

Pietro Maria Bardi in Brazil: art history, criticism and chronicle

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At all times and in all places upon the earth, man, in his intentional necessity to improve his lot, and therefore his civilization, to progress constantly in his work, has left his mark upon the world through the ingenuity, grace, imagination and feeling with which he modifies natural elements in pursuit of the beautiful...¹

The above quote is found in *Pequena História da Arte* [A Brief History of Art], which Pietro Maria Bardi published in 1958², largely based on texts written for the first didactic exhibitions on art history held at MASP in São Paulo between 1947 and 1951. While Bardi was not a systematic or rigorous thinker, the proposition evinces a general line the Italian critic adopted over the course of his activities in Brazil. For Bardi, there was a close link between artistic creation, work and technique that potentially encompassed all human attempts at modifying nature. This ranging notion perhaps explains why the critic defended the existence of a single notion of art. In all cultures, regardless of time or geographic location, one can perceive the same constant phenomenon: man's attempt to transcend his natural needs through *techne*. In other words, his striving for greater efficiency in the fulfillment of his material needs constantly introduced new technical possibilities that out-performed the old solutions and transformed the world in the process. Seen from this perspective, what varies is the level of technical development achieved by a people and time, in accordance with the existing material conditions, tools and limitations. These arguments would seem to expand on those presented by Pier Luigi Nervi in his 1933 article *Problemi dell'architetto*, published in *Casabella* magazine, directed by Giuseppe Pagano³. Nervi spoke of beauty as transcending utility and functionality through the bold novelty of the solutions permitted by the technical repertoire, introducing new qualities and values. It was not, therefore, merely a case of looking to the functionalist aesthetic of rationalism for the most adequate values of modernity, but of perceiving the aesthetic value of the new technical possibilities that lead, at each phase, to a surpassing of their antecedents. The first didactic exhibitions at MASP illustrated this conception. As Bardi would himself relate, the most notable and original aspect of the recently-founded MASP was its space devoted to adult education. This was a 12 by 30-meter hall containing 84 large glass panels set

1 BARDI, Pietro Maria. *Pequena História da Arte*. São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1958, p.9.

2 Ibid. p. 2.

3 NERVI, Pier Luigi. "Problemi dell'architetto", *Casabella*, VI, 1933, n. 5, p. 34.

into a structure of metal tubing. These panels displayed a selection of printed photographs, engravings, three tone prints and texts that provided an annotated history of art arranged chronologically and per geographic region. In terms of graphic presentation, the result was something similar to photomontage, which Bardi specialized in during the 1930s while working in visual programming for such magazines as *Quadrante*⁴. Alongside the didactic exhibitions, the museum's premises on Rua Sete de Abril also housed the *Vitrine das formas*, display cabinets thirty meters long stocked with artistic and utilitarian objects from different places and times, indicating various approaches to their conceptualization and production, which could help the public interpret and comprehend their graphic aspect.

The first didactic exhibition, the museum's inaugural show, presented a "synthetic panorama of the history of art from pre-historic times to the present day" through 76 panels containing 1,500 photographs and 8 chronological panels with explanatory text. This show gave rise to a succession of others examining a range of themes. The first one of these, held in 1949, was *Desenvolvimento das ideias abstracionistas na História da arte*. The exhibition started out from ancient Greece and, like its predecessor, had the poet and philologist Emilio Villa in a consulting role. As a scholar of Semitic and ancient Mediterranean philology, Villa was a point of contact with the universe of Italian archaeology and paleontology. The exhibition's tone can, in some ways, be likened to the themes covered by the archeologist Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, who published a book entitled *Organicità e astrazione* in 1956, based on a series of conferences administered in 1950 at the Dutch Institute in Rome. In a letter, Bardi mentions other didactic exhibitions underway on a number of specific themes and epochs, such as prehistoric, Greek, Roman and paleochristian art⁵, and the image of the feminine in art history. In fact, in July 1950, after a six-month closure for renovation, MASP reopened with the didactical exhibition *Pré-história e povos primitivos*. The content and museography of the didactic exhibitions were developed by Bardi and a group of young intellectuals, historians, archaeologists and architects working for the *Studio d'Arte Palma*, the gallery and restoration laboratory Bardi had founded in Rome in 1945 and under the coordination of Emilio Villa. From the letters Bardi exchanged with Villa, conserved at the Library and Archives of the MASP, we know that the co-organizers included the art historians Federico Zeri and Giuliano Briganti and architects connected with the *Associazione per l'architettura organica* and *Metron* magazine, both founded by Bruno Zevi in 1945, such as Cino Calcaprina, Silvio and Laura Radiconcini, Luigi Piccinato, and Zevi himself⁶.

4 About *Quadrante*, see: RIFKIND, David. *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2013; and, in this volume, RIFKIND, David. *Pietro Maria Bardi, Quadrante and the architecture of Fascist Italy*. The visual programming of these exhibitions also recalls the French publications of the time, such as Christian Zervos' magazine and volumes *Cahiers de l'art*, devoted to ancient Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern civilizations, publications with which Bardi and Villa were certainly familiar, and which Bardi mentions in letters praising the quality of their photographic reproductions.

5 Unaddressed letter in French by Pietro Maria Bardi, dated April 20, 1949. In: POLITANO, Stela. *Exposição Didática e Vitrine das Formas. A Didática do Museu de Arte de São Paulo*. Masters dissertation at IFCH UNICAMP, 2010, p. 221.

6 See: COLOMBO, Davide. "Arti visive e dintorni". In: PARMIGGIANI, C. (org.). *Emilio Villa: poeta e scrittore*. Milano: Mazzotta, 2008, pp. 285 - 304; POLITANO, Stela, op. cit.

Despite the difficulties of reconstructing these exhibitions and their many later versions with any exactitude, as the same exhibits were probably recombined in different ways, we can find a close relationship between this material and Bardi's book *Pequena história da arte*, published by Melhoramentos in 1958, a compilation of the training courses he gave to MASP monitors. Many of the pictures used on the panels were also used to illustrate this volume, so it can be considered something of a record and summary of part of the work that went into the exhibitions. Bardi's text goes a long way toward clarifying some of the ideas that guided these didactic exhibitions and the MASP project in general. One of the most interesting of these underpinning notions is, once again, the interrelation between things of everyday use and the work of art:

We cannot therefore consider the artwork as artistic produce even when it makes no intimate references to everyday, common usage. In fact, it must be said that the artistic product is invested with an altogether stronger and higher necessity: it not only expresses need, but also desire, that is, the power and impulse to go beyond simple necessity.

The graphic panels worked in tandem with the *Vitrine das formas* in which primitive artefacts were displayed alongside works of art and industrial wares, with no chronological divide. Besides concretely exemplifying the graphic content, this arrangement deepened the investigations concerning the work of art. The sequence in which the exhibitions appeared gradually deconstructs any evolutionary conception of art history. Rather it proposes that art be approached as an a-temporal phenomenon of human existence, in which the consideration of each work goes beyond its chronological context, external meanings and relationship with the material culture of its day. This made particular sense in terms of understanding the history of art in Brazil, where primitive material cultures still co-exist with the most advanced modernity.

To see a work is to justify it, associate it with others, ferment its value and place it within the existing artistic patrimony. But it is also necessary to see the work in its creative act, its values of volume and color, and to do that means educating one's sensibility so that it can reflect the sensibility of the work's creator.

Understanding the creative process as the result of interaction between material and technique lays the foundations for an understanding of art that has no evolutionist undertones:

Progress is only ever technical; a progressive mastery of material is what will enable man to express everything he has wanted to say since his first day upon the earth, when, eyes wide at the wonders of the world, all he could extract from his soul was an awestruck grunt, a cry that will echo for as long as man is man⁷.

This wonderstruck cry of the first men is the primordial equivalent of contemporary man's most refined acts of technical mastery over matter, and thus reveals the universal nature of art and how it beggars all spatiotemporal

7 BARDI, Pietro Maria, 1958, op. cit., p. 19.

classifications. This conception of art was central to a museum institution that sought to help shape a modern culture in a context with the specific historical and economic conditions of Brazil at the time of MASP's founding.

While Europe lay in ruins and cultural crisis, Brazil, which had savored a certain industrial development in the 1930s and 40s, due to the World War II, was in the throes of major change, trying to democratize after the end of Estado Novo's dictatorship and buoyed by economic growth and the engagement of the masses with public life. Bardi and his wife Lina had left a ravaged Italy and come to Brazil with a keen interest in the variety of local situations. For the Bardis, whose vision matched that of a minority, but important contingent of Brazil's cultural elite, the modernization underway here, and already running the risk of becoming just another phase in a long history of cultural dependence, had to establish itself upon the rich roots of the local culture. This notion of the existence of two contradictory options for modernization and the need to choose a path that accentuated the plurality of the existing cultures gained momentum in the Bardis' endeavors over the years. It was in this co-existence between the primitive and the modern that the couple glimpsed Brazil's potential on the contemporary cultural horizon. As Lina wrote in 1961:

Brazil is embroiled in a cultural battle. In the next ten, maybe five years the country will have drafted its cultural plan and plotted a definitive course toward becoming either a nation with an autonomous culture, drawn from its own roots, or an inauthentic country clinging to imported and inefficient schemas... An exhausting search among the tangle of inheritances snobbishly disdained by a ramshackle critical corps that dismisses them as regionalism and folklore.⁸

In contrast with Europe, culturally stagnant and closed to new proposals, America, free of the weight of tradition, seemed to be fertile ground for a new aesthetic culture to flourish in.

As Pietro Maria Bardi wrote: "So I am of the opinion that the Americas will really be the first to grasp the educational function of the new museums...It seems to me that, here in Brazil, people understand that audacious ideas are never utopias and utopias are never audacious"⁹.

Most major European museums were used to exhibit their own national histories and were still bound to the old role of conservator of the historical and cultural tradition of the nation. MASP infused this new context with ideas forged in Italy during the cultural debate of the 1930s, but transformed in the light of a post-war cultural crisis and the problems posed by the expansion of the capitalist economic model beyond the European cultural domain. Perhaps South America was the ideal place for Bardi's "cultural revolution" to take place:

⁸ BO BARDI, Lina; DE CARVALHO FERRAZ, Marcelo. *Lina Bo Bardi*. São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi, 2008, p. 141. See also: BO BARDI, Lina. *Tempos de grossura. O design no impasse*. São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi, 1994, especially the chapter *Arte popular e preartesanato nordestino*, pp. 28 ss.

⁹ BARDI, Pietro Maria. "Musées hors des limites", *Habitat*, n. 4. São Paulo, 1951, p. 50. Italian translation in: TENTORI, Francesco. *P. M. Bardi*. São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, 2000, pp. 188-191.

If genuinely responsible intellectuals recognize that a new age is dawning and that we are on the brink of revolution, a cultural revolution, then the question of education leaps into the foreground and our museum, or anti-museum, as I like to call it, has to be taken into consideration¹⁰.

As of 1950, the publication of *Habitat* magazine intensified the circulation of the new ideas brought to Brazil by the Bardis, who, with the express intention of using the museum to promote the development of a modern national culture, started to treat design, the plastic arts and architecture as aspects of popular material culture.

Two pieces published in *Habitat*, one by Lina Bo Bardi and the other by Pietro Maria Bardi, presenting the MASP to the local and international public, are as revealing as they are brief, outlining the issues the museum would broach in an active and didactic manner.

Lina's text, *Museu de Arte de São Paulo*, was published in the first issue of the magazine and highlighted the museum's didactic vocation, its social function in consonance with the needs of a Brazilian context hitherto largely unaware of the important function of artistic and aesthetic education in modern industrial societies. Pietro Maria Bardi's piece, entitled *Musée hors des limites*, published in the fourth issue of the magazine—in French, due to having previously been presented at a UNESCO meeting—stressed MASP's innovative character in comparison with the European museums. As an institution geared towards promoting the arts, MASP had to stimulate the cultural development of society as a whole, contributing to the formation of a public apt to the nation's new situation. Brazil was on the cusp of major social changes driven by economic development. The emergence of an autonomous modern culture could not ignore the input of a variety of different original cultures that were the living expressions of human conditions that were very distinct geographically, historically and economically. In Brazil, hunter-gatherers lived alongside farmers; subsistence fishing and husbandry continued in the shadow of technology and the most modern industry. The museum had to become a laboratory, a place for comparing different conceptions of aesthetics and material culture, where the public could have access to themes that were fundamental to the construction of a modern society. From that general conception came the negation of historicism, an understanding of art as a phenomenon closely bound up with *techne*, social intervention through the didactic and propositional function of the courses on offer; an attempt to bring the museum to the masses by desacralizing its spaces and artworks, defending the unity of the arts, and placing the emphasis on cultural action through all possible media, whether in print, on radio or even the first broadcasts of TV Tupi, founded by MASP's patron, Assis Chateaubriand.

The Bardis' view of this American condition, particularly the Latin-American and Brazilian condition, is important to any understanding of the museological conception. If the United States, the big victors in the war, represented the full development of the modern economic and political technical rationality, Latin

10 Ibid, p.51

America, Brazil, São Paulo were the places in which to measure the possibility of creating a culture that also included alterity, the primitive, the distant, the place of pre-modern thought and could therefore help create a new vision of modernity. If the United States was the model Europe adopted in its attempt to build a future, Latin America would endeavor to rethink the model historically constructed in Europe by approaching it from an anthropological perspective, in which the unity of the arts proposed by the modernists would take on a whole new meaning. The museum's collection, made up of works of ancient and modern art, mostly European, desacralized and placed in fluid relation to the fare of folk and industrial culture, would not only serve to crystallize a given vision of history, but stimulate the perception of aesthetic qualities that abide over time:

We do not want art conserved in an old 18th-century museum, in the same lazy way we've always known. What we want is a school of life in which the things of art are presented in their most classical qualities; that is, in their surest, most persuasive, most modern and most eternal features¹¹.

It was for this very reason that Bardi always refused to call his creation a "Museum of Ancient and Modern Art", as Assis Chateaubriand urged him to do, but opted instead for the less time-specific "Museum of Art". This conviction culminated in a form of exhibition that rejected all temporal distinctions, creating fluid spaces in which history could be conveyed through works of art, objects of use and reproductions, seeking to evoke surprise through a personal approach released from the filters of preconceived classifications, although each exhibition did suggest new classifications of its own. As such, the notion of the unified arts came to identify with the aim of social transformation through art and its constant relationship with the sphere of work. As Bardi put it: "The unity of the arts means: the participation of art in society and its contribution to its systematized future".

This understanding of culture as a single domain that encompasses and values equally all those manifestations previously considered antagonistic provided the base for Bardi's MASP program, characterized by a wide-ranging notion of art that sought to incorporate all living creative powers into the modernization of the cultural field.

If we look closely at this context we will see that the proposals drafted at MASP aimed towards an active participation in the modernization of Brazilian society. Bardi explained this idea in the text *Musée hors de limites*:

We need to conceive of new museums beyond the narrow limits and prescriptions of traditional museology: living organisms, not with the restricted mission of informing, but of educating.

[...]

I have so often thought that art, once created, is lined up in a museum, catalogued,

*boxed, hung on a wall, shoved into a showcase. Art that is the renascent germ of our life, is made to congeal: it is born from a fertile act, endless, boundless, timeless, and it wants to be preserved, but as a germ, not a relic.*¹²

In this sense, the museum did not limit itself to handling the traditional arts alone, but strove to accommodate every available form of artistic expression. Making space for film, theater, music, it sought to roll all expressive activities into a ball of culture, over and above any system of technical differentiation. This made it the museum of art Bardi had aimed for, with no adjectives to limit its scope.

In the light of these precepts, it is important to examine how Pietro Maria Bardi's work in Brazil ensued. Of particular interest are his intense activities as a journalist, historian and art critic, the author of numerous books of a general scope, such as *História da Arte Brasileira*, 1975, and others on such specific themes as Brazilian sculpture, ceramics, photography and typography, but also as an "arts chronicler", as he defined himself, the author of pieces published in the magazines *Habitat*, co-directed with Lina in the 1950s, *Mirante das Artes*, published in 1967 and 1968, *Senhor* and *Isto é senhor*, and *Vogue* from the 1970s on. This activity remains to be fully documented through a comprehensive study of Bardi's writings. Also important is his frenetic work as an organizer of exhibitions.

The cultural and political repression that came with the military dictatorship installed in 1964, in an increasingly somber Latin-American backdrop, the death of the museum's main benefactor, Assis Chateaubriand in 1968, and the emergence of a new cultural industry in Brazil, with a new public that was increasingly dependent on TV networks, forced Bardi, always sensitive to the systemic changes induced in the media by political and social changes, to revise his strategy and set out in search of support from São Paulo industries.

To this end, Bardi returned to his journalistic activities, mostly in publications belonging to the Abril group, and later Carta Editorial, both directed by Luis Carta. Bardi was convinced that the cultural battle could only be waged through the mass media, writing: "art, from the professionals and from the aspirants, and that includes the brave primitives and petulant amateurs, needs the newspaper/radio/TV *battage*."¹³

He clearly foresaw the present-day relationship between aesthetics and mass communication and saw it as a determining factor on the field of art, as on its inseparable fields of design and consumption. Bardi wrote:

*The advent of industry contributed to aesthetic changes... Now the useful and the usable come from factories, from machinery, from the computers imposed by marketing and advertising. The latter control one typical phenomenon of progress: fashion, which has become an accelerated and uncontrollable motor.*¹⁴

¹² Ibid, p. 50 and following.

¹³ BARDI, Pietro Maria. "A antiguidade de vanguardas: excessos e conveniências da Bienal paulistana", *Senhor*, 16/10/1985, p. 81.

¹⁴ BARDI, Pietro Maria. "História de um namoro que deu certo. P. M. Bardi faz revelações sobre a alquimia do nosso século: como tirar arte da indústria e da propaganda", *Senhor*, 7/10/1978, pp. 98-101.

Bardi demanded recognition of the pioneering role MASP and its didactic initiatives played in gleaning this connection between art, advertising and fashion:

It was the author of this book who, as director of the Museum of Art, inaugurated, in 1950, the first two schools in these fields: the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, set up to train industrial artists, and the Escola de Propaganda, established as an alternative to constant US imports by training Brazilian graphic artists and designers. That same year saw a third initiative: the launch of a Brazilian women's fashion, which was considered eccentric at the time¹⁵.

Thus Bardi continued with the premises of the didactic activities begun at the museum in order to focus on design, understood as a system that integrated the project for an object and its market insertion through communication and advertising. In Brazil, this meant demanding the recognition of the relevance of art and popular crafts to the creation of an autonomous design culture. These reflections were also fruit of Lina Bo Bardi's experience as director of the MAP in Salvador, Bahia, between 1959 and 1964, and her collaboration with Martim Gonçalves and other intellectuals from the Brazilian Northeast, which gave rise to the 1959 exhibition Bahia no Ibirapuera and to the exhibition of popular art closed down by the military regime in Salvador in 1964. A document of this phase in the Italian architect's activities is the book *Tempos de grossura: o design no impasse*, published in 1980, which contains texts written decades earlier by Jorge Amado, Ariano Suassuna, Paulo Gil Xavier, and Glauber Rocha¹⁶.

Bardi dedicated a whole issue of *Senhor* to the subject of design, which opened with news of a collaboration between FIAT and Jean Dubuffet, an artist known for his contributions to Art Brut, the spontaneous art. This might well have indicated a possible line of cooperation between artists and industrialists, one that was viable given the conditions of the Brazilian economy at the time, which drew its manpower from masses of migrant workers, mostly from the Northeast. These migrants brought to São Paulo their subsistence culture and popular crafts, so highly valued by Lina in Bahia, as a counterweight to a forced modernization after the Western industrial model.

Bardi also defended Brazilian art's autonomy in relation to imported styles and fads. In general, Bardi saw the genuinely Brazilian as being connected with vernacular, pre-artisanal, spontaneous attempts:

For better or for worse, Brazilian architecture was always cast from European molds. From baroque to neoclassicism, from the 19th-century mélange to rationalism, it always took its lead from abroad. Initiatives geared towards autonomy have been few, and confined to spontaneous architecture, (...) [in which we can see] an aesthetic appearing as a consequence.

In the various periods dealt with in *História da arte brasileira: pintura, escul-*

15 BARDI, Pietro Maria. *História da arte brasileira*, op. cit., p. 219.

16 BO BARDI, Lina. *Tempos de grossura...*, op. cit..

*tura, arquitetura e outras artes*¹⁷, Bardi relates a range of object typologies and diverse artistic manifestations. Indigenous objects, architectonic elements (paving, decorations, tiles, doors), aspects of design, religious articles (altar palms, brotherhood bulletin boards, silver jars and dishes for celebrating mass) and things of everyday use (gold necklaces, chairs, couches, armchairs, stools, trundle beds, sofas, benches, tables of all sorts, goldsmith's desks, chests of drawers, tin-can lamps, assorted knickknacks), always stressing the originality of Brazilian craftwork. This focus on popular crafts was justifiable, seeing as craftspeople and artisans intuitively follow the regional economic, spatial, temporal and technological specificities within their own aesthetic cultures.

Certain exhibitions held over the course of MASP's long history are strong indicators of Bardi's defense of an expanded art field and the need to tear down the barriers between erudite and popular production. For example, the exhibition *Arte no Brasil: uma história de cinco séculos* questioned the distinction between "higher art" and "lower art" by exhibiting elements of anonymous production from everyday life alongside the works of master painters and sculptors. In this exhibition, Bardi explained: "Yes, you have your Friar Agostinho, Vitor Meirelles and Portinari, but art is also the work of the Northeastern carpenters who produced such masterpieces as sugar mills, and the boilermakers with their copper stills".

On the other hand, Bardi always worked hard to make his museum the São Paulo showcase for the very best international output in design and graphic design, as well as themes relating to technological innovations and the use of IT in designing public environments. In 1970, he presented the exhibition *Desenho industrial da Escandinávia*, followed, in 1973, by *Desenho industrial da Argentina* and *A Ideia Braun* a year later. That same year, MASP hosted the exhibitions *Tempo dos modernistas* and *Bauhaus*. The show on the modernists was to be the first installment of a larger research project on images and industrialization in São Paulo, which would illustrate the origins of the city's industrial culture, of considerable historiographical relevance, the project approached the modern phenomenon in Brazil as part of a material culture no longer restricted to the higher arts. Through these exhibitions Bardi hoped to reinforce the museum's international role in relation to Brazilian society and, moreover, rally the local society's support for the museum's function as a space in which to construct the collective memory of the industrial metropolis.

A mão do povo brasileiro, held in 1969, was the first exhibition at MASP's new premises on Paulista Avenue, and it offered an overview of popular Brazilian art from the different regions of the nation, with special emphasis on the Northeast, thus making a significant contribution to a new take on Brazilian art history. On this exhibition, Pietro Maria Bardi wrote:

The material presented here, if approached objectively by those who are interested in this sector of the Humanities, constitutes a notable body of documentation from which to lay new foundations for a history of the art of the Brazilian people. It is, as you will know, the national memory, the essential condition for the continuity of

17 2nd edition, São Paulo: Melhoramentos, 1975.

culture, suffering rapid and irreversible damage due to a simple lack of records, of works and agents. Of course, only the registration of facts will be of no use. We have to locate objects of art (a term that should apply to everything that is manufactured in liberty) in their sociocultural contexts, discover the role they play in the group, explain their origins and their relationship to their surroundings.¹⁸

The passage above shows Bardi's concern (one he shared with Lina) with the disappearance of a material culture that could provide the basis for an autonomous national culture, free of the impositions of the global economic system. That culture could not be preserved as a museum's object alone, but only through the preservation of the craft itself, as part of the non-homologizing project of a modern country.

Another exhibition, *Artesanato e desenho industrial* presented the anonymous work of the Brazilian folk artist, who "succeeds in manifesting his aesthetic spontaneously". The exhibition *O Design no Brasil, história e realidade*, held at MASP in 1982 to mark the inauguration of the Pompeia Factory, remodeled by Lina Bo Bardi into SESC Pompeia, in a reaffirmation of the Bardis' hybrid vision, devoted half of its catalogue to indigenous objects, tools, 19th-century packaging and household objects, commercial items, and advertising posters from the 1940s, and the other half to graphic objects, furniture, and utensils created by designers from the 1950s on.

Along similar lines was the exhibition *A arte do povo brasileiro*, held in 1986, exhibiting the collection of popular art amassed by the French architect Jacques Van de Beuque, now under the care of the Museu do Pontal in Rio de Janeiro. The exhibition catalogue carried a text entitled *O popular e o museu*, in which Bardi once again defended MASP's open character and its essential role in accruing value to craftwork culture in the face of modernization.

Bardi's career as director of the museum came to a close in 1989, leading to a crisis of identity at the institution that continues to this day. The international significance of Lina Bo Bardi's work is now widely recognized, but it is important to highlight the indispensable contribution Pietro Maria Bardi made in promoting a cultural project of major relevance not only to Brazil, but to the international panorama of his day. Formed by the struggle to modernize architecture and art in 1930s Italy, under the conditions dictated by the fascist regime, Bardi was able to turn MASP into more than just the most important collection of European art in Latin America, but also a living center of discussion, education through art, and aesthetic and industrial culture, without which it would be impossible to imagine São Paulo as it is today, in its positive aspects at least. Bardi is an example of how we should face the problems of the contemporary world, standing with courage and intelligence against the dominion of economic logic and intellectual conformism that came to cloud his legacy.

¹⁸ BARDI, Pietro Maria, *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro: como fazer as coisas sem ter com que além de si próprio*, transcription from the MASP Archive. In: CARA, Milene. *Difusão e construção do design no Brasil: o papel do MASP*. Doctoral thesis, FAU USP, 2012, p. 174.