

ICAA | MFA H

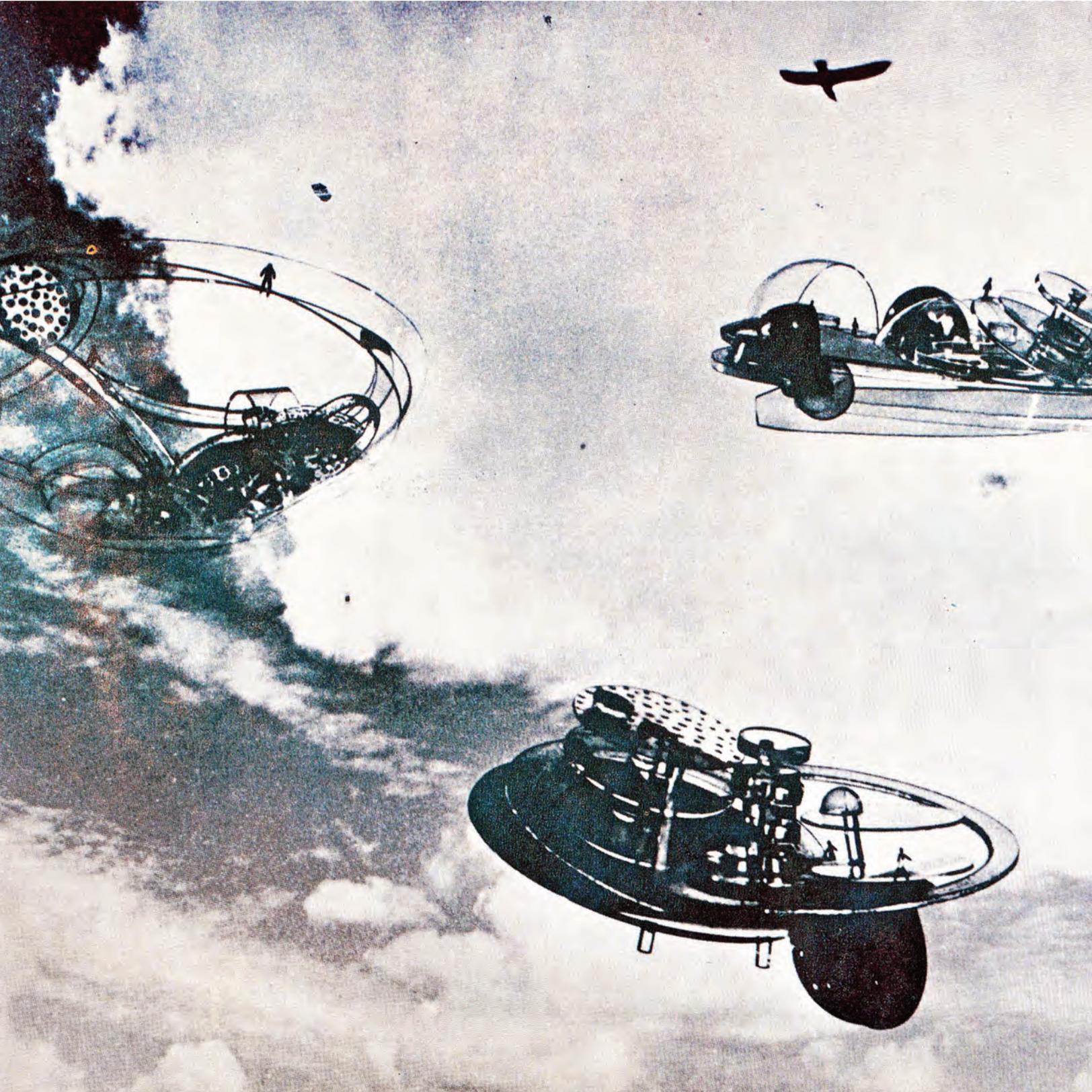
International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



# ICAA Documents Project Working Papers

The Publication Series for *Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art*

Number 6 | December 2018



# ICAA Documents Project Working Papers

The Publication Series for *Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art*

The *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers* series brings together papers stemming from the Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art Project at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. It also serves as the official vehicle to assemble and distribute related research by the Center's team of researchers, staff, and affiliates.

**Series Editor:** María C. Gaztambide, ICAA/MFAH

**Number 6 Editor:** María C. Gaztambide, ICAA/MFAH

**Design:** Graciela Araujo, MFAH

© 2018 International Center for the Arts of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. All rights reserved.

**Front cover (see also p. 5, fig. 5):**  
Gyula Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (The Hydrospatial City) (detail), n.d., photomontage.

**Back cover (see also p. 16, fig. 1):**  
Antônio Henrique Amaral, *Campo de batalha 3* (detail), 1973, oil on canvas, Coleção da Bolsa de Mercadorias & Futuros e Bolsa de Valores de São Paulo.

**For more information, please contact:**

The International Center  
for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA)

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
P.O. Box 6826, Houston, TX 77265-6826

Telephone: 713-353-1528

Fax: 713-639-7705

[icaa@mfa.org](mailto:icaa@mfa.org)

## ICAA Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art Project

### PROJECT ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

**Gary Tinterow**, Director, MFAH

**Mari Carmen Ramírez, PhD**, Director, ICAA, and Wortham Curator of Latin American Art, MFAH

**María C. Gaztambide, PhD**, Associate Director, ICAA

**Héctor Olea, PhD**, Translations and Publications Editor, ICAA & MFAH

**Bonnie van Zoest**, Latin American Art and ICAA Project Administrator, ICAA

**Beatriz R. Olivetti**, Research and Digital Experience Specialist, ICAA

**Nora A. Heymann-Nava**, Copyrights Coordinator, ICAA

**María B. McGreger**, Imaging and Web Content Specialist, ICAA

**J. Angel Carrazco**, Technical Assistant, ICAA

**Yvonne Zepeda**, Documents Project Technical Assistant, ICAA

**Zachary Haines**, Chief Technology Officer, MFAH

**Bruno Favaretto**, Database/Website Developer, Base7, São Paulo, Brazil

**Luz Muñoz-Rebolledo**, Chief Digital Librarian/Cataloguer, ICAA

### DOCUMENTS PROJECT EDITORIAL BOARD

**Beverly Adams, PhD**, Adjunct Curator of Latin American Art, The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin

**Gilberto Cárdenas, PhD**, Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana

**Karen Cordero, PhD**, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico

**Fabiola López-Durán, PhD**, Rice University, Houston, Texas

**Natalia Majluf, PhD**, Museo de Arte de Lima, Peru

**Chon Noriega, PhD**, Chicano Studies Research Center, UCLA, Los Angeles, California

**James Oles, PhD**, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts

**Marcelo Pacheco**, MALBA-Colección Costantini, Buenos Aires, Argentina

**Ivonne Pini**, Editor *ArtNexus*, and Universidad Nacional/Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia

**Mari Carmen Ramírez, PhD**, ICAA/MFAH, Houston, Texas

**Tahía Rivero Ponte**, Fundación Mercantil, Caracas, Venezuela

**Victor A. Sorell**, Independent Scholar, Chicago, Illinois

**Edward Sullivan, PhD**, New York University, New York City, New York

**Susana Torruella Leval**, Independent Scholar, New York City, New York

**Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, PhD**, Independent Scholar, San Antonio, Texas

## CONTENTS

### 2 INTRODUCTION

Beatriz R. Olivetti, Research and Digital Experience Specialist, International Center for the Arts of the Americas, MFAH

### 4 LA CIUDAD HIDROESPACIAL: CHALLENGING THE FUNCTIONAL CITY

Giovanna M. Bassi Cendra, Winner of the Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research in 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art, Graduate Student Essay

### 16 ANTÔNIO HENRIQUE AMARAL'S BATTLEFIELD PAINTINGS AND THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Margaret H. Adams, Winner of the Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research in 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art, Honorable Mention Essay

### 26 CONTRIBUTORS

### 27 COPYRIGHT AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

## INTRODUCTION

Beatriz R. Olivetti

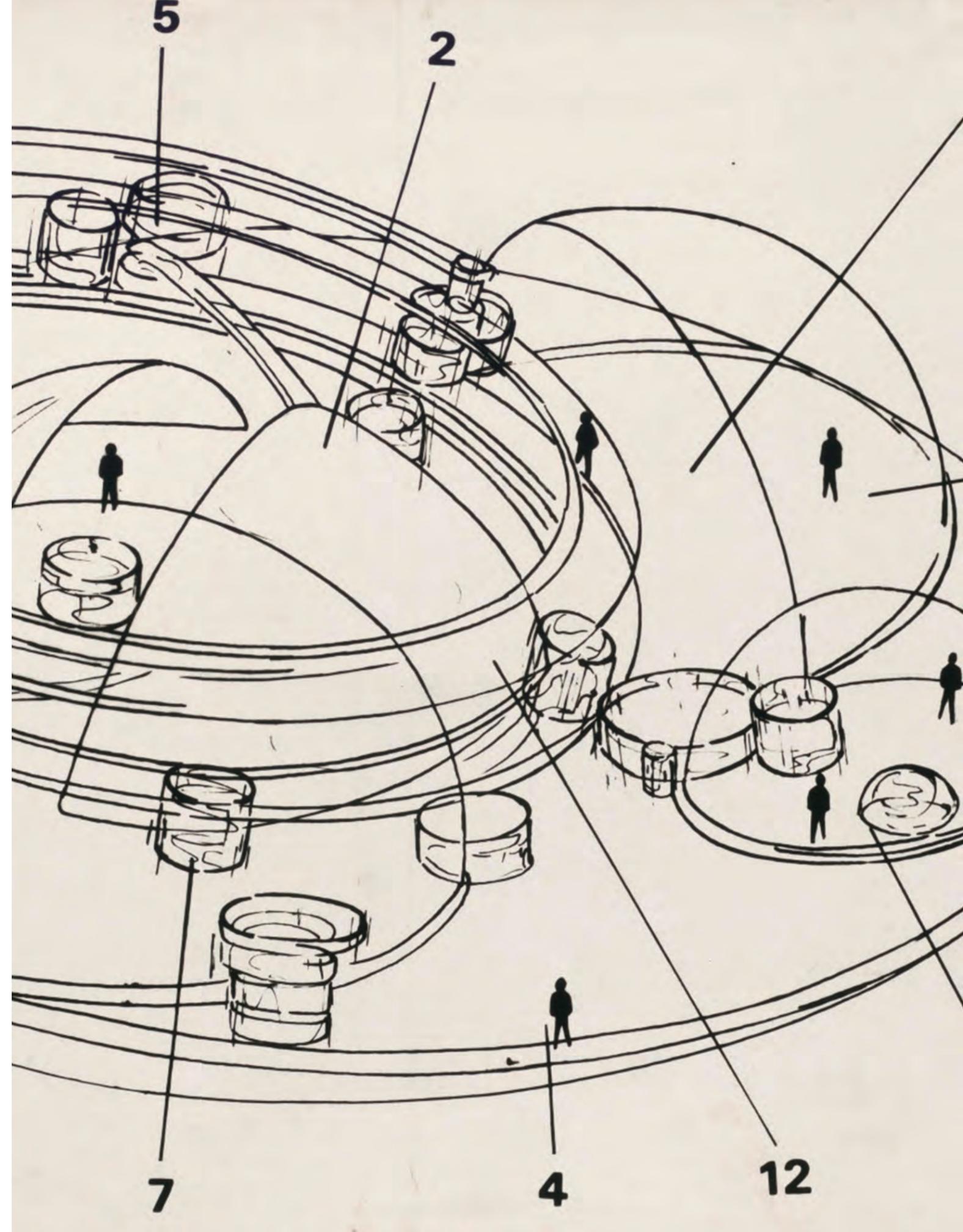
This sixth edition of the *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers* highlights two winning essays of the Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research in 20th-century Latin American and Latino Art: “*La ciudad hidroespacial: Challenging the Functional City*,” by Giovanna M. Bassi Cendra, and “*Antônio Henrique Amaral’s Battlefield Paintings and the Brazilian Military Dictatorship*,” by Margaret H. Adams. In keeping with the support for Latin American and Latino art extended by the late Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Director Peter C. Marzio, the Award aims to recognize, reward, and enable new scholarship in the field. Chosen by a jury of distinguished scholars, these essays draw from the primary and critical resources available through the *Documents of 20th-century Latin American and Latino Art* project’s [digital archive](#).

**Giovanna M. Bassi Cendra** analyzes Argentinean-Czechoslovakian artist Gyula Kosice’s installation *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1946, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) as a challenge to the notion of a *functional city*, an idea jointly conceived by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier and the International Congress of Modern Architecture in 1933. Critical of the core principles that guided functionalist architecture and urbanism (i.e., dwelling, transportation, work, and leisure), Kosice envisioned a city built with floating, mobile cells through which people would be free to travel—and be unbound to notions of private property and political boundaries. Thus, *La ciudad*’s relevance resides not only on its art historical value and precocious challenge to conventional and modernist paradigms, but also, Bassi argues, in the manner that this installation’s setup is conducive to the acknowledgment of the consumptive relationship that modern and contemporary societies have created with their environment.

**Margaret H. Adams** explores the role of Brazilian artist Antônio Henrique Amaral’s series of paintings entitled *Campos de batalha* (Battlefields) (1973–74) in the context of censorship and oppression of the military regime in Brazil (1964–1985). Drawn from her master’s thesis at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City—*Antônio Henrique Amaral’s Battlefield Paintings (1973–1974) and the Brazilian Military Dictatorship*, which she successfully defended in 2017—Adams contends that Amaral’s depictions of mangled and bound bananas, decomposing or mutilated by knives, forks, and ropes, represent his denunciation of the oppression and human rights abuses in Brazil. Basing her argument on Czech-born writer Vilém Flusser’s claim of the political meaning inherent to Amaral’s series and Brazilian art critic Frederico Morais’s analogy of the banana as a surrogate human body, Adams further strengthens her contention by adding testimonials narrating the brutality of the Brazilian military regime into her research. Adams also acknowledges current institutional efforts by Brazil’s National Truth Commission to preserve accurate accounts of this time period which, she argues, should include interpreting Amaral’s *Campos de batalha* (Battlefields) series as a visual archive of this moment in the history of the country.

The ICAA is delighted to feature both essays as part of the *Documents Project Working Papers* series and is proud to serve as a key platform for accessing the growing body of knowledge on the field of Latin American and Latino art. The Peter C. Marzio Award is generously underwritten by The Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology, a private nonprofit organization based in Houston dedicated to the support of contemporary artists and scholars who integrate advanced and relevant social, anthropological, or cultural research in their work.

Opposite:  
detail of fig. 4, p. 5.



## LA CIUDAD HIDROESPACIAL: CHALLENGING THE FUNCTIONAL CITY

Giovanna M. Bassi Cendra

In accordance with its vital impulses and reactions, mankind has moved in uneven proportion with regard to its own habitat. Architecture comprises very dissimilar elementary needs and it is not advisable to remain oppressed by the magnitude of its sluggish load. Until now, we have only used a minimum proportion of our mental faculties, adapted to modules which in some ways, derive from Western architecture known as modern or “functional.” That is to say, the apartment or the “cell” in which to live, which a class society imposes on us with its economy and compulsive exploitation.

—Gyula Kosice, “Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism,” 1971<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of his entire career, the Argentinean sculptor and poet Gyula Kosice (Ferdinand Fallik) (Kosice, Czechoslovakia, 1924–Buenos Aires, 2016) envisioned *La ciudad hidroespacial* (Hydrospatial City) (fig. 1) as a new form of human habitation that would free people from the chains of both gravity and social regulation. Although Kosice called it a “city,” this settlement would not have a permanent, stable form—its modules, suspended thousands of meters above the ground and powered by the energy latent in water, would be displaceable, reconfigurable, and pliable to the whims of individuals. *Hydrospatial City* synthesizes all of Kosice’s thought and practice—in his own words, “Having just reached the half-century of my life, I consider, now more than ever, that the whole course of my existence as a visual artist, theorist and poet has been intimately allied to my hydrospatial city project.”<sup>2</sup> First conceived in 1946, the work brings together Kosice’s poetic and sculptural theory, style, and technique; his idea that the visual arts had a social role to fulfill and that they could work together with



Figure 1 Gyula Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (The Hydrospatial City), 1946–2000s, photomontage depicting the hydrospatial cells floating against a sky background. From Guillermo Whitelow, *La propuesta hidroespacial de Kosice*, exh. cat. (Buenos Aires: Galería Bonino, 1971), n.p., ICAA Record ID 1274910.

architecture to improve human existence; his fascination with science and technology as resources that could be exploited for the benefit of human beings and could be liberating as opposed to be utilized to regiment human bodies and behavior; and his deep concern with ecology and the relationship of individuals to their *milieu*, in the manner that Georges Canguilhem understood the term.<sup>3</sup>

On first impression, *Hydrospatial City* appears to be just a delirious and escapist technological fantasy; however, it is much more than an interesting artifact for mere aesthetic enjoyment. Notwithstanding its unlikely constructability, Kosice’s proposal for a suspended city is significant because it constitutes an astonishingly precocious, lucid, and compelling challenge to both conventional and modernist paradigms of dwelling. With this work, Kosice sought to provide a practical solution to the modern urban problems of a dull and alienated human life, social inequality, and environmental degradation; ills that he considered had derived from traditional forms of urbanization and had been exacerbated by a modernist architectural utopia—the Functional City, the urban paradigm that the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier and the International Congress of Modern Architecture promoted aggressively. *Hydrospatial City* denounces the sinister and repressive eugenicist and normalizing aspects of the Functional City and its positivist reduction of human life to four functions: dwelling, transportation and circulation, work, and leisure. By leaving room for difference, the ludic, and the psychological, *Hydrospatial City* undermines the modernist focus on universal stereotypes such as Le Corbusier’s Modulor Man—the “ideal” white male figure on which the architect based his normalizing system of proportion. The suspended city’s mobile cells, which would foster the unrestricted flow of people, question our fixation with land, political boundaries, and private property. More importantly, *Hydrospatial City* induces us to reflect on the parasitic, destructive relationship that modern societies have established with the Earth and with each other.

*Hydrospatial City* is comparable to well-known and influential outsider critiques of capitalist functional architecture and urbanism, such as *New Babylon* (1956–74) by Constant Nieuwenhuys, known as Constant.<sup>4</sup> *New Babylon*, a utopian global urban system made up of labyrinthine megastructures supported by massive pillars, was also raised from the ground. Both *New Babylon* and *Hydrospatial City* attempt to materialize a concept of human habitation inspired by Marxist thought, whereby the citizens of a post-revolutionary world would live in a state of constant indeterminacy and circulation, would be liberated from capitalist modes of production by cybernetic technology, and would be able to reinvent their own environment creatively.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that Kosice conceived his revolutionary



Figure 2 Gyula Kosice, *Hábitat hidroespacial*, maqueta N (Hydrospatial habitat, Model N), 1954, ink on paper, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment Fund, 2009.1790.



Figure 3 Gyula Kosice, *Hábitat hidroespacial*, maqueta Y (Hydrospatial habitat, Model N), 1971, acrylic, Plexiglas, paint, and metal, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment Fund, 2009.29.26.

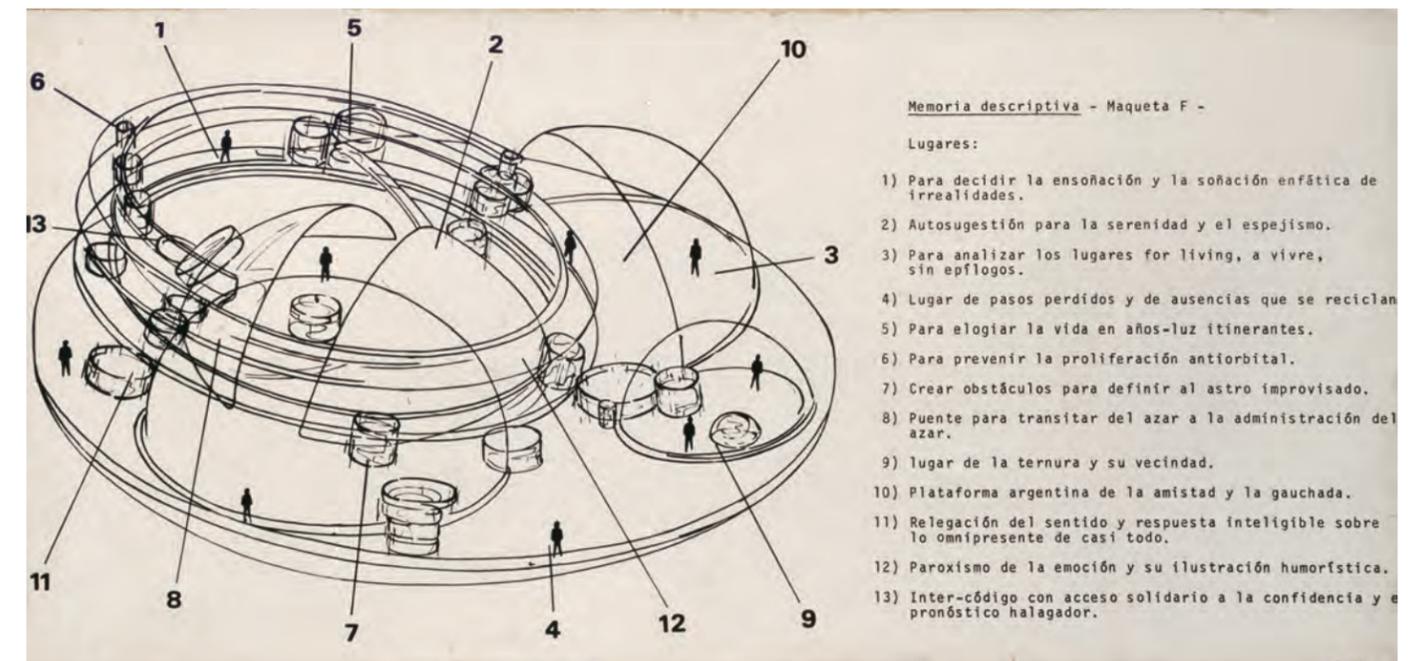


Figure 4 Gyula Kosice, *Memoria descriptiva—maqueta F* (Descriptive narrative, Model F), n.d., photomechanical reproduction, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Endowment Fund, 2009.1800.

city several years before Constant envisioned *New Babylon*, its precociousness and significance as a critique of modern capitalist urbanism has not been properly acknowledged in scholarship.<sup>6</sup> *Hydrospatial City* is as relevant today as it was in the 1940s, since the urban problems it calls attention to have worsened.

*Hydrospatial City* consists of independent modules of rounded forms that contain human habitats (fig. 2). These “hydrospatial cells,” conceived to float 1,000 to 1,500 meters above ground, would be powered by the energy harnessed from water vapor in the clouds. The modules would be able to move to any location around the globe and to connect to each other.<sup>7</sup> Kosice appropriated the role of an architect to create his city. Although his proposal does not have the finished and detailed character of formal construction documents, it approximates the initial conceptual design phase during which architects express their project’s guiding principles through simple sketches and scale models. Kosice also adopted architectural presentation techniques. He made sketches and built models that rendered *Hydrospatial City*’s modules in three dimensions; drew these sketches by hand with ink on paper or paper board and sometimes used watercolor to shade them; and constructed maquettes with acrylic, Plexiglas, paint, and metal, including small metal figurines of people in order to give the viewer a sense of the habitats’ scale (fig. 3). As architects do when they wish to explain their projects to their clients or the public, Kosice wrote *memorias descriptivas* (descriptive narratives), which are texts that accompany his sketches of the modules and explain the activities that would unfold within them (fig. 4). Kosice used the typical architectural format of a numbered list of functions keyed into a sketch to write his descriptive narratives; however, the poetic nature of these texts subverts the monotony of conventional architectural labels. In addition, in order to provide context for his modules, Kosice created color photomontages and *Constelaciones* (Constellations), which are three-dimensional multimedia panels made with acrylic, Plexiglas, paint, and light. His photomontages show the hydrospatial cells suspended against a blue sky scattered with clouds (fig. 5) and his *Constelaciones* depict them floating in the black, starry space.

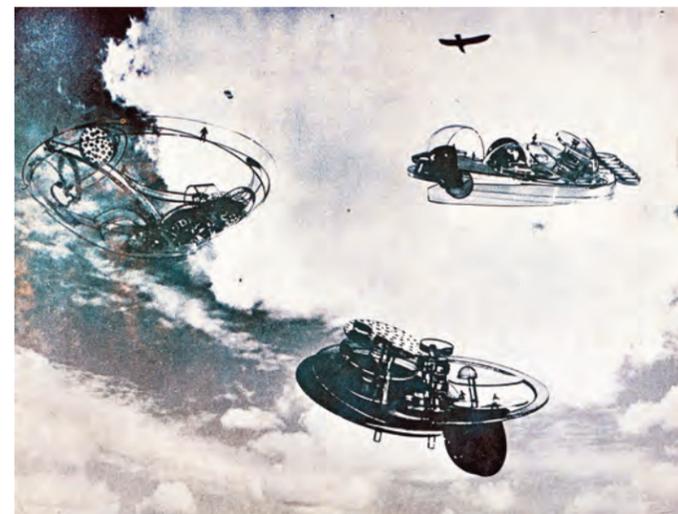


Figure 5 Gyula Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (The Hydrospatial City), n.d., photomontage. From Gyula Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial*, exh. cat. (Buenos Aires: Planetario de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1979), n.p., ICAA Record ID 1274894.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, holds the most comprehensive collection of materials related to *Hydrospatial City*. Kosice probably worked on the sketches first, as the earliest ones are dated 1948. He may have built the first Plexiglas models as early as the late 1940s, after he began to experiment with this material.<sup>8</sup> At this time he constructed the first prototypes—which did not yet have a name—with Plexiglas leftover from other sculptures.<sup>9</sup> A few photomontages dated 1950 show models of the hydrospatial cells floating against a sky background (fig. 6). However, it is very difficult to determine exactly when Kosice created these early pieces because he sometimes dated photographs—and even art objects—based on when he conceived the design or concept instead of the actual date of production.<sup>10</sup> Apparently, Kosice built most of the models between 1967 and 1971 and the *Constellations* between 1970 and 1972. However, he continued to work on *Hydrospatial City* for decades—for example, in the MFAH collection there is a watercolor and ink sketch dated 1997, a maquette dated 2004, and a three-dimensional video animation dated 2009.



Figure 6 Gyula Kosice, *Sin título* [Fotomontaje no. 4 de la ciudad hidroespacial] (Untitled) [Photomontage No. 4 from the Hydrospatial City], 1950, photomontage, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Caroline Wiess Law Accessions Endowment Fund, 2009.1780.

*Hydrospatial City* cannot be understood without placing it in its political and economic context. According to Kosice, his idea of a suspended city in space goes as far back as 1944, when he exclaimed in *Arturo* magazine—writing all in uppercase letters—“MAN SHALL NOT END UP ON THE EARTH.”<sup>11</sup> These words, likely prompted by the somber reality and uncertainty of living in a world immersed in global war, reveal Kosice’s anxiety about the eradication of life as well as his hope that humankind could perhaps continue to live in “another dimension,” as he described it.<sup>12</sup> War loomed over Argentina at the time. Although the nation had tried to remain neutral, it had cut diplomatic relations with the Axis powers in January 1944 under pressure from Britain and the United States. Soon after, in March 1945, Argentina would declare war.<sup>13</sup> In a 1976 interview conducted

by Raúl Vera Ocampo, Kosice explains that the war deeply affected him and his peers.<sup>14</sup> The explosion of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 1945 likely worsened his fears about the viability of human life on earth, prompting him to imagine a city where this threat could disappear.

Undoubtedly, the dire local political and economic situation also inspired his idea. Argentina was coming out from the Infamous Decade, a period that had begun in 1932 with an alliance of three parties known as the *Concordancia*, a regime that had the semblance of constitutionality but in reality was thoroughly corrupt and perpetrated electoral fraud, censorship, and political persecution. The nation faced a crisis that combined the nefarious effects of World War I and the Great Depression and was exacerbated by low prices of grain, closure of trade with Europe resulting from World War II, and sanctions imposed by the United States. This situation, combined with nationalist fears about Argentina’s sovereignty and its possible involvement in war had led to the Revolution of 1943 and a military junta that lasted until the rise to power of Juan Domingo Perón in 1946. Kosice, who had many artist friends who embraced the Marxist doctrine, witnessed the military junta’s hard crack down on communist union organizations. Perón initiated an era of state-directed reform and development. He implemented a series of nationalist and populist policies, increasing military spending, passing laws that dictated workers’ rights and benefits, and promoting industrial development to create jobs.<sup>15</sup> Although his government perhaps provided hope for some people, it did not restore the country’s civil liberties. He extended the military dictatorship in many respects. Under his rule, censorship was common; political enemies were attacked; universities and public schools fell under tight restrictions, and professors and administrators identified as adversaries lost their jobs; judges were impeached and replaced; and periodicals and newspapers that opposed the regime were closed.<sup>16</sup> This situation of acute repression certainly motivated Kosice to devise a plan for a city in which people would have unlimited freedom to move, think, speak, create, and behave.

A remarkable aspect of *Hydrospatial City* is that it approximates art as political activism. Certain aspects of this work, such as Kosice’s intention to integrate art with life and to modify reality through it, align with Marxist doctrine.<sup>17</sup> Kosice’s city, made up of nomadic modules that would allow the unrestricted flow of human beings, questioned the capitalist fixation with land, political boundaries, and private property. In his manifesto “Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism” (1971)—which he published in 1972, in the context of another transitional military junta and escalating violence between factions of the left and right—Kosice explained that the nomadic spatial dwelling would derail the course of contemporary economy on the basis of land value and pose sociological questions about the value of property. What he proposed was an “art of everyone and for everyone.” In *Hydrospatial City*, all intermediary relationships would be destroyed and art would merge with habitat, becoming a *modus vivendi*. Remarkably, in this manifesto Kosice seems to be criticizing—albeit very subtly—Argentina’s dysfunctional government by arguing that “social structures and behaviour mechanisms—

rupture, altercation, rebellion—are the symptoms of a change towards the disappearance of state power and its replacement by an efficient administration.”<sup>18</sup> Surprisingly, even though censorship was common at the time, Kosice was not silenced. It is unclear why he was allowed to express himself in such a way—perhaps it was because he did not refer specifically to the Argentinean regime and his criticism was of government in general; possibly his international reputation granted him a privileged position from which to speak safely; perhaps his words went unnoticed; or imaginably the Argentinean government did not take his project seriously or consider it a real threat because of its science-fiction guise.<sup>19</sup>

Kosice had been spearheading an authentic cultural revolution from the arts scene since 1944, when he coedited the pivotal single issue of *Arturo* along with the poet Edgar Bailey and the Uruguayan visual artists Rhod Rothfuss and Carmelo Arden Quin.<sup>20</sup> The artists that gathered around *Arturo* wanted to replace representational and expressive art with a kind of concrete art based on the principle of pure invention.<sup>21</sup> However, with his ambitious proposals, Kosice sought to achieve much more than artistic renewal and freedom; for him, art should have a social role and a transformative power. Since he cofounded the radical avant-garde movement Movimiento de Arte Madí with Rothfuss and Arden Quin in 1946, Kosice proposed that the visual arts work together with dance, theater, music, architecture, poetry, and literature to create an aesthetic continuum that would help improve human existence, an idea that constituted the backbone of the Madí Manifesto of 1946 (fig. 7).<sup>22</sup> Kosice maintained that the most important principles of his floating city are outlined in this manifesto, which proposes a displaceable architecture of mobile environments and forms.<sup>23</sup> At that time, he had not yet conceived the idea of powering his modules with the energy contained in water; rather, he proposed that gigantic mobile spaces be suspended in the air and relocated by way of magnetic mechanisms.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 7 Gyula Kosice et al., “[Se reconocerá por Arte Madí . . .]” (Madí Manifesto), 1946. From *Nemisor No. 0 del Movimiento Madí Universal* (Buenos Aires), no. 0 (1947), n.p., ICAA Record ID 732008.

Most secondary sources on Kosice's work assert that *Hydrospatial City* was unknown to the public until July 1971, when he displayed it at the Galería Bonino in Buenos Aires (see fig. 1). As the exhibition catalogue states, during this exhibition Kosice displayed 20 models and dwelling projects, permutable descriptive narratives, and his manifesto "Arquitectura y urbanismo hidroespacial" (hydrospatial architecture and urbanism).<sup>25</sup> Still, Kosice may have exhibited his concept of *Hydrospatial City* to a smaller audience much earlier—perhaps at the first Madí exhibition of 1946. Art historian Gabriela Siracusano claims that he exhibited a proposal for a suspended city along with his neon sculptures in the first Madí exhibition at the Instituto Francés de Estudios Superiores of Buenos Aires in August 1946, during which the group read their founding manifesto.<sup>26</sup> However, Siracusano may be referring to the Madí Manifesto, which proposed mobile architecture and which was read during this show. The Gyula Kosice ephemera collection of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, includes a photograph of a montage that is dated 1946 (fig. 8).<sup>27</sup> This photomontage depicts three Plexiglas models of hydrospatial cells floating against a dark sky. Yet it is unlikely that this photomontage was created for the first Madí exhibition. This photograph is certainly misdated; since Kosice only began working with Plexiglas in the late 1940s, he could not have built these models by 1946.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the simple design of the hydrospatial cells of this photomontage, which contrasts greatly with the more elaborate design of other models, suggests these are some of Kosice's earliest prototypes.

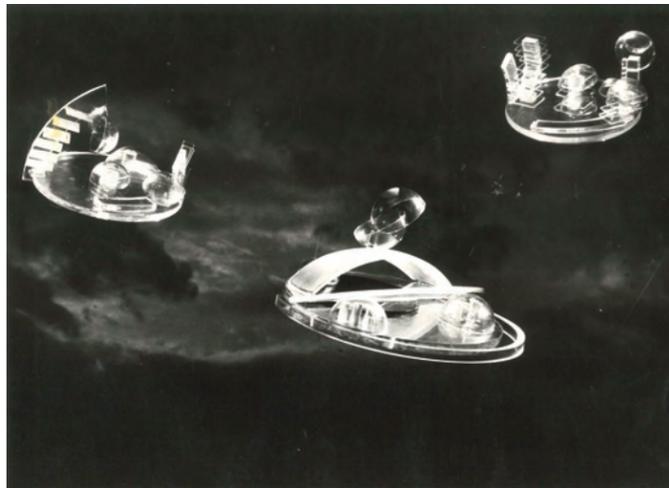


Figure 8 Gyula Kosice, *Proyecto ciudad hidroespacial suspendida, células hidroespaciales*, Bs. As. [Buenos Aires], (Project for a suspended city, hydrospatial cells, Bs. As.), 1946, Rare Materials Archive, International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Kosice's proposal emerged from a long-standing tradition of utopian urban schemes in Argentina. Although utopian narratives were not a prolific literary genre in this country, many plans that envisioned and modeled the future had been elaborated and published since the late nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> These plans were frequently linked to scientific theories and concerns such as public hygiene. As art and architectural historian Fabiola López-Durán explains, in Latin America such

proposals were generally medical utopias written by physicians or journalists who published in scientific journals or in periodicals with a technical, scientific, and futuristic focus and mass circulation. These texts shared a contradictory combination of the idealism that characterized the utopian genre and the pragmatism typical of the work of planners and reformers at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>30</sup> In Argentina, several texts that discussed hygiene and tuberculosis and imagined solutions for urban ills had been published. For example, in *Buenos Aires en el año 2080: una historia verosímil* (Buenos Aires in the Year 2080: A Plausible Story) (1879), Aquiles Sioen imagined a city with a monument that celebrated the defeat of tuberculosis in a hygienic urban utopia. As historian Diego Armus argues, these imaginary constructions visualized the city as a source of happiness, not misery. The classical myth of Hygeia, the concern for public health, and social hygiene—which had been shaped by biomedicine, social science, positive eugenics, and the concepts of prevention, regeneration, and the strengthening of human bodies—influenced these utopian schemes. For their authors, the correct use of science and technology, the virtues of healthy living, and an egalitarian society would make possible the materialization of their visions.<sup>31</sup>

Pierre Quiroule's *La ciudad anarquista americana* (The American Anarchist City) (1914) is particularly interesting as a precedent because it had—like Kosice's proposal—a Marxist foundation and a highly ambitious character. Quiroule, a French-born typographer, was one of the Argentinean anarchist movement's most prolific intellectuals. In his imaginary city capitalism would be eradicated and a new society would emerge that would grant different roles to individuals, family, women, production, leisure, and land use.<sup>32</sup> Like Kosice, Quiroule was deeply concerned with the relationship of people to their natural environment; however, unlike Kosice, his proposal was far from technological. Quiroule's antimodern, small, low-density city, made up by a network of communes and surrounded by a green belt, rejected emphatically the modern metropolis.<sup>33</sup> Nature and society would live there in unprecedented harmony, and the boundaries between the urban and rural worlds would disappear.<sup>34</sup> It is unknown but certainly possible that Kosice, who during his adolescent years read daily at the Library of the Socialist Party, discovered Quiroule's proposal.<sup>35</sup>

Despite its utopian lineage, Kosice thought of *Hydrospatial City* as a real project, not an idealist fantasy. He was noticeably frustrated by the questions he was asked after a talk he gave on occasion of his Espace Pierre Cardin exhibition in Paris (*Kosice: La Cité Hydrospatiale*, December 4, 1974–January 4, 1975). As Kosice explained in the catalogue of an exhibition that took place four years later at the Galileo Galilei Planetarium in Buenos Aires ("La ciudad hidroespacial," September 21–November 11, 1979) (fig. 9), during the public debate that followed his Paris talk, many people asked him to explain in detail issues, such as where would waste matter go, or how was the city supposed to deal with winds and clouds. According to Kosice, he provided answers to all of these questions, emphasizing that the human being had always gone "towards the unknown in spite of everything." With these words, he suggests that all such details

would be resolved eventually if there was the will to undertake the project. Kosice was disappointed by the public's reactions to his proposal. In this catalogue he asserts that people liked the aesthetics of his models but considered his texts absurd and interpreted his work as "science fiction"—erroneously, in his opinion. He emphasizes that with *Hydrospatial City* he was trying to deal with the conditions of the postindustrial age and insists that his project was not utopian idealism, arguing, "Those who do not believe in its feasibility are still bound to the cave and the nest, to wars and floods."<sup>36</sup>



Figure 9 Gyula Kosice, cover of *La ciudad hidroespacial*, exh. cat. (Buenos Aires: Planetario de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1979), ICAA Record ID 1274894.

Kosice tried to prove the viability of *Hydrospatial City* relentlessly since he exhibited it in 1971. In order to make his project feasible, Kosice consulted with scientists. Both the 1971 Galería Bonino exhibition catalogue and his 1972 book *Kosice: La ciudad hidroespacial* quote the prominent Argentinean astrophysicist Carlos Varsavsky. In a 2010 interview, Kosice asserted that it was Varsavsky who gave him the solution to the city's source of power.<sup>37</sup> In *Kosice: La ciudad hidroespacial*, Varsavsky claims that it is possible to draw water from the clouds and decompose it through electrolysis in order to get oxygen to breathe and hydrogen to feed a nuclear fusion machine that generates more energy.<sup>38</sup> The catalogue for a 1979 exhibition at the Galileo Galilei Planetarium in Buenos Aires also emphasizes the scientific viability of Kosice's project. Professor Antonio Cornejo, the director of the planetarium, stresses that one of the conditions for life on earth is the presence of water. In this catalogue, Kosice also discusses the project's economic feasibility. He admits that its construction cost would be enormous, but proposes to build it little by little and to finance it with the money that could be saved by halting the production of weapons throughout the world.<sup>39</sup> In addition, in 1982 Kosice traveled to the United States to show his project to NASA engineers, who apparently judged *Hydrospatial City* technically feasible but impractical given its extremely high cost.<sup>40</sup>

Kosice bridged the modern avant-garde and its postwar critics. *Hydrospatial City* exhibits tensions between modernist and post-modernist attitudes that clearly correspond to a transitional period. Besides its utopian literary and Marxist lineage, the work exhibits much of the social drive and the naive optimism and idealism of European avant-garde movements such as Russian Constructivism or the Bauhaus, which Kosice admired.<sup>41</sup> From these groups he drew the notion that art had an ethical social role to fulfill and that the fine and applied arts could come together to help shape and improve human life. This social drive was certainly an aspect of modernism that he considered worth keeping and developing. Indeed, with his suspended city, Kosice merged science, poetry, art, and architecture to create human habitats. He considered *Hydrospatial City* his "integration of the arts project,"<sup>42</sup> explaining that there would be no need for the art object, painting, sculpture, or the other visual arts when everything was integrated into the volume, color, movement, as well as the internal and external routes of the human environment.<sup>43</sup>

In a similar way that he challenged regressive figurative and expressive art with his sculptures and paintings, Kosice questioned conventional forms of architecture and urban planning that had been imposed on the people of Buenos Aires. Since the nineteenth century, Argentinean authorities, influenced by European positivism, had been attempting to modernize the city by implementing European urban planning models. For them, Haussmannian Paris epitomized urban modernity and refinement. Most urban renewal projects, such as the Avenida de Mayo (1894), derived from the academic urbanism of the École des Beaux-Arts and the Institut d'Urbanisme of the University of Paris. During the 1920s, Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, Léon Jaussely, and Alfred Agache had made several urban renewal proposals for Buenos Aires. The Commission of Building Aesthetics, created in 1925, had incorporated Forestier's ideas in the first Organic Project.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Peronism continued to employ conventional Neoclassical aesthetics to construct government buildings through the 1950s, as exemplified by Alejandro Bustillo's Banco de la Nación (1944), a building that Kosice and his peers ridiculed by referring to it as the "neoclassical King Kong of the Plaza de Mayo."<sup>45</sup> Kosice and his colleagues fiercely rejected this type of nationalistic and monumental architecture and urbanism, not only because they disliked its appearance but also because of its negative social and political connotations. They considered that it was based on a rhetoric that was too similar to that of the Fascists.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps Kosice sensed the sinister and repressive eugenicist, universalizing, and normalizing agendas that underpinned both these beaux-arts plans and the modernist urban renewal projects. López-Durán has demonstrated that the basis of Agache's, Forestier's, and Le Corbusier's plans for Buenos Aires was a nefarious pseudo-scientific social theory—Lamarckian eugenics, a branch of the eugenics movement that developed in Latin America and was based on the notion that the environment should interact with genetics in order to improve the local race and bring about the possibility of "progress."<sup>47</sup> In 1929

Le Corbusier had toured Buenos Aires and presented a radical proposal to renovate the city. Le Corbusier's scheme for Buenos Aires, which recalls his 1925 Plan Voisin for Paris, stipulates the creation of a massive conglomerate of business towers overlooking the La Plata River. Le Corbusier further developed this schematic proposal in collaboration with his Argentinean disciples Juan Kurchan and Jorge Ferrari Hardoy as the *Plan Director de Buenos Aires* (master plan for Buenos Aires), which they designed in 1938 and published in 1947. With its zoning rigidity, elevated motorways, and buildings on pilotis (piers), the *Plan Director* closely followed Le Corbusier's paradigmatic *Ville Radieuse* (1930) and his notion of the Functional City.<sup>48</sup> Although the *Plan Director* was never executed, it informed several urban interventions in the city later on.<sup>49</sup>

Le Corbusier's concept of the Functional City had spread internationally after he had presented it at the Fourth CIAM Congress in 1933 and published it as *The Charter of Athens* in 1943.<sup>50</sup> This charter, which CIAM invoked incessantly as a "sacred text," had become the basis of all modern urbanism.<sup>51</sup> The *Charter of Athens* stipulates that the Functional City segregate human activity in urban sectors that should work autonomously and establish relationships with each other according to the rational criterion of "time-saving." In this paradigm, human urban life is reduced to four functions: dwelling, circulation, working, and recreation. Le Corbusier asserts in the charter that the Functional City is a "carefully studied program" that leaves "nothing to chance." He justifies its implementation with practical reasons—contemporary cities constitute "the very image of chaos" and do not fulfill their purpose, which is "to satisfy the primordial biological and psychological needs of their populations."<sup>52</sup> Le Corbusier based his positivist scheme on modern science, the utilization of the latest technology, and the collaboration of experts.<sup>53</sup> Like the Argentinean proposers of urban utopias and the French eugenicists, he exploited the discourse on hygiene to promote his Functional City.<sup>54</sup> In Buenos Aires, CIAM's and Le Corbusier's theoretical presence consolidated with the publication of the charter and its availability in Spanish beginning 1954.<sup>55</sup> Even though Le Corbusier's plans for Buenos Aires never materialized, it is very likely that Kosice knew about them because they were highly visible and debated in the city.<sup>56</sup>

Although initially Kosice may have been reacting more to the classicist monumentality of official architecture and urbanism rather than the modernist urban schemes for Buenos Aires, with time he directed his criticism directly toward Le Corbusier and his Functional City. Kosice argued passionately that *Hydrospatial City* would undermine functionalist architecture and urbanism and would contribute to ending their ill effects on human life and the environment. "Le Corbusier y el poema electrónico" (Le Corbusier and the Electronic Poem), an article that Kosice published in the newspaper *La Nación* (Buenos Aires) on August 10, 1958, after he had interviewed Le Corbusier, gives insight into Kosice's thought on his oeuvre (fig. 10).<sup>57</sup> Kosice's text reveals more about his own ideas than about Le Corbusier's work. It demonstrates that at that time Kosice admired the Swiss-French architect's work—or at least some aspects of it. Kosice asserts that during the interview Le Corbusier showed him a few paintings and sculptures that, according to Kosice, "did not

measure up" to his architecture. Kosice reports having expressed to Le Corbusier his admiration for his "habitable sculpture" at Ronchamp. He also describes his visit to the architect's Phillips Pavilion at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels and praises the "renovator of human habitat" and his collaborators for this "wonderful realization." Kosice explains that Le Corbusier tried to realize a synthesis of the arts in the pavilion, which he describes as an "extraordinary electronic poem," where a "spectacle of light, color, and sound develops in the interior." These comments reveal that, rather than being interested in Le Corbusier's functionalist designs, Kosice was interested in the poetic quality of his late work and his concept of the synthesis of the arts. This is not surprising, given Kosice's constructivist influences and the synthetic nature of his own work. However, it is remarkable that the artist did not waste this opportunity to talk to Le Corbusier about his own ideas for architecture, and especially that he did not shy away from expressing his strong aversion to functionalist architecture to its progenitor. He claims to have said to the architect, "The current needs of the human being cannot stop at an engineering of buildings, at the expressive aridity of dwellings, drowning in the symmetry of big rectangular, grid-like windows, and the absolute obedience of orthogonal angles, that exclude, in fact, diversification and aesthetic satisfaction." Even more interesting is that, when he was about to leave, Kosice mentioned *Hydrospatial City* to Le Corbusier, possibly in order to test him or to get feedback from him. In the article, Kosice claims that he and Le Corbusier parted agreeing "upon a distant but possible urbanism in space."<sup>58</sup>

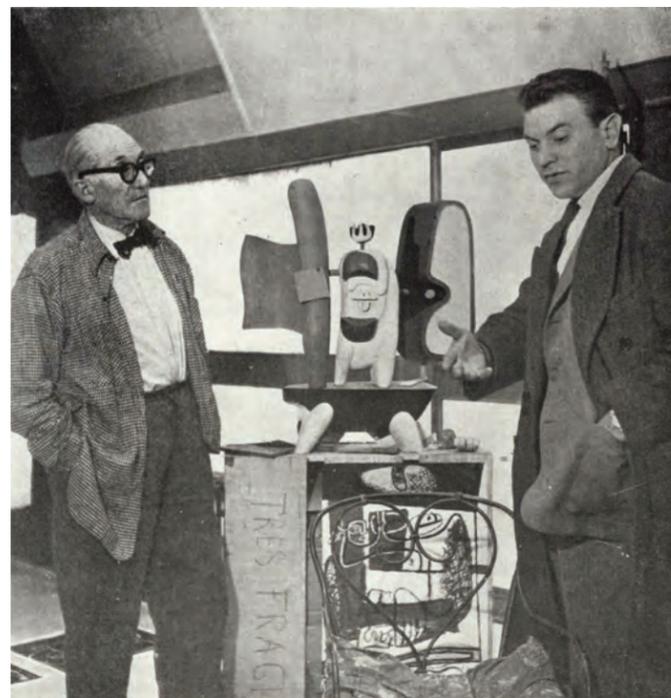


Figure 10 Le Corbusier (left) and Gyula Kosice (right), photograph taken during their interview in Paris in 1958. From "Le Corbusier y el poema electrónico," in Gyula Kosice, *geocultura de la Europa de hoy* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Losange, 1959, 59–64, ICAA Record ID 1317805)

It is noteworthy that after this interview, Kosice's criticism of functionalist urbanism and architecture intensified. In "Hydrospatial

Architecture and Urbanism" (1971), Kosice links architectural modernism to academicism. He asserts that modern functional architecture is oppressive and obsolete and that it allows us to utilize only "a minimum proportion of our mental faculties." He affirms that an exploitative class society and its economy has imposed modern apartments or habitable cells upon people, and he also announces his intention of shaking the foundations of the architectural and engineering professions, as well as "rigid convictions" and "logical ideas," all of which are "sustained by academic teaching."<sup>59</sup> In a 1976 interview Kosice actually declares that his "greatest enemies" were the architects who built cities.<sup>60</sup> Finally, in the 1979 Planetarium catalogue, which included a photograph of himself and Le Corbusier taken during their interview (see fig. 10), Kosice harshly criticizes the "renovator of human habitat," his Charter of Athens, and his Modulor Man:

Through the influence of Le Corbusier, an international modern, functional, and in many cases organic architecture has prevailed until now. An architecture of Power, centralized and repressive. Up until now, the gold section, the straight angle, the *modulor*, symmetry, the link with the form of the box, the capital gain of land, the wall, the ceiling, apartment cells. The expressive aridity of the engineering of buildings, subdued by the laws of gravity. In urbanism, a metropolis that imprisons, the antiquated ideology of the Athens Charter that has not resolved the encounter and the communication between its inhabitants, demographic explosion, the pollution of its water and food, ecologic depredation and finally the progressive increase of spatial junk. Against all of this we propose *Hydrospatial Architecture* . . . a more imaginative *modus vivendi*, a synthesis of art and dwelling and the concrete participation of a multi-optional life.<sup>61</sup>

This text demonstrates that Kosice was familiar not only with Le Corbusier's Functional City but also with the Modulor, a system of proportion that the architect had developed and utilized to design his buildings. The racist, sexist, and eugenicist Modulor is an instrument devised to normalize and "whiten" all human life by creating architectures and equipment based on the measurements of an ideal white male body. It derived from a research project on proportion that Le Corbusier had worked on for about twenty years until 1945, and with which he had earned his doctoral degree in philosophy and mathematics from the University of Zurich (1943). Le Corbusier considered that a universal system of measurement was needed to respond to the conditions of the modern world, which called for prefabrication and standardization. He believed that his mathematical expression would yield innumerable satisfactory and harmonious combinations, and utilized this system to design his buildings, as did the engineers and architects that worked for him.<sup>62</sup> As architect Luce Lance Hosey points out, the Modulor combines Le Corbusier's dual conception of the body as "divine proportion" and "machine."<sup>63</sup> Like the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius, Le Corbusier promoted the practice of using parts of the body such as the foot as units of measurement—a practice that is both racially and sexually exclusive. His

choice of model body is explicit—with a characteristically gender-specific language, he asserts that man through his body imposes order "on his own scale, to his own proportion, comfortable for him, to his measure. It is on the human scale. It is in harmony with him: that is the main point."<sup>64</sup> This supposed universality of the human body, based on the humanist image of a robust European gentleman only generates "hypocritical fictions of unity, identity, truth, and authenticity."<sup>65</sup> Kosice was also well aware of the real, disastrous consequences that Le Corbusier's theories and practice had brought to the built environment in general. He placed great emphasis on the dire ecological problems they had caused, and he also accused Le Corbusier of having failed to materialize his own vision of the synthesis of the arts—which Kosice had admired—and to fulfill the promises of a better life that he had made to the public.

*Hydrospatial City* challenged Le Corbusier's Functional City and his "machines for living" directly.<sup>66</sup> The non-teleological hydrospatial cells, always populated by human figures (see figs. 2 and 3), are not simple cells designed on the basis of universal anthropometric data for the efficient fulfillment of physical functions. Instead, they are open, fluid, and flexible spaces where individuals, unrestricted by prescriptive programs and rules, could roam freely and realize an apparently limitless range of activities. The transparency of the modules suggests an urban environment that has no confining walls. The provocative playfulness of Kosice's proposal is also clearly expressed in the material objects that constitute the project—his sketches, photomontages, models, and three-dimensional multimedia panels, where color, bubbles, dots, and light enliven organic and curvilinear forms that undermine the rigidity of the Cartesian modernist architecture.

Kosice's descriptive narratives (see fig. 4) constitute his greatest critique of modernist functionalism. Poetic descriptions such as "space for lost steps and absences that are recycled" do not make much sense.<sup>67</sup> Some of his annotations, such as "chemical dissolution of residues," or "gliding access ramp," appear to indicate the practical functioning of *Hydrospatial City*; however, these labels are few and are presented in a random way.<sup>68</sup> These descriptive narratives reject the modernist focus on the efficient fulfillment of basic biological needs or obligatory activities such as working. They reflect Kosice's aim to liberate individuals from "all self-imposed psychological and sociological ties."<sup>69</sup> In "Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism" Kosice proposes to replace rooms that have become architectural "rituals," such as the living room or the kitchen, with "something calm or intense, but differentiated in every way, as places in which to live."<sup>70</sup> His descriptive narratives leave room for the ludic, the psychological, and the fulfillment of repressed biological and mental needs. For example, Kosice contemplated a "place for the sheltering of women's dreams and punctual or abstract desires," a "place for the setting of sentimental, corporal, copulative, sexual and erotic coordinates in sublimated buoyancy," and a "place for diminishing anguish."<sup>71</sup> These texts act as triggers for our imagination, inviting us to envision ourselves using the spaces in any way we want.

*Hydrospatial City* focuses on the specific individual and his or her agency. As he did with his pioneering *pinturas* and *esculturas articuladas*, Kosice sought to create art and architecture that would grant agency to human beings—in this case, the more long-lasting and significant agency to live their lives the way they desired to. According to Kosice, “hydrocitizens” would be able to invent their own architecture; in addition, since the modules are open and displaceable, they would be able to select the sites where they want to live and to connect their spaces to other dwellings or platforms if they wish to do so.<sup>72</sup> In addition, *Hydrospatial City* questions modernist universal stereotypes like Le Corbusier’s Modulor Man; for instance, Kosice proposed that a “hydrocitizen” could be as specific as an Argentinean cowboy by including an “Argentinean platform for friendship and gaucho behavior” in *Memoria descriptiva, maqueta F* (Descriptive narrative, Model F) (see fig. 4).<sup>73</sup>

Although Kosice invokes science and technology in *Hydrospatial City*, they are meant to support human existence rather than dominate it—what he sought was a “humanized technology.”<sup>74</sup> In his view, science and technology, correctly applied, would help to end the parasitic and destructive relationship of modern societies with their planet and with each other. Certainly *Hydrospatial City* constitutes a pioneering and insightful critique to the irresponsible behavior of modern architects and planners towards the *milieu*. For example, in the 1976 interview that Vera Ocampo conducted, Kosice expressed his concern about the pollution that the Functional City’s traffic caused: “Dormitory-cities are those in which one goes to work to a distant place during the day but comes back to sleep in them at night. . . . There is an ecological reason that must be taken into account in the long run, our air is rotting . . . and vegetables . . . and water.”<sup>75</sup> It is worth repeating here that Kosice’s proposal originated in his worry about the viability of human life on Earth. As I have argued, his fear was very likely motivated by the violent behavior of human beings. In fact, this fear also stemmed from his concern for the planet’s natural balance—the artist worried about increasing populations and scarce resources and continuously asserted that *Hydrospatial City* was a feasible “biological necessity.”<sup>76</sup> In a booklet that he published in 1982—probably on the occasion of his exhibition at the Hakone Museum in Japan—Kosice expressed his anxiety about the deteriorating terrestrial ecosystems:

To have our roots on the Earth or, to be more accurate, on the water planet—even though its atmosphere, its food and its waters are contaminated—, to witness, helpless, the persistent geographical and geological depredation, to watch how the ecological balance is slowly destroyed, to verify the constant demographic growth—all these are so many incentives for the radical changes we are already anticipating as a biological need.<sup>77</sup>

In order to find a solution to these problems, as well as a source of clean energy to sustain his hovering city, Kosice turned to water—an element that had become central in his art. The artist considered water a precious resource, the source of energy itself. In his manifesto “La arquitectura del agua en la escultura” (The architecture of water in sculpture) (1959), Kosice asserted that water was a superior, primal element from the point of view of biology, as well as the major physical component of the planet.<sup>78</sup>

The historical significance of *Hydrospatial City* should not be underestimated. Kosice’s project foreshadows widely discussed and influential critiques of modern functionalist architecture and urbanism. It demonstrates that the challenge to the modernist utopias did not just originate from Europe and the United States but also from the southernmost fringes of the West. Although this work entered the transatlantic dialogue somewhat late, its international impact was immediate—it was displayed in the Espace Pierre Cardin in Paris in late 1974 and early 1975, capturing the attention of leading art critics and the press. Although *Hydrospatial City* seems exceedingly optimistic and naive by our contemporary standards, it functions as an efficient catalyst for reflection. Regardless of its unrealized status, clever proposals such as Kosice’s *Hydrospatial City* are consequential because they enter discourse and ultimately inflect artistic and architectural practice. *Hydrospatial City* loudly denounces the sinister repressive, eugenicist, universalizing, and normalizing aspects of the Functional City. With the alternative social vision it offers, Kosice’s proposal also condemns the inequalities that take place in capitalist societies. It calls attention to serious problems that continue to plague our cities to this day, such as the lack of agency of individuals or the nefarious effects of urbanization on the planet’s ecosystems. Today, *Hydrospatial City* still shakes our confidence in our society and living environment and makes us reflect upon what could be improved. It underscores the fact that art can move beyond pure aesthetics and inflect life, something that contemporary art continues to demonstrate.

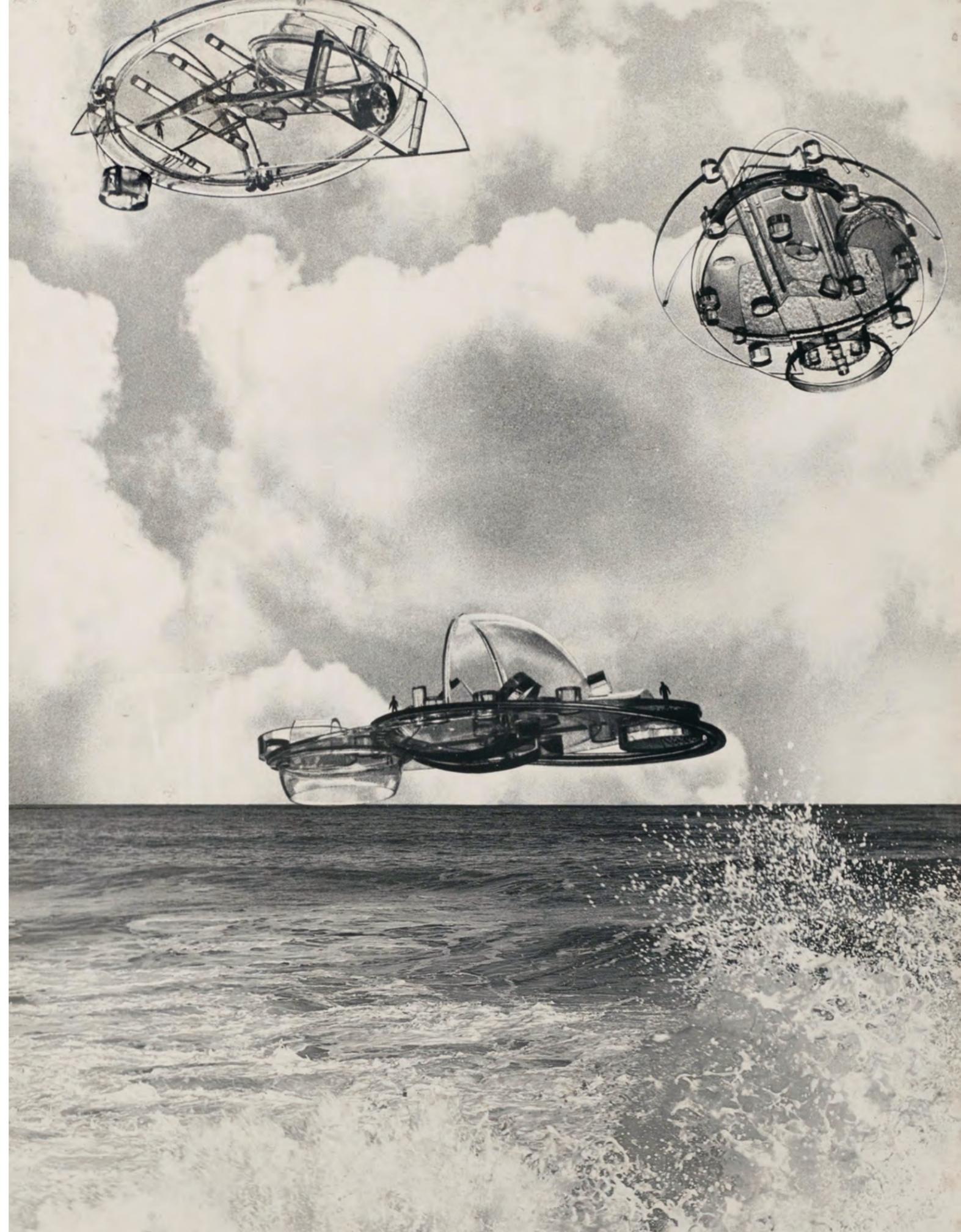
## NOTES

- 1 Gyula Kosice’s manifesto “Arquitectura y urbanismo hidroespacial” was included in an exhibition that took place at the Galería Bonino in Buenos Aires in 1971. Guillermo Whitelow, *La propuesta hidroespacial de Kosice*, exh. cat. (Buenos Aires: Galería Bonino, 1971), n.p., ICAA Record ID 1274910. This manifesto was reprinted in Spanish, French, and English in Gyula Kosice, *Kosice: La ciudad hidroespacial* (Buenos Aires: Anzilotti, 1972).
- 2 In an interview that José B. Ribera conducted in 1979, Kosice declared that all of his activity as a visual artist, theorist, and poet was intimately tied to *Hydrospatial City*. This interview was published in Gyula Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial*, exh. cat. (Buenos Aires: Planetario de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1979), n.p., ICAA Record ID 1274894.
- 3 In this paper I utilize the term “*milieu*” as defined by Georges Canguilhem, who viewed it as a complex environmental system made up of both artificial and natural elements in which all living things—not only humans—interact with each other and with inert matter. Georges Canguilhem, “The Living and Its Milieu,” *Grey Room* 1, no. 3 (2001): 7–31.
- 4 For a visual overview of Constant Nieuwenhuys’s *New Babylon*, see the Fondation Constant website: [https://stichtingconstant.nl/work?title=New+Babylon&field\\_jaar\\_value=&field\\_location\\_value=&field\\_technique\\_tid=All&field\\_period2\\_tid=All](https://stichtingconstant.nl/work?title=New+Babylon&field_jaar_value=&field_location_value=&field_technique_tid=All&field_period2_tid=All). Constant’s writings reveal his intention to critique both traditional and modern functionalist urbanism. In 1958 Constant argued, “The crisis in urbanism is worsening. . . . Faced with the necessity to build whole towns quickly, cemeteries of reinforced concrete are being constructed in which great masses of population are condemned to die of boredom.” Constant Nieuwenhuys, “Another City for Another Life,” in *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere*, by Tom Avermaete, Klaske Havik, and Hans Teerds (Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2009), 233. In 1960 Constant asserted, “Town planning is not industrial design, the city is not a functional object, aesthetically ‘sound’ or otherwise; the city is an artificial landscape built by human beings in which the adventure of life unfolds.” Constant Nieuwenhuys, “Unitary Urbanism,” in *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere*, by Tom Avermaete, Klaske Havik, and Hans Teerds (Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2009), 239.
- 5 Architectural historian Joan Ockman recognizes these characteristics in Constant’s *New Babylon*. Joan Ockman, *Architecture Culture, 1943–1968: A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation / Rizzoli, 1993), 314. Constant explains the economic basis of his anticapitalist city in his essay “Unitary Urbanism” (1960). Kosice’s Marxist orientation is a matter of debate. Art historian Gabriela Siracusano observes that many of his colleagues—the artists that published *Arturo*—adhered to dialectic materialism. Gabriela Siracusano, “Las artes plásticas en las décadas del ‘40 y el ‘50,” in *Nueva historia argentina*, ed. José Emilio Burucúa, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999), 18. Kosice seems to have felt sympathy for the Spanish republican cause—apparently he decided to name his movement “Mad” after a phrase pronounced by the republicans during the Spanish Civil War: “*No pasarán, Madrid, Madrid*.” Kosice explains that the Spaniards did not pronounce the “d” at the end of “Madrid,” and that this stayed in his mind. Gyula Kosice and Raúl Vera Ocampo, “Encuentro con Gyula Kosice en su taller hidroespacial e introducción a la historia de la vanguardia en Argentina,” *La Opinión Cultural*, November 21, 1976, 7. However, Máx Pérez Fallik claims that although a Marxist interpretation of some passages of the *Hydrospatial City* manifesto is correct, Kosice was not a Marxist himself. He explains that Kosice tried to adopt an apolitical stance, and rightly points out that Kosice expressed his conviction that art should not dissolve in politics, as he clearly suggests in some of the *Hydrospatial City* places—for example, in #113, “*Para no hacer arte político. Lugar para hacer políticamente arte hidrocineético y disolverlo en el hábitat hidroespacial, revolucionario, liberador*” (To not make political art. Place to make hydrokinetic art politically and to dissolve it in the revolutionary, liberring hydrospatial habitat). Kosice also often criticized the Marxist concept of superstructure, as he did in Place #168, “*Para alertar que el porvenirismo por venir es más una filosofía esperanzada que una superestructura ideológica*” (To call attention to the fact that the “porvenirismo” [his futuristic philosophy] that is to come is more a hopeful philosophy than an ideological superstructure). Still, Fallik acknowledges that Kosice accepted some of the postulates of Marxist theory and concluded that humankind had to be liberated through art. Max Pérez Fallik, email message to author, January 30, 2018. Regardless of Kosice’s intention to adopt an apolitical stance and to fight for the autonomy of art, *Hydrospatial City* is fundamentally political in nature—its overall conception draws heavily from Marxism, especially in its critique of a human life governed by the modern processes of production and its questioning of private property.

- 6 For example, an important exhibition catalogue published by the Centre Pompidou in 2013 states that Joe Colombo’s *Città Nucleare* (1952), Constant’s *Spatiovore* (1959), and Yona Friedman’s *Ville Spatiale* (1958) are the progenitors of *Hydrospatial City*. Camille Morineau, *Gyula Kosice* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2013), 54.
- 7 Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (Buenos Aires), *Kosice: Obras 1944–1990* (Buenos Aires: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1991), 69; Kosice, *Kosice: La ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.; Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 8 Kosice began to work with Plexiglas in the second half of the 1940s, as becomes evident in pieces such as *Simbiosis* (1947). Morineau, *Gyula Kosice*, 88.
- 9 Max Pérez Fallik, email message to author, January 31, 2018.
- 10 Max Pérez Fallik, email message to author, January 30, 2018.
- 11 Gyula Kosice, “[La aclimatación artística gratuita a las llamadas escuelas],” *Arturo: revista de artes abstractas* (Buenos Aires) 1 (summer 1944): n.p., ICAA Record ID 729940. Kosice repeatedly asserted during his lifetime that he expressed the seeds of his idea of a suspended city in this essay; see, for example, Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.; Gyula Kosice, *The Hydrospatial City* (New York: Perfection Blue Print Co., 1982), n.p. (available in the Gyula Kosice artist file, Hirsch Library, MFAH).
- 12 Kosice, *The Hydrospatial City*, n.p.
- 13 Daniel K. Lewis, *The History of Argentina* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2015), 87, 90.
- 14 Kosice and Vera Ocampo, “Encuentro con Gyula Kosice,” 6.
- 15 Lewis, *The History of Argentina*, 81–100.
- 16 Andrea Giunta, “Las batallas de la vanguardia entre el peronismo y el desarrollismo,” in *Nueva historia argentina*, ed. José Emilio Burucúa, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999), 110–11; Lewis, *The History of Argentina*, 101.
- 17 Siracusano, “Las artes plásticas,” 28.
- 18 Kosice, “Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism” (1971), reprinted in Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 19 According to Pérez Fallik, Kosice was never a target of the Argentinean government because he took an apolitical stance and abstained to make politically controversial works and affirmations. Pérez Fallik, email message to author, January 30, 2018. However, this does not mean that Kosice was in agreement with the Argentinean government. His criticism of government in general in the manifesto “Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism” could be interpreted as a lightly veiled indictment of the regime.
- 20 Kosice coedited and published the first and only issue of *Arturo: revista de artes abstractas* (Buenos Aires) 1 (summer 1944) together with the Uruguayan visual artists Rhod Rothfuss (Carlos María Rothfuss; 1920–1969) and Carmelo Arden Quin (Carmelo Heriberto Alves; 1913–2010), and the Argentinean poet Edgar Bayley (1919–1990). *Arturo* revolutionized the Argentinean arts scene at the time.
- 21 Kosice explained that he and his peers considered that there was no “mature avant-garde movement” in Argentina. They decided to form a group with what they had in common—nonobjective art. In Kosice’s words, “Representation is over, we said. We started to ‘present.’” Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, *Kosice: obras*, 10. For more information about the *Arturo* group’s rejection of figuration and their commitment to create a new art based on the principle of invention, consult the following manifestos: Edgar Bailey et al., “[Durante mucho tiempo el criterio. . .],” *Arturo: revista de artes abstractas* (Buenos Aires) 1 (summer 1944), n.p., ICAA Record ID 730241; Kosice, “[La aclimatación artística. . .],” n.p.
- 22 Gyula Kosice et al., “[Se reconocerá por arte Madí. . .]” (Madí Manifesto, 1946), first published in *Nemso no. 0 del movimiento Madí Universal* (Buenos Aires), no. 0 (1947): n.p., ICAA Record ID 732008.
- 23 Kosice et al., “[Se reconocerá por arte Madí. . .],” Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 24 Kosice, *Kosice: La ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 25 Whitelow, *La propuesta hidroespacial*, n.p.
- 26 Siracusano, “Las artes plásticas,” 21.
- 27 This photograph has a script on the back that reads, “*Proyecto ciudad hidroespacial suspendida, células hidroespaciales, Bs. As.* [Buenos Aires], 1946” (Project for a suspended city, hydrospatial cells, Bs. As., 1946). It was reproduced in Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), along with a short poem about the hydrospatial cell that contains some of the ideas of the project’s descriptive narratives.
- 28 Pérez Fallik, email message to author, January 31, 2018.
- 29 Diego Armus, *The Ailing City: Health, Tuberculosis, and Culture in Buenos Aires, 1870–1950* (Duke University Press, 2011), 308.
- 30 Fabiola López-Durán, “Eugenics in the Garden: Architecture, Medicine, and Landscape from France to Latin America in the Early Twentieth Century” (PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009), 31, 38.
- 31 Armus, *The Ailing City*, 308.
- 32 Armus, *The Ailing City*, 308–12.

- 33 Quiroule understood the metropolis as a “diabolic conglomeration of everything that could damage and injure the human being: dirtiness, disease, corruption, degeneration, delinquency, oppression, misery . . . a receptacle of sadness, tuberculosis, and death.” Quiroule quoted in note 48, López-Durán, “Eugenics in the Garden,” 40.
- 34 Armus, *The Ailing City*, 312.
- 35 Kosice recalls reading “everything” in the Library of the Socialist Party, from Nietzsche to Russian literature. Kosice and Vera Ocampo, “Encuentro con Gyula Kosice,” 6.
- 36 Kosice’s talk and the ensuing debate, which Pierre Cabanne organized, took place in the Rodin Amphitheater of the School of Decorative Arts, Paris, in 1975. Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 37 Gyula Kosice, interview by Gustavo Nielsen, “Agua va,” *Radar*, *Página 12*, April 11, 2010, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/radar/9-6061-2010-04-11.html> (accessed January 8, 2018).
- 38 Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 39 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 40 Morineau, *Gyula Kosice*, 80; Kosice and Nielsen, “Agua va”; Gyula Kosice, Andrea Giunta, and Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, *In conversación with = en conversación con Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro* (New York: Fundación Cisneros, 2012), 159–60.
- 41 Kosice explains that his “learning models” were Kandinsky, Mondrian, Malevich, Russian Constructivism, Moholy-Nagy, Van Doesburg, De Stijl, and the Bauhaus. He considers these European movements “subterranean food” that fed the Argentinean avant-garde—which, according to him, was looking for its “own formulation” and “its own style.” Gyula Kosice, *Del arte Madí a la ciudad hidroespacial* (Córdoba: Fundación Casa de la Cultura de Córdoba, 1983), 15.
- 42 Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, *Kosice: obras*, 13.
- 43 Kosice, “Hydrospatial Architecture and Urbanism” (1971), reprinted in Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 44 Arturo Almandoz Marte, *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities, 1850–1950* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2–3, 17, 30–33, 66.
- 45 Siracusano, “Las artes plásticas,” 28–30.
- 46 Siracusano, “Las artes plásticas,” 28–30.
- 47 As López-Durán explains, Lamarckian eugenics emerged from medical science and derived from Jean-Baptiste Lamarck’s theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Unlike mainstream eugenics, which considers that the evolution of race is solely driven by breeding, Lamarckian eugenics forwards the notion that this evolution is affected by the environment. This theory, which several French physicians and architects of the Parisian Musée Social developed (among them Forestier and Agache), was put into practice throughout Latin America, where the elites turned it into state policy, buildings, and new landscapes aimed at healing and regenerating society. Le Corbusier was one of the leading practitioners who attempted to apply this theory in Latin America. López-Durán, “Eugenics in the Garden,” 12–19, 59.
- 48 Almandoz Marte, *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities*, 35–36, 67.
- 49 Jorge Francisco Liernur and Pablo Pschepiurca, *La red austral: obras y proyectos de Le Corbusier y sus discípulos en la Argentina, 1924–1965* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2012), 178.
- 50 Le Corbusier first published his version of the CIAM doctrines in French as *La Charte d’Athènes* in 1943, originally listing CIAM-France as the author, from the drafts he had written in 1941. Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 73, 155.
- 51 Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse*, 90.
- 52 Le Corbusier, *The Charter of Athens*, ed. Le Corbusier and International Congresses for Modern Architecture (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), 93–97.
- 53 Le Corbusier argued, “To accomplish this great task, it is essential to utilize the resources of modern techniques, which, through the collaboration of specialists, will support the art of building with all the dependability that science can provide, and enrich it with the inventions and resources of the age.” Le Corbusier, *The Charter of Athens*, 102.
- 54 Le Corbusier asserted, “The new mechanical speeds have thrown the urban milieu into confusion, introducing constant danger, causing traffic congestion and paralyzing communications, and jeopardizing hygiene.” Le Corbusier, *The Charter of Athens*, 97.
- 55 Almandoz Marte, *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities*, 36.
- 56 Among the opposers to Le Corbusier’s schemes were the members of the society Los Amigos de La Ciudad, who were not pleased with the French architect’s “prefabricated” plans for Buenos Aires. They invited the German planner Werner Hegemann to Buenos Aires in 1931, who presented an alternative plan that combined a scientific and humanist approach to planning, focusing on the unique aspects of the Argentinean context. Almandoz Marte, *Planning Latin America’s Capital Cities*, 37, 68.
- 57 During his long stay in Paris in 1958, Kosice interviewed several intellectuals and avant-garde artists, publishing his reports in the newspaper *La Nación* (Buenos Aires). Morineau, *Gyula Kosice*, 27. “Le Corbusier y el poema electrónico” was reprinted along with other interviews in Gyula Kosice, *Geocultura de la Europa de hoy* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Losange, 1959), 59–64, ICAA Record ID 1317805.
- 58 Kosice, *Geocultura*, 59–61.
- 59 In “Arquitectura y urbanismo hidroespacial” (1971) Kosice declares, “In accordance with its vital impulses and reactions, mankind has moved in uneven proportion with regard to its own habitat. Architecture comprises very dissimilar elementary needs and it is not advisable to remain oppressed by the magnitude of its sluggish load. Until now, we have only used a minimum proportion of our mental faculties, adapted to modules which in some ways, derive from Western architecture known as modern or ‘functional.’ That is to say, the apartment or the ‘cell’ in which to live, which a class society imposes on us with its economy and compulsive exploitation.” Moreover, he adds, “Without considering the decided refusal of architects and engineers who do not admit that all the nomenclature in the construction of buildings, might one day, be supplanted by another architectural language, markedly revolutionary. And, supported by the academic teaching which is already beginning to crumble, the profession, rigid convictions, and logical ideas will totter.” Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 60 Kosice and Vera Ocampo, “Encuentro con Gyula Kosice,” 7.
- 61 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p. The full exhibition catalogue, which contains this quote, is available in the Gyula Kosice and Madí ephemera collection, International Center for the Arts of the Americas, MFAH. A section of this publication can be downloaded from the ICAA Documents Project, ICAA Record ID 1274894.
- 62 Fondation Le Corbusier, “Buildings—Projects—Le Modulor, Not Located, 1945,”
- 63 Architect Lance Hosey points out the sexist and racist notions that underlie both Le Corbusier’s Modulor and the *Graphic Standards*, which is the principal anthropometric guide to modern and contemporary architectural practice. Lance Hosey, “Hidden Lines: Gender, Race, and the Body in ‘Graphic Standards,’” *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984–) 55, no. 2 (2001): 103.
- 64 Le Corbusier, quoted in Hosey, “Hidden Lines,” 103.
- 65 Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla quoted in Hosey, “Hidden Lines,” 103.
- 66 Le Corbusier famously declared, “A house is a machine for living in,” in *Towards a New Architecture* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2013), 95, originally published as *Vers une Architecture* (Paris: Éditions G. Cres, 1923).
- 67 See *memoria descriptiva* for Model F. Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 68 See *memorias descriptivas* for Models A and D. Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 69 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 70 Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 71 See *memorias descriptivas* for Models B and E. Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 72 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 73 See *memoria descriptiva* for Model F. Kosice, *Kosice: la ciudad hidroespacial* (1972), n.p.
- 74 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 75 Kosice and Vera Ocampo, “Encuentro con Gyula Kosice,” 7.
- 76 Kosice, *La ciudad hidroespacial* (1979), n.p.
- 77 This booklet includes a photograph of Kosice in front of the NASA Headquarters. Kosice, *The Hydrospatial City*, n.p.
- 78 Kosice’s manifesto “La arquitectura del agua en la escultura” (1959) was reprinted in *Premio internacional de escultura* (Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato di Tella, 1962), 41, ICAA Record ID 1280444.

Opposite:  
detail of fig. 6, p. 6.



## ANTÔNIO HENRIQUE AMARAL'S BATTLEFIELD PAINTINGS AND THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Margaret H. Adams

In Antônio Henrique Amaral's painting *Campo de batalha 3* (Battlefield 3) (1973) a withered, oversized banana lies in a strangely precarious situation, bound by a rope to a knife and fork (fig. 1). A yellow drip sits on the bottom left edge of the dish, while the shadow that looms under the tangled mass of metal and fruit bares a sinister resemblance to the country of Brazil. The composition cuts off the ends of the utensils, which push at the frame's boundaries, introducing a sense of claustrophobia. Deviating from the traditional depictions of fruit in painted still lifes, *Campo de batalha 3* is uncharacteristically violent, as the inanimate banana appears to be restrained and bound. The yellow fruit in the image no longer resembles the tropical environment it was plucked in, but now is tormented by the eating utensils. The monumental painting's ominous tone overpowers the viewer's experience through the extreme contrast between the stark lighting and haunting shadows. *Campo de batalha 3*'s large scale (five by six feet) suggests a meaning more critical than the banal subject matter of the yellow fruit and massive silverware. At the time this painting was created, Brazil was experiencing the most violent period of its military dictatorship (1964–85), which is notorious for censorship, interrogations, arrests, torture, and disappearances of those deemed dissidents of the repressive government. The dark political and social realities of that time in Brazilian history are filtered through the viewer's visceral awareness of the painting's tone, size, and subject matter. Through a political lens, *Campo de batalha 3* exemplifies the oppressive and violent mistreatment of the Brazilian population during the country's military dictatorship.



Figure 1 Antônio Henrique Amaral, *Campo de batalha 3*, 1973, oil on canvas, Coleção da Bolsa de Mercadorias & Futuros e Bolsa de Valores de São Paulo.

From 1973 to 1974, Amaral (Brazilian, 1935–2015) created the *Campos de batalha* series of thirty-five paintings, including *Campo de batalha 3*, while living in New York City after he was awarded the Foreign Travel Prize at the Twentieth National Salon of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro in 1971.<sup>1</sup> The *Campos de batalha* paintings all have the subject matter of bananas, and the depictions of the yellow fruit become increasingly violent and claustrophobic as the series continues. For example, the close-up composition of *Campo de batalha 31* (1974) shows only bits of a banana that cling to the metal of utensils, which have violently and voraciously obliterated any trace of the fruit (fig. 2). Encouraging associations with institutional imprisonment, the composition closes in on the forks' tines, mimicking the verticality of the bars of a jail cell, which at the time of the Brazilian military dictatorship had become sites of interrogation and torture.



Figure 2 Antônio Henrique Amaral, *Campo de batalha 31*, 1974, oil on canvas, the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, Archer M. Huntington Museum Fund, 1975.

Through an examination of the military dictatorship's widespread practices of interrogation, torture, and disappearances, this essay shows an analysis of the banana in *Campo de batalha 3* as a surrogate human body subjected to cruel treatment, indicative of the oppression and human rights abuses under the authoritarian regime. These paintings exemplify the artist's own challenges in grappling with the military dictatorship and his own unique experience as a relocated Brazilian painter in New York City at a time when art in Brazil shifted away from traditional media and the institutional spaces of museums and galleries.<sup>2</sup> Although research on painters at this time exists, there appears to be a gap in analysis of how artists employing traditional media and exhibiting in museums were influ-

enced by this political context. A detailed examination of the symbolism in the paintings Amaral created preceding the *Campos de batalha* series offers a reading on cultural influences and the artists' own critical stance against the political oppression of Brazil under the authoritarian regime. This essay also examines the importance of the *Campo de batalha* series in relation to Brazil's contemporary efforts in reckoning with the atrocities that occurred under the military dictatorship.

On April 1, 1964, the Brazilian military overthrew President João Goulart, transforming the country from a democracy into a dictatorship that lasted for twenty-one years (1964–85). Brazil experienced a new height of corruption under President Emílio Garrastazu Médici's rule (1969–74), a five-year period often referred to as *os anos de chumbo* (the Lead Years).<sup>3</sup> After the 1968 decree of Institutional Act 5 (AI-5), a law noted for the suspension of *habeas corpus*, or basic human rights, Médici's rule was blackened with disappearances, systematic torture, and selective killings of people who identified with the opposition.<sup>4</sup> Resistance groups were comprised predominantly of young university students, intellectuals, and young professionals who largely belonged to the middle, upper-middle, and wealthy classes. Social alliances of students and labor parties denounced the authoritarian regime in public protests. More extreme activist groups, which were part of the armed struggle, resorted to radical activity, such as kidnapping international ambassadors and holding them ransom for the release of political prisoners.<sup>5</sup> Evident in the title of Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series, which translates to *Battlefields*, Brazil was the site where the authoritarian regime and civilians waged an ongoing war.

In 1974 Czech-born critic and theorist Vilém Flusser published an article on Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series in São Paulo's journal *Artes* titled "Campos de batalha: Tornar visível o invisível" ("Battlefields: Making the Invisible Visible"). In this essay, Flusser questioned the significance of Amaral's oversized and violent paintings, noting that there was an inherent meaning to these depictions of giant bananas and silverware. Flusser pointed out a "brutal terror and heavy oppression" in the monumental series, but ultimately tiptoed around the insinuation of Brazil's political turmoil at that time.<sup>6</sup> Using German philosopher Edmund Husserl's analysis on phenomenology, Flusser writes about Amaral's paintings through ethical, aesthetic, and technical approaches. Central to Flusser's article, phenomenology is a theory that explores how each individual human experiences the world in distinct ways dependent on their own associations and histories.<sup>7</sup>

In his essay, Flusser references Husserl and the concept of phenomenology in order to assert that each viewer's own discrete system of memories and associations with bananas and paintings will influence their singular interpretation of the *Campos de batalha* series. Amaral, in a statement for Galeria de Arte Alberto Bonfiglioli, offers his personal views on being a painter, stating, "The artist does not answer questions, the artist proposes the ideas, problems for the receiver to think about or not think about, receive or not."<sup>8</sup> Amaral recognizes the banana's ambiguous nature and that his massive canvases are a point of interpretation facilitated by the act of painting. Therefore, meaning in Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series is not explicit, but rather their significance materializes during moments of interaction between the viewers and the art objects. Flusser asserts

in his article that Amaral's choice of subject matter and art medium both exemplified an urgency that neither bananas nor oil painting had held before, and he implored the viewer to consider the political context in Brazil at the time that the paintings were created. Someone with the experience of living under the oppression of the Brazilian military dictatorship will yield a vastly different analysis than someone who has not, thus supporting Flusser's central argument.

Art critic and historian Frederico Morais's 1993 essay "O corpo contra os metais da opressão" ("The Body Against the Metals of Oppression") addresses the cruel treatment of the bananas in Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series. In a similar vein to Flusser's analysis, Morais recognized the political context within the paintings, however more violent, stating that, "the banana could be found rotten, bound, gagged [with] 'bruises' covering its entire 'body.'"<sup>9</sup> Morais made the assertion of corporeal punishment and pointedly identified the banana as a victim of arbitrary abuse, drawing a corollary to the Brazilian military's violent practices during the rule of the authoritarian regime.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the *Campos de batalha* series, the banana's victimization is evident. Particular to *Campo de batalha 3*, the banana invokes a human body in the way that the bruised peel resembles human skin. Essentially, the banana is soft and fleshy to the touch. However, this understanding is not experienced immediately through the surface of the canvas itself, but is a concept activated by the viewer.

The practice of phenomenology was popular among artists in Brazil during the military dictatorship and took a trajectory that favored human experience over finished art objects. Frederico Morais, one of the most influential critical voices in contemporary art in Brazil during the 1970s and 1980s, suggested that art practice move away from traditional media such as painting and sculpture and toward collective engagement between the public and artists.<sup>11</sup> Morais's idea, in alignment with the practice of other artists in Brazil at this time, was that art could surpass political strife and enrich human experience through the freedom found in artistic creation. This line of thought was central to artistic expression, while other forms of art production, namely painting, were deemphasized in Brazil. However, as seen with Amaral's painted works, painting, although attached to the idea of art as commodity, was still an important medium for addressing the political conflict during the Brazilian military dictatorship.

### Art Production and Art Market under the Brazilian Military Dictatorship

Broadly speaking, art created under the authoritarian regime was produced within the cultural context of oppression and censorship, although artists working during that time found that the censorship in the art world was not as clearly defined for the visual arts as it was for other modes of cultural production, such as literature, film, and theater.<sup>12</sup> The visual arts were considered to exist for an elite audience and in private institutions, making artistic practices less likely to instigate public resentment toward the authoritarian regime. Therefore, visual artists did not experience the same dangers of exile and arrest as frequently as those working in other creative spheres in Brazil at that time.<sup>13</sup> However, as censors were often unpredictable, many artists consequently engaged in self-censorship, as seen with Amaral's use of the subversive symbol of the banana fruit in the *Campos de batalha* series.

At that time, artists in Brazil, like artists elsewhere in the world, sought to evade artistic institutions and works that could be commodified easily. Although the Brazilian economy experienced major growth in the years following the instatement of the military dictatorship, inflation resulted in fluctuations of the *cruzeiro*, causing unstable conditions in the daily currency value. However, the Brazilian art market during the military dictatorship saw a rise of sales on expensive modernist paintings, as the newly wealthy population invested their money in certain art works as assets that would retain their original market value.<sup>14</sup> As artists questioned the political and social constructs of daily life, art production in Brazil still was influenced by the unpredictable financial situation.<sup>15</sup> Amaral, who was exceptional as a painter and a printmaker, was not initially recognized for his painting practice, particularly because there seemed to be limited interest in contemporary painting within the Brazilian art market at that time. However, Amaral did experience success with painting during his time abroad in New York City, when he began painting his *Campos de batalha* series between 1973 and 1974.

Amaral's accomplishment in winning the Twentieth National Salon of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro in 1971 allowed him to move to New York City. It was during his time in the United States that Amaral became recognized for his banana subject matter, when his *Campos de batalha* paintings premiered during his 1974 solo show of seventeen canvases at the Lee Ault & Co. gallery located in New York City. These paintings were shown later in various galleries and museums in Mexico, Brazil, and a few other smaller institutions in the United States, specifically the Birmingham Art Museum in Alabama and the Nashville Fine Art Center in Tennessee.<sup>16</sup> The limited attention Amaral received in the United States for his banana series is revealing of the struggles of artists from Latin America, whose art was often type casted by U.S. audiences and art critics as secondary to or derivative of American art practices.

While living in New York City's SoHo neighborhood, Amaral was among a group of other influential Brazilian artists who had relocated to New York to explore their own artistic practices. The well-known artists that came before him include Amílcar de Castro, Antonio Dias, Anna Bella Geiger, Rubens Gerchman, Cildo Meireles, and Hélio Oiticica, all of whom have been the topic of significant academic discussion.<sup>17</sup> With the increase of dictatorships in Latin America (during the 1960s and 1970s), Europe and the United States became the cultural centers for artists and other intellectuals fleeing the political situation in their home countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay. It was during life in New York that Amaral found himself among a group of other artists from Brazil's neighboring countries, including the Argentine artist César Paternosto, Chilean painter Enrique Castro Cid, and German-born Uruguayan artist Luis Camnitzer.<sup>18</sup> These artists experienced their own trials with oppression both in New York as "Latin American" artists and within the political atmosphere of their home countries, which were similarly experiencing coups and dictatorships.<sup>19</sup> They often struggled with being recognized by art institutions in the United States, exemplifying the instability of life and work for this particular group of artists while abroad. In Amaral's personal letter to Vilém Flusser in October 1974, he wrote that painting bananas during that time helped him to "preserve a sense of identity," while he

was living away from Brazil.<sup>20</sup> The subject of the banana served as a way for Amaral to show that Brazil still existed for him in the overbearing and unfriendly environment of New York. However, Amaral recognized both the hardships of the demanding U.S. art market and the allowances the city afforded him with his art practice, especially in the midst of the political climate at home in Brazil.

In another letter to his good friend and art critic Ferreira Gullar, Amaral acknowledges that as a painter he would experience better success in South American art markets if he were to return to Brazil, however the "censorship, arbitrary arrests, stagnation of friends, and the absence of cultural vitality" were factors that deterred him from returning.<sup>21</sup> Although he states within his letter to Gullar that his time in New York afforded him the freedom of artistic expression with an open political critique, his *Campo de batalha* series still exercised self-censorship through the subversive symbol of the banana fruit. Considering that foreign awards did not provide traveling artists with the funds to support life abroad, Amaral seemed to imply that he knew he would return to Brazil eventually. With the uncertainty of life in Brazil during the military dictatorship, it was advantageous to work within the confines of censorship. However, this worked in Amaral's favor, as he did experience success in some U.S. institutions within his short period of residency. Amaral's accomplishments abroad can be attributed to the fact that his paintings of bananas satisfied U.S. preconceptions of Latin American art by incorporating symbols bolstering Brazil as a tropical and exotic location.<sup>22</sup>

For example, in September and October 1971, several of Amaral's earlier paintings that depict bananas, with the titles *Brasilianas* and *Bananas*, showed at the gallery of the Pan American Union (now known as the Organization of American States) in Washington, D.C. Organized by the Department of Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State, this exhibition implied that Amaral's work was an artistic representation of the mutually beneficial economic relations between the United States and Brazil, especially with agricultural exports.<sup>23</sup> Exhibition viewers could drink Caipirinhas, Brazil's national cocktail, while mingling along other gallery-goers and monkeys dressed in green and yellow outfits, the colors on Brazil's national flag. The Pan American Union show promoted a tropical and exotic reading of Amaral's paintings, an idea that was encouraged in the show's accompanying printed text.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the exhibition pamphlet, written by Cuban art critic José Gómez-Sicre, did not include much about the banana as the topic of the paintings, but focused on constructing an amiable union between Brazil and the United States.<sup>25</sup> The other reference to the banana fruit was expressed in a vague and brief comment attributed to Amaral, stating that "he sees the fruit as 'a symbol of Brazil.'" <sup>26</sup> At the exhibition's opening, Amaral was approached by a Brazilian general attaché, General Montanha, who questioned the artist about the suspicious significance of the paintings.<sup>27</sup> Carefully, the painter responded that the works were part of a formal study and, as in Gómez-Sicre's words, they represented Brazil as a tropical country in South America.

The Pan American Union show praised Amaral's success in the international art world, evading the artist's intention or concept behind his own work. From the show's text, it is easy to assume that the

banana paintings at this show illustrate a fruitful, lucrative, and tropical environment; however, many of the titles of Amaral's works listed in this exhibition pamphlet connote violence and destruction. In particular, three titles—*Rotting Bananas*, *Umbilical Rupture*, and *Small Rotting Banana on a Plate*—stand out among the other twenty-two images listed. These titles bring attention to the fact that the paintings shown do not all depict the idealism offered in the exhibition text. Because the Pan American Union pamphlet only provides a list of works without accompanying images it is difficult to confirm if the paintings presented at this show corroborate the violence of the *Campos de batalha* series, but these three titles insinuate that a few images stray from Gómez-Sicre's tropical allusions.<sup>28</sup>

Veiled by the suggestion of prosperity and international trade, Gómez-Sicre's interpretation of Amaral's paintings omitted the reality of Brazil's tumultuous political and social climate. And, like most of the history around Brazil's coup d'état, the exhibition text failed to acknowledge that the United States supported the 1964 military coup. Known as *Operation Brother Sam* in recent declassified documents from Washington, D.C., the United States covertly provided armed force provisions on the eve of the April takeover in the case of a violent resistance.<sup>29</sup> After the Cuban Revolution (1953–59) and during the Cold War, the United States, anxious about the spread of Communism, became increasingly involved in global policies.<sup>30</sup> The declassified documents from the period of President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration point to the coercive role of the United States in supporting the Brazilian military coup.<sup>31</sup> Besides dismissing a more critical analysis of international politics at that time, Gómez-Sicre's Pan American Union pamphlet also failed to develop a dialogue around Amaral's banana metaphor with insights to Brazilian culture and other political influences.

### Symbols within Amaral's Bananas

The symbol of the banana conjures up ideas of the tropical and exotic, a stereotype that has long been associated with Brazil and other parts of Latin America. The banana first appeared in Brazilian propaganda paintings by artists, such as Albert Eckhout, who employed the fruit to create an image of abundance and wealth in colonial Brazil.<sup>32</sup> In the twentieth century, the yellow fruit appeared in the works of other artists well before Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series. Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral, two of the most influential artists during the Brazilian modernist art movement during the 1920s, both incorporated the image of the banana fruit into their work to signify their Brazilian identity.<sup>33</sup> The banana as a symbol holds associations with two twentieth-century Brazilian cultural movements, *Anthropophagy* and *Tropicália*, which both sought to reconstruct foreign stereotypes of Brazil and reinvigorate artistic production through the appropriation of other cultures.<sup>34</sup> Many of the views that depict Brazil as carefree and exotic were perpetuated by characters like Disney's cartoon parrot Carioca Zé and the Samba performer Carmen Miranda, who was introduced in the 1930s as a symbol of prosperous trade between the U.S. and Brazil during Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy.<sup>35</sup>

Amaral directly references the international policy in his 1968 painting *Boa Vizinhança* (Good Neighbor), which depicts an under-ripe banana situated at the junction of a Brazilian and an American flag (fig. 3). Seen at the bottom of the canvas, the Brazilian flag that usually reads "Ordem e Progresso" (Order and Progress) now only reads "ESSO," a reference to the leading Standard Oil Company (now Exxon) based in the United States. The suggestion of commodities and international trade in connection with a single banana calls to mind the United States' midcentury mode of capitalistic imperialism through monoculture and the banana republics that resulted throughout much of Central America and the Caribbean. In light of the system's long-lasting impact on Latin America (in the form of an impoverished working class, foreign dependency, and national underdevelopment), Amaral's *Boa Vizinhança* shows a critical stance on U.S. and Brazilian relations in trade and politics, a cynical tone that can be seen in several of his other works.



Figure 3 Antônio Henrique Amaral, *Boa vizinhança*, 1968, oil on canvas, Rose and Alfredo Setúbal Collection.

In his article "Uma visão do exterior" ("A View from Abroad") (1996), art historian Edward Sullivan asserts that the repetitive nature of Amaral's subject matter is evocative of the banal objects found in the Pop art movement, namely Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup screen prints, Claes Oldenburg's oversized sculptures, and Jasper Johns' flag paintings.<sup>36</sup> In 2015 Amaral was included in a group exhibition organized by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis titled *Pop International*, which displayed some of the works from artists that were part of the Nova Figuração (New Figuration) group in Brazil. Nova Figuração marked a return to the figure in twentieth-century art and a shift away from the artistic practices of geometric abstraction.<sup>37</sup> Amaral's work *Homenagem séc XX/XXI* was exhibited in the show among other artists of the Nova Figuração group, such as Rubens Gerchman, Antonio Dias, Carlos Vergara, and Ivan Freitas.<sup>38</sup>

*Homenagem séc XX/XXI* shows a bizarre, mutant-like representation of a human face with two noses and four belligerent mouths rising out of a stiff shirt collar and necktie (fig. 4). The composition crops the pink face at the top of the nasal bridges, turning the being into a large phallus. The official shoulder markings in the image resemble the decorations worn by a colonel in the Brazilian military. The stars and stripes in the background are emblematic of the U.S. flag, while the colors on the military official represent the yellow and green found on the Brazilian flag. Similar to Amaral's *Boa Vizinhaça*, this image exemplifies a seemingly political commentary on international relations between Brazil and the United States and mocks those politicians and administrators that hold official power. Taking the analysis one step further would imply that Amaral's image implicates the U.S. in the support of the military coup d'état that initiated the twenty-one years of Brazilian dictatorial government. In her essay for the exhibition catalogue, Claudia Calirman asserts that *Pop Internacional* displays the connection between the Brazilian Nova Figuração artists and U.S. Pop artists in technique and subject matter; however, the underlying political themes coming from the Brazilian artists in the show exemplify a remarkable difference between the two movements.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 4 Antônia Henrique Amaral, *Homenagem séc. XX/XXI*, 1967, oil on canvas, Lili and João Avelar Collection.

Amaral's *Campo de batalha* series, although invoking a more naturalistic approach to painting, falls under many of the same parameters of Nova Figuração in the display of everyday subject matter in contrast with the more serious backdrop of oppression and violence during the military dictatorship. In the same vein of the works produced under the Nova Figuração movement, Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series can be interpreted in vastly different ways dependent on the viewer's own network of associations and memories. Therefore, Flusser's analysis of the painted series in relation to fear and violence under the military dictatorship warrants a deeper analysis of institutional torture and those that were subjected to it.

### Institutional Torture, Techniques, and Dissidents

In his letter to Flusser in October 1974, Amaral thanked the critic for writing about his images in his article "Tornar visível o invisível" in a manner that exposed a political significance in the quotidian yellow fruit.<sup>40</sup> At the time that Flusser wrote his review of Amaral's work, the severity of AI-5 had set in, and the government's clandestine activity, such as arrests, torture, interrogations, and political murders of those deemed dissidents, had become part of daily life in Brazil. After the passing of AI-5, arrests did not have to follow strict protocol, and the inclusion of torture during interrogations made it easier for government officials to gather information on the leftist organizations, such as their members, activities, and headquarters.<sup>41</sup> The main oppressive agencies were the Department of Information Operation and the Center of Internal Defense Operations (DOI-CODI) alliance, the National Information Service (SNI), and the Department of Public Safety (DOPS).<sup>42</sup> The DOI-CODI was a military apparatus that coordinated arrests, interrogations, and analyses of the information gathered from detainees' confessions. These oppressive agencies were specialized in their assignments. Torture had become systematic and was taught to agents by other experts in the field to ensure that these organizations were well trained and efficient in carrying out their underground activities.<sup>43</sup> Although not directly referenced in the painting, *Campos de batalha 3* invokes the methodical nature of these violent organizations.

In *Campo de batalha 3*, the knife and the fork are precise and clinical instruments used to cut and dissect the body of the yellow fruit. Precariously balanced atop the organic decaying banana, the sharp and violent fork tines are pointed upward and outward toward the viewer, imparting a sense of danger to the audience and exposing them to physical harm. The silverware is arranged in a manner that appears boorish and unrefined in customary table etiquette, and the reckless feaster who leaves their utensils in this position gambles with being stabbed. Presumably in a kitchen or on a table in a dining room, the setting in *Campo de batalha 3* is depicted in an unconventional way, turning a space reserved for eating and nourishment into a crowded torture chamber.

In the clandestine events committed by the Brazilian regime, houses were frequent locations for the interrogation and imprisonment of individuals kidnapped by the repressive agencies. Many of the interrogations occurred in prisons, however other clandestine centers included military hospitals and rural houses, where the different rooms of these buildings were repurposed as cells. The name "Grandma's House," which connotes a warm haven, ironically was a title given to the DOI-CODI center in São Paulo. Within these rooms, various methods of torture were used for the extraction of information from those arrested.

The most widely used instrument of torture during the Brazilian military dictatorship is referred to as the Parrot's Perch (*pau de arara*), which suspended victims from a wooden pole behind their knees. With their hands bound, these individuals were incapacitated and torturers would then beat, water board, electrocute, and/or choke the victim.<sup>44</sup> Other victims suffered chemical burns, cigarette burns, sexual abuse, and drowning. The bound and beaten bodies of these victims are

mirrored in Amaral's *Campo de batalha 3*, in which the bruised and maimed banana fruit can be seen tied to the rigid structures of the knife and the fork. Like the Brazilian population that was forcibly and violently subjected to these modes of torture, the docile banana is a cheap fruit sadiistically objectified as an arbitrary plaything for the unseen feaster, who delights in its decay and mutilation.

A December 1969 cover of *Veja* drew a corollary between the interrogations under the dictatorship with torture practices from the Spanish Inquisition (fig. 5).<sup>45</sup> Criticizing the existence of torture in twentieth-century Brazil as an antiquated practice, this issue's cover shows an eighteenth-century French etching and engraving by Bernard Picart of a sadistic torment chamber with victims subjected to painful treatments and tied to torture devices. An article inside the magazine highlighted a story about 23-year-old Chael Charles Schreier, who was affiliated with the Palmares Revolutionary Armed Vanguard (VAR-Palmares), a guerrilla organization in Brazil during the time of the regime. Schreier was arrested, taken to DOPS and was killed during torture. He was beaten so severely that his death certificate stated that he sustained seven broken ribs, brain hemorrhages, internal bleeding, and intense bruising. A critical commentary on the institutional procedure of arrests and interrogation, the 1969 *Veja* article depicts the human rights abuses under the military dictatorship as cruel and gratuitous, a concept Amaral exemplified in several of his *Campos de batalha* paintings. In particular, Amaral's painting *A morte do sábado – Homenagem a Vladimir Herzog* (A Death on Saturday—A Tribute to Vladimir Herzog) (1975) is one of the most violent and visceral banana paintings he created and was interestingly one of his last on the subject matter of the yellow fruit (fig. 6).

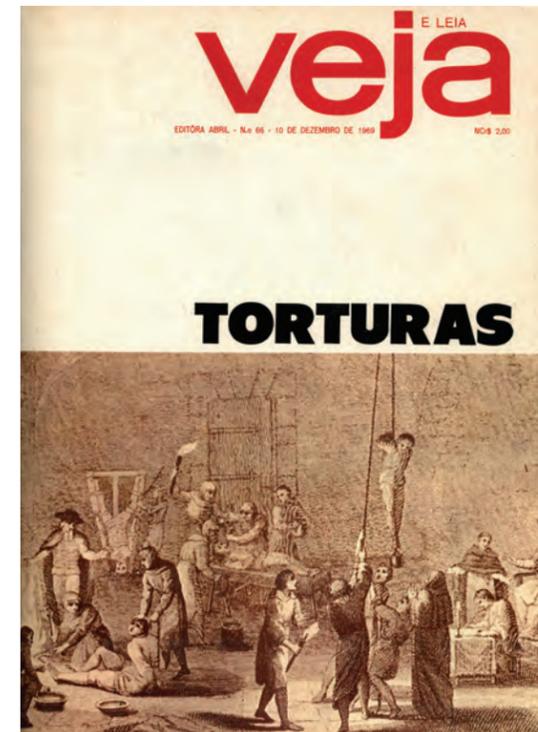


Figure 5 Cover image of *Veja*, no. 66 (São Paulo), December 10, 1969.



Figure 6 Antônia Henrique Amaral, *A morte do sábado. Homenagem a Vladimir Herzog*, 1975, oil on canvas, private collection.

The banana in *A morte do sábado* closely resembles an eviscerated body, as the viewer can make out the structure of a ribcage and what appears to be fatty tissue. The color palette is far more varied than the other compositions of *Campos de batalha*, as Amaral employed reds and pinks, resembling meat rather than fruity endocarp. The forks in *A morte do sábado* insatiably impale and devour the banana. This painting's title references Vladimir Herzog, a journalist and university professor who was arrested and detained at the DOPS because of his affiliation with the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). His suspicious death was announced on Saturday, October 25, 1975. Although officials originally claimed that Herzog took his own life, photographs and a coroner's report later showed that the police staged his suicide.

*A morte do sábado* does not fit into the model that the *Campos de batalha* series follows, as the image deviates from the subdued yellow and grey hues. Further, the style of the banana is more abstract. *A morte do sábado* is arguably the most convincing image that completes the analysis of a banana as a tortured body. Interestingly, the title of *A morte do sábado*, references the specific event of Herzog's death. In contrast, the *Campos de batalha* titles are serial, meaning that, unlike the tribute to Herzog, no single composition in the group has more inherent importance over another. The bananas are isolated, plucked from a bunch on a tree and moved to an inexact location that remains unknown, mirroring the reality of clandestine killings and disappearances at the time of the military dictatorship. Just as Amaral's *Campos de batalha* paintings are titled in an almost arbitrarily sequenced order, those individuals who were arrested, killed, and disappeared at the hand of the repressive regimes were stripped of their identity.<sup>46</sup>

A contemporary of Amaral, Artur Barrio (Brazilian, born 1945) also worked with the subject of disappearances and anonymity. Barrio's *Situações* (Situations) were artworks made of white sheets wrapped around a collection of debris and waste, such as rotting garbage, meat, and used diapers, all bundled together in a way that resembled

a human body. Artur's bloodied bundles, like *Situação..... T/T1.....* (Situation.....T/T1, 1970), exemplify the dominant art practice in Brazil by engaging audiences outside of artistic institutions (fig. 7). By invading everyday spaces, these works opened a political and social critique to a larger, public audience, while still ensuring Barrio's anonymity under censorship. The disturbing aspect of *Situações* was their likeness to bound and disposed human bodies, an experience that was heightened through the smell of spoiled meat and the presence of the blood on the white sheets that held the bundles together.



Figure 7 Artur Barrio, *Situação.....T/T1.....*, 1970, photograph, Coleção Inhotim Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Unlike Flusser's adoption of phenomenology with Amaral's *Campos de batalha* paintings, which requires that the viewer associate meaning through their own interpretation of a banana rather than encountering the rotting fruit firsthand, Barrio's *Situações* provoked the viewer's spatial, perceptual, and sensorial engagement with art through touch, smell, and direct engagement with the bundles of trash. Although different in art practices, both Amaral's series and Barrio's *Situações* employ detritus to insinuate an abused human body wrapped in rope. The similarities in these artists' two approaches lies in their efforts to bring to light the atrocities committed by the military dictatorship, a subject many are still reckoning with today. In very similar ways, both Amaral and Barrios were working with associations that connected viewers to the daily realities of life under the authoritarian regime, which in recent years has been an interest of the Brazilian government and other human rights groups.

## Conclusion

Political and social groups in Brazil are responsible for creating a dialogue around the tight-lipped history of the military dictatorship and recognizing the country's lack of resolution in the wake of the regime's end. These attempts include, but are not limited to, the 1985 Archdiocese of São Paulo's testimonial report *Brasil: Nunca Mais*, the 2011 creation of Brazil's Comissão Nacional da Verdade (National Truth Commission) and its 2014 report on the human rights violations committed by the authoritarian regime, and the initiative of the Núcleo de Preservação da Memória Política (Nucleus for the Preservation of Political Memory) in memorializing the spaces that housed the clandestine activity of the DOI-CODI. These present-day endeavors by Brazilian officials coincide with the urgency found in Antônio Henrique Amaral's *Campos de batalha* series, which call the viewer to action in uncovering a political reading through an analytical lens. Amaral, who has yet to be a subject of major critical research, was one of many artists who were simultaneously grappling with the political and social climate at that time. Unlike de commodified art works created under the censorship of the Brazilian military dictatorship, which now are often understood through photographs and the written scholarship surrounding them, Amaral's paintings, during our current moment, form part of an experiential and visual archive documenting that contentious period in Brazil's history.<sup>1</sup> Further, the unique conditions that afforded Amaral success with painting in the United States exposes the complex circumstance of relocated artists from Latin America, a conversation that is currently being developed. Flusser's assertion still holds true even today, as Amaral's paintings are physical testaments to the complex web of histories and experiences of those affected by the Brazilian military dictatorship.

## NOTES

- Margarida Sant'Anna, "Biographical Data," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, by Antônio Henrique Amaral, Maria Alice Milliet, and Margarida Sant'Anna (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2014), 247. The Salão Nacional de Arte Moderna, from which Amaral won the travel prize, was held in July 1971. Amaral had exhibited the paintings *Sequência 1*, *Sequência 2*, and *Sequência 3*. At this point, the only image of these three paintings that I could find is *Sequência 1*, which focuses on the green stem of an under ripe bunch of bananas. However, this does not account for the other two paintings, whose exact subject matter is not known.
- For more on the 1960s and 1970s art practices in Brazil, see Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012) and Elena Shtromberg, *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2016).
- Anos de chumbo* refers to Médici's rule from 1968 to 1974 and is characterized as the most violent period of the military dictatorship. As all of the leaders in the Brazilian dictatorship were military leaders, General Médici ruled on the side of the hard-liners, the population who was in support of the regime and resorted to extreme measures to silence their opponents. This period marks a widespread practice of torture in Brazil.
- Institutional Act 5 (AI-5) passed under President Artur da Costa e Silva, however the practice of direct military action quickly worsened when President Médici took office the following year.
- In September 1969, American ambassador Charles Elbrick was kidnapped by the armed organization MR-8 in exchange for fifteen political prisoners. This event was considered a success for the leftist group. The story of this kidnapping was made into the 1997 Hollywood film *O Que É Isso Companheiro?*, directed by Bruno Barreto and starring Alan Arkin as Ambassador Elbrick. The film also showed to American audiences under the title *Four Days in September*.
- Vilém Flusser, "Campos de batalha: tornar visível o invisível—mudar nossa maneira de viver," *Artes*, no. 43 (July 1975): 8. ICAA Record ID 1111050. Flusser was born in Prague in 1920 into a Jewish family. He had moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1940, a year after the German Nazi occupation in Prague, and had learned of his family's death in Nazi concentration camps shortly after his arrival in Brazil. In a letter from Antônio Amaral on October 12, 1974, the artist thanks Flusser for his critical review of his work, particularly so because the writer published the article at the height of the military dictatorship. Flusser left Brazil in 1971, as it was becoming increasingly difficult for him to continue his academic and writing career without experiencing censorship or worse. This is possibly why Flusser bypassed a blatant statement about the authoritarian government.
- Flusser, "Campos de batalha: tornar visível o invisível," 7.
- Antônio Henrique Amaral, "Depoimento gravado especialmente para o acervo da Galeria de Arte Alberto Bonfiglioli em 26.02.75," February 26, 1975. ICAA Record ID 1111039.
- Frederico Morais, "O corpo contra os metais da opressão," in *Antonio Henrique Amaral: Obra em processo*, by Antônio Henrique Amaral, et al. (São Paulo: DBA, 1997), 45.
- Morais, "O corpo contra os metais da opressão," 40.
- Morais is noted for having organized two influential exhibitions, *O corpo do terra* (1970) and *Domingos da criação* (1971), during the time of the military dictatorship. These shows were essential in the creation of art production in Brazil at this time, as they brought together artists who engaged with the society and public spaces through interventions and happenings. For additional reading on Morais's *Manifesto Do Corpo à Terra*, see Frederico Morais, "Manifesto do Corpo à Terra" [Manifesto of Body to Earth] in *Manifesto datilo-escrito*, April 18, 1970. See also the section "Do Corpo à Terra: The Aesthetics of the Margins" in the chapter "Artur Barrio: A New Visual Aesthetic," in Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship*. For more reading on *Domingos da Criação*, refer to the section "O público: O exercício da liberdade" in Frederico Morais, *Artes plásticas: A crise da hora atual* (Rio de Janeiro Paz e Terra, 1975), 1–8. Elena Shtromberg also elaborates on the events of *Domingos da Criação* in the introduction to Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 1–2.
- Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship*, 540.
- Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship*, 540.
- Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 14–16. Such paintings sold at this time were viewed as alternative investments to stocks and property. Buyers were encouraged to capitalize on these artworks before their value deteriorated in price. These sales included paintings by artists like Tarsila do Amaral, Emiliano di Cavalcanti, and Cândido Portinari.

- Shtromberg includes Cildo Meireles' *Banknotes Project*, which derided the institutions of government, art, and money, as part of her discussion of the economic conditions from which the Brazilian art market emerged. Shtromberg, *Art Systems*, 12–41.
- Sant'Anna, "Biographical Data," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, 253. The Blanton Museum of Art's Latin American Collection in Austin, Texas, is noted as the first United States museum to own Amaral's work, specifically *Campo de batalha 31* (1974) and *Alone in Green* (1973). See "One-man Exhibit: Antônio H. Amaral" (unpublished typescript, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL, 1975). Exhibition records from the Birmingham Museum of Art shows that Amaral's solo exhibition included seven paintings in total; however, only four of them had the *Campo de batalha* title. *Alone in Green* (1973) (then in the collection of Barbara Duncan) was also exhibited in this exhibition.
- Dária Gorete Jaremtchuk, "Trânsitos e política: artistas brasileiros em Nova Iorque durante a ditadura civil-militar no Brasil" in *Anais nais Brasileiros E Brazilianistas: Novas Gerações, Novos Olhares* (São Paulo: Arquivo Público Do Estado De São Paulo, 2014), 125. Many of these artists who traveled to New York were funded through U.S. funding, such as Guggenheim and Fulbright fellowships, for their work with traditional media, typically an unpopular practice among Brazilian artists at that time. Refer to Jaremtchuk's essay for more information on artist practices and relationships with U.S. institutions during "artistic exile" in the 1960s and 1970s.
- For more on the relocation and exile of artists from Latin American countries other than Brazil, see the chapter "Diaspora" in Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008), 225–26.
- For a better understanding on the trials of Latin American artists in New York during the 1960s and 1970s and their critique on the U.S. art market and political violence, see Aimé Iglesias Lukin, "Contrabienal: Redefining Latin American Art and Identity in 1970s New York," *ICAA Documents Project Working Papers 4* (November 2016), accessed February 4, 2018, [https://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/Portals/0/WorkingPapers/ICAAWorkingPapers4\\_secured.pdf](https://icaadocs.mfah.org/icaadocs/Portals/0/WorkingPapers/ICAAWorkingPapers4_secured.pdf).
- Antônio Henrique Amaral to Vilém Flusser, October 12, 1974, ICAA Record ID 1111047.
- Antônio Henrique Amaral to Ferreira Gullar, June 8, 1974, ICAA Record ID 1111048.
- Haag, "The Subtleties of Latin American Good Neighbors," 66.
- José Gómez-Sicre, *The Banana: Variations in Oil by Antonio Henrique Amaral of Brazil* (Washington D.C.: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1971), 2.
- Sant'Anna, "Biographical Data," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, 252.
- Zé Carioca is Disney's green parrot from Rio de Janeiro who is known for his street smarts, cast as a *malandro*, the Brazilian term for a street-smart scoundrel. Essentially propaganda for the Good Neighbor Policy, this collection of shorts depicts Zé Carioca as a friend of Donald Duck and follows them on their adventures in Rio and South America in animations such as *Aquarela do Brasil* (1942) and *The Three Caballeros* (1944).
- Gómez-Sicre, *The Banana*, 2.
- Maria Alice Milliet, "With Eyes Wide Open," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, by Antônio Henrique Amaral, Maria Alice Milliet, and Margarida Sant'Anna (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2014), 238.
- Amaral's collection of works does not include any paintings with these titles. It seems that the titles were either changed (whether in translation at the time of the show or at a later date) or they are not accessible to the public at this time.
- James N. Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2010), 46–47. Operation Brother Sam was a contingency plan developed by the United States that would provide logistical support to the Brazilian right-wing militants during the coup on April 1, 1964. Such support was provided in arms, ammunition, motor gas, jet fuel, aviation gas, diesel, kerosene, and ammunition ships. This plan was never put into action, as the Brazilian military coup was swift.
- Green, *We Cannot Remain Silent*, 39.
- Peter Kornbluh, "Brazil Marks 40th Anniversary of Military Coup: Declassified Documents Shed Light on U.S. Involvement," The National Security Archive. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, who was known for his involvement with Latin American economic policies and international development efforts, such as the Alliance for Progress, convinced President Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington D. C. to support the military coup on April 1, 1964. The U.S. later stated that the coup was a homegrown event that occurred without any involvement from the United States government.

- 32 Edward Sullivan, "Uma visão do exterior," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, by Antônio Henrique Amaral, Maria Alice Milliet, and Margarida Sant'Anna (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2014), 280. Commissioned by the Dutch colony's governor general, German count Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, Eckhout painted and sketched Brazilian landscapes, populations, and produce from 1637 to 1644. Eckhout's work is part of a long-standing tradition of literature and art that embellishes a colonizing country's success based on the natural resources obtained through imperial expansion.
- 33 In particular to Anita Malfatti's work, *O homem de sete cores* (*The Man of Seven Colors*, 1916) depicts a colorful man walking in the forest among banana leaves. In the background of Tarsila do Amaral's works *Antropofagia* (*Anthropophagy*, 1929) and *A negra* (1923), a banana leaf can be found.
- 34 In his 1928 *Anthropophagic Manifesto*, Brazilian modernist writer Oswald de Andrade encouraged Brazil's artists to critically appropriate cultural influences from other countries, particularly Europe and the United States, in order to create works that would exemplify a unique Brazilian national identity. By identifying with the cannibalistic rituals of certain indigenous tribes in Brazil, artist, writers, filmmakers, and musicians revitalized the term *antropofagia* to model a dialogue between western influences and Brazilian culture to lead to a liberated and separate identity. For more information on Anthropophagy, see Oswald de Andrade and Leslie Bary, "Cannibalist Manifesto," *Latin American Literary Review* 19, no. 38 (June–Dec. 1991): 38–47. For more information on Tropicália in Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s, refer to Christopher Dunn, *Brutality Garden: Tropicalia and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Spearheaded by the singers and songwriters Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, Tropicália appeared primarily in a group of musicians, although it surfaced in television as well. Tropicália built off of the multicultural approach of Oswald de Andrade's Anthropophagy. Through an ironic amalgamation of high and low brow subjects, the movement brought into context the influence of foreign countries, elite culture, marginalized society, and (importantly) political critique.
- 35 Morais, "O corpo contra os metais," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, 40.
- 36 Sullivan, "Uma visão do exterior," in *Antônio Henrique Amaral*, 283.
- 37 Claudia Calirman, "Pop and Politics in Brazil," in *International Pop*, by M. Darsie Alexander, et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2015), 120. Geometric abstraction was an artistic style that emerged in the 1950s and was practiced by a group of artists from Brazil. The style focused on the rationality of geometry as a means to reject notions of subjectivity often associated with the process of painting and artistic production.
- 38 "Nova Figuração" [New Figuration], <http://memoriasdaditadura.org.br/>, accessed October 16, 2016, <http://memoriasdaditadura.org.br/movimentos-artisticos/nova-figuracao/>.
- 39 Calirman, "Pop and Politics in Brazil," 120. In her extensive research for the exhibition, Calirman marks the subject matter of popular and mass culture and high- and lowbrow themes as a common relation between the two international groups of artists.
- 40 Antônio Henrique Amaral to Vilém Flusser, October 12, 1974, ICAA Record ID 1111047.
- 41 Archdiocese of São Paulo, comp., *Torture in Brazil: A Shocking Report on the Pervasive Use of Torture By Brazilian Military Governments, 1964–1979*, trans. Jaime Wright, ed. Joan Dassin (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1998), 81. Although they opposed the military government at heart, most of the groups of the *luta armada* (armed fight) were not united and therefore their numbers declined drastically after Médici began his presidency.
- 42 DOI-CODI and SNI were military organizations, while DOPS was part of state security and, therefore, run by the State Governor.
- 43 Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil*, 13–15. The condensed English version of *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (BNM), *Torture in Brazil* names Dan Mitrione, the United States federal officer and advisor for the Central Intelligence Agency in Latin America, as one of the officials that instructed over one hundred Brazilian military officers their pervasive torture methods in the 1960s.
- 44 Archdiocese of São Paulo, *Torture in Brazil*, 78.
- 45 The cover image for the December 1969 publication of *Veja* is an etching and engraving created by Bernard Picart (1673–1733), *Diverses manières dont le St. Office fait donner la question* (1723). The eighteenth-century image is one of many illustrations that Picart created for the nine-volume folio *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde* (Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1723–1743), which detailed the rituals and ceremonies of all known religions of the world at that time. Picart's illustration depicts the torture techniques used during the Spanish Inquisition to collect confessions from prisoners. The first editions (in French, English, Dutch, and German) of Bernard's folio are available online through the UCLA Digital Library Program as part of a joint project with the Getty Research Institute, Utrecht University, and the Huntington Library.
- 46 Rebecca J. Atencio, "Literary and Official Truth-Telling," in *Memory's Turn: Reckoning with Dictatorship in Brazil* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 2152/4384, Kindle edition.
- 47 There exists a considerable gap in examining how artists using traditional media, more specifically painters, and working within museums and other institutions were shaped by the political atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. The works of other painters, including José Roberto Aguilar, Marcello Nitsche, Sérgio Ferro, Dudi Maia Rosa, Cybéle Varela, and Humberto Spindola, still require exploration, as these artists are also critical voices from this point in Brazilian history.

Opposite:  
detail of fig. 2, p. 16.

---

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Giovanna M. Bassi Cendra** is a PhD student in the department of art history of Rice University in Houston. She previously studied and practiced architecture, receiving a bachelor's degree from the Universidad Ricardo Palma in Lima, Peru, and a master of architecture degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology. Her long-standing interest in art and architectural history led her to complete an MA in art history at the University of Houston. Her master's thesis, "New Monumentality, Integration of the Arts, and the Shaping of Modern Life," adopted a transnational lens to chart several approaches to the notion of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* through which socially and politically engaged art and architecture came together in the twentieth century. Her volunteer work at the International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, sparked her interest in the Argentinean Concrete art movements and the dynamic and interdisciplinary exchanges that existed among these and other avant-garde groups in Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Currently Ms. Bassi is specializing in modern Latin American art and architecture. Her current research interrogates the ways in which transnational politics, economics, and science blend with art and architecture in South American public projects.

**Margaret H. Adams** holds an MA in art history from the University of Utah, where she studied modern and contemporary art with an emphasis on Brazilian art and culture. Her interest in art began during her undergraduate work in art history and anthropology at the University of Arkansas. The essay published in the ICAA *Working Papers* emerged out of her master's research on painting and resistance during the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–85). In 2015, she received a Foreign Language and Studies (FLAS) Fellowship in Portuguese. She has held curatorial internships at the Rubell Family Collection in Miami, Florida, and at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she curated Brazilian video artist Berna Reale's first U.S. solo exhibition in 2016, titled *Berna Reale: Singin' in the Rain*. She is currently living in São Paulo, Brazil, where she is continuing her research on the role of painting during the 1960s and 1970s. Her other interests include art activism and contemporary artists in Brazil.

---

## COPYRIGHT AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

The International Center for the Arts of the Americas is grateful to a number of institutions and individuals for supplying the permissions and photographic materials for this publication. The ICAA has also taken reasonable steps in order to comply with applicable copyright laws. Copyright and photographic credits for the works illustrated in these publications are listed below.

### Copyright Credits

Estate of Antonio Henrique Amaral:  
Adams essay, figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6  
Artur Barrio: Adams essay, fig. 7  
Museo Kosice: Bassi essay,  
figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

### Photographic Credits

César Carneiro: Adams essay, fig. 7  
Romulo Fialdini: Adams essay, figs. 1, 3, 4, 6  
Rick Hall: Adams essay, fig. 2  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,  
Will Michels: Bassi essay, figs. 2, 4, 6;  
Thomas R. DuBrock: Bassi essay, fig. 3

---

**The Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research  
is presented with the support of  
The Transart Foundation Foundation.**

The International Center for the Arts  
of the Americas' digital archive  
is generously underwritten by  
The Bruce T. Halle Family Foundation.

The 13-volume *Critical Documents of 20th-Century  
Latin American and Latino Art* is generously underwritten by  
the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Additional generous funding for the ICAA is provided by:

Leslie and Brad Bucher  
The ICAA Ideas Council  
The Getty Foundation  
The Wallace Foundation  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
The Wortham Foundation, Inc.  
The Ford Foundation  
The Henry Luce Foundation, Inc.  
National Endowment for the Arts  
The Rockefeller Foundation  
Andy Warhol Foundation  
Mrs. Olive McCollum Jenney  
Ms. Patricia Phelps de Cisneros  
Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation  
Norton Rose Fulbright  
AEI Energy

