

A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS IN ITS 200 YEARS

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ON AUGUST 12TH, 1816, by Royal Decree, King João VI established a Royal School of Sciences, Arts and Crafts in Rio de Janeiro, in order to promote and disseminate the knowledge that he considered indispensable to men and to the progress of the country. It was sustained in the study of the Fine Arts, paying annually the necessary costs for the Royal Treasure to the artists who would provide the national instruction of the fine arts.

The first masters came with the French Artistic Mission, with the aim of implementing artistic teaching through the creation of an art school. This is the genesis of the School of Fine Arts of UFRJ.

On November 5th, 1826, in the First Reign of D. Pedro I, the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts was inaugurated, and the artistic education began in Brazil in a systematic and institutional way. In the first ten years, Debret and Grandjean de Montigny taught private lessons in a house they rented in downtown, in Rio de Janeiro.

During the Empire, our Academy followed closely the model of the French Academy. Names such as Debret, Montigny, Antoine and Felix Taunay sought to endow the institution with a teaching in which drawing and painting underpinned artistic practices. In the same way that happened in the French Academy, in our Academy were also held the General Exhibitions, the first of which took place on December 12th, 1840, in the presence of the Emperor. We emphasize its public and democratic character, since the jury of admission of these expositions directly received the works, without any intermediations. The prizes were given by appointment of the Congregation and were granted by the Emperor, who personally gave them to the nominees.

Many and renowned were the artists who passed through the Academy since the first French masters. We do not want to explain all of them, because it would be impossible to establish a chronology that contemplated, in such a synthetic text, from the first Brazilian artists, such as Araújo Portoalegre, Jose Reis de Carvalho and Francisco Pedro do Amaral, to the others, already in the Second Empire - names like Victor Meirelles and Pedro Américo, formed by the Academy - and all the great names that the History of Brazilian Art registers with prominence.

In 1842, on the occasion of the Third General Exhibition of Fine Arts, along with the works that were exhibited there, in the space of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, there was a display of daguerreotypes¹. The fact was three years after the invention of photography. The author was a woman and the works were exhibited next to those considered 'fine arts'. An even more striking fact emerges from the fact that in Europe, photography was only to be exhibited at the Universal Exposition of England in 1851 and then in Paris, at the Universal Exposition of 1855. In addition, women artists only began to stand out at the end of the 19th century.

The second episode that seems striking to us as part of this history of the School of Fine Arts happened in 1879, before the Abolition of the Captivity, and already at the end of the Empire,

¹ On the subject, consult the doctoral thesis of Vladimir Machado de Oliveira "From the conceptual sketch to the roundabout of the dioramas: the photograph in the painting of the battles of Pedro Américo", defended in the Department of History of the Philosophy, Language and Human Sciences College of the University of São Paulo, 2002.

having as scenario the 25th official exhibition of the Academy. In that year, all the artists were convinced that Estêvão da Silva, a black man, would receive the first prize, which did not happen. But what was about to happen still seems tremendous to us today. When the artist was called in to receive the smallest prize he had won, he simply 'arrogantly raised his head, and loudly shouted: 'I refuse !'². Therefore, Estêvão did not accept the prize from the hands of the Emperor. As a consequence of his attitude, he was suspended for a year, but he was not expelled, which signals the role of the Academy, not only in regard to teaching, but as a propeller of Brazilian art, regardless of social class, creed, race or color.

After the Proclamation of the Republic, the Academy was renamed National School of Fine Arts (ENBA). In the first decades of the 20th century, the painter Manoel Santiago, considered by Paulo Herkenhoff 'the first Brazilian abstract painter'³, proves that, despite ENBA's academic teaching, some artists already had the modernist omen and ventured to look for new paths.

The School itself received a stimulus of great proportions: in September 1908, the work of the new building for the National School of Fine Arts was completed. Designed by Morales de los Rios, the eclectic building was named by Ferreira das Neves as 'Modernized Renaissance'. Undoubtedly, it is a great landmark for the beginning of the Republic. However, for the architect and designer of the work, it was a reason for dissatisfaction and disconsolation, because the Construction Commission of the Central Avenue has altered the project significantly, as attested by several statements by Morales de los Rios.

In 1909, with the beginning of the activities in the building of the Central Avenue, the modernist issue was gaining new contours. Eliseu Visconti had an affinity with the Impressionist movement, which represented the strength of his modernity at the time. In addition, his production as a graphic artist pointed out the extreme ease in performing decorative styling as a pioneer of industrial design in Brazil. Visconti recognized decorative art with the vision of the modern artist, without the preconception of seeing it as a minor category. He has made several graphic and industrial designs, such as designs of vases, plates and even stamping, accentuating the decorative qualities of the pieces and creating stylizations that highlight his virtuosity. The greatest example of this decorative production is in the Municipal Theater of Rio de Janeiro. The cloth, the foyer and the dome settle the versatility of this artist, who, in the context of decorative art, always leaves his mark as a painter.

The disciples formed by Visconti, from Marques Júnior to Henrique Cavalleiro, continued to trace the course of the National School of Fine Arts. But the School needed a more forceful impulse to identify itself as an institution that was not only praised for the good norms of the academy, but which also sought to be effectively open and, more than that, to be recognized as such.

Lúcio Costa assumes the direction of ENBA being 29 years old incomplete in 1930, aiming at the renewal of the plastic arts teaching and the implementation of a modern architecture course. He hoped to provide ENBA with a technical-scientific course that would reach perfection and that would seek to guide artistic teaching to achieve the ideal harmony with the construction. He did not intend to extirpate the study of the classic, but proposed that it should be performed as a discipline, according to a critical understanding, without being applied directly. Similarly, he understood that architects should know the architecture of the

² TEIXEIRA LEITE, José Roberto. Dicionário Crítico da Pintura no Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: Artlivre, 1988, p. 476.

³ LUZ, Angela Ancorada. Uma breve história dos Salões de Arte. Rio de Janeiro: Caligrama, 2005, p. 11.

colonial era, but not for the transposition of their reasons for the new projects, but as learning lessons of perfect simplicity, and adaptation to the environment and function.

The reformist ideals of Lúcio Costa would be reflected in the organization of the 38th General Exhibition of Fine Arts, which would become known as the Revolutionary Hall, a reference to that historical moment, which gave meaning to the show by the new criteria of the organization being adopted. Right in the beginning, he created an Organizing Committee, formed by Anita Malfatti, Portinari, Manuel Bandeira and Celso Antonio, presided over by himself.

Portinari had just arrived from Europe, after enjoying the Prize for Foreigner Travel, which he had received in 1928 with Olegário Mariano painting, with the Academy uniform. After his stay in Europe, in contact with the European vanguard, Portinari would return to Brazil with another look and aligned with those who sought to build our modernity. It is this Portinari that will constitute 1931's commission of the hall.

The jury was eliminated and the strength of the organizing committee was prioritized. The prize for travel abroad was suspended under the allegation of financial reasons and a catalog was prepared with modern layout, which was composed of three sections: painting, architecture, and sculpture and printmaking. All the works inscribed were accepted, which did move away the presence of great artists, such as Guignard, Aldo Bonadei, Anita Malfatti, Antonio Gomide, Cândido Portinari, Cícero Dias, Di Cavalcanti, Flávio de Carvalho, Ismael Nery, John Graz, Lasar Segall, among others that gave the mark of a new proposal of exhibition.

It is interesting to note that, at the time that Anita Malfatti had not yet recovered from Monteiro Lobato's criticism, Rio's circle, and especially the National School of Fine Arts, welcomed the artist with due regard to those invited to be organizers of an innovative proposal. Despite the fast participation of Lúcio Costa towards ENBA, Manuel Bandeira declared, after the director left the direction of the School, which well summarizes its importance ahead of the ENBA: the reformulation of the architecture course and a new proposal for the hall of art.

In that same year, in the basements of ENBA, there is the Bernardelli Center: a group of artists who wanted to facilitate the access of the young people to the Salon, who advocated the reformulation of artistic teaching. They would meet at night, for they generally worked during the day, this was the common time for everyone. On the weekends, they went out together to paint outdoors. What marks the history of ENBA, at that moment, comes from its basements. They are the works of artists such as: Ado Malagoli, Borges da Costa, Bráulio Poiava, Bruno Lechovski, Bustamante Sá, Eugênio Sigaud, João José Rescala, Joaquim Tenreiro, José Pancetti, Manoel Santiago, Milton Dacosta, Yuji Tamaki, Yoshia Takaoka, Quirino Campofiorito and Edson Motta, because the light of modernity arrived before the day through their works. The Center remained in ENBA until 1935, creating new positions that would redirect its paths.

It was also in 1931 that the School would join the University of Rio de Janeiro and, in 1937, the University of Brazil. In that same year, the National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA) was created.

With the creation of the National Museum of Fine Arts, the building designed for the School yields important part of its spaces for the installation of the museum. The collection of the 54 works brought by the French Mission and the works of the D. João VI collection, as well as the travel prizes and other works of his gallery, give rise to the collection of the MNBA. The National School of Fine Arts continues to function in the same building, occupying the ground floor and part of the galleries of the second floor with its classrooms, in addition to the

basements, occupied with its workshops. Museum and School communicated themselves with open doors, and art students had free access to the collections and exhibitions of the new institution.

In 1940, finally, a Modern Division appears in the National Salon of Fine Arts. The work of Lúcio Costa and the example of the nucleus produced the first results and allowed a great new step to be taken, since the Modern Division would give rise to the National Salon of Modern Art in 1951. At all these times, the National School of Fine Arts played a major role in the construction of Brazilian art, due to its presence in the organization of the salons, in the constitution of the jury and in the considerable flow of ENBA artists participating in the event.

On August 31st, 1945, the Architecture course, which was part of the National School of Fine Arts, departed from the competence of the School and constituted a new unit: the National College of Architecture. However, it should be noted that the great Brazilian architects, Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Ernani Vasconcelos, Jorge Moreira and Carlos Leão, who came to constitute the so-called Escola Carioca (Rio de Janeiro's School), pioneer of modern architecture in Brazil, came from the course of architecture of the National School of Fine Arts, as well as the landscapist Burle Marx.

The first major event of the next decade would be the opening of the printmaking studio in 1951, with Raymundo Cela in charge of the project and teaching. After his death in 1954, the artist Oswald Goeldi, chosen by the Congregation, took on the chair. It impressed a new freedom in the process of creation, understanding the need for harmony with his time. Goeldi was already modern. He brought to the studio a didactics aimed at discovering the identity of each recorder and its potentiality. He not only made printmakings, but also engravers. Among them, Adir Botelho stands out, his student and assistant until his death in 1961, the year in which Adir takes the place of the master and gives continuity to his project.

In 1952, the artist Georgina de Albuquerque was named Director of the National School of Fine Arts, a fact to be distinguished for being the first woman to assume the position of director, which was not yet common in the decade⁴. It was during his administration that, in 1955, Professor Onofre Penteadó created the Center Life-Value-Art, composed of teachers and students of ENBA. In August of that same year, the only great show of the nucleus was held, with the participation of Quirino Campofiorito, Ubi Bava, Henrique Cavalleiro, Adir Botelho, Edson Motta, Almir Gadelha, Fernando Pamplona, Abelardo Zaluar, Lucas Meyenhoffer, João Garboginni Quaglia, among others. For Onofre, the aim was to integrate 'the college and student bodies of the old school in the spirit of the researches of our time'⁵.

The National School of Fine Arts continued to participate in the artistic and cultural life of the country through the artists who passed through the institution. In 1956, Candido Portinari exhibited, in the foyer of the Municipal Theater, the War and Peace panels, which were commissioned for the UN building in New York, measuring 1,400 x 1,000cm each. Still in the late 1950s, Galeria Macunaíma is founded by the Academic Directory of ENBA. The project was signed by Almir Gadelha and the space, claimed by the group, was the same one that had been occupied by the Núcleo Bernardelli. The claim made by the directory to Rector Pedro Calmon was to rescue the same desire to be ahead of his time, as the nucleus wanted and as long as

⁴ It was only in 1975 that another woman assumed the direction: the sculptor Celita Vaccani, who remained in the chair until 1976.

⁵MORAIS, Frederico. Cronologia das Artes Plásticas no Rio de Janeiro. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1995. p.234.

the Academic Directory. In addition, there was an entrance through Mexico Street, which created the possibility of greater visitation to the exhibitions and shows that would be held there. Pedro Calmon welcomed the idea and determined that ENBA would arrange space for the group and that it would hire an employee in the new gallery, as a porter, to ensure greater space operability. The Gallery was full of interruptions and returns, maintaining the characteristics of creating according to its time, privileging the dialogue with contemporaneity.

Always nourished by the tension between those who would like nothing to change in ENBA and those who struggled to make everything different, breathing and living from the present while building the future, ENBA remained at the center of the Brazilian artistic production, with recognized quality. A great example comes from the National Salon of Modern Art of 1958, when Franz Weissman and João Garbognini Quaglia won the foreign travel award. Both were graduates of the ENBA and deserved the highlight of Ferreira Gullar. For him, they were the only two works of the 'warm hall' of art of that year that deserved to receive visits.

In 1960, Fernando Pamplona was invited to sign the Carnival of Salgueiro Samba School, becoming responsible for the great change in the design and scenery of carnivals from that year. Fleeing the traditional plots and innovating boldly, Pamplona would transform the street into a grand stage, build bridges between popular culture and the academia, moving between the Samba School and the National School of Fine Arts, subverting the rule and norm and revolutionizing the carnival from Rio de Janeiro. Other great carnavalescos came with him, like Arlindo Rodrigues, Maria Augusta and Rosa Magalhães a little further ahead. The National School of Fine Arts was present unequivocally in each of them.

In 1965, the year of the IV Centenary of the City of Rio de Janeiro, A Trinca, a company formed by Adir Botelho and his colleagues Fernando Santoro and Davi Ribeiro, was the winner of the decoration contest of the city of Rio de Janeiro, exploring the theme 'Debret'. This decoration opened a new perspective both with regard to the use of new materials and to spatial design, use of color, formwork and lighting.

It is also in that same year that the University of Brazil, following the standardization of the denominations of the federal universities, disappears as a name, resurfacing in our city as Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. With the adjustment of the nomenclature, the National School of Fine Arts would be renamed School of Fine Arts, becoming a unit of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. This happens a year after the military coup of 1964, which, fatally, would also have repercussions in the School of Fine Arts.

Soon after the military coup, the great tension between the artistic currents that confronted reflected well the moment that was lived. On the one hand, those who fought for an institution aligned with the vanguards of their time and on the other hand, the monolithic force of the academic tradition. There were still those who defended the socialist ideals and even stood for the Communist Party and the conservatives and accommodated to capitalism. In the School of Fine Arts, Quirino Campofiorito and Mário Barata were appointed as the teachers of the 'left' and Gerson Pompeu Pinheiro - director of the institution in that period: 1964-1971 - was named as the 'right'.

As a student turmoil swept through the streets and Cinelandia became the scenario of freedom manifestations, the EBA students who were engaged in the struggle suffered drastic repression. At that moment, when the police arrived to arrest those who were 'insubordinate', the students ran to the School and the gates were closed. After a few similar incidents, the principal ordered the gates closed as soon as the students left, so they could not return to EBA.

On the day the order first came to fruition, and the students were on the outside ready for anything, the fact was brought to the attention of Abelardo Zaluar, a modern artist who introduced a new didactic to drawing classes and stimulated creative freedom of your group. He was a professor and did not hesitate to go to the entrance gate and determine that it was open, because in the absence of the director, the full professor enjoyed authority in the institutional area. As the students entered, Abelardo led them through the basement of the school to the exit on Mexico Street and returned to the studio to continue his class⁶.

By Institutional Act N. 5, AI-5 of December 13th, 1968, signed by General Costa e Silva, three EBA professors were dismissed and Abelardo Zaluar was among them. The other two were Quirino Campofiorito and Mário Barata. What surprised everyone was that Abelardo Zaluar was affiliated with UDN (National Democratic Union). Again, Zaluar's defense of freedom, which made him modern, spoke louder than the political inclinations of each.

Another traumatic moment lived by the school was still going to happen. In the recess of the vacations of 1974, the school began to be transferred to the building of the Architecture College in the University City. Without funds⁷, without any adaptations to serve an art school and without the works of EBA were dropped, the School left for UFRJ campus. It seemed that EBA would disappear in the displacement of the center of the city to the Fundão Island, that was defended by some, such as the director at the time, the architect Thales Memory. The change served many interests, including politician ones.

Despite the lack of space, the absence of their own workshops and the teachers who retired, so they did not have to go to Fundão Island, the flow of students continued and they took from the art the motivation to continue.

In 1976, already being managed by the director Almir Paredes Cunha, some spaces were conquered and the museologist Ecylla Castanheira Brandão dedicated herself to the creation of the Museum D. João VI with the collection that we had managed to bring. In the mezzanine of the big building, in the space that was destined to the Library of the Architecture College and assigned to us for the project, the museum would become true. There were many problems there. Enlightenment, infiltrations, gutters, lack of adequate space for a technical reserve. It seemed that everything was against an art museum, while in the workshops, the masters formed new artists, having accepted the challenge of transferring the School and staying ahead of teaching.

Maurício Salgueiro, both in the sculpture and metal workshops, was impressing on the eyes of his disciples the way of looking ahead, overcoming difficulties with creative power. Lydio Bandeira de Mello supported the construction of shape in the drawing, with its extensive figurative domain. Adir Botelho and Ahmés de Paula Machado were leading the dream of Goeldi, while they formed new recorders like Kazuo Iha and Marcos Varella. João Garboggini Quaglia and Carlos Magano, in painting studios, both in figurativism and in abstractionism, were pointing out the new ways of creation.

Rui de Oliveira weaves his drawings with lines and imagination while passing to his students, in Visual Programming, the process of creation. Celeida Tostes would give the necessary impetus from the creation of the ceramic workshop to a new reality in the teaching area. Many other

⁶ Episode reported by Fernando Pamplona.

⁷ In fact, the funds for the transfer and provision of the school were diverted to other objectives and did not reach EBA. On the following year, in a different administration, some part of the funds that we should receive finally arrived, delayed and insufficiently.

artists who were committed to modern art and avantgarde movements, even without having been students at the school, were joining EBA as teachers, increasingly oxygenating art education at school.

There were new achievements, such as the new D. João VI Museum, with all the collection of the School of Fine Arts, including the Rare Works of the Library, now occupying an area of the 7th floor of the building, inaugurated in 2004. In the recent past, after the transfer to the University City, Lourdes Barreto, Marcos Varella, Kazuolha, Jarbas Lopes, Marcos Cardoso, Ronald Duarte, Paulo Campinho, Bruno Drummond, Gilson Martins, Jorge Duarte, Maurício Dias (Dias & Riedweg) and many others, whose names we could not relate in this review of 200 years of the School of Fine Arts. Nowadays, EBA continues to fulfill its vocation, firm in the construction of Brazilian art with its more than 2.700 students, who came from the few initial students of Debret and Grandjean de Montigny, in 1816, maintaining the same artistic ideal in these 200 years of history.