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| **Brazilian Modernism** |
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| The opening of Brasília on April 21, 1960 marked the culmination of Brazil’s modernist and nationalist projects whose mission was to open and unify the country while promoting its language, culture and individuality. Brasília assured that the country’s public and political image would continue to be associated with the artistic and social ideals of international modernism as expressed by its most prominent architects, artists, authors, and intellectuals. The city’s architects, Oscar Niemeyer (1907-2012) and Lúcio Costa (1902-1998), worked closely with Le Corbusier (1887-1965) during his visits to Brazil from 1929-1936. The Russian émigré architect Gregori Warchavchik (1896-1972) designed the first ‘modernist house’ in São Paulo’s Vila Mariana; it was completed in 1928. The interplay and symbiosis of local realities with European sources and contacts was an essential component of modernism, and the international avant-garde provided an artistic form for innovative expression of national folklore, popular culture and arts. Brazilian artists often assimilated the discoveries of earlier explorers and researchers such as José Vieira Couto de Magalhães (1837-1898), Sílvio Romero (1851-1914), Marechal Cândido Rondon (1865-1958), Edgar Roquette-Pinto (1884-1954), and Luís da Câmara Cascudo (1898-1986), among others, who had assiduously collected folklore, myths, music, and legends throughout the Brazilian interior. The fusion of these materials with European forms produced unique hybrid expressions considered to be authentically Brazilian. Modernism took on the force of a movement in Brazil after the February 1922 Modern Art Week in São Paulo when, as Mario de Andrade (1893-1945)—the movement’s leader—suggested, a national creative consciousness was at the service of the country’s artists. Its major figures sought a prominent and recognizably Brazilian place in international modernism, and secondarily through local works of folkloric, linguistic, or regional expression to construct a modern national culture.    The international dimensions of modernism were essential for the development of an extraordinary array of young Brazilian artists and writers. Painter Anita Malfatti (1889-1964) studied in Berlin in 1912 and absorbed the colours of German Expressionism, moving in 1915 to New York’s Independent School of Art before her first controversial exhibit in São Paulo in December 1917. The artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), whose works draw increasing attention today, studied at the Academie Julien in 1920 and resided in Paris for much of the following decade, studying with Fernand Léger (1881-1955), André Lhote (1885-1962), and Albert Gleizes (1881-1953). The Galerie Percier exhibited her works in 1926. Her painting *A Negra* (1923) launched her most productive phase of geometrical and primitivist canvasses conveying folkloric and indigenous colours and concepts, leading to her most famous work, the *Abaporu* or “man who eats” (1928). The Italian-Brazilian sculptor Victor Brecheret (1894-1955) studied in Rome from 1913-1919. In 1920 received a commission for the massive *Monumento às Bandeiras* located in Parque Ibirapuera. Lithuanian artist Lasar Segall (1891-1957) first visited São Paulo in 1913, where he later became a prominent figure in plastic arts. Pernambucan painter Vicente do Rego Monteiro (1899-1970) was an influential artist who studied at the Académie Julien and exhibited his work at the 1913 Salon des Indépendants. Do Rego Monteiro continued his work with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes in Brazil; he created drawings based on prima ballerina Anna Pavlova (1881-1931) and the 1921 ballet Crenças e Talismãs dos Índios do Amazonas produced in Rio de Janeiro. After two solo exhibitions in Paris in 1925 and 1928, he participated in the first exhibition of Latin American artists organized by Torres-García (1930). Along with Géo-Charles (Charles Guyot, 1892-1963), he took a major international art exhibition to Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The painter, poet, essayist, and art critic Sérgio Milliet (1898-1966) was educated in Switzerland from 1912-1920, returning to São Paulo where he participated in the Modern Art Week. He remained in Paris from 1923-25 translating Brazilian poetry for the journal *Lumière* and with fellow painter Emílio Di Cavalcanti (1897-1976). During this time he became acquainted with artists and intellectuals including Picasso, Satie, Léger, Matisse, and Cocteau. Painter, ecologist, and landscape designer Roberto Burle-Marx (1909-1994) discovered Brazil’s native flora at the Botanical Gardens in Berlin while studying painting in the 1920s. Returning to Brazil in 1930 he began collecting plants and completed his first garden design in 1933, later working with architects Niemeyer and Costa. His large botanical estate at Guaratiba became a national monument in 1985.  In the area of literature, Ronald de Carvalho (1893-1935) participated in the journal ORPHEU in Lisbon in 1915, which debuted Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935) as well as other major figures of Portuguese futurism. Eight poems from Ronald’s *Epigramas irônicos e sentimentais* (1922) served as lyrics for a composition for voice and orchestra (1921-23) by Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), who would achieve a distinguished international reputation. Writer Oswald de Andrade (1890-1954) traveled to Europe in 1912, a formative experience that marked his fiction as well as his biography. Visitors to de Andrade’s São Paulo *garçonnière* produced the rich and provocative album *O Perfeito Cozinheiro das Almas Deste Mundo* (1918-19), which is considered to be one of the most unusual documents of the period. Oswald returned to Europe with Tarsila in 1923 and the couple—coined “Tarsilwald” by Mário de Andrade—entertained principal figures of the European avant-garde. The Swiss-French poet Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961) joined them in Brazil in March 1924 for an excursion to explore the baroque heritage of Minas Gerais, and in 1925 Oswald dedicated his *Pau Brasil* poems to Cendrars. The two manifestos by Oswald, *Manifesto da Poesia Pau Brasil* (1924) and *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928) depict a possible intellectual program for the movement in a highly synthetic form.  In music, French composer Darius Milhaud (1892-1974), who was in Rio de Janeiro from 1917-1919, composed the twelve dances of *Saudades do Brasil* (1920) and *Le boeuf sur le toit*, popularizing melodies by Brazilian popular composers. He brought the brilliant young Carioca pianist Maria Virginia (Nininha) Velloso Guerra (1895-1921) to Paris with her husband, composer Oswaldo Guerra (1892-1980). The popular music ensemble “Oito Batutas” led by the inimitable Pixinguinha (1897-1973) performed in Paris for six consecutive months in 1922 at the Shéhérazade Club; the group was financed by patron Arnaldo Guinle (1884-1963). Pianist Arthur Rubenstein was in Rio de Janeiro in 1918, where he met Milhaud and Villa-Lobos. By 1921 Villa-Lobos had begun his “Rudepoema,” a complex rhapsody for piano dedicated to Rubenstein, and one of the most challenging of his compositions. “Rudepoema” was an important early expression of the theme of Brazilian “savagery.” Rubenstein premiered Villa’s compositions in Paris in 1924 and 1927. After his 1927 concert in Paris, Villa-Lobos was called the “cannibal composer” because of his use of rhythm and the way that he incorporated Brazilian percussion instruments into the orchestra. After 1945 he gained international recognition as a major figure in world music.  As an early intellectual leader of Brazilian modernism, Mário de Andrade read poems from his *Pauliceia Desvairada* (1922) at the Modern Art Week. He was a knowledgeable figure in fields ranging from musicology, folklore, poetry, and dance to history and criticism, and his extensive correspondence with other payers in Brazilian modernism amounts to a personal memoir of the modernist program. Although he rarely left São Paulo, Mário collected a substantial library and closely followed developments in European literature and arts. His virtuoso Pan-American folk fantasy, *Macunaíma* (1928), relied on a 1911-13 ethnography from the Orinoco by German anthropologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1872-1924), as well as popular myths and adages.  The history of Brazilian modernism began only some three decades after the Modern Art Week with art historian Mário Pedrosa’s (1900-1981) appraisal, “Sobre a Semana de Arte Moderna” (*Dimensões da Arte*. Rio de Janeiro: MEC, 1964, pp. 127-142) in 1952, although personal accounts by authors Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade had appeared in the 1940s. In 1958 Mário da Silva Brito (1916 --) published the first and only volume charting the history of the movement. This volume opened the way for innumerable studies of the movement’s main figures, journals, and themes. The institutionalization of modernism in contemporary Brazilian history was revealed when the theme of ‘anthropology’ was adopted for the twenty-fourth Biennial Art exposition in São Paulo (1998), as well as the international exposition in Valencia, Spain: “Brazil 1920-1950: de la antropofagia a Brasília” (2000-01). |
| Further reading:  Batista, Marta Rossetti, Telê Porto Ancona Lopez & Yone Soares de Lima. (1972) *Brasil – 1o Tempo Modernista: 1917-1929. Documentação*. São Paulo: Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros.  Jackson, Kenneth David. (1998) *A Vanguarda Literária no Brasil: Bibliografia e Antologia Crítica*, Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, Madrid: Iberoamericana.  Placer, Xavier. (1972) *Modernismo Brasileiro: Bibliografia (1918-1971)*. Rio de Janeiro: Divisão de Publicações e Divulgação. Biblioteca Nacional.  Schwartz, Jorge (org.). (2002) *Da Antropofagia a Brasília: Brasil 1920-1950*, São Paulo: FAAP, Cosac & Naify.  Schwartz, Jorge. (1995) *Vanguardas Latino-Americanas*. São Paulo: Iluminuras; Edusp.  *XXIV Bienal de São Paulo: núcleo histórico: antropofagia e histórias de canibalismos*. V. 1. (1998) Paulo Herkenhoff, Adriano Pedrosa curadores. São Paulo: A Fundação. |