



ART DÉCO IN BRAZIL

In the first half of 2010, the *Universidade Federal de Goiás* published a thematic dossier on *Art Déco in Brazil* in its scientific journal *Revista UFG*. On that occasion, renowned scholars from all over the country were invited to submit the results of their research and to express their views on the subject. Coincidentally, soon afterwards came confirmation of the 11th World Congress on Art Déco in Rio de Janeiro. So the idea of producing an English version of these contributions was vented in order to offer the Congress participants and other interested foreigners a full updated overview of Art Déco architecture in Brazil.

Thus, this collection of articles deals with Art Déco architecture in Brazil from different perspectives, the architectural production in the different regions and the various stages in the process of research, identification and preservation. In Brazil, Art Déco is still a rarely discussed subject, and, for that reason, somewhat controversial.

An article by the Rio Grande do Sul Professor Günter Weimer, a renowned researcher in Brazilian architectural circles, opens the dossier. He begins by recalling the controversy surrounding the very name of this period in art history, questioning the boundaries of the style, while rooting it in the economic and political environment of the time. Then, from the hinterland of São Paulo, with Telma de Bastos Correia, comes the counterpoint, when she clearly identifies the tendency in Brazil, and presents representative examples of the various strands that she lists.

A central feature of Brazilian arts is the theme of the text by Márcio Alves Roiter, which presents the search for indigenous references – especially Marajoara – in

the national artistic production of the day. At a time of apparent exhaustion of the traditional sources of Western arts, when Europe was searching the globe for new themes, the Brazilian solution cannot be omitted from the landscape of Western culture.

After that comes an exciting new dialogue about the architectural heritage of the Northeastern hinterland. The architect Marcus Vinícius Dantas de Queiroz tells the story and describes the present status of the Campina Grande collection, immediately after the text by designer Lia Monica Rossi, the main protagonist of this process of discovery and identification in the 1980s. These two texts together cover nearly 40 years – the before, during and after – of the pioneering process of dealing with Art Déco heritage in Brazil's hinterland.

The next text leads us to the country's other extreme, Curitiba, in the South where the historian, Marcelo Saldanha Sutil, reports on how his city's architectural production of that period was forgotten. His analysis clearly shows the privileged positions of both eclecticism and modernism, while in between lies a gap containing the little-known Art Déco architecture.

The same northeastern hinterland reappears in the following article, a report on the radio station buildings in upstate Pernambuco, which was researched by architect Aline de Figueirôa Silva. These buildings, identified as aesthetically significant, are still awaiting action for preservation and appreciation.

Finally, Wolney Unes, one of the organizers of this collection, presents some thoughts on the pioneering process of preservation in the city of Goiânia, in Central Brazil. And here, in a certain sense, the vector of dialogue between our texts is completed in the counterpoint to the inaugural text where Günter Weimer ends his article

with the provocative challenge of holding a national meeting in Goiânia to discuss the topic. This meeting is actually taking place, but in Rio de Janeiro, from a slightly different angle and with much broader scope, as it will bring together scholars from all over the world. While it is true that being able to count on foreign speakers enriches and qualifies the debate on Art Déco architecture in Brazil, it is equally true that it is up to Brazilian scholars to continue promoting a countrywide discussion on this subject, which certainly will not be exhausted at this international meeting.

The dossier is rounded off with a visual essay with photographs by Wolney Unes, a tribute to Brazil's Art Déco architectural heritage. In selecting the images, priority was given to unusual presentations of the urban landscape in all regions of the country, showing buildings of various typologies and uses. An essay by Genilda Alexandria, who also organized this dossier, accompanies the images.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the support of the many institutions and people who made this publication possible: *Pró-Reitoria de Extensão e Cultura* at the *Universidade Federal de Goiás*, the Goiás Superintendent of the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* and the *Sociedade Cultural Elysium*. And a very special word of thanks to the 11th World Congress on Art Déco in 2011, organized by Marcio Roiter, who contributed to this collection.

The Editors