

BETWEEN MONUMENTS TO NOTHING AND OUR DAILY MASSACRES

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Unmonument, at the Pinto's Alley (Beco do Pinto), and Luz Massacre, at the Manor of the Marquise of Santos (Solar da Marquesa de Santos), discuss the loss of the memory of public spaces and the relationship between the city and its historical and cultural heritage.

The process of putting together works such as these involves a series of negotiations with public authorities, logistical operations, and a multidisciplinary team of researchers, engineers and architects. It is an almost epic operation that demands street closures, impact assessment of the weight of the works on historic sites, cranes and specialized technicians.

Together, the two installations invert the place of art in the field of public policies of memory. Rather than being its object, art here rethinks those policies, suggesting a debate about the social production of the aesthetics of remembering and forgetting in public spaces. Composed of fragments of monuments, the installations reproduce the situation of the pieces, as they were found in the monument storages of the Department of Historical Heritage (Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico, DPH), as a kind of ready-made of oblivion.

Ready-made because we have taken the object as it was found in the monument storage, and given it new significance, with its insertion into a new context (museological and expository). Oblivion because here we speak of the erasure of the form of social production of monuments in the public space, of the opacity of mechanisms that resulted in their implementation and removal,

omitting the presence of black and indigenous people, women, immigrants and the multiplicity of actors and social agents who, since they do not participate in the centers of power, did not have their images monumentalized in the urban space.

Ironically, neither did those symbols of power survive the city's autophagic dynamics. Here we speak of the loss of traces of how the city of São Paulo constructs and deconstructs itself, masks its past and, in the obliterations it imposes on memory, reveals its history.

UNMONUMENT

In the work *Unmonument*, installed at the Pinto's Alley we retraced the piles of missing, stolen and attacked bases, pedestals and fragments of monuments that were in the Department of Historical Heritage storage in Canindé district.

These piles had caught my attention when I was preparing the intervention *Memory of Amnesia* (*Memória da Amnésia*, 2015), in the Municipal Historical Archive, and researching at the city monuments storage. Meticulously arranged, they reversed a central hypothesis in the thought of the American art critic Rosalind Krauss. Krauss defines modern sculpture as opposed to traditional monuments by their renunciation of the pedestal, which functioned as an anchor and "mediated between the place where they are situated and the sign they represent" ("*Sculpture in the Expanded Field*," 1979). But what happens when all that you have are just the bases and pedestals? What aesthetics of memory and oblivion are at stake in these abstract forms, which bring together pedestals, debris, broken pieces and furnishings, inside a storage that holds fragments of monuments?

Although emptied of their memories, they are testimonies of a history of abandonment and stalemate in the cultural heritage of the city of São Paulo. It would be foolish to try to identify a particular administration responsible for the monument storage. Photographic records of other previous storages (the current one was built in 2006)

show that the problem is not of this or that administration, but a latent scarcity in the area of public memory policies in the city of São Paulo, whose institutionalization is quite recent. It should be remembered that the São Paulo Department of Historical Heritage (Departamento do Patrimônio Histórico, DPH) dates only from 1975 and that only in 2002 a commission for the city's monuments was established. This explains, for example, the randomness with which the monument implantations and displacements around the city were done and the history of abandonment that leads to a policy of forgetting.

Those strange forms, made up of bases and pedestals of various origins, reflect the radical idea of Michel Melot, who was director of the National Library in France, when he interprets archives as hallucinogenic substances and spaces that can absorb everything as long as it is possible to stack – even if this reflects the impossibility of creating narratives. This is the paradox of those overlapping fragments. They are deprived of data, their discourse aborted. And, as we have learned from Didi-Huberman, in *Confronting Images* (2009), everything that has no narrative about itself is forgotten by history and becomes invisible.

This is the status of the piles we found at the monuments storage. With few vestiges of their past, these enigmatic totems challenge us to ask: Where did they come from? Why were they disassembled? And, most importantly, what did they preserve from a material and symbolic point of view? It Unmonument the true monument of São Paulo's history?

PINTO'S ALLEY, THE MANOR AND THE MUSEUM OF THE CITY

Unmonument intervenes in a site relevant to understanding the process of urban occupation of the city of São Paulo, being one of the few traces of the colonial period still visible in contemporary São Paulo. There, in the *Beco* (Alley), it is easy to understand why it is said that the occupation of São Paulo's territory was deeply marked by a clash with its topography, interspersed with rivers and streams,

which divides the highlands where the colonization has begun and the flatlands, bordered by the Tamanduateí River, always subject to flooding, and area of the city first working-class neighborhoods.

This vision of the city has been lost in the web of bridges and expressways, but it is noticeable in the steep terrain of the Alley. At its lowest point, it crosses Bittencourt Rodrigues Street, opened at the end of the 19th century; it changes names from that point on, becoming Luís Teixeira Coelho Street. Following this “path” in a straight line, you arrive at the Pedro II Bus Terminal, on the banks of the Tamanduateí River.

But if the Alley allows us to understand the complications caused by the city’s rugged topography, it also illustrates, paradoxically, the ways in which the city of São Paulo, through its blockages of public spaces, became a city averse to the exercise of citizenship and access to its memories.

The Alley, long before it became “of Pinto”, was one of the ways slaves used to fetch water and dump garbage and excrement from the residences. Archaeological studies conducted in the 1980s indicate that its use dates back to the 18th century. Due to the steep slope between the hill and the Tamanduateí floodplain, many chose to dump this waste right there.

Annoyed by this, Brigadier Joaquim Pinto de Moraes Leme, who acquired a property on the site in 1802, closed the Alley (which then came to be called by his name) with a gate in 1821. The passage was reopened by order of the City Council in 1826, when it was also called School Alley (Beco do Colégio, a reference to the colonial Jesuit school and church), an official name that didn’t “catch on”.

The Brigadier was a powerful man, a former novice, in the military, a slave owner, a nobleman, a “good man” according to the precepts of the Empire. Someone who had among his merits (dreadfully...) being “terrible”, “fearless”, “virile”, living up to the fame of his “ancestors

who went to the settlements of runaway slaves (*quilombos*) (...) and returned as if from a hunt, bringing with them, as a trophies, a rosary of ears", as noted by historian Nuto Sant'anna in an article published in the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal* in 1936 (vol. 26).

Years later, in 1834, his daughter, Maria da Assunção de Moraes Lara, sold the property for 11 million and 700 thousand réis to the one who would become its most famous resident: Domitila de Castro Canto e Melo, the famous Marquise of Santos. One million réis could buy a slave or a kilo of gold, and today would amount to 123,000 reais. A lot of money. A lot of power. The scale of this power is not only measured in money. It is expressed in the geopolitics of the city's toponyms. The name of the Empress Leopoldina was given to nothing more than a simple train station in the city of São Paulo. But the mansion of the Marquise of Santos, lover of emperor Dom Pedro I, is the administrative headquarters and one of the most visited sites of the Museum of the City of São Paulo.

Immediately after the purchase, Domitila demanded that the Council allow the reinstallation of the alley gate, alleging security reasons. The request was granted in 1849 and was maintained until the death of the Marquise of Santos, in 1867. The property was acquired almost 20 years later, in 1890, by the Catholic Diocese, and became the Episcopal Palace. At the time, the new city streets had put an end to the Alley's function as an access to the East. And the Solar's new neighbors on the left side of the Alley, the Police Headquarters that moved in to the house number 1, where the House of the Image (Casa da Imagem) is now, decided to close it and occupy its stairs. With the opening of Ladeira do Carmo street, which is now Rangel Pestana Avenue, in 1912, the Alley was definitively deactivated, without being missed. Abandoned for decades, later it was even asphalted, but was reclaimed as a historic site in the 1970s, when it was listed by Condephaat, (The Historical Archeological, Artistic and Touristic Patrimony Council of the State of São Paulo).

Even though listed, the Pinto's Alley would take time to recover. This would only occur in the 1990s, when it undergoes meticulous archaeological research, carried out by the Paulista Museum of USP under an agreement with the Municipal Secretariat of Culture, and is integrated into the preservation perimeter of the Pátio do Colégio (the Jesuit School Courtyard) in 1988.

The decree creating of the Museum of the City of São Paulo dates from that period (during the administration of Mayor Paulo Maluf), but it was conceived under Mayor Luiza Erundina (1989-1993) and secretary of culture Professor Marilena Chauí, foreseeing the Manor as its headquarters, which should have happened for the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of São Paulo's Fourth Centennial (1994). It would take a long for this to materialize. During the Marta Suplicy (2001-05) municipal administration, the idea was resurrected, with the excuse of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the same 4th Centennial, but shifting its headquarters to Dom Pedro II Park and with other additions. The project was aborted during the José Serra (2005-06) administration, and finally advanced under Mayor Gilberto Kassab (2006-13) and Secretary of Culture Carlos Alberto Calil.

There was a major effort on the agenda to disassemble the official São Paulo (city and state) historiography, which was gradually achieved in the 1980's when the Division of Iconography and Museums was created, run by Daisy Ribeiro de Moraes Barros (1978-1981) and architect and professor Monica Junqueira de Camargo (1981-1983)

This disassembly was nonetheless contradictory, since it is precisely at this time during the administration of Mayor Olavo Setúbal (1975-1979) who created the Municipal Secretariat of Culture with Sábato Magaldi as its first Secretary, that the reconstruction of the Pátio do Colégio was undertaken as a symbol of the Jesuit presence, erasing the memory of the decades in which it was the Government Palace.

The Pátio do Colégio is one of the sites that explain the processes of social production of urban space in the city of São Paulo, by means

of the elaboration of memory policies that constitute policies of forgetting. Considered the founding landmark of the city due to its establishment by the Jesuits in 1554, it became, with their expulsion in 1759 – in the context of the Pombaline Reforms - the center of political and administrative power, though retaining some religious functions. Turned into a plaza, in the second half of the 19th century it became an area of circulation, a place to see and be seen, until it becomes identified, in the early 20th century, as Palace Square, or Palace Gardens and, to a lesser extent, the Government Palace. After the proclamation of the Republic, the Pátio became an object of dispute between the state and the clergy, a process that culminates with the conclusion of the construction of the Secretariats of Justice, Agriculture and Finance, designed by architect Ramos de Azevedo, and with the architectural alterations that took place in the church and the Jesuit school.

The Pátio had completely lost its identity as a religious landmark, and the area had come to be known only as a political and civic center, but never stopped being the subject of an intense symbolic dispute, which culminated in the demolition of the Government Palace in 1953, the discovery of the vestiges of previous *taipa* (wattle and daub) constructions on the site and the movement for a redevelopment of the space.

The demolition of the Government Palace was followed by the restitution of the site to the Jesuits. A campaign coordinated by the Church - the Thankfulness Campaign – raised funds for the reconstruction of the original building, which benefitted from the climate of rediscovery of traditions that accompanied the celebration of the city's Fourth Centennial, though the work was only finished in the 1970s.

It is curious to note that those processes of erasure and restoration were so intense that they eliminated the indigenous presence and led countless people to believe that the school's current chapel is the one erected by the Jesuits in the 16th century!

No less curious was seeing a fragment of the old bust that honored architect Ramos de Azevedo upside down and facing, from the top of Unmonument, towards the building of the Secretariat of Justice, which he himself built, as can be seen in the post cards included in this publication.

The Manor, however, was almost continuously occupied. From 1909 onwards, it was the headquarters of the São Paulo Gaz Company which came under control of the Municipal Government, which in 1967 had taken control of the Gaz Company's successor (Cia. Paulista de Gás). It housed the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and was the first headquarters of the newly created the Department of Historical Heritage in 1975. But these different uses resulted in a number of modifications and interventions in the building that led to a series of restorations and intermittent, "openings and closings". The first was in 1991, then, in 1996 and again in 2008 and 2011, when it was finally reopened.

This was the setting for the Luz Massacre installation.

THE LUZ MASSACRE

In Luz Massacre, the focus is on the group of eight sculptures that stood around Maltese Cross Lake (Lago Cruz de Malta), located within Luz Gardens. Built in that shape – the Maltese Cross - at the time of the transformation of the botanical garden into a public garden in 1825, eight marble and mortar sculptures were installed symmetrically at the corners. All of them are of unknown authorship and honor the four seasons of the year and Greco-Roman deities. Most date from the 1870's when this idyllic landscape was a common scene in the post cards and photos of the early 20th Century.

They were knocked down in 2016 in an act of depredation. The works were collected by Department of Historical Heritage the morning after the attack, and stored in the park administrator's house. The Police

Report that registered the crime does not add any relevant information regarding the case, as it gives neither the motive nor details regarding the time or number of people involved in the crime.

The installation presented at the Manor of the Marquise of Santos recreated the post-crime scene, just as I found it in the basement of the Luz Gardens administrator's house in 2018. The title of the installation was born the moment I saw the pieces lying, like homeless people, on a piece of gray felt, covered with dust and suffering the onslaught of the dismal, pigeon and cat-infested environment. A scene worthy of a massacre, with torn, beheaded bodies.

The attack, which was not activist in nature, shows the insipience of the notion of public property as a common good, and of the urban space as shared territory. The tensions between the right to memory and the right to the city emerge as indicators of the fragility of relations of belonging and citizenship. Not by chance, the main reports and critical reviews of the installations highlighted the Luz Massacre. They stressed the bankruptcy of the public space (Leonor Amarante in *Arte!Brasileiros* magazine), barbarism as a threat to the pillars of democracy (Paula Alzugaray in *seLecT* magazine), and indifference as a presupposition of social rupture (Tadeu Chiarelli also in *Arte!Brasileiros*).

OPEN THE ARCHIVES!

A hooded bust atop a file cabinet, also found in the Canindé monument storage, was taken to the exhibition area in the Solar, articulating the installations Unmonument at the Pinto's Alley and Luz Massacre at the Manor of the Marquise of Santos.

The covered bust, in honor of Aureliano Leite, a lawyer, writer and constitutionalist, looks like a work of the 3Nós3 group, integrated by Hudinilson Jr., Mario Ramiro and Rafael França. In *Ensacamentos* (Baggings), the group covered 68 statues with garbage bags one evening in April 1979. They clandestinely reproduced in public squares,

on official monuments, a typical gesture of torturers. The next day, members of the collective called the press denouncing the “barbarism”, and thus spread the word and got into the news cycle.

But here Aureliano Leite’s “bagging” has a different meaning. It is a gagged remnant of the past that, by chance, was placed on top of a rusted and battered office file cabinet in a corner of the Department of Historical Heritage Monuments Storage in Canindé district. Removed from its pedestal in 2009 because it had become disconnected from its base, the hooded bust became a sort of ghost in the history of public memory policies. The empty pedestal in Arouche Square was used years later, in 2004, by the Contrafilé collective for its monument to the “un-turnstylization” of life, an intervention in which they used an old rusty turnstyle which had belonged to Infraero, a government company. The unique combination of junk from the state bureaucracy and unremembered monuments is repeated here, as a counter-monumental aesthetic, but on behalf of other appeals.

At the Manor of the Marquise of Santos, it was used as the entrance to our research material. With its call to “Open the Archives” and its warnings of “Leave the Archives Open”, it gained, in the country’s present conjuncture, a political meaning, acting as a statement of the motivations for Unmonument and Luz Massacre.