

Arrival Cities

Migrating Artists and
New Metropolitan Topographies
in the 20th Century

Edited by
Burcu Dogramaci, Mareike Hetschold,
Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee
and Helene Roth

Leuven University Press

Extended publication of the conference “Arrival Cities: Migrating Artists and New Metropolitan Topographies”, organized by the ERC Research Project “Relocating Modernism: Global Metropolises, Modern Art and Exile (METROMOD)”, Institute for Art History at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, in cooperation with ZI – Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich and Kunstverein Munich, 30 November – 1 December 2018. For more information see <https://metromod.net>.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 724649 – METROMOD).



Published with the support of
KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access

Published in 2020 by Leuven University Press / Presses Universitaires de Louvain / Universitaire Pers Leuven. Minderbroedersstraat 4, B-3000 Leuven (Belgium).

Selection and editorial matter © Burcu Dogramaci, Mareike Hetschold, Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee and Helene Roth, 2020

Individual chapters © The respective authors, 2020

Every effort has been made to contact all holders of the copyright to the visual material contained in this publication. Any copyright-holders who believe that illustrations have been reproduced without their knowledge are asked to contact the publisher.

Translations and editing: Jennifer Leetsch, Ilze Mueller, Mary Stewart

Editorial assisting and index: Maya-Sophie Lutz

This book is published under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Non-Derivative 4.0 International Licence.



The license allows you to share, copy, distribute, and transmit the work for personal and non-commercial use providing author and publisher attribution is clearly stated.

Attribution should include the following information: Burcu Dogramaci, Mareike Hetschold, Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee and Helene Roth (eds). *Arrival Cities: Migrating Artists and New Metropolitan Topographies in the 20th Century*. (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Further details about Creative Commons licenses are available at

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

ISBN 978 94 6270 226 4 (Paperback)

ISBN 978 94 6166 324 5 (ePDF)

ISBN 978 94 6166 325 2 (ePUB)

<https://doi.org/10.11116/9789461663245>

D/2020/1869/34

NUR: 654

Layout: Friedemann Vervoort

Cover design: Bureau Johannes Erlar GmbH, Hamburg, Germany



Table of Contents

Arrival Cities: Migrating Artists and New Metropolitan Topographies in the 20 th Century – An Introduction	9
---	---

Burcu Dogramaci, Mareike Hetschold, Laura Karp Lugo, Rachel Lee, Helene Roth

Groups and Networks

Alone Together: Exile Sociability and Artistic Networks in Buenos Aires at the Beginning of the 20 th Century	33
--	----

Laura Karp Lugo

A Great Anti-Hero of Modern Art History: Juan Aebi in Buenos Aires	55
--	----

Laura Bohnenblust

From Dinner Parties to Galleries: The Langhammer-Leyden-Schlesinger Circle in Bombay – 1940s through the 1950s	73
--	----

Margit Franz

Austro-Hungarian Architect Networks in Tianjin and Shanghai (1918–1952)	91
---	----

Eduard Kögel

Art and Exile in Rio de Janeiro: Artistic Networking during World War II	109
--	-----

Cristiana Tejo and Daniela Kern

Kiesler's Imaging Exile in Guggenheim's Art of this Century Gallery and the New York Avant-garde Scene in the early 1940s	123
---	-----

Elana Shapira

Mobility, Transfer and Circulation

- Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin in Calcutta: The Creation of a Regional Asian Avant-garde Art 147
Partha Mitter
- Parisian Echoes: Iba N'Diaye and African Modernisms 159
Joseph L. Underwood
- The Margin as a Space of Connection: The Artists Mira Schendel, Salette Tavares and Amélia Toledo in Lisbon 177
Margarida Brito Alves and Giulia Lamoni
- Exile and the Reinvention of Modernism in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, 1937–1964 193
Rafael Cardoso
- Arrival City Istanbul: Flight, Modernity and Metropolis at the Bosphorus. With an Excursus on the Island Exile of Leon Trotsky 205
Burcu Dogramaci

Sites, Spaces and Urban Representations

- Mapping *Finchleystasse: Mitteleuropa* in North West London 229
Rachel Dickson and Sarah MacDougall
- Hospitable Environments: The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and Green's Hotel as Sites of Cultural Production in Bombay 249
Rachel Lee
- Tales of a City: Urban Encounters in the Travel Book *Shanghai* by Ellen Thorbecke and Friedrich Schiff 269
Mareike Hetschold

The Bar Sammy's Bowery Follies as Microcosm and Photographic Milieu Study for Emigrated European Photographers in 1930s and 1940s New York	293
<i>Helene Roth</i>	

Changing Practices: Interventions in Artistic Landscapes

Temporary Exile: The White Stag Group in Dublin, 1939–1946	317
<i>Kathryn Milligan</i>	
Inner City Solidarity: Black Protest in the Eyes of the Jewish New York Photo League	335
<i>Ya'ara Gil-Glazer</i>	
Bohemians, Anarchists, and Arrabales: How Spanish Graphic Artists Reinvented the Visual Landscape of Buenos Aires, 1880–1920	353
<i>Brian Bockelman</i>	
The City of Plovdiv as a New Latin American Metropolis: The Artistic Activity of Latin American Exiles in Communist Bulgaria	371
<i>Katarzyna Cytlak</i>	
Hedda Sterne and the Lure of New York	389
<i>Frauke V. Josenhans</i>	

Arrival Cities: A Roundtable

Arrival Cities: A Conversation with Rafael Cardoso, Partha Mitter, Elana Shapira and Elvan Zabunyan	409
<i>Laura Karp Lugo and Rachel Lee</i>	
Biographies of the Authors	421
Index	429

The Margin as a Space of Connection

The Artists Mira Schendel, Salette Tavares and Amélia Toledo in Lisbon

Margarida Brito Alves and Giulia Lamoni



Fig. 1: Photography of Lisbon, undated (Col. Estúdio Horácio Novais | Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – Biblioteca de Arte).

When in Lisbon ...

There is no photograph which shows the artists Mira Schendel, Salette Tavares and Amélia Toledo together in front of a camera. If such a photograph existed, it probably would have been taken in Lisbon in 1966. At that time, Brazilian artist Amélia Toledo was living in the nearby coastal city of Carcavelos, teaching art at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes (National Society of Fine Arts) in the Portuguese capital. Following the 1964 military coup in Brazil, the arrest of her

husband and his dismissal from the University of Brasília, Toledo and her family migrated to Portugal in 1965. The following year, she was visited by her fellow artist and friend Mira Schendel whom she had met in São Paulo in the early 1960s. On this occasion, Toledo organised an exhibition of 93 works from Schendel's series *Monotipias* (Monotypes) at the Buchholz Gallery and Bookshop in Lisbon.¹

Indeed, it was the first time that Mira Schendel, an Italian-Swiss Jew, had travelled back to Europe after migrating to Brazil with her husband in the post-war period. One of the reasons for her trip was her solo exhibition at Signals Gallery in London in 1966, where she had already presented some pieces in the *Soundings Two* collective show the previous year. According to Schendel, her solo exhibition in London was successful and her pieces were very well received.² On the other hand, things did not go as well in Lisbon. In a 1967 letter, the artist wrote, "The exhibition in Lisbon was very well installed. The catalogue, nothing special, and the visitors were perplexed".³ An article by the Portuguese art critic Fernando Pernes, also close to Amélia Toledo,⁴ confirms this assessment. "Unfortunately", wrote Pernes, "we do not think that this exhibition, of such grave modernity, was understood in Lisbon. That's our loss!"⁵ (Pernes 1966, 71).

The exhibition brought together two friends, Toledo as organizer and Schendel as artist, who had been differently affected by experiences of migration. Yet its poor reception revealed a disconnect between Lisbon, the capital of a southern country under dictatorial rule and a peripheral city on the European cultural map of the 1960s, and 'swinging' London which was characterized by cultural effervescence and centrality. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that in the Portuguese artistic milieu Schendel's exhibition in Lisbon did not go completely unnoticed. Featured at a relevant gallery, it was accompanied by a text by well-known art critic José-Augusto França, who also wrote a text for Amélia Toledo's solo exhibition at Atrium Gallery in São Paulo in the same year.⁶ Besides, Pernes' review of Schendel's exhibition appeared in one of the key cultural journals at the time, *Colóquio. Revista de Artes e Letras*, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

In 1966, the Portuguese artist and poet Salette Tavares was living in Lisbon and collaborated in some of the activities organised at the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes. It is probable – although, to our knowledge, no document in her correspondence suggests it – that this is where she met Amélia Toledo. Still, no evidence confirms whether Tavares went to see Mira Schendel's exhibition at Buchholz Gallery or if she met the Brazilian artist at all.⁷ Nevertheless, in 1971 Salette Tavares published an article in *Colóquio/Artes* dedicated to the work of Amélia Toledo, entitled "Brincar. A propósito de Amélia Toledo" ("Playing. Regarding Amélia Toledo"). Reflecting on the activity of playing, and revisiting some of the ideas advanced by Johan Huizinga, Tavares points out that the origin

of the Portuguese word *brincar* – meaning “play” – derives from *brinco* – “ring” – which in turn originates from the Latin *vinculum*, meaning “bond, a binding element” (Tavares 1971, 31–32).

This etymological exploration – connecting *brincar* (playing) with the creation of bonds – is all the more significant when one considers that the text establishes a bond between the author herself and Amélia Toledo, who by then had returned to São Paulo and whose design pieces, which were discussed by Salette Tavares, had not yet been exhibited in Portugal. How did Tavares get hold of them? Interestingly, in his review of Schendel’s 1966 exhibition, Fernando Pernes also evoked, among other elements, the ‘ludic’ quality of the artist’s work and quoted Paul Klee: “Art plays, even without knowing it, with the deepest realities, effectively achieving them”⁸ (Pernes 1966, 70f.). Considering the importance of *brincar* (playing) in the artistic work of Salette Tavares – after all this is how she entitled her 1979 solo exhibition organised at Quadrum Gallery in Lisbon – leads to the question of how far the process of ‘playing’ and its heterogeneous unfoldings could operate as a kind of ‘binding element’, a *vinculum* connecting the work of these three artists? And what would be the role ‘played’ by migration and by the city of Lisbon and its cultural scene in this artistic and affective triangulation?

Although Lisbon is recurrently referred to as a place of cultural exchanges, and as a crucial and strategic point for entries and escapes during World War II, it seems that in the following decades it lost its role as an international crossroad. In fact, in narratives of post-war art articulated in the context of Portuguese and international art history, the city has often been framed as a site of departure for local artists who predominantly went to Paris or London to study and/or live abroad. Although this migration towards European artistic capitals certainly heavily influenced 20th-century Portuguese art – a tendency that intensified from the late 1950s on – its centrality in critical and art historical discourses has tended to overshadow other transits to and through Lisbon.

As previously mentioned, in the 1960s Portugal was still living under the New State dictatorship (1933–1974), which caused the country’s international isolation. Despite this long regime, and despite the outbreak of the Colonial War in 1961, the 1960s were less restricted, and the period between 1968 and 1970 was significantly referred to as the “Primavera Marcelista” (Marcelist Spring). This can be ascribed to Marcelo Caetano’s role as prime minister (1968–1974) in which he, to a certain extent, softened some of the most rigid features of the government. Another key element to understand these years is the creation of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in 1956, an institution which was often described as an ‘oasis’ in the Portuguese cultural scene, and which, fostering transits, soon started to award

scholarships to numerous artists – both national and foreign – thus enabling them to travel abroad and come into contact with other lived realities.

In fact, envisaging Lisbon during this decade as a site of artistic passage, residence and transnational connections renders the map of the artistic networks and transits drawn by international art historical scholarship more complex and open-ended, all the while exploring the roles played not only by peripheral cities in Europe and beyond but also by south-to-south circulations. Regarding, in particular, the travels of artists, exhibitions and ideas between Brazil and Portugal from the 1950s onwards, the visit of the poet Décio Pignatari to Lisbon in 1956, the subsequent publication of an anthology of concrete poetry by the Brazilian Embassy in 1962, and its reception by Portuguese poets have been the object of some attention (De Campos et al. 1962).⁹ In contrast, less institutional and more volatile processes such as the passage of Brazilian artists Amélia Toledo and Mira Schendel to and from the city and their inscription into its art scene remain largely unexplored.

Evaluating the possible impact of Mira Schendel's short stay and exhibition in Lisbon and of Amélia Toledo's two-year exile on the city's artistic scene and cultural debates (of which Salette Tavares was an active agent) is quite a complex task which often lacks the archival evidence that would allow for such a comprehensive approach.¹⁰ Acknowledging, instead, the fragmentary and incomplete character of our perspective, we propose to focus on an artistic and affective map of encounters and dialogues, and to explore the way in which they inform, in different ways, the artists' production. In this sense, we suggest looking at the connections between Salette Tavares, Mira Schendel and Amélia Toledo in Lisbon by way of a relational perspective – studying the multidimensional affective as well as artistic connections between the artists and between the artists and their cultural and political environment.

Playing with words

Following the birth of her child Ada in the late 1950s, Mira Schendel began an intense period of work in the early 1960s, characterised, among other things, by the use of rice paper. In 1962, she exhibited her series *Bordados* (Embroideries) at Galeria Selearte in São Paulo; here, rice paper was suffused with watercolour and featured a set of abstract signs. It was between 1964 and 1966 that Schendel worked on the series presented in Lisbon, the *Monotipias*.¹¹ Composed of around 2,000 drawings using rice paper and oil ink, these pieces stemmed from the artist's desire to use extremely thin rice paper without tearing it apart. Resorting to a monotype technique – using glass plates, ink, talc and sheets of rice paper – the

drawing was traced with a pointed instrument.¹² This process resulted in striking works which combined transparency, fragility and brittleness, and which played with – often linguistic – signs and blank spaces.

Schendel's interest in the use of language played an important part in both her paintings and monotypes from the early 1960s onwards. In her rice paper works in particular, the limits between language and drawing became blurred as the artist attempted, in her own words, "... to surprise discourse at its moment of origin" (Schendel 2009, 60). If immediate individual experience, life and emotions are not communicable, thought Schendel, "[t]he realm of symbols, which seeks to capture that life (and which is also the realm of language), on the other hand, is antilife, in the sense of being intersubjective, shared, emptied of emotions and suffering" (ibid.). "If I could bring these two realms together," she wrote, "I would have united the richness of experience with the relative permanence of the symbol" (ibid.).

These preoccupations reveal the artist's singular exploration of language in philosophical terms, but they are also connected to a wider reflection on the visual dimension of writing as put forth by Brazilian concrete poets in dialogue with artistic concretism in the 1950s. After all, Schendel was a close friend of the concrete poet Haroldo de Campos, whom she met in the early 1960s in São Paulo and who considered her "a metaphysical calligrapher"¹³ (Salzstein 2014, 251). Such an ambivalent relationship with concrete poetry – one of clear distance but also of possible conversation – may certainly have appealed to Portuguese artist Salette Tavares, if she ever visited the exhibition of *Monotipias* in Lisbon in 1966. In fact, a few years later, in 1974, the two artists exhibited their works together in a collective exhibition in Rome entitled *Artivisive Poesiavisiva* (Visualarts Visualpoetry), organised by artist and curator Mirella Bentivoglio.¹⁴

Salette Tavares had started her trajectory as a poet, publishing *Espelho Cego* (Blind Mirror), her first book of poems, in 1957. Playing with the graphical layout of the verses – by introducing gaps, breaks, misalignments and spaces in her textual compositions – this work explored the relationship between word and image, revealing her "taste for experimenting with signifiers" (Martinho 1995, 8). Over the following decade, Tavares kept writing poetry and published three more books of poems¹⁵ in the years leading up to 1971; she also contributed to the *Cadernos de Poesia Experimental* (Experimental Poetry Notebooks), which were issued in 1964 and in 1966 by the Portuguese Experimental Poetry Group – a loose collective of poets, artists and musicians that had been informed by Brazilian concrete poetry in the 1960s and integrated an international dynamic that addressed language and words as visual elements.

Salette Tavares also started to attract attention as an artist who participated in the activities of this group, having contributed *kinetophonic* works and several

letterpress poems to the *Cadernos de Poesia Experimental* notebooks. In this context, two graphic poems stand out: *Efes* and *Aranha* (Spider), both dating from 1963 and published in the following year. Employing a semiological focus, their visual form corresponds to a “verbal body” (Tavares 1995, 17), as argued by Tavares’ friend, the artist Ana Hatherly. As a member of the *Poesia Experimental* collective, Tavares also took part in *Visopoemas*, a shared exhibition at the Galeria Divulgação in Lisbon in 1965. This resulted in the presentation of *Concerto e Audição Pictórica* (Concert and Pictorial Audition) – a collaborative event which not only established a dialogue with John Cage’s experimental concerts, but also is generally referred to as the first happening taking place in Portugal.

Between 1949 and 1963, Tavares produced several ceramic pieces that extended this exercise, testing the visual dimension of words by ironically inscribing phrases, letters or punctuation marks onto the surface of objects – as can be seen in pieces such as *Peixe* (Fish) or *Jarra Pontos e Vírgulas* (Semicolon Vase). This articulation between poetry and objects would lead her to explore a tri-dimensional and even spatial dimension (Brito Alves/Rosas 2014, 139–149) over the subsequent years. Interestingly, if for Tavares the testing ground to explore the possible tri-dimensionality of signs was the main objective, for Mira Schendel and Amélia Toledo it was transparency.

Amélia Toledo created her first collages as well as her well-known artist’s book *Genesis* when she attended Basic Design courses as well as goldsmithing workshops at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London in the late 1950s. As Agnaldo Farias indicated, the book which introduced the action of tearing “to contrast it with the monotony and rigidity of the square” (Farias 2004, 209) resulted from “exercises inspired by the Bauhaus and adopted by William Turnbull in his course” (ibid.). In these works, the artist tore sheets of coloured silk paper and rice paper to create subtle juxtapositions using either collage or the book form. “The collages”, observed the artist, “began in London with transparencies. The gouaches were the movements of coloured water and the collages arose from tearing coloured silk paper, colour on colour, transparencies” (ibid., 267).

Exploring the dimension of transparency in rice paper, these works seem to anticipate those by Mira Schendel in the early 1960s. They similarly used elements such as colour and the book form to expand the work of art in real space by breaking its bi-dimensionality. On the other hand, the act of tearing – a non-specific artistic gesture that bound together creation and destruction – significantly revealed the very texture of the material used. Tri-dimensionality was further explored by Toledo in her 1959 *Livro da construção* (Construction book). In 2011, Toledo recounted that with this book she wanted “to construct works that could awake the will to make a gesture ...” (Neves 2011, 108)¹⁶ and that what mattered

to her was “the exploration of spaces created by paper and a dialogue with spaces through folding, geometric cuts, juxtapositions, in an open construction able to produce other forms in the hands of other people” (ibid.).¹⁷ Toledo’s affinity with neo-concrete preoccupations with space and the body seems noteworthy here.

As for Schendel, for whom materiality was also extremely significant, the transparency of rice paper acquired a new dimension when she started to incorporate transparent acrylic sheets in her *Objectos Gráficos* (Graphic Objects) in 1967. The rice paper drawings were placed between these transparent acrylic plates, and visitors could thus not only walk around but also look through them. This embodied participation in the artwork was to reconstitute an experience of time that the written sign had immobilised. Yet, as Geraldo Souza Dias points out, it was apparently in Lisbon, at the Buchholz Gallery, that Schendel for the first time exhibited her rice paper pieces between glass plates (Souza Dias 2001, 81). Was this type of installation a fruit of the collaboration between Schendel and Toledo, who organised the exhibition?

What we know for certain is that the use of transparent material, and specifically acrylic, became an extremely generative process for Schendel. As stated by the artist herself, beside showing “the plane’s other side” and “the text’s reverse” (Schendel 2009, 60), the acrylic “[...] allows a circular reading, with the text as the unmovable centre and the reader in motion, thus transferring time from the work to the reader, so that time springs from symbol to life” (ibid.). And yet, almost paradoxically, the physical involvement of the participant in Schendel’s work began not with transparency but with opacity, with sheets of rice paper twisted and knotted so as to become a woven object. This well-known series of works was entitled *Droguinhas* (Little nothings), and was shown together with its sibling work, *Trenzinho* (Little train), at the London exhibition in 1966 – the same year in which *Monotipias* were presented in Lisbon.

Playing with space

Not surprisingly, it was the artist’s daughter Ada, then 10 years old, who chose the word *Droguinha* to entitle these works. They have in fact a certain playfulness and simplicity to them. “Sometime in 1965”, writes Luis Perez-Oramas, “Schendel called her young daughter, Ada, and some local children into her studio and asked them, under her instruction, to crumple and twist pieces of Japanese papers into ropes, which they then knotted and re-knotted to make the three-dimensional doodles that are the *Droguinhas*” (Pérez-Oramas 2009, 32). Like a children’s game, the *Droguinhas* were, according to the artist, a “transitory object; it could be made

by anyone, twisting paper into knots like that ...” (*León Ferrari and Mira Schendel* 2009, 64).¹⁸ Dealing with “the entire temporal problematic of transitoriness” (*ibid.*), these pieces were meant to be ephemeral. As a kind of counter-sculpture, they were fragile and precarious, elemental in their making. Also, they expanded drawing into space.

Interestingly, Amélia Toledo’s son Mo remembers that some *Droguinhas* were created in his mother’s studio in Carcavelos near Lisbon, when Schendel visited her friend in 1966 (Brito Alves et al. 2019). These same pieces were then exhibited at Signals Gallery in London. Schendel’s exploration of tri-dimensionality developed at a time when Amélia Toledo herself, working in Portugal, was conceiving sculptural multiples like *Mundo de Espelhos* (World of Mirrors) and *Espaço Elástico I* (Elastic Space I). In the early 1960s, Toledo further developed the use of movement and activation of space – already explored in her artist’s books – by creating kinetic jewellery. These pieces of metal and semi-precious stones suggested mobility while simultaneously playing with hollow space and its reflective capacities. As acutely observed by Agnaldo Farias, for the artist the jewels constituted at this time the possibility to “[...] deal with spatial problems on a small scale” (Farias 2004, 54). In fact, jewels, collages and artist’s books were all small objects easy to manipulate, directly implying touch and representing “[...] a productive pretext for the artist to deal with constructivist questions” (*ibid.*, 52). In this sense, instead of breaking the plane to extend into real space, the hollow reflective material incorporated its surrounding space, thus transforming its very perception. In 1966 the artist produced two larger-scale sculptures, *Espaço Elástico I* and *Mundo de Espelhos*; both were multiples and also used reflecting surfaces. While in the first work steel springs kept the curved steel plates in tension, in the second the construction was articulated through a number of similar modules arranged together. At the same time, the manipulation of reality through curved or juxtaposed mirrors evoked the ludic character of distorting mirrors.

In 1966, on the occasion of an exhibition of Toledo’s jewellery in São Paulo, art critic José-Augusto França insisted on the sculptural quality of her design while metaphorically addressing her pieces as toys (França 2004, 298), thus highlighting their ludic character. The playfulness of Toledo’s work, though having developed since the early 1960s, was particularly evident in the pieces exhibited in 1969 at her solo show at the Bonino Gallery in Rio de Janeiro. Often described by the press as ludic and technological (see Luz 1969, 5; Maurício 1969, 3), the exhibition presented sculptures as well as jewellery and decorative objects made with pvc, glass, water, oil, dye and foaming liquids. The transparency of pvc and glass was used to reveal to the public the behaviour of specific liquid substances when manipulated. Immersed in a colourful and surprising “spectacle”¹⁹ (Maurício 1969, 3) – here,

we are adopting the words of critic Jayme Maurício – the public was called to participate by putting the materials into action. These were the pieces that Salette Tavares explored in her article on Amélia Toledo's work in 1971.

The affinity between these two artists is palpable. As mentioned above, Tavares' artistic practice was increasingly mobilised by a tension between bi-dimensionality and tri-dimensionality, and it is no surprise that, over time, she started to describe her works not only as experimental or graphic poetry, but also as spatial poetry.

This spatialisation process is particularly evident in the early 1960s, in works such as *Maquinin*²⁰ from 1963, a sculptural piece constructed with anodised aluminium letters that corresponds to the spatial expression of a poem she wrote in 1959;²¹ or in *Ourobesouro*,²² a word connected to her childhood, that in 1965 she sculpturally formalised into a geometrical object made from glass plates and gold lettering, exploring the space 'in between' by distributing the letters on different layers and therefore giving the word a sense of depth.

These possibilities would be further expanded during the 1970s, as is expressively evident in her previously mentioned exhibition, *Brincar* (Play), which was organised in 1979 at Quadrum Gallery in Lisbon and where she presented pieces such as *Bailia* – which turns text²³ into sculpture and involves an evident phenomenological dimension – and *Porta das Maravilhas* (Door of wonders) – a transparent acrylic door with a screen-printed poem that creates a body-to-body relationship with the viewer.

These works reveal a relational and playful dimension that Salette Tavares was by that point consistently exploring. In fact, in that period, notions of communication, participation and even interaction had become a core element of her work. As she had written a few years earlier, "... art is creation, and creation is the invention of the new by the artist and the one who reads it. And invention is activity. Never passivity"²⁴ (Tavares 1972, 44).

Teaching and playing

Under the direction of art critic Fernando Pernes, the National Society of Fine Arts in Lisbon reconfigured its artistic educational programmes between 1964 and 1965, – maintaining its traditional offering of drawing, painting and modelling, but adding a set of courses and conferences on art history, aesthetics and architectural subjects. The success of the new format led the institution to launch the *Cursos de Formação Artística* (Artistic Formation Courses) in 1966, coordinated by art critic and historian José-Augusto França. Including both a practical and a theoretical dimension, and setting up some of the Bauhaus educational practices as a reference, this two-year programme was taught by art historians, architects and artists,

such as Adriano de Gusmão, António Ferreira de Almeida, José-Augusto França, Conceição Silva, Manuel Taíinha, Ernesto de Sousa, Rolando Sá Nogueira, António Sena da Silva – and Amélia Toledo.

Regarding that experience, art historian Sílvia Chicó, who had been one of the students at the time, remembers the way in which Amélia Toledo encouraged the class to meditate on form in order to stimulate them to test their ideas with paper constructions, sometimes using a poem as a starting point (Brito Alves 2018). Contrasting with other, more conventional educational formats of the time, those courses were marked by an exploratory dimension and by what Chicó describes as an “experimental” approach (ibid.). As for Toledo, her practice as a teacher was probably informed by the abovementioned Basic Design course which she had attended in London at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in the late 1950s. During that time in the United Kingdom, in fact, the Basic Design movement constituted an attempt to articulate a new approach to the teaching of art in higher education by artists-teachers such as Richard Hamilton, Victor Pasmore and William Turnbull. “The Basic Design movement”, writes Richard Yeomans, “represented a very loose dissemination of educational ideas and principles inspired by the Bauhaus and European constructivism which challenged the prevailing Impressionist realism, propagated by the Euston Road painters, who dominated the teaching of many of the British art schools” (Yeomans 2009).

As we mentioned before, Salette Tavares was not involved as a teacher in the programmes of the *Cursos de Formação Artística* (Artistic Formation Courses), but held lectures on aesthetics throughout the 1960s and 1970s, in particular at Ar.Co – Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual, an art school also based in Lisbon. It is important to bear in mind that Tavares not only worked as a poet and an artist during those decades, but also developed a very rich theoretical activity. One of her main interests concerned reception theory, and therefore her writings include not only references to thinkers such as Wilhelm Worringer, Heinrich Wölfflin, Max Bense, Henri Focillon, Gillo Dorfles, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Umberto Eco, but also, most importantly, to Abraham Moles’ information theory (Moles 1958). This theoretical activity, besides nourishing her artistic work, led her to write on the work of several other artists and even to become the president of AICA, the Portuguese branch of the International Association of Art Critics, between 1974 and 1976.

Her teaching approaches, like those of Amélia Toledo, were far from conventional, and it is quite telling how she blurred the lines between her activities as a teacher and as an artist. In fact, during the 1970s, Tavares developed performances that were presented as lectures – or, rather, lectures as performances. On those occasions, she dressed up and called herself *Sou Toura Petra* – a playful charade with a double

meaning: in Portuguese, when heard out loud, those words mean “Doctor Petra”, but in their written form their meaning is “I am bull Petra”. After all, as she stated in the catalogue of her exhibition *Brincar*, playing would be a privileged way of going through life and not just an activity undertaken in childhood; it would correspond to “a natural and permanent state as it was at school and at home”²⁵ (Salette Tavares 1979).

Back to Lisbon

Mira Schendel had left Europe in 1949, embarking at the port of Naples in Southern Italy to head to Rio de Janeiro. In 1966, she arrived in Lisbon by boat and continued her travels by train. Her movements throughout Europe draw a map on which the Portuguese capital represents a margin, a point of entry – in a similar way to that in which, during World War II, it constituted a point of exit or escape from Europe for so many. But because of the presence of her friend, the artist Amélia Toledo, Lisbon also became a place of connections for Schendel. When juxtaposed to the city map, this network of relations reveals its spatial dimension. Evolving both inside and outside Lisbon, it encompassed the city of Carcavelos, where Toledo lived and worked, and Lisbon’s city centre – the Buchholz Gallery in the street Duque de Palmela, and the nearby National Society of Fine-Arts in the street Barata Salgueiro, where Toledo worked as a teacher and Salette Tavares lectured at times. It is within the frame of this symbolic and spatial triangulation that the charted and uncharted encounters between these artists occurred.

Interestingly, like Mira Schendel’s personal trajectory, the Buchholz Gallery also had a transnational history which intertwined with Nazi Germany and the World War II conflict. The Berlin art dealer Karl Buchholz founded the bookshop, which would later turn into a gallery, in Lisbon in 1943. As described by Jonathan Petropoulos, Buchholz was

[...] one of the four dealers initially selected by Goebbels’s Reich Ministry of People’s Enlightenment and Propaganda to sell “degenerate” art purged from German state collections When Buchholz received his formal contract with the Reich Propaganda Ministry to sell off “degenerate” art on 5 May 1939, the final provision was that Buchholz keep the contract secret: Buchholz received a commission of 25% in Reichsmarks for the works he sold. (Petropoulos 2001)

But in 1942, according to the same author, Buchholz's relations with the authorities became more problematic; he was searched and expelled from the Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts (ibid.). The following year, he migrated to Lisbon where he opened a new branch of his bookshop – a previous one had opened in Bucharest in 1940. In the early 1950s he left Portugal for Colombia.

As a gallery, the Buchholz branch in Lisbon began its activities in 1965. First directed by Catarina Braun, then by the Portuguese art critic Rui Mário Gonçalves, it launched with an exhibition dedicated to the Bolivian artist Maria Núñez del Prado (Rosa Dias 2016, 299).²⁶ It ceased to function as a gallery in 1975, a year after the revolution changed the country's political makeup for good. In the texture of this complex history, Mira Schendel's exhibition at Buchholz in 1966 and her real and virtual connections with Amélia Toledo and Salette Tavares in Lisbon represent significant nodes that are key for a transnational understanding of the contemporary histories of art in Southern Europe and beyond.

Notes

- ¹ The exhibition took place in November 1966 (*Mira Schendel*, 1966). Unfortunately, we have not been able to locate the archives of Buchholz Gallery, which closed in 1975. It is very possible that they were lost.
- ² Mira Schendel quoted by Jorge Guinle Filho (Guinle Filho 2014, 236).
- ³ Our translation. Letter to Elizabeth Walther, São Paulo, 10 January 1967 (Souza Dias 2009, 193).
- ⁴ As shown, for instance, in a photograph, probably from 1966, depicting Amélia Toledo with Pernes and with Portuguese artists Helena Almeida and Alice Jorge at the Venice Biennial (Farias 2004, 271).
- ⁵ Our translation.
- ⁶ As highlighted by Geraldo Souza Dias, José-Augusto França had already written about Mira Schendel's work in an article on the 1965 São Paulo Biennial, published in *O Comércio do Porto* on 22 March 1966 (Souza Dias 2009, 192).
- ⁷ According to Brazilian artist Irene Buarque, who had been living in Lisbon since the early 1970s, Salette Tavares' name circulated in São Paulo in the gatherings organised by the De Campos brothers in the 1960s, often attended by both Amélia Toledo and Mira Schendel (Brito Alves /Lamoni 2019a).
- ⁸ Our translation.
- ⁹ See also Hatherly/de Melo e Castro 1981.
- ¹⁰ Interviews with Amélia Toledo's son Mo Toledo (Brito Alves et al. 2019) and daughter Ruth Toledo (Brito Alves/Lamoni 2019b) have been important to our research process. To this day, for circumstantial reasons, it has not been possible for us to interview art historian José-Augusto França and artist Fernando Lemos, key mediators between the Portuguese and the Brazilian artistic milieus in the 1960s and 1970s.

- 11 Biographical information on Mira Schendel is drawn from different sources, among them Souza Dias 2001, 77–85 and Avelar 2014, 257–279.
- 12 Mira Schendel. Recorded statement to the Departamento de Pesquisa e Documentação de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (FAAP), São Paulo, 19 August 1977. Quoted in *Mira Schendel* 2014, 266.
- 13 Our translation.
- 14 See *Artivisive Poesiavisiva*, exh. cat. Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Artivisive, Rome, Editrice Magma, March 1974.
- 15 *14563 Letras de Pedro Sete* (1965), *Quadrada* (1967), *Lex Icon* (1971).
- 16 Our translation.
- 17 Our translation.
- 18 Mira Schendel. Recorded statement to the Departamento de Pesquisa e Documentação de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (FAAP), São Paulo, 19 August 1977. Quoted in *León Ferrari and Mira Schendel* 2009, 64.
- 19 “Espetáculo”. Ibid.
- 20 The word *Maquinin*, invented by Salette Tavares, playfully combines the words *maquina* (machine) and *manequim* (mannequin).
- 21 The poem was entitled “Maquinin” and was not published until 1967, in the volume *Quadrada*.
- 22 The word *Ourobesouro*, created by the artist, combines the word *ouro* (gold) and *besouro* (beetle).
- 23 The poem was entitled “Bailia das Avelaneiras”, by Airas Nunes de Santiago, an 18th-century Galician troubadour.
- 24 Our translation.
- 25 Our translation.
- 26 As a bookshop, Buchholz put on exhibitions from 1943 and it dedicated its inaugural show to Portuguese painter Carlos Botelho. See Fialho Brandão 2016, 15.

References

- Artivisive Poesiavisiva*, exh. cat. Studio d'Arte Contemporanea Artivisive, Rome, Editrice Magma, March 1974.
- Avelar, Ana Cândida de. “Mira Schendel: Cronologia.” *Mira Schendel*, edited by Tanya Barson and Taisa Palhares, exh. cat. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, et al., 2014, pp. 257–279.
- Brito Alves, Margarida. 2018. “Interview with Silvia Chicó.” (unpublished and unrecorded interview, Lisbon, November).
- Brito Alves, Margarida, and Giulia Lamoni. 2019a. “Interview with Irene Buarque.” (unpublished and unrecorded interview, Lisbon, 16 April).
- Brito Alves, Margarida, and Giulia Lamoni. 2019b. “Interview with Ruth Toledo.” (unpublished Skype interview, 16 April).

- Brito Alves, Margarida, and Patrícia Rosas. "Salette Tavares: A work of art is not a soft-crust pastry pie." *Salette Tavares: Spatial Poetry*, exh. cat. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2014, pp. 139–149.
- Brito Alves, Margarida, et al. "Interview with Mo Toledo." (unpublished, São Paulo, 29 January 2019).
- De Campos, Augusto, et al., editors. *Poesia concreta*. Serviço de Propaganda e Expansão Comercial da Embaixada do Brasil, 1962.
- Farias, Agnaldo, editor. *Amélia Toledo, The Natures of Artifice*. W11, 2004.
- Fialho Brandão, Inês. "What's in Lisbon? Portuguese Sources in Nazi-era Provenance Research." *Journal of Contemporary History*, volume 52, issue 3, 2016, pp. 566–587.
- França, José-Augusto. "Amélia Toledo." *Amélia Toledo, The Natures of Artifice*, edited by Agnaldo Farias, W11, 2004, p. 298. First published in 1966.
- Guinle Filho, Jorge. "Mira Schendel, pintora: o espaço vazio me comove profundamente." (1981). *Mira Schendel*, edited by Tanya Barson and Taisa Palhares, exh. cat. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, et al., 2014, pp. 235–244.
- Hatherly, Ana, and E. M. de Melo e Castro, editors. *PO.EX. Textos teóricos e documentos da poesia experimental portuguesa*. Portugal Moraes Editores, 1981.
- León Ferrari and Mira Schendel: *Tangled Alphabets*, edited by Luis Pérez-Oramas, exh. cat. MoMA, New York, Cosac Naify, São Paulo, 2009.
- Luz, Celina. "Amélia Toledo, O Objeto: Arte e Brinquedo." *Jornal do Brasil*, 17 December 1969, Caderno B, p. 5.
- Martinho, Fernando J. B. "Nota sobre 'Espelho Cego' de Salette Tavares." *Salette Tavares. Poesia Gráfica*, Casa Fernando Pessoa, 1995, pp. 8–10.
- Maurício, Jayme. "O mundo tecnológico de Amélia Toledo." *Correio da Manhã*, 31 December 1969, Anexo, p. 3.
- Mira Schendel*, exh. cat. Galeria Buchholz, Lisbon, 1966.
- Mira Schendel*, edited by Tanya Barson and Taisa Palhares, exh. cat. Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, et al., 2014.
- Moles, Abraham A. *Théorie de l'information et perception esthétique*. Flammarion, 1958.
- Neves, Galciani. "As escrituras do corpo e Amélia Toledo: quando o gesto se torna livro." *Tessituras e criação*, no. 2, 2011, pp. 104–112, <http://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/tessitura>. Accessed 12 April 2019.
- Pérez-Oramas, Luis. "León Ferrari and Mira Schendel, Tangled Alphabets." *León Ferrari and Mira Schendel: Tangled Alphabets*, edited by Luis Pérez-Oramas, exh. cat. MoMA, New York, 2009, pp. 12–45.
- Pernes, Fernando. "Mira Schendel, Exposição na galeria Buchholz." *Colóquio: Revista de Artes e de Letras*, no. 41, 1966, pp. 70f., <http://coloquio.gulbenkian.pt/al/sirius.exe/artigo?1211>. Accessed 12 April 2019.
- Petropoulos, Jonathan. "Bridges from the Reich: The Importance of Émigré Art Dealers as Reflected in the Case Studies of Curt Valentin and Otto Kallir–Nirenstein." *Kunstgeschichte, Open Peer-Reviewed Journal*, 2001, <https://www.kunstgeschichte->

- ejournal.net/305/1/PETROPOULOS_Bridges_from_the_Reich.pdf. Accessed 18 April 2019.
- Rosa Dias, Fernando. “Rui Mário Gonçalves: Exercícios históricos de construção de uma curadoria moderna.” *Convocarte: Revista de ciências da arte*, no. 2, September 2016, p. 299.
- Salette Tavares. *Brincar*, exh. cat. Galeria de Arte Quadrum, Lisbon, 1979.
- Salzstein, Sônia. “Entrevista com Haroldo de Campos.” (1996). *Mira Schendel*, edited by Tanya Barson and Taisa Palhares, exh. cat, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, et al., 2014, pp. 247–255.
- Schendel, Mira. “Fragment of a typewritten text, not dated nor signed.” Arquivo Mira Schendel. *León Ferrari and Mira Schendel: Tangled Alphabets*, edited by Luis Pérez-Oramas, exh. cat., MoMA, New York, Cosac Naify, São Paulo, 2009, p. 60.
- Schendel, Mira. “Recorded statement to the Departamento de Pesquisa e Documentação de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (FAAP), São Paulo, 19 August 1977.” *León Ferrari and Mira Schendel: Tangled Alphabets*, edited by Luis Pérez-Oramas, exh. cat. MoMA, New York, 2009, pp. 62 and 64.
- Souza Dias, Geraldo. “Chronologie.” *Mira Schendel*, edited by Françoise Bonnefoy, exh. cat. Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2001, pp. 77–85.
- Souza Dias, Geraldo. *Mira Schendel: Do Espiritual à Corporeidade*. Cosac Naify, 2009.
- Tavares, Salette. “A propósito de Amélia Toledo.” *Colóquio / Artes*, n° 7, April 1971, pp. 31–32.
- Tavares, Salette. “Kitsch.” *Expo AICA*, exh. cat. SNBA, Lisbon, 1972, p. 44.
- Tavares, Salette. “Transcrição da Carta de Salette Tavares para Ana Hatherly.” Idem. *Poesia Gráfica*, Casa Fernando Pessoa, 1995, pp.16f.
- Yeomans, Richard. “The Pedagogy of Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton.” *Henry Moore Institute Online Papers and Proceedings*, 4 November 2009, p. 1, <https://www.henry-moore.org/research/online-papers/2009/11/04/the-pedagogy-of-victor-pasmore-and-richard-hamilton>. Accessed 18 April 2019.