

LASAR SEGALL AND DEGENERATE ART: ART EXHIBITIONS AS A PLACE OF POLITICAL DISPUTE IN THE 1930S AND 1940S

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Persecution against modern art in Brazil was not limited to isolated episodes. Both Nazi ideas relative to the degenerate nature of modern art, and the anti-modernism that marked the period between World War I and II, had concrete effects in Brazil, having impacted the lives of artists such as Candido Portinari, Lasar Segall and Wilhelm Wöller to a greater or lesser extent. Any approach on modern art that disregards the radical nature of such disputes is bound to reiterate the myth of America as a second welcoming home,¹ as well as of the alleged autonomy in the realms of arts and politics. Lasar Segall's trajectory itself puts such assumptions aside. Take, for instance, the attack that perforated the artist's self-portrait at an exhibition held in São Paulo, in 1928, or the segregation he suffered at the Pro-Modern Art Society, in 1934, or, finally, the defamatory campaign newspaper *A Notícia* organized against him, in 1943².

The purpose of the exhibition from which this catalog took its name was to remember the history of Nazi persecution of modern art, and the impacts thereof in Brazil, using Lasar Segall's career as its connecting thread. This study maintains the same principle, though specifically focused on the exhibitions, in the attempt to understand how they became a place of political dispute in the 1930s and 1940s, both in Brazil and abroad, and how they would affect Segall's career. Whether, at times, thanks to the documents he produced, and, at others, thanks to those he kept, Segall has proven to be a privileged witness of a story that to this day, is still full of blind spots³. An unsuspected network of intellectuals, critics, artists and photographers, immigrants or otherwise, spans from the books, catalogs, letters, newspaper articles and ichnographic material available at the Lasar Segall Museum; all such players had a substantial role in defining modern art in Brazil and/or in fighting Nazi-fascism⁴. Nicanor Miranda, Sérgio Rodrigues, Miécio Askanasy, Irmgard Burchard, Hanna Levy and Kurt Klagsbrunn are only a few of the names who acted as political subjects, highly compromised with the issues of their time, and who will cross paths with this narrative quite a few times.

DEGENERATE ART VERSUS THE GREATER GERMAN ART EXHIBITION⁵

The impact caused by the Degenerate Art Exhibition organized in Munich, in 1937, stemmed not only from the radical stand of the German State against modern art and its representatives, but also in relation to the promotion of the explanatory matrix for modernist movements. The notion of "degenerate art" guided the exhibition, which showcased a set of approximately 650 works

1. Sabine Eckmann claims such myth exists. See: ECKMANN, Sabine. *Considering (and Reconsidering) Art and Exile*. In: BARRON, Stephanie; ECKMANN, Sabine (Orgs.). *Exiles + Émigrés. The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*. Los Angeles/ New York: Los Angeles Count Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1997. p. 30-39.

2. The pieces written by Daniel Rincon Caires and Annateresa Fabris, published in this catalog, cover such episodes.

3. Three authors have analyzed the 1940s exhibitions and the persecution of modern art in essential publications for the development of this study: AMARAL, Aracy. *Arte para quê?*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1984. ZANINI, Walter. *A arte no Brasil nas décadas de 1930-1940*. O Grupo Santa Helena. São Paulo: Nobel/Edusp, 1991; LOURENÇO, Maria Cecília França. *Operários da modernidade*. São Paulo: Hucitec/Edusp, 1995.

4. I would like to thank Mónica Inés Aliseres for her priceless support in the research performed at the Lasar Segall Museum library, when I first took an interest in this matter, back in 2006.

The pieces written by Daniel Rincon Caires and Annateresa Fabris, published in this catalog, cover such episodes.

5. Further information on these exhibitions is available in: BARRON, Stephanie (Org.). *Degenerate Art: the Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991; PETERS, Olaf (Org.). *Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937*. New York: Prestel-Neue Galerie, 2014.

confiscated from public German museums. The discourse was focused on explaining, to the general public, the meaning of certain characteristics of the works, especially in what concerns the expressionist deformations, associated to physical and mental diseases based on the ideas of Paul Schultze-Naumburg⁶. The exhibition was organized in one of the wings of the former Archeology Institute building, whose furniture was removed at the last minute to give room for a large number of works, purportedly displayed in a chaotic fashion on panels in poor conditions⁷. What could have seemed like neglect or lack of specialized knowledge of the organizers actually turned out to be part of a cleverly devised strategy.

The Greater German Art Exhibition was inaugurated on the day before the opening of the Degenerate Art Exhibition, showcasing a set of works deemed beautiful and contributory to and by the regime. Such exhibition embodied a special meaning, having been planned for the opening of the *Haus der Kunst*, the Third Reich's first art museum. The venue was a majestic neoclassical building, whose impeccably clean spaces were in strict compliance with museum standards then in effect, whereby works were displayed in a single line, in perfect order, with appropriate lighting and standardized identification tags.

The Degenerate Art exhibition obtained much greater media cover and attracted circa two million visitors in Munich alone. The exhibition then toured other German and Austrian cities for three years, having grossed another one million visitors. Until then, no avant-garde and/or modern art exhibition had had so many visitors. The Greater German Art Exhibition, however, did not garner the same success, as reported by Brazilian Nicanor Miranda (1907-1990) in his testimonial⁸. São Paul-born intellectual working in child education, at the time, Miranda was the head of the Education and Entertainment Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of São Paulo, led by Mário de Andrade⁹. According to Miranda, during a trip to Munich, 1937, an important local authority suggested he visit both exhibitions, and he chose to go first to the exhibition at the *Haus der Kunst*.

I visited the first exhibition as soon as I could, which did not trigger any sort of enthusiasm for me. It was empty. People could be easily counted by hand – there were so few of them. There were portraits of Hitler of all kinds, in all positions and several uniforms. [...] Portraits of soldiers, navy men, Nazi militia and a young peasant working a field. Pictures of submarines, battleships, destroyers, mixed with paintings on other absolutely uninteresting subjects for who sees such fabulous things in Europe. [...]

Well, it is clear that an exhibition organized according to such conditions were of little or no interest for a foreigner avid to see things that contributed to his artistic education. And excited by the hope of seeing things I had no idea about – for I wondered,

6. Paul Schultze-Naumburg's ideas were part of the book entitled *Art and Race [Kunst und Rasse]*, published in Germany, in 1928.

7. Aside from contributing to decrease the value of the works, the exhibition design seems to make reference to the Dadaist fairs organized in a freer fashion, on purpose, including handmade posters and works together with paintings, engravings, drawings, etc. See: *Erste International Dada-Messe. The First International Dada Fair, Berlin, 1920*. In: ALTSCHULER, Bruce. *Salon to Biennial. Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1863-1959*. London: Phaidon, 2008. v. 1, p. 185-202.

8. Miranda, Nicanor. *Lasar Segall e a Arte degenerada*. O Estado de São Paulo, 5/8/1944. Republished in: *Diário Carioca*, 29/10/1944, caderno cultural, p. 1 and 3. The MLS Archive has a copy of the article published in this second edition. Since it had never been published before, other than in the newspapers, the testimonial was reproduced in its entirety in the catalog.

9. Nicanor Miranda was one of the names behind the project for the Children's Parks, when Mário de Andrade was in office. In 1937, the Department of Cultural Affairs of São Paulo published its study entitled "*Origem e Propagação dos Parques Infantis e Parques de Jogos*". On Nicanor Miranda, See: NIEMEYER, Carlos Augusto da Costa. *Parques infantis de São Paulo: lazer como expressão de cidadania*. São Paulo: Annablume/Fapesp, 2002.

what do the Germans refer to as “degenerate art”? – I went to the exhibition thus named. [...] So many things to learn and meditate on! And so many people, my God! [...] All representatives of the Dresden expressionist school were there, which, thanks to its importance, has definitively become part of the history of modern art – the big and the small. Otto Dix, Chagall, Kokoschka, Segall, Feininger, Nold [sic], Van Gogh, George Grosz, Schmidt-Rottluff, Christoph Voll...

Nicanor Miranda reinforces the omnipresence of the image of the Nazi leader at the regime-sanctioned art exhibition, and also comments on the existence of paintings on war-related issues. He also mentions the insignificance thereof, and of so many other paintings included in the exhibition. However, the tone of his testimonial is transformed when he begins to enthusiastically describe the works include in the Degenerate Art exhibition. Miranda also addresses certain substantial issues, such as the prohibition of taking pictures and the nature of the phrases written on the panels. He said he was reprimanded whilst copying such phrases into his notebook, which led him to stop taking notes. Miranda also says he saw a Nazi visitor discretely write a compliment on Otto Dix's War Cripples, on the palm of his hand. Finally, Miranda reports his feelings when he unexpectedly came across two of Lasar Segall's paintings.

Following the natural course of the exhibition, I arrived at the ground floor. The first room had cabinets filled with pencil, red chalk and crayon drawings. My feelings were immediately awakened when I saw two paintings displayed together on a wall. It seemed like I knew them. I had already seen them before. When and where? I could not recall. I came closer and saw the signature: Lasar Segall. It was the “Eternal Walkers” and “The Loving Couple”. I stood there looking at them, because those paintings meant a lot to me, made by a painter who had long lived in Brazil, in my state, in my city¹⁰.

Nicanor Miranda's long testimonial, published seven years after his trip to Munich, stresses the large number of people he saw at the Degenerate Art exhibition, when compared to the reduced number of people present at the Greater German Art Exhibition. Miranda also draws attention to the fact that not everyone who came to the exhibition actually agreed with the idea of degeneration of modern art, despite being supporters of the Reich.

REACTIONS WORLDWIDE: EXHIBITIONS VERSUS COUNTER-EXHIBITIONS

The German government would not spare derogatory words to refer to the modernist artists, after the organization of the Degenerate Art exhibition. The alleged proof of degeneracy of modern art the exhibition made possible would later be used

10. The painting to which the author makes reference to, *Loving Couple*, is catalogued as *Two Beings*, 1921, and is today part of a private collection.

as reason not only to destroy works, but also for the arbitrary conduct and violence against both the artists themselves and the supporters thereof, whether they were critics, art dealers, museum directors or gallery owners. The radical nature of the situation raised alerts in the international art scenario, especially with respect to the most progressive left-wing circles, the Jewish groups of intellectuals and artists, as well as refugees and German immigrants spread out in several countries. It was precisely in this context that organized groups and associations of civil society, progressive press agencies and institutions took on the task of answering back to the Nazi provocation and report the risks faced by artists who remained in Hitler's Germany. In addition to the publication of several articles, charges and pieces in the press, criticizing or ridiculing the taste of both the Führer and his collaborators, several events were also organized, including, rallies, marches, parades, theater plays, radio shows, publications and exhibitions¹¹.

It is worth highlighting some of the exhibitions organized against the Degenerate Art Exhibition, or against the Adolf Hitler regime, which, precisely because of their disposition to challenge the ideas promoted therein, may be understood as "counter-exhibitions"¹². It is possible to identify two distinct approaches if one analyzes the exhibitions classified in this category, within the scope of the debate on degenerate art. The first approach was theme-based and compiled different material, such as drawings, pictures, books, signs, pamphlets, maps, models, graphs, etc. This type of exhibition had a strong visual appeal and reinterpreted the agitprop (agitation + propaganda) techniques used in post-revolutionary Russia to report on cases of oppression and encourage the politicization of the popular classes¹³. In turn, the second approach essentially showcased original artwork produced by modern German artists, either with or without documents and printouts. In this case, the idea was to put together the production of artists the Nazi regime deemed degenerate in order to "prove" such assessment was mistaken, and at the same time praise the artistic quality of the works.

There is reference to one of the counter-exhibitions organized in response to Degenerate Art in the letters Wassily Kandinsky sent to Lasar Segall¹⁴, of June 1938, in which Kandinsky speaks, at first, of his stand in relation to the recent events.

I always rejoice at not being a politician, but a painter. I can therefore close the doors of my studio and the "world" (what they refer to as world nowadays) disappears. Far more important than Czechoslovakia, for me, is understanding whether this blue goes well with that brown, whether the extension and direction of the line match each other entirely, if the "weights" were happily placed, etc.¹⁵

11. The following books include information on the actions organized in response to Degenerate Art, and against Adolf Hitler's regime: HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004; e HOLTZ, Keith; SCHOPF, Wolfgang. *Allemands en exil. Paris, 1933-1941*. Paris: Autrement, 2003.

12. The practice of organizing exhibitions in response to others seems to date back to the nineteenth century. Both the *Pavilion of Realism, 1855* and the *Salon of Rejects (Salon des Refusés, 1863)*, were exhibitions designed as a reaction to the official Salon organized by the French government. This type of reaction would be further intensified as from the 1920s, when the exhibitions acquired a clearer tone of political propaganda. One of the frequently mentioned examples in the bibliography is of the exhibition organized by the surrealist artists in response to the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, in Paris. On the Salon of the Rejects and the Pavilion of Realism, see: ALTSCHELER, Bruce. *Salon to Biennial. Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1863-1959*. London: Phaidon, 2008. v. 1. On the surrealist exhibition, see: MILEAF, Janine. *Body to Politics: Surrealist Exhibition of the Tribal and the Modern Art the Anti-Imperialist Exhibition and the Galerie Charles Ratton. Anthropology and Aesthetics*, n. 40, 2001, p. 239-255. Available [online] at: <www.jstor.org/stable/20167548>. Access in: January 2018.

13. Agitprop techniques in post-1917 Russia included several strategies, such as theater, film, music and the arts, in addition to exhibitions and rallies with performances, allegorical cars/floats and ephemeral monuments. Resources used included the agitprop trains and boats, taken to the farthest places of the country's interior to showcase exhibitions on the revolution for those who lived far away from the main urban centers. See: STRIGALEV, Anatol. *L'art de propagande révolutionnaire. L'agitprop*. In: HULTEN, Pontus (Org.). *Paris-Moscou: 1900-1930*. Paris: Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, 1979, p. 314-339.

14. On the letters exchanged between the two artists, researcher Vera D'Horta claims that: "Deep divergences as to the aesthetical ideals and the relationship between both the artist and the work and the reality of their time become clear between the affectionate lines of the letters exchanged". D'HORTA, Vera. *Discordâncias cordiais: a correspondência entre Kandinsky e Segall*. *Revista de História da Arte e Arqueologia*, IFCH-Unicamp, n. 1, 1994, p. 205.

15. Letter dated 6/6/1938. *Idem*, p. 227.

Kandinsky then tells Segall that the Twentieth Century German Art Exhibition would soon open in London, where he would showcase some of his paintings.

The exhibition entitled "Twentieth Century German Art Exhibition" will be open on June 1st, in London, displaying around 200 works of the "degenerate" Germans. I have contributed with 15 paintings (from the pre-war period to date). This exhibition should then go on tour to Brussels, possibly Paris and the USA.

Lasar Segall apologizes for the delay in his replay and somewhat ironically regrets not being able to maintain the same distance he does when it comes to the bitterness of the world at war:

[...] life becomes ever the more complicated for certain people, especially for those who establish special connections with the circumstances around them. You, dear Kandinsky, are happier, you have the strength to leave the world outside, and, in your own world, in your studio, you manage to calmly dedicate yourself to your work and consider the problems of art more important than the facts of the world today, to which we are strictly connected, whether we like it or not, and upon which we unfortunately depend, whether as people or as artists. I am much more of a pessimist than you are. Perhaps that is due to the fact that I see everything through a colorful and opaque lens, from afar. What happened to the "Twentieth Century German Art" exhibition, which should have occurred in London?¹⁶

In what concerns the apparently clear contraposition between Kandinsky and Segall, expressed in the letters, it is necessary to take into account the complex nature of the artists' relationship with World War II politics. Sabine Eckmann draws attention to the nuances of such positions, and the dominating trend of labeling modern artists as either victims, or as progressive agents, at other times.

"If we begin to examine those positions, however, we find that, aside from unequivocal antifascist involvement on an artist's part (as exemplified by Käthe Kollwitz and Hans and Lea Grundig), a range of possible attitudes can be identified, both among émigré artists and those who remained in Germany. Many – including Lyonel Feininger, Kurt Schwitters, and Max Beckmann – insisted that as artists they were untouched by politics and attempted to salvage their artistic autonomy from a dictatorship that declined to recognize the existence of any such thing. Other artists, including Emil Nolde and Franz Radziwill, expressed support for National Socialist Germany, a fact that tends to be suppressed or glossed over to this day. Yet others, such as Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, were prepared to compromise in order to carry on their careers – another subject that is often avoided. And there

16. Letter dated 4/22/1939. *Idem*, p. 223.

are those – as Willi Baumeister, Otto Dix and Conrad Felixmüller – who- se positions are hard to determine because they shifted between acquiescence and withdrawal¹⁷.

It is essential to maintain such nuances in mind if one wishes to better understand the ideological disputes involved in the exhibitions organized in the period, not only in Europe and in the United States, but also in Brazil.

According to the studies of Keith Holtz, the first exhibitions triggered by Degenerate Art and by the defamatory campaign of the Nazis against modern artists were first concentrated in Czechoslovakia, France and England, specifically in the cities of Prague, Paris and London¹⁸. The geographic proximity to Germany, the democracy still ruling in the countries and the cosmopolitan environment thereof favored such actions. Prague, for instance, was already the home to the first international caricature exhibition, in 1934, including several anti-Nazi pieces, by artists such as John Heartfield, then exiled in the country. Other anti-Nazi exhibitions were organized in 1937, one of which with paintings and sculptures and Heartfield's photomontages.

At the time, Paris had turned into an important center of anti-fascist resistance, home to a huge number of refugees, independent German press agencies, in addition to several political and cultural organizations¹⁹. Launched in February 1938, at a workers' district of Paris, the *Five Year of Hitler's Dictatorship (Cinq ans de dictature hitlérienne)* exhibition was comprised of 12 panels with drawing, graphs and pictures, whose purpose was to report the arbitrary acts of the German government since Hitler's ascension. According to Holtz, the panels were organized based on the agitprop aesthetics, addressing several issues, such as racism, religious prosecution, attacks on freedom of press and burned books. The panel on the concentration camps is especially significant²⁰. The virulence of the discourse and the strength of the displayed images resulted in protests of the German authorities headquartered at the French capital, resulting in police action to remove documents from the exhibition²¹.

July 1938 also marked the opening of the London exhibition, at the New Burlington Galleries, which Kandinsky had referred to in his letter to Lasar Segall (*Twentieth Century German Art*). The members of the organization committee included British critic and art historian Herbert Read and the young Swiss art dealer Irmgard Burchard. Two hundred sixty-nine pieces by 64 artists were showcased, most pieces coming from private collections of different countries. Initially designed as a counter-exhibition of Degenerate Art, the project suffered all sorts of pressure aimed at depleting its political nature. The organization committee itself excluded the works connected to the fight against Nazi-Fascism, having included others, of artists such as Emil Nolde, who did not

17. "See: ECKMANN, Sabine. *Considering (and Reconsidering) Art and Exile*. In: BARRON, Stephanie; ECKMANN, Sabine (Orgs.). *Exiles + Émigrés. The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*. Los Angeles/New York: Los Angeles Count Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1997, p. 31-32.

18. On such exhibitions, See: HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

19. On the anti-fascist acts of German exiles in Paris, see: HOLTZ and SCHOPF, op. cit.

20. Current bibliography on Nazism is unanimous in claiming the existence of concentration camps only became public after the U.S. Army invaded Germany, in 1945. However, based on the photographic documents photographer Josef Breitenbach produced, Keith Holtz describes the panels of the *Five Year of Hitler's Dictatorship* exhibition, which included one denouncing such practice in 1938. Not only does the panel include a drawing of a group of prisoners facing two Nazi officials, it also has a map of Germany with the location of the concentration camps, prisons and detention centers. See: HOLTZ and SCHOPF, op. cit., p. 137-139.

21. HOLTZ, op. cit., p. 189-190.

hide their admiration for the Reich²². In the attempt of convincing everyone on the neutrality of the proposal, historian and former diplomat Ronald Storrs argued the exhibition was "not merely apolitical, but anti-political"²³.

The debate on the motivations behind the British exhibition was rather disputed and eventually involved Adolf Hitler himself. The dictator not only made reference to the London event in his speech during the inauguration of the second edition of the Greater German Art Exhibition, but also in an article published in newspaper Daily Graphic, in which he accused the organizers of having shady political purposes, of being enemies of Nazi Germany and of attempting to underestimate the cultural achievements of his government. Herbert Read's answer was published in the same newspaper:

Herr Hitler asserts that the exhibition has been arranged for political purposes. This is entirely untrue. The organizers of the exhibition had only one purpose – to show the English public a phase of modern art, which they believe to be of considerable historical and artistic interest [...]. The principle which the organizers maintains is that of the artists' freedom of expression, irrespective of national, religious or racial distinctions. This principle is ethical, not political"²⁴.

The alleged neutrality Herbert Read assumed in his answer and the defense of an apolitical position by several artists and intellectuals would set the tone for several exhibitions organized during the period, which attempted to disguise their political bias by appealing to a more universal, humanistic discourse. Such was the case of several exhibitions organized by allied countries during the war, which were then sent to South American countries, Brazil included.

Based on a clear position against degenerate art and the alleged neutrality of the London exhibition, the Union of Free Artists, founded in France, organized the Free German Art (*L'art allemand libre*) exhibition at *Maison de la Culture*, home to the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists. Open in November 1938, the exhibition brought together approximately one hundred works of circa 70 artists. In addition to works made by immigrant artists, the exhibition included a panel reproducing art sanctioned by the Nazi regime, amongst which were two watercolors signed by Adolf Hitler. One of the most striking works was Oskar Kokoschka's painting, which Gestapo had vandalized in Vienna, in May 1938²⁵.

According to Keith Holtz, even before the Paris exhibition, the Union of Free Artists already had plans to organize an exhibition in the United States at the 1939 New York International Fair. New York was perceived as the best place to give international visibility to the drama lived by modern German artists. The group decided to

22. HOLTZ, Keith; SCHOPF, Wolfgang. *Allemands en exil. Paris, 1933-1941*. Paris: Autrement, 2003, p. 151-23. Apud: HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 208. Holtz informs that the exhibition was initially entitled *Banned Art*, which was later changed during its organization process.

24. Apud: HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 212-213.

25. According to Holtz, the painting, cut into four pieces, would be showcased at the London exhibition, but ended up being removed. HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 204-205; 238.

organize an exhibition entitled "Germany of Yesterday – Germany of Tomorrow", comprised of 30 panels designed in line with the agitprop discourse²⁶. Faithful to its purposes, the exhibition encompassed severe criticism against the Nazi government, including references to Degenerate Art and the importance of the acts of resistance. North American press actually announced the exhibition would be held at the "Liberty Pavilion", however, unsurpassable circumstances occurred during the negotiations to include the exhibition in the New York Fair, related to the International Bureau of Exhibitions and the Fair's financial supporters, not to mention the diplomatic imbroglio triggered between France, the United States and Germany²⁷.

The United States' position in relation to German modern art in the 1940s deserves special attention. Nonetheless, because of the complex nature of the matter and the limited scope hereof, all efforts will be focused on the discourse of Alfred Barr, curator of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), when of the exhibition organized on the new purchases for the museum's archive, in 1942²⁸. The admiration of MoMA's first curator for German modern art is widely known, which first began when he travelled for research purposes to Europe, in 1927-1928, prior to becoming the museum's director, in 1929²⁹. In 1931, Barr organized the German Painting and Sculpture exhibition, one of the first ones organized in the USA on such production. Barr would then organize an exhibition at MoMA, in 1942, with works by German artists, "[...] not approved by the Nazi government"³⁰. Open on June 24th, *New Acquisitions: Free German Art*, was a small exhibition intended to promote recent acquisitions of four German artists: Max Beckmann, Ernst Barlach, Kaethe Köllwitz and Emil Nolde. In his introduction, Alfred Barr mentions the persecution the artists faced and compares the brutality of the Nazi regime to the freedom reigning in the United States.

Among the Freedoms the Nazis have destroyed, none has been more cynically perverted, more brutally stomped upon than the Freedom of Art. [...] But German artists of spirit and integrity have refused to conform. They have gone into exile or slipped into anxious obscurity. Of all the painters and sculptors who made the pre-Nazi German School second in Europe only to that of Paris, almost none is now honored, and few tolerated, in Germany today. Their paintings and sculptures, too, have been hidden or exiled, even those that were once the pride of German museums. But in free countries they can still be seen, can still bear witness to the survival of a free German culture [...] These men and their works are welcome here [...]"³¹.

Taking modern German art as a synonym of resistance against Nazi-Fascism was the first step towards transforming modern art, as whole, into an expression of freedom and supreme incarnation

26. According to Holtz, such panels later disappeared, in unclear conditions. It is possible to access the content thereof in the documentation produced by photographer Josef Breitenbach. For further details on the exhibition, see HOLTZ, Keith; SCHOPF, Wolfgang. *Allemands en exil. Paris, 1933-1941*. Paris: Autrement, 2003, p. 171-250.

27. See: HOLTZ, Keith. *Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance & Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 253.

28. See: BARNETT, Vivian Endicott. *Banned German Art: Reception and Institutional Support of Modern German Art in the United States, 1933-1945*. ECKMANN, Sabine. *Considering (and Reconsidering) Art and Exile*. In: BARRON, Stephanie; ECKMANN, Sabine (Orgs.). *Exiles + Émigrés. The Flight of European Artists from Hitler*. Los Angeles/New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1997, p. 273-284.

29. KANTOR, Sybil Gordon. *Alfred H. Barr and The Intellectual Origins of the Museum of Modern Art*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002.

30. See: "Free German Art Acquisitions Shown by Museum of Modern Art". Release. It is worth mentioning that during this period, MoMA had adhered to the war efforts and Edward Steichen became responsible for organizing large exhibitions of political propaganda. See: STANISZEWSKI, Mary Anne. *The Power of Display. A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*. Cambridge/London: The MIT Press, 1998.

31. See: "Free German Art Acquisitions Shown by Museum of Modern Art". Release. Available [online] at: <https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_master-checklist_325320.pdf>. Access on: January 20, 2018.

of democratic ideals. Such association was not commonplace in the mid-1930s and was developed throughout such years, especially after the Degenerate Art exhibition. The equation was quite simple: if Hitler and his followers execrated modern German art, it was because it was a progressive and libertarian form of artistic expression³². Such discourse perfectly adjusted to the North American purpose of taking the artistic and cultural lead in the Post-War period, in the attempt to place the country at the lead of the movements for the protection of freedom of expression.

REACTIONS IN BRAZIL: BETWEEN STREETS AND EXHIBITIONS

Shortly after Brazil cut diplomatic ties with the Axis, on January 28, 1942, the country would be surprised by the attacks against Brazilian ships, attributed to German submarines. Between January and August 1942, 19 Brazilian ships were attacked, leading to the death of over 700 people, mostly civilians³³. The press extensively reported on the episodes, mobilizing public opinion on the country's need to react against the attacks and join the war on the Allies' side. The first broad-reach manifestations against Nazi-Fascism in Brazil thus began, in an environment of national commotion.

In the beginning of July 1942, several press agencies informed the organization of the Anti-axis March organized by the National Students' Union (UNE), which took the streets of downtown Rio de Janeiro. The march was scheduled on July 4th, on purpose, for the US Independence Day. Supported by the Appointed Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro and the Acting Minister of Justice, UNE organized a huge march with floats in reference to the pressing political issues, clarifying its stand on the matter. Newspaper *A Manhã* anticipated how the event would be organized: the first group would include the celebratory floats, and the second, the protest floats.

[...] celebratory floats took the lead, with the following allegories: "In honor of the Allies", using the Statue of Liberty as their base, with the sayings, "Symbol of Destiny of the Free Peoples"; "In Honor of Pan-Americanism", with the bust of minister Oswaldo Aranha; "V for Victory"; "In Honor of the Brazilian Air Force"; "Glory to the Brazilian Navy"; "Applauses for the Draft", among others, followed by the protest floats, led by the "Death to the Fifth Column" float. The leading float was in honor of president Getúlio Vargas, with the caption "We shall die for Brazil"³⁴.

According to the articles published after the march, 14,000 people attended the rally. In addition to the detailed description of the allegories, the newspapers and magazines also photographed the people on the streets³⁵. The parade also included the "police brigade band", followed by floats transporting the survivors of

32. Such idea turns up once again in Barr's piece, entitled "What is Modern Art?", whose first idea came out in 1943. The book would be adapted, also in 1943, into the exhibition format, made available for sale or rent. Purchased by Sérgio Milliet, then director of the São Paulo City Library, the exhibition was presented to the São Paulo audience at several occasions, causing the MoMA take on modern art to circulate in Brazil, precisely during the period in which the USA increased support for the foundation of modern art museums in Brazil. See: COSTA, Helouise. A exposição como múltiplo: lições de uma mostra norte-americana em São Paulo, 1947. *Anais do Museu Paulista* [online], 2014, v. 22, n. 1, p. 107-132.

33. "In total, 34 Brazilian vessels were torpedoed during World War II, causing the death of 1081 people, mostly innocent civilians. Not even in the battlefields were so many Brazilian souls lost". SANDER, Roberto. *O Brasil na mira de Hitler. A história do afundamento de navios brasileiros pelos nazistas*. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2007, p. 246.

34. It was not possible to determine if such floats were effectively part of the march. See: *O que será a manifestação anti-eixista do dia 4 de Julho*. *A Manhã*, 28/6/1942, p. 9; according to newspaper *Gazeta de Notícias*, the following organized groups would join: National Law School, Medical School, Philosophy, Dentistry School, Engineering, Chemistry, Agronomy; National Music School, National School of Fine Arts, Brazilian Sports Confederation, National Students' Union. See also: *Passeata universitária anti-eixista. Os carros alegóricos desfilarão pela avenida - instruções para a concentração*, *Gazeta de Notícias*, 26/6/1942, p. 4.

35. "Viva a democracia", "Tudo pelo Brasil", "Abaixo o totalitarismo" - Eis o lema da mocidade brasileira. *Diretrizes*, 9/7/1942, p. 13-15 e 26; *Contra o Eixo! A parada universitária do dia 4*. *Revista da Semana*, 11/7/1942, p. 21-23.

the Arabutan, one of the bombarded Brazilian ships. One of the biggest floats included a cage placed upon a "snow mountain", carrying three students dressed as Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito, respectively. The students used exaggerated gestures to imitate the three leaders of the Axis nations, provoking enthusiastic reactions of the crowd³⁶. Adolf Hitler was one of the most evoked personalities of the event and was portrayed as the charmer of a dangerous snake, Gestapo, the Reich's secret police. "How Green Were the Chicken of Yesteryear..." was the name of a float with a caldron full of plucked chicken, representing the members of the fifth column³⁷ and pro-fascism groups (the local *integralistas*).

The Anti-Axis March UNE organized was supported by the government's progressive wing, which ensured police protection on the streets and substantial media repercussion³⁸. All such factors signalized changes to the relations of force that sustained the *Estado Novo* dictatorship thence far. Immediately after the parade, Getúlio Vargas removed some of his leading men from office, including Filinto Müller and Lourival Fontes, knowingly pro-Axis³⁹. As it was increasingly pressured, the government finally left its neutral position in August, which had been maintained at very high costs, having declared war against Nazi-Fascism, joining the Allies.

The massive promotion of the bombarded Brazilian ships and the generous space offered to the UNE march in the press reveal that censorship was finally being left aside. News on different anti-fascist activities promoted by different organizations, such as the National Defense League (*Liga de Defesa Nacional*), the Anti-Axis Committee of Banco do Brasil (*Conselho Anteixista do Banco do Brasil*), and the Friends of America Society (*Sociedade Amigos da América*), in addition to UNE itself, became ever the more frequent. Such organizations would soon realize the potential of mobilizing modern artists against Fascism, and the advantages of being associated to such figures. The Modern Art Fair was opened on January 30, 1943, at the Brazilian Press Association (ABI), sponsored by the National Defense League. According to the article published in *Diretrizes*, the exhibition included:

[...] hundreds of paintings – oil paintings, drawings, watercolors, portraits, marine paintings and landscapes. All modern Brazilian artists are represented at the exhibition. Portinari, Ado Malagoli, Augusto Rodrigues, Guignard, Hilda C. Campofiorito, Jorge de Lima, Luiz Soares, Oswaldo Goeldi, Perci Lau, Quirino Campofiorito and Quirino da Silva, Rubem Cassa, Sílvia Chalreó, Teruz, Thea Haberfeld, Rescala, Gobbis, Oswald de Andrade, several of them⁴⁰.

In addition to the foregoing, the exhibition also included Roberto Burle Marx, Athos Bulcão, Djanira, Rebolão Gonsales and Mário Zanini, among others. Its purpose was to raise funds for the

36. "Viva a democracia", "Tudo pelo Brasil", "Abaixo o totalitarismo" – Eis o lema da mocidade brasileira. *Diretrizes*, 9/7/1942, p. 13-15 e 26

37. Fifth column was the "term coined during the Spanish Civil War, used to designate those who supported, in Madrid, the four columns marching against the government of President Azaña's Popular Republican Front. During World War II, the term was used to refer to those who acted surreptitiously in countries at war, or about to join the war, preparing support in the event of invasions or spying and organizing propaganda in favor of the Axis countries. Such individuals were also referred to in Europe as collaborators". Available [online] at: <http://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas1/glossario/quinta_coluna>. Access in: January 2018.

38. UNE had already organized a similar parade during the March 1943 carnival, referred to as "Carnival of Victory". See: *Manifestando no carnaval nossa repulsa ao nazismo*. *O Radical*, 5/3/1943, p. 8; *Um desfile antinazista, o cortejo da vitória!*. *O Radical*, 11/3/1943, p. 6; *O carnaval da vitória*. *Gazeta de Notícias*, 7/3/1943, p. 8; *Cortejo da vitória num carnaval de Guerra*. *O Jornal*, 6/3/1943, capa.

39. The Minister of Justice Francisco Campos and the Ministry's Chief of Staff, Vasco Leitão da Cunha, also left the government on such occasion. Cunha was responsible for such matters, at the time. TORNAIM, Cássio dos Santos. *Janela da alma: cinejornal e Estado Novo: fragmentos de um discurso totalitário*. São Paulo: Anablume-Fapesp, 2006, p. 141.

40. Os artistas do Brasil formam uma barricada contra o fascismo!. *Diretrizes*, 11/2/1943, p. 6-7, 13.

National Defense League's "Pro-War Bonus Campaign", which would receive 50% of the proceeds on the sold works. Several conferences were organized on "Art in Defense of Brazil" during the exhibition, given by the likes of Manuel Bandeira, Claudio Manuel da Costa, Álvaro Moreyra, Aníbal Machado and Osório Cesar⁴¹.

Still during the first semester of 1943, it is worth mentioning the organization of Lasar Segall's exhibition, launched on March 15th, at the National Museum of Fine Arts, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Health. Though the event was not expressly bound to any political cause, modern art was already associated to democracy and to the fight against fascism in the ideal of the world at war. It would not take long for Lasar Segall to once again become the target of racist and xenophobic attacks.

Lasar Segall's exhibition is now open – one of the so-called modernist painters, creatures who run around scot free, who turn right into wrong, light into darkness, movement into paralysis, transforming all things beautiful in nature into monsters and abortions. It is therefore an exhibition of monstrosities, which was organized "specifically for educational purposes", according to its program, though it has nothing to teach. And we shall not further extend ourselves because we have not managed to achieve the transcendence of similar art⁴².

The virulence of the attacks against Segall is also measurable in the campaign newspaper *A Notícia* began against him, precisely when of the opening of the exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts⁴³.

An Anti-Fascist Week was organized simultaneously to the opening of Segall's exhibition, in memory of the 1938 Brazilian Integralist Attack⁴⁴. The event included workshops at workers' unions, visits to the São João Batista Cemetery, where the victims of the attack were buried, a mass at the Candelária Church downtown and a rally in front of the Municipal Theater, whose speakers were the ABI Chairman, Herbert Moses, and General Manuel Rabelo, Chairman of the Friends of America Society⁴⁵. A "huge, 10-meter panel" was placed as a backdrop on the façade of the theater, with a "splendid caricature drawn by Augusto Rodrigues, representing the union of Hitler and Plínio Salgado"⁴⁶. The week ended with Salgado's mock trial, accused of "wanting to hand Brazil over to Fascist enslavers", organized at the João Caetano Theater⁴⁷.

At the time, the audience could watch the *Der Führer's Face* cartoon at the movie theaters, a Walt Disney Studios production that would win the Oscar for Best Short Subject – Cartoons. According to the ad, "If you haven't seen "Der Führer's Face, come watch today and find out how one lives in Germany, and think about how happy you should be for being away from the Gestapo and the mini-mustached man"⁴⁸. The cartoon focuses on

41. The aforementioned article also informs that the Women's Division of the National Defense League also organized the Thursday Tea Parties during the exhibition, supported by the "patriotic groups of Rio de Janeiro", including the French Fighters, the Russian Committee and the Chinese Committee. Op. cit.

42. O Malho, June 1943, p. 45.

43. See the text written by Annateresa Fabris, published in this catalog.

44. The National Defense League, UNE, the Friends of America Society and the Anti-Axis Committee of Banco do Brasil organized the event. See: A força expedicionária vingará a agressão nazista. O Radical, 12/5/1943, cover.

45. Iniciada a Semana Anti-Fascista. Gazeta de Notícias, 11/5/1943, p. 4.

46. See the pictures of Kurt Klagsbrunn, published in this catalog, showing the façade of the Municipal Theater with the respective sign, during the Anti-fascist Week.

47. A Semana Antifascista. O professor Arthur Ramos pronunciará hoje uma importante conferência. Gazeta de Notícias, 15/5/1943, p. 4.

48. "Vida de Nazista". Published in O Jornal, 5/5/1943, p. 11; A Manhã, 6/5/1943, p. 5.

the hardships Donald Duck faces, including, among others, the obligation to work for the Nazis at a munitions factory, in a frantic rhythm, until he wakes up and is relieved to see it was nothing but a bad dream⁴⁹. Vinícius de Moraes also commented on the new cartoon in his film column, having mentioned the character's pathetic nature as one of the characteristics of the supporters of the Nazi regime⁵⁰. In addition to the Disney studios cartoon, several other war films and similar productions were screened in Brazil, at the time, including "Hitler's Children" and "Confessions of a Nazi Spy", announced as the "film Hitler would do anything to destroy!"⁵¹. This was also the case in relation to the theater industry and the publishing houses – politics had in fact taken the many areas of everyday life.

As for the exhibitions, the year of 1943 would also be marked by two important events⁵². The Guignard Group exhibition was held in October, originally at the Student Council of the National School of Fine Arts, which was cancelled by a group of conservative students less than 24 hours before the official opening⁵³. The exhibition was transferred to the Brazilian Press Association, where it was once again open to the public, though the episode would be the presage of other attacks on exhibitions organized in other years⁵⁴. The growing wave of persecution against modern art and the desire to stand ground in support of the allied countries led a group of artists to organize and international event⁵⁵. The Modern Brazilian Painting exhibition began in November 1943, at the prestigious Royal Academy of Art, sponsored by the British Council⁵⁶. The exhibition showcased 168 works, including paintings, drawings and engravings, in addition to 162 pictures from Brazil Builds, exhibition on Brazilian architecture, displayed at the MoMA in 1942⁵⁷. The artists donated the works for sale, to raise funds for the Royal Air Force (RAF). More than raising funds, the purpose of the exhibition was to increase visibility for the Anti-Fascist fight in Brazil, in order to obtain international support.

In what concerns the efforts to fight conservative forces, the mood of persecution against modern art would not cool down before the end of the war. The first great event of 1944 was the organization of the Modern Art Exhibition in Belo Horizonte, opened in early May⁵⁸. Such exhibition was important on several levels, including the fact that it was the largest modern art exhibition organized in Brazil thence far, having made it possible to bring together the leading names of modern art working in Brazil, and because it was organized outside the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo scene. It is also worth mentioning the exhibition's connection to the Juscelino Kubitschek administration, mayor who had been investing to transform Belo Horizonte into a modern art production and debate center. Organized by Alberto da Veiga Guignard and by writer José Guimarães Menegale⁵⁹, groups of artists and critics coming from Rio de Janeiro and São

49. The Der Fuehrer's Face cartoon is available online at <<https://archive.org/details/DerFuehrersFace>>. Access on: Feb. 15, 2018.

50. Vinícius de Moraes had a film column in newspaper *A Manhã*. On the aforementioned cartoon, he wrote: "Thanks to 'Der Fuehrer's Face', Walt Disney offers us the first cartoon on the propaganda scheme designed to cooperate with his country's government in the war efforts. None of his characters other than Donald Duck could best satirize the theme of the life of a civilian in Hitler's Germany, under the methodical control of swastika-bearing dummies. Thanks to his specific comedic approach, Donald has everything it takes to render any adventure he is involved in into something somewhat pathetic. [...] He is a poor afflicted duck. The duck is in fact a good person who is always taken by the most generous impulses, much like a Charlie, the Tramp, of the cartoons [...] The thing is the poor fellow is a duck of good faith, getting involved in all sorts of confusions, as stupid as only he can be [...]" MORAES, Vinícius. Duas variantes sobre o tema da guerra. *A Manhã*, 5/5/1943. p. 5.

51. See the ads in *A Manhã*, 7/3/1945, p. 7 and *Correio da Manhã*, 1/5/1942, respectively.

52. Several other exhibitions were also held in 1943: Anti-Axis Exhibition, at the Palácio do Itamaraty (Rop de Janeiro) and at the Galeria Prestes Maia (in São Paulo) (in August); Photographic Exhibition on the War Efforts, at the Trade Pavilion, Água Branca Park, in São Paulo (November); Exhibition of War Caricatures. These events will not be further addressed for the size of the piece, and because of the lack of available documents. See: *A Noite Ilustrada em São Paulo*. *A Noite*, 31/8/1943, p. 33 (on the Anti-Axis Exhibition); *Exposição fotográfica do esforço de guerra, O Estado de S. Paulo*, 11/11/1943; *Liga de Defesa Nacional. Homenagem a J. Carlos na Exposição de caricaturas de guerra*. *Diário de Notícias*, 1/12/1943, p. 4.

53. A exposição do Grupo Guignard na ENBA. *A Manhã*, 30/10/1943. Guignard used to offer a free art course at the terrace of the UNE headquarters at the Flamengo beach, in Rio de Janeiro. See: AMARAL Jr. A secretaria de arte da União Nacional dos Estudantes. *Carioca*, 2/1/1943, p. 38.

54. According to Walter Zanini, such attack was the repetition of the attack against modern art, occurred in the previous year. ZANINI, Op. cit. p. 34. Journalist Joel Silveira argues that the students of the School of Fine Arts, of modernist affiliation, could not open their annual exhibition in 1942 because of the director's censorship, having transferred the works to be displayed at the terrace of the ABI building. He also claims one of the exhibition panels was vandalized prior to the transfer. See: Silveira, Joel. Os modernos expulsos da Escola de Belas Artes. *Diretrizes*, 10/12/1942, p. 12-13.

55. *Artistas modernos do Brasil em Londres*. *Diretrizes*, 14/10/1943, p. 28; *História fotográfica de uma exposição*. *Diretrizes*, 30/12/1943, p. 27.

56. *Arte Brasileira em Londres*. *Revista da Semana*, 13/1/1945, p. 26.

57. There have been recent reports that the exhibition will be reorganized and showcased in London, with expected opening during the first semester of 2018: "Londres vai rever exposição usada como arma diplomática pelo Brasil em plena 2ª Guerra Mundial". *BBC Brasil*, Nov. 19, 2017. Available [online] at: <<http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/geral-42010289?SThisFB>>. Access on: Nov. 20, 2017.

58. The exhibition was opened on May 6, 1944. For further information on the exhibition, see: MATTAR, Denise. *O olhar modernista de JK*. Belo Horizonte: IAB/Usiminas/Secretaria de Estado de Cultura de Minas Gerais, 2008. This is the catalog of the exhibition that attempted to reconstitute the 1944 Belo Horizonte exhibition.

59. José Guimarães Menegale was a former employee of the Belo Horizonte Government, and was also one of Juscelino Kubitschek's cultural advisors. He wrote the foreword of the exhibition's catalog and also answered some of the reviews published in the press. MATTAR, Denise, op. cit.

60. MATTAR, Denise, op. cit., p. 26. Though one was unable to find any reference on this matter, it is arguable that such reproductions were the same as those the artist had showcased at the exhibition of the National Museum of Fine Arts in 1943, which were included in the records of the exhibition area Kurt Klagsbrunn used during Segall's exhibition at the Rio de Janeiro museum (Photography Archive – Lasar Segall Museum).

61. MATTAR, Denise, op. cit. See also: VIVAS, Rodrigo. 1944. *Do pincel à gilete: a arte moderna em Belo Horizonte*. In: CAVALCANTI, Ana; OLIVEIRA, Emerson Dionísio de; COUTO, Fátima Morethy; MALTA, Marize. *História da arte em exposições: modos de ver e exibir no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Rio Book's/Fapesp, 2016, p. 97-112.

62. Segall, Lasar. In: *Quando ouço falar em cultura, puxo o meu revólver*. Estado de Minas, 14/6/1944, p. 2. Apud: MATTAR, Denise. *O olhar modernista de JK*. Belo Horizonte: IAB/Usiminas/Secretaria de Estado de Cultura de Minas Gerais, 2008.

63. *Uma exposição permanente de arte moderna*. A Manhã, 27/8/1944, p. 3-6.

64. Miécio Askanasy's real name was Mieczyslaw Weiss. He adapted his first name to make it easier to understand in Portuguese, and also used a derivation of the term Ashkenazim as his last name, which refers to the group of Jews coming from Central and Eastern Europe.

65. On the Askanasy Gallery, see: KERN, Daniela. *Hanna Levy e a Exposição de arte condenada pelo Terceiro Reich (1945)*. Comunicação apresentada no 25º Encontro da ANPAP, Porto Alegre (RS), 26 a 30/9/2016.

66. In August 1945, Irmgard Burchard organized his first exhibition as an artist, at the gallery of the Brazilian Institute of Architects, in Rio de Janeiro, having received solid media coverage. See: *Exposição de pintura de Irmgard Burchard*. A Manhã, 5/8/1945, p. 1; Irmgard Burchard. *Vamos Ler*, 1/11/1945, p. 9.

67. ASKANASY, Miécio. *Exposição de Arte Condenada pelo Terceiro Reich*. Rio de Janeiro: Casa do Estudante do Brasil/Galeria Askanasy, 1945. See also: MIGUEIS, Armando. *Eles foram expulsos da Alemanha*. *Revista da Semana*, 10/3/1945, p. 33-36.

68. 68. KERN, op. cit. On Levy's work in Brazil, see NAKAMUTA, Adriana Sanajotti. *Hanna Levy no Brasil: história, teoria e crítica de arte no Patrimônio (1937-1947)*. Rio de Janeiro, 2016. Tese de Doutorado. Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro/PPGva.

Paulo came to the exhibition. Lasar Segall was represented with the "*Cabocla Mother*" painting, as well as with reproductions of some of his sculptures⁶⁰. The Belo Horizonte Modern Art Exhibition had already provoked intense debate in the press when four works were cut with razors, which attack was never clarified⁶¹. The article entitled "*Quando ouço falar em cultura, puxo o meu revólver*" (or "I pull my gun out whenever 'culture' is the mot du jour") assembled testimonials from several artists, Lasar Segall included.

I already know these people. I was the victim of a campaign using expressions such as "degenerate art" and "the Russian" (as if it were an offense...), which defined the authors thereof, when I was organizing my exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts. This is certainly the same group of people that has vandalized our paintings at the Belo Horizonte exhibition⁶².

It was therefore in a time of great tension in the art world that the Askanasy Art Gallery was opened, in Rio de Janeiro, in August 1944. It seems that it was Brazil's first art gallery dedicated to modern art⁶³. Polish immigrant Miécio Askanasy⁶⁴ arrived in Brazil in 1941, having first dedicated himself to the door-to-door sale of books. He then leased a small shop downtown, where he would now only sell books, but also artworks⁶⁵. The gallery was the result of the adjustment of the venue, which became the home to temporary exhibitions of mostly immigrant artists, in addition to the permanent exhibition with reproductions of modern works. Less than one year after opening the gallery, Askanasy held the ambitious Art Exhibition condemned by the Third Reich, in April 1945.

Designed similar to the other counter-exhibitions, the purpose of the exhibition was to show the art execrated by the Nazi regime to the Brazilian public, in order to increase support against Nazi-fascism and define modern art as a synonym of freedom of expression. Askanazy obtained sponsorship from Casa do Estudante do Brasil, a local students' foundation, as well as the help of art dealer Irmgard Burchard⁶⁶, who had been part of the Twentieth Century German Art Exhibition held in London, in 1938, as mentioned above. The exhibition included 119 works, mostly engravings, made by 39 artists whose works were displayed at the Munich Degenerate Art Exhibition, such as Otto Dix, Max Beckmann, Kaethe Köllwitz, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Lasar Segall⁶⁷. German art historian Hanna Levy, who had been working as art professor and critic in Brazil between 1937 and 1947, wrote the foreword to the catalog⁶⁸.

At Miécio Askanasy's request, Lasar Segall sent two of his works to the Art Exhibition condemned by the Third Reich, *Cabocla Mother* and *The Dream*. The letters exchanged between them refer to the invitation and the negotiations on the loan of the works, and

also include certain considerations on the persecution suffered by modern artists, as was the case in Brazil. Though he agreed to participate of the exhibition, Lasar Segall questions whether it would make sense to organize such an exhibition, at that point.

After having reflected on your idea, I caught myself asking why and for who is this exhibition necessary. Hitler, today, is a man without any universal meaning, a dead man [...]. So why should we remember his existence, nowadays? You do realize my current opinion has substantially changed. However, I do not want to in any way prevent you from putting your plan into action, and I will evidently take part in your exhibition, as promised⁶⁹.

Askanasy clarifies the reasons for which he believes it was important to maintain his exhibition project, including a brief history of the recent attacks against the artists and the works, starting with those Segall himself suffered during his exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts, in 1943.

As for whether it is worth organizing the exhibition, as you have asked, I would like to mention that in addition to the political meaning, which nowadays is rather reduced, this type of exhibition plays a leading role in terms of propaganda. After the ignoble attacks against you when of your great exhibition in Rio, and the razor attacks against the Belo Horizonte Modern Art exhibition, and also after the attacks against the exhibition organized by Guignard's students last year, after all such episodes, I strongly believe in the importance of an exhibition that shows it is always and precisely the ghastly forces currently circulating under the name of fascism, which violently persecute Art and Spirit [...]⁷⁰.

In turn, Lasar Segall mentions the reason for which he chose the paintings "Cabocla Mother" and "The Dream" to be part of the exhibition – the artist was concerned that once again, works deemed too audacious could be attacked by reactionary forces.

I would only like to once again draw attention to the imperative need to only display more balanced works, without any significant deformations or exaggerations, which the audience is able to better understand, in order to produce the effects you seek. The result would otherwise easily be counterproductive⁷¹.

Lasar Segall's fears would unfortunately come true. The more progressive Rio de Janeiro press would openly accept the Askanasy Gallery exhibition, not only because of the anti-fascist nature thereof, but also because of the attack it suffered. On May 28th, three men allegedly members of the integralist movement, as reported at the time, used a sharp object to vandalize the displayed paintings.

69. Lasar Segall's letter, addressed to Miécio Askanasy. São Paulo, Feb. 9, 1945.

70. Miécio Askanasy's letter, addressed to Lasar Segall. Rio de Janeiro, Feb. 15, 1945.

71. Lasar Segall's letter, addressed to Miécio Askanasy. São Paulo, Feb. 9, 1945.

[...] yesterday was marked by an attack, which was yet another repetition of the facts occurred in São Paulo and Minas, perpetrated by members of the green movement, against the canvases signed by disciples of leading masters, banished and disqualified by the Germans [...]. The damaged painting is entitled "Sentimental Romance", by Wilhelm Wöller, whose 1935 exhibition was closed down by Gestapo twenty minutes after its opening. Wöller is currently in Rio de Janeiro as a refugee⁷².

The attack against the Askanasy Gallery seemed to evidence that despite the end of the war in Europe, members of the integralist movement were far from out of the picture⁷³. Several artists, intellectuals, architects and activists involved in the organization of the Anti-Integralist Exhibition shared such understanding. The exhibition opened on June 9th, at the underpass of the main streetcar terminal in downtown Rio de Janeiro, located only a few blocks away from the Askanasy Gallery.

The National Students' Union (UNE), together with the support of several political, civil society and workers' organizations, has organized the "Anti-Integralist Exhibition" at the underpass of "Taboleiro da Baiana", triggering intense public interest [...]. Designed with the best possible taste and under the guidance of a group of architects and painters, the exhibition displayed large-sized panels with pictures, documents and signs related to the integralism activities, as a modality of international fascism. [...]. Large Urban Cleaning waste baskets were filled with weapons seized from the members of the group – including guns, machine guns, swastika-bearing daggers and books written by the pro-integralism thinkers"⁷⁴.

The exhibition was part of a campaign whose purpose was to report on the illegal activities of the Brazilian Integralist Actions and its plans for a coup d'état⁷⁵. The Organization Committee was comprised of Oscar Niemeyer, Augusto Rodrigues, Alcides Rocha Miranda, Hélio Uchôa, Fernando Brito and Marcos Chaimovich, among others⁷⁶. The few pictures of the exhibitions and the descriptions published in the press suggest there was great concern in transmitting the context using an agitprop-inspired set design⁷⁷. Several intellectuals supported the event, including art critic Mário Pedrosa – though he had mentioned certain missing gaps in the exhibition, he acknowledged the importance thereof in an article published in newspaper *Correio da Manhã*⁷⁸.

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From the historical standpoint, the overview of the exhibitions set forth herein privileged those that became stages for the political dispute, and which were directly related to the prosecution against modern art and/or to the anti-fascist fight.

72. Atentado integralista contra a exposição da arte condenada pelo Reich. *Diário de Notícias*, 29/4/1945, Segunda Seção, p. 10. See also: Na exposição de Arte Condenada pelo Terceiro Reich – Cortado a gilete um dos quadros expostos. *Diário Carioca*, 29/4/1945, p. 5; Ocorrência revoltante. Desconhecidos inutilizaram, com violência, um quadro de grande valor na Galeria Askanasy. *A Manhã*, 29/4/1945, p. 8.

73. Germany was declared officially defeated in World War II on May 7, 1945, putting an end to the conflict in Europe.

74. Aberta a exposição anti-integralista. Respondendo com provas reais ao recente desafio dos camisas-verdes. Rio de Janeiro, *A Manhã*, 9/6/1945, p. 6; A Exposição Anti-Integralista. *Revista da Semana*, 16/6/1945, p. 4-5.

75. Exposição Anti-Integralista. *Diário Carioca*, 29/5/1945, p. 3. According to researcher Gilberto Calil, the integralist movement was reorganized after the war, and attempted to leave its fascist past behind. Its members founded the Popular Representation Party (PRP), in 1945, and implemented a pro-democracy discourse, nevertheless maintaining their authoritarian and anticommunist agenda. The Anti-Integralist Exhibition was thus organized in this context. See CALIL, Gilberto. *Integralismo e hegemonia burguesa: o PRP na política brasileira (1945-1965)*. Cascavel (PR): Eduioeste, 2010.

76. Exposição Anti-Integralista. *Diário Carioca*, 29/5/1945, p. 3. For further information on the exhibition's Organization Committee, see also: Exposição Anti-Integralista, *Gazeta de Notícias*, 7/6/1945.

77. There is no surprise in the fact that several of the names involved in the Anti-Integralist Exhibition were architects and artists members of the Brazilian Communist Party, such as Oscar Niemeyer, Augusto Rodrigues and Marcos Chaimovich. Such relationship may help explain the orientation given to the exhibition, as well as the language used, both in terms of the verbal and the visual discourse.

78. See: PEDROSA, Mário. Para a exposição Anti-Integralista. *Correio da Manhã*, 10/6/1945, cover.

However, in order to be complete, a broader study on the political exhibitions organized during the World War II period in Brazil must take into account the several exhibitions organized by allied countries and sent to South American nations⁷⁹. Such exhibitions are more specifically related to the meanders of diplomatic relations and require a type of reflection that does not fall within the limits of this essay.

In what concerns the broader challenges of this research, it is necessary to mention there is no single and coherent movement that may be referred to as anti-fascist in the 1940s, in Brazil. Also, the few studies available on the matter make it difficult to identify the sociability networks and the fields of dispute established between the agents involved. As such, it is inevitable to recall the warning Keith Holtz made on the dangers of a positive moral celebration of anti-fascism considered *a priori*, which prevents one from taking a critical and coherent stand with respect both to the historical conditions for the rise thereof, and its future developments. It is furthermore worth mentioning that the exhibitions and events referred to herein were in constant negotiation with the visual representations of an authoritarian regime, extremely mindful of the construction and control of its own image. The praise for Getúlio Vargas' image in several of the self-proclaimed anti-fascist manifestations is part of the many contradictions inherent to this process. Finally, it is worth mentioning that further studies on this matter must necessarily include the pursuit of other research sources, to be compared to the press-published material⁸⁰.

Discursive Disputes within the Realm of the Exhibitions

One of the leading identifiable phenomena based on this survey is the intense political use of art, especially of art exhibitions, at the end of the 1930s and mid-1940s, not only in Europe and in the United States, but also in Brazil. The pioneering experiences developed in post-revolutionary Russia opened way for this process, both with respect to the agitprop actions, and in terms of the exhibition design. The exhibition techniques experimented during such period, especially throughout the 1920s, would soon undergo intense development, including adaptation thereof to the most varied users. In a very short period of time, exhibitions would turn into a specific and innovative media, gaining evidence beyond the art scene, whether within the scope of political propaganda and educational activities, or in trade fairs and mass culture.

The aforementioned scenario makes it clear that Adolf Hitler's and his supporters' choice to use exhibitions to provide clarifications, for the general public, on the regime's position in relation to modern art was anything but casual. Far from merely organizing two simultaneous exhibitions – Degenerate Art and the Greater German Art Exhibition –, the Nazi government put together a crafty education apparatus by means of the

79. On this matter, see KNAUSS, Paulo. Os sentidos da arte estrangeira no Brasil: exposições de pintura no contexto da Segunda Guerra Mundial. In: FLORES, Maria Bernardete Ramos; VILELA, Ana Lucia (Orgs.). Encantos da imagem. Blumenau: Letras Contemporâneas, 2010, p. 127-139.

80. Though this study was only possible because the press was taken as the primary source of research, one nevertheless acknowledges the limitations thereof, as well as the methodological challenges placed and the possibility of furthering such reflection, based on other sources. It is also possible to further the investigation on the very periodicals used. For instance, Ângela Meirelles de Oliveira reveals, in her doctoral dissertation that magazine *Diretrizes* was one of the vehicles compromised with the fight against fascism in Brazil. Such information opens a new investigation pathway, as a substantial part of the news and articles used to recover the analyzed events was published in *Diretrizes*. See: OLIVIERA, Ângela Meirelles de. Palavras como balas. Imprensa e intelectuais antifascistas no Cone Sul (1933-1939). São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo/FFLCH, 2013. On the specificity of using the press as a source for historical research, see, LUCA, Tânia Regina de. História dos, nos e por meio dos periódicos. In: PINSKY, Carla Bassaneri. Fontes históricas. São Paulo: Contexto, 2005, p. 111-153.

programmed confrontation of exemplary cases, backed by pamphleteer rhetoric. Such action, together with the counter-exhibitions triggered thereby worldwide, point towards the fact that exhibitions truly became *loci* of political dispute during the World War II period. It was the intense circulation of people, technologies, images and ideas, resulting from different migratory waves of intellectuals, artists, photographers, technicians and political activists, among others, which led to the appropriation and attribution of new meaning included in the exhibition-related solutions, based on the local contexts and demands. Refugees and immigrants therefore played a crucial role in this process.

The disputes on modern art and the dynamics of the politics-oriented exhibitions organized in Brazil during the *Estado Novo* period (1937-1945) reveal that Brazil was part of a certain transnational circuit, in which the legitimization of art frequently underwent discursive disputes in the spaces of the exhibitions. Using words and images as weapons, such disputes oftentimes culminated in assault, resulting in the vandalism of works, as was the case of many examples mentioned herein. Changes to the post-war scenario and the institutionalization of modern art in Brazil would neutralize the critical forcefulness of the exhibitions, as well as promote the deletion of a past of intolerance and persecution the history of Brazilian modernism still has not been able to take in.

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