

**Nelson A. Rockefeller and Art Patronage in Brazil after World War II:
Assis Chateaubriand, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
and the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM)**

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My research at the Rockefeller Archive Center looked for evidence of Nelson A. Rockefeller's involvement in the creation of art museums and cultural programs promoted by Brazilian philanthropists, particularly in São Paulo in the decade after the end of World War II. This research is part of the project for a comprehensive book about the work and life of Italian-born Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914-1992) who, among other important buildings, designed the temporary and permanent facilities for the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP). The museum, co-founded in 1947 by Brazilian press magnate Assis Chateaubriand (1892-1968) and her husband, Italian art dealer and critic Pietro Maria Bardi (1900-1999), contains one of the most prestigious art collections in Latin America and pioneered the layout of modern museums and the concept of comprehensive art institutes based on North American and Bauhaus models. The archival material reveals that the creation of MASP was closely related with the creation of the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), and that both represented the aspirations of local elites in creating a modern, cosmopolitan culture in the city with the direct and indirect help of Nelson A. Rockefeller.

This report aims at organizing specific and relevant material found at the Rockefeller Archive Center into a chronological narrative based on my broader research. I first came across Nelson A. Rockefeller's name through an editorial in the first issue of *Habitat*, an art magazine found in the Bardi Archives in São Paulo. The magazine was created and edited by the Bardi in December of 1950 as part of the MASP's cultural and institutional expansion. Their editorial quoted a long excerpt from Nelson A. Rockefeller's address as a special guest at the opening of the museum's new painting gallery. "Art ignores borders [and] speaks a universal language," he said, suggesting that art is "a means for approximation and understanding between peoples and nations." "With the exception of places where it is controlled and subverted by reactionary totalitarianism," he emphasized that art "represents free men's highest and most sublime expression." Echoing Franklin D. Roosevelt's address at the opening of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City almost two decades earlier, Rockefeller called the São Paulo museum a "citadel of civilization."^[1]

This address sounded meaningful in the context of political and cultural struggles growing in Brazil since the simultaneous end of World War II and Getúlio Vargas' fifteen-year dictatorial regime in 1945. Nelson A. Rockefeller's role in United States' foreign relations with Latin America as well as his enthusiastic support for the arts and for MoMA in New York in the years before this speech had already helped give Brazilian culture broad international visibility. For example, MoMA organized the large exhibition on modern Brazilian architecture, *Brazil Builds*,

in 1943, during Rockefeller's tenure as a trustee of the Museum and his term as Coordinator of the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA) in the U.S. State Department. At the same time, the OCIAA also produced several travelogues about Brazilian cities and Latin American countries, including a film produced by a team of artists and designers led by Walt Disney. .

According to information in Nelson A. Rockefeller's personal archives, he started to travel to Latin America in the late 1930s, with extensive visits between 1937 and 1939 representing the Standard Oil Company. His first recorded trip to Brazil took place in 1942 and he returned to that country in 1946 soon after he and his brothers established the American International Association for Economic and Social Development (AIA). This philanthropic association sponsored non-profit aid projects in Latin America, particularly in the areas of education, agriculture, and health in order to improve general living standards in the region, aiming at the formation of a solid middle class. This endeavor was soon followed by the creation of the International Basic Economic Corporation (IBEC) in 1947. Nelson A. Rockefeller led this corporation, which maintained offices in São Paulo and other Latin American cities until the late 1950s, representing North American business and political interests through economic programs at the outset of the Cold War.

Archival records show that Nelson A. Rockefeller established contact with Assis Chateaubriand, founder of the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP) even before the end of Second World War. Assis Chateaubriand, (1892-1968), whose nickname was Chatô (and whose full name was Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand Bandeira de Melo), became one of the most influential public figures in Brazil during the 1930s and the 1960s, after creating a media conglomerate, *Diários Associados*. His empire was built on a personal struggle for power, along with political interests and agreements, including convoluted but profitable relations with the Brazilian government, particularly with President Getúlio Vargas' dictatorial regime. He became notable as a journalist, a modernizer, and a patron of the arts as well as a senator and ambassador. Having controlled more than a hundred newspapers, magazines, and radio and TV stations all over the Brazil, Chateaubriand has often been seen as a "Brazilian Citizen Kane." He was an eccentric and controversial figure, often accused of blackmailing individuals who did not offer financial contributions to his favored causes, such as the arts, aviation, and health programs, or companies that would not sign advertising contracts with his print and broadcast media. He had a capricious and volatile temperament and would publicly insult potential competitors with lies. He did so, for instance, to his friend and industrialist Francisco (Ciccillo) Matarazzo Sobrinho, another patron of the arts who he introduced to Nelson Rockefeller and who founded the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM) in 1948.

Despite initial caution and reservations due to the rumors surrounding the controversial journalist, Rockefeller gradually grew to admire Chateaubriand and to maintain a friendly and collaborative relationship with him until his death. The earliest record I found in the Rockefeller Archive Center regarding their contact is a letter Rockefeller sent to Chateaubriand on August 28, 1944, in which he acknowledged a gift sent by the Brazilian tycoon. The present, a portrait of Assis Chateaubriand painted by prominent Brazilian modern artist Cândido Portinari, suggests his shared interest and admiration for Rockefeller's dynamism as an art collector. Chateaubriand also published newspaper articles praising Rockefeller's political views as the geopolitical panorama quickly changed after World War II. For example, Rockefeller kept articles from 1945

in which Chateaubriand praised his cautious opinions about Russia and reported his resignation from the Department of State, occasions on which the Brazilian journalist described him as "the pilot who acted in good faith"[2] for his work in political and intellectual propaganda.

Chateaubriand and His Early Art Network

Aspiring to the model of North-American philanthropists, Chateaubriand began to acquire works by contemporary Brazilian painters as a way of bringing about the creation of an art gallery or an art museum, an idea he had struggled with since the late 1920s. He was not alone in this venture and initially discussed the foundation of an art museum with other entrepreneurs, such as Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho. Without a clear artistic vision of his own, Chateaubriand searched for collaborators who could help him organize and direct the institution. In the absence of specialized modern art museums and particularly art curators in Brazil, it occurred to him to have someone trained for the position. He decided to help sponsor a tour of the United States by the modernist painter and socialite Moussia Pinto Alves (1910-1986), née aristocratic Moussia von Riesenkauf in pre-Bolshevik Crimea.[3] On March 20, 1946, he wrote to Rockefeller asking him to assist her during her trip to "visit American museums, to study American modern art and also the technique of museum direction, in order to organize a museum of modern peinture [sic] in S. Paulo." He reminded Rockefeller that, "she had the happy occasion of meeting [him], in [his] always well remembered visit to Brazil," much likely in 1942. Chateaubriand made it clear that, despite living in Rio de Janeiro at the time, "it is our idea to place this new museum in the building of 'Diários Associados' in São Paulo and we hope that it will be of great service to the development of modern art in our country." [4] The building he referred to was still under construction in the booming business district in downtown São Paulo

It took Rockefeller a few months, until May, to reply to Chateaubriand with a short note in which he suggested making arrangements to introduce Pinto Alves to René d'Harnoncourt.[5] D'Harnoncourt (1901-1968), an Austrian émigré and art connoisseur, had been appointed to MoMA in 1944 as a curator and eventually served as its director between 1949 and 1967. Pinto Alves completed her tour and made personal and professional acquaintances in the United States, including guaranteeing an exhibition of her work in a New York art gallery a few years later. Still, Chateaubriand soon replaced her with another, more experienced professional. The connoisseur who captivated his interest was the controversial Italian art dealer and journalist Pietro Maria Bardi, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro for the first time on October 12, 1946, accompanied by his young and irreverent wife, architect Lina Bo Bardi.

In the meantime, Nelson A. Rockefeller was preparing his first trip to Brazil after the end of World War II, and contacted the director of the New York Public Library, Ralph Beals, to invite Dr. Carleton Sprague Smith to join him on the trip. Smith (1897-1994) worked for the library as a musicologist and an expert on Hispanic and Brazilian culture. Rockefeller suggested that "his unusual experience and intimate knowledge of the people of Brazil [would be] an important contribution to the success of the trip." [6] As an influential trustee at MoMA, Rockefeller also noted that the museum was "anxious to develop closer contacts with similar institutions in Brazil." [7] With the help of Dorothy Canning Miller (1904-2003), the first professionally trained curator at the museum, he purchased several works by American-based artists to donate to museums in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Among them were modern paintings, drawings and

prints by Jacob Lawrence and George Grosz and also a mobile by Alexander Calder, with "Rene [d'Harnoncourt]'s excellent diagrams for assembling it." [8]

Although Pietro Maria Bardi, Lina Bo Bardi, and Nelson A. Rockefeller were in Rio de Janeiro at the same time in late November and early December of 1946, there is no evidence that they met each other then. Their first meeting seems to have occurred four years later in São Paulo, during the opening of MASP's new collection hall.

Pietro Maria Bardi had arrived in Brazil with a large shipment of Italian paintings, books and antiques selected for three commercial shows and also hoping to meet Assis Chateaubriand. The prolific and astute Italian dealer and critic had been one of the main supporters of modern art and architecture in his country since the late 1920s and throughout the fascist regime. He also maintained a dynamic art gallery in Rome in the early 1940s. His gallery promoted exhibitions, sales, lectures, publications, and even innovative restoration work, but the art market in Italy was bankrupt at the end of the war. Moreover, the purges that dominated Italian politics threatened his commercial rights because of his previous connections with Mussolini's regime, so Bardi was looking for a way to temporarily removing himself from the scene while exploring new commercial opportunities for his considerably large art collection. Following the suggestion of his social connections at the Brazilian Embassy in Rome, he became interested in meeting the eccentric Brazilian journalist and art collector. He was also curious about Chateaubriand's dream of creating an art museum. With the personal help of Brazilian art critic Mário da Silva Brito, Bardi set sail to South America in the early fall of 1946 with at least two exhibitions of his works already scheduled for two important locations in Rio de Janeiro, capital of Brazil at the time.

The first exhibition of Bardi's collection in Brazil opened in November; showcasing early Italian paintings, it was intended for art collectors. It was housed in the lobby of the iconic modernist building of the Ministry of Education and Health completed a few years before. This new building had already received international recognition in MoMA's Brazilian architecture exhibition curated by Philip Goodwin in 1943. Bardi's second show, containing European furnishings and targeting a different clientele, took place in a more private and commercial venue, the fashionable Copacabana Palace Hotel. It opened on December 19, 1946 and closed in January of 1947. A third exhibition took place in the ministerial building a few weeks later with a collection of modern Italian paintings.

Among the visitors to the early Italian painting exhibition was Assis Chateaubriand, who Pietro Maria Bardi was hoping to meet. Chateaubriand lived in Rio de Janeiro at the time and already knew about Bardi's activities through the Brazilian ambassador in Rome, Pedro de Moraes Barros, who used to attend lectures and shows in Bardi's gallery, Studio d'Arte Palma. In his distinctively impulsive manner, Chateaubriand showed interest in buying paintings, but more importantly he told Bardi about his plan to create an art museum in Brazil and enquired about his interest in participating in the enterprise.

Almost immediately, Bardi confirmed that Chateaubriand was as eager and determined a man as his Brazilian friends had described. At the same time, Chateaubriand realized he might have found the man with the artistic knowledge, entrepreneurial verve, and shrewd personality willing

to become his ally. Imaginative, contentious, unscrupulous, and eight years older than Bardi, Chateaubriand was responsible, beginning in the 1920s, for many modernizing projects in Brazil.

Chateaubriand and Rockefeller: A Tentative Beginning

Chateaubriand originally came from a small town in the Northeastern state of Paraíba and worked as a lawyer and journalist in Rio de Janeiro. Through those activities he saw the opportunity to quickly climb the social and political ladder. He became a lobbyist for influential foreign investors and corporations doing business in Brazil during a time in which nationalism was on the rise. By the end of World War II, he had fully developed his media empire. He did not have a very professional managerial style or a clear ideological program except for his unyielding support of and involvement in business and political initiatives that represented some form of control and public attention. He considered himself above the law -- with an entourage of dubious body guards -- and used his press network to manipulate officials through deliberate use of defamation, blackmail, threats and even violence. The purpose of his public and personal attacks ranged from obtaining political favors to extorting money to support his favorite projects, such as the museum of art.^[9]

Nelson A. Rockefeller was aware of Chateaubriand's manners and behavior and initially maintained a cautious distance from him. In the meantime, the Brazilian journalist continued to write laudatory articles in his influential newspaper, *O Jornal*, defending Rockefeller's political views and practices. During his 1946 visit to Brazil, Chateaubriand wrote several articles portraying Rockefeller as a kind of inter-American prophet. He called the American entrepreneur omnipotent but instead of being simply a millionaire, implying his "vocation of a missionary," and praising "the sparse, modest and simple life Nelson and his wife have ... and their interest in the welfare of humanity."^[10] A few weeks later, in describing Rockefeller's visit to Brazil, he suggested that the "Americas are inhabited by peoples of freedom" and their key to the future is "in the hands of this Solomon."^[11]

Chateaubriand continued to cover the unfolding of North-American economic enterprise in Brazil with great interest and support in the following months. He covered projects that had some connection with Rockefeller's IBEC activities.^[12] Besides Chateaubriand's genuine admiration for Rockefeller, the persuasive coverage of his deeds was also meant to obtain international financial support for his *Diários Associados* media corporation. His strategy had a positive outcome. In May 1947 Rockefeller wrote a letter to William McChesney Martin, Jr., president of the Export-Import Bank -- created as part of the Good Neighbor policy in Latin America -- endorsing Chateaubriand's request for funds, and praising him as a "loyal supporter of the interests of the United Nations, [who] rendered great service to our cause during the war... His knowledge of our country and people has proven extremely valuable in our relations with Brazil." ^[13]

Despite his economic and political support, Rockefeller remained vigilant about a more direct association with Chateaubriand. In response to the Brazilian journalist's initial enthusiasm and insistence, Rockefeller's top press agent, journalist Francis A. Jamieson, "unequivocally [advised him] against accepting the proposal to write a regular column on inter-American or world affairs" for *Diários Associados*. He further added, "I think you are familiar with my earlier

hesitation ... fears which I expressed to you but not to him [Chateaubriand]. I am pleased to see that Berent Friele [Rockefeller's business associate in Brazil] now shares our hesitations."^[14] Still, this tone would soon change, mainly in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the period during which Rockefeller traveled to Brazil as a special guest for the opening of MASP's new Collection Hall in 1950. By then, both men were exchanging letters in personal and friendly terms.^[15]

MASP Takes Shape

The Museum of Art of São Paulo was Assis Chateaubriand's pet project. His meeting with Pietro Maria Bardi and the purchase of some of the works of his Palma Art Gallery prompted him to take an independent route and abandon plans to create a museum with industrialist Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, his wife and a group of intellectuals and patrons who represented the São Paulo elites at the time. Chateaubriand's motivation remains unclear, as he often made capricious decisions, but Bardi's perspective and influence may have been part of it. After adding a few Italian Renaissance paintings to his collection, Chateaubriand moved away from the idea of having a strictly modern collection. He talked about creating a Museum of Early and Modern Art, but Bardi finally convinced him to call it simply Museum of Art. His advisor saw no conceptual need for dividing artistic production into strict chronological and geographic categories, considering that they did not have a significant collection at the time and that the purpose of the museum should be pedagogical rather than a specialized depository of artistic production.

In June of 1947, the Bardis moved to São Paulo, despite Lina Bo Bardi's desire to remain in Rio de Janeiro. This was how she became responsible at age thirty-two for the first design proposal for the Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP) in the new building of Diários Associados Corporation, owned by Chateaubriand. The relationship between the Bardis and the press magnate in São Paulo was initially marked by disappointment. The building was still under construction and not ready to house a museum. Moreover, Chateaubriand's art collection practically did not exist. Still, he had a plan to achieve his goals. His method was to pressure the local elite to donate money for art works by threatening to publish embarrassing personal stories in the newspapers he controlled.^[16] Bardi put his key commercial and connoisseur skills into practice, and actively acquired excellent works from New York art galleries and even more from European collectors and galleries that had gone bankrupt after World War II.

In a speech that Chateaubriand delivered to potential donors and later published in his newspapers, he said, "I adopted an efficient technique used by banker Correia e Castro to persuade the bourgeoisie: [it consists of] announcing the end of the bourgeois world under Soviet attacks [...] and that their only salvation can come from the strengthening of bourgeois clusters. One of the ways to do so is to donate Renoirs, Cézannes, El Greco to the Art Museum."^[17] This excerpt illustrates the cultural, social, and political context the Bardis encountered as they started their life in São Paulo. By promising access to an upper- and middle-class, cosmopolitan lifestyle for the masses, Brazilian elites fostered partial modernizing practices disguised as national culture. Despite initially feeling awkward, Bardi soon became engaged in Chateaubriand's plan. His wife, however, accepted the circumstances of the move with ambivalence, reacting with complacency and irony. To leave the vibrant cultural life of Rio de Janeiro for what amounted

only to the promise of an emerging but still provincial industrial center had been a great disappointment to her. Yet, the new country and the new city would offer her unmatched opportunities. And her admiration for Chateaubriand's ability soon overshadowed her criticism.

The museum first opened on the second floor of Diários Associados new building (Edifício Guinle) on October 2, 1947. Pietro and Lina Bo Bardi worked around the clock to give the new museum both a home and a collection. They had just arrived in São Paulo, spoke little Portuguese, and did not know anybody besides their new boss. With the assistance of a few collaborators recommended by Chateaubriand, they soon established a reasonable social and professional network. They set up a temporary office across the street from the construction site in a room adjacent to the offices of the engineers and construction crew. The Bardis worked as partners to bring to fruition Bardi's concept for the museum. As an art dealer rather than a conservator, he followed the guidelines for museums proposed by UNESCO's International Council of Museums (ICOM) and envisioned a museum with a pedagogical purpose.

The Museum of Art of São Paulo (MASP) was initially a conceptual extension of Bardi's Roman gallery. As he described it, the "hall in the shape of a double T" was divided into four sectors: "a picture gallery; periodic cultural exhibition rooms; a lecture room and; rooms for exhibitions both permanent and temporary dealing with the history of art."^[18] More precisely, the resulting museum included a large pedagogical exhibition with panels representing the history of Western art; galleries for temporary displays and exhibits on design and architecture; two auditoriums for lectures and courses; and administrative offices. Bardi had many other plans for the museum, and he realized several of them over the years. He hoped to "send traveling exhibitions throughout the state of São Paulo, and we are fitting up a truck for that purpose." He also planned "to open an institute for students and artists in Florence, and to this end we have purchased the Villa Mackenzie in Fiesole."^[19] Among his goals for the museum goals was a "special series of lectures by art historians [beyond] courses already given by Roberto Longhi, Siegfried Giedion and Germain Bazin. The Museum [should] also publish books to popularize the history of art."^[20] Ultimately, he saw the museum as an "experiment" that would "encourage the development of the visual arts in the city. Furthermore, Mr. Chateaubriand intend[ed] to restore the Goeldi Museum in Belém (developed entirely to Amazonia [sic]) and to organize in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife, museums like the one at [sic] São Paulo." ^[21]

While Pietro Maria Bardi worked more directly with Chateaubriand to develop the institution, Lina Bo Bardi was responsible for the layout and physical transformation of the museum. One floor had been initially reserved for the museum, but she expected "in the near future, to extend its premises by the addition of [another floor with] a hall of 1,000 square meters in which the picture gallery will be installed."^[22] She was a well-educated architect who moved from Rome to Milan after her graduation in 1940. Her dreams of becoming a designer were delayed and changed by the outbreak of World War II a few months after her move. She used to say that she chose to be an architect when nothing was built, only destroyed. As an alternative, she spent most of the war years working as a graphic designer, illustrator, and editor for several Italian commercial and professional magazines. She initiated her career in partnership with her former college friend, Carlo Pagani, who worked with architect Gio Ponti, one of the most prominent Italian architects, furniture and interior designers at the time. Through this partnership she was exposed to innovative exhibition design standards of the rationalist Milanese school, which

refused to place works of art against walls and alternatively proposed to display them on elegant easels or metal supports going from floor to ceiling in the middle of gallery spaces. Franco Albini was a leading designer in this field along with his collaborator, Giancarlo Piretti, who also immigrated to Brazil in 1946 and ended up collaborating with Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi in the museum between 1948 and 1950.

The construction of the building for the Diários Associados headquarters had not been completed when the museum received its first visitors. They had to go through a temporary entrance on the first floor, which Lina Bo Bardi skillfully announced with a wide white trellised panel with a large open door and two cases displaying the activities offered by the Museum of Art. In four months, she coordinated the organization of the main hall by using a pre-fabricated tubular system to display the art history exhibition prepared by her husband's Roman gallery; she also designed the auditoriums and the chairs that should be used in it. After searching the city for modern chairs that could be stacked to provide more flexible use to the auditoriums, she enlisted the help of a local furniture maker and designed and produced a series of wooden folding chairs with stretched canvas seats. These experiences proved to the Bards that, beyond their initial disappointment, they had arrived at a fertile ground to disseminate their beliefs. They embraced this opportunity in favor of art appreciation, education and history to contemporary production, emphasizing the need to dispel scholastic standards and to associate modern taste with local values and practices.

The first exhibition organized by MASP was titled *Art History Panorama* and traced art from its origins to the present. Bo Bardi displayed panels brought from Rome "in four horizontal rows: elements of history and civic life; architecture; sculpture; painting [with] copies of major works are of fair size and nearly all in colors. Each panel contained simple explanations. The section also contained glass cases with works of applied arts pertaining to the period described on the plates."^[23] Docents accompanied small groups of visitors and students, using the panels for innovative gallery talks. Temporary shows organized between 1947 and 1951 were truly innovative and included several general pedagogical exhibitions about architecture, industrial design, urbanism, graphic design and advertisement in line with MoMA and also based on the concept that art can be expressed in different media. The Bards also organized solo exhibitions of Brazilian and international artists and designers, whose work was accompanied by lectures and carefully produced catalogues. Among them were architect Lúcio Costa and artist Max Bill (in 1947), artists Cândido Portinari and Alexander Calder (in 1948), artist Flávio de Carvalho (in 1948 and 1949), artists Geraldo de Barros and Mário Cravo Jr. and architects Le Corbusier and Richard Neutra (in 1950) and Lasar Segall (in 1951). The museum also exhibited local and traditional works ranging from indigenous art (in 1948), ceramics from the Brazilian Northeast (in 1949), and the unusual works of interns of a mental institution (in 1948) and naïve Brazilian painters (in 1949). ^[24] All these activities attracted increasing audiences, and the museum sometimes hosted up to four hundred visitors per day. Not only did this popularity validate the less noble strategies Chateaubriand undertook to obtain donations and funds for the museum, it also encouraged other experiments, such as art and music courses for children and art and music history courses for high school and university students and teachers. ^[25]

Bardi's plan for Chateaubriand's museum was an inventive and pioneering experiment in Brazil. He wanted to create conditions for a cosmopolitan artistic culture in the country. He explained

that "the varied nature of the Museum's public" led him to "decide to give it a universal and educational character." [26] At the time there were "no manuals and publications in Portuguese, no history of art in schools, no specialized library" and, consequently, he determined that "collections of local art and history from the discovery of the country up to the present day [would] have considerable interest." [27] From now on, as Chateaubriand announced in his newspaper *Diário de São Paulo*, it would no longer be necessary to cross the Atlantic to see the works of great Western masters. Bardi also organized "a course on the history of art and on the general principles of museography for young people wishing to later take up museum work." [28] About fifty students attended the program, and he chose four of the best to become assistants at the museum, undertaking docent, administrative, and curatorial work.

Bardi's vision of modernity, simultaneously embraced by his wife Lina Bo Bardi, provided more focus for Chateaubriand's attempt to generate public artistic discourse in Brazil. It was at once universal, progressive and rooted in the understanding of local traditions, a perspective they shared with some but not all Brazilian modernists. In the following years, Bardi's and, by extension, Chateaubriand's Museum of Art would favor naturalist and social-realist works of art, while the Museum of Modern Art, following Nelson A. Rockefeller's view and MoMA's model, would focus on contemporary abstract art and support the emergence of a prolific breed of Neo-Concrete Brazilian artists.

MAM Takes Shape and Rockefeller Keeps Tabs

The Museum of Art of São Paulo opened one month after the Inter-American conference took place in Rio de Janeiro. This conference consolidated Nelson A. Rockefeller's creation of the AIA in 1946 and IBEC in 1947. Both grew out of his work as Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which aimed to promote the improvement of standards of living in cooperation with North-American interests in Latin America. These events took place at the outset of the Cold War and of the redemocratization of Brazilian political and public life after fifteen years of the Vargas regime. While Chateaubriand overtly defended North-American political and economic interests in Brazil and gave Bardi carte blanche to establish a more pluralistic collection, the group of intellectuals, artists, architects and patrons surrounding Matarazzo, founder of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo in 1948, was more diverse and included several prominent leftists. Among them was the young architect Vilanova Artigas, who was involved with the São Paulo branch of the culturally active Brazilian Institute of Architects. He also was an influential member of the Brazilian Communist Party and would become a leading cultural figure in the city.

Collaboration existed, but the growing differences between art patrons and intellectuals in Brazil was becoming more and more evident in the cultural and political milieu of São Paulo, and this news soon reached Rockefeller. He asked his associates for updates on his projects to help the development of modern art museums in Brazil and learned from Carleton Sprague Smith that "in São Paulo . . . there has been some resentment between the intellectual and the 'granfino' [socialite] elements who are organizing the museum (this is practically inevitable and requires a lot of tact in handling)." [29] In a report about the creation of the Museums of Modern Art in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Smith reported that "the [modern art museum] committee is working on the by-laws and should have something more concrete to offer within a short time." He

reminded Rockefeller that "a group of some twenty architects (from the Institute of Architects, which has been so active in this question) is expected in New York in May, and this trip will probably greatly contribute to materialize the whole project." [30]

Smith and even Moussia Pinto Alves, who had been originally sent to New York by Chateaubriand and was later dismissed by him, kept Rockefeller well informed, including confirming the Brazilian press magnate's change of plans. According to Smith's critical perspective, "The São Paulo Institute of Modern Art [had] been moving along [...]. Chateaubriand could not be kept in line so the Museum at the Diários Associados is building a pot-pourri, or as the Spaniards say, an 'olla podrida' [stew] of various styles." [31] He told him, with hesitation, that, "the celebrated Armando Alvares Penteado gift to the State [of São Paulo] is being bandied about politically so no one knows exactly what will happen to it." [32] Penteado's generous gift to the state included a large site in the Pacaembú neighborhood to be used to create a fine arts school to teach painting, sculpture, architecture and interior design, theater, photography, cinema and radio, as well as to create a modern art collection with gallery to complement the existing Beaux-Arts Museum, called Pinacoteca do Estado. [33] His plans took a few years to materialize, confirming Smith's opinion that, "If someone does set up an 'Escola de Belas Artes,' theatrical, moving picture and radio institute and a division of permanent exhibitions (under which will be included the classical museum and the Museum of Modern Art), that day is probably fairly far off and the course guiding it will be anything but reliable." [34]

At this point, it seemed clear that the political relationship with Chateaubriand was important but his independent plans and association with Bardi would not be as fruitful as with the groups orbiting around the idea of creating modern art museums in Rio de Janeiro and in São Paulo. For the moment, Smith recommended to Rockefeller that "we are doing well to stick to the movement sponsored by Carlos Pinto Alves, Rino Levi, E. Kneese de Mello, Almeida Salles and Chichilo [sic] Matarazzo. They, as well as the group in Rio are writing for technical information about the Museum [MoMA] here. I have seen René [d'Harnoncourt] about it and the information will really be of considerable usefulness, in my opinion." [35] He went on to say, in slight competition with Chateaubriand's plans, that "our next task is to get our Rio and São Paulo boys to work closer together and perhaps encourage Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte to move a little." [36]

During 1946 and 1947, Smith closely followed the development of Rockefeller's patronage efforts in Brazil. In letters sent to the nascent board of the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, he agreed that the São Paulo branch of the Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB) would be the "depository of thirteen gouache, watercolor, and oil paintings and one sheet metal and wire mobile" [37] donated by Rockefeller. Kneese de Melo, president of the Institute, wrote to report on the organization's move to its new headquarters a few blocks away from Avenida Ipiranga at the end of 1946. He also reassured him about the museums' plans and to report that Rockefeller's gesture, "which gave encouragement to Paulistanos [São Paulo natives] and Cariocas [Rio de Janeiro natives], was welcomed with great satisfaction." [38] The donated works were "regarded cornerstones for growing collections as stimuli to contemporary art -- and it is suggested that they can be effectively used to promote the establishment of Museum Societies -- not only in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo but perhaps also in Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre." [39] He went

further to recommend, "While the final division of the works has not been definitely settled, Mr. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., who helped in the selection of the material, has suggested the following distribution: São Paulo: Braune, Calder, Grosz, Graves, Leger, Masson, Chagall; and Rio de Janeiro: Spruce, Gwathmey, Lawrence, Asver, Leger, Tanguy, and Ernst." [40]

Smith's reports to Rockefeller were followed by a few letters from industrialist Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho, architect Rino Levi and writer Carlos Alves Pinto, respectively executive director, director-president and vice-president of the planned São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (MAM). They indicated that plans for the museum were not progressing as intended and that it would be "necessary to wait a while before attempting anything new." [41] They also reported that while differences did exist, their desire to collaborate still prevailed. The Museum of Modern Art moved slowly. Members of the committee were aware that even if Matarazzo "wanted to have an Art Gallery, consisting of paintings brought over from Europe, a large number really good, and also several Brazilian paintings," [42] they faced the fact that "the greatest difficulty lies in instituting a society under Ciccillo's auspices that will have all the different groups and will be under control." [43] Initially, their plan was to organize "the greatest possible numbers of groups, artists, and friends of Modern Art in São Paulo," in order to create an Institute of Modern Art instead of a museum. This choice was made for three reasons: "two museums were recently opened in São Paulo -- one public, the other one private -- and [the institute] may even collaborate with them wherever possible within its orientation; the institute [would] need everyone's help, particularly the aid of people of means, to support it and to many of them the word 'museum' implies only paintings and in this case, modern paintings, which they abhor; [and] the word 'institute' is more extensive and envelops all arts. That is what we desire." [44] Aware of their difficulties, Rockefeller wrote Matarazzo a letter of encouragement for his artistic enterprise, saying that he was "looking forward to the association with you and the other officers of the Fundação." [45]

Despite such obstacles, this correspondence shows that economic and political interests led to the North-American cultural incursion into Latin America years before MoMA created its International Committee in 1952. Several were the means through which symbolic capital helped diffuse those geopolitical interests: the creation of museums and art magazines, along with the activity of artists and critics in the Southern continent tended to embrace formalist experimentations such as abstract expressionism as an apparently depoliticized alternative to movements related to figurative muralism and to national identity and social realism. [46] The Museum of Modern Art in New York became a deft exporter of a specific kind of art representing North-American cultural identity, aiming at the expansion of the market for abstract paintings and sculpture, and obliquely laying the groundwork for alliances supporting Truman's doctrine of simultaneous containment and expansionism. In this context, Matarazzo wrote to reassure Rockefeller, telling him that his plans for a Fundação de Arte Moderna were moving along and asking for MoMA's cooperation with exhibitions. It should not be a surprise that Matarazzo also told him he had been in Switzerland the previous year, where he met a few critics and artists -- much likely including Max Bill, who became one of Matarazzo's protégés -- and "had the idea that an exhibition of abstract art in Sao Paulo would cause great repercussion." He added that, "With this exhibition we have in mind to show international artist paintings ... such as from New York, London and Paris," expecting to ultimately "cause the public to discuss this particular form of painting" [47]

A couple of days later, Rino Levi wrote to Smith to confirm Matarazzo's plans. Levi was a prominent modernist architect in São Paulo who, like Lina Bo Bardi, had studied in the School of Architecture in Rome and graduated a decade before her. He was also a well-connected promoter of artistic and social events in São Paulo and a key figure in the Institute of Architects. In February 1948, Levi sent Smith the preliminary statute for the creation of a new museum and announced, "The Foundation of Modern Art exists and the Museum of Modern Art [MAM] is really being organized ... with the collaboration of the Architectural Institute, the Cinema Club, the Experimental Theater of the University, and the Artists' Club."^[48] He also mentioned that he hoped they would "reach an agreement, or, at least, a plan of cooperation with Chateaubriand's museum, [and] is willing to step aside to facilitate the creation of an organization uniting all interests. It is necessary to say that Chateaubriand's newspapers have really been very cooperative."^[49] According to Levi, the Institute of Architects had agreed to temporarily install the museum in its new building,^[50] whose design team had been directed by Levi himself, but the transfer never happened. In actuality, Chateaubriand agreed to rent a floor in Diários Associados building to house MAM on a floor above his own art museum. The only feature from the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (MAM) that ended up in the lobby of the Institute of Architects was the Calder mobile donated by Nelson A. Rockefeller.

Smith kept Rockefeller updated about the process, suggesting that "Brazilians always liked injections and your 'shot in the arm' in November 1946 started something,"^[51] referring to his previous visit and donations. He also suggested writing encouraging letters to Matarazzo, Levi and Alves Pinto, and having Elodie Courter, who was in charge of arranging and shipping traveling shows for MoMA, and her husband work at the museum in São Paulo. Smith expected her to offer considerable help in the organization of the new institution: "Slaps on the back and encouragement will keep the fires burning and be more enduring than direct financial assistance anyhow."^[52] And so four days later, Rockefeller sent a support letter to Matarazzo, in which he expressed his desire to work in "association with [him] and the other officers of the Fundação."^[53] By doing so, Rockefeller strengthened his connections with the Brazilian elites via business, policies and art patronage. Still, part of the middle and artistic class he expected to galvanize by helping these projects started to orbit around the Communist Party and to engage in left-leaning cultural politics, particularly after the mid-1950s.

Rockefeller travelled to Brazil again in September of 1948 and, following Chateaubriand's invitation, he attended a reception at Matarazzo's mansion and finally met his wife, the philanthropist Yolanda Penteado. They talked about their "stimulating [modern art] museum."^[54] One of the purposes of his trip was to meet potential artistic collaborators in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, who were particularly involved with Museums of Modern Art in both cities and with Chateaubriand's Museum of Art. He expected them to be interested in "receiving modern art from the States" and also hosting traveling exhibitions organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.^[55] After his return to New York, Rockefeller wrote to Chateaubriand regarding the "delightful memories" visiting both Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo with Chateaubriand. He specifically said that he was impressed with the progress "in establishing your museum," adding, "it was indeed a pleasure to see the close cooperation which exists between you and your museum and the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo, as there is such a natural and logical association for the two museums." He also acknowledged, "I was very glad to have the opportunity of visiting with the Matarazzos."^[56]

During this period, the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art was getting ready to open. It exhibited its collection in an improvised, temporary facility in one of the buildings of the Matarazzo Steel Mill on Caetano Pinto Street in the Brás industrial district about a mile east of the Diários Associados building. The museum finally opened in the beginning of 1949, a few floors above Chateaubriand's already lively Museum of Art. Probably following the example of MASP, Ciccillo Matarazzo and his wife Yolanda Penteado also hired a European connoisseur to direct their museum. The Belgian art critic Léon Degand (1907-1958), a major promoter of abstract art who was based in France and worked for André Bloc's magazine *Art d'aujourd'hui*, arrived in São Paulo on March 6, 1949. Three days later, he gave a lecture at the new Municipal Library, just a couple of blocks away from the two museums. In his lecture he defended his artistic beliefs and preferences.[57] Soon after, he presented the first exhibition -- titled "From Figurative to Abstract Art" (Do Figurativismo ao Abstracionismo) -- to the São Paulo public. The show marked the museum's official opening and legitimized its alignment with both sides of the North Atlantic: with the Parisian artistic debate and, above all, with its model, the Museum of Modern Art of New York.

Degand's lecture did not go unnoticed. It found disagreement among Brazilian artists and intellectuals, particularly those like Di Cavalcanti (who favored social realism). His criticism prompted polemical responses in the press and he eventually was invited by the museum to present his point of view. The exhibition catalogue was, however, more ambiguous. While Brazilian critic Sérgio Milliet proposed continuity and dialogue between figurative and abstract art as two contemporary renovation trends, the Belgian director was impartial about his evolutionary ideas about an autonomous, abstract artform. Degand showed the works of francophone artists such as Jean Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Robert Delaunay, Auguste Herbin and Fernand Léger beside others such as Juan Miró, Victor Vasarely, Vassily Kandinsky, Alexander Calder, and Hans Hartung.[58] This choice had to do with his own connections as well as with difficulties with international transportation of works from other museums. He included in the exhibition only three Brazilian artists who were aligned with his ideas.

The Re-Inauguration of MASP and Rockefeller's Visit, 1950

By the time MAM opened a few floors above MASP, Chateaubriand's museum had already established itself as a prominent cultural center in the city. He continued with his questionable fund-raising campaign while Bardi travelled to Rome, Milan, Florence, Paris, and New York City looking for good deals in art galleries and among private collectors. They felt they did not have much time left to acquire relatively low-priced works for the museum's collection as Europe started to show signs of economic recovery. One of their most important acquisitions was one of van Gogh's version of the painting *L'Arlésienne* for \$67,000, which Chateaubriand promptly and gladly communicated to Rockefeller.[59] In the meantime, Lina Bo Bardi spent most of her time closer to the museum and, along with two young collaborators, historian and educator Flávio Motta and curator Luís Hossaka; she assisted her husband in organizing the museum's educational programs and curatorial design and work. In 1948, as Bardi realized that their temporary trip to Brazil was becoming more and more permanent, he decided to open a subsidiary of his Roman art gallery, Palma, in São Paulo. He also opened Pau-Brasil Studio with Lina Bo and Giancarlo Palanti, another émigré Italian architect, for the design and production of furniture, and domestic and commercial interiors, which lasted until 1950. Their firm was the

first to manufacture modern objects in the city, giving a Milanese character to shops, galleries, and restaurants, and also merging rationalist and vernacular Brazilian forms and techniques.

Chateaubriand's artistic enterprise was steadily progressing with the help of Pietro Maria Bardi and his crew, and their efforts had proven to be innovative and successful. In a couple of years they had acquired enough prestigious paintings and sculptures. By the time the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) opened with a temporary exhibition in 1949, the Museum of Art of São Paulo was ready to open its second floor housing a permanent collection. Chateaubriand saw this as an occasion to re-inaugurate the museum, giving it international projection and decided to invite Rockefeller as a guest of honor. Their first contact about the trip took place early in 1950, when Rockefeller said that he would be "very pleased [and] anxious to be present on this occasion, and hopes it will be possible during May or June."^[60] With the mediation of Berent Friele, his associate in Brazil, the date was finally settled for the first week of July, when Rockefeller travelled to São Paulo for the special event,^[61] symbolized by the unveiling of a recently acquired Manet painting. ^[62]

Once the date was established, preparations for Rockefeller's visit started. Smith organized an extensive memorandum about the Museum of Art of São Paulo, which he described as having made a lot of progress since its opening in October 1947. He pointed out that "the Director of the place is P. M. Bardi, an Italian"^[63] but did not mention his architect wife. In the memorandum, he added reports about individuals on staff of the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro -- "generally not as active as São Paulo crowd" -- and the one in São Paulo, "the museum which you helped created in 1946" with the donation of works by "Byron Brown, Georges Grosz, Andre Masson, Fernand Leger, Marc Chagall, Morris Graves, Alexander Calder (mobile)." The document also contained a note regarding "the Alves [sic] Penteado estate (reputed to be worth several millions) left a bequest empowering the State to set up a Museu de Arte Moderna in São Paulo." ^[64] He reminded Rockefeller that, "as you know, the whole place is closely associated with the modern architects of Brazil," and described some of them taking part in the administrative council: "Eduardo Kneese de Mello, well-known modern architect, descendent of southerners who went down in the 1860s; J. Vilanova Artigas, communist architect who was in U.S. for a while, brilliant young chap; Rino Levi, well-known modern architect who has given parties for you; Jacob Ruchti, well-known Swiss [sic] architect." ^[65]

Smith diplomatically suggested that "there is probably some rivalry between the Chateaubriand and Matarazzo museums. Chateau [sic] started out with classical pictures (a Rembrandt, a Tintoretto, and a Velazquez, etc.), but recently his emphasis has been on Modern Art and he apparently wants to run Matarazzo a race in this respect." ^[66] He added, "I doubt whether you will have any trouble, but the amusing fact is that you gave pictures to inaugurate the Matarazzo collection and now are being asked to give your blessing also to the Diários Associados outfit." After all, he believed, "this rivalry may be very healthy and salutary,"^[67] pointing out some of the upcoming exhibits at Chateaubriand's and Bardi's museum. Smith ended his memo about the museum by stating that he did not know the names of any of its trustees, which seemed irrelevant because "generally Chateaubriand runs things himself, no matter what the window dressing is." ^[68]

Rockefeller arrived in São Paulo for the ceremony carrying an address prepared by his consultant at IBEC in São Paulo, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., himself the son of a prominent Republican U.S. senator, an able lecturer and active expert on international affairs during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Vandenberg's text was based on three sources provided by Rockefeller: an unidentified Statement of Modern Art; a lecture by Columbia University philosophy professor, Irwin Edman, given in Rio de Janeiro in 1945 with the sponsorship of the United States Department of State; and Franklin D. Roosevelt's address at MoMA's reopening in 1939, in which he referred to the museum as a citadel of civilization.[69]

The re-inauguration of MASP and the unveiling of the Manet painting on a chilly late afternoon of July 5, 1950 was a relatively informal event, uniting prominent political and cultural personalities such as Rockefeller himself, the Brazilian president, Eurico Gaspar Dutra, the French filmmaker Henri-Georges Clouzot, and Chateaubriand's large entourage of politicians, military representatives and socialites. Nelson A. Rockefeller's address framed the artistic mission of the museum within an unconcealed political message, particularly suited to doctrines of Pan-Americanism and Good Neighbors that he embraced. Rockefeller started by saying, "The peoples of all nations want security, strength, beauty, and friendship that show evidence of love; this is the only force able to overcome hatred, fear and resentment." [70] Quoting Irwin Edman, he suggested that "the development of industrial society made the possibility of art a subject of major importance to every nation," which "represents free men's highest and most sublime expression" against the "rigidity of social centralization, formalized ideas, and chaos." [71]

Rockefeller described the great vitality of MoMA's dedication to contemporary trends; he also reminded his audience that the purpose of the Museum of Art of São Paulo to contemporary society should be to promote debate, which he understood as "significant evidence of the cultural maturity of the New World." Whether unaware of Bardi's more comprehensive approach to the museum collection or not, Rockefeller expressed his particular point of view in defense of abstract art by suggesting that the "humanitarian value of modern art" should surpass "academic humanism in its insistence in figure as the central element of art." He insisted on exploring "new conceptions of life, new scientific concepts and new technological methods ..., helping humanity to adapt to the modern world, facing and dominating it instead of imitating it." [72] This abstract, pragmatist comment, if well noticed, must have caused some discomfort for Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi. They were both convinced of the importance of modern art and modern science, but their approach was based on the empirical idea that change is embedded in experience and the knowledge of history. To the Bardi and consequently to the museum and the activities they were organizing, abstract art was not superior to or dissociated from other artistic expressions. To Rockefeller, however, the value of abstract art was the "expression of human aspiration, thoughts, and emotions in search of freedom and order," and the "function of a museum is not to control or dictate [practice] but to observe what artists make." [73]

Despite such conceptual and aesthetic differences, Chateaubriand's museum had gained its first international seal of approval. He courteously thanked Rockefeller for his friendly presence, "honor, and unforgettable pleasure," [74] sending him a series of photographs that documented the opening of the museum extension and new permanent gallery later that year. [75] The pictures included a few images with Rockefeller in social functions at the museum as well as in private receptions surrounded by local philanthropists, politicians, and socialites. Only one shows the

director of the museum, P. M. Bardi, sticking his head out from behind a line of a few social personalities and military officers entering the new facilities. None of them portrayed his young wife, architect Lina Bo Bardi, perhaps an indication that the Bardis did not have much direct contact with Rockefeller or were not seen by Chateaubriand as protagonists in the event. One picture that Rockefeller received was taken from the museum window facing the street and focused on several Jeep army trucks lined up along the sidewalks. His associate, Howard N. Knowles, commented, apparently with no irony that, "it is a great pleasure to see that the troops were called out for the opening." [76]

New Projects for Chateaubriand and the Bardis

Besides the re-inauguration of the Museum of Art, Chateaubriand achieved another entrepreneurial goal on September 18, 1950 and he counted once again on his friendship with Rockefeller. He created the first Brazilian television station -- named Tupi Network after one of the Brazilian native peoples -- initially housed in the same building on Sete de Abril Street where his Diários Associados headquarters and the museums were located. This pioneering accomplishment also counted on the support of Nelson Rockefeller, who assisted in the purchase and delivery of an RCA television transmitter for Tupi Channel early that year.[77] Among the pictures that Chateaubriand sent to Rockefeller were two images of a large, curious crowd watching a small television monitor sitting on a tall makeshift stand in the ground-floor lobby of Diários Associados headquarters.[78]

Rockefeller also heard rumors that, as part of this endeavor, Chateaubriand planned to create a Radio City Hall in Brazil.[79] It is possible that this idea related to his plan to build a larger building to house the headquarters of Diários Associados, probably emulating Rockefeller Center in New York. Perhaps trying to realize that dream, Chateaubriand hired prominent Italian architect and engineer Pier Luigi Nervi to elaborate a design proposal for a large mixed-use complex called Tabo Guaianazes between 1950 and 1951. The suggestion much likely came from Bardi, who was Nervi's friend and admirer and had invited him to spend a few weeks in São Paulo teaching a course at the museum school. Lina Bo Bardi, who also knew him from Milan, and his son Antonio Nervi helped him develop the project and to produce drawings and models. The proposed complex was based on rationalist principles and contained a large base occupying the whole site with three auditoriums, one of them as large as Radio City Hall. Above them were two articulate towers with 32 and 22 floors and a roof terrace, where offices and apartments would be located. Despite the fact that this plan was never accomplished, it represented the image of a modern, fast growing city, as well as Chateaubriand's and the architects' aspirations to state-of-the-art technical and aesthetic progress.

During this period, Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi collaborated on two other projects that contributed to the life of the museum and that reinvigorated artistic debate in São Paulo with the support of Chateaubriand's media conglomerate. Besides their work conceptualizing and designing exhibitions they focused on further developing the museums' pedagogical programs and on disseminating its goals through the creation of an art and design magazine. In October of 1950, they issued the first issue of *Habitat, Revista das Artes no Brasil* with help from their assistants, Luís Hossaka and Flávio Motta. The journal covered contemporary Brazilian architecture, art, and culture, ranging from urban and modern topics to traditional and regional

subjects. It lasted until 1965, but they co-edited only the first fifteen numbers between 1950 and 1954. The magazine presented an alternative to the abstract and internationalist approach to art conveyed by the group orbiting around the Museum of Modern Art.

The Bardis' editorial vision, which was based on their previous editorial experiences in Italy in the 1930s and 1940s, was more in tune with early Paulistano modernists. Among them were Mário and Oswald de Andrade who, in the 1920s, had proposed the modern culture and art in Brazil should not deny traditional and international influences but to be able transform them into new and genuinely national expressions. Pietro and Lina Bo Bardi's goal was not to forsake the past, but to "shape up a mind frame for the understanding of art"[80] that was also, like their competitors in Brazil, fully committed to modernity.

Five months after the magazine came out P. M. Bardi sent a copy to Rockefeller. "Our museum is publishing a magazine of information, 'Habitat,'" he politely announced, "and in the first number we printed your noteworthy address for the inauguration of the gallery. We take the liberty of sending you a copy, along with the best regards from Mr. Chateaubriand and myself." [81] This letter is the only record Rockefeller kept of his direct communication with the director of the Museum of Art of São Paulo. It is unlikely that he read the translated excerpt of his address in Portuguese. If he had done so, he would have realized that the editors had left out the part in which Rockefeller adamantly supported abstract against figurative art.

The other important but short-lived endeavor led by the Bardis during that period was the creation of Instituto de Arte Contemporânea (IAC, Contemporary Art Institute) to expand their initial pedagogical programs. The Instituto opened in March 1951 and closed its activities in late 1953. It was modeled after the Chicago Institute of Design at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), originally founded by László Moholy-Nagy as the New Bauhaus. Like the program at the large North-American institution, MASP's school was one of the first initiatives in the country to train "young students for a career in the industrial arts, enabling them to design objects whose taste and rationality for forms could match progress and modernity." [82] Among the national and international faculty of the Instituto were Lina Bo Bardi herself, accompanied by architects and designers Oswaldo Bratke, Jacob Ruchti, Leopold Haar, artist Roberto Sambonet, anthropologist Roger Bastide, and historian and pedagogue Flávio Motta.

The Institute's founders alleged that its closure was due to the lack of success in establishing productive links with local businesses. They would not have been able to find internships for IAC students in fast-growing São Paulo industries, because local entrepreneurs did not see the relevance in investing in product design professionals in the manufacturing sector. [83] Nevertheless, the Design School at IAC and MASP provided good initial education to pioneering names in Brazilian design, particularly in the graphic sector since it would take much longer for product design to develop professionally in the country. The Institute pioneered basic pedagogical premises and goals that yielded to the introduction of courses about industrial design at the school of architecture at the University of São Paulo as Lina Bo Bardi taught in the school between 1955 and 1957, before being replaced by her colleague Jacob Ruchti. Ultimately, those experiences leveraged the creation of the Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial (ESDI, Graduate School of Industrial Design) in Rio de Janeiro in 1963.

MAM's Growth and Growing Conflict between the Museums

Coincidentally, during the period in which the Bardis organized extensive exhibition programs and expanded activities at Chateaubriand's museum with the creation of *Habitat* magazine and the design school, Matarazzo's Museum of Modern Art (MAM) was also moving full steam and establishing itself as a strong competitor. Unlike MASP, MAM was a collective endeavor and more overtly emulated MoMA. Despite having smaller and less elaborate facilities, it also had a bar that made it popular among Paulistanos working and living in the city center. They playfully used to say that Diários Associados building housed two important institutions: Bardi's museum and the bar museum. This lighthearted joke concealed a growing conflict between the two museums, which led to disputes between their founders and members, leading to a defamation campaign against Bardi and the authenticity of the works he had acquired for MASP in Europe and the United States.

The Museum of Modern Art (MAM) had started its own educational program with the creation of a lecture series and courses in art history, the history of philosophy and introduction to aesthetics, followed by the preparation of docents. Unlike the approach offered by MASP, the intent of such programs at MAM was to organize genealogical and evolutionary frameworks to help audiences better understand and appreciate modern art. Soon after MASP opened its school of design, MAM opened a small school of handicraft in a building located a few blocks away. This school focused on teaching ceramics, graphic design, drawing, and art history with a similar idealistic purpose to MASP's program: to prepare designers and artists for industrial innovation with an understanding of the relationship between art and everyday life. It operated between 1952 and 1959, catering to both adults and high-school students, and helped educate designers such as Henrique Amaral, Abrahão Sanovicz, and Flávio Império. [84]

The creation of pedagogical programs by MAM was closely related to another meaningful endeavor promoted by its founders and directors: the establishment of the first International Art Biennial in São Paulo in 1951. The museum had existed for little over a year and did not have a permanent location or even enough space when the executive board decided to organize the biennial show, yet the nascent biennial received strong support from MoMA, as is evident from the extensive correspondence between Matarazzo, Rockefeller, d'Harnoncourt, and other members of the New York museum and the São Paulo IBEC offices. Their communication included negotiations to take architectural and art exhibitions, including Picasso's "Guernica," to São Paulo.[85]

The idealizers and curators of MAM had the Venice Biennial as a model, and offered twice the prize money that the Italian organization paid for its main award. This strategy helped attract considerable interest among modern European artists. Funds came from the São Paulo Industry Coalition (FIESP),[86] which had been founded a couple of decades before by Matarazzo and other industrialists and had great interest in associating itself with the image of a progressive and cosmopolitan metropolis. However, they faced a serious problem: their facilities were not adequate to host such a large event.

MAM's Biennial, Trianon Terrace and Urban Land Use

While MAM was starting to compete quantitatively with MASP a few floors below, the quality of its displays did not yet have the same careful and innovative design that the Bardis and their collaborators had created. MASP had invested in high-quality display cases and modern furniture and specific lighting, but MAM still seemed spatially unfinished. Visiting both museums on the same day must have presented quite a contrast during this initial period. Visitors going to a show at MASP in early 1950 would have observed that Lina Bo Bardi had carefully coordinated all design elements for the exhibitions organized by Pietro Maria Bardi. Conversely, MAM visitors going to see, for example, a show of North-American prints loaned from MoMA would have noticed that installations looked somehow unprofessional if not improvised: all twenty-seven prints were displayed on a series of zigzagging plywood panels painted in alternating black and white and placed against one of the corners of the large hall with no special lighting.^[87]

Despite this apparent makeshift condition, MAM would spend the following years looking at improving their facilities. The creation of a pavilion for the Biennial exhibition prompted this process. In agreement with the City of São Paulo, the Biennial committee proposed to temporarily occupy a historic site on affluent Paulista Avenue, a couple of miles south of the city center. Paulista Avenue was originally the boulevard along which the old São Paulo elites had decided to build their mansions. The initial property owners were mostly connected to the coffee trade that boomed in the late nineteenth century, aspiring to a European residential boulevard in the tropics. The developer of the subdivision decided, as part of his plans in 1891, to isolate a reasonably large plot of land approximately at the middle of the thoroughfare to be used as a small public park, which was finally completed in 1911 as a terrace on the north side of the street overlooking the then distant city. The park was named Trianon and consisted of a large eclectic structure housing a large ballroom built halfway into the slanted ground and covered with a terrace surrounded by elaborate pergolas and balustrade.

Trianon Terrace and its ballroom represented the most important gathering place for the São Paulo elites in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Politicians, artists, and wealthy families frequented elegant social meetings and events held there. In the 1930s, this scenario started to change. The collapse of the New York stock market in 1929 had ruined the Brazilian coffee trade and the fortunes of many families living along Paulista Avenue. The new elites emerging from the incipient concentration of manufacturing and commerce in São Paulo started to buy the valuable properties along the avenue and to demand new urban legislation that would allow them to build multi-family and commercial buildings on their new property. Consequently, the first middle- and upper-class midrise apartment buildings replaced the large estates as early as the mid-1930s, resulting in significant change and diversification of the social composition of the area. Over the years, Trianon Terrace lost its meaning as a gathering place for well-heeled Paulistanos and the city started to rent the ballroom for more popular events, such as bolero shows that attracted a broad population from different neighborhoods. By the early 1950s, Trianon had lost its exclusive and sophisticated appeal to the affluent and its architecture did not correspond to their modern, anti-academic taste.

As the city landscape changed so did the cultural values attributed to it. Trianon Terrace represented a contentious site in this process as industry and trade leaders tried to regain control over the use of a symbolically and visually rich plot of land. In 1950 Yolanda Penteado, Matarazzo's wife, who Nelson Rockefeller later befriended and advised in many of her

philanthropic programs, organized and promoted the "Mascarade Ball of Bad Taste" at Trianon Ballroom. Artists, architects, intellectuals, and patrons orbiting around the Museum of Modern Art were invited to the costume party and Lina Bo Bardi won first prize for her outfit, which consisted of an enormous hat, ruffled shiny dress, exaggerated fake jewelry, and a long cigarette holder. Not only was this an opportunity to remember the irreverent games she and her friends played during the long nights of war in Milan, it was also a way of mocking what they saw as the presence of undesirable, unrefined, popular and uneducated people who were slowly taking over such precious public property.

This big event preceded the agreement between Matarazzo's group and the city to use the Trianon site for the first art Biennial. Architects from MAM's executive committee, Luis Saia, Eduardo Kneese de Melo, and Jacob Ruchti proposed a temporary modernist pavilion that was built with wood and bricks over the existing terrace.^[88] The southwestern elevation of the two-story, symmetrical building was simple, white, and lined up with the sidewalk on Paulista Avenue. The northeastern elevation was more elaborate and suited to the site: a series of slender posts suspended the second floor volume right above the original terrace at the same time matching its basic geometry and dimensions and maintaining the terrace open to the view of the city, as an existing city ordinance required. The pavilion ambiguously seemed to have both landed on and emerged out of the existing terrace, but it sent no ambiguous message about the kind of artistic innovation it announced. Moreover, it also set an important precedent for the unveiled dispute between MAM and MASP in the following years as they competed to gain permission to use the public site.

As the organizers had predicted, the first biennial show was a great success both locally -- with over 40,000 paying visitors -- and internationally. It received great support from sponsors, critics, and artists aligned with the abstract art movements in Paris and New York, such as the president of the jury, René d'Harnoncourt from MoMA. The competition predominantly supported abstract art as a means for creating new art markets as well as to legitimize cultural cosmopolitanism along with political and economic control among affluent local groups. Works by Swiss artists Max Bill and the late Sophie Taeuber-Arp were the great winners in the show. Still, figurative works that distanced themselves from naturalist representation were among the pieces acquired for the museum collection, such as paintings and sculptures by Roger Chastel, Mário Cravo Jr., and Victor Brecheret.^[89]

Shortly after the conclusion of the exhibition, not only was the temporary pavilion dismantled but the whole building housing the ballroom and the terrace was demolished. The place which for forty years had been the center of elegant social life in São Paulo suddenly became an open razed urban block. The circumstances of Mayor Armando de Arruda Pereira's decision to demolish Trianon Terrace remain unclear, but it is very probable that his decision was tied to the plan to build a permanent facility for MAM. This hypothesis is reinforced by letters from Matarazzo to Rockefeller between August and September 1952, in which he asked for financial support for the construction of a building to house the Palácio das Artes (Arts Palace) on the Trianon site. Included with his letters were architectural drawings, descriptions, and an official note of approval by the local government.^[90]

The Department of Public Works of the City of São Paulo organized a closed architecture competition in April 1952 to develop the project on Paulista Avenue, most likely with the help of executive committee of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo. Only two architects were invited to present proposals: prominent modernist architect Affonso E. Reidy, who simultaneously designed the permanent Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (completed in 1954), and José Augusto Bellucci, a modernist architect with a more modest practice. The rules of the competition offered great freedom and no specific program to the architects but highlighted the need to create "a viewpoint that allows the appreciation of the gigantic urban panorama, so characteristic of São Paulo, which lays open from Paulista Avenue through Nove de Julho Avenue toward the city center."[91]

According to architect Francisco Beck, director of the City's Architecture Department, Bellucci submitted only a "preliminary study" for a seven-story building that, despite leaving the required eight meters above the terrace free, would anonymously "enmesh into the future mass of buildings to be erected along the avenue."[92] Beck saw Reidy's work was as a truly developed proposal with a "fortunate solution for a complex problem," and showed thorough understanding of the program and facilities: an elevated horizontal building for the museum-school with a "triangular plan that suits the shape of the square Exhibition halls [would] have completely free plans to allow for an infinite number of layouts" [93] and located in the volume sitting on pilotis to allow for the free view of the city panorama. The terrace would be the roof for the large base volume containing a large auditorium, storage, and mechanical rooms.[94] Those attributes positively responded to the urban constraints and were also "appropriate to the purpose of the project," leading Beck to conclude that "architect Reidy's project has high architectural value and the Palace's construction based on his project will bring great benefits to the capital of the state of São Paulo." [95]

Such expectations were part of a larger project commanded by Matarazzo since 1951: the construction of several cultural facilities in strategic areas of new development in the city to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of São Paulo to take place in 1954. Representing the Fourth Centennial Commission, created to promote the programs and projects surrounding the festivities, Matarazzo revealed his plans to Rockefeller in a letter delivered by Chateaubriand's during his trip to New York City in August 1952.[96]

Matarazzo explained that several foreign groups in São Paulo were organizing to offer the city a gift during its celebration, and that he had had an official meeting at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where he "proposed that the Americans offered the Arts Palace to be built at Trianon." [97] He also explained that despite their encouraging response, "the Americans who were present in the meeting needed support from their headquarters in the United States."[98] This gift would represent "the symbol of [international] collaboration above business and with a highly educated [Brazilian] group, and whose significance Chateau [briand] will be able to describe to you in such a crucial moment in the relationship between the two nations." Matarazzo also took the opportunity to reiterate his expectation that "MoMA would participate in the second Art Biennial (November 1953 -- January 1954), which will also be one of the Centennial manifestations."[99]

Rockefeller received this letter just two days later, which shows Chateaubriand's commitment to help Matarazzo before his relationship with his competitors at MASP deteriorated in the following years. Rockefeller politely responded a couple of weeks later, praising the idea and indicating that he would "make inquiry as to the thinking of the United States community in São Paulo in order to ascertain their reaction."^[100] He confirmed MoMA's interest in cooperating with the Biennial show, and also asked for clarification about whether the planned building would "be used ultimately as the permanent home of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo, or would it be for a new Museum of Plastic [sic] Arts. Either would certainly be a very thrilling possibility."^[101]

Rockefeller did in fact proceed with the suggested inquiry, contacting Stig G. Palmgren at IBEC offices in São Paulo about the opinion of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Board there. Palmgren raised the issue during a meeting on September 12 and immediately informed Rockefeller that "I have been told confidentially that the Chamber does not regard the Palácio das Artes as feasible. They are considering contributing to a new building for the União Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos [Brazil-United States Cultural Association], for which the City has contributed land. Since the property reverts to the City in forty years, the Chamber believes that a contribution in this form will serve the double purpose of meeting the present need of support for the Fourth Centenary and its long-term obligation in support of the União Cultural."^[102]

With no further ado, Rockefeller wrote to Matarazzo, explaining that "from the responses I got, it would appear that the Chamber already has another project in mind for the Centenary and that unless there is some shift, which is not now presently indicated, they would not be in a position to support or to contribute to the funds for the Palácio das Artes." He amiably excused himself for "not know[ing] the other plan, [and] it is difficult to have any judgment in the matter. Perhaps some other sponsorship will develop for your program."^[103]

Thus, documents in Rockefeller's files but not found in the Brazilian archives shed new light on why Reidy's project for Trianon Terrace was never built. They confirm that there was indeed a public competition for the project, even though they also suggest the procedure was not democratic, professionally balanced or even broadly representative. The documents indicate that the process favored Reidy, who was a protégé of the groups involved in the creation of modern art museums in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, the Rockefeller documents help to correct a mistaken but generally accepted rumor: that Reidy's project had not been approved by the city because it did not respect the urban requirements, which evidently was not the case.

Once the plans to build the large Palácio das Artes on Paulista Avenue failed, Matarazzo and the MAM-Biennial group focused their attention on the construction of a much larger cultural and leisure project to celebrate the 400th anniversary of São Paulo: Ibirapuera Park. This large park was strategically located between new affluent residential developments and the floodplain of the Pinheiros River, with a series of large buildings connected by a vast white concrete canopy on pilotis designed by architect Oscar Niemeyer and grounds designed by landscape architect and agronomist Otávio Teixeira Mendes (the original project had been authored by Roberto Burle-Marx but was never built). The park followed the example of the modernist Pampulha Lake neighborhood in Belo Horizonte, built a decade before with iconic buildings and gardens planned by the Niemeyer and Burle-Marx. Among the modernist buildings for Ibirapuera Park was the

large pavilion that ended up housing the Biennial Foundation facilities, whose functional program was very similar to the one Reidy had suggested for the Palácio das Artes.

Rivalry, Instability and Revival at MASP

While Matarazzo's group and their artistic and cultural endeavors gained great local and international visibility and support in favor of modern, abstract art (including from Rockefeller and MoMA), Chateaubriand's and Bardi's initiatives for the MASP started to suffer serious political setbacks. After Chateaubriand's controversial campaign to raise funds for his museum's collection and the inauguration of the new facilities in July 1951, rumors started to appear suggesting that the works Bardi had acquired in Europe and in the United States were not original masterpieces, particularly those attributed to early Italian, Spanish, and Dutch artists. What initially had seemed to Carleton Sprague Smith to be a "very healthy and salutary rivalry" [104] turned out to be quite destructive. It did not take long for a defamation campaign against MASP to emerge.

There were many reasons for the resistance and conflict between different powerful groups and Chateaubriand. Not only had he provoked general ethical discomfort through his fundraising methods, he had also historically cultivated an ambivalent relationship with the Matarazzo family. Every time their deals did not bring him a profitable outcome, he would publically attack them in his large circulation newspapers and *O Cruzeiro* magazine. When, in the early 1950s, other competing media conglomerates started to appear in Brazil, Chateaubriand began to think that these developments had a single goal: to destroy his *Diários Associados*. [105] On the international front, he continued to cultivate Rockefeller's support with several articles praising his policy work as president of IBEC and also as chairman of President Truman's International Development Advisory Board. [106] His support as a Brazilian senator for North-American business and investment interests had earned him trust and the acknowledgement from Rockefeller that "we are indebted to you for the friendly atmosphere, which you created. How you cover the ground you do, I do not know" [107] "With all his shortcomings Chateaubriand is a great man," Rockefeller's advisors had written. "No one could be more loyal to his friends. I wish more would have his courage!" [108] On the domestic front, however, his political and business relationships were deteriorating and it did not take much for his personal accusations against Brazilian competitors to escalate in his newspapers, magazine and radio stations. [109]

All this controversy directly affected the work the Bardis were doing for MASP. Still, they were also personally involved in the controversies between the two museums. For example, Pietro Maria Bardi publicly criticized the executive board of the MAM for having copied the model of the Venice Biennial for their international art show. Moreover, he and Lina Bo Bardi edited a large section in *Habitat* magazine -- printed by *Diários Associados* called "Crônicas do Alencastro" (Alencastro Chronicles) which included a series of anonymous comments written by themselves and others -- presumably even Chateaubriand -- about the cultural and social life of the city. The projects and people they supported received positive comments, while those they disagreed with received scathing criticism. Lina Bo Bardi herself had particular resentment toward *nouveaux riches* and Italian immigrant families such as the Matarazzos, who she inaccurately believed to hold only conservative political and aesthetic values.

By 1952, both museums had grown apart as they ascended to similar prominent positions in the cultural life of the city and the country, each one being supported by a different press group. Responses to Chateaubriand's manipulation and insults and to the Bardis' overconfident criticism took shape as a campaign to discredit the work they had done for MASP. Two respected, left-leaning Brazilian critics, Mário Pedrosa and Ciro Mendes, respectively writing for two of *Diários Associados* main competitors, *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, led the accusations against the legitimacy of the artwork.^[110] Not only was the authenticity of masterpieces by Rembrandt, Velazquez, Goya, Tintoretto, Botticelli, and El Greco at stake, but Bardi's political past as a prominent advisor to Mussolini in the early 1930s became the target of gossip and reason for mistrust. In response to a case of physical aggression against Mendes, the critic accused Bardi in the press of being a fascist. After that, xenophobic rumors against Bardi and his wife led to increasing ostracism.

Bardi tried to reverse this situation by demonstrating his commitment to Brazil and by obtaining proof of the legitimacy of the works in the museum's collection. Proving commitment to Brazil was simpler: both Pietro and Lina Bo Bardi decided to cancel their Italian citizenship and to become Brazilian citizens in 1953. The second case was more complex and took more time. With Chateaubriand's support, Bardi contacted several European museums and by 1953 he and Bo Bardi were ready to set up the first international exhibition of the MASP collection in Europe. With the help of Bardi's and Chateaubriand's friends, Germain Bazin, director of the Louvre, and Georges Wildenstein, influential Parisian art dealer, the French president, Vincent Auriol, opened the doors of the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris on October 10, 1953 to a show containing part of MASP's recently acquired collection.^[111]

Despite the lack of support from the Brazilian government and the general expectation by Brazilian critics that the tour would be short-lived, European connoisseurs applauded the show. Locals and tourists lined up at the museum door for three months to see the sixty-four "Chefs-d'Ouvre du Musée d'Art de São Paulo" (Masterpieces from the Museum of Art of São Paulo) from Mategna to Picasso. In view of this general acclaim, Chateaubriand's competing newspapers in Brazil remained silent: no comments but also no more deception. In the meantime, Bardi's plan had a positive reception in other European capitals. In the next three years, the exhibition travelled to several other museums around the continent, starting at the Tate Gallery in London, followed by Utrecht, Brussels, Düsseldorf, and Bern; the tour concluded at Palazzo Reale in Milan in 1956. During this period, about forty artworks were incorporated into the collection as Bardi and Chateaubriand took advantage of any good commercial opportunity to acquire new pieces.^[112]

Before returning to Brazil, the founder and the director of the São Paulo museum made arrangements to take the show to the United States. Given the pluralistic nature of the collection, there was no place for it at MoMA, but the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Toledo Museum, in Ohio, accepted the exhibition. Unlike the European tour, however, the decision to send the works to New York proved to be a miscalculation.^[113] By the time the works were shipped from Europe to the United States, *Time* magazine had published a long article about Chateaubriand, welcoming the MASP exhibition but offering a scathing review about its founder. This episode presaged other unexpected problems. The obstacles regarding the

exhibition set up did not have anything to do with the quality of the collection or Bardi's expertise, but with Chateaubriand's misguided business operations.

Lina Bo, Pietro Maria Bardi and their assistant Flávio Motta travelled to New York to organize the exhibition in March 1957, occupying several rooms of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One week before Chateaubriand planned to arrive for the opening banquet, he received a phone call from the Brazilian ambassador in Washington to tell him the Brazilian consul in New York had a subpoena addressed to him, warning that unless he paid a debt of over \$2 million that he had contracted from Guaranty Trust Company of New York, the Metropolitan Museum rooms containing MASP's exhibition would be sealed and the works would be confiscated. [\[114\]](#)

Most of the debt had been contracted to pay for artwork he had purchased from Georges Wildenstein's gallery, which also had a branch in New York City. Despite having nurtured close friendship with Chateaubriand, Wildenstein saw this as a prime time for an ultimatum, especially since the international art market had warmed up once again and the monetary value of the works in MASP's collection had multiplied several times.[\[115\]](#) By then, Chateaubriand's notoriously bad habits as a debtor had crossed the Brazilian border. At home, things also looked bleak. *Diários Associados* Corporation had contracted enormous debts in several other exorbitant projects, which he could not finance. During this period, Chateaubriand was spending more time in Rio de Janeiro after being elected senator and, knowing that he could not get the support of private investors, he decided to appeal to Juscelino Kubitchek, then president of Brazil. In an episode that involved events ranging from emotional blackmail -- through suicide threats in front of the president -- to political and armed confrontation -- against a demonstration by the National Student Union (UNE) accusing him of corruption and conservatism -- in a few days Kubitchek and his Treasury Secretary decided to pay off the debt Chateaubriand had contracted in the name of the Museum of Art of São Paulo. On November 29, 1957, he had Caixa Econômica Federal and Banco do Brasil, the two major Brazilian national banks, transfer the full balance plus interest directly to the Guaranty Trust Company of New York.[\[116\]](#)

The Brazilian president loaned the Museum of Art of São Paulo the money to pay off its debts to the North American company with a single condition that would forever change the museum's fate. Aware of the investment the Brazilian government was making to recover such important works of art, Kubitchek obliged Chateaubriand to dissociate the museum from his corporation, *Diários Associados*. From that date on, the museum officially ran under the name of Associação Museu de Arte de São Paulo. The international financial deal cost Kubitchek harsh criticism in the Brazilian press. Moreover, it took the museum almost two decades to renegotiate the debt and finally have the federal government absorb the unpaid loan during the military dictatorship of President Emílio G. Medici[\[117\]](#) in the early 1970s.

During the years that followed the dissociation between MASP and *Diários Associados* in 1957, Chateaubriand yielded his representation of the museum to his main associate, Edmundo Monteiro, who was the executive-director of the press conglomerate and president of the museum. Still, until his health dramatically changed in 1960, Chateaubriand continued to be directly involved with activities at MASP. He also diversified his artistic patronage by planning other art museums in the Northeast of Brazil, particularly in Salvador and Recife, where he had branches Álvaro Penteado's widow to merge MASP and the foundation (Fundação Armando

álvares Penteado, FAAP) created with the fortune he had left for the State of São Paulo. The traveling collection returned from the United States in the second half of 1957 and soon after it joined the gallery designed by Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi in the new facilities at FAAP. But just before the museum reopened in São Paulo, both Chateaubriand and Ms. Penteado decided to cancel their deal. Consequently the Museum of Art of São Paulo collection returned to the downtown building and left its pedagogical programs to the Foundation.

It did not take long for the executive directors of MASP to organize an alternative solution to the problem. They saw their misfortune as an opportunity to galvanize the city government to grant them use of the empty site on Paulista Avenue. The large slanted lot where Trianon Terrace used to stand and where Palácio das Artes should have been built had been empty for more than six years. Chateaubriand and Monteiro had political contacts and the press in their hands. The Bardi had their expertise and Lina Bo Bardi's designs for an art museum on the coast of São Vicente, which had not been built. She quickly improvised the adaptation of her previous project to the specificities of Trianon. She designed a large modern, concrete building with a municipal hall and theater at the base of the site whose roof recreated the terrace analogy to old ballroom. Above the terrace, she proposed to place a long volume elevated off the ground by two sets of beams and columns, allowing for the space underneath it to open toward the city panorama.

With this project in hand, Edmundo Monteiro presented a very attractive deal to Mayor Adhemar de Barros, a politician with whom Rockefeller had had superficial contact and who was described by his advisers as a having been "jailed in 1956 for embezzlement in 1956 while governor of the State of São Paulo."^[118] Monteiro knew that Barros would be running for president in 1960 and offered to trade the use of Trianon Terrace for complete media coverage of his campaign by *Diários Associados*. Almost right away, the City of São Paulo granted the museum a long-term lease to build Lina Bo Bardi's project on Avenida Paulista. It took another three years for construction to break ground on the site. The new mayor approved the foundations and the municipal hall and theater, but construction soon halted because of financial problems. The museum finally opened in 1968, a few months after Chateaubriand's death. Despite the fact that the permanent building now standing on Paulista Avenue carries his name, he no longer was officially connected to it and did not have the chance to see it completed.

Chateaubriand and Rockefeller, twilight of a friendship

According to archival records, Rockefeller did not maintain close contact with Chateaubriand after the subpoena episode in 1957. Two years later, Chateaubriand contacted Rockefeller, then governor of New York State, about "holding a forum in an American city for the detailed study" of a project that he considered to be of great interest to North-American and Brazilian investors. The forum should "be essentially private in character and partly defrayed by the *Diários Associados*." He planned to carry out an agricultural project to produce Brazilian raw materials in the semi-arid Northeast region and along the São Francisco River, the second largest Brazilian river basin. With large federal investments in irrigation, he believed "this area [would], before long, ensure great agricultural and cattle-raising opportunities which [would] definitely stabilize our supply of those materials that interest the United States."^[119] Rockefeller responded courteously, acknowledging Chateaubriand's "interesting letter [about] an important subject,"

and suggested that he would "ask Berent to keep in touch with Walter Moreria Salles [banker and Brazilian Ambassador in Washington, D.C.],"^[120] with no further consequences.

A few months later, Friele sent Rockefeller a memorandum to report that Chateaubriand had suffered a stroke that kept him almost completely paralyzed and unable to speak, although he continued his writing activities for eight more years with the aid of special tools, until his death on April 4, 1968. During this period, he visited the United States a few times for treatment in New York; Rockefeller's assistants made sure to remind him to write to Chateaubriand.^[121] His friendly but distant notes mentioned that he "think[s] of you very often, and of the many happy and stimulating occasions which brought us together over the years. Your devotion to art, democracy, and the welfare of the Brazilian people will always be remembered."^[122]

Early in 1965, Chateaubriand visited the United States for treatment at the Howard Rusk Rehabilitation Institute, but the treatment produced no improvement.^[123] Berent Friele recommended to Rockefeller that "it is important that you see your old friend and admirer before he leaves for Brazil Chateaubriand, more than any other Brazilian, supported our war efforts and through his chain of newspapers, radio and television stations has constantly reminded the Brazilian public of the contributions being made by the Rockefeller family to Brazil's agricultural, social and economic development. ... He is still the Kingmaker and is deeply involved in making Castello Branco's revolutionary government succeed."^[124] It is probable that Rockefeller did pay him a cordial visit. During this period, he made his last donation to the Museum of Art of São Paulo: a Picasso painting.^[125]

A few months later, in September or 1965, Chateaubriand returned to the United States. Despite his physical incapacitation, he gave a polemical address at the Brazilian Embassy in Washington in which he presented his impressions about his recent trip to Moscow, and expressed his high esteem for Rockefeller, his family, and the United States. Although he was paralyzed, his address displayed his unmatched vigor and irreverent political style. He began with a note of skepticism regarding Anglo-Saxon humanitarianism. To him, "Americans and Brits pertain and exist in their own orbit of life, one that is beyond my comprehension." "Let us establish a second alliance," he proposed, "this one with the 'so-called' intent of fighting intellectual and moral immaturity" against problems in Asia, Vietnam, and even in Oceania. His alliance with North-American interests and the Brazilian military regime was clear as he told the American audience, "Your reporters were frequently given to ask us [Diários Associados] if, in fact, there were any communists in Brazil. We never denied at any time that there was some substance to those inquiries since we were aware of the actual existence, somewhere in Brazil, of Soviet colonies." Most of all, Chateaubriand's last address had a sense of closure and irony. He took advantage of the occasion to compare himself to the man and entrepreneur he much admired and emulated. He described his life-long pursuits in Brazil as being "a vain attempt at selling a luxury item -- a super deluxe 'parfumerie' [sic] article: Nelson Rockefeller."^[126]

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Rockefeller Archive Center Research Reports Online is a periodic publication of the Rockefeller Archive Center. Edited by Ken Rose and Erwin Levold. Research Reports Online is intended to foster the network of scholarship in the history of philanthropy and to highlight the diverse range of materials and subjects covered in the collections at the Rockefeller Archive Center. The reports are drawn from essays submitted by researchers who have visited the Archive Center, many of whom have received grants from the Archive Center to support their research.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and are not intended to represent the Rockefeller Archive Center.

ENDNOTES:

[1] Nelson A. Rockefeller, "Cidadela da Civilização." *Habitat*, 1 (Dec. 1950), p. 1, Lina Bo e Pietro Maria Bardi Archives.

[2] Assis Chateaubriand, "O piloto da fé." *O Jornal* (May 9, 1945), in Rockefeller Family Archives, RG 4, NAR personal documents, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[3] Moussia Pinto Alves, née Moussia von Riesenkauf, was born into a Crimean tsarist aristocratic family but both parents were killed during the Bolshevik revolution. After fleeing to Constantinople, she ended up in Hamburg where she met and married Brazilian writer and sugar-cane millionaire, Paulo Alves CarlesPinto.
<http://www.mac.usp.br/mac/templates/projetos/seculoxx/modulo2/modernidade/eixo/spam/moussia/indexhtml> (January 4, 2009).

[4] Letter from Assis Chateaubriand to Nelson A. Rockefeller, March 20, 1946, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[5] Letter from Nelson A. Rockefeller to Assis Chateaubriand, May 17, 1946, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[6] Letter from Nelson A. Rockefeller to Ralph Beals, November 11, 1946, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[7] Idem.

[8] Unsigned letter to Nelson A. Rockefeller, November 13, 1946, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[9] For more on Assis Chateaubriand, see Fernando Morais, *Chatô, o Rei do Brasil*, S. Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994; and Bernardo Kucinski, "Chatô: o poder da chantagem." *A Síndrome da Antena Parabólica*, São Paulo: Perseu Abramo, 1998.

[10] Assis Chateaubriand, "O Capricho do onipotente." *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, (December 1, 1946) Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[11] Assis Chateaubriand, "A iniciativa privada." *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro, (December 24, 1946) Folder 100, Box 17, RG4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[12] Assis Chateaubriand, "Ausncia de governo no Mediterrâneo brasileiro." *O Jornal*, Belém, (February 16, 1947) Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[13] Letter from Nelson A. Rockefeller to William McChesney Martin, dated May 22, 1947, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[14] Memoranda by Francis A. Jamieson to Nelson A. Rockefeller, March 1, April 20, and April 24, 1948, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[15] Over twenty of those letters, notes, and cables were found in the Rockefeller Archives, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[16] Fernando Morais, *Chatô: O Rei do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994, pp. 479-485.

[17] Chateaubriand sponsored several populist and megalomaniac programs such as the transformation of the aviation industry in the country, programs to help children, and the creation of the São Paulo Art Museum. Fernando Morais, op.cit, pp.483-484.

[18] Pietro Maria Bardi, "An educational experiment at the Museu de Arte, Sao Paulo." *Museum*, New York: UNESCO, 1: 3-4 (Dec. 1948), pp. 142 and 212, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[19] Idem, *ibid.*

[20] Idem, *ibid.*

[21] Idem, *ibid.*

[22] Idem, *ibid.*

[23] Idem, *ibid.*

[24] Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*, São Paulo: EDUSP (1998), p. 99.

[25] Pietro Maria Bardi, "An educational experiment at the Museu de Arte, São Paulo." *Museum*, New York: UNESCO, 1: 3-4 (Dec. 1948), pp. 142 and 212, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[26] Idem, *ibid.*

[27] Idem, *ibid.*

[28] Idem, *ibid.*

[29] Letter from C. S. Smith to NAR, April 17, 1947, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[30] Idem, *ibid.*

[31] Letter from C. S. Smith to NAR, November 6, 1947, Folder 1471, Box 149, R G 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[32] Idem, *ibid.*

[33] See "O Legado de Armando Álvares Penteado." *O Estado de São Paulo*, n/p, March 7, 1947, article clipping, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[34] Idem, *ibid.*

[35] Idem, *ibid.*

[36] Idem, *ibid.*

[37] Letters from E. Kneese de Melo to C. S. Smith, November 28, 1946; and Rodrigo M. F. de Andrade, January 4, 1947, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[38] Letter from E. Kneese de Melo to C. S. Smith, December 26, 1946, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[39] Letters from C. S. Smith to E. Kneese de Melo, November 28, 1946, and to Sérgio Milliet, November 30, 1946, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[40] Letter from C. S. Smith to E. Kneese de Melo, November 28, 1946, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[41] Letter from E. Kneese de Melo to C. S. Smith to, April 27, 1947, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[42] Letter from E. Kneese de Melo to C. S. Smith to, October 13, 1947, Folder 1467, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC

[43] Idem, *ibid.*

[44] Idem, *ibid.*

[45] Letter from NAR to F. Matarazzo So., March 5, 1948, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[46] Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*, São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998, p.104.

[47] Letter from Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho to NAR, January 30, 1948, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[48] Letter from Rino Levi to C. S. Smith to February 2, 1948, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[49] Idem, *ibid.*

[50] Idem, *ibid.*

[51] Letter from C. S. Smith to NAR, March 1, 1948, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[52] Idem, *ibid.*

[53] Letter from NAR to F. Matarazzo Sobrinho, March 5, 1948, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[54] Cable from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, September 4, 1948, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[55] Memo from Susan (?) to NAR, August 31, 1948, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[56] Letter from NAR to Assis Chateaubriand, September 23, 1948, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[57] Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998, p.114.

[58] Idem, p.113.

[59] Letter from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, December 5, 1949, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[60] Letter from Berent Friele to Assis Chateaubriand, February 15, 1950; letter from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, February 18, 1950; and memorandum from Francis A. Jamieson to Berent Friele, March 22, 1950; Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[61] Letter from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, June 10, 1950; cable from NAR to Assis Chateaubriand, June 16, 1950; and cable from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, June 19, 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[62] Memo from Carleton Sprague Smith to NAR, June 23, 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[63] Idem, p.2.

[64] Idem, *ibid.*

[65] Idem, p.3.

[66] Idem, p.1.

[67] Idem, *ibid.*

[68] Idem, p.1.

[69] Letter from Arthur Vandenberg Jr. to Louise Boyer (NAR's executive assistant and trusted adviser), circa 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[70] Nelson A. Rockefeller, "Cidadela da Civilização." *Boletim Informativo Uniao Cultural Brasil Estados Unidos*, Ano II, (Agosto 1951) 8, p.4, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[71] Idem, *ibid.*

[72] Idem, p.5.

[73] Idem, *ibid.*

[74] Letter from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR, July 18, 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[75] Photos Diários Associados, July and September 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[76] Memo from Howard Knowles to NAR, December, 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[77] Memo from Berent Friele to NAR, October 17, 1949, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[78] Photos of Diários Associados, July and September 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[79] IBEC, Daily News Digest, Brazilian Bulletin, March 15-29, 1951, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[80] Lina Bo Bardi, "Museu de Arte de São Paulo." *Habitat*, São Paulo, 1: 17, (October-December 1950).

[81] Letter from P. M. Bardi to NAR, April 8, 1951, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[82] Promotion flier about the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 1950, n/p, Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi Archives.

[83] Ethel Leon, IAC, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea: Escola de Desenho Industrial do MASP (1951-53): Primeiros Estudos. Master's thesis, São Paulo: Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2006.

[84] Maria Cecília França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998, p.112.

[85] Several letters between 1951 and 1958, Folder 1469 and 1470, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[86] Idem, p.115.

[87] Photos from US Prints Exhibition, MAM-SP, Folder 1470, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[88] Maria Cecilia França Lourenço, *Museu acolhem moderno*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1998, p. 115-116.

[89] Idem, p.116-118.

[90] Several documents regarding Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, April to September 1952, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[91] Competition document Francisco Beck, Director, Department of Architecture, São Paulo City, May, 30, 1952, p.1, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[92] Idem, *ibid.*

[93] Idem, p.2.

[94] Affonso Eduardo Reidy, "Museu de Artes Plásticas, São Paulo." Descriptive memorandum, FLS. 21: 757/52, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[95] Competition document Francisco Beck, Director, Department of Architecture, São Paulo City, May, 30, 1952,

p. 2, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[96] Letter from F. Matarazzo So. to NAR, August 19, 1952, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[97] Letter from F. Matarazzo So. to NAR, August 19, 1952, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[98] Idem, *ibid.*

[99] Idem, *ibid.*

[100] Idem, *ibid.*

[101] Idem, *ibid.*

[102] Letter from S. G. Palmgren to NAR, September 12, 1952, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[103] Letter from NAR to F. Matarazzo So., September 24, 1952, Folder 1478, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[104] Memo from Carleton Sprague Smith to NAR, June 23, 1950, Folder 1471, Box 149, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[105] Idem, p. 550-1.

[106] Several documents attest to their mutual collaboration: Assis Chateaubriand, "O papel dos Estados Unidos na recuperacao dos povos sub-desenvolvidos." *O Jornal*, May 13, 1951; memos and letters regarding Chateaubriand's mediation as a Senator after 1952 in delicate political and

business negotiations between the two countries and personal gifts such as MASP and MoMA exhibition catalogues and an African amulet, NAR to Assis Chateaubriand, February 2, 1953; Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[107] NAR to AC, September 3, 1952, Memo Berent Friele and Francis A. Jamiesonto NAR, September 22, 1952, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[108] Memo from Berent Friele and Francis A. Jamiesonto NAR, September 22, 1952, Folder 1464, Box 148, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Museums, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[109] Fernando Morais, *Chatô, O Rei do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994, p. 582.

[110] Idem, *ibid*.

[111] Renato M. Gouvêa, *Masp, 60 anos: a história em três tempos*. São Paulo: MASP, 2008, p.50-51.

[112] Idem, p.54.

[113] Idem, *ibid*.

[114] Fernando Morais, *Chatô, O Rei do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994, pp. 582-585.

[115] Idem, p. 586.

[116] Idem, pp. 589-593.

[117] Idem, p. 594.

[118] Memo and clippings about A. de Barros, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[119] Letter from Assis Chateaubriand to NAR from Rio de Janeiro, November 11, 1959, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[120] Letter from NAR to Assis Chateaubriand, December 3, 1959, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[121] Memos from Berent Friele to NAR, June 4, 1960, January 23, 1964, May 8, 1964, January 25, 1965, and September 29, 1965, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[122] Letters from NAR to Assis Chateaubriand, January 22 and December 28, 1964, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[123] Memo from Berent Friele to NAR, January 25, 1965, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[124] Idem, *ibid.*

[125] Cable from Tereza Chateaubriand (daughter) to NAR, February 5, 1965, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.

[126] Assis Chateaubriand's address, Brazilian Embassy, September 30, 1965, Folder 100, Box 17, RG 4, NAR Personal Documents, Countries, Rockefeller Family Archives, RAC.