### Marcelo Mari

Department of Visual Arts, Universidade de Brasília, Brazil

# Mário Pedrosa's Turn Point: From the Good Neighbour Policy in the United States to the Brazilian Modern Project (1938–1951)

**Abstract:** Mário Pedrosa contributed in a decisive way to the formation and development of Brazilian politics and art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pedrosa traveled to the United States and started to live in New York at the end of 1938. In the field of the arts, he took a position on the debate between Independent Revolutionary Art and Instrumentalized Art. In the essay "Portinari – from Brodósqui to the murals in Washington" (1942), Pedrosa overcomes the defense of art as a revolutionary weapon, which was his position at the conference on the German artist Käthe Kollwitz, presented at the Club of Modern Artists, in Brazil in 1933. From 1942, he approached the position of independence of art, in relation to the government's instrumentation policies.

**Keywords:** Mário Pedrosa; constructivism; portinari; Greenberg; abstract expressionism; Fernando Pedreira.

A political activist and a great expert on art, Mário Pedrosa contributed in a decisive way to the formation and development of Brazil in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We can say that his course closely follows the main transformations of the century because Pedrosa always analyzed the local plan and the international plan and proposed interventions to promote the concrete transformation of the society, with a view to the international communist revolution.

After a brief passage through France, Pedrosa traveled to the United States and started to live in New York at the end of 1938. There, he made contact with militant North American Trotskyists, such as James Burnham, Max Shachtman, and James P. Cannon, and with many artists, writers, and critics of art who approached Trotskyism, including Alexander Calder, Clement Greenberg, and Meyer Schapiro. Pedrosa and the North American militants were determined to propagate the proposals of the International IV in America, and they shared many views about politics and art.

In the field of the arts, all those who were critical of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration and also condemned the recent political guidelines of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) tried, without measuring their efforts,

to find alternatives to the impasse faced by Realism in the visual arts. If at the beginning of the 1930s visual art followed political polarization of society and many artists turned their work to agitprop, after the establishment of the political doctrine for the arts in the USSR, with politics of conciliation of class interests that took CPUSA to support the nationalist theme in North American art, and the populist use of the art mural in the programs of Works Progress Administration (WPA) and of Federal Art Project (FAP), realism wasn't any longer a revolutionary alternative and thus needed to be overcome.

Jonathan Harris says that the persons responsible for the FAP motivated the production of nationalist art. Starting from 1937, US art would be denominated Democratic Realism. This realism that had served before for agitation and propaganda of communism and that was now to service Roosevelt's politics, resulted in the union of the democratic values of the United States and of the capacity to reach the masses in opposition to analytical characteristics of modern European art. According to Harris, Holger Cahill declared that the project sought, partly, to mine the imported academic traditions of Europe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the recently-arrived conventions of modernist art. In that sense, based on cultural and political national subjects, Cahill disagreed with the left artists' program, that, although they wanted to attend a social-ist revolution in the United States, they also had an internationalist perspective.

In this sense, Harris comments on the position defended by Ed Rowan:

"One of the administrators in charge of the next project, the section of painting and sculpture, not only divided the artists into three categories – 'good', 'medium' and 'bums' – but also gave orders to his administrators to weed out any Mexican partisans, abstractionists, academics and other extremists. Such an eclectic prohibition indexes the peculiar political and authentic complexity of this project's administrative policy. Classifying the particular type of 'representational' art favored by the project is difficult: a provisional neologism might suitably be 'New Deal Democratic Populist Realism."<sup>2</sup>

The Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art (1938), by Trotsky and Breton, came in support of the evaluations of Trotsky and many other intellectuals about the deterioration of the Stalinist regime and response to the Popular front politics for the arts, especially in the United States. When the dispute regarding the North American Popular Front, which united communists and liberals, ended an alternative appeared for the Democratic Realism in the plastic arts. Many intellectuals and militants decided to move away not just from CPUSA because of the tactical mistakes that took the communists to support Roosevelt's New Deal and the artistic tradition of the United

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Paul Wood, Modernismo em disputa: a arte desde os anos quarenta (São Paulo: Cosac & Naify Edições, 1998), 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Jonathan Harris, "The New Deal Arts Projects: a critical revision: constructing the 'national-popular' in New Deal America 1935–1943," (PhD thesis, Middlesex University, 1986), 39–40.

States, but because they echoed the latest news from the USSR about the installation of the Tribunals of Moscow.<sup>3</sup>

It consolidated the American left, whose creed was anti-Stalinism. Some approached Trotskyism while others assumed independent political positions. Serge Guilbaut informs:

After the First Congress of American Artists in 1936, criticism of the Popular Front from a part of the intellectual left became more organized and virulent. The gulf between Trotsky and Stalin followers widened [...]. Despite the news on the Tribunals of Moscow the Communist Party continued to support Stalinist Russia. That, and the Russo-German pact drove a growing number of disillusioned intellectuals into opposition because they could not support the uncritical stance of the Party. To many intellectuals, it seemed more and more clear that what was needed was independence from all political parties for artists and writers.<sup>4</sup>

In the United States, one of the results of the *Manifesto* of Trotsky and Breton was the critique of the commodity aestheticism of art in a capitalist consumerist society. Thus, besides the strong defense of the true meaning of modern art against the attacks of the Nazi regime and against those that considered it mere empty formalism, other concerns expressed by art critics – such as Clement Greenberg, in his 1939 essay "Avant-garde and Kitsch" – were that the new art could be a means of resistance to the culture produced in the emerging and dynamic North American consumerist society. According to Greenberg, it was necessary to condemn the instrumentalized art and recover the independence of art as a means of survival of a field eminently critical to the capitalist system.

In New York, Pedrosa took a position in the debate on arts. In the essay "Portinari – Brodósqui to the murals of Washington" 1942, he overcame his position of defense of art as *agitprop*, a revolutionary weapon – pointed in his 1933 conference about the German artist Käthe Kollwitz<sup>6</sup> – and approached the position of independent, autonomous art.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the *Manifesto* of Trotsky and Breton intended to be an option for the artists that, though critical of capitalism, didn't see a viable alternative for the transformation of society in the USSR. If Realism in aesthetics became the governmental political doctrine – either in its socialist version in the USSR or the racist production of Nazism or still in the Democratic Realism of the Roosevelt

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Seaton. "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture: The Graphic Arts Division of the Works Progress Federal Administration Art Project, 1935–1943 (Illinois: Northwestern University, 2000), 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of the Modem Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch", *The Partisan Review* (1939): 34–49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Mário Pedrosa, "Käthe Kollwitz and her Red Way of Perceiving Life," conference presented in Clube dos Artistas Modernos, São Paulo, Brazil, 1933.

Dwight Macdonald, The Memoirs of Revolutionist (New York: Farrar Straus Cudahy, 1957), 198–213.

Administration – it was also essential that the artistic manifestations were free from conditioning by capitalist production.<sup>8</sup>

# The US cultural politics and Latin America

The Second World War not only impeded the increase of revolutionary movements led by the workers in Europe but also contributed to the consolidation of new political relationships on the American continent. Although the United States reaffirmed its neutrality politics and isolation from the war in Europe (1939), it didn't wait to establish stronger bonds with Latin America. The US was interested in defending its commercial interests and feared not only the growing German influence in countries such as Argentina and Brazil but also the appearance of revolutionary movements, besides the growth of anti-Americanism.9 The history of the political relationships between the US and the countries of Latin America was based on the 'obvious right' - proposed by the Monroe Doctrine - with the application of the 'big-stick' and 'dollar diplomacy'. In the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt announced a new phase, the Good Neighbour Policy towards Latin America. Beyond the mere government rhetoric about educational, cultural and economic cooperation for the common development of the American countries, the new politics sought to fasten the influence of the United States on the continent, to protect the interests of great North American companies and to open, or to recover, the supplying markets of raw materials and of consumers of industrial products.

In 1939 and 1940, the North American governments intensified the cooperation agreements with the other American countries to stamp their influence on the Continent. Pedro Tota tells the strategic importance conquered by Latin America:

After the Nazi army invaded Denmark, in April 1940, American politics felt the urgency to find formulas to guarantee the safety of the continent. The poverty and the economic underdevelopment of the Latin American countries could propitiate revolutions led by nationalists, socialists or sympathizers of the Nazi-fascism, movements that put in check the interests of the United States. [...] To the eyes [...] of the North Americans, the weakness – not only economically and socially but also military – of the Latin American countries was a direct threat to the United States. <sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Antonio Pedro Tota, *O imperialismo sedutor: a americanização do Brasil no tempo da segunda Guerra* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000), 46–7.

The government and US entrepreneurs, such as Nelson Rockefeller, were concerned not only with German influence and espionage in Latin America but also with the growing number of labor strikes. If nationalism, communism, or fascism progressed on the Continent, allied with the dissatisfaction of the impoverished populations, they would endanger US companies. The anti-Americanism would find favorable conditions to grow. It was for this reason that the Roosevelt administration began to articulate a new international policy and decided to invest in the social programs and economic agreements to solve the problems of Latin America.

Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett tell the deflection of the American foreign policy in the period of Roosevelt's reelection:

As the Nazi Blitzkrieg swept over France, Compañia officials (Compañía de Fomento Venezolano) began looking toward a possible postwar era in which Rockefeller interests would be competing peacefully in Venezuela with the companies owned by triumphant Nazis. [...] As the elections of 1940 approached, two powerful groups with overlapping concerns were emerging to formulate a new US strategy toward Latin America. One group led by Under Secretary of State Summer Welles, Assistant Secretary Adolf Berle, and Pan-American Union head Leo Rowe, was visible to the public and the press. The other group met in a private corporate office and centered on Nelson Rockefeller. Outsiders called it 'the group.'11

The Roosevelt Administration, the Pan American Union, and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), led by Nelson Rockefeller, got right a political plan more or less united of intervention in Latin America. Tacuchian comments on the United States' plan:

During the war, the emphasis was given to the reinforcement and enlargement of the functions of the Pan-American organizations, toward Good Neighbour Policy. In this way, the US government strengthened the relationships with the Hemisphere, without giving up the interference power exercised in the past, through military actions. [...] One of the unfoldings of recent politics was the implementation of massive propaganda on behalf of the values of the American culture. [...] In June (1940), president Roosevelt expressed [...] his concern about the economical relationships with Latin America and the actions that should be undertaken. [...] Although dealing with economical, commercial and administrative priorities, the document recommended the creation of a wide program of cultural, scientific and educational relationships [...].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Colby and Dennett, *Thy Will be Done: The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), 91-92.

The proposal stressed the importance of guaranteeing the political and economic position of the country in the Hemisphere, independently of the results of the war in Europe, but for such, it would be of fundamental importance (to promote the economic development) [...] of South and Central America, although maintained in a 'cooperation context and economical dependence.'<sup>12</sup>

The cultural activities were effective for the construction of a positive image of the United States and of their politics in Brazil as much as in many American countries. For several years, the Good Neighbour Policy was executed: US publications in newspapers and magazines regarding Brazil; the diffusion of programs of NBS, of CBS and other radio companies, in Portuguese and the tours for US writers, film directors, and artists to know Brazil and its culture, and at the same time the tours for the Brazilian artists to know the United States. The institution that had more influence in the execution of those tasks was, without doubt, the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA). Antônio Pedro Tota said of it: "The agency created by Roosevelt and driven by the magnate Nelson Rockefeller had [...] two important incumbencies: to spread a positive image of the Latin-American countries among the US, especially of Brazil, and to convince the Brazilians that the US had always been friends with Brazil. Those were the tasks in 1940." <sup>13</sup>

Roosevelt's government chose Democratic Realism as a symbol of the cultural politics for the American continent. Governmental efforts to promote the United States in culture centers for Latin America that culminated with the 1939 New York World's Fair, there happened to be the adhesion of great part the North American artistic community and intellectuality to the official politics of the Roosevelt administration. The initial success of the government in terms of the cultural exchanges with other American countries was intensified when Paris was invaded by German troops in June 1940. If the United States was concerned about exercising durable influence in the American continent, it was necessary to create solid cultural bases, which made the prospect of following the American way of life attractive to most Latin American countries.

In time – soon after the end of the conflict – the US way of life won force and settled down internationally. In the post-World War II period, US cultural institutions promoted less and less Democratic Realism in the visual arts. Instead, Abstract Expressionism became a symbol of individualistic freedom in capitalism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Fátima Tacuchian, "Panamericanismo, propaganda e música erudita: Estados Unidos e Brasil (1939–1948)" (PhD presented to the University of São Paulo, 1998), 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Antonio Pedro Tota, O imperialismo sedutor: a americanização do Brasil no tempo da segunda Guerra (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000), 93.

### The new road of art: Institutionalized autonomous art?

The end of the Second World War marked the reestablishment and the intensification of international relationships. Just after being invited by Paulo Bittencourt to do newspaper reports as an international correspondent and having his departure from the United States to Europe barred, Mário Pedrosa decided to return to Brazil and started to live in Rio de Janeiro in 1945. There, Pedrosa founded the weekly publication *Vanguarda Socialista*; he also founded the Popular Socialist Union, worked as art critic for the newspaper *Jornal da Manhã*, in which, in November 1946, he created a specific section dedicated to the plastic arts. Pedrosa acquired political experience as secretary of the International IV. He got in touch with the most recent artistic production in the United States. It was precisely in his passage through that country that Pedrosa became friends with Alexander Calder.

Pedrosa, as well as a lot of US art critics, ceased to support Trotskyism, which led them to the defense of autonomous art. Pedrosa promoted the art of constructivist tendencies but US art critics, such as Clement Greenberg and Meyer Schapiro, clung to abstract expressionism. That happened when the cultural politics of the United States, previously restricted to the American continent, was expanded by the world and, consequently, also their symbolic production. Serge Guilbaut tells about the first movements of Clement Greenberg to make New York center an irradiation pole of the world culture:

The key to the thought of Greenberg is the word 'independence', for it was on autonomy the fate of the avant-garde depended. Independence meant independence in Paris. [...] For the first time in the history of the American art, an important critic showed himself to be sufficiently aggressive, confident, and devoted to American art to openly challenge the supremacy of Parisian art and to claim that the art of New York and Jackson Pollock had taken its place on the international scene. <sup>14</sup>

In the United States, abstract expressionism was taken as the international artistic movement. Not only Greenberg's criticism but also the actions of MoMA (Museum of Modern Art), coordinated by Alfred Barr Jr. and with funding from Nelson Rockefeller, were decisive for the promotion and final victory of American modern art. Guilbaut says:

Between 1948 and 1951, thanks to writings of Clement Greenberg and the activist involvement of major institutions, modern art was protected, repackaged, and presented as the most important movement for the new emerging postwar America. This was, of course, a very new phenomenon for the United States. [...] Clement Greenberg, Robert Motherwell,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of the Modern Art, 168, 172.

Alfred Barr and Nelson Rockefeller, to mention only a few with certain ideological bent (which we can call a new liberal modernism separated from the watered-down academic modernism very much in demand), were aware of the need to promote an art based on individualism, on freedom of expression and in opposition to ideologically bound socialist productions.<sup>15</sup>

The battle for defenders of modern art against the anti-modernist conservative thought didn't guarantee a comfortable position for many US abstract artists. If the art of the United States had won prominence on the international scene, it was also used in the emblematic reappraisal of the national values of the largest capitalist society of the Occident. Guilbaut meditates on the appearance of a new political conditioning of the aesthetic field: "In the process though, modern art, in order to be acceptable in the US and for strategic reasons, had to lose its negative, traditionally oppositional edge and be somewhat toned down, so as to be able to enter into the international arena as a positive alternative in Europe to Communist culture. It was the price modern art had to pay at that particular moment." <sup>16</sup>

The success of the American art in the exhibition in Venice had served as anti-Soviet propaganda in 1951, resulting in the effective presentation of an alternative for socialist realism. For being an art adverse to political messaging, Abstract Expressionism changed into a political weapon of the United States government. As Guilbaut would say, in 1951, art could be politicized if it was apolitical. The explanation of the origins of that new cultural politics of the United States for the world lies in the immediate postwar period. Against the expansion of communism, Truman developed the Marshall Plan to rehabilitate capitalism in Europe. However, anti-Americanism grew among the Europeans: "In 1946 and 1947 certain members of Congress traveled to Europe and came back quite surprised by their reception and by the bad press the United States received overseas. To counter what American observers took to be the results of an adroit Communist propaganda campaign, the Senate passed the Smith-Mundt Act in January 1948, reorganizing and expanding the Information and Cultural Program." <sup>17</sup>

### Guilbaut concludes:

The year 1950 saw the intensification of the Cold War under the effects of the first Soviet atomic bomb, the fall of the Chinese nationalists, and increased domestic pressure against the Communist party. The propaganda and ideological war heated up, and the merger of two previously separate agencies responsible for cultural activities and information testifies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Serge Guilbaut, "Postwar painting loves," in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal*, 1954–1964 (Massachusetts: MIT, 1990), 34.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 36-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of the Modern Art, 192.

to the importance that was attached to achieving greater effectiveness in this area. By 1949 propaganda had begun to influence all aspects of social life and filtered down even to local communities. [...] Improving the cultural image of the United States was identified in 1948 as the most important goal for American propaganda. But what sort of image was appropriate? This was the main issue on the cultural agenda at the time the avant-garde came to the fore. [...] Avant-garde art could be called American; it was cultivated and independent, yet linked to the modernist tradition. What is more, it could be used as a symbol of the ideology of freedom that held sway in the administration and among the new liberals. The domestic triumph of the avant-garde was important because it paved the way for the conquest of the European elites. <sup>18</sup>

## Possible construction?

The Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, and the Bienal de São Paulo were institutions that promoted, at that moment, the abstractionism on the international stage. This movement had gathered momentum in the main capitals of the world due to the reestablishment of international contact with the European production – mainly Swiss concretism – and also to the recent, not only more economical and political but also cultural, prevalence of the United States. The disputes between the USA and USSR intensified and took on a global dimension. Therefore, the cultural, political, and ideological propaganda became a weapon in the economic dispute between these two powers. In Brazilian visual arts, the dispute between realism and abstractionism – in the year of the First Art exhibition – would also reflect the climate of the Cold War. One Brazilian art critic who defended the Soviet cultural doctrine of socialist realism was Fernando Pedreira. He took a position of condemning abstract art as empty formalism and as a result of the influence of the cultural politics of the United States in the world. Aracy Amaral made these comments:

This is, in sum, the spirit of the text 'The Art exhibition: cosmopolitan imposture' by [...] Pedreira (published in the magazine *Foundations* in August of 1951) that rejects the 'generosity' and the 'enterprising' spirit of Matarazzo Sobrinho, in the way the press trumpets their accomplishments, putting art exhibition more as an answer of the business community, trying to induce the artistic way to align with the new tendencies of the world art, instead of grinding again with inquietudes that could result from crises of a system that the dominant class wants to maintain.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 192-93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Aracy Amaral, *Arte para quê? - a problemática social na arte brasileira (1930–1970)* (São Paulo: Studio Nobel, 2003), 248.

For Pedreira, the formalism of modern art was part of a US imperialist policy, and it contributed to the alienation of the people:

'As well as they did at the earliest countries, also among us the dominant classes [...] are setting up their machines of corruption and propaganda to control and to guide the message development of the plastic arts. This true trust led by Nelson Rockefeller that includes, especially, as we saw, the Museum of Modern Art of New York and the British Council (the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo). He takes care now of reinforcing their bases in Brazil, of increasing his influence in our artistic means. [...] for doing of 'the Art exhibition an apotheosis of the decadent modernism', Matarazzo Sobrinho did not limit himself 'to sink the art into the swamp of the modern formalism. Actually, 'for more than half a century, the dominant classes noticed the great service that they could render to the so-called modern tendencies that deny the social value of the art, its educating and progressive function, turning it into a formal game for the delicacy of the initiate ones'. That would be the objective of 'Mr. Rockefeller, Matarazzo, Chateaubriand, Jafet and other patrons of the same type.'

### And Pedreira concludes:

'Their maneuvers have never been so evident for us when they try to collaborate, under the domain of the sharks of the finances, with the national artistic production. It has never been clearer the effort of the imperialism, through their agents (the patron Rockefeller at the head) to firm positions and to win influence among the Brazilian intellectuals.'<sup>20</sup>

The target of Pedreira's text was the capitalistic sponsors of modern art, which tried to depreciate the social function of art and influence the Brazilian intellectual elite, but also Mário Pedrosa because he was the oldest defender of the abstractionism in Brazil. Aracy Amaral tells us:

As we have seen, the debate about realism versus abstractionism would give up place, for the occasion of the opening of the Art exhibition, to the accusation of abstractionism in our country. [...] Great part of that article intended, however, to condemn Mário Pedrosa. [Pedreira says:] 'he intends to prove the connections between the abstract art and the Soviet revolution. By mentioning Kandinsky, Rodchenko and Malevitch, Mário Pedrosa makes the demoralized Trotskyist barrel organ work to accuse the 'Stalinists' of betraying at the same time the revolution of Lenin and

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 249-50.

the revolutionary art... This art that critical Pedrosa still revolutionary's fire included, for some time, a lot of good people. But soon this art tendency revealed its false and sterile character, its absolute lack of content. What is demanded now is an art that (for the displeasure of the ones that worry about these things) doesn't have any relationship with the work of Rodchenko and of other artists of the time in which the flames of October shone, as Mário Pedrosa says.' [...] According to Pedreira, 'A more human and generous art, directed to the Brazilian man's problems, an art that can help the people get rid of the oppression and the exploration and contribute to the flourishing of real Brazilian culture. This is the reason why we combat the cosmopolitan abstractionism that denies the social and human value of the art.'<sup>21</sup>

In an article written for the newspaper *Tribuna da Imprensa*, published on November 3, 1951, Pedrosa presented the current tendencies of modern art and answered Pedreira's accusations that it was an empty formalism. Far away from being only a diversion for the wealthy classes or a field of researches for the initiate, the new art had relations with the world of work and, consequently, with the solid base of modern society.

Like the Russian constructivists' experiences, the resurgence of the abstractionism, and mainly of the concrete art, was an expression of the 'neotechnical' era that was just inaugurated. Pedrosa says:

Whatever opinion one may have on the researches of modern art, in their more daring expressions – and we especially referred to the followers of the 'abstractionism' or of the concrete art – a remark needs to be made: Those artists don't propose, before everything, a vision of the world that wants to be actualized. And that [...] would be early to our sentimental and mental habits today, in a projection of the future. [...] With effect, the researchers of the pure plastic surgery, of the visual dynamics are what there is of more contrary to the escapism. For them, the art is not a world aside, a refuge to the 'ivory tower', to the old illusion of the 'art for art's sake'. On the contrary, they are put with the two feet solidly fixed in the possibilities of the present. (Their art intends to be) the crystallization of the culture state and of civilization that the man potentially reached.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the accusations that he suffered from the followers of the Brazilian Communist Party, Pedrosa reaffirmed the connection ties between the communist revolution in the times of Lenin and Trotsky and modern art, especially the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid., 249-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Mário Pedrosa, "Atualidade do abstracionismo," in *Modernidade lá e cá: textos escolhidos* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2000), 179.

constructivism. The Russian vanguard had established a goal to create an art to be part of the efforts of the man's towards the construction of the future and of social relationships based on the collectivity and on shared and fraternal feelings. Its main motto was the approach between artistic work and social production. Based on the rationality idea and planning of the society, Rodchenko, Kandinsky, and Malevitch didn't save efforts so that, through the revolution of the art, they could contemplate the common ideals of the Russian revolution. They made a profession of faith of their art and of the communism because both seemed to walk together for synthesis in that the work and the art would be free activity of all human activities. That was the objective of the efforts of those that worked in the initial phase of the Soviet revolution.

### References

Amaral, Aracy. Arte para quê? – a problemática social na arte brasileira (1930–1970). São Paulo: Studio Nobel, 2003

Arantes, Otilia Beatriz Fiori. Mário Pedrosa: itinerário crítico. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2004.

Breton, Andre. and Trostsky, Leon. *Por uma arte revolucionária independente*. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, CEMAP. 1984.

Brito, Ronaldo. Neoconcretismo; vértice e ruptura do projeto construtivo brasileiro. Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE, 1985.

Colby, Gerard and Charlotte Dennett. Seja feita vossa vontade: a conquista da amazônia: Nelson Rockefeller e o evangelismo na era do petróleo. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1998.

Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." The Partisan Review (1939): 34-49.

Guilbaut, Serge. How New York Stole the Idea of the Modern Art. Abstract expressionism, freedom, and the cold war. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Guilbaut, Serge. Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris and Montreal, 1954–1964. Massachusetts: MIT, 1990.

Hobsbaum, Erik. The Age of Extremes. A History of the World, 1914-1991. London: Vintage Books, 1996.

Macdonald, Dwight. The Memoirs of Revolutionist. New York: Farrar Straus Cudahy, 1957.

Moraes, João. Quartim. de. (org.). *História do marxismo no Brasil – os influxos teóricos*. Volume II. Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1995.

Moreira, Marcos. Cândido Portinari. São Paulo: Editora Três Ltda., 2003.

Pedrosa, Mário. Modernidade lá e cá. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2000.

Pedrosa, Mário. Política das Artes. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1995.

Pedrosa, Mário. Homem, mundo, arte em crise. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1986.

Seaton, Elizabeth. Federal Prints and Democratic Culture: The Graphic Arts Division of The Works Progress Federal Administration Art Project, 1935–1943. Illinois: Northwestern University, 2000.

- Tacuchian, Fátima. "Panamericanismo, propaganda e música erudita: Estados Unidos e Brasil (1939–1948)." PhD presented to the University of São Paulo, 1998.
- Tota, Antonio Pedro. *O imperialismo sedutor: a americanização do Brasil no tempo da segunda guerra*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000.
- Wald, Alan. The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left From the 1930s to the 1980s. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- Wood, Paul et al. Modernismo em disputa: a arte desde os anos quarenta. São Paulo: Cosac & Naify Edições, 1998.

Article received: December 16, 2019 Article accepted: January 31, 2020 Review article