reflections take shape drawing on a collective. With the title "Critical memories of an architectural journalist", the text gives voice to an oral and written correspondence that evokes displacements, processes, positioning, collaboration, and disputes.

Therefore, the letter is placed here as a privileged practice to put into evidence hesitant voices, or still, wandering voices, inherent to the critic's and the curator's practice. Furthermore, the letter becomes the place of questions and ponderations, as well as of doubts, of an open thought construed in a collective way. It is in these spaces of coexistence and complicity, which are absent in institutional discourses, that will be presented the confidential writings of the stationery paper. As a game board, the actors in it meet and seek to construct a practice of coexistence that enable us to embody correspondences in a broad sense.

ARCHIVES, DEBRIS AND SILENCES

Why mention an exchange of letters to talk about an exhibition if it is made so explicit by the exhibition itself and its catalogue? Why enter intimacy, delve into the ubiquity of daily life, to talk about architecture drawing on social actors who supposedly never built it? What is the texture of fabrics darned by our interactions, by the correspondences we establish? Or perhaps we could ask ourselves about the rhythms of the divergence and convergence movements of social actors, their groups, institutions, and even cities, which as vapours move, disperse and meet in constellations (Pereira, 2018), with their diffuse frontiers?

The interactions, necessarily material, furrow, line, inscribe their marks on the most different bodies – a world of vestiges. On the one hand, the material framework or the material culture as vestige is on the base of the archaeological work. On the other hand, the social framework, the "immaterial" culture of bodies and gestures so incarnated, so material, are on the base of the anthropological work. The cultural studies dive into the world(s) as representation(s) (Chartier, 1989). Ho-

wever, in spite of the world being, strict sense, vestige, the social forms of their appropriation are about a rugged topography of built vestiges, legitimated and institutionalised as archives, whereas so many others persist as debris and silences.

It is on this rugged terrain that, most often, the researches move, and this is certainly the case of the authors in this section. Especially, the historiographic reviews, traversed by changes in historiographic narratives, approaches and objects, tendentiously take the path over the debris and silences of the not archived. In the asynchronicity of temporalities of archive-making, in the face of the frontier of researches, emerges a contradiction that is necessary to sustain: this space of incompleteness that appears to us as inherent in our practice. On the one hand, we should resist the archival hypertrophy, resist what Choay (1999) addressed, about the heritage inflation, as narcissistic syndrome. On the other hand, an ethical North is needed for historical reparations in relation to those whom the patri-archival violence (Derrida, [1995] 1998) has neglected, made peripheral, debris and silenced to the point of dehumanising them. To whom do we owe the restitution of their humanity?

Hence, it is necessary to dispute the archive-making. This can happen from top to bottom, from the institutions and places of power that decide what should or not be kept. But also from bottom to top, from each monographic research, which make from these debris and silences an evidence corpus, an almost-archive. The phantasmatic image constituted from this, necessarily out of focus, always in the periphery of vision, turns into the condition of an invisible that pressures on the consciousness. The historiographic operation insufflates in the hegemonic documental body this new spirit, fabricates a new body (Magalhães *et al.*, 2020), making from this heterogeneous material an amalgam, a breath that reconducts to humanity people, persons, life.

Reconducting to humanity is inherent in overcoming the biographic taboo that still persists due to reservations, suspicions and accusations about biographic approaches that traditionally reduced the living to a closed and finalist unity, to autonomous and exceptional individuals. Contrary to tradition, contemporary biographic approaches (Dosse, [2005] 2009) situate in concrete conditions of existence, action and enunciation the social and cultural history of which the historiography of architecture still seems to lack; in which persists, more insidiously, a formalist view of architecture and the city as a product, rather than as a complex, collective process, immerse in the society and culture in which it is constantly reconfigured (Ricoeur, [1998] 2016).

For you who reads us, we meet in these texts because even before there was already between us a correspondence, affections, subtle fields of relations that make as gravitate and, lovingly, touch. We invite you to go to the papers of Reinaldim, Peixoto and Verde Zein and find there so many other correspondences.

With kind regards,

Daniela and Mário.

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ARCHIVES, CRITICISM AND POLITICS

ANNOTATIONS FOR INTERPRETING SILENCES¹

Priscilla Alves Peixoto

VESTIGES IN AMNESTY²

What is inherited when there is a collective commitment with forgetfulness? This question seems to contain a certain paradox. Is there a memory of forgetfulness? In one of his most well-known books, Paul Ricoeur (2007, p. 509) dispels “the idea of symmetry between memory and forgetfulness in terms of success or achievement [...]”. He addresses the relationship between both of them in a more complex way, traversing and problematizing situations that involved also amnesty processes. In his conclusion, he writes:

[...] Forgetfulness prevents the continuation of action, either through the confusion of roles impossible to be disentangled, or through unsurmountable conflicts in which the dispute is unsolvable, unsurpassable, or still through irreparable damages that usually date back to former times. If pardoning has a role in these increasing tragic situations, it can only be about a type of not-punctual work regarding the way of waiting and accommodating atypical situations: the inextricable, irreconcilable, irreparable. This tacit acceptance deals less with memory than with greave as lasting disposition. In fact, the three figures evoked here are figures of loss; admitting

1 This article was published in the journal *Paranoá*. It is available at: PEIXOTO, Priscilla Alves. Archives, criticism and politics. Annotations for interpreting silences. *Paranoá*, n. 17, e41201, 2024. Available at: <https://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/paranoa/article/view/41201/41668>.

2 At the time when the *Colloquium Architectural Criticism, Media and Memory (1940s–1970s)* was held, in September 2022, this introduction had not been written yet. It was necessary to reach January 2023 for it to be finally outlined. Most likely, because at that moment the thematising of amnesty (or claim for a non-amnesty) had crossed several discourses in Brazil. However, the construction of this paper had a longer and slower preparation than its introduction; it dates back to 2020, when I started to debate more systematically issues addressing architectural archives, the writing of their history, and the history of architectural criticism (Peixoto, 2021; 2022).

that there is a permanent loss would be the greatest wisdom, worthy of being considered as the incognito of forgiveness in the tragic of action. The patient search for the solution of compromise would be the bargaining chip, but also the accommodation of dissents in the ethics of discussion. Should one go as far as to say “forget the debt”, this figure of loss? Probably yes, insofar as the debt confines, in the absence, and encloses, in the repetition. Nevertheless, it means recognition of the heritage. A subtle work of disconnection and connection should be performed in the very core of the debt: on the one hand, disconnection of the loss, on the other, connection with a forever-insolvent debtor. The debt without the absence. The debt made explicit. In which there is a reencounter of the debt with the ones that are dead and history as grave (Ricoeur, 2007, p. 509 – free translation).

This long excerpt by Paul Ricoeur points how there is, in the crossing of asymmetric experiences of memory and loss, a work to be done, that of grieve, in which history has a role to be fulfilled: keeping connected the figure of a debtor forever-insolvent and, at the same time, creating the means so that the survivors’ lives – those who remained – can follow their path.

Paul Ricoeur’s statements, as most texts that address the theme of forgiveness and forgetfulness, may be felt as painful and unfair, especially in case the intention is to cross moments of Brazilian social and political life marked by a systematic and – one could say – pathological appeasement.³ It is necessary to make clear: initiating this essay with Paul Ricoeur’s words is not related to a defence of indulgence. On the contrary, this choice is guided by the importance that this author gives to the work of grieve, of a conscious reflection on the experience of loss. I seek to enunciate this with some clarity, as to address the issue that, in fact, the paper will approach: a specific case, related to the institutionalisation (or not) of archives of art critics dedicated to architecture during the 1950s. The motivation is the need to dimension the value attributed to art and architectural criticism in the process of turning documental sets into heritage.

Focusing on the study of the private collections of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, this paper analyses the different processes of the entry of documentation and books of these three critics in archives, museums and libraries. The hypothesis is that this process has the marks of the military dictatorship installed in Brazil between the 1960s and 1980s, which also affected the documentation

3 For example, as those based on the practices of “cordiality” (Holanda, 1995, p. 139-152) and “structural racism” (Almeida, 2019).

produced before this period.⁴ In other words, this paper approaches the institutionalization of these collections as part of an amnesty process that followed the dictatorship⁵. As can be verified along this essay, I will not explore many details of the art critics' documentation, since much of it is inaccessible. The proposal of this paper is to address the absence or the hindrances of access to these sources, hence, to consider this situation as a historiographical problem of architectural criticism in Brazil.

MEDITATIONS ON THE TUNER OF SILENCES

However, let us get back to the initial question: what is inherited when there is a collective commitment with forgetfulness? Trying to answer this question does not only imply meditating on the sense of the relationship established between memory, history and forgetfulness. It also brings along the need to build ways to face the work of experiences of forgiving and loss, remembering that these are followed by a commitment established before us, of making actions stop.

As we have seen, Paul Ricoeur leads his reflection on the issue by building parallels with the process of grieve. Nevertheless, the problem that we bring here is of a slightly different nature: in fact, one seeks resources to work on a process of recognition of absences so that one can operate a farewell or forgiveness. However, in the case studied in this essay, it is about grieve to be carried out much later than the actual event of the loss. Or, a process of grieve demanded by bodies that did not live (or could not live) the event of loss, but feel themselves heirs of it. Seeking resources to illustrate the issue, we propose an approach to the literary work by Mozambican writer Mia Couto, "Antes de nascer o mundo" ([2009] 2016) [Before the world was born].

Couto's book tells the story of a father, Silvério Vitalício, whose memories bring so much pain that make him choose sideration, for

4 It must be alerted that the consequences of the military dictatorship installed in Brazil in the 1960s through 1980s do not seem to have been the only forces to affect the presence or absence of institutional recognition of the works of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito (Peixoto, 2021), especially when we address documents of these critics dedicated to architecture. Considering that these opinions were produced by art critics dedicated to the theme in a very specific moment of their intellectual trajectories, it seems that it also reflects disputes in their professional fields. In other words, that of claiming that architectural criticism is a specialised discourse, as clearly exposed in the texts by Hélène Jannière (2019, p. 19-20) and Silvio Vasconcellos ([1957] 2003, p. 287).

5 Here it is perhaps noteworthy to make a short note to differentiate the way of keeping memory in archives from the memory present in the bodies. One should not forget that without the reminiscences that inhabit our bodies, many of the experiences would have never been transmitted. Part of what I think here comes from several talks, interviews and testimonies of people who came before me and, therefore, recognize the body as a monument. However, specifically choosing to problematize archives – the places of institutionalised memory – is justified by the interest in investigating the mechanisms of construction of value for the practice of architectural criticism. In other words, in this study, I interrogate about the ways and causes for it to have been possible (or not) to monumentalize criticism in Brazil. A criticism that as practice often circulated as writing and exhibitions.

himself and his sons. He decides to flee from his past and create a land where there was no time, hence, no memory. The story's element of tension is the dispute, between the three characters, over the memory of the wife and mother, Dordalma. Her story remains unknown during almost the entire book: the woman had decided to abandon the family to refund her own life with a new love, but before she could trail her own destiny, in the escape route she was brutally raped. This tragedy led her to suicide.

Throughout the book, the memories that the characters have of Dordalma is the way in which we are, in fact, led to know her. Thus, her memory tilts between three forms. For the father, she is a synonymous of a past that he wishes to forget, her name cannot even be mentioned: "I have told you four hundred times: your mother has died, she has completely died, pretend she has never been alive" (Couto, [2009] 2016, p. 32).

For the eldest son, Ntunzi, who kept memories from the world out there, the mother's face is an image to which he can resort. However, little by little, with the days spent in the land without time and the fear of losing the memories of the contours of the mother's face, Ntunzi's actions gravitate between the compulsion for drawings, in which he tries to crystalize them, the cult to these images and the haunting they produce in him. A sort of phantasmagoria that follows and confuses him.

For the younger son, Mwanito, the mother is known from the compulsions, repressions and phantasmagorias of the brother and the father. He was still very young when she died. So, during the time he spent in the land without time, the cult of silence was his form of reconnecting with Dordalma. Silence was his representation of the mother.

Mwanito's appreciation of silence helped the father to keep away from his own demons. In the nights when he could not sleep, Silvério Vitalício asked his youngest son to stay by his side "tuning silences". Then a perverse game was revealed: the peace of this father was built at the expense of Mwanito's life, who cultivated silences because he could never worship his memories, never remember his ancestors, nor himself.

One of the most moving moments in Mia Couto's text is that, after the turning point of the story, when they are all forced to return to town, face the past and know Dordalma's story, it is precisely Mwanito who embraces the present and faces the past and the future; without fear and romanticism, without fear of the respective roughness or crystallising images, not being haunted by phantasmagorias. From almost all characters, he is the only one who embraces time, allowing it to act over the relations established with those around him, updating wishes and projects for the future, and giving space to the father and to the mother's memory, accepting them, in their incompleteness, frailties and absences. He is the only one who seems to be aging. Not by chance, the author makes Mwanito be the narrator of the story. It is for this

character that time actually comes into existence and becomes a matter under construction.

The way in which each character relates to the past brings attributes already largely worked upon by theorists of memory. Surely, the feelings of the father and the eldest son seem to perform symptoms of the pathologies linked to memory. However, the figure of Mwanito calls particular attention because it seems to represent the story's attributes; the figure that interprets from the vestiges and the attentive listening. There is something about the "tuner of silences" that makes him be a compassionate listener and a constructor who manages to place into narratives "spaces of experience and horizons of expectation" (Koselleck, [1979] 2006, p. 305-328).

In Mía Couto's literature, the unities explored by Paul Ricoeur – memory, history and forgetfulness – come to light to deal with the process of grieve. With a different tonus from that brought by the philosopher, the story of Mwanito shows us the gaining of awareness of a heritage – fruit of a desire of forgetfulness – and, at the same time, the operation of the reconfiguration of an identity forged in the worship to absences. It shows us that the action of putting into a narrative – mapping, recognising and talking about the loss that cannot be fully lived as experience – is also capable of giving space to the memories of unfair and incomplete situations, whose reparation is impossible.

THREE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The archives that we work upon here, the private collections of Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, can be seen, little by little, as the representations of Dordalma in "Antes de nascer o mundo" (Couto, [2009] 2016). In the condition in which they are, their main poetics seem to be a thin weave of presences and absences. In some of them, the absences seem to dominate the scene. As paradoxical as it may seem, we can say that in some cases they are archives "tuned by silence". With the purpose of making explicit the metaphor, it is necessary to present the current situation of the three documental sets.

Mário Pedrosa's private archive is undoubtedly the most organised and accessible of the three critics. It is divided between two Brazilian public institutions: *Biblioteca Nacional* and *Centro de Documentação e Memória of Universidade Estadual Paulista* (Unesp). The *Biblioteca Nacional* makes available for access a website where it presents the dossier arrangement and some information on the documentation's institutionalisation. The *Centro de Documentação e Memória* of UNESP conducted an archival description; it is available on a digital booklet format, together with the description of other funds of the collection.

Until recently, Mário Barata's private archive had belonged to his family⁶ and all that could be known about it was restricted to a blog named "Memorial Mário Barata" (Barata, 2008; 2010).

Quirino Campofiorito's private archive could hardly be recognised as a unity. The heritage of this critic is distributed in various institutions. Part of his paintings is at the museum of the Escola de Belas Artes of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). The documentation related to his activity as a critic is safeguarded in a private collection belonging to his family. According to Beatriz Pinheiro de Campos, "[...] it has never been published, or even studied, separately. There are over 400 collected criticisms, between the years 1944-1952 and 1957-1960" (Campos, 2014, p. 212). Regarding the books that constituted his former library, I found varied information. It is known that part of the bibliographic collection is owned by another institution in Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) (Campos, 2014, p. 213). There have also been donations to library of Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Biblioteca Nacional and Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), all in Rio de Janeiro.

The mapping of these collections reveals different safeguard conditions. In Mário Pedrosa's case, one finds a systematised documental set concentrated in a few and accessible institutions. In Mário Barata's case, one finds that the family wishes (and, perhaps, the critic himself wished) to safeguard the collection, maintaining a certain unity of the documental set, but this contrasts with the possibility of accessing the sources. In the case of Quirino Campofiorito, one observes a documental, iconographic and bibliographic set already dispersed through different institutions. As we have pointed earlier, this essay considers that in these safeguard processes there is the experience of amnesty; they are like Dordalma's representations, something that gravitates between vestiges and absences. From a closer observation of the three collections, arises the question: For what reason there has been, apparently, greater difficulty in institutionalising the documentation of Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito than that of Mário Pedrosa?

To try to answer this question, I will follow two different paths. Firstly, a path that enables the identification of political and social processes that were equally present in the institutionalisation of the three critics' documentation. In the sequence, I will situate the aspects that influenced the constitution of Mário Pedrosa's collections, those that seemingly have systematised locations that ensure a certain cohesion of the documentation.

6 This text began to be written in 2021 and only in February 2023 it was possible to establish a first contact with Mário Barata's family and access part of the documentation and the critic's library. The archives and books found from this contact didn't have an inventory. Throughout 2023, a part of this collection was sent to safeguarding and research institutions and the identification processes were initiated. However, this processing is still in progress. The reflection covered by this essay, whose writing was completed in early 2023, was established in the moment immediately before these processes were starting.

CRITICISM BETWEEN TWO PERIODS OF STATE OF EXCEPTION

To follow the first path, I bring a book that does not specifically approach the case of Brazilian art critics, but which enables to frame them more generally, as intellectuals. The book is *La saga des intellectuels français (1944-1989)* [The Saga of French Intellectuals (1944-1989)], by François Dosse (2018). Through approaches and contrasts with the French case, reading this book helps to identify some specificities of the Brazilian critics' activities. Through François Dosse's lenses, one can infer possible impacts on the institutionalisation of their private documentation.

Let us see an excerpt of the book's introduction. François Dosse writes that between the end of Second World War and the year that marks the end of the Soviet Union, the French intellectuals (both from left and right wings) seem to have reached the end of that period as "orphans of a project of society", marked by what François Hartog ([2003] 2014) called "presentism". For Dosse, between 1944 and 1989, "(...) the belief in the course of history, meant to bring the advent of a better world (...), [was] shaken" (2018, p. 11 – free translation). Following the development of his argument, Dosse writes:

The trajectory retraced here occurred between two moments: the eruption and later the disappearance of the prophetic intellectual. Having appeared in the immediate post-war, this figure is cultivated by the generation that traversed the tragedy and expects to reenchant history. [...] At the other extreme of the trajectory, in 1989, this figure of the "wise" thinker, capable of giving a point of view about everything, disappears. We are talking about the "grave of intellectuals" (Dosse, 2018, p. 13 – free translation).

The history of this "erasure" is what François Dosse seeks to reconstitute in the development of his book⁷. For the study of the Brazilian case, the landmarks proposed by the author – the end of the Second World War and the end of the Soviet Union – demarcate the years that follow and precede two processes of re-democratisation in Brazil: 1945 and 1988. If these are dates when the democratic play returned to the scene, it is a sign that, before one and the other, two periods of state of exception, two periods of dictatorship, were traversed.

Superposing these two chronologies, which possess truly distinct objects, helps to perceive that, in Brazil, the figure of the thinker who could give his opinion about everything and build projects of society, not

7 One cannot say that François Dosse's statement points to something very different from what authors dedicated to architecture and urbanism had been writing in the 1960s, as in the works of Françoise Choay (1965; 1980; 1992). In her writings, the criticism of the adoption of models and of the utopian discourse seems to denounce a similar crisis.

only took shape after a great war, but also was configured after almost a decade without the possibility to freely transmit ideas. The year 1945 marks the beginning of a democratic period, considering that between 1938 and 1944 the Vargas dictatorship interfered in the public debate using press censorship and political persecution. When pointing 1988 as another landmark, the year of the first direct presidential election after the beginning of the process of political re-opening in Brazil, another state of exception is delimited: the military dictatorship established in 1964, through another coup d'état; a regime that toughened from 1968 onwards, with the Institutional Act no. 5 (AI-5), which instituted the prior censorship of artistic works and the press. In other words, the process that led to problematizing, contesting and, even, the death of that intellectual attitude identified by Dosse (in the French case), perhaps would not have been possible to occur in Brazil. At least, not in the public arena.

In Brazil, the period of existence of this “figure of the ‘wise’ thinker”, capable of giving “a point of view about everything”, seems to have been shorter than that interpreted by Dosse. From 1968 onwards, one can say that it became more difficult (or even impossible) for intellectuals to make public their opinions about projects of future, whether they were expressions of their wishes or their frustrations. Between 1968 and 1978,⁸ some of them became silent, others were silenced and others chose to carry on their actives, but had to go away into exile. For example, between 1970 and 1973, Mário Pedrosa needed to seek exile in Chile (Paladino, 2021), and, in 1969, Mário Barata was removed from his position as university professor,⁹ which led him to material hardships (Ribeiro, 2009).

Going back to the debate on the collections, and considering this context, what is observed is that the safeguard of the private documentation or even published texts, with the purpose of constituting a memory of criticism, did not receive systematic efforts. After all, precisely the activity that engendered the documentation, *i.e.*, the activity of criticism, became a practice that was fought against by the Brazilian State during the period immediately after the production of the documentation.

As much as one can state that the process of memory production is not a State monopoly, two questions are raised here: one can imagine the lack of public policies for the reception of documents of this type,

8 The final limit of this process is imprecise; several landmarks can be mentioned here, such as the revocation of institutional acts, in October 1978; the Amnesty Act, passed in 1979; the inauguration of a civil president in 1985. Nevertheless, we took the first date as a temporary landmark.

9 Mário Barata was compulsorily retired by Institutional Act #5, in 1969. Since 1955, he had been full professor of Art History at the *Escola Nacional de Belas Artes*, at the time a unity of the former University of Brazil (presently Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – UFRJ). In 1979, with the amnesty process, Mário Barata resumed his activity as professor at the University, but did not return to his original school; he became a faculty member at Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (Wehling, 2007; Tupy, 2021).

and it is possible to verify the political retaliation against the proponents of this sort of private initiatives.

For example, searching on the data base “Memórias reveladas” [Revealed memories], a project dedicated to providing public access to governmental documentation produced during the dictatorship in Brazil, we found a document that lists “names and addresses of individuals and entities recipients of publication and correspondence originating in communist countries, apprehended by the DCT GB in August 1970” (Brasil, 1970).

In this list, one can find Mário Barata’s name, as well as of several libraries, among which the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where this critic was a professor. I mention this document to evince how difficult it was to maintain a library during the dictatorship period and in the case of public libraries to have the autonomy to organise their collections.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning here that the three intellectuals whose collections are addressed in this article did not constitute a unity, neither in their perspectives as critics, nor in their political ideologies (Campos, 2014, p. 26; Moraes, 2018, p. 73-74). However, during the dictatorship, it seems that the nuances were not recognised. All of them were seen as opponents to the government.

However, the analysis of the political persecution and retaliation undergone by these critics should not simplify the elements that motivated them, because it is not only about a combat against the ideologies in a strict sense. They seem to have been invested also of other sorts of political disputes, in which seem to have weighed social, cultural and economic capitals.

For a brief illustration of the issue, we can resort to these critics’ involvement with the International Association of Art Critics (AICA)¹¹ and with mass circulation newspapers. In both cases, Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata

10 Although distant from our study object, to exemplify how some intellectuals feared keeping a library, we take Marcos Bagno’s testimony, in which he tells that he accompanied his father during the discard of his private library. He recalls: “When the coup broke out, I was three years old [...], this caused a number of difficulties for my family. We come from Minas Gerais, but my father passed a contest for a job at Banco do Brasil and was allocated in Salvador [Bahia]. When we were living in Salvador, [it was] when the coup broke out and my father had a huge library. His education was in sociology, [he was] a Marxist. He had a broad library on Marxism and political science [...]. Then there was that thing, right? The need to discard those books. So, he threw part of this library in Baía de Todos os Santos. And he took me along. It is an interesting story, because I was very small and did not remember well, but recently he told me all about it. He would take some supermarket paper bags, put the books inside and take me along, because a person with a little child would not look suspicious. [So,] he took the ferryboat to Itaparica and, [...] during the trip he sat with me right at the rear of the boat and threw the books into the sea” (Bagno *apud* Araújo; Rellstab, 2021).

11 The International Association of Art Critics (AICA) is a non-governmental organization linked to UNESCO. Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito were affiliated art critics. During the 1950s, two of them performed prominent roles. In 1957, Mário Barata became Regional Secretary for Latin America and Mário Pedrosa became one of its vice-presidents (Peixoto, 2020, p. 81).

and Quirino Campofiorito played roles in which they showed the capacity to position themselves publicly, the access to an international circulation, and the easiness to disseminate their ideas in mass media vehicles.

Considering this picture, we can think that the memory of their criticism are also reminiscences of a world of transnational and multilateral relations, in which the social field did not have its differences appeased. Regarding the latter, the role of criticism (and of critics) was precisely of making them publicly explicit and debating them. In other words, a set of values difficult to be supported in a dictatorial regime.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the end of the dictatorship did not automatically rehabilitate the practice of criticism and, consequently, during the process of political re-opening, the criticism written in former times was not rapidly recognised as heritage. One could say that, in a way, after the repression and disarticulation of the criticism diffusion means, especially mass media newspapers and public universities, the practice of criticism was distant from having the same strength of the 1950s.

However, what we enunciated in the hypothesis of this essay brings yet another layer to this discussion. When considering the criticism archives as heritage of an amnesty process, we observe the collision of two antithetical movements: the pulsion to remember and the need to forget. In other words, the ongoing amnesty operated a movement that refrained the practise of criticism, stopping it from developing. Differently from the French case that built graves for its intellectuals, in Brazil it was necessary to welcome them back and introduce them to the new generations, because having been amnestied, they returned from exile to the institutions from where they had been expelled.

These considerations about amnesty do not mean that we disregard the efforts of those people who constructed it, nor diminish their contributions to the resumption of democratic life. Amnesty was designed within the conditions of possibilities, in the course of action. However, the elements listed here seek to recognise that this process affected the production of criticism in the quality of social practice, as well as the valorisation of its memory.

In order to address these considerations with some more depth, I will continue to give a closer look into the passage of Mário Pedrosa's documents to be safeguarded at the Centro de Documentação do Movimento Operário (CEMAP), which takes his name, and at the Biblioteca Nacional.

THE SPECIFICITY OF A COLLECTION BUILT BETWEEN TWO PASSIONS (ART AND POLITICS)

When accessing the research tools of the two archives, the first finding is already noteworthy: at the CEMAP as well as at the Biblioteca Nacional, the entry of the documents into the archives dates from a period significantly posterior to the moment of the documentation produc-

tion. Probably 1981 for the first and early 2000s for the second. In other words, the early movements are inscribed in the period of the political re-opening of Brazil.

Furthermore, another aspect calls attention: the process of institutionalisation of the two documental sets did not have as dynamist only the specificity of Mário Pedrosa's activity as critic. To explicit this issue, it is necessary to resort to excerpts of the archival description that presents the Mário Pedrosa Fund at CEMAP:

Mário Pedrosa's collection, comprising documentation produced and gathered by him, was donated to the Documentation Centre of the Workers' Movement (CEMAP) and in 1994 it was transferred, under custody, together with the other funds and collections of CEMAP, to UNESP/CEDEM. [...]

The Mario Pedrosa Fund [of CEMAP] comprises documents about his political militancy and his activity as art critic, besides correspondence and articles published in various newspapers, especially in the period 1923-1931. The documentation demonstrates the tension of this political period, little known, having among his interlocutors Murilo Mendes, Lygia Clark, Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, Benjamin Péret, Oscar Niemeyer, Antonio Candido, Pietro Maria Bardi, Tomie Othake and Ferreira Gullar, among others (Moraes, 2018, p. 74).

On the site of Biblioteca Nacional, in the section presenting the project that enabled the donation of Mário Pedrosa's remaining collection, there are also some detailed information. The donation of the documentation resulted from a sponsorship of Petrobrás, the national public oil and gas company, implemented between 2001 and 2003, which had as objective:

[...] Preserve Mário Pedrosa's documents, which had been with his family, with actions that allowed its conservation, organisation and dissemination, ultimately enabling the ample public access to the data that they comprise. The intellectual's family, in return, would donate the treated collection to a public institution in the city of Rio de Janeiro, having the National Library as the one selected (Ferrez, s/d).

In the same way as at CEMAP, in this second collection, Mário Pedrosa's political involvement gains the foreground in the construction of the documentation's patrimonial value. However, differently from the first collection, his activity as critic reaches an equivalent importance. To justify the relevance of this collection in the project that economically enabled the donation, Mário Pedrosa is presented as "an intellectual ah-

ead of his time. Art critic internationally renowned and political militant, he had his life divided between these two passions: art and politics” (Ferrez, s/d).

By making explicit the importance of Mário Pedrosa’s political engagement to the institutionalisation of his archive, we can speculate that perhaps by itself his action as art critic would not have triggered a series of processes that enabled the conservation, organisation and accessibility of the documentation. It seems that it was necessary to have other social “impulses” for his oeuvre to be sheltered at a place of memory. The same speculation leads us to denaturalise the election of Mário Pedrosa’s collection as a model process, “a promising path for the preservation of private collections of significance for the country’s culture and history” (Ferrez, s/d), as pointed on the website of the Biblioteca Nacional.

As one can find on the same website, “one of his [Mário Pedrosa’s] greatest prides was to be the PT no. 1” (Doctors, s/d). This sentence is meant to remember that the critic took pride in being the first person affiliated to the, then, recently created Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) [Workers’ Party]. This aspect conforms to the archival description of the critic’s fund at CEMAP and, in a broader sense, the presentation of CEMAP itself. In the centre’s publicity material, one can read:

The constitution of the collection [of the Documentation Centre of the Workers’ Movement Mário Pedrosa (CEMAP)] occurred by means of single donations of political militants, intellectuals, CEMAP’s sympathisers and founders. In 1994, this collection, along with the other CEMAP funds, was transferred to UNESP/CEDEM, under custody [...].

The collection comprises documents of the Workers’ Party (PT), such as: proposals, resolutions, party meetings, social movements, students movement, metalworkers union, other unions, CUT [Workers’ Central Union], documents produced by left-wing movements in the 1930s, about the national conjuncture, and documents referring to the 4th International, produced by various European and Latin-American institutions (Moraes, 2018, p. 70).

In a way, these findings can lead to speculations about the similarities between archives and political parties: the matter of each one of them – the memory for the first and politics for the second – exists in life in an “uninterested” way, it is almost a human faculty, an ontological condition. However, the archives, as the parties, belong to the order of the negotiated and officialised agreements, struggles formally shared, made public, and that from time-to-time demand updating to keep their representation.

The second trajectory followed by this essay demonstrates, therefore, that the effort of “patrimonialisation” of Mário Pedrosa’s documentation occurred mostly due to his political involvement. In other words, in the Brazilian archives, in a time of political re-opening, at the turn of the 1970s to the 1980s, Mário Pedrosa’s documents, in the quality of memory of criticism, had a different value from the documents that were vestiges of his activity as articulator of social and political causes. It is important to stress that this does not mean that this process was not legitimate or that there is no reckoning of Mário Pedrosa’s work as art critic. After all, the books published by Aracy Amaral (Pedrosa, 1981), Otilia Arantes (2012), Guilherme Wisnik (2015), Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff (2015) demonstrate, precisely, this recognition. However, what we highlight here is another symptom: the necessary capitals to build archives in the country seem different from those for constructing books.

The creation of Mário Pedrosa’s collection at the mentioned institutions was delineated in a significantly later period than the documents’ production and is inscribed in a deliberate action of the critic himself in wishing that the memory of his activity would be linked to a greater sphere of social causes, of a political character. Seen from this angle, Mário Pedrosa’s archives, though having a much different institutional existence from those belonging to the heritage of Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito, do not differ much from these. They all seem to be symptoms of concessions delineated after a process of amnesty that acted in dousing the public debate and, even if not intentionally, seems to have contributed to diminishing the perception of the social value of criticism.

GRIEVE, CRITICISM AND POSSIBLE ARCHIVES

In the beginning of this paper, I have mentioned that the turning point of Mia Couto’s book is precisely when the “tuner of silences”, Mwanito, can know his past and, with this, recognise the effects of time. I resort to this passage of the novel because it helps me to conclude the process followed throughout this essay. Between the dictatorship and the amnesty, art criticism and especially architectural criticism seem not to have not been able to age. Partly, the three critics, whose archives we have studied here, were part of the epistemological “saga” described by François Dosse (2018) in his book. They were among the group of intellectuals who had “a point of view about everything”: they were art critics who wrote about architecture, for example. However, the dictatorship and the amnesty interrupted the process of criticism that would be performed by the next generations. The “intellectuals’ grave”, in face of which François Doss makes his criticism of the generation of “wise thinkers”, here, in Brazil, seems to have left no gravestone vestige. A grave that, according to Paul Ricoeur, confounds with the process of interpreting the past (history) and, therefore, seems to be indispensable

to put in motion the grieve experience (a critical framing of the lived experience, which ponders upon what is to be left, here and now, and what is recognised as heritage).

The intellectuals whose archives we have addressed throughout this essay did not stop thinking or taking a stand during the dictatorship or the years of political opening. However, the reflections that they produced could not become old. They could not be made public and suffer, themselves, the work of judgement and contestation. Without the criticism of criticism, *i.e.*, the criticism outside the current life, and without time acting on it, the very memory of this practice could not be socially elaborated.

I would like to cite another excerpt of Paul Ricoeur's book, which has not been mentioned yet. A short note in which this author dialogues with a text by Arlette Farge, reminding that it is the archives' nature to be the representation of a world through fragments (archives are not the facts as such, but rather vestiges of what has happened). Ricoeur, in a dialogue with the author of "The Allure of the Archives", helps to verify that the historians' task is to listen to the echoes of this world. "Signs of a minimal disorder that left traces, [...] these facts of intimacy, in which almost nothing is said, although so many things transpire, are places of investigation and research" (Farge *apud* Ricoeur, 2007, p. 192).

As Ricoeur has done by approaching Arlette Farge's text, and also returning to the figure of the "tuner of silences", this essay ends with an invitation: in face of the heritage full of absences, perhaps it is worthwhile to seek less conventional paths. Observing more carefully the vestiges that escaped deliberate wishes, even if their existence is conditioned by them. It is about learning to see vestiges that, for some reason, remain alive, even if dormant, in pieces, or by insisting in inhabiting the bodies.

For example, many journals specialized in architecture were accumulated in school libraries or architecture archives in Brazil for their applied character or their artistic value. However, as a construct of people of their own time, they do not keep their pages only for architects' activities strict sense, they also bring numerous texts by Mário Pedrosa, Mário Barata and Quirino Campofiorito. Besides these specialised newspaper archives, we can also think of mass circulation newspapers, documents that in general attract great safeguard efforts and digitalisation due to being documents traditionally used in historical researches. It was in these "media" that a considerable amount of the texts by art critics circulated between the 1940s and 1960s. We can also resort to the "fractured libraries", a heritage of art critics that were divided and distributed through different public institutions or are in the hands of private collectors.

What we wish to call attention is that, in fact, it is necessary to attest the loss, recognise that the received heritage is full of absences. However, this is only the first movement of grieve, of history and of the history of criticism. Next, it is necessary to "tune silences", as to scrutinise the

rest notes, as well as place them in relation to the sound notes. Knowing how to listen to the echoes of this world in fragments and already aged, give them a place, most likely, will not bring the heroic vision of a past already past. Nevertheless, like Mwanito, perhaps they can allow us to recognise our history and update our own present practices.

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THE EXHIBITION “BRAZILIAN CONSTRUCTIVE ART PROJECT” AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE VANGUARD IN BRAZIL

Ivair Reinaldim

On July 15, 1977, the director of the *Pinacoteca de São Paulo*, Aracy Amaral, sent a letter to the Executive-Director of the *Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro* (MAM-Rio), Heloísa Lustosa. It was the day after the opening of the exhibition “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte” [Brazilian Constructive Art Project] at the São Paulo institution. Amaral listed a number of problems and conflicts that occurred during the setup of the exhibition and stated that “the result was undoubtedly a possible disharmony between the anthology/catalogue and the exhibition that is being presented for the first time to the new generations”.¹

It is drawing on this critical evaluation made at the time when the exhibition was opened to the audience that we intend to reflect about how certain exhibitions, circumscribed to their own space and time, constitute unavoidable devices in art historiography, considering that in this particular case the initiative certainly established parameters in the historiography of the Brazilian constructive vanguards concerning Concretism and Neo-concretism.² Simultaneously, we analyse by which means this was made possible, based on Amaral’s remark, considering consonances and discrepancies between publications (catalogues, books etc.) and the exhibitions.

The “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte” is an emblematic exhibition also because we know its original anthology of 1977 and the facsimile re-edition produced in 2015. Through this publication and the institutional archives, we have access to the names of artists and poets and to the images of some of the works exhibited. However, there are no known registers of the setup of the exhibition in São Paulo and Rio de Ja-

1 Letter from Aracy Amaral to Heloísa Lustosa, three pages, Jul. 15, 1977. Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo.

2 This analysis is linked to the research *Estudos curatoriais: perspectivas atuais e históricas* [Curatorial studies: present and historical perspectives] developed at the *Escola de Belas Artes* da UFRJ and the research group Lab | HABA – Laboratório de Historiografia da Arte no Brasil e Américas, registered at the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa (CNPq).

neiro.³ In other words, the memory of the exhibition is mostly based on the discursive-visual material of its anthology, rather than on the actual visuality of its design. Since the phase of the publication's conception, Aracy Amaral stressed that it would present the conceptual guidelines of the exhibition, meaning it would be a catalogue; however, the coordinator recognized that it would be possible to consult it autonomously, as an anthology. Hence, we should confront this consideration with the critical remark made in an institutional document referring to the "possible disharmony" that characterized the entire proposal, and how this would have produced, or not, reverberation in the historiography.

When referring to Concretism and Neo-concretism, we must consider both the primary sources and its historiography. Although it is possible to verify the profusion of images and critical debate between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 1950s, it is perceptible that the theoretical evaluations of this period gained depth from the mid-1970s onwards. We can highlight two evaluative exhibitions of the Constructive vanguard, each with its own characteristics: "Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte", of 1977, and "Arte Agora III – América Latina: Geometria Sensível" [Art Now III – Latin America: Sensible Geometry], the latter organised by Roberto Pontual at MAM-Rio, which was tragically destroyed by fire in the early hours of July 8, 1978. As our aim is not to compare the two exhibitions, we include another referential contribution: the book *Neoconcretismo: vértice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro* [Neo-concretism: Vortex and Rupture of the Brazilian Constructive Project], by Ronaldo Brito. Although the book was published in 1985, the essay had been ready since 1975, drawing on a research funded by art collectors Marcos Marcondes and Luiz Buarque de Hollanda. The book was published by Funarte, after the copyright acquisition, and provided the public access to its full contents, which was reiterated by its republication by Casa Naify editor in 1999. However, two excerpts of the essay were published in the 1970s: the first, with the title *Neoconcretismo* [Neo-concretism], edition n. 3 of *Malasartes* magazine, in 1976; the second, with the title *As ideologias construtivas no ambiente cultural brasileiro* [Constructive ideologies in the Brazilian cultural environment], in the anthology that accompanied the exhibition "Brazilian Constructive Art Project". Brito's book is essential

3 At the Centro de Documentação e Memória of the Pinacotheca we retrieved photographic material registering the opening of the exhibition. However, these photographs aimed at registering the public and it is almost impossible to identify fragments of the works in the background. As there are no authors' identification of these registers, the Pinacotheca does not authorise its reproduction. Through e-mail conversation with the Centro de Documentação e Pesquisa of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, due to the institution's unavailability for an in-person research appointment, the information received was that there are no photographic registers of the exhibition in its archives. Therefore, we stress here not the inexistence of images that could even diffusely provide indications of the setting-up, but rather the impossibility of their circulation. We reiterate our acknowledgments to Eliane Barbosa and all the team that received us at the Cedoc of the Pinacotheca. We are also thankful to Elizabeth Catoia Varela, who kindly handed us a set of primary sources used in her doctoral thesis.

to understand that moment when the historiographical revision of the so-called Constructive vanguard started to be articulated. Likewise, it is crucial for the evaluation of the passage from the theoretical reflections of the essay to the body of an exhibition project that became known as “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte”, an expression present in the subtitle of the essay.

As the book’s text about Neo-concretism was ready in 1975, it is possible to place when the idea of an exhibition emerged. In the following year, both Ronaldo Brito and Aracy Amaral were members of the Cultural Planning Committee of MAM-Rio, together with Heloísa Lustosa, Roberto Pontual, Frederico Moraes and members of the various teams of the museum. At a meeting of the committee, Ronaldo Brito suggested that a retrospective exhibition about Neo-concretism would be in the museum’s agenda. Endorsing the idea, Aracy Amaral proposed that it should encompass artists from São Paulo and also be presented at the Pinacotheca, as to gather efforts for such a broad proposal.⁴ That was when the proposal was born and until its completion it was characterized by disagreements and conflicts.

CONCEIVING THE EXHIBITION: THE DIALECTICS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND CURATORSHIP

Once the agenda of the exhibition had been approved by both institutions, Ronaldo Brito and Aracy Amaral attended meetings to define the scope of the proposal. In the document named “Anteprojetos” [Preliminary project], filed at the Centro de Documentação e Memória of the Pinacotheca, it is mentioned that Ronaldo Brito and Ana Maria Beluzzo would share the curatorship, most likely because Aracy Amaral was the director of the Pinacotheca. The title of the document is *O projeto construtivo no Brasil: do concretismo e neoconcretismo à contemporaneidade* [The Constructive Project in Brazil: from Concretism and Neo-concretism to contemporaneity]. It established that the exhibition would present works, showcases with documentation, amplified fragments of texts (with the purpose of guiding the visit) and the projection of poems of the epoch, as to comprise also poetry. There were no references to

4 “The origin of the exhibition that focuses today on Constructive art in Brazil in the 1950s draw on the idea of a show about this tendency when the critic Ronaldo Brito prepared an essay on Neo-concretism. Having the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM-Rio) become interested in the project, and being a member of the Cultural Committee of MAM-Rio at the time, we suggested to focus not only on Neo-concretism, but rather on all the movement that emerged with Concretism in the 1950s onwards. The suggestion was the joint organization of the exhibition – Pinacotheca of Estado de São Paulo/Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro – sharing the work and the costs of research and organization, and enabling the appreciation of the show in both capitals, given the hindrances arising from any retrospective exhibition.” AMARAL, Aracy. Apresentação. In: AMARAL, Aracy (coord.). **Projeto construtivo brasileiro na arte, 1950-1962**. Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna; São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado, 1977, p. 9. In the press of the time, there was the information that the show would also go to Brasília, but this did not happen.

Brazilian Modernist architecture, which in fact was not included in the exhibition. The undated document presents the conceptualization and the objectives:

The proposal is to study the Brazilian Constructive project, its procedures, languages, theoretical origins and social reach. The exhibition and the catalogue will show the localisation, identification and conceptualisation of the emergence of the Constructive art in the Brazilian cultural environment, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, and an analyses will be carried out of its concrete effects. The aim of the exhibition and catalogue is not restricted to the presence and empirical classification of the works of the various movements of Constructive content; it includes the investigation and debate about its inscription in the country's cultural reality. Therefore, it is not a re-constitution work: the documentation, register and historiographic research should exist as support to a historical and theoretical inquiry.⁵

In this description, the terms “Concretism” and “Neo-concretism” do not appear, and are implied in “Brazilian Constructive Project”, an expression that later gained greater prominence. From the beginning, there was the awareness that the proposal – exhibition and catalogue – would be marked by a historiographical configuration, based on the research and on the study of documental and artistic sources of Concretism and Neo-concretism. This intention would develop in the following excerpts of the preliminary project, whose strategy was to constitute an “effective theoretical circle around the ‘Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro’ in the so-called plastic arts”, drawing on the research and theoretical reflection, “an investigation process that sought to reach a more rigorous viewpoint on the theme”, so that it would be possible to “break through the merely circumstantial impressions and concepts that would have remained in our cultural environment and, more specifically, in the circuit of art”.

By problematizing the mapping of sources, privileging a “contemporary reading of the Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro”, centred on the analyses of the “functioning of its systems” and the “evaluation of its cultural values as a proposal of an vanguard active during some time in the country”, more than reconstituting an epoch, Brito and Amaral intended to emphasise a certain critical stand of that moment (second half of the 1970s) in relation to a certain elected past (the 1950s and early 1960s). This is why the historiographic effort became preponderant.

There was also a clear didactic concern inherent to the proposal, considering that works and theoretical elaborations would be present-

5 Anteprojeto [Preliminary Project], undated [1976], Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo. The subsequent quotes were extracted from the same document. (Free translation)

ed, in retrospect, to an audience that had not necessarily experienced or known those productions. However, against a “pure linear didacticism” centred on the “myth of the pure documentation”, all collected material should “be submitted to a critical process”. Hence, the notion of “project” was sustained on this dialectical relation between the primary sources and the analytical distancing:

The strategic sense of the plan is to update a debate on the constructive languages and the meanings these can have in various levels, from the formal to the social. Surely, with this we are not thinking of bringing back those languages, or proposing a continuity for the Brazilian Constructive Project, but trying to perform a theoretical work on this cultural stance. The intention is to make it transparent and open to discussion.

Some changes were made after the presentation of the preliminary project. First, the title of the exhibition was changed. For Ronaldo Brito, on a letter addressed to Amaral, dated May 13, 1976, on the title there should be a “statement of contemporaneity concern”, hence the terms “Concretism” and “Neo-concretism” should be excluded. He then suggests the “Brazilian Constructive Project in Art”, an expression that was the subtitle of his book on “Neo-concretism” and that became the title of the exhibition. The change on the title made it closer to the objective of making a critical re-evaluation and reinforces the maintenance of an *a posteriori* discursive construction. The term “project” was not recurrent in the Concretist and Neo-concretist vocabulary, in that which circumscribed a more specific debate of the plastic arts, but it delimited Brito’s theoretical elaboration and ended up being approved by the exhibition and the anthology. With this statement, we do not disregard the use of this term in the field of architecture – and even the influence of the Brazilian Modernist architecture, its ideology and concepts in texts such as “Plano-piloto para poesia concreta” [Pilot plan for Concrete poetry] by Augusto de Campos, Décio Pignatari, and Haroldo de Campos, published in *Noigrandes* magazine, n. 4, 1958.

Another evident aspect in the preliminary project and in the letters exchanged between Amaral and Brito is a divergent conception about curatorship and its competences, which can indicate different ways of understanding this practice in the second half of the 1970s, but also disagreements regarding the conceptual bases that would guide the process of historiographic review. In the preliminary project, the curatorship functions are listed as follows:

1. The two curators will conceptualize the exhibition.
2. They will provide guidance for the data collection – with the collaboration of a small group of research-

ers from São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – for the selection of works and the preparation of the catalogue.

3. Both curators will equally make the contacts to request present-day texts to be published in the catalogue.

4. The curators will conduct together the supervision of the exhibition in both locations, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

5. Both curators, in their respective cities (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), will be responsible for the list and necessary data of the works, so that these are appropriately required by the two Museums regarding the insurance. For this purpose, the curators will provide the mentioned list in the letters to be sent to the institutions, owners, artists and art collectors, for the necessary loan.

In an undated letter, sent to Amaral (with the date of receipt by the Pinacotheca of Jun. 3, 1976), Ronaldo Brito mentions the conception of the exhibition, which is also a reflection on the curatorship role:

I have been giving a lot of thought to the need of the exhibition be effectively a study exhibition and all that this implies in terms of transformation of the habitual process of conceptualising and writing an exhibition. We must break through the linearity and the “natural” sequence of the exhibitions that are setup here: this linearity and this naturalness obviously serve aestheticizing purposes that I hope will be absent from our project. Hence the proposal that we work out the exhibition around nuclei of problems, theoretically organized. Thus we would keep away from the chronological empiricisms and would produce an intelligent space that would demand from the spectator not a “natural” circulation around the isolated works, but rather an effective intellectual mobilization.⁶

At first, the conception of curatorship and of exhibition became a point of agreement between the two positions assumed by Amaral and Brito. However, as meetings followed and the work developed, there were disagreements that can be followed from the correspondence between them. Initially, in a letter addressed to Heloísa Lustosa, dated September 1, 1976, Amaral informs that, due to the demands of her position as the Pinacotheca’s director, she could no longer continue with the full collaboration to the project, except for the continuity of the anthology’s edition; therefore, the curator in Rio de Janeiro and his team should

⁶ Letter from Ronaldo Brito to Aracy Amaral, undated, Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo. (free translation).

respond for everything that would refer to the exhibition as such – the list of works to be exposed, the contact with artists and art collectors, insurance, transportation, exhibition design and setup⁷. Three other letters were then exchanged between Amaral and Brito. In the first one, undated, Ronaldo Brito declares his withdrawal of the project and explains the reasons that led him to this decision. As he could not adapt to “the manner of Amaral” in which the work had been developing, the continuity of his commitment to the project had become impracticable:

After some meetings, which for me were something uncertain and chaotic, after your decision to abandon the final part of the project, after realising that your decision-making manner is for me incomprehensible, I find myself paralysed: the thing is that I simply cannot work if it is not within a method, with a certain rhythm, with a certain dynamics of adequacy between my desire and reality. Then, the work occurs as a process of adjustment between this desire and the real, never (as is occurring) as an insane whirl, a carousel, a sequence of facts without hierarchy, with plenty of pertinent data and many impertinent to the task that I suppose is ours as curators. As I do not have, cannot have control over the material that I am supposed to conceptualise (all the available elements to prepare a catalogue and an exhibition), how to admit any possibility of a coherent work?⁸

Bruto’s letter produced a strong reply from Amaral, in September 17, 1976, which, due to the scope of points covered, requires a broader transcription:

You mention that you feel an inadequacy between a manner of mine to conduct the preparation of the exhibition (which you qualify as an “insane whirl of things”) and your position, which would be “a certain dynamics of adequacy between my desire and the reality” (in your words and emphasis). It happens, Ronaldo, that an exhibition is not organised only on the level of conceptualisation, as you seem to insist. There is a whole amount of less pleasant tasks, of a more practical order, which needs to be carried out, and at the same time a necessary contact with the artists that will take part in it, to clarify this very conceptualisation, which you are not interested in doing, since, as you have repeatedly stated, “it is a researcher’s job”, and yours “is a curator’s job”. [...] At the same time, I would like to mention that you,

7 Letter from Aracy Amaral to Heloisa Lustosa, September 1, 1976, Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo (free translation).

8 Letter from Ronaldo Brito to Aracy Amaral, three pages, undated, Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo, emphasis in the original (free translation).

in fact, as the initiator of the idea of the exhibition have thought about it drawing on a work that you had already accomplished. In other words, for you it was about visualising in an exhibition the ideas that you had already expressed in your essay, for which I personally have great respect. Well, for us, insofar as the work started to unfold, the approach of the exhibition changed, given that the outcomes of the research signalled directions that had not been thought of in the beginning. Hence the importance of the exhibition-catalogue as a “piece of study”, which was, actually, also a point that you yourself considered important. But apparently you did not realise this development. “Work division actually adequate to each one’s possibilities”. In our reality, in which skilled labour is really difficult, you should know that it is impossible, especially in the cultural field, to have precisely delimited such tasks as the ones we propose ourselves to accomplish. In other words, we, curators, need to perform several tasks that perhaps, in another context, would be those of typists, researchers, translators, public relations, exhibition setup labour, and sometimes even photographers etc. It is not about the demerit of one’s possibilities, but, on the contrary, the recognition of one’s flexibility to adapt to the circumstances. On my side and that of my team, that is what we have done. Now, if you have prejudices about this, then it is your personal problem. [...] I withdraw irrevocably from the organization of the exhibition in the current conditions.⁹

In the same letter, Aracy Amaral suggests that Ronaldo Brito should share with her the edition of the anthology, but in his reply the critic mentions a biased interpretation by Amaral of some of his statements, and withdraws definitely and entirely from the project. In practical terms, this inflexion produces the rectification of the tasks division between the two institutions: Aracy Amaral would continue to coordinate the production of the catalogue/anthology at the Pinacoteca of São Paulo; MAM-Rio would assume full responsibility over the exhibition in both institutions, and should indicate another person for this position. Three artists, from three different generations, undertook the task: Lygia Pape became the curator, with Ronaldo do Rego Macedo as assistant curator and Angelo Venosa as responsible for the exhibition set up in São Paulo (in Rio de Janeiro the set up was assigned to Frank Barral). However, with the presence of Lygia Pape on the project the divergences

9 Reply letter from Aracy Amaral to Ronaldo Brito, five pages, September 17, 1976, Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo, emphasis in the original (free translation).

became even greater. It was at this moment that Aracy Amaral stresses the “possible disharmony” between the catalogue and the exhibition.

BETWEEN IMAGES AND TEXTS: DISCURSIVE FUROR

What characterizes the anthology “Brazilian Constructive Art Project” is the substantial presence of historical texts, considered referential, followed by an updated analytical production, even if there are also numerous images of the works, many of them in colours. Under the general supervision and coordination of Aracy Amaral¹⁰, the publication presents a synoptic table, listing events in Europe and United States of America, Latin America and Brazil, from 1915 to 1963. Besides highlighting important facts in the art system, the Brazilian table also lists some cultural and political events. In the section “Documentos”¹¹ [Documents], texts and manifestos of the European and Latin American Constructive vanguard, followed by manifestos and texts produced in Brazil, present in “Manifestos”,¹² and representative texts of the critical debate in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, grouped in “Textos de época”¹³

10 Supervision, general coordination and research: Aracy A. Amaral; Text edition and research: Ana Maria Belluzzo; Research: José Carlos Serroni, Sérgio Segall, Maria Helena T. Fernandes and Eliana Anghinah; Photographs: Júlio Abe Wakahara; Layout: Amílcar de Castro; Graphic supervision: Paulo Portella Filho; Printing: Serviço Gráfico da Secretaria da Cultura, Ciência e Tecnologia do Estado de São Paulo; Sponsors: Secretaria da Cultura, Ciência e Tecnologia do Estado de São Paulo and MEC-Funarte.

11 Texts by Kasimir Malevitch (“Suprematismo”, 1927), Naum Gabo and N. Pevsner (“Manifesto Realista”, 1920), “Manifesto do Produtivismo” (1922), Piet Mondrian (“De Stijl”, 1919), Theo van Doesburg (“Arte concreta”, 1930), Naum Gabo (“Construtivismo”, 1937), Walter Gropius (“O programa da Bauhaus”, 1938), Max Bill (“Arte concreta, 1936/1949”, and “O pensamento matemático da arte de nosso tempo, 1950”), Ferreira Gullar (“Tentativa de compreensão”, 1959), Joaquín Torres García (“Querer construir”, s.d.), and Argentinian manifestos (“Manifesto Invecionista ou Concreto”, 1945; “Manifesto Branco”; “Espacialismo”, 1946; “Manifesto Madí”, 1946; “Manifesto Tempista”, 1948; “Manifesto da Arte Construtiva-Arquitetural”, s.d.).

12 “Manifesto Ruptura” (1952), Waldemar Cordeiro (“O objeto”, 1956, e “Teoria e prática do concretismo carioca”, 1957), Décio Pignatari (“Forma, função e projeto geral”, 1957), Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos, and Décio Pignatari (“Plano-piloto para poesia concreta”, 1958) and Ferreira Gullar (“Manifesto Neoconcreto”, 1959, and “Teoria do não objeto”, 1960).

13 Texts by Romero Brest (“A arquitetura é a grande arte de nosso tempo – 1948: Romero Brest em São Paulo”, 1948), Waldemar Cordeiro (“Ruptura”, 1953), Décio Pignatari (“Arte concreta: objeto e objetivo”, 1956), Ferreira Gullar (“Arte concreta”, 1960; “Da arte concreta à arte neoconcreta”, 1959; “Arte neoconcreta: uma contribuição brasileira”, 1962; “Concretos de São Paulo no MAM do Rio”, 1960; and “Resposta a Cordeiro”, 1960), Tomás Maldonado (“O problema da educação artística depois da Bauhaus”, 1961) and Mário Pedrosa (“Paulistas e cariocas”, 1957; and “Poeta & pintor concretista”, 1957), besides poems by Augusto de Campos (1931-), Haroldo de Campos (1929-2003), Décio Pignatari (1927-2012), José Lino Grünewald (1931-2000), Ronaldo Azeredo (1937-2006), Theon Spanudis (1915-1986), Pedro Xisto (1901-1987), Ferreira Gullar (1930-2016), Wladimir Dias Pino (1927-2018), Reynaldo Jardim (1926-2011) and Osmar Dillon (1930-2013) and texts by Albertus Marques (“Poesia neoconcreta não objeto poema elétrico”, 1961) and Ferreira Gullar (“Palavra, humor, invenção”, 1960).

[Texts of the epoch]. In the section “Artistas concretos e neoconcretos” [Concrete and Neo-concrete artists], there is the list of artists presented in the exhibition, with a selection of images of works and excerpts of specific critical texts, subdivided into “Os primeiros”¹⁴ [The first ones], “Arte e produção”¹⁵ [Art and production], “O novo espaço”¹⁶ [The new space] e “Concretos no Rio”¹⁷ [Concretos in Rio]. There is also a section named “Outros construtivos”¹⁸ [Other Constructives], with artists who were not in the Concrete and Neo-concrete groups, concluding the catalogue with “Textos de hoje”¹⁹ [Texts of today] and bibliographic references.

The description of the contents that comprise the catalogue/anthology highlights the attempt to make a relation of the so-called “Constructive vanguard” in Brazil, especially Concretism and Neo-concretism, with the European Constructive vanguard, seeking to provide conceptual bases for the terms “constructive” and “Concrete/Concretism” and, at the same time, endorse the argument of a general “Constructive project”, in which Brazil became aware of its participation. By doing so, the anthology assumed a revisionist character, inserting the São Paulo Concretists in the context of the “industrialist technology” and the Rio de Janeiro artists in the keys of the “sensorial liberation”, reinforcing the distinctions between the two movements and the divisions occurred in the “heat of the moment”. Even recognizing Mário Pedrosa’s statement that architecture had preceded the other plastic arts in absorbing the Constructivist infor-

14 Abraham Palatnik (1928-2020), Ivan Serpa (1923-1973), Almir Mavignier (1925-2018) and Mary Vieira (1922-2001).

15 Antonio Maluf (1926-2005), Waldemar Cordeiro (1925-1973), Leopold Haar (1910-1954), Luís Sacilotto (1924-2003), Kazmer Féjer (1923-1989), Geraldo de Barros (1923-1998), Alexandre Wollner (1928-2018), Lothar Charoux (1912-1987), Judith Lauand (1922-), Maurício Nogueira Lima (1930-1999), Hermelindo Fiaminghi (1920-2004), Willys de Castro (1926-1988), Hércules Barsotti (1914-2010), Heinz Kuhn (1908-1987), Anatol Wladislaw (1913-2004) and Alberto Aliberti (1935-1994).

16 Franz Weissmann (1911-2005), Amílcar de Castro (1920-2002), Lygia Clark (1920-1988), Aluísio Carvão (1920-2001), Hélio Oiticica (1937-1980), Lygia Pape (1927-2004) and Décio Vieira (1922-1988).

17 Rubem Ludolf (1932-2010), João José da Costa (1931-2014), Dionísio del Santo (1925-1999) and Ubi Bava.

18 Text by Frederico Morais (“Concretismo/Neoconcretismo: quem é, quem não é, quem aderiu, quem precedeu, quem tangenciou, quem permaneceu, saiu, voltou, o concretismo existiu?”, s.d.), followed by Milton Dacosta (1915-1988), Rubem Valentim (1922-1991) and Alfredo Volpi (1896-1988).

19 Texts by Ronaldo Brito (“As ideologias construtivas no ambiente cultural brasileiro”, 1975), Aracy A. Amaral (“Duas linhas de contribuição: concretos em São Paulo/neoconcretos no Rio”, 1977), Roberto Pontual (“O hoje do ontem neoconcreto”, 1977), Júlio Katinsky (“O concretismo e o desenho industrial”, 1977), Luiz Antônio de Figueiredo (“Poesia concreta – a dinâmica do in(con)cluso”, 1977), Wilson Coutinho (“Poesia concreta: as ambiguidades da ordem”, 1977), Ferreira Gullar (“A poesia neoconcreta”, 1975) and Gilberto Mendes (“Música e poesia concreta”, 1975).

mation in Brazil, Aracy Amaral justifies the non-inclusion of architecture in the framework, although some texts mention it.²⁰

One can identify how, even with Ronaldo Brito's withdrawal, the publication reiterated his argument presented in the 1975 essay. When studying the origins of Neo-concretism, Brito identified the specificity of the movement precisely in one contradiction: even though circumscribed to what the author named as "Constructive ideologies", Neo-concretism made explicit the crisis of Constructivism, being the "Vortex" of this awareness in Brazil, *i.e.*, its highest point, and its "Rupture", its surpassing. Thus, in Neo-concretism there would be "the most sophisticated elements attributed to the Constructive tradition and also the implicit critics and the awareness of the impossibility of the validity of these elements as cultural vanguard project" (Brito, 1999, p. 55) of the geometric language in the country, positioning itself, on the one hand, against the rationalist and mechanistic character of Concretism in São Paulo, and, on the other hand, the revitalization of these proposals drawing on experimental aspects of the artistic practice, which would be valued by the subsequent generations of artists. Hence, Neo-concretism established an "important manoeuvre of the Brazilian art production in the sense of conquering a broader autonomy regarding the dominant cultural models" (Brito, 1999, p. 64).

Ronaldo Brito analyses Neo-concretism by means of a comparison with Concretism, characterising the moment in Rio de Janeiro as the "second movement of a synchronicity", with "greater freedom in relation to the matrices" and the "demand of a more specific national production". This synchronic aspect, placing Concretism and Neo-concretism in the same key, would strengthen the notion of "project" defended by the author. However, the lack of awareness in that epoch as to elaborate coherent actions, articulated around a defined purpose, a general programme, as well as the lack of continuity among the proposals, would have raised a discussion about the real existence of a project. Perceived also as two stages, in a sequence, the synchronicity proposed by Brito actually established a teleology. This implied the existence of concretism as necessary to arrive at neo-concretism, understood as a local contribution of the constructive vanguards originated in Europe.

It should also be stressed that Brito's analysis was deeply grounded on Ferreira Gullar's positions, since the later sought to constitute a theoretic corpus for Neo-concretism capable of providing unity to the production, by inserting it in the history of the international vanguards.

20 Complementing information and sporadic mentions to architecture in the catalogue/anthology, it is important to highlight that in Ronaldo Brito's book the author stresses that in Brazil, the beginnings of a Constructive project were in the Modernist architecture, from the 1930s onwards, reinforcing that this relationship with plastic arts should be deepened, something that was left out of the scope of the exhibition in 1977. We should also consider that Aracy Amaral performed as a professor at the School of Architecture of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP).

This aspect was highlighted in the criticism that Décio Pignatari directs to Aracy Amaral and Lygia Pape in the text “A vingança de Aracy Amaral” [Aracy Amaral’s vengeance], by denouncing the homogenising and opportunistic character comprised in the title “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte”, and in the reiteration of polarities – rational v. intuitive, geometrical v. organic, impersonality v. individualism – in the analysis of the debate São Paulo v. Rio de Janeiro, visible in the catalogue and in the exhibition. Pignatari (1977) counts the huge amount of texts by Ferreira Gullar in the anthology, among the international texts, Brazilian texts of the epoch, fragments of texts of specific artists and the current texts, an indication not only of the emphasis given to the theoretician of Neo-concretism, but also of the importance of his ideas on the conceptualisation of the project. Another aspect criticised by Pignatari was the fact that the exhibition curatorship was under the responsibility of Lygia Pape, a Neo-concrete artist, which in his view entailed a non-exempt position and a greater valorisation of the artists from Rio de Janeiro.²¹

The exhibition was divided into four nuclei: artists with clearly Constructive works produced before the emergence of the Concrete and Neo-concrete groups; artists participating in the groups; artists not directly linked to the movements, but with rigidly Concrete works; artists whose works were characterised by the use of a Constructive language, but not Concrete, contemporaneous to the movements. There were also projections of Concrete and Neo-concrete poems and other audio-visual productions. The exhibition was opened on June 14, 1977 at the Pinacotheca of São Paulo (ending on July 3) and on July 14 at MAM-Rio (ending on August 10), thus staying for a short period at each institution.²² Whereas in the setup and opening in São Paulo some conflicts became evident between Lygia Pape and the Pinacotheca’s team, in Rio de Janeiro the publication of a specific folder with Lygia Pape’s text produced the intensification of those differences, due to the exclusion of information about the Pinacotheca’s team and direction in the project.

21 “Lygia Pape tells that the physical part of the exhibition has already been mapped for São Paulo: – ‘There has been great interference there. As I could not be present all the time, each time I went there the space had been redefined. Two hours before the opening – somewhat violated – I took a somehow radical measure. Cordeiro and Serpa were in the same room, in the original project. When I looked, Serpa was out’. Ronaldo Macedo, one of the organizers of the exhibition together with Lygia, adds: – ‘He was literally in a corridor’. Lygia asked for Serpa’s work to be replaced and one of the technicians [of the setup team] suggested a change that needed the withdrawal of a painting: – ‘By chance, it was one by Sacilotto (Concrete). There was a great misunderstanding, a malaise. I differentiate my participation as a Neo-concretist from my activity as a curator, responsible for a Concrete and Neo-concrete space. Fiaminghi did not understand this difference. In the same way as probably did not understand Décio Pignatari, who accepted at first, but later refused to participate in the meeting [of artists, for a public talk at the Pinacotheca]’”. CABALLERO, Mara. Lygia Pape: construção e emoção. *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 110, Jul. 27, 1977 (free translation).

22 According to documents consulted at the Documentation and Memory Centre of the Pinacotheca of São Paulo, the exhibition could not stay longer than 25 days on display to the public in each city, because the insurance covered the total duration of 70 days.

In the text of the folder, dated from June 4, 1977, Lygia Pape publicly expresses her disagreement with the scope of the proposal. She considers that the Brazilian strands that feed the Constructive project “do not draw on presuppositions collected here and there in international tendencies, in an innocent and ingenuous way as all the approaches of the local criticism want to make one believe until today”, since there would not be one prevailing trend, but several trends, which emerged independently and more or less simultaneously. For Pape, to conceive “a homogenous and monolithic whole” as the anthology tends to affirm, means not to correspond to the Brazilian reality, as an underdeveloped country, and not to consider the conditions that reinforce a position of subalternity in the face of the hegemonic centres²³. Therefore, in the country there would be more of a “Constructive will”, marked by the “cultural encounter”, in which stands out a “constructive tropism in Brazilian art”, and which refers to “the origins on the Indigenous, the African, the recycled objects of the Northeastern people, the permanence of geometric elements of Carnival, the patchwork quilt of Minas Gerais, the popular ceramics, the kitsch architecture at the beach front, etc., etc.” Having said this, Pape declares:

There is a certain cultural convenience in facing the things of the country as incapable of having their own energy and in using ready models providing evaluation judgments collected in external moulds. It is for this reason and also because we find the internal critical debate outdated that we propose a new apprehension of the two movements: Concrete and Neo-concrete – a more globalising and comprehensive evaluation standard. There is no more place for the Manichaean view of good and evil on which the uninformed critics are based until today. It would mean supporting an inconvenient product, because it is unfortunate and culturally underdeveloped. There is an undeniable courage and will of the makers of the two processes and their real and non-alienating vitality. We do not allow ourselves whatever valuation – for all these reasons and also because we have been working on the project from its start and have experienced all its phenomena. We believe we are more precise by viewing the two

23 “It is a national pride – it is a bit awkward to say this – but there is this aspect that the critics insist in denying. The anthology is an example of using foreign examples to endorse Constructivism in Brazil. There was, certainly, a parallelism between what happened abroad, but we were not in the wake of it. It was a spontaneous and creative movement. There was no irresponsible and epidermal assimilation of international currents.” CABALLERO, Mara. Lygia Pape: construção e emoção. *Op. cit.* (free translation).

movements Concrete and Neo-concrete as two moments of the constructive art project.²⁴

Although Lygia Pape reinforces an opposite position to those adopted by Ronaldo Brito and Aracy Amaral, she does articulate an approach of Concretism with the European vanguard and does not develop a deeper analysis on these Brazilian bases that she affirms as a “Constructive will”. In fact, in the exhibition, except for the text in the folder, there is nothing that endorses such a thesis, since only Concrete and Neo-concrete works were displayed. It is important to consider that at that moment Lygia Pape was developing her research for her Master’s Degree in Philosophy and worked with Mário Pedrosa in the conception of an exhibition about the indigenous arts, with the title “Alegria de Viver, Alegria de Criar” [Joy of Living, Joy of Creating], which was not setup due to the fire at MAM-Rio.²⁵ In her dissertation *Catiti Catiti*, presented in July 1980, the disagreement with Ronaldo Brito and Aracy Amaral was resumed, as well as the full transcription of the folder’s text and the deeper development of her argument, drawing on what she defined as “the new idea”.²⁶

Although we found no critical analyses published in São Paulo newspapers, there was in the press of Rio de Janeiro, especially *Jornal do Brasil*, greater space dedicated to the exhibition, due to Roberto Pontual’s activity both at MAM-Rio and at this daily newspaper. Pontual is the one who makes a more detailed analysis of the exhibition. He mentions that it contributed only partially to the evaluation of the importance of the period, because of the insufficient representation of artists and poets, especially the Concretists of São Paulo, regarding the amount and the quality of works on display. For the critic, the failure results from something that is at the base of the project, producing a certain frustration in regard to what was presented to the public.

And why did the expectation retrocede? In my view, for the fact that, both the starting point for the selection of the works and the final setup solutions moved away from what would best justify the effort of the exhibition. One gets the impression that all those works were gathered as if they were still alive, were products of today, resulting from an activity performed before our eyes. However, even if they continue to fertilize current productions, now they participate much more in the condition of memory,

24 PAPE, Lygia. Folder of MAM-Rio for the exhibition “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte”, 1977, Centro de Documentação e Memória da Pinacoteca de São Paulo (free translation).

25 Cf.: REINALDIM, Ivair. Produção cultural indígena e história da arte no Brasil: exposições e seus enunciados (parte I – Alegria de Viver, Alegria de Criar). **MODOS: Revista de História da Arte**, Campinas, v. 3, n. 3, 2019, p. 135-151.

26 Cf.: PAPE, Lygia. **Catiti Catiti, na terra dos Brasis**. Rio de Janeiro, 1980. Dissertação (Mestrado em Filosofia) – IFCS-UFRJ. Rio de Janeiro, 1980.

document, history, than as live entities. Therefore, it would be necessary to approach them from this perspective, especially to avoid the margin of nostalgia that the exhibition arises. Only a thoroughly didactic disposition, transferring to the public the clash of ideas that marked the epoch and individualised its cultural process, could save the exhibition from the static character, out of context, perhaps even unfortunately idle and nostalgic, into which it ended up falling. Even because only this disposition would bring back what was most typical of those years: the dynamics of a frank discussion of concepts and problems, perhaps as it has not occurred again between us since then. Therefore, the book “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte” is, in the whole event, what corresponds the most to the importance and reach of the facts that it sought to circumscribe. It stimulates knowledge and debate, in the perspective of time (Pontual, 1977 – free translation).

It is not possible to know if Roberto Pontual was aware of the several conflicts that occurred during the setup in São Paulo, but, in short, he recognised the signification and importance of the project, highlighting how those movements still produced reverberations in the contemporary production, although he did criticise the exhibition for a nostalgic attitude. By questioning the way in which the works would have been treated, one can observe a contradiction that had been considered from the beginning, in the words of Ronaldo Brito and Aracy Amaral. The critic also stressed the way in which the exhibition highlighted Neo-concretism as the movement “most apt to vitally survive through time”, closer to a Latin American Constructivism, already externalising an understanding that would be at the base of the exhibition “Art Now III – Latin America: Sensible Geometry”, held at MAM-Rio in the following year, and reinforcing the primacy of Neo-concretism. Finally, when confronting exhibition and catalogue, Pontual stressed how the latter became more successful by presenting the nature and the importance of its framework and promoting the continuity of the debate in the present – and, we can say, for the future generations.

AFTER ALL, WHAT DOES SURVIVE FROM AN EXHIBITION?

The anthology “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte” became a referential and rare publication, at least until 2015, when the Pinacotheca of São Paulo produced a facsimile edition of it. Together with the anthology, a booklet sought to update its importance and contextualise its conception. In the presentation of the booklet, Ivo Mesquita, then the Pinacotheca’s technical-director, argues that the 1977 project was “a founding episode in the process of diffusion and institutionalisation of this production in Brazil and abroad”, stressing that it was “from then onwards

that there were researches, publications and exhibitions articulated around the productions and programmes of Concrete and Neo-concrete artists, perceiving them as support for future generations”. For Mesquita, the “exhibition built, for the first time, [...] a global view drawing on the reflexive distance of the historical approach, tracing the theoretical bases over which was built the Brazilian Constructive project as a whole” (Mesquita, 2015, p. 5). He reinforces the importance of the “Brazilian Constructive Art Project” for being the first panoramic exhibition about Concretism and Neo-concretism, as well as for the catalogue being the first publication to systematise documents and theoretical reflection. If in the second half of the 1970s there was already the objective of developing a critical study about the Constructive vanguards of the 1950s, relating them with the critical and artistic production of that time (the 1970s), now [2015] there was a strengthening of the idea that the Brazilian Constructive vanguards constituted the bases for contemporary art in Brazil, in a broad sense, especially because Neo-concretism would represent a line relatively independent from the international models.

Therefore, one perceives how the catalogue/anthology was effectively what survived from the project, be it due to its later repercussion or to the strategy of re-edition, making it available again for generations that probably had never seen the original publication. Besides its materiality, the discursive structure that sustains it, which the catalogue reiterates, also had repercussion and tends to reinforce itself in the historiographic field. Nevertheless, little is known about the exhibition itself. The few available accounts are mostly about the divergences of conception and the conflicts during the setup. We have no knowledge of accounts about the reception – individually and collectively – of that ensemble of collected works, either by the generations that had direct contact with them in the 1950s, or by those who saw them only in 1977, both in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro. In fact, we are far away from the practice of extensively documenting the exhibitions’ museography (floor-plans, 3D projects, photographic registers, videos etc.), which makes the analytical task more difficult.

One can considerer, hence, how much the catalogues tend to constitute the prevailing view about the exhibitions. In the case of the “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte”, one should also consider that the catalogue, as an anthology, was in fact distant from the exhibition, becoming virtually autonomous. And although it is difficult to analyse in depth the “possible disharmony” between both of them due to the lack of documentation on the actual exhibition, it is possible to affirm a certain mystification of the exhibition as something mostly imagined, rather than properly seen and remembered, and the validation of a historiographic approach that has consolidated and rooted in art history. However, Ronaldo Brito himself alerts in notes to the first (Funarte, 1985) and to the second editions (Cosac Naify, 1999) of the book *Neoconcretismo* [Neo-concretism], that the essay was written “by a young and inexpe-

rienced critic” and that it is necessary to be attentive to the risks of institutionalization, to the process of cultural sublimation of art. Hence, the naturalisation of the expression “Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro” must be placed on the agenda of criticism. According to Guilherme Bueno (2018, p. 162 – free translation),

[...] when we use the term, we think of “project” as a civilizational attempt undertaken by the “constructive” fronts of Concretism and Neo-concretism. We naturalise its existence, as if it had occurred since always; the confused amalgam of the groups of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro is not enough to distrust its totality and awareness of their anticipatory actions. We should problematize the link between Ruptura [Rupture], Frente [Front] and Neo-concretism, testing this precept.

According to Bueno, one should consider the historical and localised sense of terms such as “project” and “constructive”, rather than repeat them empty. Thus, as historiographic constructions of the 1970s, it is necessary to confront them with the dynamics of the Concrete and Neo-concrete movements, something that Bueno develops thoroughly in his essay. For him, “the ‘Brazilian Constructive project’ symbolised the gesture of intelligence reconstruction in Brazil, at a moment of rudimentary distension of the military regime”, since, in the 1950s, “Concretism and Neo-concretism were landmarks of a brief and unstable experience of democracy and modernisation, not only technician, but intellectual”, which would demarcate a construction achieved by a “knowledgeable sector of the middle-class” in the 1970s (Bueno, 2018, p. 179). He concludes that the so-called “Brazilian Constructive project” reflects, in sum, the desire and the uncertainty of the country’s democratization, something that we should consider in the way in which our memories are constructed.

It is crucial that we understand, therefore, how such a historiographic strategy is based not only on the analysis of the documentation of the epoch, but especially on the interpretation that is effectively achieved drawing on it, wishing for – beyond the construction of a historical narrative – a political action in the present, in that present (second half of the 1970s). For this, middle-class intellectuals from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo occupying spaces of representation in the field of culture, draw on a specific framework, circumscribed to their immediate territories, as to project a broader entirety, named “Brazilian” project, without in fact considering different aesthetic and cultural responses co-existing in the same period. If this was not a direct concern of the exhibition and the catalogue, it is up to us to think of the re-evaluations that we produce in our present, not considering historiography as a permanent and immutable monolith. If this case study cannot (and should not) contemplate general evaluations when making explicit such limits, we believe,

however, that it can contribute to the enlargement of the repertoire of problems to be posed, both to the history of exhibitions and to the historiography of art.

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CRITICAL MEMORIES OF AN ARCHITECTURAL JOURNALIST

Interview with Ruth Verde Zein, by Silvia Sávio Chataignier e Priscilla Alves Peixoto

Priscilla Peixoto – The presence of Ruth Verde Zein at our colloquium occurred in the form of a testimony. Ruth Verde Zein, who is currently a professor and researcher at the Mackenzie Presbyterian University, in São Paulo, was invited to revisit memories of her work as a journalist at *Revista Projeto*, between 1982 and 1996. The invitation also sought to bring inputs to the interpretation of two different historiographic processes. On the one hand, it intended to put into perspective the way in which the architectural criticism produced in the 1950s and 1960s reached (or did not reach) those who took on the criticism activity in the years of the political re-opening in Brazil, in the 1980s. On the other hand, it sought to deepen the debate, taking her own editorial activity as a place of memory production. This interview occurs a few months after the colloquium *Criticism, Media and Memory* was held. It intends to present some themes addressed in Ruth Verde Zein's testimony, so that the reader may access part of the experience shared at that moment and deepen some other issues that emerged from the dialogue.

Silvia Sávio Chataignier – In your testimony at the colloquium, you mentioned that *Revista Projeto* established a new format of diffusion of architectural projects, especially for having structured technical data sheets and graphical material of the architectural works. Besides these evident and more objective contributions, from the point of view of today, do you perceive others? I have a special interest in knowing if we can think *Revista Projeto* as an articulator of a network of architectural critics?

Ruth Verde Zein – I was part of the editorial team of *Revista Projeto* in 1982, and I would say that the formation of this network of critics occurred, mainly, from 1984 onwards, continuing through the 1990s. At that time, the academic system in the field of architecture was very different from today. In the beginning of my activity, there was no more than a master's course and a doctoral course at the University of São Paulo, which was evidently insufficient. Many went abroad for this stage of professional training. In the 1990s, some specialisation courses were created, which later became strict sense, as in the case of the PROPARG at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). The system was

still being structured and I followed this process. Although there was no pressure (as verified today) to publish ongoing researches, all those who were carrying out their master's and doctoral wished to publish their academic production in Brazil. However, the means were scarce. There was *Módulo* journal, for example, still representing a certain modern trend. Later, came *Revista Arquitetura e Urbanismo – AU*, which invested in a renewed image and also published textual contents. However, in *Revista Projeto* we opened a section named “Ensaio e Pesquisa” [Essay and Research], which was idealised precisely to meet the demand of those who wished to publish scientific contents or critical reflections, and it continued for many years.

At the time, the section “Ensaio e Pesquisa” presented the early results of ongoing researches. Forty years later, those embryos generated very significant studies. In fact, it is interesting to remember that the section published the early texts, for example, of Edson Mahfuz, Luis Espallargas Gimenez and Margareth da Silva Pereira, among other researchers who wished to publicise their studies and critical thinking. With the experience of “Ensaio e Pesquisa”, which was printed on a different paper from the one used in the rest of the journal, we instituted a new structuring logic for it by means of sections.

At first, the articles published on *Revista Projeto* were edited in various forms. When the section “Ensaio e Pesquisa” was created and Hugo Segawa became its editor, he normalised the presentation format. He selected, organised, made the contacts and combined the editions by themes. The issues were not always defined a priori, but rather as a result of the collected material. When Hugo Segawa became the editor-in-chief, I became the editor of the section “Ensaio e Pesquisa”. Not only I received the material from the authors, but I also asked for texts, because I knew what researches were being carried out and I circulated through Brazil, through events, with friends. I discovered who was conducting a research on a given issue, I made phone calls, sent faxes. Sometimes, people spontaneously inquired about the interest of the journal and sent their articles.

In fact, this dynamics created a sort of network, in the sense manifested by your question. It was as if there existed a kind of card index. Not a material one, but a mental register, with the names of authors, their study themes and their works. When we produced a text, we listed many questions, doing what we jokingly called, among us, “prospection” work. We called one of them, then another one, asking: “Do you know someone who is working on such a subject?” So, we did not promote the network, but we tried to perceive where it existed, to find out where its nodes were, and published them in the journal.

In fact, I never thought of it in the perspective you presented, but it is possible to say that this way of working did create something. I do not

know if we can identify it as a network, because a network is an entity intentionally constituted, but we can certainly identify the constitution of a community. It was, above all, a community of critics and researchers, whose works reverberated in other studies and proliferated, also, in the development of monographic, master's and doctoral works, which was very stimulating.

However, with the event of *Plano Collor* [Collor Plan],¹ *Revista Projeto* underwent major financial difficulties and sometime later there was a change in the direction, when Vicente Wissenbach left. From that moment on, we were questioned about the pertinence of the section “Ensaio e Pesquisa” regarding the number of readers who followed it. We had reports that some readers made collections of the section, even separated its pages from the journal, to read them later and keep them together. It was, above all, the logic of collecting and filing that guided those readers, which distinguished the texts of this section from the mere reading of the news of the moment. Despite the apparent success of “Ensaio e Pesquisa”, the new editors of the journal decided to end it, because they considered its contents were directed to a very limited number of readers. In retrospective, we can observe that in the mid-1990s, when the section “Ensaio e Pesquisa” was ended, there were ongoing changes in the conditions of the field. At the time, one could see a significant increase in the number of academic journals. In fact, the section lost part of its role. After all, there were new spaces for the publication of scientific contents and it was perceptible that a certain network had already been constructed. From that time onwards, however, the connections expanded and were strengthened in the events, where we came to know about the themes and the people who studied them.

In a country with the extension of Brazil, previous to the possibilities that emerged with the Internet, travelling was the only possibility to establish connections. In the journal we had great flexibility to travel around. We circulated among different groups, of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. We visited schools and always met friends. Hugo Segawa travelled even more than I did, because between 1988 and 1991, I had three children, one soon after the other. Obviously, at that moment, travelling became more limited for me. However, when I travelled, I did not only show my work or passively attend other people's presentations of their work. As we used to say at the journal, I “prospected”. In the day-to-day, this was our jargon: “to prospect”. It was about travelling, asking questions and observing what was happening. My work was to talk to people. We sat around a table, had a coffee, and I became updated on the state of the art of a certain subject. I cannot state that it was the journal that

1 The Plano Collor was a set of economic reforms created under the administration of President Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992) to stabilize inflation. One of its main measures consisted of blocking the liquidity of financial assets, which generated numerous criticisms. This confiscation had a strong impact on the economic life of both the general population and companies, such as *Revista Projeto*.

created those networks of relationships. This would certainly be an overstatement. There were groups already formed. However, what may not have existed yet was the connection between those groups. For example, we made several “prospections” when we structured the commemorative dossier on Le Corbusier’s 100th birth anniversary, on the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the project of the former Ministry of Education and Health, in its headquarters at Gustavo Capanema Palace, in Rio de Janeiro. At the time, Le Corbusier was in the spotlight. Margareth da Silva Pereira was then returning from France, with Cecília Rodrigues dos Santos, and their respective husbands (Romão Veriano da Silva Pereira and Vasco Caldeira). In addition, the publisher of *Projeto* had published their book, “Le Corbusier e o Brasil” [Le Corbusier and Brazil] (Pereira *et al.*, 1987). By then, Margareth da Silva Pereira already knew the work of Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas, who was also studying Le Corbusier’s work.² In his turn, Comas knew about Pereira’s work. In other words, those were not completely isolated groups. They were people working on close subjects, from different angles and perspectives. The difference is that, in the journal, their perspectives were presented together, for a broader audience.

SSC – At the colloquium “Criticism, Media, Memory” you mentioned that your academic research activity started when you decided to carry out the post-graduate course at UFRGS, under the supervision of Professor Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas. Could you identify some points that you consider significant in this process of change? Could you also comment on how this change affected your performance as architectural journalist and critic?

RVZ – This process begun before I entered the Architectural Research Programme at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, the PROPARG-UFRRGS, in 1997. In the early 1990s, Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas had invited me to take part in the master’s course. However, I had three small children and no possibility to travel periodically. As I could not accept the invitation at the time, I had to postpone the project, but followed several seminars of the “small PROPARG”, as we called the broad sense post-graduate course on architecture of UFRGS, which preceded the structuring of the strict sense post-graduate course. Then, when I was leaving the journal, at the end of 1996, there was the selection process for the strict sense post-graduate course, to which I submitted a proposal and it was approved. I did not move [from São Paulo] to Porto Alegre [capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul] because with three small children and a husband it would be a family complication. The PROPARG made an exception and did not require daily attendance; the idea was to invite students who would produce quality studies, and they considered that, in some way, I would be a good investment. I had

² Held in April-May 1986, it was a seminar dedicated to Le Corbusier within the Architectural Research Programme at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, the PROPARG-UFRRGS.

a large practice with writing and affinity with the themes and researches proposed by the programme. Other experienced architects were also invited, under the same conditions; I was not the only one. So, in 1997, when I entered the master's course, I had already left *Revista Projeto* and had attended some of PROPARG's courses. Therefore, the post-graduate course in Rio Grande do Sul happened as a conclusion of an ongoing process.

I made acquaintance with Carlos Eduardo Dias Comas at a seminar in Porto Alegre in 1983. In that occasion, I also met Rogelio Salmons and Mariano Arana, highly important figures in Latin American architecture. Comas had many connections with Argentina, Chile and other countries in Latin America. Moreover, Porto Alegre is a city that has the privilege of being close to other Latin American countries and, at the same time, to large Brazilian centres. For example, one can travel by coach to Uruguay, visit works with the students, and also go to São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, or Buenos Aires, without these being complicated trips. I had already initiated connections with Latin American colleagues, but it became consolidated exactly at the seminar where I met Comas. I attended his presentation and remember having appreciated it because he had a critical approach on Brazilian modern architecture, placing the projects at the centre of analyses.

In the following year, 1984, when the *Congresso Brasileiro de Arquitetos* was held in Belo Horizonte, there were several seminars to be attended and I registered for the seminar conducted by Comas. I found it particularly interesting, because although I was a well-informed person, knew the contents that he explored and had read everything Lúcio Costa had written and published, Comas showed things from a very distinct angle. It was not about learning something I had not previously known, but rather about observing things from a viewpoint that placed the project at the core of the discipline. This connection always interested me. I am not a historian and, although I make history, I am above all an architect. The theme of the project was, therefore, something that had always been present in everything I did in my life, either in the practice of architecture, or in the critical discourse, and, mainly, in the classes I teach. The very form in which a project is published in journals seemed to me a matter of project and not a matter of criticism. Only later I understood that this is also an action of criticism. Anyhow, at that time, my first concern was truly to understand: "How to talk about an architectural project?"

SSC – One of the most instigating parts of your testimony at the colloquium, was when you told about how you made acquaintance and started to work in partnership with colleagues from Latin America. Could you please tell again about this "discovery", the friendship relationships you built and, also, the performance of this group at the Seminários da América Latina (SAL) and at the Congressos Internacionais de Crítica da Arquitetura (CICA)?

RVZ – The first colleague I met was Enrique Browne. He fell from the sky! Browne made research with a scholarship from the Guggenheim Foundation and he showed up at the journal. For some reason, I do not remember why, that day only the publicity group was there. One of them called me to tell there was someone who wanted to talk about Brazilian architecture. I invited him to come for dinner at my house, where I had my books, my texts and my research, which I could show him. Another one who was in São Paulo was Roberto Segre; he came to give a lecture at the Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil (IAB), which I attended as a journalist. I was at the side, taking notes of what he said, to write the report. Almost nobody knew me, except for Vicente Wissenbach, who was looking for someone to take Professor Segre to visit the city and see some works of architecture. The next day, I took him around to show São Paulo during all day and we visited many places. I particularly remember that we went to Casa Modernista, at Itápolis street, designed by Gregori Warchavchik. André Wainer still lived there and we were able to visit the house. Another colleague whom I met in those walks as hostess of São Paulo was Jorge Francisco “Pancho” Liernur. Pancho returned from Germany in 1988, before publishing his books. He had concluded his research, had been in Rio de Janeiro, and had already written to me. Taking fellow architects to visit São Paulo was an informal activity, because I had a car and conducted them all over, and I knew who would open the doors of the houses...

Another aspect that strongly contributed to this Latin American network was obviously the relationship of Vicente Wissenbach with the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC), which soon after would constitute the Bienal de Arquitectura de Buenos Aires. The Brazilian exhibition was in 1983, and in 1985 begun the biennials in the centre of the city of Buenos Aires, the same year when started the Seminários de Arquitetura Latino-Americana (SAL), held at the University of Buenos Aires (outside the city, in the direction of the Aeroparque). At the first SAL, I was there only as a listener and journalist, but there were several people I knew, like Enrique Browne, Severiano Porto and Joaquim Guedes. I almost edited Joaquim Guedes’ first book. During several months, on Fridays, we met to talk about the book’s structure. When we finally concluded the proposal, there was no funding for the editorial project. However, I learnt a lot from listening to Joaquim Guedes talk about his works.

The SAL took place at Lala Méndez Mosquera’s country house. Only guests were there, and I was not part of that group. It was through Joaquim Guedes and Enrique Browne that I attended this first meeting. Lala Méndez Mosquera told me that they planned to hold another seminar, the following year, in 1986, and that they would invite me to make a presentation, since they would invite architects and critics. In short, it all happened through a network of personal relationships and, above all, due to a disposition to listen. For example, I had the disposition to listen to Roberto Segre, who, once he started talking, he would never

stop! However, I also raised questions, disagreed. Actually, I disagreed from everybody and was not afraid to expose my opinions and to debate. Another example, I remember that Enrique Browne came to talk about the idea of “organic”. I counter-argued that this was a debate from the 1950s and that it was outdated for the understanding of our current architecture. To me, it seemed a category hardly operative to read contemporary works. However, it is important to stress that in a debate I did not disagree because I had an idea a priori. I met people, I talked to them, I listened, and I also disagreed if I thought it was necessary to disagree. This way of dealing with criticism created a great relationship between myself and those colleagues. I learnt a lot, very much indeed. Besides, the action of disagreeing implies the intellectual organisation of the argument. It is, in fact, a fantastic exercise! If you say “no, I don’t think it is that”, how to sustain your argument and explain “what it is not that”? I learnt, in fact, to set up my speech, develop it more clearly, because things are not always evident. There is a Portuguese author who states that the act of thinking is the act of writing. And I think this is it. In other words, I don’t think and then write. I can say that I think, systematically, all the time.

SSC – In some of your more recent researches,³ I observe that, in a way, you denounce the scarce production of studies dedicated to women architects. At what point in your career did the feminist perspective start to gain emphasis in your work and how did this happen?

RVZ – The one responsible for this is Ana Gabriela Godinho Lima, the researcher who actually inaugurated these issues in our environment, in Brazil. In the 1990s, she was still very young and was doing her master’s on Latin American women when she came to visit me. She was searching for material and I have a good library – with many Latin American books –, because I travelled, I bought or received plenty of material that at times had not even been published. When a book was prepared, but not published, it was at least distributed among the acquaintances. A printed copy was handed out. I kept some of those publications. Nowadays, from the point of view of a library, this would be regarded as a rare book. For example, I had publications of women architects from Venezuela and Argentina. Ana Gabriela Godinho Lima

3 Recent researches conducted by Ruth Verde Zein: *Arquitetura moderna no Brasil e América Latina: revisões críticas e historiográficas* [Modern architecture in Brazil and Latin America: critical and historiographical reviews] (2022-Current); *Patrimônio Moderno Ibero-americano: Legado Histórico e Salvaguarda Contemporânea* [Modern Iberian-American Heritage: Historical Legacy and Contemporary Safeguard] (2022-Current); *Arquitetura moderna no Brasil e América Latina: revisões historiográficas* [Modern architecture in Brazil and Latin America: historiographical reviews] (2020-2022); *Repercussões nos discursos contemporâneos dos debates e obras dos anos 1950-70* [Repercussions in contemporary discourses of debates and works from the 1950s-1970s] (2018-2020); *Discussão teórica e construção histórica. O patrimônio arquitetônico da modernidade no Chile e no Brasil* [Theoretical debate and historical construe. Architectural heritage of modernity in Chile and Brazil] (2018-2020); and *Conexões brutalistas, repercussões contemporâneas* [Brutalist connections, contemporary repercussions] (2015-2018) [free translation].

was able to consult all of them. At a given moment, though, she decided to interview me. She asked if the fact of being a woman had influenced, hindered or had some impact on my professional activity. At the time, my reaction was categorical: “It did not disturb anything, in no way!” An answer that denounces a classic case of memory repression. It was necessary to go through therapy to discover that I was actually repressing several memories. Because it is evident that the fact of being a woman caused hindrances! Today I am aware that the fact of being a woman raised problems, but the awareness of these problems was not present at that time. It was from Ana Gabriela’s question, to which I gave a conventional answer, that I started to interrogate myself. The psychoanalytical process brought the awareness of the issue and, in doing so, I worked on this more and more. However, I do not consider myself a researcher on feminism. This is not it. I do not work on these themes. I have supervised several researches on feminist themes. In some cases, when it appears to me that it is becoming too complex, too theoretical, I invite Ana Gabriela and we make a co-supervision, because she has an ample theoretical basis on the subject. It does not mean that I do not think it is important, but this is not my subject. I have consolidated other research themes. However, now, especially in the post-graduate classes, I do not avoid bringing contemporary themes for debate: feminism, LGBTQIA+, racism, etc. We must necessarily discuss all these issues to perceive up to what point they affect, or do not affect, our work as women architects. It is necessary to have the opportunity to elaborate questions.

SSC – In your book *Revisões historiográficas: arquitetura moderna no Brasil* [Historiographical reviews: modern architecture in Brazil] this is clear when you analyse the quantitative data...

RVZ – Yes, this emerges. I remember that soon after I had started to teach at Mackenzie University, in the late 1990s, one day at the teachers’ room a male colleague said: “Architecture is in decadence because nowadays there are many women architects.” I asked: “So this means that we, women, are the agents of architecture’s decadence?” He alleged that it was a statistic data. In fact, numbers can be used to prove anything. One can understand whatever... However, it is not exactly only a matter of statistics.

I mention another example related to the LGBTQIA+ theme. A student wished to work on the gays’ spaces in the city as a research theme for his master’s dissertation. However, he was questioned by a colleague professor, who affirmed that this could not be a research theme in the architectural field. I asked: “Why not? Are the gays outside the city? Are they living in another planet?” I am not a researcher on the subject, but within my attributions, I try as much as possible to help in the sense that the issues are freely raised and discussed in an open and direct way.

I can give another example, the debates around the notion of decolonial. I do not know if I like or not, but this is not the point. Even if my

research has no relation with this topic, I try to be updated about it. We cannot state, a priori, that a subject is not a matter of interest. My opinion is that the issue of the research is not only to research the themes as such, it is also an attitude in relation to the field of investigation.

PP – I found it interesting how you presented your activity regarding both the journal and the classroom supervision practice. In your testimony, both are places where you make friction between groups and issues. You create spaces for these to talk, or at least, to make contact. Even when it is evident that there is a problem, the classroom and the journal seem to serve as a sort of accelerator to have the debate on a certain theme. I am sorry, this is not a question. However, your talk made me think about the proximity between your activity in the journal and in the classroom, as a professor, because in both of these activities the architectural criticism is present.

RVZ – I teach a project class. One semester I lecture on the theoretical part, on the next, the project; so I alternate. This occurs for a practical reason related to the maximum number of hours, which is quite reduced because I am a post-graduate researcher and there are many hours allocated for this purpose. There was an occasion when I made a remark after a class prepared by a colleague. His theme was the periphery and its disputes. However, as I shared with him, his bibliography consisted of authors who were all men, white and Europeans. So I asked some questions: “Are there Brazilian authors on this subject? And Latin American?” When I ask this type of question, I do not expect the person to change immediately. The questioning intends to introduce an “uneasiness”. The same question is pertinent regarding the presence of women in the architectural production in Brazil. Where are they? Who are they? The first reaction is mostly saying that they do not exist. Then, I ask one more question: “Is that right?” And, slowly, I take books, I show that they are there. Thus, slowly, the changes happen. The situation changes very slowly, but I find it interesting.

Nowadays, I no longer have the need to affirm myself in the debate, in the disciplinary field or in the architectural criticism. Not that there is no pride. It is simply that I feel an immense personal satisfaction with the teaching activity. And for me the teacher’s role is to be forgotten. As to the teacher whose comment has been assimilated, the student tends to forget who said it. This is part of a researcher’s construction, of the person who is a researcher. The work is not only that which I write, publish and say. The classroom work is very important, even if it is little, step by step, everything is important. This is why I believe that the fact of being there, and being a woman, is already an important action.

PP – What is, then, the role of forgetfulness in the construction of memory? In your testimony, you emphatically addressed the issue of forgetfulness. Here, it seems to reappear, though in a slightly different way. In the face of so many important recollections for the construction

of the historiography of architectural criticism, what were the necessary aspects to be forgotten?

RVZ – I find it difficult to address forgetfulness, but it is important to do so. Nowadays, I am in a process of trying to forget some harsher confrontations or debates. Or, at least, trying to disconnect the consequences of the discussions and the ways in which they were conducted by the persons who provoked them. I think I wish to forget debates that were disrespectful, in which empathy or the lack of it were mixed up – liking me or not liking me – with the theme of the discussion. Unsubstantiated discussions resulting from some ignorance, from people who never read what I wrote. I would like to keep only the way in which I needed to restructure myself and review what I was doing to be able to counter-argue. Talking about these experiences of what I wish to forget takes me to issues that, for me, are still research themes; at times, in the critical debate, the verification of facts seems to be insufficient. The narrative construction in which these facts are inscribed seems to be more powerful than its evidence. People remember the ideological construction, they do not remember the facts, even when they are confronted by them: “Listen, this is the fact!” There are perversely dominant schemes, and this makes me think about the ways to intervene in these ideological schemes. This turns the critic’s activity into a very complicated work and, at times, I ask myself if I am still able to undertake it.

PP – Your comments remind me of questions I also come across in the classroom. Sometimes, when lecturing history, I try to remind the students that there is no way to go back to the past and know exactly what happened. There is no time machine. In fact, we only access representations or fragments of something that happened. Hence, we can say that history is a construct, but I try to remind them that when practicing it, one must safeguard a principle: ethics. Even without the certainty whether what one is faced with actually happened, the report produced by it has a commitment to the truth. Truth is the horizon. However, the permanent state of incompleteness of fragments certainly fuels the debates. Nevertheless, I seek to encourage them to turn to the analysis of that which reaches our time, even if they do not find all the answers there.

RVZ – In the book *El Interior de la Historia: Historiografía Arquitectónica para Uso de Latinoamericanos* (1990) [The Inside of History: Architectural Historiography for the Use of Latin Americans], Marina Waisman makes a clear distinction, which to me seems very operative, that history and the facts that integrate it are distinct entities. In the case of art or architectural history, one has the document, the building that is still there. Perhaps it has been demolished, but ideally it is documented. The Pantheon is there, the building of the Ministry of Education and Health (Gustavo Capanema Palace) is there. Therefore, the fact (the building) causes a space-time distortion: in the case of Gustavo Capanema Palace, it exists since 1937, but, when dealing with it today, one verifies that it is no longer in that past time. The architecture books

usually publish images of a recently-inaugurated building and never return to update the images. My doctoral student Taís Ossani worked on this issue, to some degree, in her research. When we speak about architectural facts, we often forget to address what happened to them after the inaugural moment. Taís Ossani's work was interesting because once a building is presented as a fact of the past, it belongs to that time. The question is to remember that it is also a present fact. This is why it is possible to confront someone's argument with architectural works, because they are tangible, concrete facts. They are not second degree memories. I can interpret Gustavo Capanema Palace in the light of the 1930s issues. In the same way that I can interpret it in the light of contemporary issues. Therefore, one can disagree or agree. When one has a fact, one can observe it from different angles. The impossibility to observe it from other angles does not depend on the fact, but rather on the ideological construct in which one frames it. It happens that often this perception is not clear even for the historians themselves. Sometimes, a researcher crystalizes a certain narrative. Then, this researcher teaches classes and repeats this narrative again and again and again... Thus, he becomes no longer a historian, he becomes a "repeater". Something else I learnt in this process is that if the interpretation you have made is understood, assimilated, it will be surpassed. It is necessary to be prepared for this. Because if you think that you have made the ultimate, the best, the most perfect interpretation, you will be only deluding yourself. If you have made an interpretation that advanced something in relation to what existed before, excellent! Wait, though, because time eats all your children.

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Architect and Architectural Historian, Specialist in History of Architectural Criticism. Among her main publications on this topic are: “Critique et architecture: un état des lieux contemporain” [Criticism and Architecture: a Contemporary State of Affairs] (Paris, 2019); with Kenneth Frampton, the special issue of *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine* named “La critique en temps et lieux” [Critics in Time and Places] (2009). After several publications on architecture journals of the 20th Century, “Politiques éditoriales et Architecture moderne, 1923-1939” [Editorial Politics and Modern Architecture, 1923-1939] (Paris, 2002) and “Architectural Periodicals in the 1960s and 1970s” (CCA, IRHA, Montreal, 2008), her current research focuses on architectural and urban criticism in France in the 1950s-1980s. With Paolo Scrivano (Politecnico di Milano), she co-edited a special number of *CLARA/Architecture + Recherche*, devoted to “Architectural Criticism and Public Debate” and an issue of the journal *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, entitled “Committed, Politicized, or Operative: Figures of Engagement in Criticism from 1945 to Today”. Her interest in criticism intersects with another of her research fields, the history of urban planning in France since 1945 and the urban landscape, particularly from the 1950s to the late 1970s. She is currently the scientific coordinator, together with Paolo Scrivano, of the international research program and network Mapping Architectural Criticism.

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Collaborating researcher linked to the Post-graduate Programme of the School of Architecture and Urbanism at Universidade de Brasília (FAU-UnB). Architect and urbanist from Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) (2000), conducted Master of Science (2017) and Doctor (2022) of Philosophy Studies in City and Urbanism History and Theory at the Post-graduate Programme in Architecture and Urbanism of Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Post-doctoral studies (2023) at Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain), as CNPq scholarship holder with the project *Narrar por paisagens: questões em arquitetura, projeto e tectônica* [Narrate through landscapes: issues on architecture, project and tectonics]. Her researches are on the relation between cinema, city and architecture focusing on Brasília. She is a member of the Research Group TOPOS and of the CNPq Research Project “Brasília, Paisagem e Projeto: Revisitando as novas capitais modernas do século XX” [Brasília, Landscape and Project: Revisiting the new modern capitals of the 20th century]. She coordinates the Extension Project “Cinema Urbana – interseções entre arquitetura e cinema” [Urban Cinema – intersections between architecture and cinema], resident at Casa da Cultura da América Latina – CAL/UnB, since 2017. Curator and idealiser of *Mostra Internacional de Cinema de Arquitetura - Cinema Urbana*, since 2018. Developed architecture and product design for over 15 years; was a professor of Architecture and Urbanism course of UNIP - Campus Brasília (2012-2017) and assistant professor of Instituto Federal de Brasília (IFB), Product Design Technologist course – Campus Samambaia (2022). She works in the area of Architecture and Urbanism, in the following themes: Modern Architecture, Brasília, Cinema, Landscape, Audio-visual Archives. Her thesis *Brasília e Cinema: paisagens cinematográficas* [Brasília and Cinema: cinematic landscapes] was awarded with the UnB 60 years Prize, within the UnB Post-graduate Prize, 2022 edition.

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Ruth Verde Zein (*In memoriam*)

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"Is there a history of architectural criticism?" At first glance, this question may seem excessively simplified; however, it highlights the need of historically thinking the practice of criticism. The fifteen chapters of the book "Criticism Media Memory" evolve around this issue. Grouped into four axes of discussion – transatlantic dialogues; the role of visual culture; different modes of diffusion; and places of memory –, these chapters comprise articles, essays and interviews presented by renowned researchers. These writings intend to distance the relationship established between history and criticism from the search for definitions, limits and purpose in each of these areas, framing criticism in an original way as a historiographic object of study.

