

Is there a Brazilian art?¹

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WEAKNESSES AND APORIES IN THE BRAZILIAN ARTISTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Introduction

To provide an overview on the relationship between the figurative arts in Brazil and the historical reflection efforts they elicit in the country (and, more rarely, abroad) is a major challenge. First of all, this historiography has not until now been object of a complete study or of general reflections. As we venture into this area, we notice that the field is not well defined. So far, there have not been art historians in Brazil who structured the intellectual scene and defined their lines of strength, such as Henri Focillon, in France, Roberto Longhi, in Italy, Julius von Schlosser, in Austria, Erwin Panofsky and Edgar Wind, in Germany, Roger Fry, in England, etc. Of course, there are some referential people, but they are usually writers, essayists, and journalists who eventually have devoted themselves - for better or worse - to the art history. Moreover, until the 1980s, the art history understood as methodical knowledge and as a university discipline associated with undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees simply did not exist in Brazil. Even today, in fact, the courses on art history are very few.

A second reason to explain the struggles of proposing an overview on the Brazilian artistic historiography is associated with the fact that studies on art in Brazil were concentrated, until recently, in two historical periods and in two regions of the country: the baroque of Minas Gerais, with isolated incursions in Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Pernambuco and Paraíba ("baroque", here,

is understood as the art practiced during the colonial period, roughly, between the beginning of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century), and modernism, a term used here to refer to the art imbued with nationalism produced from the 1920's and on, especially in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and, a little later, in Minas Gerais. Therefore, important moments from the art history in Brazil – mainly of the art produced in the 19th CENTURY – remained almost forgotten until the 1990's. Finally, and above all, if the Brazilian artistic historiography presented gaps and lacked university rigor until the 1980's, it was also because the figurative arts produced in Brazil did not deserve, which is fair in my opinion, the same attention as other arts, such as literature and music, whose density attracted the most methodical attention of historians.

This third reason comes from a value judgment that must be made explicit and assumed. In this regard, two precisions are imposed. First, as the focus of my work is not the history of architecture, nor the decorative arts or the so-called "contemporary art", I will limit my analysis to the field of studies of the figurative arts *stricto sensu*. Second, it is likely that most Brazilian fellows probably do not share this view. It is understandable that anyone who devotes him or herself to the history of figurative arts in Brazil tends to value his or her object of study and attribute it a greater historical and aesthetic importance. With the exception of specific cases (Aleijadinho, some works by Amoedo, a designer in the 1920s, Portinari, a portrait artist, Goeldi...), the history of figurative art in Brazil, and especially painting, does not seem, in my opinion, to exhibit a secure relevance outside the scope of local history.

The historical weakness of figurative arts

The weakness in the figurative and especially pictorial tradition in Brazil is constitutive. Its origin is Lusitanian. As in Portugal, in the colony, the art of figure in space also suffers if compared to other arts, such as architecture, decorative arts, literature and music. The most exquisite workshops in the art of furniture and of metal carving and modeling have left, both in the metropolis and in the colony, monuments worthy of being included in the most select universal artistic patrimony. There is, however, no Portuguese painter or sculptor of the 16th

1. Debate originally published in French and Portuguese in the magazine *Perspective*, 2, 2013. Electronic reference: Luiz Marques, Roberto Conduru, Claudia Mattos et Mônica Zielinsky, « Existe-t-il un art brésilien ? », *Perspective* [On line], 2 | 2013. Text in French available in: URL : <http://perspective.revues.org/3879> | Original text in Portuguese available in: URL : <http://perspective.revues.org/5543>.

and 17th centuries who is featured, in any sense, alongside Camões or Antônio Vieira. Nor was any painter from the colony put at the same level of Gregorio de Matos, of Luso-Brazilian poets such as Tomas Antônio Gonzaga (1744-1810) or, again, of Antonio Vieira (for his biography and the recipients of many of his sermons, Vieira is Luso-Brazilian). This Luso-Brazilian deficit in representation of the figure and of the figurative space in relation to the other arts continues in the 19th and 20th centuries. Who is the painter, in Portugal or in Brazil, who can be remembered (with the only exception, perhaps, of Domingos Sequeira in his best moments) when one evokes names like Alexandre Herculano, Camilo Castelo Branco, Eça de Queirós, Machado de Assis, Fernando Pessoa and Guimarães Rosa?²

Here, I do not forget the admirable set of sculptures attributed to Aleijadinho, but this is, above all, an architect-sculptor, who was taught by his father, a Portuguese architect. As a monumental sculptor, he stands (with the excuse for the cliché) as an isolated tower in a choral culture of carving whose historical development was drastically limited by the following factors:

this sculpture is restricted to religious art and, with the exception of Aleijadinho, is never monumental, in stone or marble, and destined to a public space;

far from creating a world of fable, as it happens, for example, in the Neapolitan Crib or in the trade cards of Northeast Brazil, its iconographic repertoire is poor: the Christ, the Holy Family, the Virgin in her infinite declensions, the Virgin Education, angels, archangels, angels and saints, often anonymous, given the smallness of their attributes;

with the exception of Aleijadinho and a few rare cases, there is little interest in this sculpture in the universe of physiognomy;

the "baroque" exuberance of the draperies would compensate for the absence of the naked if the fabrics were not, on average, an "industrial" conventionalism. However, the exceptions of beautiful musicality in the lines, masses and rhythms of the fabrics are not rare;

in short, it is a sculpture without great contrasts of poetry, despite the efforts of Brazilian scholars and the art market to create "personalities" and genealogies, grouped in imaginative "schools". Without being a person that studies this sculpture, I think that some of the "non-Aleijadinhos" of high artistic quality found in Brazilian museums and private collections are Iberian works (in the tradition, for example, of Frei Cipriano da Cruz Souza) or bohemian

(in the tradition, for example, of Ferdinand Maximilien Brokof), transplanted to Brazil in different times.

In colonial painting, this deficit in relation to literature and music is most cruelly evident. Since the pictorial space in perspective is a very intellectualized construct, for whose exercise a long academic training is indispensable, it is not surprising that the painter Aleijadinho is absent. The painting in the Portuguese colony thus remained, without exception, at an elementary level and far below not only, as has been said, the proficiency of the other arts in the Portuguese colony, but also the painting of the Hispano-American colonies, as proved again by the exhibition proposed by Jonathan Brown in 2010-2011 in Madrid, titled, justly, *Pintura de los reinos. Identidades compartidas em el mundo hispánico*, (Painting of the kingdoms. Identities shared in the Hispanic world), where it is perceived that there is practically no aesthetic and sociological fracture between Spanish art and the art of its colonies. A monumental statuary and a painting of a high level was not developed in Brazil from the 16th to the 18th centuries due to a lack of demand. The monumental public statuary presupposes the need for symbolic legitimation of political power, a nonexistent necessity in the Portuguese colony. The same can be said of the portraiture and the great pictorial decoration. Contrary to the Nueva España in Mexico and Peru, to the Virreinato de Nueva Granada in Colombia, to the Nouvelle-France in the Louisiane of Louis XIV and to the New England of the Northeast of the United States, the colonial Brazil, in its overwhelming majority composed of slaves and bastard mulattos like Aleijadinho, never was and has never been conceived like a "New Portugal"³.

In colonial Brazil, all that painting can offer to historians are venerable relics of an artistic practice that only exceptionally (Mestre Ataíde, perhaps, if affection prevails over judgment) rose above a crude serial craftsmanship. In these historical circumstances, one can not expect a painting that moves in the high repertoire, which is cultured in invention, capable of representing space in perspective, the naked body according to classical or other canons, the dramatic complexity of the visual narrative, and the calibrated trade between form and expression. But one might expect that, just as Afro-Brazilian, indigenous, "caboclo",

2. The balance is equally adverse for Luso-Brazilian painting when this comparison is made with music. While Vieira Lusitano (1699-1783) evolves in the shadow of Trevisani, Carlos Seixas (1704-1742) is a worthy interlocutor of Domenico Scarlatti in the Royal Chapel of Lisbon. Similarly, no Brazilian painter will ever experience the collective recognition of Carlos Gomes, Villa-Lobos, Pixinguinha, Noel Rosa, Nazaré or Antônio Carlos Jobim.

3. In addition, not even in Portugal the monumental public sculpture had an important tradition. The equestrian statue of D. José I, for the Terreiro do Paço, by Joaquim Machado de Castro, a disciple of Alexandre Giusti, was the first public bronze statue in that country.

and others popular art, it could express, by its own means, its own complexity, something singularly beautiful, rather than an inescapable ineptitude.

Of course, as our times are those of *global art* and hunting Eurocentrism, there are many who believe that there is an intelligence in the mere disintegration of the cultural codes of Christianity and classical culture. And they engage in discovering it. They are generous and sometimes brilliant efforts, but I fear that the results are due more to the historian's intelligence than to the phenomena studied.

The historical weakness of artistic historiography

Only after the middle of the 19th century one can speak of the existence of an artistic historiography in Brazil. In 1858, Rodrigo Ferreira Bretas wrote a biography of Aleijadinho, being, in fact, the only artistic biography of the century. In addition, chronicles on the honors, exhibitions and mishaps of the Imperial Academy, published in a diverse and abundant but often ephemeral press, sum up the artistic historiography of the 19th century in the capital of the Empire. Its known authors are four: Félix-Émile Taunay, Manuel de Araújo Porto Alegre, Gonzaga Duque, and Angelo Agostini, a insignificant number compared to the artistic historiography and art criticism in Mexico in the same period⁴. Of course, there is no artistic historiography in which there is nothing that elicits it: a literate middle class and a visually educated ruling class, which recognizes in collecting a strategy of cultural emulation and affirmatio⁵. But this historiographic rickets is also due to the constitutive weakness of the Brazilian figurative culture previously discussed. The sociological deficiencies mentioned above did not prevent journalistic confrontations of beautiful rhetorical temper, like that of Joaquim Nabuco (1849-1910) opposing José de Alencar (1829-1877) on the question of slavery. Nor did they prevent a journalistic critique and a historiographical production in the field of literature. Simply recall the *History of Brazilian Literature published in 1882 (and in the*

5th edition of 1953 in five volumes) by Sílvia Romero. Nothing remotely comparable can be said of any co-production of artistic historiography in Brazil.

The national-modernist historiography

In the other countries of the New World and in the countries of Central, Eastern, Scandinavian, Balkan and Iberian Europe – peripheral to the core area of Italy, France, the Netherlands and England – the modernism and historiography of the period extended a romantic and nationalist tradition, of 19th century character, that marked its materials and its ideology. From there, it's possible to designate the modernism and the historiography of the period in these countries by the term national-modernist, something substantially different from the modernism of Parisian origin, free from romanticism and unappealing to the expression of national essences or deep psychologies, albeit in the manner of Worringer.

Brazil did not escape this pattern. But there is a singularity in relation to the other national-modernisms. Unlike the "peripheral" European countries, rich in historical tradition; and also unlike the Hispanic America, backed by pre-Columbian civilizations, in Brazil, the national-modernism lacked "historical material": (1) here, there was scarcely any documentary and monumental record of a multiseccular past; (2) decimated, assimilated, sheltered in enclaves or in the Amazon jungle, the indigenous people were until the MID-20th century an abstraction for the urban country of the coast. It was also a trademark of the romantic nativism of the 19th century and was thematically drained by José de Alencar, Carlos Gomes and certain paintings by Pedro Américo and Amoedo. At the beginning of the 20th century, with the exception of some Parisian watercolors by Vicente do Rego Monteiro, it was reduced to Oswald de Andrade's pun "Tupi or not Tupi" (1928), excellent in everything, and not least by condensing the Hamletian dilemma of Brazilian national-modernists; (3) finally, the ancient African culture did not provide a viable model in a country that was viscerally racist towards black people, who had (and continue to have) slavery as the greatest trauma in their history, and who sought by all means to "whiten" the population.

Pressured by this void of historical reference, the Brazilian national-modernism had as only option inventing it *ex nihilo*. The starting point of this unlikely operation is the impact seen in Brazil of the tentacular performance of Ricardo Severo (1869-1940), a

4. Cf. Ida Rodrigues Prampolini, *La crítica de arte en México en el siglo XIX (Estudios y fuentes del arte en México)*, 3 volumes, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997.

5. In 1854, in the opening speech of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, Manuel de Araújo Porto Alegre affirmed, conformed: "I do not come with unfounded desires, nor with the vanity of showing off public exhibitions in a new country, where wealth and aristocracy have not yet called the fine arts to adorn their coats of arms and their liberalities." Cf. Luciano Migliaccio, Luciano. *O Século XIX*. N. Aguilar, Nelson (org). *Mostra do Redescobrimto: Arte do Século XIX*. São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2000, p.101.

Portuguese architect exiled in Brazil, conservative in his architectural practice and particularly refractory to European modernism⁶. An influential and erudite figure in the circles of the São Paulo elite, Ricardo Severo's work promoted a smooth transition from his ideal of "re-Portuguezation" of Portugal to the ideal of "Brazilianization" of Brazil⁷. There, this operation was a reaction to the gap of a Portugal without an Empire. In Brazil, at least in São Paulo, it was in part a reaction of the local elites to the "invasion" of immigrants, especially Italians, whose higher standards of culture (including politics) and professional proficiency threatened their ideological hegemony. This reaction seems to me to be a implicit, but more important than is usually admitted, ingredient in the mentality of the patrician elites who would sponsor "their" artists in the Modern Art Week of '22 and other projects. From Severo's crusade, national-modernism would inherit the idea that the French Mission of 1816 – the starting point of all the institutional effort to build a modern urban culture in Rio de Janeiro – had denatured and repressed the primordial "baroque" origins of our culture.

This interpretation was coined in 1955 by a left-wing intellectual and art critic of the time, Mário Pedrosa, who in his 1955 thesis affirmed: "the Davidian nobles came to change the course of our true artistic tradition, which was baroque, via Lisbon"⁸. In opposition to this thesis, I have more than once had the opportunity to recall that baroque, outside its strict sense (that is, the art of Rome and Naples in the 1620's-1720's *circa*), is particularly badly at characterizing the "temperament of a people" that is non-European, because it is an European art. And it is even more European in Portugal, where, far from emanating from a profoundly Portuguese nature, it enters the country through royal and court commissions to Italian artists such as Agostino Cornacchini, Camilo Rusconi and dozens of others. Especially under D. João V, the Portuguese baroque is an art of strict Roman observance. Therefore, the French Mission, does not mean, as Pedrosa thinks, the repression of "our true artistic tradition, which was baroque, via Lisbon" by a French culture foreign to this

"tradition". The Mission of 1816 is only the reflection, in Brazil, of the slow transition from Roman hegemony to French hegemony in the European Academies, a shift that begins, if we want to be precise, with the Vatican commissions to Pierre Subleyras in the 1740s and is consummated with David.

With rare exceptions, which can not be considered in this space, Brazilian artistic historiography evolves until very late in the 20th century within the scope of this triadic scheme: (1) Baroque (origin); (2) French Mission and its developments (diversion); (3) Modernism from the landscapes of Eliseu Visconti (reunion). Thus, it does not attain to the fact that the search for "identity" as a program is a tautology, because one can not wish to be what one inevitably already is. From where there are two apories: (1) to claim an "identity" is a ipso facto to the confession of its impossibility, since such a claim refers to a closed circuit, an effect of opposing mirrors, of self-referential *strange loops*; (2) to claim it is also a contradiction in terms, since it implies mimicking the European model (already endowed with identity). These apories have gained a greater impression and longevity for emanating from the central figure of national-modernism, Mario de Andrade, in his essay from 1928 on Aleijadinho, argues that the sculptor's "mulatto-ness" acquires the DNA value of "Brazilian" art.

The wisdom of Angelo Agostini

Fortunately, the current generation of art historians in Brazil is less and less interested in this genre of rhetoric and this ideological heritage when studying the art that is preserved in the country and, above all, is increasingly venturing into international art. They perceive that in the art produced in Brazil the adjective "Brazilian" is *not a critical category*, that is, it contributes nothing to its intelligibility; they realize that this intelligibility does not emanate from a phantasmatic autochthonous instance, but from the network of international relationships and conditions that Brazil and the art that has been made here are the result. They can now understand the irony of Angelo Agostini (1843-1910) in his satire of the Exhibition of 1879 at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, in which a room entitled "Escola Brasileira" (Brazilian School) was candidly inaugurated⁹:

"Exhibition of 1879. Let me take this opportunity, here at the closing of the exhibition, to talk a little bit seriously (hum! hum!) about the pretensions of the catalog in which we come across, with the

6. Cf. Joana Mello, *Ricardo Severo: da arqueologia portuguesa à arquitetura brasileira*. São Paulo, Annablume, FAPESP, 2007, with preface by José Tavares Correia de Lira.

7. The term, as it is known, is by Mário de Andrade. Cf. Marcos Antonio de Moraes, "Abrileirar o Brasil". *Arte e literatura na epistolografia de Mário de Andrade*. *Caravelle*, Toulouse, 80, 2003, p.33-47.

8. Cf. Mário Pedrosa, "Da Missão francesa: seus obstáculos políticos" (1955), in O. Arantes, (org.) *Mário Pedrosa: Acadêmicos e Modernos. Textos Escolhidos III*. São Paulo, Edusp, 1998, p.83-84.

9. *Revista Ilustrada*, Year 4, 157, April 16th, 1879 (online).

following: 'Paintings, etc. etc. forming the BRAZILIAN SCHOOL'. (...) But the Brazilian school has its charm... Our Academy has certainly heard of the Flemish school in Italy, and naturally thought that every picture painted in Italy belongs to the Italian school (...), just as the paintings painted in Brazil form the Brazilian school. That is really like trying to disentangle the Gordian knot without looking neither to the right nor to the left, like Alexander. But as much as I think, reflect, study the paintings from the picture gallery, whenever someone talks about Brazilian school, I think of school of Glória, and I run away before a conference knocks on my door. "

Agostini expresses his fear that the theme of the "Brazilian School" of painting would become a tedious theme of lectures in one of the Conferences of Glória which, since 1873, had as its objective the dissemination of scientific, philosophical and literary themes¹⁰. A prophetic fear of incurring the fate of Sisyphus that we have only recently, at last, been liberated.

NEW HORIZONS FOR THE ART HISTORY IN BRAZIL

Claudia Mattos

Art history as a specific field of knowledge in Brazil was first and foremost a direct legacy of the modernist historiographic tradition. As Luiz Marques observes, it concentrated on the three visceral themes of this historiography: baroque art, with a main focus on the baroque from Minas Gerais and the figure of Aleijadinho; the so-called "academic" art, centered mainly on the analysis of the production of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro; and, above all, modernism itself. The latter became in fact the articulating field of hegemonic discourses on art history in Brazil, at least until the 1980's. The search for an artistic identity of its own and the idea of constructing an art of a specifically national character, characteristic of modernism, had repercussions in the field of art history as a desire to focus on the national artistic production and on the local historiographical tradition to construct an art history. It is for this reason that the arts from Europe, including important collections residing in Brazil, such as those from the São Paulo Museum of Art or the National Museum of Fine Arts, remained poorly studied for a long time, as well as the entire scope of arts of non-European tradition, such as African, pre-Columbian, Asian, Islamic art, among others. Due to this historical restriction of the field to the themes mentioned, significant Afro-Brazilian and Amerindian artistic productions

have also been forgotten and, to a large extent, are still ignored by art historians in the country, who thus construct a art history that identifies with history of the European conquerors.

The lack of institutions capable of offering specific training in the area of art history as well as the scarcity of translations of classical and recent texts central to the discipline also hindered for a long time a theoretically complex and updated approach to the material studied. In fact, for several decades, Brazil could only count on the course of art history offered by the Institute of Fine Arts of Rio de Janeiro, inaugurated in 1961 and transferred to the University of Rio de Janeiro in 1978. The first undergraduate course in art history was opened in 2009 at the Federal University of São Paulo. In the same period, other similar courses were created in other universities. From the 1990's onward, the process of translating classical and more recent texts, fundamental to the formation of art historians, to Portuguese has accelerated. Works by authors such as Erwin Panofsky, Giulio Carlo Argan, Michael Baxandall, Svetlana Alpers, Louis Marin, Hans Belting, Georges Didi-Hubermann, among others, were then published. In this context, the works of translation developed by some academic journals, such as *Concinnitas*, published by the University of Rio de Janeiro, or the *Revista de História da Arte e Arqueologia* by the State University of Campinas, among others, deserve special mention.

With a few rare exceptions, the production in the area of art history in Brazil was thus reduced, until recently, to narratives about trajectories of artists, with little emphasis on the analysis of actual works. Very few works dealt with themes of relevance, such as the history of collecting, issues of patrimony or aspects of the material history of the work. Reflections on the status of the object of art or on image theory, for example, were also largely scarce. A fundamentally documentary – especially in the case of the literature on the 19TH century – and chronic art history, often marked by the lack of theoretical and critical distance from the object of study, set the predominant tone in the field until the late 1980's.

It was often outside the specific realm of art history that one could find more lively and daring interpretations of local artistic production, like in the reflections of the artists themselves, or in related fields such as anthropology, sociology, or philosophy. In the 1970's, parallel to the development of art history, figures such as Vilém Flusser and Haroldo de Campos were central

10. Cf. Karoline Carula, *As Conferências Populares da Glória e as discussões do darwinismo na imprensa carioca (1873-1880)*. Master's thesis, University of Campinas, Unicamp, 2007.

to the development of a theoretical reflection on art in Brazil. These and other authors are at the root of a semiotic tradition of art theory in Brazil that includes intellectuals such as Arlindo Machado and Lúcia Santaella – both linked to the postgraduate program in semiotics at the Catholic University of São Paulo. Also in the São Paulo intellectual context, we can cite the work of the psychoanalyst and art critic Suely Rolnik, who contributed to the diffusion of the theories from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in Brazil. Moreover, since the 1970's, the field of art criticism has brought fundamental contributions to reflections on art, especially through the figure of Ronaldo Brito¹¹. Names such as Paulo Herkenhoff and Moacir dos Anjos, in the field of curatorship, and Sérgio Miceli (responsible for the publication in Portuguese of the works of Pierre Bourdieu works by the publisher of the University of São Paulo in the 1990's), in the field of sociology of art, also helped to enrich the artistic debate. Finally, more recently, the historian and archaeologist Ulpiano Bezerra de Meneses has contributed significantly to the theoretical development of the discipline by introducing important discussions on image theory and visual studies in Brazil¹².

Until the end of the 1980s, Brazilian art historians struggled to get recognition and a lack of interest from the international community in the specific case of Latin America, and especially, of Brazil, further aggravated the situation, producing a situation of relative isolation from the global context. It is worth mentioning, however, that the history of contemporary art was then an exception in the country. Powered by a lively debate with artists, art historians such as Ronaldo Brito, in Rio de Janeiro, and Walter Zanini, in São Paulo, produced an important artistic historiography. From the point of view of the institutional articulation of the field, it is also important to mention the presence of the Brazilian Committee of Art History, founded in 1972 and affiliated to the International Committee of Art History, as a tenuous channel of communication with the international community and as a space of confluence and professional articulation of art historians in the country.

The general situation of art history in Brazil began to rapidly change from the 1980's onward, when several postgraduate

courses were opened in the area and many professionals sought to study outside the country, although this phenomenon unfortunately remained too restricted to the Southeast and South regions. Gradually, a new generation with experience and international acquaintances began to work in Brazil, expanding the thematic boundaries and understanding the field of art history in tune with the international directions of the discipline. This change coincided with the development of a critical attitude towards the directions of the art history in the world, which included an openness for the incorporation of new objects in the perspective of scholars, as well as a revision of the theoretical and methodological principles that underpinned the knowledge of the art historian until then. The revival of Aby Warburg and Alois Riegl, for example, as models for a critical art history has helped reduce the distances between "high" and "low" art, has expanded the field of expertise of the art historian into the broader context of visual culture and offered a more dynamic reference to the question of the circulation of material (and immaterial) culture across the globe, thus deconstructing a history of art still marked by the concept of local schools. The place of the speech of the protagonists of a traditional art history also began to be revised through postcolonial approaches.

In observing the new framework that was configured for the art history in Brazil from the 1980's and 1990's onward, we noticed significant changes both in the objects and themes addressed and in the quality of theoretical-methodological reflection. From the point of view of the thematic breadth, we can say that, gradually, the limits historically imposed to the discipline were being crossed. The works on the production in the 19th century, for example – such as those developed by Jorge Coli, Alexandre Eulálio, Luciano Migliaccio, Rafael Cardoso, Ana Paula Simioni Cavalcanti, Maraliz Christo¹³, among others – showed a salutary tendency to no longer be limited to the creation of the traditional

11. In this art criticism tradition, we should mention Nelson Aguilar, Paulo Venâncio Filho, Rodrigo Nunes, Lorenzo Mammi, Sonia Salzstein, among others. Cf. Mônica Zielinsky, *La Critique d'art contemporaine au Brésil : parcours, enjeux et perspectives*, Lille, 1999.

12. Ulpiano Bezerra de Meneses, "Fontes Visuais, Cultura Visual, História Visual. Balanço provisório, propostas cautelares", in *Revista brasileira de história*, 23/45, July 2003.

13. On this subject, cf. the works from Luciano Migliaccio in the catalog from the *Mostra do redescobrimto*, 2000, citation n. 6; Rafael Cardoso, *O design brasileiro antes do design: aspectos da história gráfica, 1870-1960*, São Paulo, 2005; Rafael Cardoso, *A arte brasileira em 25 quadros*, Rio de Janeiro, 2008; Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni, *Profissão artista: pintoras e escultoras acadêmicas no Brasil*, São Paulo, 2008. Cf. also the following academic works: Claudio José Alves, *Natureza e Cultura nas Ilustrações da Comissão de Exploração Científica (1859-1861)*, doctorate thesis, State University of Campinas, 2012; Maria Antônia Couto da Silva, *Um Monumento ao Brasil: considerações acerca da recepção do livro Brasil Pitoresco, de Victor Frond em Charles Ribeyrolles (1859-1861)*, doctorate thesis, State University of Campinas, 2011; Rosângela de Jesus Silva, *O Brasil de Angelo Agostini: Política e sociedade nas imagens de um artista (1864-1910)*, doctorate thesis, State University of Campinas, 2010.

genres of painting and sculpture recognized by the academy, and its relation to European tradition, but instead seek to understand production in the 19th century from a more dynamic point of view, emphasizing the importance of the photography, the illustrated press, the participation of academic artists in scientific expeditions, or even their direct involvement with other relevant institutions, such as the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute. With this, for example, the importance of photography for the representation of the State during the Second Empire was emphasized. The focus on gender issues and attempts to understand the vast Afro-Brazilian production in relation to the field of art added richness and complexity to the studies conducted between the 1980's and 1990's. The same can be said with regards to the baroque. From the traditional historiographical, centered on the Minas Gerais case and exceptional figures such as Aleijadinho and Ataíde, a much more dynamic approach was focused on the circulation of material culture, not only in Brazil, but in the global scope of the Portuguese empire. Attempts to understand the meaning and function of the various religious programs and their performative character in an environment marked by the meeting of various visual traditions and specific political contexts, have diluted the essentialist and nationalist discourses, concerned with the "authentic" and the "original" in the local baroque culture¹⁴. Important studies on the colonial period in various regions of the country, such as Belém do Pará and Northeastern capitals, helped to construct a new framework for studies on the colonial period in Brazil¹⁵. Finally, a systematic revision of the notion of modernism as a "zero mark" of contemporary art in the country, as well as an attempt to understand its manifestations in association with the Latin American avant-garde and across the world, has helped situate modernism in an international context and to position it more adequately in the process of development of art in the

country¹⁶. More recently, in large part due to the development of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in art history that include non-European art in their curricula, such as the undergraduate programs at the Federal University of São Paulo and the University in Rio de Janeiro, as well as the recently inaugurated non-European art line of the post-graduation program at the University of Campinas, artistic production of non-European origins – African, Amerindian, Asian, Islamic, among others – has also been the subject of analysis by art historians in Brazil, something that gains special relevance in face of the cultural multiplicity of the country. The biggest lesson we take from all this is that the apparent weakness of art and art history in Brazil depends directly on the lens we use to evaluate it. By renewing the glasses, the reality acquires complexity and richness.

From my point of view, therefore, the main difference between the historiography of art prior to the 1980's and current production lies in the framework of the quality of theoretical-methodological reflection. In line with developments in the art history in the world, more dynamic and complex models were gradually built to understand the artistic production and the historiography of Brazilian art. The professionalization of the field prompted the integration of Brazil into the international community of art historians. The consequence was a significant increase in the number of translations of key texts for the current theoretical debates on the discipline, as well as the increase of publications about Brazil in international journals. The growth of international collaboration was also significant. Here, it is necessary to mention the support offered in recent years by the Getty Institute of Los Angeles, which has fostered the development of the field through projects such as "Connecting Art Histories" – three projects of this nature were recently approved for the art history in Brazil – or by the invitations sent to Brazilian art historians to integrate the visiting researchers program at the Getty Research Institute. Today

14. On this process of theoretical-methodological revision of the baroque in Brazil, cf. the works of Jens Baumgarten and André Tavares Pereira (Federal University of São Paulo): Jens Baumgarten, "Staging Baroque Worship in Brazil", in David Morgan E., *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, London, 2010, 1 v., p.173-192; Jens Baumgarten, "O Corpo, a Alma e o Amor: Esculturas do Brasil Colonial entre o Performativo e o Religioso", in *Designio*, 3, 2005, p.27-36; André Tavares Pereira, "Zeferino da costa e as pinturas da candelária", in *Thule, Dinâmica de la Religiosidad en América Latina*, 2003.

15. Cf. Renata Maria de Almeida Martins, *Tintas da terra tintas do reino: arquitetura e arte nas Missões Jesuíticas do Grão-Pará (1653-1759)*, doctorate thesis, University of São Paulo, 2009; André Tavares Pereira, *A constituição do programa iconográfico das irmandades de clérigos seculares no Brasil e em Portugal no século XVIII: estudos de caso*, tese de doutorado, State University of Campinas, 2006.

16. One of the first to question the history of modernism was Carlos Zilio with the publication of his book *A querela do Brasil: a questão da identidade da arte brasileira, a obra de Tarsila, Di Cavalcanti e Portinari, 1922-1945* (Rio de Janeiro, 1982). In 1995, Tadeu Chiarelli published his doctorate thesis *Um Jeca nos Vernissages* (São Paulo, 1995), which proposed an important revision of the role of Monteiro Lobato in the history of art criticism in Brazil. Cf. also: Sergio Miceli, *Nacional Estrangeiro*, São Paulo, 2003; Leticia Squeff, "Paris sob o olho selvagem: *Quelques Visages de Paris*, de Vicente do Rego Monteiro", in Alex Miyoshi E., *O selvagem e o civilizado nas artes, fotografia e literatura do Brasil*, Campinas, 2010, 1 v., p.57-81. On the attempt to understand modernism in its Latin American context, cf. Maria Amélia Bulhões, Maria Lúcia Kern EE., *Territorialidade e práticas artísticas na América Latina*, Porto Alegre, 2002; Jorge Schwartz, *Vanguardas Latino-Americanas*, São Paulo, 2010.

these professionals are more present than ever in the discipline's main international forums. It is fascinating to watch the outcome of this engagement, also for the direction of a new history of global art.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF BRAZILIAN ART SEARCH OF ITS PLACE

Mônica Zielinsky

In the final part of his text, Luiz Marques states that "in the art produced in Brazil the adjective 'Brazilian' is not a critical category [...] this intelligibility does not emanate from a phantasmatic autochthonous instance, but from the network of international relationships and conditions that Brazil and the art that has been made here are the result". This observation, which is of great importance for the reflections on the existence of a Brazilian art and its historiography, is presented by Marques based on some examples of Brazilian colonial art and the historiography of that period.

Among the various emerging considerations in Marques's text, one is evident: he states that he considers, above all, the "artistic phenomenon, before dealing with [...] the artistic historiography". However, in his approach to art and especially to the art of the colonial period, one perceives a derogatory view of the artistic production in the country, suggesting, through judgments almost always of a formalist nature, its poor plastic quality. He points out the weakness of the figurative tradition, the poor formal repertoire of Aleijadinho, the little interest in the universe of the physiognomic expression; he places the painting of the Portuguese colony at an elementary level, stating that it lacks a long academic training and presents characteristics of a crude serial craftsmanship; he denies the existence of a sculpture on a monumental scale between the 16th and 19th centuries, alleging the absence of commissions and, thus, a symbolic and expressive legitimization on the part of the political power in the Portuguese colony.

A historiography of the period would already be, in his view, compromised to the extent that it would not account for an artistic production so weak and inconsistent, unable to offer, because of this weakness, valuable material for the development of a more dense historiography. The author also mentions Afro-Brazilian, indigenous or "caboclo" folk art – which could prove to be "singularly beautiful" – as a possible way to create their own

problematics. He judges it, here as well, "of inescapable ineptitude," although he acknowledges that there are quality studies in the approach of these practices by some Brazilian historians.

All these observations stimulate some conclusions about this essay: in it, the art developed in the country is considered precarious; one does not perceive in the text of Marques a predisposition to understand it in a greater depth. There is no mention of documentary data or analysis methodologies that are consistent with the processes of building local histories and which contemplate their broader and comparative implications with other cultures. The essay also does not consider the social and political relationships, nor the role of migrations and the differences present in the anatomy of this art. In fact, he does not really bet on the cited artistic phenomenon. In face of a historiographical production presented as weak and practically nonexistent, it is necessary to question the kind of historiography that, in a different way, could one day be constituted.

It is worth reviewing the positions on this subject assumed by some Brazilian scholars, beginning with Rodrigo Naves¹⁷. In *A forma difícil: ensaios sobre arte brasileira*, the critic and art historian considers the production of the Brazilian fine arts irregular and sparse, "an uncertain material" in relation to most of the public reputations of its tradition¹⁸. But what is more important is the mention to the fact that the condition of art in the country would never justify the lack of knowledge and the unpreparedness of the area for the constitution of a more rigorous and enriching historiographic medium¹⁹, that could deepen its nature and recognize its historical and anthropological particularities. This position is distinguished from the reflection of Marques, for whom there is no artistic historiography "simply because there is nothing that elicits it".

In face of these controversies, Naves proposes to seek in the works of art themselves the reasons for its little international

17. Rodrigo Naves, Ph.D. in philosophy and fellow of the Center for Brazilian Studies at St. Antony's College in Oxford, is a renowned critic and art historian in Brazil. He was the editor of the *Folhetim* from the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* and of the journal *Novos Estudos* from the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP); he also participated in the publications *A parte do fogo e Beijo* and is responsible for the editorial project of the collection *Espaços da arte brasileira* from the publisher Cosac Naify. He is the author of *El Greco: um mundo turvo* (São Paulo, 1985), *Amilcar de Castro* (São Paulo, 1991), *A forma difícil: ensaios sobre arte brasileira* (São Paulo, 1996) and of the romance *O filantropo* (São Paulo, 1998).

18. Naves, 1996, citation n. 23, p.10.

19. Naves, 1996, citation n. 23, p.10.

repercussion and is interested in understanding what happens in the Brazilian production by incorporating modern changes and assuming, in this perspective, "a particular bias"²⁰. He dwells on the specificity of the works, pointing to "its difficult form" in relation to the models of modern international art, of an ambitious nature and supported by a dense creative tradition. It stresses the perceptive slowness of the art developed in Brazil and the timidity of its configurations, colors and images, which he considers distant from the innovations and ruptures of the art of the dominant circuits. He recognizes the differentiated outlines of the fine arts in the country over those of the art of the hegemonic centers, stating that the Brazilian productions extract from the struggles inherent to them – mainly from their difficulty of formalization – an admirable aesthetic force²¹. His text from 1996 presents an ambivalence: on one hand, he does not deepen the connections between the cultural and historical flows of art in the country and its articulations with the multicultural structure of contemporary society, nor does he go so far as to deal with issues regarding the institutional quotas set out therein. On the other hand, it is a study that attempts to escape the homogenizing perspective of global culture and seeks the differences and particularities of this art in its conception and practices. He considers it a local recreation with its own outlines and emphasizes the importance of "better understanding the art we produce, from its intrinsic values and its historicity [...]"²², facts that Marques apparently seems to forget when presenting the art developed in Brazil. By reflecting not only on differences, but mainly on the basis of the differences²³, Naves makes a valuable contribution to the reflection proposed here.

A second approach is presented to the discussions motivated by the essay by Luiz Marques, providing a fertile ground for the expansion of the historiographic question in Brazil. This approach is developed by the French researcher (residing in Brazil) Stéphane Huchet²⁴, who, unlike Luiz Marques, considers

Brazilian art as one endowed with irrefutable quality, assuring that "those who do not live in Brazil have no idea of the force of artistic creation in the country"²⁵. With a focus on contemporary Brazilian art, he contrasts, through a close analysis, the incontestable quality of the art produced in the country with a inconsistent historiography of art that has not yet found its place – a fact also presented by Naves. For the French scholar, Brazilian historiography needs a more in-depth and pertinent theoretical formation that allows meta-historical and conceptual conflicts. It also lacks updated methods, as well as an increase in field research. Huchet points out problems of institutional inconsistency, both in the academic field (which offers few bachelor's degrees in art history) and in the editorial medium (publishing, translation and dissemination of publications) – facts that inhibit the strengthening of the local and international repercussions of Brazilian artistic and academic productions. The diffusion of these works does not reach the conditions indicated in Marques' text, which mentions the need to project the art that is done here in a network of international relations in which it can be more renowned and widespread. However, Huchet presents the gain that international exhibitions have brought to the visibility of this art and mentions a few examples, such as *Les Magiciens de la terre*, presented in 1989 in Paris²⁶. Primarily focused on cultural decentralization, this exhibition allowed to put into evidence artistic practices from the social and geopolitical peripheries²⁷. The author mentions the boost given by this exposure to the development of several others and, in light of this, he states that "Brazilian art became an art of the world, completely. International institutions have finally understood it"²⁸.

Although he has exposed the importance of this insertion of the art produced in Brazil into the world artistic dynamics – an idea also outlined in the final part of Marques' text – Huchet does not even consider the type of political and symbolic investment that these articulations would imply – a discussion that would also deserve careful consideration. On this aspect, the historiography

20. Naves, 1996, citation n. 23, p.12.

21. Rodrigo Naves, "[...] Um azar histórico. Desencontros entre moderno e contemporâneo na arte brasileira", in *Novos Estudos Cebrap*, 64, november 2002, p.18.

22. Naves, 2002, citation n. 27, p.18.

23. Gerardo Mosquera and Jean Fisher highlight the importance of this perspective in the introduction of the work edited by them: *Over Here: International Perspectives on Art and Culture*, New York/Cambridge (MA), 2004.

24. Stéphane Huchet, "Presença da arte brasileira: história e visibilidade internacional", in *Concinnitas: revista do Instituto de Artes da UERJ*, 1/12, 9, July 2008, p.48-65 [orig.: "Présence de l'art brésilien : histoire et visibilité internationale", in *Revue art histoire : Cahiers du Centre Pierre Francastel*, issue

"Histoire et historiographie. L'art du second XX^e siècle", 5-6, fall 2007, p.229-246].

25. Naves, 2008, citation n. 30, p.49.

26. *Les Magiciens de la terre*, Jean-Hubert Martin E., (cat. expo., Paris, Centre Georges-Pompidou, 1989), Paris, 1989.

27. It is worth consulting the detailed interview with Benjamin Buchloh with Jean-Hubert Martin on the guiding principles of this exhibition: "Entretien Benjamin H. D. Buchloh et Jean-Hubert Martin", in *Les Cahiers du MNAM*, 28, summer 1989, p.5-14. Recently reproduced in Sophie Orlando, Catherine Grenier EE., *Art et mondialisation : décentremements, anthologie de textes de 1950 à nos jours*, Paris, 2013.

28. Naves, 2008, citation n. 30, p.64.

of Brazilian art would certainly have much to express. There is also a lack, in the art history studies in the country, of research to clarify the importance of the articulation of this art with the plurality of other fields – social, political, economic and anthropological –, all essential for the understanding of the Brazilian artistic phenomena in the context of a global and cosmopolitan art history that, often, omits the local stories and aspirations from which these phenomena come. When presenting, in his essay, the artistic production of the Portuguese colony that he considers so depleted, Luiz Marques could have made its history emerge in the present. This is because this art calls for a peripheral view, focused on its hybrid, relational and appropriative aspects, which were not mentioned by him. As Amílcar Cabral states, reminded by Gerardo Mosquera, the analysis of this production could perhaps erect new worlds for our present world²⁹.

It is up to this historiography of Brazilian art to generate the necessary epistemological transformations³⁰ and to raise new academic disciplinary challenges through relational models of diversity adapted to the history of this culture and art. It could, thus, allow the blossoming of a thought built from its limits, a peripheral thought that comes from "dwelling the borders"³¹. This position is neither defended by Marques, or by Naves or by Huchet. In conceiving the adjective "Brazilian" as emanating from a network of international relationships and constraints, Luiz Marques does not particularize the Brazil's position and characteristics in this context. Naves, in his search for the particular bias of Brazilian art, does not reflect on the place that this particularity could assume in a contemporary historiography in times of globalization. Huchet, on the other hand, omits the particular, when reflecting on the Brazilian artistic insertion in the global dynamics of art, not mentioning the negotiations and rearticulations that could be stimulated by the integration of Brazilian art in this world system.

29. Amílcar Cabral refers to the imperialist domination. Amílcar Cabral, "O papel da cultura na luta pela independência", in *Obras escolhidas de Amílcar Cabral*, Lisbon, 1, p.234-235; Gerardo Mosquera, "The Marco Pólo syndrome: some problems around art and eurocentrism", in Zoya Kocur, Simon Leung E., *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985*, Malden (MA), 2005, p.219.

30. Cf. Hal Foster, "O artista como etnógrafo", in *Arte e Ensaios*, 12/12, 2005, p.138.

31. Term employed by Walter D. Mignolo, in *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*, Princeton, 2000. Cf. the analysis of this work by Serge Gruzinski, in *Annales: histoire, sciences sociales*, 2002, 57/1, p.234-235, and Walter D. Mignolo, "Géopolitique de la sensibilité et du savoir. (Dé)colonialité, pensée frontalière et désobéissance épistémologique", in *Mouvements*, n. 72, December 2012, available at: www.mouvements.info/Geopolitique-de-la-sensibilite-et.html (Access in: November 15th, 2013).

For Brazilian art to be recognized in the global geopolitical context, it must circulate effectively in the global network of contemporary art – but that is not enough. The constitution of a critical and updated historiography that follows, discusses and amplifies this production and its processes of insertion is essential to the very nature of the so-called "Brazilian" art. As an "identity in action"³², this historiography, in its specific way of doing contemporaneity, requires that local landmarks be surpassed and that a new cartography of art in the country be created. In a never monolithic perspective, but through the mentioned models of alterity, this historiography must articulate the confluences and the influences of this art in the midst of the cultures that constitute it and associate with it. Far from being marked by fragility, the art developed in Brazil must identify itself with a historiography in process, which will mark its differences and will undoubtedly be politically innovative, thus recognizing its proper place in the world culture.

THE ART HISTORY IN BRAZIL, "FROM HERE TO THERE"

Roberto Conduru

Despite the laudatory tone of his texts published in 1835 and 1841, which began the critical reflection on art in Brazil, Manuel de Araújo Porto-Alegre did not fail to indicate the limitations of the artistic production of the former Portuguese colony and even of the production done previous to the European presence in America³³. Today it seems difficult to find someone who defends the existence of a strong historiographical tradition of art in Brazil. A recent indication of the persistence of this negative judgment is the interpretation made by Rodrigo Naves of the "difficulty of form" that "permeates much of the best Brazilian art"³⁴. A sense of inferiority is common in comparison with the domains of music and literature in the country, as well as with other historiographical traditions. Instead of being a mobilizing element, the small number of works, which were mostly non-extensive and unambitious (but not less important and even, sometimes, grandiose), as well as the lack of systematicity – in short, the absence of a tradition – is

32. Cf. Gerardo Mosquera, "Notas sobre globalización, arte y diferencia cultural", in *Zonas Silenciosas*, Amsterdam, 2001.

33. Manuel de Araújo Porto-Alegre, "Résumé de l'histoire de la littérature, des sciences et des arts au Brésil", in Jean-Baptiste Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil*, 3 v., Paris, 1839, p.84-87 [ed. orig. : *Journal de l'Institut Historique*, 1, 1835]; Manuel de Araújo Porto-Alegre, "Memória sobre a antiga escola fluminense de pintura", in *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, 3, 1841, p.547-557.

34. Naves, 1996, citation n. 23, p.21.

a barrier for those who reflect on art in Brazil and who must face the weight of the silence and the myths generated by critical discontinuity in a rarefied professional environment.

The elements that have recently revitalized the historiography of art in Brazil are also not totally positive, since they do not completely break certain historical impasses, thus reinforcing old problems or constituting new obstacles. The proliferation of undergraduate³⁵ and postgraduate³⁶ courses in art history, especially in the last decade, is unable to reverse the country's traditional concentration of personal, physical and financial resources, which declines from the Southeast region towards the South, Center, Northeast and North regions; that is, it is a phenomenon that is in keeping up with Brazilian social inequality.

Although the growing international motion of researchers from Brazil is promoting greater professional exchange, this dynamic is still constrained by less mobility compared to other contexts. The increase in the interest of foreign researchers in Brazilian art has not yet had its corresponding reflection incorporated into the debate in the country. The greater interaction between these groups can generate frictions and consonances, configuring a differential in the historiographical field, internally and externally.

Despite the notorious quantitative and qualitative leap in art publications in the last 20 years – something that has broadened the public status of art in Brazil – the preponderance of the *coffee table book* model and the small print runs limit the critical thinking and its diffusion. The concentration of monographies on the trajectories and achievements of individuals, especially artists, is also dominant, in a process of differentiation that breaks the essentialist and homogeneous visions (although it is not altogether unrelated to the cult of personality, so dear to the market of art). It is important to mention here the studies on artists, among which we can highlight collections of texts by critics and historians from the last 50 years, which, by constituting a *corpus*, enable and demand greater reflexivity in the historiography of art in Brazil.

Taking as a motto the title of a text by Mario Pedrosa, "A *Bienal de cá para lá*" [The Biennial from here to there]³⁷, one can

think of the historiography of art in Brazil from the current state of art and its critical reflection, instead of taking European past values as parameters of judgment. Instead of operating with conceptions of art and history geographically and historically fixed, it seems more productive to start from a mobile, mutant position: "here" is not necessarily Brazil, but the social situation of ideas, things and subjects, even in transit; "there" is also at first vague, temporal and spatially extensible, and can reach the prehistory – the societies existing in the South American territory before the European presence –, the porous, plural and active Africa, and go beyond, leading to a wide alterity. The contemporary position can help in the perception and thinking of the multipolarity of the world, not only now, but, above all, in the past.

Perhaps the art produced in Brazil in the last 70 years³⁸, which is well received by institutions and agents of foreign art, can activate other visions, be they retrospects or historiographical propositions. "From adversity we live": the sentence from Hélio Oiticica, so often quoted, can help in this context³⁹. For a historiography that must deal with deficiencies, the artistic achievements nourished by precariousness can serve as stimuli. One can cite, among others, the incorporation of the abject and alterity proposed by Lygia Clark in *Baba antropofágica*, 1973; the way Frans Krajcberg reverses human violence by potentiating calcined debris from nature; the ability to reinvent himself and the world of Arthur Bispo do Rosário by manipulating supposedly insignificant and wasteful artifacts.

Another formulation from Oiticica can also serve as an encouragement: it is, from the "underground" position of Brazil, "to rise as something specific still in formation," insisting on the "permanent and experimental universal critical position"⁴⁰. In order to think about the historiography of the art produced in the complex (post-)colonial experience, it may be necessary to search here and there for authors, works, excerpts and even fragments, not exclusively published in Brazil, that illuminate other paths. In the somewhat erratic set of history, criticism, chronicle and memory, among other genres, that this research can produce, perhaps

E., *Arte brasileira, hoje*, Rio de Janeiro, 1973, p.1-64.

38. At least since the exhibition *Brazil Builds: architecture new and old, 1852-1942*, held at the Museum of Modern Art of New York in 1943.

39. Hélio Oiticica, "Esquema geral da nova objetividade" [1967], in Luciano Figueiredo et al. E., *Hélio Oiticica: aspirio ao grande labirinto*, Rio de Janeiro, 1986, p.98.

40. Hélio Oiticica, "Brasil diarreira" [1970], in Ronaldo Brito et al., *O Moderno e o contemporâneo*, Rio de Janeiro, 1980, p.27.

35. On undergraduate courses in art history, cf. Carlos Terra E., *Arquivos da Escola de Belas Artes*, Rio de Janeiro, 2010, p.41-90.

36. On postgraduate courses in art history, cf. Almerinda Lopes, "Reflexões sobre a história da arte e o historiador de arte no Brasil", in *Vis*, Brasília, 2006, p.33-50.

37. Mário Pedrosa, "A Bienal de cá para lá", in Otília Arantes E., *Mário Pedrosa: política das artes*, São Paulo, (1970) 1995, p.217-284 [ed. orig. : Ferreira Gullar

there is something comparable to the work of Manuel Mousinho, the Portuguese critic based in Brazil invented by Ronaldo Brito in 1983 and on which he wrote: "scattered, almost lost, in their innumerable notes, let us find ideas, commentaries, and indications of the fine arts which deserve to be regarded as at least provocative, and, some of them, even ingenious"⁴¹.

The art history sketched by Porto-Alegre is nationalist, monarchical, clerical, antilusitan, francophile, linear and evolutionist, but, nevertheless, he came to think of potential openings. Although he understood the historical process of art in Brazil, in the transition from a condition of being a colony to being a nation, as a reflection of the shift in artistic centrality from Italy to France, in his considerations, Egypt is a reference, as is the Orient. It is thus possible to see how the idea of a more inclusive art history, although centered in Europe, germinated even on the margins of the Western system. This breadth was also delineated in the artistic categories and in the origins of the mentioned artists. In his text from 1835, he mentions achievements in the areas of architecture, sculpture, painting, pottery, numismatics, and jewelry⁴², thus constituting a local precedent for a historiographical practice which, consistent with the non-restriction of art to a type of object, broadens its field of action, giving value to various types of works and texts. In presenting artists who "honor the land in which they were born," Porto-Alegre includes a German, a son of Italians and a former Afro-descendant slave among the eight constituent artists of the Rio de Janeiro school of painting⁴³, thus delineating an unrestricted "Brazilianess" in Brazil.

In the writings of the architect and urbanist Lúcio Costa, there is a clear defense of nationalism and the understanding of modernism as a movement that reactivated the genuine tradition of "Brazilian art," it stalled the disarticulation previously introduced by the academic system and connected itself with art produced in the period when Brazil was a Portuguese colony. This reading culminates in the election of Aleijadinho and the architect Oscar Niemeyer, paired, as the ultimate expressions of the "national genius"⁴⁴. On the other hand, he cites Paris, English landscaping, the relationship between architecture and territory in China, roads and viaducts on the

outskirts of New York, and Diamantina⁴⁵, as the "ingredients" of the urban design of Brasília, the made up capital for the future of the nation⁴⁶. Is it possible to find in his work, as well as in other artistic and historiographical works, elements that help transform and reverse the simultaneously submissive universalism to nationalism and eurocentrism? Can a critical reflection on the process of cultural globalization contribute to the development of historiographical practices free of centers and borders, akin to nationalism and its opposite, while remaining socially situated?

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Claudia Mattos: Professor of Art History at the State University of Campinas and President of the Brazilian Committee of Art History. Her research focuses on Brazilian art from the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as on historiography and art theory.

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Roberto Conduru: Professor of Art History and Theory at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. He is the author of *Arte Afro-Brasileira* (2007) and *Coleção Gilberto Chateaubriand, 1920-1950* (2011).

41. Ronaldo Brito, "Manuel Mousinho, um polemista secreto" [1983], in Sueli de Lima E., *Ronaldo Brito: experiência crítica*, São Paulo, 2005, p.103.

42. Porto-Alegre, 1839, citation n. 39.

43. Porto-Alegre, 1841, citation n. 39.

44. Lúcio Costa, *Registro de uma Vivência*, São Paulo, 1995, p.199.

45. City created in 1713 in the Southeast region of Brazil.

46. Costa, citation n. 50, p.282.