

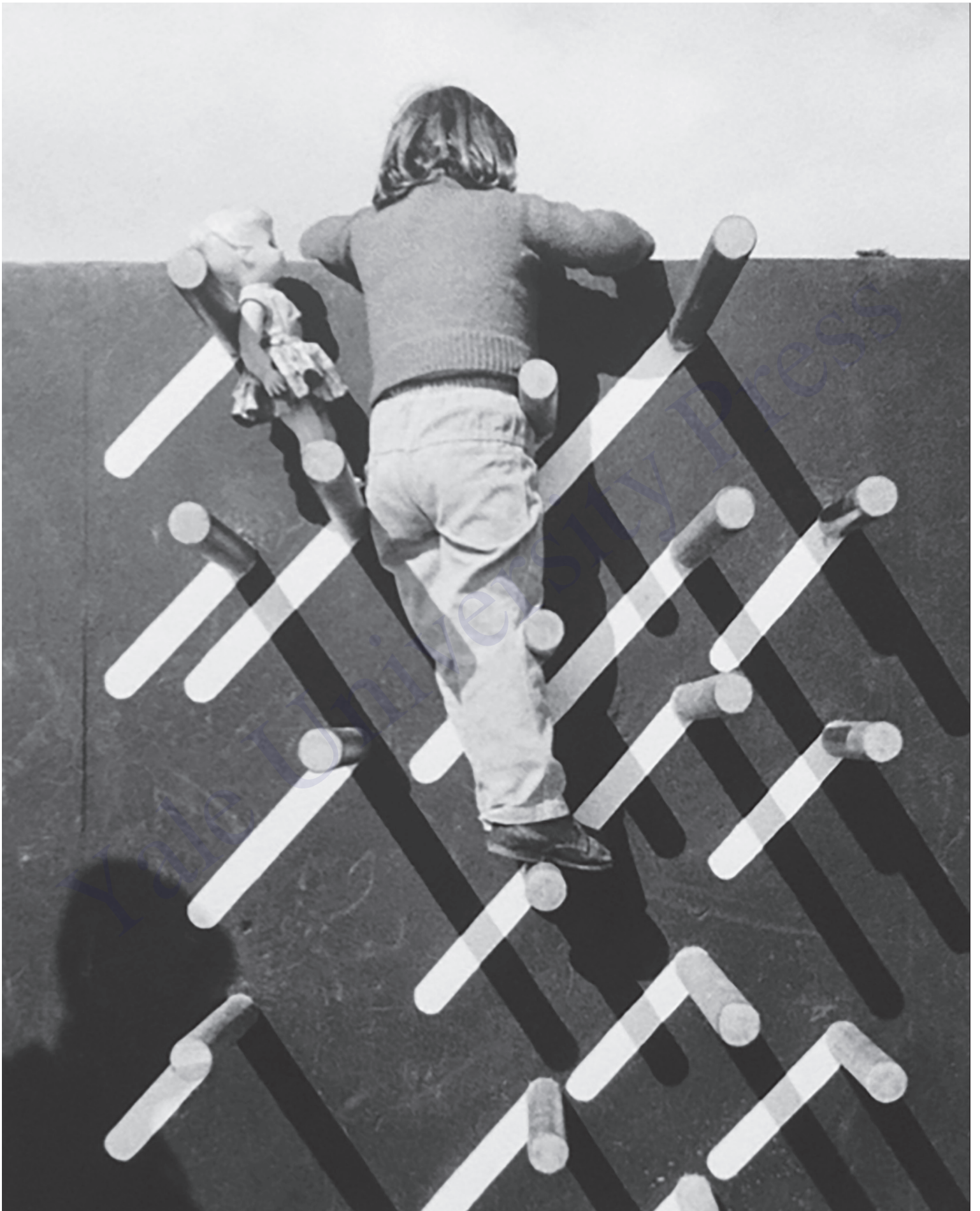
# Spatial Orders, Social Forms

Art and the City in Modern Brazil

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## 4 Scattered Wall

Waldemar Cordeiro and Lygia Clark

If Flávio de Carvalho's work around 1930 dramatized social conflict in Brazil, and the plazas of Vargas-era Rio de Janeiro sought to harness the power of the people (o povo) by recalling colonial-era spatiality, Brazil's new museum spaces of the late 1940s and 1950s seemed to neutralize historical inequalities. But in these supposedly neutral museum salas inhabited by a modern and deracinated Brazilian citizenship, how could artists place their work? In which way would artworks join architectural settings to create spaces for a modern Brazilian populace? Over the 1950s and early 1960s, shortly after the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM/SP) were established, and before construction of the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (MAM/Rio) was even complete, artists began challenging the conventions of wall and plinth, and implicating viewers' bodies as a way to break with conventional modes of art-viewing. This story has often been told, in Brazil, as a transition from a mode of geometric abstraction in painting, sculpture, and design, called Concretism, to a particularly Brazilian—meaning, embodied—set of art objects dubbed Neoconcretism. This is a familiar story, as it roughly accords with North Atlantic accounts of the 1950s through early 1960s that pivot around minimalism. The shift from modernism to contemporary art is, in both cases, written as a transition from discrete artworks with an internal formal drama to spatially dispersed works that demand the bodily presence of a beholder.

But in Brazil, this was also a period of dramatic modernization, with the new capital of Brasília the quintessential instantiation: a “visible emblem” of “modernization as the harbinger of a renewed national unity” during the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps it was a period perched at the edge of dramatic failure, as evinced in the words of philosopher Vilém Flusser—an immigrant to Brazil from Prague, by way of London.

The socio-economic class structure of the 1950s went along these lines: the majority of the people lived a half-nomadic existence; they followed the harvests of the

monocultures into suffering, hunger, and disease; and the challenge was to create a homeland from these masses devoid of culture. Above this stratum, there was the proletariat living in the cities and made up mostly of immigrants. And, beyond this, there was the bourgeoisie made up partly of immigrants and partly of the offspring of Portuguese conquistadores. The weaving together of a homeland was the bourgeoisie's task. And the question was: To whom should we turn? . . . To mobilize [the workers in] the cities, one had to politicize them. And, to confront the masses, one had to depoliticize them and create economic options. In short, one had to fight either for freedom or against hunger and disease.<sup>2</sup>

This is a far cry from the nostalgic 1930s dream of Brazilian social scientist and essayist Gilberto Freyre for a harmonious agrarian past of quasi-feudal, patriarchal hierarchy. In place of Freyre's rural oligarch who maintains social order, Flusser set the bourgeoisie (itself a nebulous category in 1950s Brazil) to the task of "weaving together" a nation.

The idea that a new national ethos was emergent, and that this necessitated a newly modern and deracinated aesthetics, was broadly shared across intellectual circles. Artists developed ostensibly universal and placeless geometries of Concretism in the 1950s precisely in reaction against the dominance of pseudo-populist muralism by Cândido Portinari and other artists who had enjoyed patronage under President Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo (1937–45).<sup>3</sup> If this construction of a new audience were to function, the body would necessarily drop out, in favor of an art and architecture heedless of race, in favor of a generic, perhaps classless array of city dwellers and gallerygoers. Yet as Lina Bo Bardi's 1950s writings highlighted, the class status of this new modernist audience remained in question. In architecture, Bo Bardi praised the modernist, open-plan, "everywhere glass and low ceiling[ed]" houses of João Batista Vilanova Artigas for posing a new morality, rejecting bourgeois intimacy in favor of a radical openness to sociality, "as far as possible from the fortress-home, the closed home."<sup>4</sup> Yet one might oppose Artigas's glass-walled houses to the galactic geometries of Brasília, which established an aesthetic of newness and progress through an "idiosyncratic neobaroque modernism" of dramatic curves, but which assumed a homogeneously middle-class (or even upper-middle-class) populace, and thus eliminated spaces of spontaneous sociability.<sup>5</sup> Art and architecture would be geometric; their formal language, universal. But how, in a Brazilian city, could the spaces of aesthetic experience and social interaction ever be neutral?

For Brazilian artists Waldemar Cordeiro and Lygia Clark, this was a question that found form in a longer history of art's relationship to architecture, in the possibility for art to play a key role in architecture's staging of modern life, and in artistic interventions that reoriented the body's relationship to its surroundings.<sup>6</sup> And though these two artists are often taken as emblematic of the Concrete/Neoconcrete divide, they shared an emphasis on the plane as a primary formal problem. Working across mediums, shifting from worktable to gallery wall to city ground, Cordeiro and Clark implicated the plane's



multiple roles as potential picture surface, one wall of a shelter, and the ground of collective spaces.<sup>7</sup> Cordeiro's works created an abstract ground against which modern embodiment might figure, culminating in 1960s designs for landscapes and parks as inscriptions upon the land, along with a spatially dispersed mediascape, as the backdrop for a modern sociability. Clark, however, evinced a concern more in keeping with contemporary art, to dissolve the boundary between body and artwork, to return to the body as the artwork's central concern. If Cordeiro's artworks were, in essence, ground for the figures of a modern Brazilian populace, Clark's were figures without ground, artworks that staged bodies (*corpos*) before the ground of a Brazilian modernity still finding form.

#### WALDEMAR CORDEIRO: THE SPACE OF THE PAGE, SPACE TO PLAY

Sometime between late 1948 and early 1950, a period spent alternately in Rome and São Paulo, artist Waldemar Cordeiro created a small abstraction on paper in ink, wash, and graphite (fig. 73). Cordeiro was an immigrant, born and raised in Rome but with familial ties to Brazil. As part of Brazil's 1950s Concretist movement, Cordeiro would become known for a hard-edged mode of geometric abstraction in saturated hues, but this early work displays a more delicate, graphic touch. Freehand, in black ink, the artist traced two sets of wavering concentric circles, tacked to the ends of a staff of five parallel horizontal lines. Two smaller circles divided into black and white hemispheres evoke moon phases, reinforcing the sense that the entire page constitutes a sort of cosmic diagram, a set of simplified planetary orbits. However, ghostly pencil lines doubling the circles and central staff belie the scientism of the work, and show instead how the artist worked through differing compositions to create the most convincing sense of rotation and spatial uncertainty.

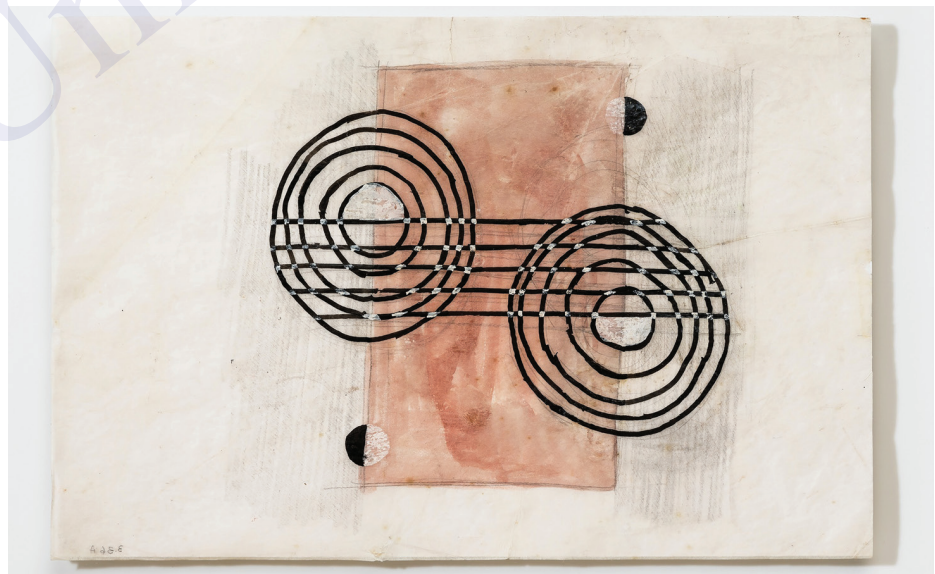


Fig. 73. Waldemar Cordeiro, *Untitled*, 1948–49. Watercolor, graphite, and india ink on paper, 8½ × 12¾ in. (21.5 × 32.5 cm). Private collection.

Weighted by the lower-right-hand circles and small, white hemisphere, the central figure seems to rotate clockwise around the picture plane, and also to swing outward and inward along a second axis perpendicular to the paper. The circles and staff float atop a background of rust-colored wash, its rectangular shape delineated by flickering edges where the artist drew and redrew lines in pencil. Still, the concentric circles' outer hemispheres remain tethered directly to the ground of the paper, amid vertical pencil strokes that never quite resolve into volume or perspective. The pictorial space remains flat, planar.

As Cordeiro wrote around the time he created this work, "It is necessary to understand the canvas solely as a plane, a defined space, where composition is a test of dependencies," what one might understand in terms of Walter Benjamin's *Spielraum*.<sup>8</sup> In discussing the difference between painting and the graphic arts, Benjamin described the graphic arts in terms of lines applied to a planar surface, where "two lines can establish their relationship to each other only relative to the ground. . . . The graphic line confers an identity on its ground"—here, paper, while, in the later case of Brazilian Concretism, industrial materials such as plywood, particleboard, or eucatex.<sup>9</sup> The ambiguous perspective and restless rotations of this work are formal procedures that figured prominently in Cordeiro's works of the 1950s, when he was Brazil's leading polemicist of Concrete art (fig. 74).

In line with the interwar formulation by international artists around *Art Concret* in Paris, that "painting technique must be mechanic, i.e., exact, anti-impressionistic," Cordeiro's Concretist oeuvre is often characterized by the repression of the artist's hand.<sup>10</sup> Across the 1950s, Cordeiro gradually reduced visible facture in favor of mechanical tools: the ruler, the compass.<sup>11</sup> In these works, Cordeiro continued playing with rotation, but used a compass to neatly delineate staggered and overlapping curves seesawing around one or more pivot points near the center of the picture plane (fig. 75). With titles such as *Idéia Visível*, these works ostensibly made immaterial mathematical concepts visible. Cordeiro eliminated tentative pencil marks, concealing his process in favor of a finished product. The notion of dependencies among different geometric figures was displaced by artistic control over planning and outcomes. The picture plane shifted from a space for play to a finished product.

Or, the space for play was now architectonic, with painted patterns applied to surfaces across a city.<sup>12</sup> As Cordeiro wrote of his fellow Concretist Luis Sacilotto, "The architecture that Luis Sacilotto knew was not the same one discussed by intellectuals. . . . He was a simple draftsman. . . . The elegant lines of modern construction were only realized on tracing paper. Architecture was two-dimensional."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, in paintings that looked like logos, and in the actual design of logos for various businesses, Cordeiro suggested that the artist's task would be precisely to formulate a new, dispersed visual syntax as a scrim across urban space (fig. 76). Yet though Cordeiro's practice has been assimilated to a proto-media theory model, he started from an older model of artistic synthesis, rooted in the transition from fascist monumentality to the humanism of postwar artistic synthesis.

Fig. 74. Waldemar Cordeiro,  
*Untitled*, 1952. Enamel on card-  
board, 9¼ × 12 in. (23.5 × 30.5 cm).  
Private collection.

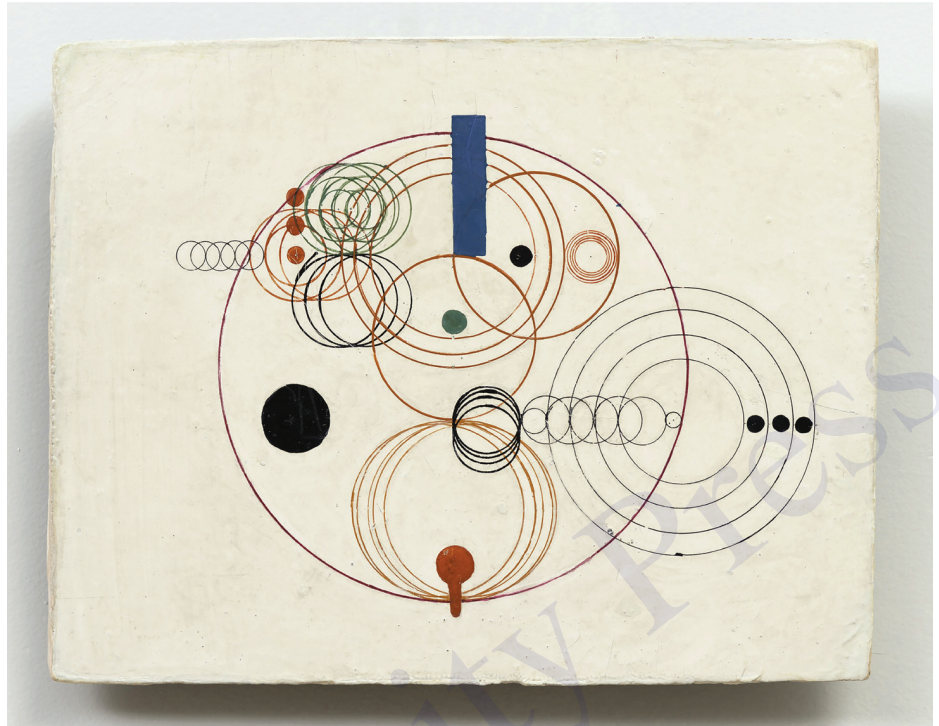


Fig. 75. Waldemar Cordeiro, *Idéia  
Visível*, 1952. Tempera on wood,  
24 × 24 in. (61 × 61 cm). Private  
collection.



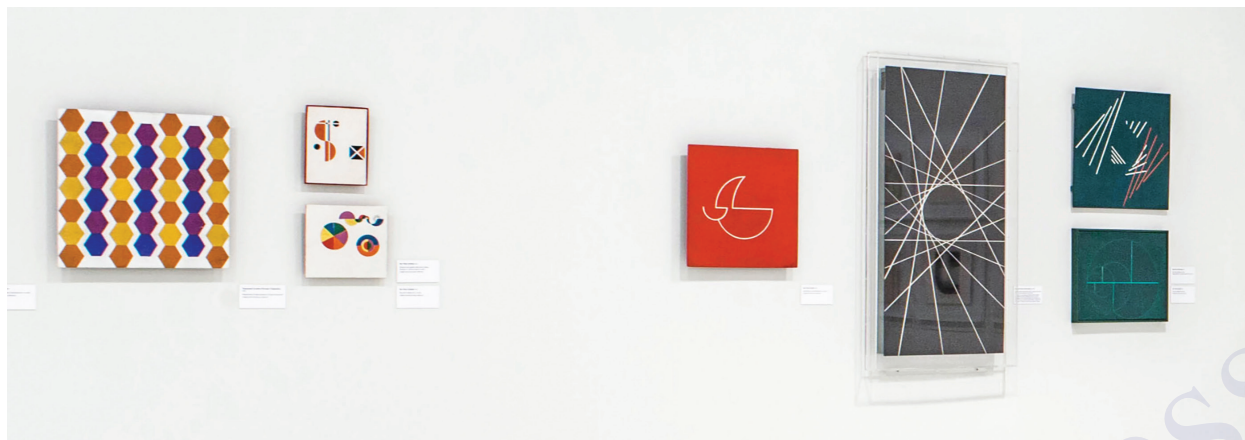


Fig. 76. Waldemar Cordeiro:  
*Fantasia Exata*, exhibition at Itaú  
 Cultural, São Paulo, 2013.

### WALDEMAR CORDEIRO: THE SPACES OF ARTISTIC INTEGRATION

Writing in the Brazilian newspaper *Folha da Manhã* in 1950, shortly after he settled permanently in Brazil, Cordeiro proposed “salvaging the collective aims of art” with a rousing call: “We must return to the mural!”<sup>14</sup> But Cordeiro’s text presented an idiosyncratic theoretical lineage for a postwar return to the mural, and indeed did not even seem to be describing muralism at all. In lieu of heroic interwar efforts by socialist or social realist artists in Mexico, the USSR, or the United States, Cordeiro traced a history of “optical tactility” that led from the “heterogenous appliqué of masks by primitive [sic] peoples” to the *papiers-collés* of futurists and cubists and the phantom-object (*objeto-fantasma*) of the surrealists.<sup>15</sup> Cordeiro’s notion of a collective art was not, then, a return to large-scale, figurative wall painting. Those who responded to the “crisis of figuration” through the enlargement of “paintings impregnated with expressionist psychologism, with its residues of naturalist allegory,” were merely “babbling the same phrases in a foreign language,” merely transposing easel painting to the wall.<sup>16</sup>

Instead, following Italian artist Enrico Prampolini, Cordeiro advocated polymateriality, “an intermediate state between sculpture and painting” that would be “an *organic continuity* of architecture itself.”<sup>17</sup> The stakes of introducing collage and phantom objects thus become clearer, since cubism and surrealism provided formal procedures to unite disparate materials, what Cordeiro explained as “the trans-substantiation of matter by different technical systematizations which contradicted the order of naturalistic logic.”<sup>18</sup> Only now, Cordeiro explained, the disparate materials of the artist were not calling cards and newspaper scraps, but so-called existing plastic conditions: “the dimensions of the surface to be painted, the relation of the surface to others that compose the environment, and the chromatic characteristics of the setting (which owe much to illumination).”<sup>19</sup> And the formal procedure uniting these plastic conditions would be what Cordeiro dubbed the “organic continuity” of architecture itself.

While Cordeiro’s polymaterial “organic continuity” can be seen as a defense of Brazilian Concretism’s medium promiscuity—its dispersal of geometric patterns across painting, sculpture, and design seemingly without concern for medium—Cordeiro’s claim



was also related to calls for integrations of art and architecture. As a young art student in mid-1940s Rome, Cordeiro would likely have encountered notions of polymateriality that had originated with Italian futurist artists during the early 1920s. In 1921 Benedetta Cappa Marinetti proposed the concept of polymateriality (*plastico polimaterico*) as a characterization of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "tactile boards" (*tavole tattili*).<sup>20</sup> The concept of the *tavolo*, meaning board or table, invoked the horizontal and tactile experience of working at an architect's drafting table, rather than the vertical and optical easel of a painted tableau, and recast the activity of the plastic artist in terms of the technical work of the architect.<sup>21</sup> This opposition of polymateriality to easel painting was shared by Enrico Prampolini, a second-generation futurist who was still active in 1940s Rome, and with whom Cordeiro was acquainted.<sup>22</sup> In a 1934 essay, "Al di là della Pittura, verso i Polimaterici" (Beyond painting, toward polymateriality), Prampolini had described the "agony of the canvas" as the "last Romantic experiment," and decried the way that "painting, losing its relationship with the architecture—that is, with life—was decomposed, shattered, fatally proclaiming the triumph of the fragment, the advent of the easel painting, of individualistic expression."<sup>23</sup> Writing in 1950, and citing Prampolini by name, Cordeiro would similarly insist that "the younger generation condemns in easel painting (and here they refer to an individual painting) the triumph of the fragment, of a literary motive, in favor of the panel's function in its setting, not considered as extraneous in relation to architecture, nor as a servile aspect of its environment."<sup>24</sup> Like Marinetti and Prampolini, Cordeiro saw polymateriality as a way to unite painting and architecture, to claim a role for painting in the delineation of collective spaces.

Where Cordeiro differed from his two elders, however, was with regard to the social conditions for artistic integration. These 1930s texts reflected a fascist-era desire for muralism and polymateriality to serve what Prampolini called "the great eras of construction which are those of the great national questions where the artist, if illuminated by the new faith, can make of man a God."<sup>25</sup> But the bombast of fascist monumentality would necessarily be transformed in postwar Brazil, where collective aesthetic experience was less the purview of an authoritarian state than a potentially democratizing aspect of Brazil's nascent consumer society.

Moreover, rather than the figurative works produced by many interwar Italian muralists, Cordeiro sought to defend a new collective and *abstract* art. In his account of the "organic continuity" of architecture with sculpture and painting, Cordeiro thus drew upon Le Corbusier's ideas of artistic integration as a way to justify abstraction.<sup>26</sup> Citing a talk that Le Corbusier delivered at the fascist-era Volta Conference in Rome, Cordeiro's 1950 article argued that "rational[ist] architecture must exclude the range of figurative arts."<sup>27</sup> Instead, Cordeiro promoted the "correlation between functional architecture and polymateriality—which brings with itself the characteristics of the new *abstract* art."<sup>28</sup> Cordeiro was also familiar with Le Corbusier's post-World War II *synthèse des arts*, as the Swiss architect shifted emphasis from the organizational expertise of the engineer toward a



humanistic (anti-fascist) renewal of collectivity. Following Le Corbusier's 1948 article "Vers l'unité: Synthèse des arts majeurs: Architecture, peinture, sculpture," Cordeiro asserted in another 1950 article that functionalist architects had borrowed key formal procedures from cubism, such as "free and asymmetrical equilibrium, interpenetrating planes."<sup>29</sup> And this formal congruence went beyond cubism. In an environment of mutual influence among modern architecture and the plastic arts, Cordeiro explained, Le Corbusier was indebted to Piet Mondrian, László Moholy-Nagy to Walter Gropius, and Oscar Niemeyer to Hans Arp.<sup>30</sup>

In his calls to an international avant-garde, Cordeiro was representative of a number of young Brazilian artists, including a substantial number of immigrants from Europe, who became deeply engaged with the legacies of interwar geometric abstraction beginning in the late 1940s.<sup>31</sup> These artists were particularly attentive to Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich, and the integration of art and industrial design promoted by Swiss Concrete artist Max Bill. In his own Concretist work, Cordeiro sought inspiration from São Paulo itself, taking the city as a manifestation of universal modern geometries. As Cordeiro put it in 1952, "Fascination with the machine led to the demise of naturalistic beauty. The artists forged a new language that can express the individual, the collective, the national and the universal all at the same time."<sup>32</sup> Again echoing Le Corbusier, Cordeiro explained that artists seeking to create "an easily read art" would find "countless examples" around the city, in "the car, the building, clothing, the airplane, the shoe."<sup>33</sup> While Cordeiro's oeuvre has been interpreted almost entirely in light of his affiliation with Concretism, his own efforts to collapse artistic production with the designed world of modernity saw Cordeiro expand the field for geometric abstraction. From works on paper, canvas, and fiberboard, Cordeiro expanded into landscape architecture and the design of children's playgrounds and public sites, crafting stages for new collectivities. Ultimately, however, this dispersed cityscape would vie with a dispersed mediascape, as Cordeiro's 1960s works waffled between plans for resolutely material spaces—such as residential gardens or the Parque Mutirama in the interior Brazilian city of Goiânia—and critical accounts of mass media.

#### **LYGIA CLARK: THE SPACE OF THE PAGE, SPACE TO PLAY**

Like Cordeiro, fellow Concretist Lygia Clark expanded geometric abstraction beyond singular art objects. Though Cordeiro would become best known as a polemicist of "orthodox" Concretism, with Clark exemplary of Neoconcretism, the two shared a commitment to exploring the integration of art and architecture as outgrowths of cubist painting.<sup>34</sup> Clark's 1950–52 study with Fernand Léger in Paris is, of course, a pivotal period in her career. But Clark's early study with Brazilian artist Roberto Burle Marx, from 1947 through 1950, was also foundational for her understanding of cubist spatial relations and large-scale artistic integration. During the period of Clark's study, Burle Marx was best known for his late 1930s design of the roof garden on the terrace of Rio de Janeiro's

Ministry of Education and Public Health (MES) building. For the MES terrace garden, Burle Marx plotted biomorphic curves of gravel and tropical vegetation to create an abstract composition for viewers on floors high above, as well as a garden space through which one could move horizontally from the building mezzanine. While the garden was, in theory, a space to be traversed, Burle Marx's design seems less concerned with relations between the ground plan and bodies in motion than with how the gardens looked to a distant, even bird's-eye, view. In fact, while Clark may have visited the terrace garden, she was likely more familiar with Burle Marx's drawings for it than with the garden itself. Like most of his preparatory drawings, his sketches for the MES garden were two-dimensional overhead diagrams, mapping out plantings in nonnaturalistic, interlocking blobs of bright color that resemble reliefs by Hans Arp.<sup>35</sup>

Clark did not, however, arrive at abstraction and artistic integration by way of the Arp-like biomorphic abstraction that characterized Burle Marx's garden compositions, but through his cubist engagement with urban space in works on paper. In Burle Marx's 1946 drawings for the general interest magazine *Rio* (fig. 77), uptilted veranda floors blended into a cityscape described by *cronista* (essayist) Henrique Pongetti:

Rio of the chorus of mestizo angels with their hair smoothed on the straightening iron, the noise of scavengers and drilling machines, Rio that can be seen from the top of Glória and Arcos da Lapa, Rio of fractured tiled façades . . . of houses with the date of construction on Rococo façades, of pots with superstitious plants such as rue and palm of São Jorge; Macumbeiro [syncretic] Rio of offerings to São Damiano and São Cosme, black, mulatto and white Christian and spiritist, the line of Umbanda [syncretic religion] and that of Jesus. Rio of the iron bars through which gossip slips. . . . Oh moribund Rio of my adolescence, goodbye, goodbye!<sup>36</sup>

Burle Marx's drawings compressed the lost, enchanted Rio de Janeiro of Pongetti's childhood into simultaneous views of the city's religious, racial, and architectural heterogeneity, flattening the city into a vertical scrim or stage set.

Clark's 1948 ink drawing *Escada* echoed Burle Marx's strong, dark strokes and his terrace views of Rio de Janeiro, but she reduced the *cronista*'s all-encompassing vision of the cityscape to the singular view of a lone artist ambiguously situated in an urban fragment (fig. 78). Rather than Burle Marx's city as screen, Clark's offered a vertiginous view of an urban staircase, her imprecise perspective implying that the walls on either side might be simultaneously bowing outward and collapsing onto the stairs below. The artist depicted her own arm (and perhaps the top of her head?) rakishly at the edge of the page, but the disparities of scale refuse full immersion of the body in the depicted world. More to the point, where Burle Marx painted a quasi-cubist play of flattened volumes, Clark drew repeated instances of interstitial spaces: open windows, a gate swinging agape, the half-observed space of the smaller residential staircase at left, the suggestion of a balcony on the left side of the building across from the artist. The volumes and voids do not interlock

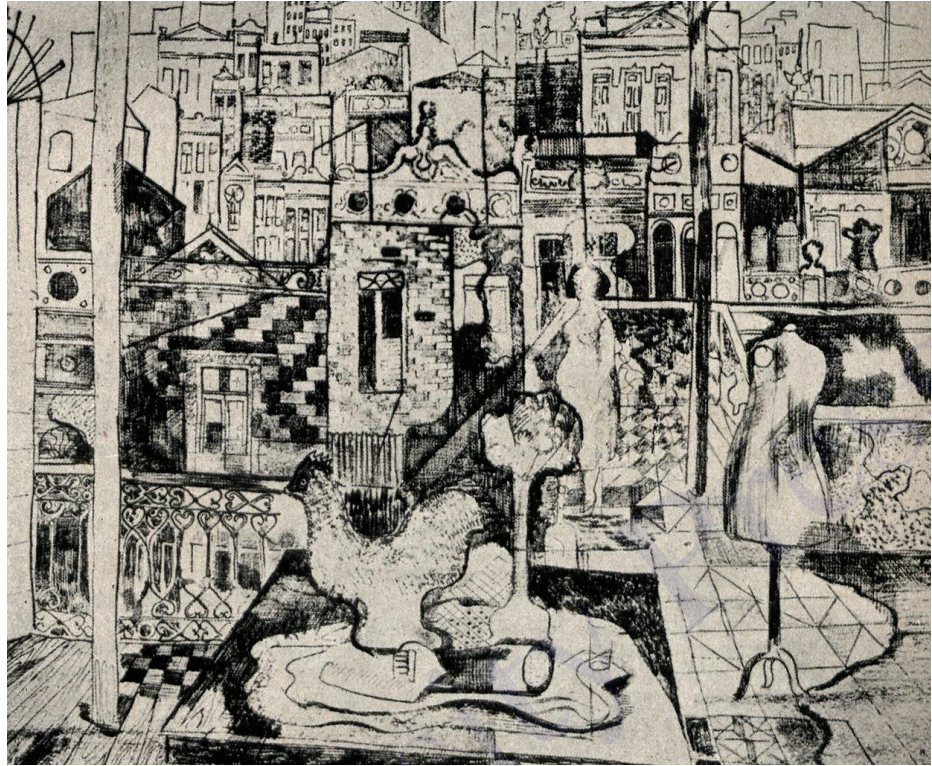


Fig. 77. Roberto Burle Marx,  
*Untitled*, 1946. Reproduced from  
*Rio* (December 1946).



Fig. 78. Lygia Clark, *Escada*, 1948.  
Ink on paper, 13 × 19 in. (33 × 48  
cm). Photograph by Marcelo  
Ribeiro Alvares Corrêa. "The World  
of Lygia Clark" Cultural  
Association, Rio de Janeiro.



to create a cubist picture plane but present the artist's body ambiguously embedded within an irresolvable three-dimensionality. Clark would soon leave behind depictions of the human figure for depictions of architectural features and, later, geometric abstraction. This early work shows her grappling with the issues that would continue to haunt her later work: the challenges of inscribing the body within an existing space or composing space around the body.

#### LYGIA CLARK: THE SPACES OF ARTISTIC INTEGRATION

Clark's only work that integrated art and architecture in the conventional sense came around 1950, just as she concluded her drawing and painting classes with Roberto Burle Marx and left Brazil to study art in Paris. During the period that Clark studied with him, from 1947 through 1950, Burle Marx was primarily occupied with designing private residential gardens. However, there was one project that seems to have inspired Clark to create what is likely her only mural. The Pedregulho social housing complex, a project of urbanist Carmen Portinho and architect Affonso Eduardo Reidy, included integrated artworks by painter Cândido Portinari and Burle Marx himself. Constructed in Rio de Janeiro between 1947 and 1958, Pedregulho was a large-scale housing project that included childcare facilities, schools, medical facilities, a swimming pool and gym, practically an entire new neighborhood emerging tout court on what was then considered the northern periphery of the city. The Federal District Department of Social Housing intended Pedregulho as social housing for federal employees, since Rio de Janeiro was then still the national capital; rents were deducted from workers' paychecks, and the government required tenants to submit to health evaluations and agree to intermittent checks of their private spaces to ensure proper cleanliness and maintenance.<sup>37</sup>

As a "clear response to the Athens Charter," the Pedregulho complex offered a model of a "mini welfare state" that was praised by jurors for the architecture section of the First São Paulo Bienal in 1951, who described it as "an example to Brazil and an audacious housing solution. . . . [Yet] the jury regrets that the work is isolated, appearing among neighborhoods formed anarchically."<sup>38</sup> To this meticulously planned community, Burle Marx contributed landscape design and a mosaic mural for the grammar school (fig. 79).<sup>39</sup> Burle Marx's glass mosaic mural embedded abstracted, linear figures within interpenetrating blocks of bright color and pattern across a long horizontal plane. He took up the lineaments of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) but replaced all the righteous anger with the conviviality of small scenes that suggested children playing. Burle Marx's landscaping and mural panel were thus part of a new mode of spatial ordering that sought to regulate the behavior of Brazil's non-elites—a model of harmonious conviviality in the figurative mural, and a zone of controlled nature in the landscape design.

In 1951, under conditions that remain obscure, Lygia Clark completed her own glass-tile mural in bright hues, depicting two seated figures, at least one seemingly

Fig. 79. Roberto Burle Marx,  
Pedregulho mosaic mural, Rio de  
Janeiro, 1951. Reproduced from  
“Breve giro pelo mundo dos jar-  
dins e murais de Roberto Burle  
Marx,” *Manchete* 66 (July 1953).



Fig. 80. Lygia Clark, *Mural-Mosaic*,  
Mira-Mar building, 3992 Avenida  
Atlântica, Copacabana, Rio de  
Janeiro, 1951. Map data © 2019  
Google. “The World of Lygia Clark”  
Cultural Association, Rio de  
Janeiro.



female, suspended vertically in a field of color (fig. 80).<sup>40</sup> Clark’s glass mural still exists today, tucked under a cantilevered volume just outside the entryway of a private residential building on the corner of Copacabana’s Avenida Atlântica. It is not an explicitly civic venue like the Pedregulho social housing complex, and its physical setting is not eye-catching. Where the working-class Pedregulho was located far from the city center, and likely only its inhabitants saw Burle Marx’s mosaic mural, Clark’s mural is located along heavily trafficked (by both car and foot) routes adjacent to Copacabana beach. Stylistically, while Clark shared with Burle Marx a base of colorful, interlocking biomorphic forms, her figures were not delineated with black lines, but formed from colorful curves that merged figure and ground, closer to the model of Matisse’s *Le bonheur de vivre* (1906). Following the lead of her teacher, one can see Clark working through the



question of what a “public” artwork might be, and how artistic integration could appear in the modern city—one where spatial injustices meant that an avowedly public work was more inaccessible than an artwork integrated into centrally located, private architecture.<sup>41</sup> Stylistically, Clark sought a tighter embrace between image and wall, merging the colorful shapes and the glass tile ground in ways that presage her continued efforts to integrate art and architecture in formal terms.

In 1950–52 Paris, Clark came upon two additional models for her investigations of artistic integration: the artist Fernand Léger, with whom she studied, and the architect Le Corbusier. For both Le Corbusier and Léger, the post–World War II humanization of functionalist architecture would be based upon collaboration among artists and architects, and one formal tool for this humanization would be polychromy. While Clark may have come across older projects in magazines, her time in Paris coincided with the construction of Le Corbusier’s large housing block *Unité d’Habitation* in Marseilles, France, where the gray and white expanse of concrete facades and reflective windows was broken by bright colors on the side walls of the balconies.<sup>42</sup> Léger, for his part, had recently engaged with polychromy while collaborating on a project patronized by Brazilian newspaper magnate Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand, the founder of the MASP.<sup>43</sup> In 1952 Assis Chateaubriand commissioned Léger and architect André Bruyère to design a “village” near the city of Biot, France, to house Brazilian artists living in France (fig. 81).<sup>44</sup> Though the project never came to fruition, Léger produced a number of drawings for the “Village Polychrome” (1952–53), some likely created while Clark was still studying with him in Paris in 1952. Given the Brazilian connection with Assis Chateaubriand, it is likely that Clark would have particularly noted this project. Counterintuitively, Clark’s own paintings from this

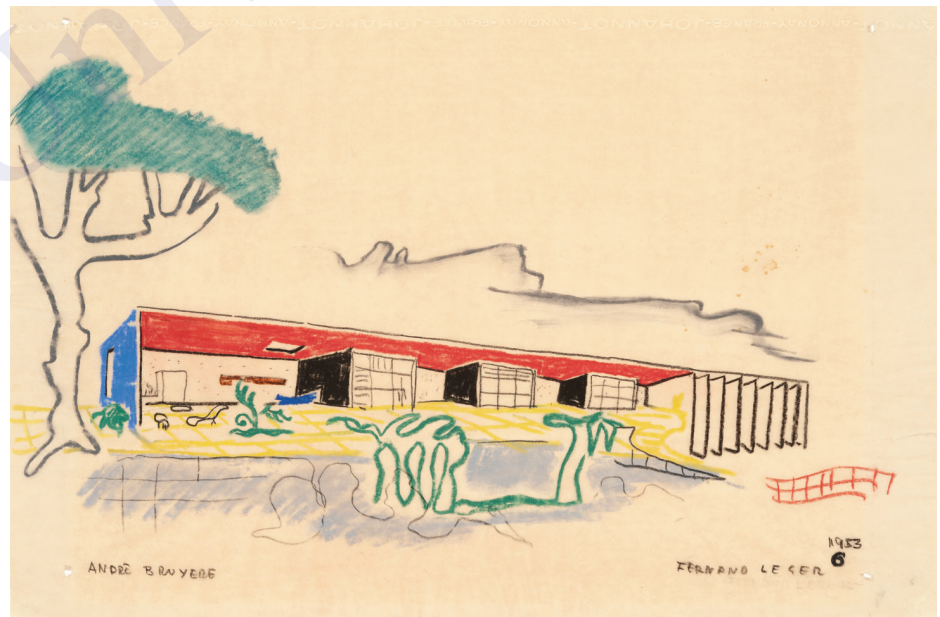


Fig. 81. André Bruyère, architect, Fernand Léger, artist, *Perspective for a Villa with Three Workshops, Village Polychrome, near Biot, France, 1953*. Pastel on tracing paper, 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (37.3 × 55.5 cm). Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal, Gift in memory of Daniel Robbins.

period featured vertiginous views of winding staircases, painted in a dark, desaturated, even muddy color palette.<sup>45</sup> In these cropped images of claustrophobic interiors, Clark did not formally borrow from the examples of vibrant, planar, architectonic polychromy by Le Corbusier and Léger. However, with her turn to abstraction upon her return to Brazil in 1952, Clark reiterated the concept of polychromy based on architecture as a key formal maneuver.

#### LYGIA CLARK: TOWARD THE ORGANIC LINE

Though architecture would soon become key, Clark first took two seeming detours in other fields— theater and psychology of perception— before explicitly working with artistic integration. In 1953 Clark created a number of stage sets for the theater groups Duse and Bolso, collaborations likely inspired by her paintings and drawings of staircases, since one of the first plays she worked on included a staircase— supposedly to concretize an anti-communist message.<sup>46</sup> While there do not seem to be archival photographs of Clark’s designs for theater productions, reviews emphasized her adeptness with the constricted space of the stage, and her inventive formal solutions: “On a small stage, furniture disturbs the actors. . . . Clark imaginatively solved the furniture problem with a prism that serves as a bench and, in the background, another prism that serves as a sofa. . . . The scenography is attractive for its color: yellow, blue, and purple, with yellow feet.”<sup>47</sup> It is not clear from the review how those colors were applied, but given the precedents of Léger and Le Corbusier, one might imagine each plane of the sides and top colored a different shade, as with the planar blocks of color that characterized architectonic surfaces in drawings of the *Village Polychrome*. For Clark, then, the architectonic deployment of color came first on the theater stage, as solid, abstract volumes activated by the bodies of the actors. Clark pursued the entanglement of abstraction and embodiment within the discipline of theater, through play with conventions of staging bodily encounters that would continue to characterize her art practice through the following decade.

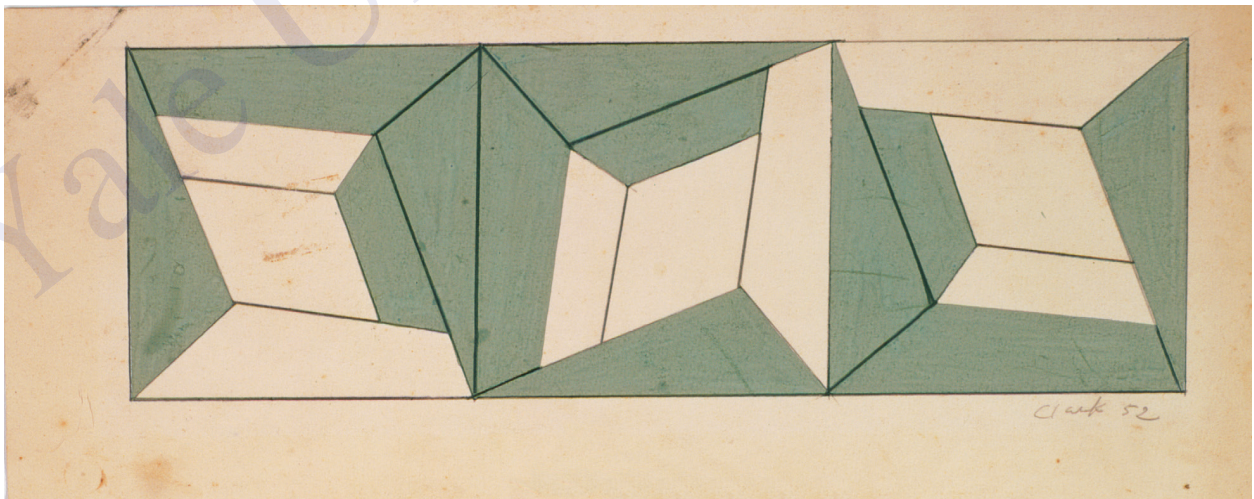
Clark seemed at first unsure about how to transfer the formal lessons learned by applying color in three dimensions to the creation of two-dimensional artworks. How would she create artworks that engaged with their architectonic settings? While Clark would famously turn to quasi-sculptural, relief-like objects, she first came at the problem by working with the boundary between artwork and frame, as both a spatial and visual problem. In 1954, rather than creating vertiginous spaces— as in her early ink drawing of the urban staircase or the claustrophobic cropped interiors of her staircase paintings— she began dividing her canvases into abstract planes of color that extended beyond the central rectangular surface, creating a wide border suspended ambiguously between frame and painting as such.<sup>48</sup> In this series of works she titled *Quebra da Moldura* (Breaking the frame), Clark may have been spurred by her encounter with a special Mondrian retrospective at the Second São Paulo Bienal (1953–54). Even so, she retained the muddy palette

of her previous staircase paintings, forgoing the dramatic contrasts of Mondrian's white, black, and primary palette in favor of a subtler effect. At this point, Clark had almost certainly not yet seen photographs of Mondrian's studio, in which the Dutch artist incorporated the light and space of the atelier into a total ensemble of painting, object, and architecture.<sup>49</sup>

Instead, Clark first sought to understand Mondrian's formal moves through debates current in the local art scene concerning psychological theories of perception.<sup>50</sup> Clark's primary source for these debates was Mário Pedrosa, a prominent Brazilian art critic who had studied psychology in late 1920s Berlin. Pedrosa's training was steeped in Gestalt, a psychological theory of perception and subjectivity that viewed experiential space as "fundamentally centered, and thus deeply symmetrical" and argued that human perception was instinctually prepared to see figures that are "well-built . . . securely hanging together . . . centrally organized [and thus] securing the centered subject."<sup>51</sup> For Gestalt theorists, human vision was predisposed to apprehend figures holistically, not as a mechanical summing up of parts into a whole. For artists and aesthetic theorists, Gestalt theory provided ways to justify formalist concerns with figure-ground relationships; distinctions between coherent forms versus unresolved "noise"; and the possible universality of vision.<sup>52</sup> Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, Pedrosa's writings would be crucial for the dissemination of Gestalt theories of perception among Brazilian artists, including Clark.

But for Pedrosa—and, ultimately, for Clark—Gestalt would be inflected, perhaps even undermined, by other psychological theories. Most accounts of Neoconcretism stress the importance of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology as a critique of Gestalt common to the Neoconcretist artists. In 1959, for example, Neoconcrete theorist Ferreira Gullar wrote, "I consider [Merleau-Ponty's] criticism of Gestalt to be of great importance," since Merleau-Ponty rejected the Gestaltist presupposition of "the existence of perceptual structures previous to perception."<sup>53</sup> But in the mid-1950s, before Neoconcretism developed,

Fig. 82. Lygia Clark, *Planos em Superfície Modulada*, 1952. Graphite and gouache on card, 17 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 25 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (44.7 × 65.8 cm). Photograph by Marcelo Ribeiro Alvares Corrêa. "The World of Lygia Clark" Cultural Association, Rio de Janeiro.



Pedrosa's critique of Gestalt was shaped not—or not yet—by Merleau-Ponty, but by readings of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget.

Piaget's tempering of Gestalt likely propelled Lygia Clark's mid-1950s breakthrough. Clark may have encountered Piaget's work directly during her stay in Paris, a period when the Swiss psychologist taught at the Sorbonne.<sup>54</sup> The more proximate source is Pedrosa's 1954 essay "Problemática da arte contemporânea" (Issues in contemporary art), which coincided with Clark's *Quebra da Moldura* series.<sup>55</sup> In this text, Pedrosa discussed Piaget's analysis of the "topological" spatial notions of children. Pedrosa reframed this topology as a compositional technique for contemporary art. The topological spatial notions of the child did not, Pedrosa explained, arise from knowledge of mathematical formulas but from the "practical geometry" of the child's untutored mind. Likewise, claimed Pedrosa, the artist Max Bill arrived at a sculpture in the form of a Möbius strip through an act of "ingenuous plastic imagination," rather than beginning from geometric planning. "In spite of everything," Pedrosa claimed, "art does not renounce its radical purpose of making space visible" but begins from the field "of that which is not sensorially delimited, of undetermined space."<sup>56</sup> Not coincidentally, the mid-1950s saw Clark turn to spatial and explicitly architectonic works as a way to develop her notion of the "organic line," those "functional lines [at the edges] of doors, at the joining of materials, of fabrics, etc., [that] modulate the whole of a surface"—that is, as a way to work through the sensorial delimitation of space.<sup>57</sup> Leaving behind the optical possibilities of singular planar surfaces, Clark sought to architecturally delineate space as a way to fulfill Pedrosa's insistence that the artist make "undetermined space" sensible. Rather than a Gestaltist act of creating good form—or highlighting its existence in one's surroundings—Clark sought to intervene in "undetermined" space, to trace previously unseen delineations of the "organic line" between spatial zones as a way of making space visible.

Where Pedrosa provided a theoretical framework, Dutch De Stijl artists César Domela and Piet Mondrian were visual models for Clark. Writing in 1956, Brazilian art critic Jayme Mauricio described Domela's 1954 visit to Rio de Janeiro as encouraging Clark's deduction of the organic line from found architecture.<sup>58</sup> In a lecture Domela delivered at the MAM/Rio in 1954, he emphasized the importance of the relation of painting and architecture for Mondrian and Theo van Doesburg. He then went on to quote French art critic Raymond Bayer's assessment that "undoubtedly, the space of Mondrian does not surpass a singular plane: it is not an object, but a piece of wall. However, it does so to the extent that it is not always watertight and sometimes evasive. Mondrian, then, does not fall back on the frame, he abolishes it."<sup>59</sup> While Clark likely began her *Quebra da Moldura* series slightly before Domela's October 1954 lecture, she sought out conversations with him, and Domela's own tableau-objet reliefs may have sparked her move to spatial reliefs.

At the very least, Domela's reiteration of the relation between plane and wall seems to have spurred her continued development of the *Quebra da Moldura* series—perhaps especially the more Mondrian-inflected work—and a new series of architectural



maquettes. In 1955 Clark apprenticed herself to an architectural model maker and produced a series of shoebox-sized maquettes in which geometric shapes and planes of color are arranged on three “walls,” the “floor,” and on tiny prisms resembling dollhouse furniture. While these Concrete interiors suggest a formal resonance with Mondrian’s neo-plastic world-making, it was not simply formal affinity but conceptual rigor that Clark sought in conversations with Domela about his fellow Dutch artist. Specifically, Mondrian provided a robust model for Clark’s growing interest in juxtaposed planes as a key formal component in interrelating abstraction and architectonic spaces.

On the basis of these maquettes, Clark was invited to deliver a lecture to university architecture students in Belo Horizonte in 1956, when she expounded upon her conception of the “organic line.” As Clark would explain, this organic line was a line that did not originate in graphic mark-making, did not arise spontaneously from the body of the artist, but was in fact a natural function of architecture.<sup>60</sup> Two adjacent planes that differ in color appear as two planes, without creating the sensation of an independent line between them. Between two adjacent planes of the same color, a condition common to architectural joinery, the organic line appears. “I . . . don’t wish to state that my purpose was ‘to paint’ walls,” Clark explained in 1956. “Far from it. The material should be freely used, absolute within its wholeness, without being violated. . . . The materials themselves, with their authentic lines of finishing, would give the artist the possibility of modulating the whole surface of a floor, using this same line as a graphic module for a composition. . . . In large stairways this line has its function, as it is created by the existence of two or more planes of the same color. If there is polychromy, this false line of planes will be totally or partially integrated.”<sup>61</sup> Here Clark makes clear why she ceased experimenting with the polychromy of Le Corbusier and Léger. Polychromy is a formal procedure that *destroys* the contingent discovery of the organic line: two different colors side by side will efface the line in between, while two juxtaposed planes of the same color will reveal this organic line. The organic line would be found in the gap between two pieces of material painted the same color, an optical confusion of two homogeneously colored areas popping into depth or recession through the addition of a simple cut, as with her *Planos em Superfície Modulada* (Planes in modulated surface; fig. 82). In cardstock and wood, Clark’s *Superfície Modulada* (Modulated surface) series formulated the organic line through collage or assemblage, reliant upon the procedure of the cut. But while the organic line remained linked to the planar surfaces of these works, Clark would soon complicate the relationship of the artwork to its architectonic setting amid the new institutions of modern Brazil.

Clark echoed Waldemar Cordeiro’s notion of artistic integration in her account of the organic line, which she linked to her belief “in the possibility of a working group in which the architect and the artists can, working together, find new and authentic plastic solutions.”<sup>62</sup> Like Cordeiro, Clark sought a unity between the plastic arts and architecture, while remaining skeptical of traditional forms of muralism. “The mural in its conventional sense, maintaining its expressive character, characteristic of an easel painting,” Clark



explained in a 1957 interview, “can never be integrated into architecture.”<sup>63</sup> Instead, for Clark, the artist should carry out research as a function of “the lines which I will call ‘organic,’ functional lines [at the edges] of doors, at the joining of materials, of fabrics, etc., to modulate the whole of a surface.”<sup>64</sup> Where Cordeiro had identified the prevailing issue of contemporary art as one of polymateriality, Clark identified the primary “plastic problem” as “simply ‘the valorization or devalorization of this line,’” meaning the organic line.<sup>65</sup> But this does not mean that Clark sought an idealist imposition of form upon raw material. Rather, Clark explained, “The materials themselves, with their authentic lines of joinery, will grant the artist the possibility of modulating the whole of the surface of a floor, using this same line like a graphic module of composition.”<sup>66</sup> This evinces, instead, a trust in the “authenticity” of materials assembled by craftspeople, an assumption of the built environment as something given, or found, as much an artistic source as nature had been for previous generations of artists. Clark treated architecture as a found object, a ready-made procedure—yet rather than the mechanically mass-produced consumer objects of the dadaist or pop ready-made, Clark relied upon the Brazilian craftspeople.

Where Cordeiro foregrounded Le Corbusier’s notion of a *synthèse des arts*, Clark, who had studied with painters Árpád Szenes and Fernand Léger in Paris, saw art as the dominant partner in artistic integration with architecture. Clark’s practice was centripetal, drawing found space and architectural details into her works, while Cordeiro sought to remake the environment of Brazilian cities in the modern era as a centrifugal explosion from artworks to the city beyond, in posters, consumer goods, and architecture itself. Ultimately, both artists’ approaches to the integration of the arts must be understood in the particular context of 1950s Brazil, a time when the queasily utopian city of Brasília took shape on the horizon of the high plains, and modernist architecture might become merely an empty form in a cityscape brimming with meaning.

#### CONCRETE SPACES, NEOCONCRETE SPACES

In the well-rehearsed story of Brazilian Concretism, Waldemar Cordeiro is considered the primary polemicist for the supposedly more “orthodox,” rigid, and idealist Concrete art that emerged in São Paulo in the early 1950s, while the work of Lygia Clark seems to exemplify the “phenomenological openness” of Rio de Janeiro Concrete artists, many of whom redefined themselves as Neoconcrete by 1959.<sup>67</sup> Visually, orthodox Concrete paintings and sculptures are understood as those with formal structures deduced from an initial mathematical or geometric procedure, tending to result in repetitive geometric patterns. Those Concretists who later formulated Neoconcretism, including Clark, often blurred the boundaries among the mediums of painting, sculpture, and poetry, generating a new “nonobject” medium. Three-dimensional arrangements of materials such as planar painted wood, cut paper, or metal sheets, these nonobjects might hang from the ceiling, be buried underground, or sit directly on the floor, engaging viewers in a durational,

evolving experience of being in the world.<sup>68</sup> In theoretical writings by Cordeiro, as well as denunciations by critics such as Mário Pedrosa and Ferreira Gullar, orthodox Concrete artists were understood to work from idea to object, with the object as a “product” of the intellect, rather than expressing some internal state of being. In contrast, Concrete-cum-Neoconcrete artists, poets, and critics explained their works in terms of a more open-ended process of creation and often implicated viewers’ bodies in completing the work. As key figures in the development of Concretism and Neoconcretism, Cordeiro and Clark occupy a critical juncture between modern and contemporary art in twentieth-century Brazil.

But rather than understanding artworks and statements by Cordeiro and Clark as expressing the canonical positions of Concretism and Neoconcretism in Brazil, one can understand them as working with two idioms of artistic integration. In their practices and writings, Clark and Cordeiro ranged far beyond delineating a Brazilian Concretist project, instead exploring broader questions of aesthetics, social organization, and human agency. If Concrete art was central to their thinking in the mid-1950s, it was in relation to the imbrication of the art object with its setting. As Clark explained in 1956, “If the concretists are composing with equal spaces and similar forms, a relation between an architectural module and concrete painting itself is already established.”<sup>69</sup> But the two would adopt differing approaches to relating artworks to their settings.

Cordeiro’s centrifugal logic is apparent in his works that blurred the boundaries of artwork, frame, and wall. The frame or base mattered little, as Concrete art offered an aesthetic that spread beyond the artwork or gallery walls across the city. If art was an autonomous pursuit, it was not predicated on the fact of an autonomous art object but upon the special perceptivity of the artist. If aesthetic principles were embedded in industrial objects made by humans, artists could apply formal principles to everyday objects as well as artworks. In a 1958 text, Cordeiro described the characteristics of Concrete art as converging with those of industry: elementary geometric forms, standardization of elements, prefabricated elements, and a sense of movement created from a flickering between figure and ground composed of regular patterns.<sup>70</sup> In a modern, urban, and industrialized Brazil, Concrete art would be the ground against which modern social relations were figured.

In seeking to disperse Concretist aesthetics into the world, Cordeiro and other artists worked both within the studio and gallery, and pursued projects in design and industry that would inhabit quotidian spaces—if typically falling short of architecture as such. Cordeiro’s own landscape designs resembled Concrete paintings writ large in grass, shrubbery, pathways, and pools.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, in the 1950s, fellow Concretist Geraldo de Barros designed modernist furniture to be mass-produced by a Catholic workers’ cooperative; despite the utopian mode of production, the furniture was really only affordable to upper-class buyers.<sup>72</sup> And in 1958 to 1959, Barros cofounded and briefly worked at the design firm Forminform, which created logos for many of Brazil’s largest companies.<sup>73</sup> Polish-born Concretist Leopold Haar adopted the most ambiguous approach to art and

design. His designs for store vitrines were difficult to distinguish from his sculptural work, and both were celebrated with exhibitions at the MASP. Finally, most famously, Concretists (later Neoconcretists) Amilcar de Castro and Reynaldo Jardim completely redesigned the entire layout of the *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper in the late 1950s.<sup>74</sup> Yet these design activities remained rather limited.<sup>75</sup> It did not seem that Brazilian artists would succeed in implementing a seamless integration of art and design. Moreover, artistic success was still gauged by their social visibility as artists with artworks exhibited in museums and the São Paulo Bienal, and critical attention was contingent upon institutional backing.

If Concretism sought immersion in a social body, where, then, would this body be located? Many of the early criticisms leveled at orthodox Concretism hinged on its use of standardized forms, decrying the seeming loss of human agency, intentionality, and subjectivity. As a member of the international jury for the Fourth São Paulo Bienal in 1957, Alfred Barr, then-director of collections for New York's MoMA, characterized Brazilian artists' submissions to the Bienal jury as "Bauhaus exercises." Barr continued: "Many Concrete diagrams and little otherwise."<sup>76</sup> Critic Mário Pedrosa countered that Barr had a typical foreigner's desire for Brazilian romantic exoticism, as in images of "savage Indians [sic] and flocks of parrots," or of expecting Brazilian artists to continue working in styles rooted in interwar Europe.<sup>77</sup> Foreign critics, Pedrosa insisted, "did not want to permit [Brazilian] artists an inquiry, a modern language that does not meet the current tastes of the grand European centers," where there predominated "a romantic—or, better, anti-cultural—tendency, in the sense of preferring so-called instinctive or subjective qualities to the purest formal values."<sup>78</sup> Instead, Pedrosa asserted that foreign critics were "horrified, like men weary of culture and aesthetic experiences, of everything reminiscent of structure, order, discipline, tensions, optimism; plastic beauty, in short."<sup>79</sup> For Pedrosa, Barr's disregard for Brazilian Concretism resulted from both his immersion in Old World trends (ironically, given Barr's origins in the United States), and from Barr's inability to recognize Brazil's urbanized modernity.

Writing two years later, in 1959, another foreign critic—this time from Austria—highlighted his own inability to reconcile Brazilian Concretism and its setting: "How can such a trend grow to dominate the artistic production of a people living in a subtropical environment, in which nature threatens at every step to swallow up the intentionality of the inhabitants? Unless it was precisely as a reaction or defense against this threatening condition, against the bubbling chaos."<sup>80</sup> In a situation of industrial underdevelopment, then, Concretism was itself an *expressive* act.<sup>81</sup> And this was, indeed, how some Brazilian critics discussed Concretism. In the works of Concretist Maurício Nogueira Lima, for example, one critic identified "standard elements": "Equal elements which, by the formal arrangement to which they are submitted, give the impression of space, suggestions of dynamism. . . . Due to these characteristics, his arrangements [*arranjos*] can be used in modern industry with greater ease, since they are exactly like works made by machines,

though they are *always human creations*.<sup>82</sup> Critics sought to locate a traditional sense of artistic intentionality in precisely the consonance between Brazilian Concretism and urbanized modernity—and the jarring disjunction between these aesthetic emblems of modernity and Brazil's seeming underdevelopment.

The idea that Concretist aesthetics could infiltrate the world beyond was often, however, modeled within the space of the gallery. With Luis Sacilotto's uncompromisingly frontal, all-over Concretions, or the discrete, logo-like emblems found in paintings by Waldemar Cordeiro (an untitled 1952 enamel on plywood) and Geraldo de Barros (*Estrutura tridimensional* [1953], enamel on Kelmite industrial board), paintings act as stand-ins for the varied surfaces—billboards and buildings, clothing and furniture—where Concrete aesthetics might function. These paintings model the modernist spatial orders in which new human formations might emerge.

This was a fuzzily leftist project that held little appeal for the coolly aristocratic Clark, born to a wealthy family from Brazil's Minas Gerais.<sup>83</sup> Clark's works thus adopted a more contemporary reflexivity, operating on a centripetal visual logic in which figure-ground relationships tested the boundaries between an artwork's interior and exterior.<sup>84</sup> Clark's artworks absorbed the exterior world into themselves, first by incorporating the gallery wall as a constitutive part of artworks, and then by absorbing human beings into the fulfillment of her work.

Clark's approach to Concretism implicated gallery architecture as itself a constitutive part of the work, a quality that would be highlighted in Neoconcretist works by Clark and others who emerged around 1959. The 1a Exposição Neoconcreta was held in 1959 at the MAM/Rio, designed by Affonso Eduardo Reidy. There, Clark exhibited her *Unidades* (Units/unities), comprising seven square planes of painted and incised wood arranged in a spiral formation. The squares are, at first glance, black monochromes, with slight recessed gouges along sides or along central axes painted white (fig. 83). These recessed white strips delineate the edges of the black squares but also merge visually with the wall behind, literalizing Clark's investigations of the relation of artwork to its material context.<sup>85</sup> By installing the work so that the white lines radiated out from a center pivot, Clark created a sense of movement, of rotation. The assimilation of the white lines to the wall made a sense of centripetal and centrifugal forces tangible, with each *Unidade* seeming to collapse inward and fling itself outward with rotation of the whole ensemble. A photograph of the unnumbered Exposição Neoconcreta na Bahia, held in November 1959 at the Salvador Municipal Tourism Department's gallery on the Belvedere da Sé, affirms the fact that Clark intended the white gallery wall as constitutive of the *Unidades* (fig. 84).<sup>86</sup> There, the *Unidades* were installed substantially higher to ensure they were all located on a white wall surface above a molding. Generally, however, artists only inconsistently assumed the incorporation of a white wall as part of the artwork. Instead, Neoconcrete works began to devise their own settings.



Fig. 83. Lygia Clark photographed before her *Unidades N1-7*, at the 1a Exposição Neoconcreta, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1959. “The World of Lygia Clark” Cultural Association, Rio de Janeiro.

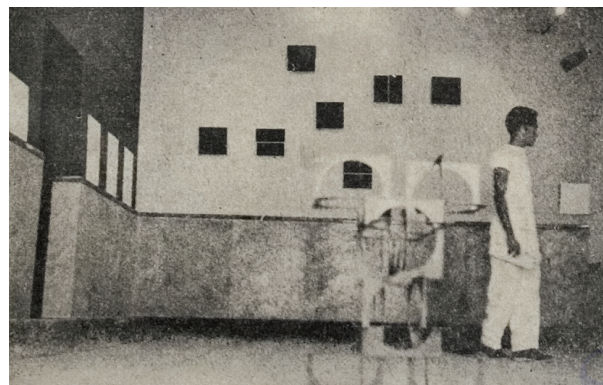


Fig. 84. “Neoconcretos na Bahia,” *Suplemento Dominical do Jornal do Brasil*, November 21, 1959, showing the 1959 Exposição Neoconcreta at the Galeria do Departamento Municipal de Turismo, located on the Belvedere da Sé in Salvador, Bahia.

The changing venues for Neoconcrete exhibitions, from MAM/Rio to the MES building, radically altered the backdrops for Neoconcrete works. The 2a Exposição Neoconcreta was held in November to December 1960 at the MES building in Rio de Janeiro, in an ersatz location enclosed by huge curtains, under the Burle Marx roof garden.<sup>87</sup> In a photograph of the earlier exhibition at MAM/Rio, Lygia Clark sat before a large, white wall where her *Unidades* were arranged in a spiral configuration. But the MES building lacked white gallery walls. Some paintings were hung on temporary easel-like walls barely wider than the paintings themselves. Many of the works were scattered in the center of the space, detached from the walls. Sculptural book and poem works by Lygia Pape and Ferreira Gullar, for example, sat on plinths at or below waist height, while poet Reynaldo Jardim’s maquette for a “total theater”—a small chamber intended for a single theater viewer—seems to have rested on the ground. Works by Hélio Oiticica were suspended from the ceiling, where their brightly colored planes offered a visual rhyme for the missing walls (fig. 85). It is, perhaps, too deterministic to claim that the venue’s lack of white wall space guided artists to create nonobjects physically independent from the architecture, since many of these artists had already been invested in exploring the relation of artworks to their surroundings. However, the ambiguous thresholds and blurred interior and exterior spaces of Brazil’s modernist architecture resonate with Neoconcrete forms. The final Exposição Neoconcreta was held in 1961 at the MAM/SP, at that time housed in Parque Ibirapuera at the Palácio das Indústrias (today the Pavilhão Ciccillo Matarazzo), an Oscar Niemeyer–designed building known for its dramatic, curving balconies and relative lack of vertical white walls (fig. 86). Many of the Neoconcrete works presented there were fully sculptural, set on plinths or directly on the ground.

Neoconcretism was a movement for a contingent museum, for museums whose physical spaces were always in flux, never fixed. Neoconcrete artists did not, however,



Fig. 85. "Arte Neoconcreta agora," *Suplemento Dominical do Jornal do Brasil*, November 26–27, 1960, showing artworks by Lygia Clark (top), Amílcar de Castro (middle), and Hélio Oiticica (bottom) exhibited at the 2a Exposição Neoconcreta.



reify the painting's frame or the sculptural base as a way to set artworks apart from the unpredictability of the exhibition setting. Nor did they share the Concrete aspiration of figure-less ground, where all the works formed a new backdrop for human experience. Instead, Neoconcrete works presented the artwork as an autonomous figure, in relation to an impermanent and mutable ground. Neoconcretism foregrounded formal relationships of inside and outside, beneath and behind, the relationships between an artwork's inner cavities or planar projections and a space as yet undetermined. Neoconcrete works did not, then, implicate the architectural conditions of the white cube gallery—for such spaces had barely formed in Brazil.<sup>88</sup> Neoconcretist artists worked without expecting the spaces of white-walled museums and galleries, something often taken for granted by artists working in Western Europe and the United States. Neoconcrete exhibitions were staged in and around buildings—often recently constructed modernist structures—whose interiors were not necessarily intended for, or conducive to, the display of art.<sup>89</sup>

In the absence of conventionalized architectures of the art institution, the Neoconcrete works' experimental forms themselves affirmed their status as art. As critic Ronaldo Brito has observed, Neoconcretism was a revolution "within the limits of art": "If we limit ourselves to the issue of artists' participation in social production, the Neoconcrete insertion occurred in a far narrower and more traditional space than that of Concretism"—meaning, the space of the gallery.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, Brito insisted that Neoconcretism offered a rupture with spatial conventions. Neoconcrete artists "criticized



Fig. 86. São Paulo Bienal, Pavilhão Cicillo Matarazzo (formerly Palácio das Indústrias), 1950s. Dossier BR RJANRIO PH.0.FOT.616, photo 16, Arquivo Nacional do Brasil, Brasília.

the continuation of a figure-ground scheme—the basis of pre-Cubist representational space—and threw themselves into the task of its total, nonmetaphoric mobilization. . . . The Neo-concrete artist did not approach space, properly speaking; he or she experimented with it.”<sup>91</sup>

Many Neoconcrete works displayed a concern with the transition from horizontal to vertical and back again, often taking the floor rather than the wall as a key reference point. This differs, however, from the formlessness seen to characterize early contemporary art in Western Europe and the United States, for the Neoconcretist works sought not to destroy a Gestaltist plane but to hold that Gestalt in permanent flux, occupying a continual transition from vertical to horizontal. Formally, one can think of Lygia Clark’s persistent concern with vertical planarity, maintained even after she moved from works on paper to the more obviously sculptural *Bichos* (Creatures).<sup>92</sup> The *Bichos* rest on pedestals or directly on the floor, but offer themselves up vertically; even in their most crab-like, draped configurations, the “dorsal fin” or spine of a *Bicho* opens out and upward. The “viewer” works with the *Bicho*, moving its wings or flaps through variations that only temporarily and tentatively resolved into a flattened plane. Critic and poet Ferreira Gullar’s 1960 *Poema enterrado* was intended to draw viewers below the museum space, staging a poetic encounter in an underground room with a series of nested cubes, which viewers bent to move aside, revealing the single word “*rejuvenesca*” (rejuvenate). The work demanded viewers shift between lowering their bodies toward the floor and the Gestaltist act of reading a word on a planar surface.

Likewise, Lygia Pape’s *Livro da Criação* (Book of creation), exhibited at the 2a Exposição Neoconcreta in 1959, traced a visual and quasi-biblical narrative through a

sequence of transitions between horizontality and verticality. “In the beginning all was water,” was followed by pages including “Man was social and sowed the earth” to the modern “Man discovered the planetary system.” The pages of the *Livro da Criação* transitioned from the horizontality of endless ocean and the base materiality of earth and fire, through a verticalization accompanying “civilization” as the rise of agriculture, shipping, and construction spread man’s dominion over the earth and seas, followed by astronomy’s extending human reach vertically to the heavens. Pape’s book ends in “Light—broad daylight,” seeming to complete the transition to transcendent verticality. But the cyclical nature of Pape’s book, both textually and visually, does not offer a one-way shift from horizontality to verticality. The reading pulses upward with the three blue waves of the receding waters, intended to be held vertically, while the sowing page returns to a horizontal plane.

In a pragmatic sense, Neoconcretism’s play with the decontextualized plane, in the absence of a neutral gallery wall as backdrop, responded to the relative lack of white cube museum spaces in 1950s Brazil. But Pape made this refusal into an aesthetic principle, seen in photographs of her *Livro da Criação* pages in quotidian settings across Rio de Janeiro. The Rodchenko-like concentric circles of “Man discovered the planetary system” were held before the spokes of a bicycle wheel. The red triangles of “Man discovered fire” were set upon a beachside table before a line of alcoholic beverage bottles. The blue circle of “The earth was round and rotated around its axis” sat on a pay phone shelf. “The keel slicing through time” sat upon a rock, its red triangle thrust upward to echo bodies diving from a rocky slope into the sea, while the blue “Submarine—the empty is the full beneath the water” framed swimmers playing in the waves. In lieu of the gallery’s orderly contemplation of fine art, the *Livro da Criação* was thrust into the world of everyday objects and activities around Rio de Janeiro.

#### WALDEMAR CORDEIRO: FIGURES AND GROUND

Like Lygia Pape, Waldemar Cordeiro moved his work from the gallery into social spaces in São Paulo during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Around 1955 Cordeiro began experimenting with landscape design, first for private residences around São Paulo. What is perhaps Cordeiro’s earliest landscape design work, for the Keutenedjian residence, echoes the composition of his 1948–49 ink drawing, but the form is writ large and made material, its cosmic scheme mapped in tufts of grass and curved bands of tile (fig. 87). The implicit rotations of the work on paper are now suggestions for movements of the human body in the world, both singular and collective. For Cordeiro, landscape design was an art that emerged when new modes of architecture and urbanism created disequilibrium between built volumes and open spaces, a problem “not only of taste, but of public health and culture.”<sup>93</sup> “To open or close a void in a wall,” wrote Cordeiro in 1957, “is not only to delimit the visual field or apportion light. It is a social fact, which favors or impedes human relations.”<sup>94</sup> Writing in 1957, it is likely that Cordeiro had the city of Brasília in mind, a city that



Fig. 87. Waldemar Cordeiro, Design for garden at Residência Ubirajara Keutenedjian, São Paulo, 1955.

would be adorned with figurative sculptures commemorating Brazilian mythologies or eternal allegory—rather than an integrated ensemble of modernist architecture and geometric abstraction—and whose high-rise residences and massive street-level voids seemed antithetical to traditional modes of urban sociability in Brazil.<sup>95</sup> In this same 1957 article, Cordeiro described an analogous situation, as when an architect “imposes upon clients a way of life which they do not want, a ‘hortus conclusus’ [closed garden] that remains the aspiration of a mentality of a collective [divided] in lots, of distrustful neighbors.”<sup>96</sup> The habitus of the Brazilian city was, Cordeiro recognized, a potential victim of standards, of geometric principles.

The unpredictability of matter, of the artist’s body, are thus subsumed to the regularity of spatial order, in keeping with a characteristic conflict of modernist art and the anxieties of modernizing Brazil. For prior generations of Brazilian artists, aesthetic production “compensated for material backwardness and the weakness of institutions by an overvaluation of regional features, making exoticism a reason for social optimism,” an approach that no longer seemed possible once Brazilian artists gained “consciousness of underdevelopment.”<sup>97</sup> But Cordeiro was an odd figure to bear the weight of this local tension, for his immigrant background meant he was relatively uninvested in debates over Brazilian identity as an aesthetic problem. Cordeiro framed his arguments in terms of spaces rather than identities, with one 1957 article expressing his frustration that access to space in the Brazilian art world was determined by “interests outside the realm of art,” resulting in a “private, aristocratic, and arbitrary” rather than “a rational and impersonal organization of culture.”<sup>98</sup>



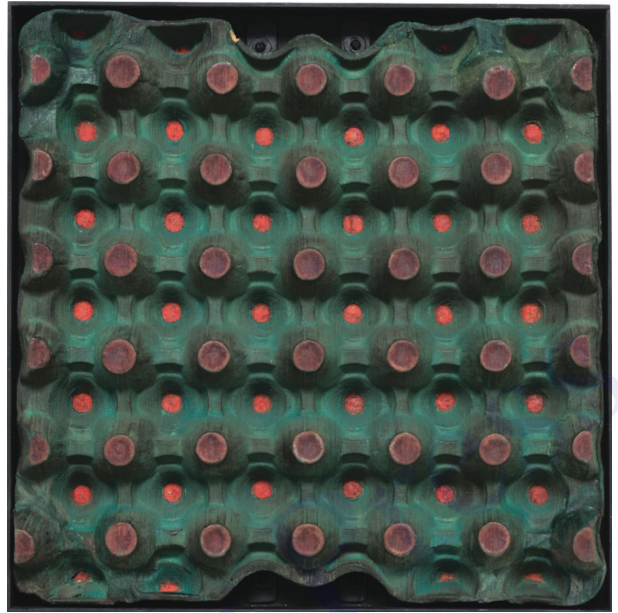


Fig. 88. Waldemar Cordeiro, *Objeto*, 1962. Gouache on cardboard, 12 × 12¼ × 2 in. (30.5 × 31 × 5 cm). Private collection.

Cordeiro's take on the balance between autonomy and social relevance for art was thus couched as a conflict between older forms of socio-spatial organization and a newly impersonal rationality. But rather than rejecting this new mode of living, Cordeiro saw its potential for both freedom and rigidity. Across mediums, Cordeiro's works in geometric abstraction offered one finale of the modernist project, in which it was still thought possible to plan for a new society, to contain the imprecision and unpredictability of human action in regular, if wobbling, orbits.<sup>99</sup> Yet even as Cordeiro insisted that geometric abstraction must leap from the picture plane to the world, he recognized the ways that formal qualities would be intimately bound up with, and even produce, social relations.

In the early 1960s, even as Cordeiro turned increasingly to landscape design as a means of supporting himself and his family, his artworks seemed to retreat from the world. The years 1961 through 1963 saw Cordeiro create a number of quasi-color field, oil-on-canvas paintings that read like a pastiche of the second-generation abstract expressionist painters (and posthumous Jackson Pollock) who represented the United States at the Fourth São Paulo Bienal in 1957—James Brooks, Philip Guston, Grace Hartigan, Franz Kline, and Larry Rivers. In light of Cordeiro's fluency with international paradigms, one might also see in these works a dash of Jasper Johns's play with signs (in Cordeiro's case, arrows), the lurid and uneasy chromatic relations of Jules Olitski and Larry Poons, Poons's emergent grids circa 1961, and the assured brushstrokes of Joan Mitchell. But even as Cordeiro's early 1960s paintings read like a Brazilian artist's proto-pop read of late abstract expressionism, his own move to Brazil's answer to pop—which would be known locally as "Nova Figuração"—came in the form of objects plucked from the world, sometimes oddly altered, as in an egg carton patterned in green, purple, and red gouache (fig. 88) or decomposed bicycle frames made into Rauschenberg-esque assemblages. These



works were generally mounted on planar grounds or paralleled a gallery wall, maintaining a conventional spatial relationship to a (potentially white cube) gallery space. Where Cordeiro's 1950s paintings had sought to extend planar geometric patterns across a receptive cityscape, his early 1960s works transported the city's found geometries to the gallery interior. Cordeiro's subsequent turn to mass media and semiotics in the mid-1960s might be read as a further retreat from embodied experience, even as a return to the most dematerialized syntactical play of his 1950s Concretist forms, but this was also the period when Cordeiro validated his professionalization as a landscape designer in terms of socio-spatial relations.

Beginning around 1964, Cordeiro elaborated a set of ideas around landscape design in terms of tensions between the intentionality and planning of the artist-designer, and the "pragmatic and random" situation of the fulfiller (*fruidor*) within the "modern cityscape."<sup>100</sup> For Cordeiro, working in the wake of Brasília, the problem of urban open space was something that remained the purview of the state:

The planning of the open areas, as areas where people can get together, practice sports, rest, or attend a natural amphitheater of culture, can be a response to the "private entertainment industry," that considers free time in superficial terms, of escape and alienation. But only the governments have resources for the creation of millions of square meters of green areas with proper infrastructure. The aim of usage leads to the integration of the free space in the organized system, where the free space stops being a mandatorily disorganized space, stops being the tabernacle for the fascination of nature transformed into a fetish. Functional green is the characteristic of the urban landscape, unlike the rural landscape, where the spacings, the large voids without connection, lead to the isolation of the individual.<sup>101</sup>

In the years between 1955 and 1966, Cordeiro had moved from designs for upper-class São Paulo residences to proposals for large-scale public gardens, such as the Parque Mutirama in the interior city of Goiânia, not far from Brasília. Cordeiro argued that the massive voids of arch-modernist Brasília were—strangely—echoes of those large, disconnected voids found in rural areas and scaled according to the colonial-era extractive economy. For Cordeiro, spatial massification went hand in hand with social exploitation in the case of both Brasília and the fazenda. These spatial forms were antithetical to the egalitarian social connections engendered by the humane scale and well-proportioned solid-void relationships that Cordeiro believed should characterize Brazil's modern cities.

In a playground (1963–65) for the Clube Espéria, a predominantly Italian social club in São Paulo, Cordeiro integrated sculptural Concretism and landscape design (figs. 89–91). For this playground, Cordeiro transformed the regular geometries of Concretism into physical structures over which children could climb and hang. Yet even in transforming what was—in both his Concretist works and landscape designs—a planar practice to three dimensions, Cordeiro played with perceptions of the plane, with depth and spatial



Figs. 89 and 90. Waldemar Cordeiro, Designs for playground at Clube Espéria, 1963-65.

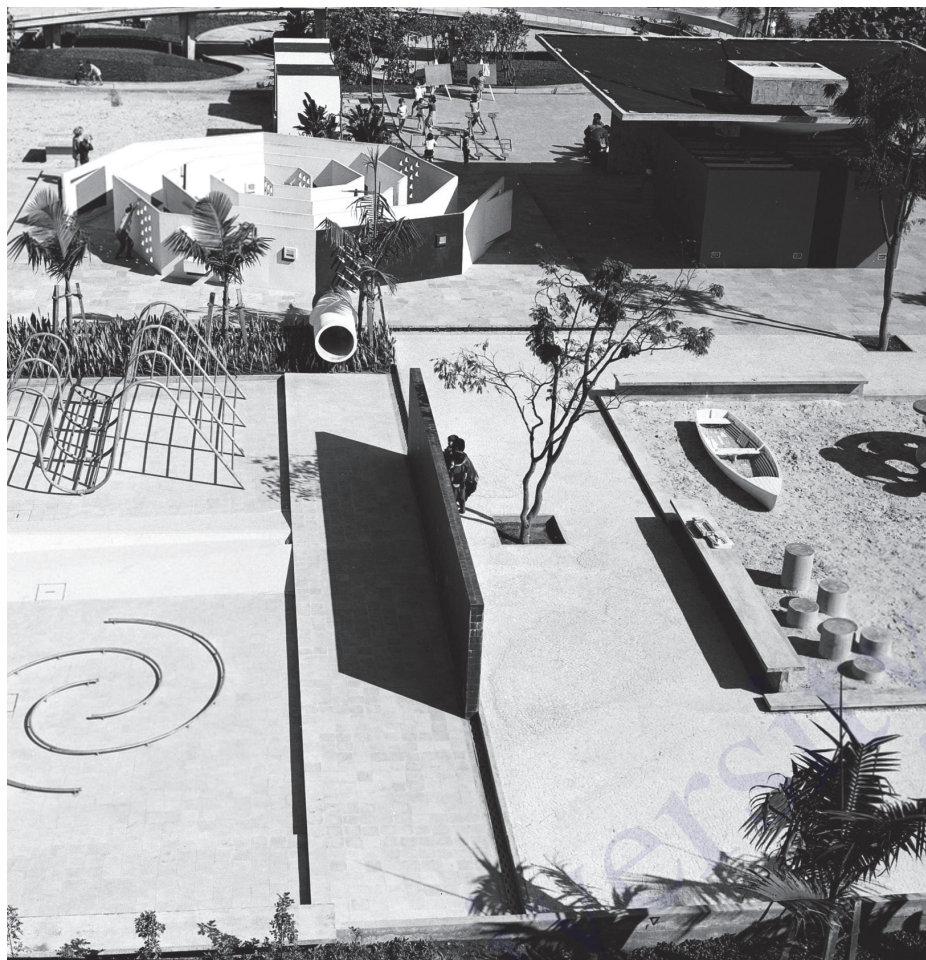


Fig. 91. Waldemar Cordeiro, Design for playground at Clube Espéria, 1963–65.

relations. Angled downward from wooden rods and concrete prisms jutting out from walls for children to climb, Cordeiro painted shapes to suggest that the rods and prisms were casting dark shadows, creating a visual sign of the playground's relationship to its setting. The fixed shadows both caricature and affirm the objects' sited-ness outside, their openness to a world beyond. With its disparate zones—a large sand area with a play boat and several cylindrical concrete pillar "islands," a spiraling labyrinth, and a tree emerging from a perfectly square hole in the concrete ground—the playground's overall composition is that of a city in miniature, with its structures and pathways mimicking a sequence of buildings and streets.

Cordeiro emphasized that his designed landscapes were distinct from fetishized nature and from the rural: "When the process of urbanization began to present the first conflicts [around 1930], Mário de Andrade preferred to dedicate himself to the study of rural folklore. . . . Industrialization took place without an adequate communicative (or artistic) superstructure. Tarsila studied with Leger . . . to portray (this is the term) the landscapes of her farm [*fazenda*]."<sup>102</sup> For Cordeiro, it would not be enough to study or portray a



waning bucolic Brazil, but nor would he adopt the heroic functionalist monumentality of modernist architecture. In place of the massive voids of Brasília—echoing the vast empty spaces of the colonial-era fazenda, or plantation—Cordeiro proposed small pockets of greenery, enmeshed within the broader urban fabric. Perhaps intelligible as Concretist geometries, Cordeiro's compositions of urban space are also like the “test of dependencies” he took as an artistic subject even from his early works on paper. But as the 1960s saw a return to political repression, the ostensibly neutral spaces of the Concretist city took on new meanings. Those pockets of nature integrated into a broader urban fabric might be leisure spaces in the face of instrumentalizing economic relations, while their small scale opposed the monumental bombast so beloved by authoritarian regimes (albeit, in Brasília, created by a democratically elected government). As Cordeiro had already asserted in 1950, at the beginning of his career, describing the modernist figurative sculpture of Mário Cravo Júnior, “His sculpture is not driven by any vanity as official statuary, but is rather a free poetic form that renounces the atmospheres of myth, of literary suggestions, to float in the light of the sun, in the playgrounds, in the wide public squares of the modern city.”<sup>103</sup>

For Cordeiro, “artists create, according to natural laws, objects that have historical value in the social life of man.”<sup>104</sup> Across nearly three decades, Cordeiro's works questioned where the social life of modern man would occur—in unbounded urban space or the controlled zone of the gallery. If the early 1950s saw both Waldemar Cordeiro and Lygia Clark working through various approaches to artistic integration with architecture, by the mid-1950s their approaches to Concretism diverged. Cordeiro applied principles of geometric abstraction to shared urban space to create staging grounds for new human relationships, a resolutely modernist project. By the 1960s, both Clark and Cordeiro thought about their works in settings beyond the gallery, where the questions of artistic autonomy became less dependent upon the museum's specific architectural settings. Cordeiro took mass media and emergent digital technologies as his material, alongside landscape interventions in urban spaces, while Clark would eventually use therapeutic objects to spur embodied social encounters. Ultimately, however, it was the late 1960s work of artist Hélio Oiticica that most cogently reflected upon earlier explorations of institutional architectures and simultaneously pointed forward to new conceptions of the spaces in which collective aesthetic experience could take place.

- Netherlands, April 10–September 24, 2010. Both Van Oldenborgh's and Koether's installations are crucially different than Bo Bardi's: for the Van Abbemuseum exhibitions, artworks were installed on panes of glass *within* a contemporary gallery space—a white cube with skylights in the case of Koether, and the same space with walls painted dark green from chest level to floor and white from chest level to ceiling in the case of Van Oldenborgh. Another contemporary curatorial project that drew upon Lina Bo Bardi is that of now-defunct London-based curatorial/design collective Newbetter and its spokesperson, Shumon Basar. See their 2005 exhibition, *Can Buildings Curate?: The Modern Gallery Setting as a Site of Artistic, Architectural and Curatorial Adventure*, Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, September 13–October 29, 2005. Basar positions the curator as “referee” in the “face-off between artist and architect.” Shumon Basar, “Whitewash: The Role of the Modern Gallery Setting as a Site of Artistic, Architectural and Curatorial Adventure,” *Modern Painters* (April 2005): 100.
113. Since at least the late 1990s, Jacques Rancière's accounts of aesthetics, pedagogy, and politics have been an important touchstone for contemporary art exhibitions, including Documenta X (1997). See his *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (2000) (London: Continuum, 2004); “The Emancipated Spectator,” *Artforum* 45, no. 7 (March 2007): 270–81; and *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1987), trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). Of course, in Brazil, the “ignorant schoolmaster” is preceded by the radically anti-hierarchical educational philosophy of Paulo Freire, whose 1968 book *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Pedagogy of the oppressed) theorized educational efforts he undertook in areas of Brazil with high illiteracy during the early 1960s. Finally, it must be noted that Rancière's notion of the “emancipated spectator” in fact refuses the dichotomy of passive viewership before an art object versus the active viewership ascribed to participatory and relational art practices, instead describing the artwork as a “third thing,” a “material thing” that acts as a mediation “between the idea of the artist and the feeling and interpretation of the spectator.” Rancière, “Emancipated Spectator,” 278.
114. “Today we hear from many curators that they are working toward a single objective, that of making individual artworks appear in the most favorable light. Or to put it differently, the best curating is *nil*-curating, non-curating. From this perspective, the solution seems to be to leave the artwork alone, enabling the viewer to confront it directly.” Boris Groys, “On the Curatorship,” in *Art Power* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), 45.
115. Bo Bardi, “Função social,” 17.
116. Anagnost, “Limitless Museum,” 702–5.
117. Bo Bardi, “Planejamento ambiental,” 4–7.
- 2002), 98–99. The text, initially entitled “Wohnung beziehen in der Heimatlosigkeit: Heimat und Heimatlosigkeit—Wohnung und Gewohnheit,” was first presented at the Second International Kornhaus-Seminar at Weiler im Allgäu, Germany, in 1985. The Prague-born Flusser lived in Brazil from 1940 through 1972, at which point he returned to Europe.
3. Aleca Le Blanc, “Tropical Modernisms: Art and Architecture in Rio de Janeiro in the 1950s” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2012), 251–52. On the idea that Brazil's status as a “modern, clean, and advanced country” was contingent upon establishing its character as “white and free of conflicts . . . and without class struggle,” see Luiz Renato Martins, “Trees of Brazil,” chap. 4 of *The Long Roots of Formalism in Brazil* (Boston: Brill, 2018), esp. 73–74.
4. Lina Bo Bardi, “Casas de Vilanova Artigas,” *Habitat* 1 (October–December 1950): 2.
5. Monika Kaup, “The Future Is Entirely Fabulous: The Baroque Genealogy of Latin America's Modernity,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (June 2007): 221–22; and James Holston, “The Death of the Street,” chap. 4 in *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), esp. 101–7.
6. Such varying approaches to autonomy—whether the “frame” for artistic production would be the gallery or the city—can be understood in terms of Jacques Derrida's discussion of the *parergon* (accessory, embellishment). See Jacques Derrida, “The Parergon,” trans. Craig Owens, *October* 9 (Summer 1979): 24.
7. Clark and Cordeiro would certainly have been acquainted with each other's work through the small Concretist art scene in Brazil during the 1950s. However, they do not seem to have interacted socially and indeed do not appear to have taken any interest in the other's artistic production.
8. Waldemar Cordeiro, “Ainda o Abstracionismo,” *Revista de Novissimos* (São Paulo) 2 (January–February 1949): 27–28.
9. Walter Benjamin, “On Painting, or Sign and Mark” (1917), in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 221.
10. “BASE DE LA PEINTURE CONCRÈTE. . . 40 La technique doit être mécanique c'est-à-dire exacte, anti-impresionniste.” Otto Gustaf Carlsund, Theo van Doesburg, Jean Hélion, Léon Arthur Tutundjian, and Marcel Wantz, “Base de la Peinture Concrète,” *Art Concret* (Paris) (April 1930): 1.
11. Of course, as Pia Gottschaller points out, “unlike some of his contemporaries such as Judith Lauand, Cordeiro in these years did not reach for self-adhesive tape or a spray gun . . . instead he preferred a ruling pen or compass and a brush,” which she links to Cordeiro's “classical training at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome.” Gottschaller, “Making Concrete Art,” in Pia Gottschaller and Aleca Le Blanc, *Making Art Concrete: Works from Argentina and Brazil in the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and the Getty Research Institute, 2017), 44.

#### CHAPTER 4. SCATTERED WALL

1. Sérgio B. Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde: Art in Brazil, 1949–1979* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), 88.
2. Vilém Flusser, “Taking Up Residence in Homelessness,” in *Writings*, ed. Andreas Ströhl (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,



12. On this point, see Givaldo Medeiros, "Art Cidade e Paisagem/ Art, City, and Landscape," in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, ed. Analivia Cordeiro, trans. John Norman, Marisa Shirasuna, and Izabel Burbridge (São Paulo: Itaú Cultural, 2014), 503. For the architectonic aspect of Spielraum, see Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version" (1935–1936), in *Work of Art*, 37–38, 45n11; and an earlier reference to Spielraum in terms of urban space in Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis, "Neapel" (1925), in *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Tillman Rexroth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 4:309. See also Ralph Ubl, *Prehistoric Future: Max Ernst and the Return of Painting between the Wars*, trans. Elizabeth Tucker (2004; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 199–201.
13. Waldemar Cordeiro, "Sacilotto, Poeta da economia moderna/ Sacilotto, A Poet of Modern Economy," *Folha da Manhã* (São Paulo), May 11, 1952, repr. and trans. in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, 202.
14. "Deve-se voltar ao mural! . . . salvando as finalidades coletivas da arte." Waldemar Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica—O mural e a arquitetura—O tatlismo optico das tendencias de vanguarda—Para uma arte coletiva," *Folha da Manhã* (São Paulo), August 20, 1950, cad. 5, pag. 12.
15. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 5. André Breton's original conception of the phantom object was a sort of material rebus; the example in *Les vases communicants* was an envelope on which depictions of eyelashes (*cils*) and a handle (*anse*) sound out the word "silence." See André Breton, "L'objet fantôme," *Le Surrealisme au service de la revolution* 3 (December 1931): 20–22; and André Breton, *Qu'est-ce que le surréalisme?* (1934; repr., Paris: Le temps qu'il fait, 1986), 27.
16. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 12.
17. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 5, 12 (emphasis in original).
18. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 5.
19. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 12.
20. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Il Tattilismo* (Milan: Direzione del Movimento Futurista, 1921). Benedetta Cappa Marinetti, *Le forze umane: Romanzo astratto con sintesi grafiche* (Foligno: F. Campitelli, 1924), 146.
21. On the tavolo as an architect's drafting table, see David Rifkind, "Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2007), 53n16. This shift from verticality to horizontality has been understood as a key maneuver for painting and sculpture at the crux of the transition from modern to contemporary art. Rosalind E. Krauss, "No More Play," in *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: The Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), repr. in Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 73–74. See also Rosalind E. Krauss, "Horizontality," in *Formless*, ed. Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss (New York: Zone, 1997), 94–95, 97; and Leo Steinberg, "Other Criteria," in *Other Criteria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 55–91, esp. the section on the "flatbed picture plane" (82–91).
22. Cordeiro was almost certainly acquainted with Prampolini through his involvement in the Rome branch of the international Art Club, which Prampolini founded alongside Polish artist Josef Jarema in 1945. See Gisella Conte and Piero Dorazio, eds., *Art Club: 1945–1964* (Parma: Galleria d'arte Niccoli, 1998), 16.
23. Enrico Prampolini, "Al di là della Pittura, verso i Polimaterici," *Stile Futurista* 1, no. 2 (August 1934): 8–10. This problem of art's lost relationship to architecture was a common theme of interwar writing in Italy and France. See Adrian Anagnost, "Limitless Museum: P. M. Bardi's Aesthetic Re-education," *Modernism/modernity* 26, no. 4 (November 2019): 687–725.
24. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 11.
25. Prampolini, "Al di là della Pittura," 10. See also Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 244–45.
26. Cordeiro's rhetoric parallels that of his contemporaries in postwar Italy, though he did not seem to be conversant in debates going on in 1950s Rome and Milan. See, for example, Marco Zanuso, "Architettura e pittura," *Edilizia moderna* 47 (December 1951): 43–48; Gio Ponti, "Astrattismo in facciata," *Domus* 267 (February 1952): 61; and Piero Dorazio, "Verso la sintesi delle arti plastiche," *Arti Visive* 3 (December 1952), n.p. See also Romy Golan, "Italy and the Concept of the 'Synthesis of the Arts,'" in *Architecture+Art: New Visions, New Strategies*, ed. Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Esa Laaksonen (Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Academy, 2007), 62–83. On the "new humanism" of 1950s architecture, see Romy Golan, *Muralnomad: The Paradox of Wall Painting, Europe 1927–1957* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 183.
27. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 5, 11. Cordeiro attributes the quotation to Le Corbusier's 1928 book *Une maison et un palais*. However, the sentence Cordeiro cites, in quotation marks, is taken from a publication of Le Corbusier's talk at the 1936 Volta Conference in Rome. See *Convegno di arti, 25–31 ottobre 1936–XIV. Tema: Rapporti dell'architettura con le arti figurative* (Rome: Reale accademia d'Italia, 1937), 107. It is unlikely that Cordeiro attended the conference, as he was only eleven years old at the time, but he may have encountered the publication, and many conference participants, as an art student in 1940s Rome. On the Volta Conference, see Romy Golan, "Sironi's Pseudo-Ruin," chap. 3 in *Muralnomad*.
28. Cordeiro, "A arte polimaterica," 11. Le Corbusier, "Vers l'unité: Synthèse des arts majeurs: Architecture, peinture, sculpture," *Volontés de ceux de la résistance* (December 13, 1944), repr. in Le Corbusier, *Oeuvre Complète 1938–1946* (Zurich: Les Éditions d'Architecture, 1966), 152–53, 155 (emphasis added).
29. Waldemar Cordeiro, "O problema da expressão plástica: Relação entre escultura, pintura e arquitetura—A propósito de um artigo do sr. Sergio Milliet," *Folha da Manhã*, January 4, 1950. Compare to Le Corbusier, "L'espace indicible," *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, special issue (November–December 1946): 9–10.
30. Cordeiro, "O problema da expressão plástica."
31. For an account of Latin American artists' reconceptualizations of interwar abstraction, see Megan Sullivan, "Locating Abstraction: The South American Coordinates of the Avant-Garde, 1945–1959"

- (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013).
32. Waldemar Cordeiro, "Sacilotto, A Poet of Modern Economy," *Folha da Manhã* (São Paulo), May 11, 1952, repr. in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, 200.
  33. Cordeiro, "Sacilotto," 201–2. Compare with Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Paris: G. Crès, 1924).
  34. On Cordeiro's cubism, see Luis Pérez-Oramas, "Waldemar Cordeiro: Images That Hold-On at the Edge of Themselves" (paper presented at Waldemar Cordeiro Scholars' Day, Princeton University Department of Spanish and Portuguese and Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, N.J., March 29, 2019).
  35. Burle Marx spent eighteen months in Berlin in 1928–29. While Hans Arp had, by this time, left Germany for Paris, Burle Marx may have become acquainted with Arp's work during this period. See William Howard Adams, *Roberto Burle Marx: The Unnatural Art of the Garden* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1991), 11; and Lélia Coelho Frota, "A Planetary Modernist," in *Roberto Burle Marx: The Modernity of Landscape*, ed. Lauro Cavalcanti, Farès El-Dahdah, and Francis Rambert (Barcelona: Actar, 2011), 141–43.
  36. Henrique Pongetti, "Natal no Rio que more," *Rio 90* (December 1946): 112–13.
  37. On Pedregulho, see Nabil Bonduki, *Origens da habitação social no Brasil: Arquitetura moderna, lei do inquilinato e difusão da casa própria* (São Paulo: Estação Liberdade, 1998); Nabil Bonduki and Carmen Portinho, eds., *Afonso Eduardo Reidy* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Blau, 2000), 82–85; and Richard Williams, *Brazil: Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion, 2009), 85–88. On the rules for residents, see Departamento de Habitação Popular, *Conjunto Residencial Prefeito Mendes de Moraes: Regulamento* (Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura do Distrito Federal, 1957); and Helga Santos da Silva, "Arquitetura moderna para habitação popular: A Apropriação dos espaços no Conjunto Residencial Mendes de Moraes (Pedregulho)" (PhD diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2006).
  38. See Sigfried Giedion's account in *Ata do Júri da 1ª. Bienal Internacional de São Paulo*, quoted in Dante Paglia, *Arquitetura na bienal de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Edições Americanas de arte e arquitetura, 1952); and Williams, *Brazil: Modern Architectures*, 85–88.
  39. On the research, see among others, "Conjunto Pedregulho," *Revista Habitat* 29 (April 1956): 51–52. Urbanist Carmen Portinho claimed that Burle Marx donated his artwork and landscape design. See Bonduki, *Origens da habitação social*, 99.
  40. I have not been able to discover the name of the architect or firm who designed the building, which is a rather undistinguished twelve-story residential high-rise. Clark's mosaic was comprised of *vidrotil* (literally, "glass tile"), made-to-order glass mosaic tile produced by the Brazilian glassworks company Vidrotil in São Paulo beginning in 1947. See Vidrotil, "História," <https://web.archive.org/web/20150326071125/http://www.vidrotil.com.br/empresa-historia.asp>. The material was employed for mosaics by artists such as Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, Clóvis Graciano, and Roberto Burle Marx on the exterior walls of buildings constructed in Brazil during the 1940s and 1950s by architects including Afonso Eduardo Reidy and Oscar Niemeyer. See Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Operários da modernidade* (São Paulo: EdUSP, 1995), 273; and Aracy A. Amaral, "As três décadas essenciais no desenho de Di Cavalcanti," in *Textos do Trópico de Capricórnio*, vol. 1, *Modernismo, arte moderna e o compromisso com o lugar* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2006), 94–95.
  41. Of course, this phrasing might seem to suggest that the "center" of Rio de Janeiro is the area inhabited by wealthy people, while areas where poorer people live and work are peripheral. In fact, in the specific case of Copacabana beach, the waterfront buildings do tend to house upper-income people, but the beach itself is a public zone much visited by people originating from neighborhoods all over the city, particularly during holidays such as New Year's Eve.
  42. See Barbara Klinkhammer, "After Purism: Le Corbusier and Color," *Preservation Education and Research* 4 (2011): 19–38; Jan de Heer, *The Architectonic Colour: Polychromy in the Purist Architecture of Le Corbusier* (Rotterdam: 010, 2009), 173–80; and Stanislaus von Moos, *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979), 296.
  43. On the Village Polychrome, see Lauro Cavalcanti, *When Brazil Was Modern: A Guide to Architecture 1928–1960* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 9; Nicola Pezolet, "Living in Polychrome: The Village Polychrome, 1952–53," *Canadian Centre for Architecture* (December 2009), <https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/22/ideas-of-living/667/living-in-polychrome>; Guillemette Morel Journel, "Le Corbusier et Léger face à face, face au mur," *In Situ* 32 (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/15402>; and Thomas Gluckin, "André Bruyère et la synthèse des arts: Projet de Village polychrome avec Fernand Léger" (1953), *In Situ* 32 (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/insitu/14622>.
  44. Biot is located on France's southern coast, about halfway between Cannes and Nice. While at first blush this seems an unlikely location for Brazilian artists whose journeys to France were likely spurred by the ideal of Paris as a cultural center, the mild climate of Biot may have been appealing for Brazilians, and the nearby cities of the French Riviera were hubs for French and international artists. Guy Debord met the Lettrists at Cannes in 1951, Jean Cocteau was president of the Cannes jury three times during the 1950s, and Yves Klein performed at the Cannes Festival in 1962. There were also efforts to establish a modern art museum in the city of Nice during this period. See Rosemary M. O'Neill, *Art and Visual Culture on the French Riviera, 1956–1971: The École de Nice* (New York: Ashgate, 2012).
  45. Megan Sullivan also argues for the relevance of architecture in Clark's practice, particularly for Clark's transition from figuration to abstraction, but emphasizes Clark's paintings of stairways, such as these. Sullivan, "Locating Abstraction," 212n132.
  46. Or so a newspaper story explains; not having read the play, I cannot directly comment on its message. "Lygia Clark, a cenografia de '13 degraus para baixo,'" *Jornal do Commercio*, January 24, 1953.
  47. "Cenografia Lygia Clark," *Jornal do Brasil*, November 16, 1953, cad. 5, pag. 1.
  48. Monica Amor, "From Work to Frame, In Between, and Beyond: Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, 1959–1964," *Grey Room* 38 (Winter

2010): 20–37.

49. Clark would certainly have been able to see a photograph of Mondrian's atelier by 1956. In the October 28, 1956, issue of the Sunday supplement of the *Jornal do Brasil (SDJB)*, a few weeks after the publication of Clark's own "Uma experiência de integração," the *SDJB* published an article by Michel Seuphor on the integration of the arts. Seuphor's article was illustrated with a photograph of Mondrian's Paris atelier. Michel Seuphor, "A integração das artes é possível?," *Jornal do Brasil*, Sunday supplement, October 28, 1956. This article was a translation of Michel Seuphor, "Synthèse des arts," *Art d'Aujourd'hui* 5, nos. 4–5, (May–June 1954): 13–19. On Mondrian's studio, see Nancy Troy, "Piet Mondrian's Atelier," *Arts Magazine* 53 (December 4, 1978): 82–87. For Clark's take on Mondrian, see the excellent account in Sullivan, "Locating Abstraction," chap. 3.
50. The importance of Gestalt for Brazilian Concrete artists is well established. See, among others, Monica Amor, *Theories of the Nonobject: Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, 1944–1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 81–86.
51. Rosalind E. Krauss, "Gestalt," in *Formless*, ed. Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss (New York: Zone, 1997), 89.
52. On the relevance of Gestalt among late 1940s artists in Brazil, see also Kaira M. Cabañas, "A Strategic Universalist," in *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents*, ed. Glória Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, trans. Stephen Berg (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2015), 23–35; Amor, *Theories of the Nonobject*, 81–86; and Adrian Anagnost, "Cosmopolitanism, Universalism, and Primitivism in 1940s–1950s Urban Brazil: The *Fotoformas* of Geraldo de Barros" (unpublished text, 2010).
53. Ferreira Gullar to Mário Pedrosa, February 16, 1959, Rio de Janeiro, repr. in Ferreira and Paulo Herkenhoff, eds., *Mário Pedrosa: Primary Documents*, 418.
54. There are also intriguing formal similarities between Clark's *Quebra da Moldura* works and illustrations of geometric optical illusions found in Jean Piaget, "Quelques illusions géométriques," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Psychologie und ihre Anwendungen/Revue suisse de psychologie pure et appliquée* 11 (1952): 19.
55. See Mário Pedrosa, "Problemática da arte contemporânea" (1954), repr. in Mário Pedrosa, *Textos escolhidos*, vol. 2, *Forma e percepção estética*, ed. Otilia Beatriz Fiori Arantes (São Paulo: EdUSP, 1995), 287. According to Arantes, this essay was written in 1954, though it was published only in 1959–60, when it was serialized in the *Jornal do Brasil*. Pedrosa cited Jean Piaget and Bärbel Inhelder, *La représentation de l'espace chez l'enfant* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948).
56. "Estamos aqui no domínio das distinções não visualmente habituais apriorísticas, do não sensorialmente delimitado, do espaço não determinado." Pedrosa, "Problemática," 287.
57. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração," *Suplemento Domenical do Jornal do Brasil*, October 7, 1956, cad. 2, pag. 5. This article was the text of a lecture Clark had presented at the Faculdade de Arquitetura in Belo Horizonte in August 1956. It was also published as Lygia Clark, "Uma experiência de integração," *Brasil arquitetura contemporânea* (Rio de Janeiro) 8 (1956): 45.
58. "A Conferência de Cesar Domela no Museu de Arte Moderna—'Quelques aperçus et conceptions personnels sur l'art moderne,'" *Correio da Manhã*, October 21, 1954, 12. Jayme Mauricio, "Lygia Clark três anos depois: Valorização da linha e cromatismos no plano arquitetônico," *Correio da Manhã*, April 7, 1956, cad. 1.
59. "A Conferência de Cesar Domela."
60. For an opposing view, see Luis Pérez-Oramas's assertion that the line's "organic" character comes from its identity as an incision that penetrates the body of the painting, "giv[ing] the possibility of looking at the interior of the body of the painting" and "function[ing] as an opening to the organism of the painting." Museum of Modern Art, "Lygia Clark. *Descoberta da linha orgânica* (Discovery of the organic line). 1954," July 12, 2013, <https://www.moma.org/multimedia/audio/388/6727>.
61. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração."
62. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração."
63. Frederico Moraes, "Entrevista com Lygia Clark," *Diário de Minas* (Belo Horizonte), August 8, 1957, repr. in *Leilão março de 2012*, ed. Frederico Moraes (Rio de Janeiro: Soraia Cals Escritório de Arte, 2012), n.p.
64. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração."
65. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração."
66. Clark, "Uma experiência de integração." Megan Sullivan, however, emphasizes Clark's slightly later insistence that the organic line is "not graphical." Lygia Clark, "Lygia Clark e o espaço concreto expressional," *Suplemento Dominica do Jornal do Brasil*, July 2, 1959. Sullivan, "Locating Abstraction," 155–60.
67. Sérgio Martins, "Phenomenological Openness, Historicist Closure: Revisiting the Theory of the Non-Object," *Third Text* 26, no. 1 (2012): 79–90.
68. Ferreira Gullar, "Manifesto Neoconcreto," *Suplemento Dominical do Jornal do Brasil*, March 22, 1959, 4–5. See also Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde*, chap. 2; Amor, *Theories of the Nonobject*, chap. 3; and Irene V. Small, *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 24, 37–38, 52.
69. "Ora, se os concretos compõem com espaços iguais e formas semelhantes, já se estabelece aí uma relação entre um módulo arquitetônico e a própria pintura concreta." Clark, "Uma experiência da integração."
70. "The conceptions of color and texture," Cordeiro continued, "confirm the identity of the process, the morphological identity between Concrete Art and industry." Waldemar Cordeiro, "Arte industrial," *ad. arquitetura e decoração* 27 (February–March 1958): 1.
71. See Waldemar Cordeiro, "Para uma justa proporção entre volumes edificados e espaços livres," *Acrópole* (São Paulo) 19, no. 223 (May 1957): 244–46; Euler Sandeville Junior, "Anotações para uma História do Paisagismo Moderno em São Paulo: Elaboração da Linguagem e Conceituação de um Campo entre Arquitetos," *Paisagem e Ambiente* (São Paulo) 10 (1997): 97–166; and Ana Maria de Moraes Belluzzo, ed., *Waldemar Cordeiro, uma aventura da razão* (São Paulo: MAC-USP, 1986).
72. Mauro Claro, *Unilabor: Desenho industrial, arte moderna e autogestão operária* (São Paulo: Senac, 2004). Ethel Leon, *Design brasileiro: Quem*

- fez, quem faz/*Brazilian Design: Who Did, Who Does* (São Paulo: Senac, 2005), 82–83.
73. Leon, *Design brasileiro*, 82–83.
74. See Small, *Folding the Frame*, 43–49. On the attribution of the redesign of the *Jornal do Brasil*, see Daniel Trench Bastos, “Tentativa e acerto, a reforma gráfica do *Jornal do Brasil* e a construção do SDJB” (MA thesis, Universidade de São Paulo, 2008), 20–25.
75. In fact, it was architects who were, arguably, responsible for disseminating Concretist aesthetics throughout urban space in Brazil. Examples of buildings with geometric designs on their facades include the Rio de Janeiro Hospital de Lagoa (1955), by Oscar Niemeyer’s firm; the Casa Rubem de Mendonça (1958), designed by architect João Batista Vilanova Artigas, with a mosaic mural by Mario Gruber; various buildings in Brasília (1958–60) and Rio de Janeiro (1962) with tile murals by Athos Bulcão; the Banco do Nordeste (1962), with tile mural by Antonio Maluf; and the black and white tile sidewalks (1966) that still exist all over São Paulo to this day. While many buildings constructed during the 1950s applied figurative tile mosaics, in the 1960s abstract tile designs were ubiquitous in Brazilian architecture. As a U.S. visitor to Brazil once remarked to me, the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo look like a forest of high-rises wrapped in bathroom tile. And of course, this use of tiles looks back to the Brazilian modernists’ redeployment of colonial azulejo tile decoration, as in the MES building.
76. C. A., “Conversa com Alfred Barr Jr.,” *Suplemento Literário, O Estado de S. Paulo*, September 28, 1957. See also Ana Cândida de Avelar, “Controversies of a Juror: Alfred Barr Jr at the 4th São Paulo Bienal,” *Third Text* 26, no. 1 (January 2012): 29–39.
77. Mário Pedrosa, “Pintura brasileira e gosto internacional,” *Jornal do Brasil*, November 19, 1957, repr. in Mário Pedrosa, *Textos escolhidos*, vol. 1, *Acadêmicos e modernos* (São Paulo: EdUSP, 1995), 279.
78. Pedrosa, “Pintura brasileira e gosto internacional,” 281.
79. Pedrosa, “Pintura brasileira e gosto internacional,” 281.
80. Jorg Lampe, *Die Presse* (Vienna), September 24, 1959, quoted in Jayme Mauricio, “A crítica Austríaca e a arte Brasileira,” *Correio da Manhã*, November 20, 1959, cad. 2, pag. 2.
81. “In spite of the incipient industrialization, in Brazil this class [of industrial workers and smaller employees] did not exist. . . . Concrete art and Brazilian architecture did not presume the existence of an already consolidated industrial society, and in a way they were establishing it. Modern times should first be achieved in the symbolic plane, and then achieved within the social structure.” Lorenzo Mammì, “Concret ’56: The Root of Form (A Reconstruction of the I National Exhibition of Concrete Art),” in *Concreta ’56: A Raiz da forma*, ed. Lorenzo Mammì, João Bandeira, André Stolarski, and Carolina Soares (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 2006), 32. One might compare this to the situation of productivist artists in Soviet Russia during the 1920s, whose efforts to bring together art and industry were undertaken in conditions of severe “under-industrialization” and economic instability. See Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), esp. chap. 5, “Red Technics”; and Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005).
82. The term used is “*elementos-tipo*,” which would translate literally as “type-elements.” “Maurício Nogueira Lima vai expor varias [sic] obras na galeria de arte das ‘Folhas,’” *Folha da Manhã*, January 15, 1959, 9 (emphasis added). See also Caroline Jones on the auratic mechanisms of modern art, which persisted even as artists in the postwar United States began employing industrial and managerial procedures. Caroline Jones, *The Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 2.
83. At times, Clark did speak of social issues. In a 1957 interview, for example, Clark noted that “here in Brazil, the museum educates the elite more so than the people [o povo] in general,” and highlighted several ways of making the fine arts more accessible to broader audiences: using mass media such as radio and television, employing “simple and accessible language,” and placing mobile exhibitions in the “plaza or neighborhood, but above all in schools and hospitals.” “Lygia Clark (Pintora concretista): ‘A arte me disciplina e me educa,’” *Jornal do Brasil*, August 8, 1957, cad. 2. Clark had previously participated in exhibitions at a hospital (1953) and at a steelworks factory (1956). See “I Salão de Arte do Sanatório de Curicica,” *Correio da Manhã*, January 1, 1953, cad. 1., pag. 11; and Aleca Le Blanc, “Concrete and Steel: Grupo Frente’s Exhibit of Concrete Art at the Brazilian National Steelworks Company, 1956” (paper presented at the College Art Association Conference, New York, February 9–12, 2012). However, Clark’s artistic practice remained an activity distinct from any political action. Later in life, Clark explained that “if I were younger, I would be in politics,” while describing her distanced acknowledgment of social problems such as police brutality under Brazil’s military dictatorship. Lygia Clark, “1968: Are We Domesticated?” *October* 69 (Summer 1994): 107, quoted in Ana María León, “Lygia Clark: Between Spectator and Participant,” *Thresholds* 39, *Inertia* (2011): 45–53.
84. See Small, *Folding the Frame*, 53.
85. See Sullivan, “Locating Abstraction,” 188.
86. “Neoconcretos na Bahia,” *Suplemento Dominical do Jornal do Brasil*, November 21, 1959.
87. While this was called the 2a Exposição Neoconcreta, there had actually been an additional unnumbered Neoconcrete exhibition between the first and second exhibitions. In November 1959, this Exposição Neoconcreta na Bahia, sponsored by the fine arts department at the Universidade Federal de Bahia, in partnership with Lóide Aéreo Nacional airlines, was held at the Salvador Municipal Tourism Department’s gallery on the Belvedere da Sé in Salvador, Bahia. This exhibition comprised works by the seven artists who had exhibited in the 1a Exposição Neoconcreta, plus works by an additional six artists, including—for the first time—Hélio Oiticica. The exhibition was intended to travel onward to the Museu de Arte Moderna in Belo Horizonte in January 1960, though this proposed exhibition did not take place. See “Exposição neoconcreta na Bahia,”



*Suplemento Dominical do Jornal do Brasil*, October 31, 1959.

88. For Sérgio B. Martins, the relative lack of institutional spaces and virtual absence of an art market in 1950s and 1960s Brazil renders moot the importance of “site” in Rosalind Krauss’s sense. Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde*, 203–4n74. Rosalind E. Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30–44.
89. The under-the-terrace exhibition space of the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, at the Ministry of Education and Health was flanked by curtains. Oscar Niemeyer’s Palácio das Indústrias building, where the 2a Exposição Neoconcreta was held, is famed for its curving walls, which make hanging art somewhat difficult.
90. Ronaldo Brito, “Neo-Concretism, Apex and Rupture of the Brazilian Constructive Project,” trans. Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro with Irene V. Small, *October* 161 (Summer 2017): 125, 130. Ronaldo Brito first published on this topic in the mid-1970s in the Rio de Janeiro arts journal *Malasartes* and the exhibition catalog *Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte (1950–1962)*, ed. Aracy A. Amaral (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro; São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado, 1977), 303–10. He released a revised and expanded version as a book in 1985, reprinted in 1999. Ronaldo Brito, “Neoconcretismo,” *Malasartes* (Rio de Janeiro) 3 (April–June 1976): 9–13. Ronaldo Brito, *Neoconcretismo: Vértice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1985).
91. Brito, “Neo-Concretism,” 134.
92. On Clark’s oeuvre, see Suely Rolnik, “Molding a Contemporary Soul: The Empty-Full of Lygia Clark,” in *The Experimental Exercise of Freedom: Lygia Clark, Gego, Mathias Goeritz, Hélio Oiticica, and Mira Schendel*, ed. Rina Carvajal and Alma Ruiz (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000), 55–108.
93. Cordeiro, “Para uma justa proporção.”
94. Waldemar Cordeiro, “arte, arquitetura e vida,” *ad: arquitetura e decoração* (São Paulo), no. 26 (December 1957): 1.
95. On this point, see Holston, *Modernist City*, 101–7.
96. Cordeiro, “arte, arquitetura & vida.”
97. Antonio Candido, “Sous-développement et littérature en Amérique latine,” *Cahiers d’histoire mondiale* (UNESCO) 12, no. 4 (1970): 618–40, repr. as “Literature and Underdevelopment,” in Antonio Candido, *On Literature and Society*, trans. Howard Becker (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 120–21.
98. Waldemar Cordeiro, “O concretismo e o problema da organização da cultura,” *ad: arquitetura e decoração* (São Paulo), no. 22 (March/April 1957): 24. Fabricio Vaz Nunes has pointed out that Cordeiro was echoing the title of Antonio Gramsci’s classic: *Gli intellettuali e l’organizzazione della cultura*, 4th ed. (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1949). Fabricio Vaz Nunes, “Waldemar Cordeiro: Da arte concreta ao ‘pop-concreto’” (MA thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2004), 45n87.
99. While Cordeiro is taken here as an arch-modernist, he also developed a more resolutely contemporary body of work in the later 1960s and early 1970s, with combine-like assemblages he called “pop-cretos” (combining pop art and Concrete art), a media practice that offered a protoconceptual approach to the newspaper as medium/media, and, finally, a digital media practice cut short by his death.
100. Waldemar Cordeiro, “Conceituação do paisagismo enquanto comunicação e arte/Conceptualization of Landscaping as Communication and Art, São Paulo,” typewritten text (paper for the Institute of Brazilian Architects [IAB] Seminar “O Homem e a Paisagem Paulistana/Man and São Paulo’s Landscape,” São Paulo, November 1964), repr. in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, 486.
101. Waldemar Cordeiro, “Planejamento e Design Paisagísticos/Landscape Planning and Design” (paper for First Meeting of Architect-Urban Planners, Curitiba, Brazil, May 1966), repr. in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, 512.
102. Waldemar Cordeiro, “Uma nova variável para modelo de organização territorial/A New Variable for the Model of Territorial Organization: The Evolution of Electronic and Communication Media” (paper for the VIII Congress of the Sociedade Interamericana de Planificação [SIAP], Salvador, November 1970), 520.
103. Waldemar Cordeiro, “Mário Cravo, Escultor/Mário Cravo, Sculptor,” *Folha da Manhã* (São Paulo), July 30, 1950, repr. in *Waldemar Cordeiro: Fantasia exata*, 88.
104. Waldemar Cordeiro, “o objeto,” *ad: arquitetura e decoração* (São Paulo), no. 20 (November/December 1956).

## 5. EDEN

1. Ceres Franco, *Opinião 65* (Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, 1965), n.p.
2. Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 52–55.
3. Sérgio B. Martins, *Constructing an Avant-Garde: Art in Brazil, 1949–1979* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), 86.
4. “Parangolé” is a slang word, already little used by the time Oiticica appropriated it from a grafitto, that roughly connotes hubbub, syncopated rhythm, conviviality, and explosive energy. See Irene V. Small, *Hélio Oiticica: Folding the Frame* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 188. See also Carlos Zilio, João Luiz Lafeté, and Lígia Chiappini Leite, *O nacional e o popular na cultura brasileira: Artes plásticas e literatura* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1982), 28.
5. See Small, *Folding the Frame*, 202.
6. This story is recounted in Claudir Chaves, “Parangolé’ impedido no MAM,” *Diário Carioca* (Rio de Janeiro), August 14, 1965, 7. See also Paola Berenstein Jacques, *Estética da Ginga: A arquitetura das favelas através da obra de Hélio Oiticica* (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2001), 37.
7. For a critique of such interpretations, see Small, *Folding the Frame*, 181–86.
8. Roberto Schwarz, “Remarques sur la culture et la politique au Brésil, 1964–1969,” *Les temps modernes* (Paris) 288 (July 1970): 37–73, repr. as “Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964–1969,” in *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, ed. John Gledson (New York: Verso, 1992), 127 (emphasis in original).