

From BW2 to São Paulo: An encounter with the Robert Turner Collective of Algorithmic Art

Marcos Reigota*

There was still one exhibition left to visit in Geneva, during those warm June days. I had only one available afternoon before I was due to leave the city. From what I had seen in the flyers spread throughout the university and the cultural centers I had been to, ‘Renaissance’ by Inluut & Robert Turner Collective was not a priority theme, despite the attraction of the algorithmic abstractions, audiovisual installations, transdisciplinary performances, and thematic conferences relating to the exhibition. I had already passed in front of the building named Le Commun several times, when I went to the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMCO) to see temporary exhibitions dedicated to the work of Augusto de Campos, Geraldo de Barros, Verena Loewensberg (an occasion which allowed me to listen to Elizeth Cardoso singing *Manhã de Carnaval* in an installed music box), Marion Baruch, and Jackie Winsor, and to explore the collection and spend long moments with the sculptures of Ángeles Marco. The trajectory was exhausting, but still I found energy to enter the bookstore. Prominently displayed was *Unpayable Debt* by Denise Ferreira da Silva¹ and I also found *The Forest and the School—Where to Sit at the Dinner Table?*², with articles about Anthropophagy, organized by Pedro Neves Marques. This book led to a brief dialogue (by e-mail) with the organizer, where I emphasized the invisibilities relating to the progression of Anthropophagy in the present time, marked, let us say, by what Pierre Bourdieu defined as “symbolic capital” and as “positions in the field”³. In one of these e-mails, I informed Neves Marques about the work of my authorship, *A Floresta e a Escola: Por Uma Educação Ambiental Pós-moderna*⁴, published in 1999 and, since 2011, in its fourth edition.

At the same address—an old factory converted into a cultural space, unavoidable in restless Geneva—besides MAMCO, the Le Commun space, and the bookstore, there is the Photography Center and the Center for Contemporary Art of Geneva, which at the time was showing work by, among

* Global Studies Center, Open University of Portugal.

1 Sternberg Press: Berlin, March 2022.

2 Archive Books and Academy of the Arts of the World: Cologne, 2015.

3 Rocha, Maria Eduarda da Mota. *Bourdieu À Brasileira*. Confraria do Vento: Rio de Janeiro, 2022.

4 Editora Cortez: São Paulo.



others, Guerreiro do Divino Amor, Dorien Sari, and Louisa Gagliardi. I returned to the Center for Contemporary Art a second time to contemplate, now calmer and more rested, the works *Superficcional Sanctuaries* by Divino Amor, *Look!* by Sari, and *Paysage Paysan* by Gagliardi, stopping off to visit the exhibition *Dry* by Abdo Shanan at the Photography Center, “which takes on matters of identity and of representation that are intimately connected to his personal experience”.⁵

The Sudanese-Algerian photographer wrote on the wall a number of phrases in French and English, among them the following: “Even if you try to deconstruct this concept of territory, you will still feel a certain bond to the place your mother is buried at. Even though I never go to visit her grave”.⁶ On the other side of the hallway, almost in front of the bookstore, is *Le Commun*, which housed the Robert Turner Collective exhibition.

Why did a public building in Geneva receive the name of a concept, dear to contemporary ecological, anti-capitalist, and anti-colonial thinking? I asked myself this, under a near-summer sun marked by the signs and evidence of a warming climate.

(...)

In the afternoon of June 14, 2022, there was an opening conference by Achille Mbembe at the

free event named *Explore — Festival de la Ville de Demain*.⁷ I signed up and was one of the first to arrive. I wanted to meet him, and in our brief conversation we spoke of the Brazilian edition of his books, *Políticas da Inimizade and Brutalismo*,⁸ of the presence of African students at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (where he received the title of doctor honoris causa), and about Black students in Sorocaba. He told me he was rereading Paulo Freire, and that soon he would be in São Paulo, and we could meet in the city to deepen these initial themes. We said our goodbyes and I went to sit in the first row. The title of his conference was “The Universal Right to Breathe”.⁹

On the occasion, he called attention to the fact that the cities “of tomorrow” will be marked no longer by steel and concrete, but by algorithms, and that non-technophobic critical thought on technology must be created while taking into consideration this new element: algorithms.

The short conversation with Mbembe and his conference encouraged me, and next day, as soon as the doors to *Le Commun* opened, there I was. When I entered the room that housed the *Renaissance* exhibition, the only person there was a young man who offered to turn on the lights so I could see better. I thanked him for his kindness and asked if I could take photos. He said yes, and left me to it.

5 “Explorant des questions identitaires et de représentation intimement liées à son expérience personnelle”. [Exposition Dry de Abdo Shanan](#).

6 “Even if you try to deconstruct this concept of territory, you will still feel a certain bond(?) to the place your mother is buried at. Even though I never go to visit her grave”. I have not located, until this moment, any document with this argument by Abdo Shanan, however I photographed it in French and in English.

7 *Explore — Festival of the City of Tomorrow*.

8 Both published in 2021 by N-1 Edições, São Paulo, translated by Sebastião Nascimento.

9 - *Le Droit Universel À La Respiration*. In his conference in Geneva, Mbembe addressed the same themes that can be found in his article [O Direito Universal À Respiração](#), made available by the Instituto Humanitas of UNISINOS on 17.04.2020. This article served as a basis for the “[Proibido Respirar](#)” Project of Marcos Jinguba, which “carries out a series of conversations with artists from five countries especially affected by the pandemic. (...) Brazilian Luana Vitra represents Brazil in this debate.



I walked up to the first piece, which held my attention longer than usual, and then the second, the third... I read the titles of each, the date, and photographed all the available details and information. Something reminded me of Arcangelo Ianelli and/or Mark Rothko and/or the large and minuscule pieces. But these were not paintings, they were digital images printed on paper.

Before I had explored half of the exhibition I was already completely convinced of the beauty in front of my eyes, of the good it was doing me to have visited, finally, the Le Commun space. I was not yet thinking about algorithms, since the first pieces I saw did not refer directly to them. Titles such as *Timelines*, *Du bout de la pensée I*, *Du bout de la pensée II*, *Pink Punk*, *The Methaphysics of Funk*, *Écumes*, *Multicosm*... brought humor, reflection, and poetry. I took a little time to read the information at hand among the pieces and found a creative approach to themes and concepts present in the arts and in transdisciplinary academic studies in contemporary times, such as:

“The collection of pictures *Timelines* places in evidence multiple possible futures as well as the nuances that an image can contain in addition to the ways of looking at it. The 100 pieces of art *Multicosm* originate from

a process of growing hybridization of representations of nature with images of the technological or industrial world. In this manner, they reflect, each in their own way, possible visualizations of the Anthropocene. The technique of *Algorithmic Abstraction* is used to create non-linear interpolations between two images of the real world”.¹⁰

I drew near to the work BW2 and stood in front of it a good while. This time I was not reminded of other artists, but of the windows of São Paulo, which I had observed from the ninth floor during the social isolation caused by the pandemic and which I repeatedly photographed, during the day, in the evening, in the middle of the night... I sought information on the piece on the label stuck beside it. It was from 2019, “printed on Hahnemühle paper, glued to Dibond”.¹¹ However, the digital image before my eyes did not originate from the windows of São Paulo or any other place, but instead

“together with the works *The Metaphysics of Funk* and *Pink Punk*, it is part of the series *Pohutukawa*¹² created from one singular and same image of an antipodean tree. This is a work of pure *Algorithmic Abstraction*, in the sense that each piece, evoking a different reality, originates from the same elementary

10 Text photographed at the exhibition and later sent to me via e-mail, by Paul Turner: “La collection de tableaux *Timelines* met en lumière la multitude des futures possibles comme autant de nuances que peut contenir une image et autant de manières de la regarder. Les 100 pièces de l’oeuvre *Multicosm* sont issues d’un processus d’hybridation croissant des représentations de la nature avec des images du monde technologique ou industriel. Elles reflètent ainsi, chacune à sa manière, des aperçus possibles de l’Antropocène. La technique de l’*Abstraction Algorithmique* est utilisée pour créer des interpolations non-linéaires entre deux images du monde réel”.
11 “Impression sur papier Hahnemühle contrecollée sur Dibond”. The companies that sell this paper, on the internet,

observe that it is a “paper 100% cotton and completely acid-free.” It is also known as ‘Blotting Paper’. The companies that offer printing on Dibond inform that: “this is a brand patented by 3A Composites, with a name that has been incorporated into photographic language. It is a panel of composite material, compressed between two sheets of aluminum”.
12 *Metrosideros excelsa*, according to Gabriele Schmidt-Adams; Andrew G. Young; Brian G. Murray. “Low outcrossing rates and shift in pollinators in New Zealand *Pohutukawa* (*Matrosideros excelsa*; Myrtaceae).” *American Journal of Botany*, v.87, n.9, p.1265-1267, 2000. There is a song with this title, interpreted in Maori by [Maisey Rika](#). Known in Brazil as *Árvore-de-fogo*.



constructions without leaving any remaining trace of the original image. In the three exhibited pictures, the organic contours of the vegetable world give place to a rectilinear rigidity, as if nature, held at bay, had to cede to the laws of the digital world”.¹³

Still in a solitary state of contemplation and refection provoked by what I had seen until then, and especially by the piece BW2, I turned to see a man with hair tied back in a ponytail, wearing a shirt with a cassette tape printed upon it. He drew nearer and asked if I had enjoyed the exhibition. I said yes, and added that I had hesitated in coming. I thought he was a visitor to the space, like me, but no. I was talking to Paul Turner, one of the artists of the Collective...

Paul explained the concept for the exhibition¹⁴ and some technical details of the work relating to algorithms, to the handling and artistic work with these (on the computer),¹⁵ and finally to the process of printing the images. I told him that contemporary art related to and produced with excessive technology (computers and such) does not interest me, but that BW2 reminded me of the windows of São Paulo, etc...

13 “Un ensemble de trois tableaux —*The Methaphysics of Funk*, *BW2* et *Pink Punk*— est tire de la collection *Pohutukawa*, crée à partir d’une seule et même image d’un arbre antipode. Il s’agit d’un travail d’*Abstraction Algorithmique* pur, dans le sens où chaque oeuvre, évoquant une réalité différente, provient des mêmes briques élémentaires sans qu’aucune trace de l’image originale ne subsiste. Dans ces trois tableaux exposés, les contours organiques du monde végétal laissent place à une rigidité rectiligne, comme si la nature, contrainte, avait dû se plier aux lois du monde numérique”.

14 I transcribe what is in the folder: Of interdisciplinary nature, the exhibition aims to offer a sort of demystification of the general notion of algorithm. In a manner that is at times didactic, at times playful, at times organic, it deals with themes that are perhaps still difficult to access with a

I asked questions about the collective, a duo made up of him and Louis-Hadrien Robert (the young man who had received me and switched on the lights, but who was no longer in the room).¹⁶ I made it clear, too, that I consider tiring those works that use multiple technological resources, as they impose an accelerated rhythm of information (and “critiques”) that do not allow the necessary pause for breathing, reflection, and for a possible dialogue between the spectator and the work/artist.

I did not mention this to Paul, but I was thinking about some of the installations I had recently seen, and that among them *Look!* by Dorien Sari synthesized very well what I thought about the demands made upon the spectator. In other words, I was in complete agreement with Sari, if indeed this was his intention and not to call the attention of those who insist on not seeing what needs to be seen.¹⁷

Paul recommended I see the installation *Living Still—Tane’s Garden*, adding some of the aspects of sonority that I would encounter and talking about the Influit group. He presented me with three postcards with reproductions of the pieces *Far Away 1*, *Far Away 2*, and *Far Away 3*, which had the collective’s website.¹⁸ He waved a hand,

positive and inclusive attitude”/“De nature transdisciplinaire, cette exposition a pour vocation d’apporter une sorte de démystification sur la notion générale de l’algorithme. Elle traite de manière parfois didactique, parfois ludique, parfois organique, des thèmes peut-être encore difficiles d’accès avec une attitude positive et inclusive”.

15 A close explanation to that which he gave me can be found in the [video](#).

16 Both are mathematicians. [Paul Turner](#) is from New Zealand, a professor in the mathematics department of the University of Geneva. [Louis-Hadrien Robert](#) is a post-doctorate candidate, assistant to Professor Sergei Merkulov at the University of Luxemburg.

17 [LOOK- “Post-truth”](#).

18 [robertturnercollective.org](#)



pointing the way to the installation, and said: “I think you’re going to like it”.

I entered the dark room. Images similar to those I had just seen along with others I had not seen or noticed, in movement, were projected onto a large screen with a soundtrack I could not identify.¹⁹ Was this the Influt group in action? I let myself be swept away by the images and sounds. I “spoke” with Marta Catunda and the concepts, dear to her, of sonorous sculpture and landscape.²⁰ I would not be able to say how long I remained there. When I left, I photographed the available information about the installation:

The projection Tane’s Garden inhabits the space between immobility and movement. An image that at first seems fixed —immobile, and therefore incapable of fully reflecting the living world— evolves in a slow and constant manner. Playing with the theme of “still life”, the Robert Turner Collective has developed the concept of Living Still: a digital work that gives body to an image of fixed appearance, gradually filling it with life. The serenity remains while the almost always imperceptible mutations echo the human experience of passing time. Tane, the forest god of Māori cosmology,

*sees the sky through the vegetation coverage, dreaming of a myriad of possible futures. The work is animated by algorithmic abstractions, weaving the threads of this waking dream, in a room with quadriphonic special diffusion. A processor implements an algorithm of atonal composition, using as source fragments of saxophone recordings. These fragments are amplified in sonorous time and space, giving the impression of vibratory movement expanded infinitely.*²¹

I wanted to say goodbye to Paul, but the room was empty. When I left, I met him on the first floor with a few students from HEAD (Geneva University of Art and Design) —members of Music 4, a group of generative music. They were preparing a concert for that evening, in honor of Brian Eno. I was invited, but couldn’t miss the last train.²²

(...)

After the observations of Mbembe, made the previous day, it was inevitable that I would think of the work of mathematics professor Haroldo Aleixo de Lima Júnior and the conversation he had with Professor Ubiratan D’Ambrósio, registered, in part, in his Masters dissertation²³; I considered

19 According to Paul (via e-mail) this will be available soon on Vimeo.

20 Concepts present in the body of theoretical work of Marta Catunda, as well as in her artistic production, marked especially by the collaboration with Tetê Espíndola. Among her innumerable works I suggest her doctoral thesis: **ABC dos Encontros Sonoros: Entre Cotidianos da Educação Ambiental**. University of Sorocaba, 2013.

21 “La projection Tane’s Garden habite l’espace entre immobilité et mouvement. Une image qui au premier regard semble fixe-immuable et donc incapable de refléter pleinement le monde vivant évolue pourtant de façon lente et constante. Jouant sur le terme de “nature morte”, le Robert Turner Collective a développé le concept du Living Still: une oeuvre numérique qui donne corps à une image d’apparence figée en

lui insufflant graduellement la vie. La sérénité demeure, tandis que les mutations souvent presque imperceptibles font écho à l’expérience humaine du temps qui passe. Tane, dieu de la forêt dans la cosmologie maorie, regarde le ciel à travers la canopée em rêvant à des myriades de futurs possibles. L’oeuvre est animée par des abstractions algorithmiques indépendantes, qui tissent les fils de ce rêve éveillé, dans une salle avec diffusion spatialisée quadriphonique. Un processeur implemente um algorithme de composition atonale prenant comme source des échantillons de prises de son de saxofone. Ces échantillons son étires dans le temps et l’espace sonores, donnant l’impression d’un mouvement vibratoire allongé à l’infini.

22 A reference to the samba [Trem das Onze](#), an iconic song of São Paulo, by Adoniran Barbosa.

23 O Ensino de Matemática e o Cotidiano Escolar — Uma abor-



that the exhibition, in the space denominated Le Commun, was a dialogue with innumerable artists, activists, and theoreticians, who directly or indirectly emphasized this concept.²⁴

It was inevitable that I would relate the *lutas e lidas*²⁵ in favor of the common good with the high temperature of those days, a direct consequence of the climate crisis; with the specter of nuclear war that hung in the air since Russia invaded the Ukraine; with the presence of refugees, with their pale skin and eyes, who were expected at the train stations of major Swiss cities. With the solidarity work carried out by support groups awaiting the arrival of the refugees at the stations, especially women, teens, and children, to avoid them falling into the hands of human traffickers; with the historic neutrality of Switzerland at stake, especially after Finland and Sweden decided to join NATO; with the few people still wearing masks as a reminder that the pandemic is not yet over; with the abundance of available vaccines, and the intense campaigns of the Swiss federal government for people to be vaccinated, and the constant public and private demonstrations by European negationists, in name of individual freedom.

(...)

dagem Apoiada no Filme Matrix. Masters dissertation. University of Sorocaba, 2011. Professor Ubiratan D'Ambrosio is considered the precursor of ethnomathematics.

24 The list of names may be exhaustive. Some names and works cited in this text are based on this concept and its derivatives. I would add to the list: Ailton Krenak, Angela Davis, Cacique Raoni, Chico Mendes, Davi Kopenawa, Frans Krajcberg, Jaider Esbell, Jean Ladrière, José Lutzenberg, Kenzaburo Oe, Margaret Mee, Marielle Franco, Mercedes Sosa, Milton Santos, Nita Freire, Pedro Lemebel, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, and Yoko Ono.

25 Translator's note: in searching for an English equivalent that captures the poetry of this Brazilian expression, I suggested the Shakespeare-inspired 'social toils and troubles'.

I look through the photos, reread the exhibition folder, spend time on the Robert Turner Collective website, listen to Influit, an "electroacoustic post jazz" duo.²⁶ I find the information that the collective defines its work as Algorithmic Abstraction, and this places them in proximity with the movement initiated by artists Jean-Pierre Hébert and Roman Verostko.²⁷ The latter is the author of the article *The Algorists*²⁸ which opens with an image from the work *Chicago*, 1992 by Jean-Pierre Hébert.

He presents an in-depth and didactic history of this artistic branch, extensively illustrated with works that, for instance, pay homage to Paul Klee or refer to Mondrian,²⁹ observing details of the movement with its precursors, gatherings, exhibitions, publications, and connections.

According to Verostko, "The 1995 manifesto of the "Algorists" was not a declaration of something new, rather, it was giving identity to an artistic practice that had already brought radical change and would continue to change the way we would create art in the 21st Century".³⁰ In this same article he offers a series of information, such as relating to CompArt — Center of Excellence Digital Art, a database organized by Frieder Naker at the

The author requested that I leave the original but add the translation in the footnotes.

26 The definition can be found on the webpage of [Daniel Maszkowicz](#), who makes up Influit together with Nat Cila.

27 Available at robertturnercollective.org

28 Available at verostko.com

29 Hommage à Paul Klee, created in 1965 by Frieder Naker; Computer Composition with Lines created in 1964 by A. Michaell Noll; and Artificial Mondrian, created in 1967 by Hiroshi Kawano.

30 "The 1995 manifesto of the "Algorists" was not a declaration of something new, rather, it was giving identity to an artistic practice that had already brought radical change and would continue to change the way we would create art in the 21st Century".



University of Bremen, where we can find among the 210 listed artists the names of Salvador Dali, Jean Tinguely, Pieter Cornelius Mondrian, Nan June Paik, Jackson Pollock, John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Max Bill, and Waldemar Cordeiro.³¹

About his own work, Verostko writes: “Algorithmic drawings, like my “Green Cloud”, shown below, evolved from my passion, as a painter, for the marriage of spontaneous brushwork and studied arrangement. With elementary programming abilities I explored the same goals I had set for myself as a painter”.³² (Undated; p.3).

In the catalogue for the exhibition held in 2006 at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics of the University of California in Santa Barbara, in which he took part together with Hans Delhlinger, Jean-Pierre Hébert, and Chana Horwitz, Verostko observes that:

Since 1960, in all my work, I have sought to create original forms that are unique realities without reference to other objects or images. For me these forms are visual celebrations of information procedures embedded in today’s culture. The works are visual analogues of the coded algorithms by which they grew. They invite us to ponder how the stark logic of a coded paradigm yields such surprising grace and beauty. By doing so they serve as icons

*illuminating the mysterious nature of code, the procedures underlying the shape of our evolving selves*³³ (2006, p.13).

Verostko is also the author of a generous article on Jean-Pierre Hébert, dating from 2003.³⁴ According to him, the artist’s work:

*“Led us to experience a personal and private visual world via coded procedure, a world that would otherwise remain hidden from view”*³⁵ (2003, p.3). In another passage, the author writes that the series of works by Jean-Pierre Hébert named *Sisyphus*, “...can evoke a sense of transcendence”³⁶ (2003, p.7).

On his work, Jean-Pierre Hébert reports that:

“I love to draw and always had a passion for drawing. Since the late 1970s, I have been working with the conviction that to gain power and beauty, drawing should become a pure mental activity, rather than a mere gestural skill. I have endeavored to make it so banning the physical side of drawing. I create drawings by composing and writing down an original, defining code for each piece. This code will guide the device precisely, actually producing on paper the physical proof of the concept with pens, leads or brushes. The self-emergence of the drawing on paper

31 dada.compart-bremen.de

32 - “Algorithmic drawings, like my “Green Cloud”, shown below, evolved from my passion, as a painter, for the marriage of spontaneous brushwork and studied arrangement. With elementary programming abilities I explored the same goals I had set for myself as a painter”. The text includes a photo of the work *Green Cloud*.

33 - “Since 1960, in all my work, I have sought to create original forms that are unique realities without reference to other objects or images. For me these forms are visual celebrations of information procedures embedded in today’s culture. The

works are visual analogues of the coded algorithms by which they grew. They invite us to ponder how the stark logic of a coded paradigm yields such surprising grace and beauty. By doing so they serve as icons illuminating the mysterious nature of code, the procedures underlying the shape of our evolving selves”. [The Algorists: Four visual artists in the land of Newton: Dehlinger, Hébert, Horwitz, Verostko.](#)

34 [The Drawings of Jean-Pierre Hébert-Master Algorist.](#)

35 “His work led us to experience a personal and private visual world via coded procedure, a world that would otherwise remain hidden from view”.

36 - “...can evoke a sense of transcendence”.



resulting from the mental vision is always a magically rewarding and fascinating performance, when one can be both witness and creator, or Henri-Georges Clouzot and Pablo Picasso at the same time. My process is thus very much akin to composing or choreographing or...thinking”³⁷ (2006, p.8).

The technological changes that occurred in the second half of the 20th century, mainly by means of computers, meant their presence in daily life, their constant and ever more refined development, provoked interest and experimentation by many artists, in different countries, leading to the construction of languages and aesthetics in the final decades of the 20th century.

According to Verostko, the art that stemmed from this movement, marked by use of computers, formed a new frontier of possibilities, “opening new pathways in the visual arts”³⁸ (2003, p.7). Among the precursors is Max Bill from Switzerland, as stated in the catalogue of the exhibition held at the University of California in 2006, proposed and organized by Jean-Pierre Hérvet while he was the artist in residence at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics.

37 “I love to draw and always had a passion for drawing. Since the late 1970s, I have been working with the conviction that to gain power and beauty, drawing should become a pure mental activity, rather than a mere gestural skill. I have endeavored to make it so banning the physical side of drawing. I create drawings by composing and writing down an original, defining code for each piece. This code will guide the device precisely, actually producing on paper the physical proof of the concept with pens, leads or brushes. The self-emergence of the drawing on paper resulting from the mental vision is always a magically rewarding and fascinating performance, when one can be both witness and creator, or Henri-Georges Clouzot and Pablo Picasso at the same time. My process is thus very much akin to composing or choreographing or...thinking”. [The algorists: Four visual artists in the land of Newton: Dehlinger, Hébert, Horwitz, Verostko.](#)

Bill’s arguments, “strikingly prefigured the arrival of the new algorists in his (1949) essay “The Mathematical Approach to Contemporary Art (...). New algorists today are exploring Max Bill’s still uncharted regions of the imagination”.³⁹

The explicit inclusion of Bill in the movement’s history allows us to make connections *avec les tristes tropiques*⁴⁰ and particularly with São Paulo.

The name of the Swiss artist is recurrent in studies on visual arts, on poetry, and on the political dimension of his languages and the diffusion throughout Brazil, after he received an award at the 1st International Biennale of São Paulo in 1951. Bill returned to his country in 1953, after participating in exhibitions, holding conferences, and having his texts published in the magazine of the Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro.⁴¹

The influence of Max Bill in Brazil relates directly to the development of Concrete Poetry⁴², and therefore to Augusto de Campos and the work and trajectory of Geraldo de Barros. In the collection of concrete poetry of MAMCO, there are at least three works by Augusto de Campos, two of

38 “These domains of visualization constitute a new frontier where algorists have been opening new pathways in the visual arts”.

39 “In 1949 the artist and theoretician Max Bill strikingly prefigured the arrival of the new algorists in his essay “The Mathematical Approach to Contemporary Art (...). New algorists today are exploring Max Bill’s still uncharted regions of the imagination”. [The Algorists: Four visual artists in the land of Newton: Dehlinger, Hébert, Horwitz, Verostko.](#)

40 A reference to the book by Claude Lévi-Strauss and to a song by [Gérard Manset](#) with the same title as the book.

41 Sant’Anna, Sabrina Parracho. “Wiederaufbau no Brasil: Relações entre a Escola de Ulm e o projeto do MAM Carioca”, *Sociologia&Antropologia*, V.02, N.03, p.183-201, 2012; Dionísio, Gustavo Henrique. [O Antídoto do Mal: Crítica da arte e loucura na modernidade brasileira](#) (online). Rio de Janeiro: Editora FIOCRUZ, 2012.



Imagen 2. Detail of exhibition, Augusto de Campos – MAMCO, 03.06.2022.



Fuente: Marcos Reigota, 2022.

which in partnership with Júlio Plaza.⁴³ In June 2022, the piece *Viva Vaia* was on display, with rare editions of documents, books, records, and the voice of Caetano Veloso singing *Circuladô de Fulô*,⁴⁴ a song he wrote for the poem by Haroldo de Campos.

The influence of Max Bill in the work and trajectory of Geraldo de Barros was commented on by Paulo Herkenhoff, curator of the 24th International Biennale of São Paulo, in the text “One foot in rationality, another in experimentation”, dating from April 18, 1998, in which he writes: “In the 50s,

42 Fernandes, Bráulio Sebastião Alves. *A estética da invenção na obra dos irmãos Campos*. Dissertation for Masters in Literature, Culture, and Contemporaneity. Pontifícia Universidade Católica of Rio de Janeiro. 2019.

43 They are: *Poetamemos* (1953-1973); *Poemobiles* (1968-1984) with [Júlio Plaza](#), and *Caixa Preta*, 1975, with Júlio Plaza.

44 <https://youtu.be/pPmQYbTE21M>



São Paulo could no longer stop. There was the nostalgia of the utopic promise of Bauhaus, which was renewed with the presence of Max Bill among us and which is reinvented with Waldemar Cordeiro and Geraldo de Barros”.⁴⁵

The introduction for Geraldo de Barros, on the occasion of the MAMCO exhibition, which counted on the collaboration of one of his daughters in its curatorship, states that

“(…) Geraldo de Barros was a Brazilian painter, photographer and designer, and a founding member of the Brazilian Concrete art movement. De Barros initially trained as an economist, but in the mid-1940s, while still employed at Banco do Brasil, he began studying art. He first made a name for himself as a photographer with the abstract series entitled *Fotoforma*, which he showed in 1951 at the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art. The unconventional nature of his work won him a scholarship that enabled him to study and travel in Europe. There he met Max Bill and François Morellet with whom he maintained close ties. De Barros was particularly interested in Gestalt theory and the geometry of Concrete art. When he returned to Brazil he founded the Grupo Ruptura, along with Waldemar Cordeiro and Luis Saciolotto among others”.⁴⁶

Another remarkable aspect of the trajectory of Geraldo de Barros “after his visit to the School of Ulm in Germany, was his participation in the founding of the labor community Unilabor (1954), designing the furniture created at this factory”.⁴⁷

Many of these pieces, built out of Formica, or others inspired by them, entered the homes and spaces frequented by working class and middle-class families of Brazil’s interior, bringing to these remote locations, to private and daily life, the contemporary languages and aesthetics that would carry throughout the 1960s and that, despite the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985), would continue until at least the end of the 1970s.⁴⁸

(…)

The *Renaissance* exhibition was of great impact to me, altering the path and programming of my readings and studies. I was also deep in thought about the welcome and kindness I received from the members of the Robert Turner Collective. When I found out the two are mathematicians and professors, I emailed Paul Turner two photographs in which the shadow of my silhouette is projected upon the work BW2.

45 [Folha de São Paulo](#), April 18, 1998.

46 [Geraldo de Barros](#) (1923-1998).

47 [Unilabor](#).

48 - I think of the houses of my friends, my family, and the furniture bought by my parents. It is also worth remembering the presence of modern Formica furniture in blue collar diners, bakeries, delis, bars, and restaurants.

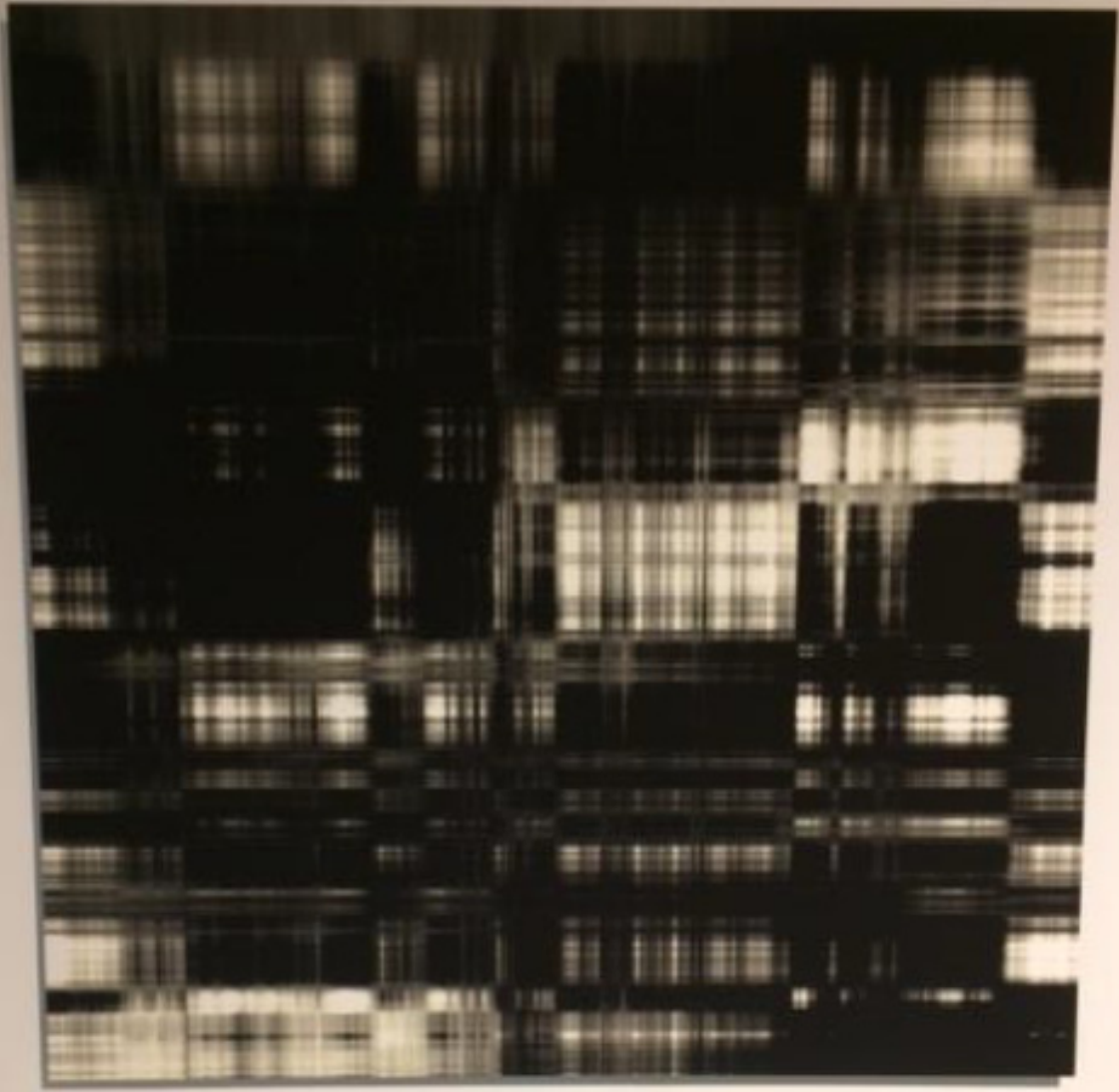
49 “Vos commentaires sur les vues par les fenêtres à São Paulo m’a beaucoup parlé. Pour le tableau en noir et blanc, nous n’avons jamais trouvé un bon titre. On pense le changer pour “São Paulo”, si vous êtes d’accord” (18.06.2022).



Imagen 3. Detail (in foreground) of the Geraldo de Barros exhibition at MAMCO –03.06.2022



Fuente: Marcos Reigota, 2022.



BW2, 2019, Robert Turner Collective. Marcos Reigota, 2023.