

After being part of the curatorial team for the 31st São Paulo Biennial in 2014, Pablo Lafuente worked at the Universidade Federal do Sul da Bahia (UFSB) as a visiting professor from September 2015 to June 2016. This interview aims to take an in-depth look at the University's educational goals, understand its contribution to the creation of tools promoting epistemodiversity in what is, to date, a profoundly Eurocentric academic world, explore the difficulties in this process, and investigate the role of art in this transformation of the University and of the region.

María Íñigo.- To begin with, what would you say are the main changes occurring in the UFSB with regard to the Western concept of the "university"?
Pablo Lafuente.- There are a number of movements at the heart of the UFSB project that run counter to what I believe are some of the classical university-related assumptions or practices. Three of these – and I don't know if they're the most important ones, but I do believe they are key ones – are universality, specialization and, on this basis, hierarchies (of knowledge, of people, etc.). In contrast, the UFSB proposes localism, interdisciplinarity, the opening up of the academic context to non-academic knowledge and an educational approach not based on transmission.

However, before we begin, I think it is important to talk of programmatic inclinations or interests, rather than ruptures that are there from the very start. The project is a proposal designed in a programmatic founding document by a group of people – a proposal that civil servants (both academic and non-academic), students and the surrounding community must subsequently put into operation (or not) and adapt, in line with their interests and priorities. In fact, after four years, a short lifespan, the University is witnessing a number of internal conflicts between those responsible for designing the project and some professors who do not appear to agree with the processes and priorities established from the beginning. Recently, Naomar Almeida Filho, the founding rector, resigned from his post in response to the attitudes of some professors which he denounced as opposing the project's spirit, and announced that he would not be running for the elections to the rectorship that would soon be taking place.² As I see it, the dispute is partly about who decides upon what the University is or wants to be and how, about hierarchies and personalities, and about the role of local communities that are neither professors, nor students, nor civil servants. I think it can be said that these are "conventional" disputes that are also affecting the rest of the country, in which the political and economic situation has been changing, or rather worsening, at a dizzying speed over the course of the last 12 months.

Having said that, I would talk of the UFSB as an eminently local educational (and political) intervention, actively and explicitly focused on potential students from the region, and with the goal of providing a response to very local priorities, dynamics and demands. The region, the south of Bahia, is part of the imaginary of the creation of the Brazilian state, as it is the coastline where the Portuguese landed in 1500, and has been afflicted by extreme exploitation dynamics for more than 500 years. The University is set in three cities, Itabuna, Porto Seguro and Teixeira de Freitas, located along a 370-kilometre-long line running from north to south, parallel to the coast (with Itabuna to the north, Porto Seguro roughly in the middle and Teixeira to the south). It is a very low-income region, dominated by vast cattle and eucalyptus farms and, in the Porto Seguro area, by a rampant tourist industry.

This local mission is guaranteed, in part, by a Social Strategic Council made up of members of the region's communities (rural workers' communities, indigenous communities, businesspersons and representatives of other local stakeholders) whose deliberations and conclusions provide guidance for the processes within the University (although its positions are not binding). The Council's perspective compensates for the fact that the professors and a large amount of the civil servants have arrived only recently, hired to move to the region from other, mainly urban, areas. The presence of the Council, and the local mission, necessarily implies relativizing the processes of producing and transmitting academic knowledge, which are sometimes not appropriate for the circumstances or which clash with others with which they may or may not be compatible. This could break down the barriers between areas of knowledge wherever they may be found, and their specific protocols.

MI.- The art department teaching programme has a special focus on "Amerindian and African arts and cultural practices, rebuilt in different contexts of American territory, including the field of metropolitan areas". How is epistemodiversity constructed at the UFSB?

PL.- Firstly and simply, in the construction of a new catalogue of references: one not focusing on modern practices and premises (be they European or American) but on the practices of Pre-Columbian peoples, contemporary indigenous communities or the descendants of black peoples. These references provide a basis on which to shape the practice of art. And even for questioning it, given the fact that many of these traditions have a conception and practice that does not restrict art to being a "separate" discipline. Exchanges with traditional craftspeople, with indigenous people who could be categorized as artists (whilst being aware of the fact that this is an imposed classification), with communities in which cultural and political agency breaks free from individualist or "experimental" criteria... this direct contact, either in "classroom" situations or encounters outside of it, is also key in educating towards practices that respond to different paradigms.

MI.- In the first year, professors give classes in the University College Network (CUNI), as part of a teaching programme that takes place in secondary schools. In other words, the University goes out in search of students instead of expecting them to come to the University. What is the percentage of indigenous students?

PL.- More than a search for students, this is an activity that arises from the University's mission to become involved in the local context, as I mentioned at the start. In a region in which public education has been very much neglected by the authorities, the University puts the emphasis on educating teachers in partnership with secondary education institutions. So, in places close to the three cities in which the campuses are located, secondary education centres organize one-year courses offering an independent qualification that, at the same time, acts as an introduction to the university. This way the university steps out of its "comfort zone" to operate in other contexts, to make itself more familiar to different groups and, at the same time, confronting its teachings and its professors with other realities. And that's what opens up the door to a relationship with the University, both for those who want limited contact with it and for those who seek to take part in degree courses.

This strategy is not specific to the local indigenous population, but has the goal of making contact with the greatest possible number of people in the region. It's true that there is a large number of Pataxó in the Porto Seguro and Prado regions, and Tupinambá in Olivença in the north and Pataxó Há Há Hã in Pau Brasil, with their cultural and political specificities, but, at the same time, they are also affected by the same things as the rest of the local population, particularly with regard to limited economic resources and poor access to basic services. Additionally, the region has a population with an indigenous origin that does not recognize itself as indigenous or is not recognized as indigenous. So, there are indigenous students in the CUNI and at the university, in different areas, and they receive, as do quilombola students, a special grant as part of the Student Permanence Programme from the Ministry of Education.

MI.- How does this subvert the elitism of Brazilian universities, where only those students who can afford to study their secondary education in private schools can attain the level required to enrol in a free, public university?

PL.- Access to public universities has historically been difficult, particularly for courses such as Medicine and, as you say, the selection processes favour those students who have not gone through the public secondary education system. During the governments of Lula and Dilma, things changed, especially at the federal universities and, until, even the most reluctant universities, such as the USP, are introducing racial and social quotas. But access to university education in Brazil is still, generally speaking, defined along class and race lines. The UFSB's approach with regard to this situation is one that could be described as "shock tactics", with the adoption of 75% quotas for students from specific social contexts, literally reflecting the demographics of the region in which it is located.

MI.- The first year of the academic curriculum avoids separating academic disciplines, and all students, irrespective of their degree course, study the same subjects, although they are not defined as subjects, but rather "curricular components". What have the results been?

PL.- Students begin contact with the University's interdisciplinary programme with a series of, as you say, "curricular components" common to all, which introduce general, methodological and contextual matters, and which aim to be places for thinking of the University as a project, its methods, its functions, its potential... The goal is not for students to enter university to undergo a training process, but rather to do so through spaces that think through the university in general and the UFSB in particular, the overall context of Brazil and, more specifically, the south of Bahia; the socio-political and cultural role of education and the forms of social inclusion of the professionals emerging from a university education, the ways of connecting the practices of different academic areas and of non-academic contexts... In short, learning how to dismantle the academic apparatus and, from the moment they enter university, participating in building the project. It could perhaps be summed up by saying that the emphasis is on what the social and political uses of educational training and academic knowledge could be, and not only on education itself.

The option of "components" as an alternative to "disciplines" or "subjects" aims to avoid "disciplinary" distinctions and also provides for the possibility of constructing an educational trajectory in which the different components result in a singular, personal experience, without distinguishing between main or "major" fields and subsidiary or "minor" ones, in which the components are coupled and permeate each other.

MI.- What contribution does art make to this reconfiguration? There's a curricular component called "Regimes of the Sensible", for example, offered by the art department. What does this consist of?

PL.- "Regimes of the Sensible" aims to provide "training" in the use of the senses and in aesthetic (in its broadest meaning, as sensing the world), political, ethical, historical or emotional implications of being part of the world that surrounds us. The component's focus is on collective experience and exchange situations and the different students can contribute and share, or that the group can generate as a class. The goal is to put the world surrounding each and every one of us – and the group itself – into play in terms of these senses, without immediately resorting to classifications, narratives and uses, lingering on the shared physical conditions that give rise to experiences that are also shared, experiences that can speak of history and of what can be done with it.

MI.- The teaching plan for the art department points to "the impoverishment of Western society's racial and logical technoscience, which overvalued forms of knowledge that suppress the subject, its ways of affecting and being affected, of hearing and being heard, of being seen, of appreciating and being subject to appreciation, of being present in spaces shared with other subjects. The most serious consequence of this impoverishment is the separation of the world between subjects and objects, for the purpose of producing instrumental knowledge". How does this change the result of students' learning?

PL.- Once again, I feel it is important to differentiate between the general project's intentions and the intentions and interests of specific professors, and the effects of these upon each of the students. We shouldn't be thinking of a single resulting perspective, in this aspect and in all others. With regard to the relationship between subject and object, the logic promoted in the arts area supposes a relationship in which, on the one hand, the object (of art, or indeed any object) is not, in principle, of primary importance, nor is it separated from a series of material and operational continuities connecting it to the subject. And, on the other hand, subjectivity, and hence agency, is not limited to human subjects. These two moves, which can be found, for example, in *candomblé* and in the life practices of indigenous peoples, create a rich field for the arts and, from there, for other areas.

MI.- Is *candomblé* included in curricular content as an epistemological or thematic point of reference?

PL.- A number of syncretic cultures present in Brazil are addressed in various components, for example in the field of the arts and in that of health. Matters concerned with the body and movement, with material culture, with food and medicinal practices... These are knowledges that can make an enormous contribution to the educational process in a number of the fields in which the University is working.

MI.- In addition to the "Regimes of the Sensible" curricular component, what other tools have been offered by the field of the arts for this process of changing epistemological frameworks? What concepts, what methodological tools?

PL.- The visual arts are, today, very open to interdisciplinarity, as the result of working practices that have been intensified over the course of the last five or six decades, in different formats and in connection with social and political theory, science, research... even if these connections are neither universal nor embracing all areas of the arts. In any case, this ability to connect can be an example, but keeping in mind that at some times comes into conflict with the need to consider technique –something that contemporary art does not regard as vital, but that many traditional arts do. Maybe I'm not answering your question, but instead raising an issue, a conflict, between on the one hand European or Western contemporary art's "facility" for being and doing "anything", "anyhow" (provided that this is done by someone authorized to be an artist) and the technical emphasis, and the need to transmit specific knowledge about materials, tools, treatments and processes that many traditional arts imply. This issue is a challenge for the UFSB's educational project.

MI.- Well, whether you answered it or not, I find your response very interesting, because this distinction between erudite and popular art would lie at the heart of the colonial project. If we don't question this distinction, we turn decolonization into a subject matter, into course content, rather than a challenge to our structures.

Turning to another matter, the model of the artist that the curriculum appears to seek is that of an educational artist, rejecting Brazil's strong formalist tradition. How can we escape from Brazil's educational/indoctrinating or paternalistic tradition, for example in Popular Cultural Centres? How can we avoid living art's potential?

PL.- Brazil has quite a lot of strong educational traditions, not only in the Popular Cultural Centres. Unlike its public education system – which often has to deal with instability, historical institutional difficulties and a political administration that appears to want to undermine it – it has quite a rich history of libertarian, critical, egalitarian, or minority education. It can be said that, in contrast with the poor state of public education, the educative function became in Brazil a political urgency, which does not necessarily have to be linked with any doctrinaire or indoctrinating urge. In the arts area at the UFSB, whilst once again remembering that different professors have differences in approach, there is a combination of collective pedagogy (there is no academic freedom, each component is defined by a group of professors who need to work together, albeit remotely, in the different campuses) with an open educational approach that stays away from education as transmission of information, and which focuses on group situations. This collectivist, propositional and situational educational approach could be adopted by artist-educators.

Additionally, I think it is important to question the definitions of art that we are accustomed to, which are frequently defined following a modernist narrative. Like, for example, the potential visionary character of the artist or the work, if that means it has an experimental, mould-breaking or cutting-edge practice or nature. Associating art with these qualities is something that indigenous practices generally do not do, for example. Or the idea that usefulness in some way implies a limitation upon artistic practice, rather than its intensification.

MI.- As you mention the collaborative nature of the professors' work and that the University announces that one of its values is the collectivity of Amerindian cultures or traditional *mestres*, what is the dialogue with these indigenous forms of organization like?

PL.- I don't want to talk about collaboration in relation to indigenous communities. There is a huge diversity in terms of collective articulations amongst the some 300 indigenous peoples of Brazil, and I would not dare to identify any common denominators. If we're talking of collaboration in terms of artistic and educational practice, I'd say it's difficult, firstly because people (be they students or professors) arrive with investments in different issues, idioms and practices, and bringing them into harmony is not always possible, or even desired by the people involved. Secondly, due to administrative and educational issues: the academic system requires of students a series of credits per academic term, a series of assignments in different formats requested by different professors, and this creates intense pressure on their time and on their ability to associate with others. The academic system is incapable of freeing itself from the need for assessment, and this assessment is always individual. With this point in particular, there is a problem of rhythms: an academic rhythm may not be the best for practising art, and can certainly enter into conflict with the rhythms of other cultures. I think that this is another issue that needs resolving, with time and care: how production or transmission dynamics occurring in other contexts can be possible within the rhythms and structures of the academic world – whether these structures are flexible or not, if they are willing to be shaped, or even to be radically changed. Ultimately, if this adaptation is insufficient, we should, I think, refrain from this incorporation. The university as such is rarely called into question. There is a tendency to think of it as place in which everything can fit, when perhaps there are things that cannot fit and that would be better off outside of it. I think the same could be said if we were to replace the word "university" with the word "museum".

Having said this, there is at the UFSB a constant emphasis on shared experiences, on shared issues, and on the horizontal nature of many of these experiences, and I believe that this can create a culture of exchange and, perhaps, of responsibility.

MI.- So individualism prevails? Could this be one of the school's limitations? And, if not, what would its main blind spot be? Perhaps this is one of those occasions when an attempt to decolonize clashes with the colonial framework that governs our thoughts and practices without being able to overcome it?

PL.- The number of collaborations is greater than what I have found in other universities and art schools. But I still see a predominance of individual authorship. I don't think it's a blind spot, as it is already regarded as an issue that needs to be addressed. But, as I mentioned, university structures insist on making enrolment and assessment individualized processes.

MI.- I'm interested in the dialogue between "the popular" and what it denies it causes a crisis in. Popularizing erudite art and "eruditing" popular art? How can we make popular wisdom compatible with the type of thought that it denies it?³ There is a curricular component called "Black Descendant Aesthetics", but Western philosophy's concept of aesthetics excludes "the popular".

PL.- I don't feel attracted by either of these two movements, of turning something into something else. I think it would be more interesting to understand the process from an egalitarian perspective, in the sense that both Western and indigenous arts, for example (although I insist this term is problematic), are complex cultural processes with a series of assumptions and implications. The use of the word "aesthetics" in the title of this and other components is, for me, a misunderstanding, but a misunderstanding that can be productive in the educational process, as is also the case with the use of the word "art". To classify, for example, indigenous basketwork or the Maracatú tradition of the northeast region as art is inappropriate, as it separates it from other spheres (religious, utilitarian, political, etc.) in which it operates, and not as secondary areas. Although these practices are already taking place in different contexts as "separate" practices (as "mere" music or dance, for example), to make money, to entertain or to exhibit. These dynamics of resistance, of confusion, of contamination, of appropriation and their respective ethics and politics are all happening today, and it is important to approach them without a legislative or judgemental attitude.

Additionally, and alongside this, if the word "university" can be used to describe an institution different to that defined by its classical conception, the word "aesthetics" can also betray its canonical, modern definitions and work in other ways. Indeed, this is how it works in *salões de estética* (beauty salons), where material culture is created in the bodies of those frequenting them.

MI.- I feel that anthropology is one of the great articulators in terms of working from the standpoint of these "aesthetics" and I'm concerned about a degree of omission of practical and theoretical experiences on the part of contemporary art and its curators (Jimmie Durham, Jean Fisher, Olu Ogube, Susan Vogel, Clémentine Deliss, Fred Wilson, David Hammons). How can these transnational debates be contextualized as a further tool for considering the Brazilian context?

PL.- I wouldn't say that Durham, Deliss, Fisher and Hammons can't be useful in today's Brazil, or in the rest of Latin America, but I do feel comfortable saying that they are not essential to understanding what's happening here, or what could happen. The recent controversy involving Durham and the Cherokee leaders shows the fragility of his position as an artist, which I think is constitutive of the models of artistic practice inserted in globalized contemporary art that, at the same time, claim a relationship with non-Western visions of the world. To what point practices like those of Fisher, which took shape in the 1990s as a response to racial-cultural issues in an English-speaking context, could be key to creating a relationship with artistic and cultural practices in the Brazil of 2017? Obviously, any kind of import must also bring with it part of its temporal and political context, but it is more important, I believe, to bear in mind that the goal of developing artistic practices in a specific territory need not imply that those practices have to be exportable to First World museums, a global transition logic that underlies a large amount of the work of the authors you mention, precisely because their work is carried out at the heart of contemporary art's globalized context. In contrast with this dynamic, I would say that the importance of a practice cannot come from its recognition in such contexts nor its adaptability to them. For example, because in order to adapt, they might need to be presented as authorial, individualized practices, as I believe the names you mention prove. Rather than a geographical/cultural prism, I view the imaginary of "the Americas" as a poetical/geographical entity, along the lines of the Amerídea created by the Valparaíso School. In this sense, it is an alternative political, emotional and geographical history, of which something is part not because of geographic reasons, but also, and mainly, because of the type of logic it answers to. So what's important is to make connections between these logics. And while it's true that there may be productive connections with divergent logics from non-American geographies, the field is so great that it seems reasonable to begin with a smaller territory.

MI.- I agree with you in part, because I also agree with that travelling concepts may bring more benefits than dangers: in all directions, of course, not only from North to South. But I'm again concerned that the immense practical/theoretical production of the artistic field is being undervalued; for example, there are valuable resources to anthropology. However, an exclusively "Americanist" framework cannot benefit from such tools, and limits still further the possibilities of questioning methodologies.

PL.- Yes, yes, the work of the people you mention may contribute to critical operations. It's not because they are important traditions in a European, or US context that they should be ignored. It's a question of urgencies, of priorities: you just cannot do it all at once. Nor, to return to an example already mentioned, does the Valparaíso School have a presence in the political, cultural or academic imaginary of the UFSB or of Brazil in general, and they are "neighbours" and easier to translate, due to the language they use and the territory they arise from. If I had to choose my priorities, I would stress the dialogues between the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences of the Americas, since these dialogues have, to date, been very fragmentary and weak. The "First World" context already has its own, successful mechanisms for exporting both its problems and its solutions!

MI.- The Reina Sofía Museum and New York's Bronx Museum⁴ make it clear how Mario Pedrosa worked with the mentally ill, and how this was an influence on concrete art. We know that Lygia Clark worked with prostitutes, and then there's Otília with his experiences in the favelas... Does the UFSB carry out a recreating of the history of art taking into account all these experiences? Given that its intellectuals have been so inspired by "the popular"... M

PL.- This work of rewriting the history of art is not something that is being done in the University, perhaps because history of art does not, as such, have a presence there. Neither Lygia Clark's nor Hélio Oiticica are compulsory references, and nor are Mario Pedrosa or Mario de Andrade. They could be, of course, but the goal of rewriting history is not the project's focus. The priority is on practical rather than historiographical issues.

MI.- This is my fundamental criticism. It's not that no account is taken of Wilson or Fisher, but that none is taken of Oiticica either, as if contemporary art were incapable of contributing anything to a conversation about decolonization.

PL.- What the official, modernist art system in mind as that modern (from Tarsila to Oiticica) can be part, it's not "banned", but it is not an obligatory point of reference. At the same time, I think that it is important to bear in mind that art from Brazil's most "interesting" output in Brazil is that arising from an act of appropriation, by upper- and middle-class artists, of popular culture, and this includes, once again, both Tarsila and Oiticica. So, if we're going to talk about Oiticica, we have to consider what makes this act of appropriation possible.

However, I think that one of the possible strategies for building new ways of doing and thinking is to change the focus, not to look to what the university and art system is already looking at, and to spend time and attention on other things (because both are limited resources, in and outside the university). We can argue that it is important to accompany documents or read *Artforum*, because they are dominant at global level. Or we can decide to engage in the activities of a community museum on the outskirts of Belém. The two emphases are not always compatible. Especially because the second requires more persistence, more translations, more materials that are not readily available. The system for promoting "confirmed" or "established" culture is busy producing and disseminating materials and narratives on the importance of Oiticica. I believe that the programme of a university that seeks to create new models does not need to contribute to this emphasis. Rather, it would be interesting to contribute to an understanding of how these mechanisms for producing importance function.

MI.- I don't know whether Oiticica is a modernist or whether the way he is interpreted is modernist... That's why a re-reading of the history of art is important, to consider how his practices were innovative and created new tools.

Given that we are living at a time of identity-based politics, have you worked on these issues of strategic essentialism with students? Does the University think about its position as a place of predominantly white pronouncements?

PL.- The majority of the University's students are from a local or indigenous background. Amongst them, there are, as I've mentioned, indigenous people brought up in villages and who practise indigenous cultures and rituals, and/or black descent and whites who practise *umbanda*, a large number of evangelicals (indigenous, white and black students) and others who have no religious affiliation whatsoever. Self-identification in terms of culture, politics, gender and sexual orientation is equally diverse. In comparison, the teaching body is whiter and more middle class, although the majority, at least in the field of the arts, have a research or professional background with non-European cultures. Unlike the identity-based positions you mention, which I agree are also appearing in Brazil, the students' positions are very strong but at the same time fluid, and this is something I also experienced in other parts of the country.

MI.- Interesting thing is that you stay at the UFSB took place between your participation in the 2014 São Paulo Biennial and the *Dja Guata Porã: Rio de Janeiro Indígena* exhibition at the Rio Art Museum in 2017, and I think that it would be interesting to understand this move to a work approach with indigenous viewpoint. I know that it's complex question, but it's so important right now!

PL.- I find it difficult to have a clear narrative about my own life, but I can try... The two curatorial projects were built on the basis of collaboration processes, with horizontal, collective curatorships, and both aimed at rethinking and reshaping institutional processes. Between the two, I feel that the months I worked at the UFSB were important. On the one hand, because I spent quite some time without any specific work or research goals with Pataxó communities, and I became familiar with some of the issues and some of the ways of seeing and doing that are important to them. Also because the collegiate approach within the University, with students and civil servants, acted as a form of institution for collegiate practice different of it. And, finally, because, as I have already mentioned, I came into contact with dynamics in which the structures of modern trainings come up against outside of them and sometimes incompatible logics, which, if taken seriously, could shake the very foundations of those institutions. Working on *Dja Guata Porã* was, in that sense, an extension of this: how to work with indigenous groups from the state of Rio de Janeiro in the joint construction of an exhibition project within an art museum, with all the methodological and institutional implications that might entail. And, thanks to my prior experiences, the scale, the project... it was more satisfactory than the biennial, it "worked" better.

MI.- What can we learn from the Amerindian worldviews with regard to the process of transforming Western epistemology in both the university context and its extension to its representative apparatus, the museum?

PL.- It's difficult to answer this: I don't want to simplify these worldviews nor suggest they have a common denominator. Neither do I want to think of them in a utilitarian way, in terms of their potential to change us, we white people, and our institutions. I think I can say something more modest: from the moment that members of these indigenous peoples enter these institutions (and I believe that we need to defend and facilitate this right to entry, not just as visitors but also as workers, managers, directors, etc.), it is easy to see how legal, administrative, conceptual issues, priorities, concerns, and matters of time, space and forms of expression emerge and problematize conventional processes. Something parallel occurs when you work with periphery or low-income populations. I think that these institutions only deserve being defended and, indeed, to continue to exist, if they commit to tackle these issues openly and with a willingness to being transformed.

MI.- Well, about "thinking in a utilitarian way" about Amerindian worldviews... I believe that the key to things changing is changing oneself. How can one do so otherwise? Provided, obviously, that this helps us overcome our limitations and build epistemodiversity. Is there any plan to create an Indigenous Studies Department led by Indigenous?

PL.- I'm not aware of this. Following the logic of the UFSB, it wouldn't be a department, as the university is organised in areas (arts, health, sciences, humanities...) rather than "closed" departments. Creating an 'indigenous area' would perhaps be difficult, as it would overlap with all the existing ones, and it would also beg the question of whether a "afro-descendant area" should follow suit. There is another problem: Ministry of Education regulations determine that teaching staff at universities, in order to apply for positions, need to have a masters or, preferably, a PhD. There is a growing number of indigenous people accessing universities, but the number of graduates is still extremely low. There are also programmes to grant titles for bearers of traditional knowledges, but that process is also very slow... But, independently from these administrative issues, would a 'indigenous area' imply that indigenous staff, perspectives and knowledges should not be part of the general areas? How to reconcile the attempt to consider indigenous perspectives and people equal to the other perspectives and people, and at the same time circumscribe their work to a specific area?

MI.- Could some of this help us to think, critically and constructively, about how the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) has come back to popular material culture through the research of Lina Bo Bardi, reproducing her curatorships?

PL.- I don't know if I want to end on a negative note, but I don't see any other way of answering the question. I'm not an expert on the work of Lina Bo Bardi, but it seems to me there are very interesting aspects to her conception of the popular museum, mainly the work she did in Salvador de Bahia. "Bringing back" her work, to me, means bringing back her spirit and her orientation, not her formal solutions, because those formal solutions came in response to a situation, habits, processes, that are different to those of today. The MASP has been doing just this: reproducing, almost literally, Lina Bo Bardi's formal solutions, as a reference and in terms of content, and, at the same time, introducing other content that I find interesting. But I believe that, except for some small-scale projects and programmes, it has not questioned the workings of the modern museum, nor its relationship with those who live alongside it and who visit it. It is a very "modern" museum in which a small number of people decide what the rest of the team will be implementing as content for abstract audiences, and at rather expensive admission prices. Bahia's MAM was, I believe, much more faithful to Lina Bo Bardi's spirit in the three years that it was headed by Marcelo Rezende. But there's always the possibility that things will change, especially in troubled times such as today's...

P5: Reading again my last answer, I perceived that, while I attempted to present a complex image of the UFSB, in which there'd be room for diverse interests and agencies within and around the institution, as well as diverse possibilities of intervention and construction, when I replied the question about the MASP I did the opposite. I offered a monolithic vision of the institution, taking into account only, and in a simplifying manner, the curator's programmatic lines, without considering that a museum's activities are not reduced to the large-scale exhibitions, and that different teams establish relations with different groups in varied ways, sometimes with divergent or complementary perspectives to those that are more visible or presented as "official". In fact, during the last 2 or 3 years, the MASP has developed projects and discussions that have proven very interesting, and which should not be left aside or forgotten.

Notes:

[1] I am most thankful to María José Guzmán and Gustavo Gonçalves in helping me understand the project during the days I spent in Ilheus. It is thanks to them that I could carry out this research.

[2] The interview took place in October 2017, coinciding with the election process for the new rector.

[3] "Imposing upon others its notion of own culture, the curriculum can contribute, in addition to guaranteeing constructed knowledge, room for constructing vulnerabilized social identities and to reconquering the country's linguistic, epistemic and cultural diversity".

[4] <http://www.bronxmuseum.org/events/form-and-feeling-the-making-of-concretism>.

