

## **Brief Comments on the Role of Pietro Maria Bardi and the Foundation of MASP.**

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“I did so much!” Nearly two decades since my daily contact with Pietro Maria Bardi, I would add an extra clause to that statement: “...and with such intensity”. If the modernist must be “a man of his time”, one could say that Bardi was not only of his time, but ahead of it in several fields. And all the while he never abandoned his humanist background, forged during his youth, at the law offices in which he worked, and through his interest in Jeremias Bentham and the book he published of this author’s work at the age of seventeen. From his birth in February 1900 to his death late in 1999, his life accompanied the 20th Century step for step, first in Europe, and then then in South America — more precisely, in Italy and Brazil.

My first contact with the museum was through the magazine *O Cruzeiro* in the 1950s. At the time, the Brazilian press was practically monopolized by one man, Assis Chateaubriand. His newspapers and radio stations covered the length and breadth of the country, and this gave him great wealth and political clout. I was born in Nova Veneza in the south of Santa Catarina, in a colony of immigrants from the north of Italy. During my childhood, the adults still conversed in their regional dialect. I never imagined that would stand to me one day. My parents were modern and forward-thinking (my father was a doctor), and I grew up in an open, enlightened home, albeit in a small hamlet where news only arrived through newspapers and magazines. Assis Chateaubriand came in for heavy criticism and after everything I had heard about him, particularly his politic beliefs, I developed quite an aversion to the man, one that grew throughout my teenage years, a time of pre-dictatorship changes. But these were the publications that brought Brazil, with news of all that transpired in the major cities. Today I recognize that the way the museum’s creation was handled in the press was brilliant. Every now and then a report would come out in *O Cruzeiro* with photographs of the functions held at the museum to celebrate the arrival of new works, showing elegant ladies and gentlemen surrounded by great art. Stories about artists always drew a lot of attention. This certainly had an impact on us, the readers, and helped transform MASP into the national symbol it is today.

In 1978 I enrolled on the museology course MASP ran for professionals from various different backgrounds. It was created by Waldisa Rússio Camargo

Guarnieri<sup>1</sup>, with Bardi's support<sup>2</sup>. In fact, Bardi himself gave some memorable classes there on Saturday mornings. A few days later Anna Carboncini, Bardi's assistant, made me the unrefusable invitation to begin an internship at the museum. My first task was to help develop a chronological archive of all of the exhibitions held at the museum after 1975. As a journalism graduate, I knew how to type, and it was thanks to this, plus my familiarity with text and ability to decipher Bardi's handwriting (he only ever wrote by hand), that we developed a rapport. Soon, that sacred cow of a man, whom I had admired since childhood, became a very present figure. I suppose you could say we "hit it off"... demanding, controversial and fond of a good row, he was rarely impatient toward me—though I did know when to make myself scarce...

Bardi was a dynamo. Always full of ideas, he wrote prodigiously: articles, commentary on works from the collection, ideas for books, letters to friends and same-day replies to almost all of the museum's correspondence. He would also write letters of introduction for artists and, generous as he was, always attended such requests. Working with him taught me a great deal about the museum, the collection and Bardi's place in its history. I also gradually learned about his life and a little about Lina's too, and the enormous contribution they made to Brazil, and about which, now that the years have rolled by, I feel entitled to speak.

France had an enormous cultural influence on Brazilian society throughout the 20th Century, as it did in the rest of the world. The rich vacationed in Paris, and the books they read, the clothes they wore, the language they spoke, it all came from France. When USP was formed, there were many French academics on its staff (one notable exception was the Italian Giuseppe Ungaretti). Even after the war, Paris still dictated the rules of fashion, social mores and taste. In a sense, this was a barrier Bardi had to overcome, and he did so through culture.

Moments of major social change tend to stimulate novelty and creativity. "It was clear from the beginning that modernism could establish itself as a powerful cultural phenomenon only when economic, political, and cultural conditions were supportive"<sup>3</sup> and modernism needed the figure of the patron, the capitalist with the money to support undertakings that fostered the new, the modern. During economic and political upheaval in Russia in the early 20th Century, the Communist party leadership seized the art collections of the Russian bourgeoisie and rich industrialists and transformed them into museums through which to educate the people.<sup>4</sup> In Brazil at the end of the

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1 See: BRUNO, Maria Cristina Oliveira (org.). *Waldisa Rússio Camargo Guarnieri; textos e contextos de uma trajetória profissional*. São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2010.

2 It was not the first course he had created in the area. Soon after the museum opened he gave classes to the youths who worked there, and, in the early 1970s, he administered a similar course taken by various illustrious students, such as the sculptor Dan Fialdini, who was there mounting and organizing exhibitions when I started, and his brother, Rômulo (now a well-known photographer).

3 GAY, Peter. *Modernismo – o fascínio da heresia: de Baudelaire a Becket e mais um pouco*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009.

4 Ibid, see: Stalin's Soviet Union, pp. 426-432.

World War II, two magnates, Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho and Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand Bandeira de Mello (aka Chatô), decided to form art collections, partly out of vanity, partly out of competition and partly out of personal rivalry.<sup>5</sup>

The Brazilian bourgeoisie was not particularly numerous and its was largely concentrated in Rio de Janeiro, still the national capital at that time, and São Paulo, then experiencing rampant industrial development. The powers-that-be were never far away and they were relatively accessible. Both men wanted to bring about change through art and culture by setting up museums.

Matarazzo came from an Italian immigrant family that had worked its way up the ranks of the coffee-growing elite. With wealth came culture. A man of taste, with a bourgeois education, part of the moneyed São Paulo set that traveled frequently to Paris, Matarazzo confided his idea for a museum to a group with strong French connections. His first collaborator, Léon Degand, came to Brazil from Belgium, to where he would return some years later. Perhaps buoyed by a more romantic vision than Chatô, Ciccillo created the MAM, followed by the Bienal de São Paulo.

Chateaubriand<sup>6</sup> was another story altogether: a self-made man from the Northeast, he built a journalistic empire in Rio and São Paulo and extended its reach nationwide. He used his companies and was lucky to find the Italian Bardi—Italian, note! A witty man in the business world, he decided to entrust his museum project to a specialist, someone who knew his way round the art world. Chateaubriand's museum, a private partnership, was created around a collection of works which Bardi brought with him from Italy. The institution was open to business, and the idea was to do what museums still do in the US: negotiate, swap and sell.

Self-taught, Bardi dabbled in various fields, and everything he earned from that was the fruit of his own labor as a free agent. He was a man who was used to being in command<sup>7</sup>. He had worked as an architecture critic, a journalist, editor of magazines, and as an entrepreneur. He set up the Studio d'Arte Palma in Rome, a gallery with a research and conservation center directed by Francesco Monotti<sup>8</sup> and staffed by a highly-specialized team that included Emilio Villa<sup>9</sup>, Federico Zeri<sup>10</sup> and Giulio Carlo Argan. That was where he got the works he used to explore the Latin-American market and which won him a foothold in Rio, the first contact with Chatô and, ultimately, the creation of the museum. He and his young wife, the talented architect Lina

5 Chateaubriand was supposedly in love with Yolanda Penteadó, who lived with Ciccillo.

6 Fernando Morais describes this figure perfectly in his book, aptly titled *Chatô, the King of Brazil*. MORAIS, Fernando. *Chatô, o rei do Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994.

7 "I'm more a commander than a subordinate", he declared to *Vogue* magazine, which ran a special issue to celebrate his 85th birthday. *Vogue* n. 115, February 1985, p. 160.

8 Francesco Monotti (Bologna, 1899 – Rome, 1973)Roma???

9 Emilio Villa (Affori, 1914 – Rieti, 2003). Poet and linguist who also worked at MASP during the 1950s.

10 Federico Zeri (Rome, 1921 – Mentana, 1998). One of the most important historians of Italian art of the 20th Century.

Bo Bardi, keen to discover the New World for themselves, brought the talent of the modernists to the shores of what was then a gradually modernizing semi-agricultural country, but one in which the patron Chateaubriand saw vast potential. Bardi settled in and took stock of his new surroundings.

In fact, the country was not unknown to him. He had visited before, in the 1930s, stopping off at several Brazilian cities while sailing down the coast to Buenos Aires<sup>11</sup>, where he had some official business. He made the most of a stop-over at the port of Santos to visit nearby São Paulo. Of course, the country that awaited him and Lina in 1946 was certainly much changed. When they arrived in Rio de Janeiro that October, what did they see? The modernity they wanted to instil and promote in their homeland was already in full swing. Their first glimpse of the fact came in the form of the Ministry for Education and Health<sup>12</sup> building, which they would have known from the book *Brazil Builds*, which had been published in the United States. Finding a modernizing, industrializing nation instead of the relative backwater Bardi had encountered on his first trip here was probably encouraging for the couple.

Over the years Bardi would settle on a version of events to explain his coming to Brazil and his meeting with Chateaubriand, which by some accounts had occurred in Rio and by others in Rome. Bardi often declared that he had decided to set out for Latin America with a number of works and that one of his destinations was to be Buenos Aires, a city he knew and which already had a vigorous elite with a solid structure in art, much of it modern<sup>13</sup>. The contradictions would suggest there were many reasons for his coming here.

The fact is in November 1946 the decision was made to establish the museum in the coffee-rich, rapidly industrializing São Paulo as opposed to Rio, as originally planned. São Paulo was growing; the Bardis' future city was shedding its provincial skin.

Having accepted the challenge, early in 1947, Bardi, accompanied by Lina, started setting up the new museum at Chateaubriand's newly-built Diários Associados' building at 230, Sete de Abril, to be officially inaugurated in October. In close collaboration with her husband, Lina designed the internal layout for the spaces, as well as the furnishings, displays and all other necessary features. Given his background in rationalist architecture, Bardi would have given her some general coordinates, and this symbiosis certainly helped Lina, who had mostly worked in magazine editing back in Milan, to become one of the outstanding architects of the 20th Century, as she is increasingly

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11 In 1933 Bardi spent four months there presenting an exhibition on new architecture as part of a tour to promote the ideas of the rationalist architects, whom he championed in the Italian press.

12 The building was designed by Lucio Costa, Carlos Leão, Jorge Moreira, Oscar Niemeyer, Affonso Reidy and Ernani Vasconcelos based on sketches by Le Corbusier, who spent four weeks working on the project with Oscar Niemeyer in June of 1936, conveyor of the French-Swiss architect's ideas to the rest of the group. WILLIAMS, Richard J. *Brazil modern architectures in history*. London: Reaktion Books, 2009, p. 10. Also see: CAVALCANTI, Lauro. *Quando o Brasil era Moderno: Guia de Arquitetura 1928-1960*, Rio de Janeiro, 2001, pp. 364-365; See also: HARRIS, Elizabeth Davis. *Le Corbusier, riscos brasileiros*. São Paulo: Nobel, 1987.

13 As described in the book: SCHWARTZ, Jorge. *Fervor das Vanguardas: Arte e Literatura na América Latina*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2013.

recognized today. Her major contributions to the São Paulo cityscape were: MASP, SESC-Pompéia and Teatro Oficina.

Bardi noticed a number of changes in the city, but certain necessities in the cultural area remained. The couple decided to try to change that—or Chatô asked them to, as the idea behind the museum’s creation had always been fundamentally didactic. This was how American museums worked, along the same lines as the MoMA in New York, which Bardi mentioned in his articles—yes, he had returned to his old vocation as a journalist—on the new institution arriving on the São Paulo scene. On January 1, 1947 he published the article *Museus e Anti-museus*<sup>14</sup>, in which he outlined the ideas he was about to put into practice. The article foresaw a free architecture, with appropriate lighting and spaces for multiple activities geared towards the development of a new pedagogy, good taste, the love of art and knowledge of history. First and foremost, however, it was to be an agreeable place to visit. Bardi claimed that, in Brazil, “people understood that bold ideas were not utopian”. The same proposals he presented at the inaugural meeting of the ICOM in Mexico City in 1947, in a text entitled *Musée hors des limites* (Museum beyond limits)<sup>15</sup>, clarified his project.

For his biographer Tentori, Bardi started devising his “museographical system”<sup>16</sup> in 1935, while working with Guido Fiorini<sup>17</sup> on a project for a building that could accommodate any form of manifestation, while wringing maximum usage from minimal space, the same situation he and Lina faced when planning MASP in downtown São Paulo, which was later expanded at the building on Paulista Avenue.

Bardi prized the new, encouraged experimentation, gave classes, and held the first exhibitions of photography considered as art. It was a question of background and practice. He realized soon enough that most of the population was uncultured and that one of the museum’s main tasks would have to be to teach, and that art was the best way to do that. One of his first steps was to have the Studio d’Arte Palma in Rome prepare a series of large-format didactic panels presenting a timeline of the history of art. This vast panorama of artistic development from the stone age to modern times went on exhibition at the museum.

In 1972, MASP held a major exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922, which had largely faded from memory in São Paulo. This was one of my first visits to the museum. I remember the unusual arrangement of the works on the basement floor: an *assemblage*, as Bardi liked to say, comprised of paintings, furniture, photographs, books,

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14 *Diário de São Paulo* January 1, 1947. The same piece was republished four days later in *O Jornal*, Rio de Janeiro. Both papers belonged to Chatô’s Associated Press.

15 See: TENTORI, Francesco. *P.M. Bardi*. São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi/Imprensa Oficial do Estado de São Paulo, 2000, p. 188.

16 *Ibid*, pp. 156-157.

17 Guido Fiorini (Bologna, 1891 – Paris, 1965). He was an architect who collaborated with Bardi on the magazine *Quadrante*.

objects, clothing, texts on the the Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922 and its participants. It was unlike anything we were used to see.

Some years later, in 1978, I was timidly helping Bardi produce the text for *O Modernismo no Brasil*<sup>18</sup>, the first of a series of 12 books he wrote for Sudameris bank. It was at this time that I started to collaborate on and respect the work of Pietro Maria Bardi. In parallel with this, he was also putting the finishing touches to a volume commemorating the museum's 30th anniversary, which shows through illustrations and texts the establishment of the organization. In his introduction, Bardi gave an objective account of the facts that led to the creation of the institution, and spoke admiringly of Chateaubriand. Naturally, I was surprised by this the first time, but I soon got used to it, as he would praise Chatô on numerous other occasions, especially in the book he wrote about their relationship, published in 1982<sup>19</sup>. That same year the museum held the exhibition *Perfume e Maquilagem*, featuring items from collectors and tracing the human fascination for the theme down through the ages. It was also the first time I helped research and borrow works. The following year, Bardi put on the exhibition *Itália-Brasil, uma história de cinco séculos*, commissioned by the Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli in Turin, and my involvement was even more intense. I remember traveling around the south by car, visiting places and doing some fruitful field work where Italian immigrants had settled.

At the museum, Pietro was generally referred to as "Professor Bardi", which was what Chateaubriand had always called him. I soon realized that the title was more than warranted: Bardi knew how to do what needed to be done, and if he didn't know, he learned. He must have been like that since boyhood, if the book he was commissioned to write by Fiat is anything to go by. In *La strada e il volante*, the young Bardi took an in-depth look at the inner workings of the automobile. It was a side to him I experienced first-hand when helping him package some pieces, which, at the time, was done using crumpled paper. He patiently showed me how to cushion corners and protect protrusions with thick padding to avoid crashes and frictions. It was the unforced generosity of a brilliant man, a man I respected, and it made my admiration grow. It must be remembered that, approaching 80 years of age, here was a man who still turned up for work at the museum each day, just like the rest of us.

This know-how extended to books, too. He not only conceived them, but as he wrote them I do believe he envisaged the layout, mentally arranged the pages, with illustrations and lines of text. He would meet with Dan Fialdini, and pass on the draft material for Dan to flesh out, painstakingly unravelling the enigma. With time I came to know Bardi's despotic habit of not crediting those who contributed to the work, a side to him that vexed his collaborators. But, as I said, there was no changing a man bordering on 80. And anyway, it

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18 The book was so popular a second edition was published in 1982.

19 BARDI, Pietro Mari. *Sodalício com Assis Chateaubriand*. São Paulo: Edição do MASP, 1982. In February 1997, the *Folha de S. Paulo* "Ilustrada" supplement (p. 3) published an interview with Bardi by Leon Cakoff, entitled *Eu não fiz nada. Foi tudo o Chateaubriand*. (I did nothing. It was all Chateaubriand)

was not common practice to credit others back then, something that would be unthinkable today. He had a passion for books, and, in 1977, to mark the 30th anniversary of the museum, he and Lina donated their personal library, full of rare and valuable volumes. In 1979 the museum conducted extensive research on *Tipografia no Brasil*, mainly based on the collections of José Mindlin and Rubens Borba de Moraes. Bardi oversaw the whole process, alongside Fialdini and Claudia Marino Semeraro, who worked in the library.

I imagine his ideas must have come to him out of the blue, while in the car or during a meeting, because they were jotted down on all sorts of paper scraps, including the real estate fliers handed out on street corners during the 1980s building boom in São Paulo. Sometimes there would be expressions in Italian that were incredibly hard to translate into Portuguese, and if I dared suggest a change, he did not like it. So I would look to Luiz Hossaka<sup>20</sup> for help, who knew Bardi's writing well and had been transcribing it for far longer than I. It was fun, because Hossaka was a good-humored fellow who used to say that Bardi was trying to invent a new language, so there was no point in asking him to change words here or there. So we'd pass the book and the 'buck' to the printers. They'd call up to complain, saying that this or that couldn't be done, that it needed revision, but just try explaining that the author wanted it that way, end of story. After a while, Carlos Magno Bonfim,<sup>21</sup> from the publisher Raízes Artes Gráficas, owned by Regastein Rocha<sup>22</sup>, would appear and try to explain to Bardi the changes they had made.

He had a methodology for these publications. He did a lot of research on them, buying the books he thought might help him, and which he gave to the museum library afterwards. He was helped by Ivani Di Grazia Costa, who researched the books they already had. Bardi would sketch out a synopsis, sort out possible illustrations, draw up the layout for the pages and store everything in large titled "files" he improvised out of folded paper. Mixed into these texts were Italian constructions and terms, and it was then that I realized the real value of having heard my *nonnas* speaking in dialect when a child or in the case of my paternal grandmother, standard Italian.

Sometimes he would bring me a piece written by *dona* Lina, as we called her, to have it typed up. She wrote very well, and was highly objective and courageous in her texts.

The series of books for Sudameris, which covered themes from Brazil's past and culture, such as modernism, silver, gold, wood, photography, sculpture and design, were sometimes followed by an exhibition—as was the case with *Arte da Prata no Brasil*—and the budget always included a contribution to MASP.

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20 Luiz Hossaka (Birigui, 1928 – São Paulo, 2009). He worked at MASP from a young age. He was chief conservator when he died.

21 Carlos Magno Bonfim (Salvador, 1950). He still works in publishing today.

22 Regastein Rocha (Santa Rita do Passa Quatro, 1935). He was a major figure in São Paulo publishing in the 1980s.

In 1982, MASP celebrated its 35th anniversary. In August that year, Linda Kohen<sup>23</sup> introduced Bardi to José Roberto Marcelino dos Santos, from Banco Safra, as they were planning a series of books. They wanted Bardi's approval, as he had already collaborated with Sudameris. The museum had not updated its catalogue of paintings and sculptures since 1963, and Bardi saw this as a good opportunity for MASP and other museums. The deadline was tight, roughly three months, but he didn't see this as an impediment for another project. The result was the publication of a MASP catalogue sponsored by Banco Safra, the first in a series that would benefit many museums throughout Brazil, with a new catalogue published at the end of each year.

Bardi oversaw the setting up of each exhibition. There were displays which Lina had designed for the space on Rua Sete de Abril, and Bardi and Dan Fialdini would decide together which to use. Photographs from the museum's archives show that the iron tube supports were often used, though there was also a light and elegant easel support in pale wood that was excellent for works on paper because you could regulate the panel height. Temporary exhibitions were many and frequent, and they were mostly held in the basement level, where exhibitions could be changed in just two days, without much fuss, given the practical nature of the materials and the crew's familiarity with them and with the space itself. Whenever possible, materials were reused to avoid wastage.

The museum auditorium was used for concerts coordinated by Walter Lourenção and for film screenings too. These were coordinated by Leon Cakoff, who started the now famous Mostra Internacional de Cinema de São Paulo there in 1977. But all of these activities were under Bardi's watchful eye. The museum had a small staff. Opening hours were from midday to five in the afternoon, and the staff worked on general services through the morning and looked after the exhibitions (admission free) in the afternoon. Everyone was aware of the importance of the museum's artistic patrimony, and the whole staff worked with pride and dedication.

Occasionally, the museum hosted exhibitions from abroad. MoMA sent exhibitions to MASP, and others came through national organizations, such as the German Goethe Institut, the British Council and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura. During Bardi's tenure, the museum was practically an extension of the Italian consulate and the directors of the Istituto could always count on his support when it came to showcasing the peninsula's culture and art.

The exhibitions of Brazilian art revealed some new artists, and not only from São Paulo. Artists would often turn up with samples of their work and ask to speak with Bardi, and many of them went away with the promise of an exhibition at the museum. Bardi had a well-known eye for painting, as the MASP collection itself more than proved, having been largely hand-picked by him. Many of the newcomers he gave their first break went on to

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23 Born in Milan in 1924, the Italo-Uruguayan artist Linda Kohen, with ties to the Safra family, was living in São Paulo at the time and became close to Bardi, who admired the intimate explorations of her painting and presented her work to the museum.



become established artists, while others simply disappeared. It is interesting to note that many of these established names were later presented at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo after its renovation under the administration of Emanuel Araújo.

An assiduous letter writer, receiving the daily mail was a ritual for Bardi, who maintained ongoing correspondence with various personalities. These letters are now stored in the archives of the museum and the Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi<sup>24</sup>. He always carefully filed every document, as if foreseeing that these would someday be of value<sup>25</sup>.

A brief aside. Bardi was seductive, but he could also be taken in rather easily by unscrupulous people. Riccardo Mariani was one. One of the reasons for his visit to Brazil was to look for and acquire the archives of citizens with some active participation in politics, and Edgar Leuenroth<sup>26</sup> was one of his targets. However, much to his disappointment, Leuenroth's archive was already in the hands of UNICAMP. So he turned his sights on Bardi and the valuable archive he had begun in 1917, in his hometown of La Spezia, Italy, and which contained a great deal of information about the country up until 1947. It was a hurricane. Bardi literally succumbed to the crafty Mariani, who lectured in Geneva and promised to write a documented biography and then hand the papers over to the Central Archive in Rome. Bardi let him have everything he had, despite Anna Carboncini's attempts to warn him, to make him see that these were important papers that documented the first half of the 20th Century and all of his activities. She asked him to wait until they could have it all registered and marked, but Bardi did not like to be second-guessed, and ordered her to have as much of it stamped and registered as quickly as possible, because the documents were to be sent to Italy without delay. This was done, and Mariani enlisted the help of the Italian consulate in São Paulo to have the archive shipped to his house in Milan within a matter of days. The end result was that, after many demands, consultations with lawyers in Milan, countless letters to authorities and to Mariani himself, the archive was eventually transferred to the Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana at Castello Sforzesco in Milan, albeit with some notable absences, such as the letters of Ezra Pound, which were not handed over by Mariani.

Bardi's most frequent letters were to Mario da Silva<sup>27</sup>, the friend who had received the Bardis upon their arrival in Rio de Janeiro in 1946, and to Ettore

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24 The Bardi archive in the Instituto is in the process of being reorganized.

25 An example is his correspondence with Le Corbusier, which he was luckily convinced not to hand over and can now be read at the Instituto Lina Bo and P.M. Bardi. Bardi wanted to write a book about his relationship with the architect, which he published in 1984 under the title *Lembrança de Le Corbusier: Atenas, Itália, Brasil*, published by Nobel, with a preface by Alexandre Eulálio.

26 Born in Mogi-Mirim in 1881, he was a typographer, journalist and anarchist. He died in São Paulo in 1968. Leuenroth put together one of the biggest archives in existence on the labor and anarchist movements.

27 A journalist born in Rio de Janeiro, he lived in Europe from 1925 to 1937. He and his wife, Lillo, were good friends of the Bardis; he died in Rio in 1991.

Camesasca<sup>28</sup>, whose knowledge of Italian art was of great use to Bardi. He also corresponded with Mario Modestini<sup>29</sup>, a former partner in Studio d'Arte Palma in Rome, and a well-known restorer who later settled in New York; with the designer Roberto Sambonet<sup>30</sup>, a friend of his and Lina's; with the powerful *marchand* Daniel Wildenstein<sup>31</sup>, with whom he consulted on the art market and works of art. And with Libreria Salimbeni, in Florence, a bookseller from which he liked to purchase books. From his first meeting with his biographer, Francesco Tentori<sup>32</sup>, their correspondence was intense. However, he was respectful toward all those who wrote to him and never let a letter go unanswered, regardless of the subject.

Bardi expressed his ideas, and promoted MASP, in his weekly column in the magazines *IstoÉ* and *IstoÉ/Senhor*, directed by Mino Carta, and he also occasionally contributed to the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper and other vehicles. His humanism was fully displayed in many of these writings. On May 11, 1951, in the local Italian newspaper *Fanfulla*, he published a text entitled "Un'enciclopedia brasiliana", in which he suggested undertaking a major series of books about Brazil. It was not the only time he would speak about the project; in the 1980s, on the prestigious Page 3 of *Folha de S. Paulo*, he returned to the subject, suggesting to then-Minister for Culture José Aparecido the publication of a large "Encyclopedia" about Brazil. The suggestion irked the academic and great linguist Antônio Houaiss<sup>33</sup>, who, days later, published a letter of protest against Bardi's idea, on the grounds that the encyclopedias Delta-Larousse and Mirador Internacional had already been compiled. However, it should be noted that these were only published in 1972 and 1976 respectively, while Bardi's first article on the matter dates to 1951.

Irreverent, with a well-known verve, Bardi never hesitated to say what he thought. He could be sexist, especially when he saw a woman, such as Aracy Amaral or Sheila Leirner, start to make a name for herself as an art critic, a lot of this was also to cause a stir. He sometimes had to retract his statements, as times had changed. Yet, however humorous he was about these matters, it was obvious they displeased him.

He was, above all, a huge personality who was respected the length and breadth of Brazil. He was also popular. He accepted an invitation to sit on the jury for Miss Brazil, known as he was as an eternal admirer of beautiful women.

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28 Ettore Camesasca (1922 – 1995) Italian art historian who worked at the museum shortly before I started there. He was primed to be Bardi's successor, but, for a number of reasons, this never transpired. Their friendship cooled for a period, but was later rekindled. Camesasca researched the museum's collection and wrote the catalogues for MASP's exhibitions in Europe, held from 1987 on.

29 Mario Modestini (Rome, 1907 – New York, 2006).

30 Roberto Sambonet (Vercelli, 1924 – Milan, 1995).

31 Daniel Wildenstein (Verrières-le-Buisson, 1917 – Paris 2001).

32 Francesco Tentori (Tarcento, 1931 – Udine, 2011). He was researcher and professor at the University of Venice.

33 Antônio Houaiss (Rio de Janeiro, 1915 – 1999).

A meeting with Bardi at the museum, whether for a chat or for a tour, was a must for all illustrious visitors to São Paulo. One notable case was that of John Cage, who was stunned by MASP while having a stroll along Paulista Avenue during his time here at the Bienal de São Paulo. He was recognized by a passerby, who took him up to the first floor and asked to speak with Bardi. Bardi obliged, and they chatted awhile in the corridor, where he heard the American declare that “this is the architecture of freedom”.

Japanese committees and even members of the Japanese royal family also visited. There was great respect for the man who, in 1972, took part of the museum’s precious European collection on a tour of several Japanese cities, at a time when this was still unheard of among European institutions, unlike today. You could say he started this opening, and MASP would hold many other exhibitions in Japan during Bardi’s administration.

Bardi donated works of art to MASP and to other museums<sup>34</sup>, but few know that he made a particularly important donation to the IPHAN of some large drawings made by Le Corbusier in Rio de Janeiro in 1938, and which he had bought from the architect. He could have made a lot of money selling them in Europe or to some university or other, but he wanted them to remain here, in the country that had adopted him and whose culture he had helped develop. In a sense, this donation closed a circle: Pietro Maria and Lina Bo Bardi, enchanted by Brazil and its architecture from their very arrival, repaid their welcome with a gift of drawings by another modernist, Le Corbusier.

Of course, the most significant donations Bardi and Lina made to Brazil were their house in Morumbi, São Paulo, the Casa de Vidro, a milestone in modern architecture, and the institute that bears their names, Instituto Lina Bo and P.M. Bardi. The Glass House is today home to their Brazilian legacy: a documental archive, paintings, sculptures and objects preserved by an art and architecture research center.

In a sense, one could say that these avant-garde figures gradually supplanted the patron Chateaubriand, who turned in other directions and, after years of ill-health, disappeared, leaving what little remained of his media empire. In short, they remained loyal to the man who had supported them, but they held their own reins, occupied their own space and, in such an expressive manner, left an indelible mark on Brazilian culture through their work in museums, architecture and other fields.

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34 It is worth noting that Lina also donated a small painting by Tarsila do Amaral to MAM-BA.