The Local Context and the Institutional and International Contributions of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo (1998)

Camila Maroja

Abstract

Arguably the XXIV Bienal de São Paulo, also known as the bienal da antropofagia, is the most internationally celebrated iteration of the Brazilian biennial. Curated by Paulo Herkenhoff in 1998, the exhibition was acknowledged in the international press as shifting the focus of the Bienal de São Paulo away from its earlier international model based on the Biennale di Venezia toward a more geopolitical, Southern one closer to the Havana Biennial. Famously, Herkenhoff mobilised the modernist concept of cultural cannibalism (anthropophagy) coined by Brazilian intellectual Oswald de Andrade in 1928 to make a commentary of contemporary art, placing Brazil at the centre of the exhibition.

This article revisits this celebrated exhibition to consider it not as an isolated curatorial *tour-de-force*, but as deeply inserted in its historical moment (i.e., post-multiculturalism in a decade marked by neoliberalism and biennalisation) and stemming from transformations in the very São Paulo Biennial, which had been uplifted monetarily and curatorially by the two previous exhibitions (the 22nd and 23rd curated by Nelson Aguilar). Ultimately, it also surveys how this show contributed to the internationalisation of the national concept of anthropophagy and of Brazilian artists associated with it.

Keywords

24th Bienal de São Paulo, *Bienal da antropofagia*, anthropophagy, Brazilian contemporary art, Latin American contemporary art, Exhibition histories

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The Local Context and the Institutional and International Contributions of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo (1998)

Camila Maroja

The 24th Bienal de São Paulo, curated by Brazilian Paulo Herkenhoff in 1998, is generally remembered as the "anthropophagic biennial", in reference to its curatorial use of Oswald de Andrade's 1928 modernist concept of anthropophagy. The exhibition is understood as a transformational moment in both the mission of the Bienal de São Paulo and the internationalisation of Brazilian contemporary art. The 1998 biennial has also been widely acknowledged as having inserted the work of such local artists as Ernesto Neto, Adriana Varejão, Artur Barrio, and Beatriz Milhazes into the international art market and having played a major role in the ongoing globalisation of contemporary art and its history. The lasting impact of this exhibition on the institutional history and international stature of the Bienal de São Paulo, and on the currently dominant conceptualisation of contemporary art, is surely a reflection both of the individual vision of its chief curator and of various political and intellectual shifts taking place within the larger international art world at the time. Nonetheless, a closer examination of the intentions and format of the 1998 biennial reveals that this watershed moment was also largely made possible by its local context. These include the innovations introduced by curator Nelson Aguilar in the two preceding iterations of the São Paulo Biennial, ongoing efforts by Brazilian thinkers and artists to revise their own art history, and the impact of Brazil's cultural ambitions and its adoption of neoliberal policies on the nation's artistic institutions in the 1990s.

Modeled on the prestigious Biennale di Venezia, the Bienal de São Paulo was founded in 1951 by entrepreneur Francisco "Ciccillo" Matarazzo Sobrinho as an offshoot of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP) with the stated mission of exposing local artists and audiences to the newest international artistic trends, a task otherwise made difficult by Brazil's lack of established cultural institutions. Following the format of its Venetian model, like many other international imitators, all but the first of the early iterations of the Bienal de São Paulo included two sections: *National Representations*, in which artworks were selected and organised according to nationality, and a series of *Special Rooms*, which presented curated monographic and thematic shows that typically exhibited modernist artworks. In addition to its international pedigree, this format offered Matarazzo a way around the logistical difficulties and prohibitive expense of regularly bringing international exhibitions to Brazil through the recently inaugurated MAM-SP, as each invited country was financially responsible for selecting and facilitating

its own national representation.[1] Moreover, it allowed the Bienal de São Paulo to rely on the official organisational support of Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, known as Itamaraty, in a shared effort to boost the city's international reputation and eschew insular provincialism. Both the *National Representations* section and the *Special Rooms* inaugurated at the 2nd Bienal de São Paulo in 1953 – the latter of which famously displayed Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) – were also seen as a way to provide the local public with a foundational artistic education for understanding the newest art trends, in effect operating as temporary museums intended to provide artists and viewers with a growing awareness and appreciation of important and often groundbreaking developments within contemporary art.

This format, originally introduced in 1895 and under increasing international scrutiny throughout the 1970s, was reformulated when in 1979 the foundation in charge of the Bienal de São Paulo, inspired by the example of the Kassel Documenta exhibition, chose to institutionalise the role of the curator. Beginning with the 1981 Bienal de São Paulo under the curatorship of Walter Zanini, artworks were displayed according to medium (termed "language relation and analogies" in the catalogue) rather than national identity – a shift that persisted from the 16th to the 19th biennials.[2] Although the division according to nationalities was re-instituted in 1989, in the mid-1990s curator Nelson Aguilar made several changes to the format that would help prepare the way for what would become Herkenhoff's dramatic (and vastly more internationally publicised) 1998 intervention.[3]

For the 22nd Bienal de São Paulo in 1994, Aguilar modified the established format of the *Special Rooms*, which had previously predominantly displayed important works by European and North American modernists, to instead promote Brazilian art and its history. Orchestrating the exhibition around the curatorial theme of *Ruptura com o suporte*, or the rupture of the frame, a foundational concept of the Brazilian Neoconcrete Movement, Aguilar created three special rooms titled *Museographic Spaces* in which he displayed works by the local artists Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, and Mira Schendel, showcasing how each had eschewed traditional media to expand modern art by creating hybrid artworks. Aguilar's decision to consolidate a national art history around a local concept key to the understanding of Brazilian contemporary artistic production, helped to revive local historiographic efforts undertaken by artists and critics in the late 1970s, such as the important exhibition *Projeto Construtivo Brasileiro na Arte* (Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo and Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, 1977), and to increase international recognition of the work of all three artists alongside a younger generation of local artists.[4]

Following that well-received exhibition, Aguilar expanded on his previous exhibition concept for the 23rd Bienal de São Paulo in 1996 by choosing the theme *a desmaterialização da arte no final do milênio* (the dematerialisation of art in the end of the millennium). This time, however, the curator was able to support

1
1 Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 1951), 14-15. For more on the difficulties attending such efforts despite being fueled by post-war politics and economics, see Adele Nelson, *Forming Abstraction: Art and Institutions in Postwar Brazil* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), especially chapter 1.

2
The Fundação Bienal de São Paulo has digitised important information about each of its iterations. Information on the 16th Bienal de São Paulo is available at: https://bienal.org.br/exposicoes/16a-bienal-de-sao-paulo/, accessed December 2023.

3
For a history of the Bienal de São Paulo, cf. Roberto Conduru, "Janela Baça: A Bienal de São Paulo e seu formato recente", *Novos Estudos* 3, no. 52 (1998); and the introduction in this special issue. Conduru also made a poignant analysis of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, cf. Conduru, "Arte com filtro – XXIV Bienal Internacional de São Paulo", *Arte & Ensaios* 6, no. 6 (1999).

4
The almost immediate impact of the 22nd Bienal de São Paulo on the international recognition of Brazilian artists is evidenced by the exhibition of 167 works by sixteen Brazilians in eleven New York galleries artists under the title *Art from Brazil in New York* shortly following a visit to the biennial by the gallerists Mary Sabbatino, Lori Ledis, and Robert Flam. Francisco Alambert and Polyana Canhête. *As Bienais de São Paulo da era do Museu à era dos curadores (1951-2001)* (São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial, 2004), 191.

his vision with a robust budget as a result of the growing impact of the neoliberal Rouanet Law (1991), which granted federal and private companies a tax deduction for contributions to cultural institutions. This shift in local conditions allowed the curator to restructure the Biennial format and include a record number of participating countries that responded to Aguilar's theme. Alongside national representations and monographic exhibitions in the special rooms displaying works by Jean-Michael Basquiat and Edvard Munch, the curator designated a space titled *Historical Nucleus*, which showcased more than 200 prints by old master Francisco de Goya. In doing so, the 23rd Bienal de São Paulo not only expanded the biennial's focus beyond contemporary art (an opening that Herkenhoff would take even greater advantage of in 1998) but also adopted the neoliberal practice of displaying and amply advertising work by big names in the art world to attract a larger audience.[5]

Aguilar also initiated a section titled *Universalis* that was directly inspired by Jean-Hubert Martin's presentation of the work of Western and non-Western artists side by side in his seminal 1989 Parisian exhibition, *Magiciens de la terre* (La Villette/Centre Georges Pompidou), inviting a team of eight internationally renowned art professionals, including Martin (France), Mari Carmen Ramírez (Puerto Rico), and Achille Bonito Oliva (Italy) to showcase the work of forty-one contemporary artists from six regions of the world: Africa and Oceania, Latin America, Asia, Canada and the United States, Western and Eastern Europe, and Brazil. Despite this section's regional format – an apparent response to growing criticism of the national representations format within the art world – his choice to feature Brazil as an autonomous unit further advanced the project of promoting Brazilian art and placing it squarely as a major site of artistic innovation, initiating a move that, once again, would be further advanced by Herkenhoff in 1998.

Together, Aguilar's formal innovations, stronger curatorial imprint, and emphasis on Brazilian art and the unprecedented budget and record number of visitors attending the 23rd Bienal de São Paulo not only confirmed the show's ambitions and reputation as one of the most important large-scale international exhibitions but also encouraged Herkenhoff to envision an extravagant curatorial plan for what would be the final biennial of the 20th century. To organise the exhibition under an overarching theoretical concept that would both unify contributions and attract international interest, Herkenhoff selected the term *épaisseur*, or "thickness", a notion coined by French postmodernist philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, which the curator translated as "density" and adopted as an argument against the subordination of seeing to reading, of image to text.[6] In his original plan for the exhibition, this guiding theoretical concept spanned all three proposed sections of the biennial: the traditional *National Representations* section, the multi-themed special rooms exhibition now bearing the title *Historical Nucleus*, and the global show *Universalis* introduced by the previous biennial, which was ultimately reorganised and renamed as the word *Routes* repeated seven times. Of these, Herkenhoff viewed *Historical Nucleus*, for which he invited a select team of international curators to contribute special exhibitions associated with his chosen theme, as the curatorial core of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo.[7] Although Herkenhoff had originally hoped to drop the increasingly controversial *National Representations* section, the economics of the exhibition made that impossible, though in the catalogue and elsewhere, he expressed hope that the curatorial interventions of the other sections would mitigate most

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For more on Nelson Aguilar's 1996 show, see Agnaldo Farias (ed.), *50 Anos da Bienal de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2001), 240.

6
Herkenhoff, interview with the author, Rio de Janeiro, December 16th, 2011. Lyotard's book had explored the tension between *figure* (understood as the thick visible world captured by the "savage eye", to borrow André Breton's famous expression) and *discourse* (the transparent system of language, the visible that is "legible, audible, intelligible"). Thickness could thus operate as an open method that allowed text and image to coexist as a conjoined structure encompassing both recto and verso. Jean-François Lyotard, *Discourse, Figure* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 12.

7
Paulo Herkenhoff. "Bienal 1998: Princípios e processos". *Trópico*, April 2008.

of the criticism leveled against it.[8] Just months before the opening, early in 1998, Herkenhoff also decided to add a fourth show, titled *One and/among Other/s*, containing only Brazilian contemporary art and co-curated by assistant curator Adriano Pedrosa, a reflection of the growing importance of Brazilian art in the conceptualisation and scope of the exhibition. In numerous newspaper interviews at the time of the exhibition and in later writings, Herkenhoff clearly acknowledged his intention to highlight Brazilian art and showcase international art from a distinctly Brazilian point of view.[9] This explicit intention to transform the agenda of the Bienal de São Paulo from one focused on introducing international art to Brazilian artists and audiences to the reverse was undoubtedly fueled in large part by Herkenhoff's own history as a conceptual artist in the 1970s. Namely, his involvement in an artistic generation that was deeply concerned with the problem of creating and institutionalising a local art history capable of anchoring the contemporary artistic production of his generation within an autonomous genealogy.[10]

In his general introduction to the catalogue for the *Historical Nucleus* section, Herkenhoff explained that in order to accomplish his larger purpose of positioning Brazilian art within the larger discipline of art history, he developed the curatorial structure of the *Historical Nucleus* around a rhetorical question based on Lyotard's theory: "Which is the dense moment of art history in Brazil?" [11] His answer to that question not only identified the anthropophagist movement of the 1920s as the point at which Brazilian modern art was thickest – that is, the least mediated by Western readings or metadiscourses – but also led him to employ the Brazilian modernist concept of anthropophagy as the central topic of the *Historical Nucleus* section, which presented images of historical cannibalism, and as a post-colonial method he described as cultural cannibalism across all of the biennial's exhibitions.[12]

8
Herkenhoff confirmed this in an interview with the author in December 2011 and in a text co-authored with Adriano Pedrosa, "O curador Carioca", in *Marcelina: Revista do mestrado em artes visuais da Faculdade Santa Marcelina*, 1, no. 1: 42-52. In a letter to Anna Matirola from the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, the president of the Bienal de São Paulo wrote, "We all know that the traditional model of international biennials has recently been called into question and now faces a serious crisis. The majority of international biennials such as Istanbul, Johannesburg, and Gwangju have abandoned the notion of 'national representations' altogether. In São Paulo, like in Venice, we wish to maintain this model and fully explore all the possibilities of a dialogic interaction between our institution and all participating countries [...] This makes us quite optimistic *vis-à-vis* a thorough revision of the traditional notion of 'national representation' to which the curatorial guidance and orientation of the XXIV Bienal is committed". Letter dated October 31, 1997, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1385, folder 5.

9
Besides stating his nationalistic intentions in several newspaper interviews, Herkenhoff reported in a later review of the biennial that he had proposed organising a biennial intended for a Brazilian audience and focused on Braziian art" and stated that "the XXIV Biennial affirmed that the place of Brazilian art is outside of the exile of the historical canon and of the 8.547.877 km^2" (a reference to Brazil's territorial dimensions). Herkenhoff, "Bienal 1998: Princípios e processos", 10-12.

10
Working as a conceptual artist while a law student in the 1970s, Herkenhoff had met most of the artists with whom he would later work as a curator and museum director. In addition to exhibiting work at *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* (Young Contemporary Art, JAC) and Walter Zanini's groundbreaking initiative at MAC USP in 1973 and at the *Area Experimental* (Experimental Area) of the MAM-RJ in 1975, his work as an artist anticipated many of the concerns that shaped the 24th Bienal de São Paulo. For example, a series of artworks and performances during this period included his eating bits of artworks or commentaries regarding art, which Herkenhoff described as "an anthropophagy of art itself". See Francisco Bittercourt, "A Arte Experimental quer 'questionar a arte vigente'" (Experimental art wants to "question the current art"), *Tribuna da Imprensa*, December 6-7, 1975.

11
Paulo Herkenhoff, "General Introduction" in *Núcleo Histórico: Antropofagia e histórias de canibalismo*, vol. 1 of XXIV Bienal de São Paulo (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1998), 36. Available at: https://issuu.com/bienal/docs/name208154, accessed December 2023.

12
According to a 1997 institutional press release, "The XXIV Bienal de São Paulo does not have a general theme, but rather a paradigmatic concept: épaisseur, which relates both to complexity and compactness in the articulation of object and thoughts. Épaisseur is suggested as a working tool for curators in all segments of the exhibition". At this point in the biennial's conception, according to this document, only the *Historical Nucleus* was expected to be regulated by the Brazilian concept: "Although it is guided by the concept of 'density', the Bienal de São Paulo will realize a historical exhibit around the theme of 'Anthropophagy' while admitting some parallel discussions...". "Density and Antropofagia", press release, November 1997, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1488. Large portions of these institutional documents are included in the four printed catalogues of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, most notably in Herkenhoff's "General Introduction" to the *Historical Nucleus* exhibition.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the development of Brazilian modernism had been largely dependent upon the re-elaboration of European influences, Herkenhoff's answer historicised anthropophagy as its primary impetus and the inauguration of a distinctive and autonomous art movement.[13]

The term *anthropophagy* was originally coined by Brazilian intellectual Oswald de Andrade in his theoretical *précis* "Anthropophagite Manifesto" (1928), a foundational statement of the Brazilian modernist movement.[14] In this influential text, de Andrade urged the Brazilian intelligentsia to act as cultural cannibals, by which he meant freely ingesting theories from Europe together with local artistic themes so as to give birth to a cosmopolitan and national culture. By invoking the figure of the cannibal, de Andrade simultaneously presented locals as highly sexualised, creative, spontaneous, and vital – characteristics that European audiences already identified with the avant-garde trope of the primitive – and implied a resistance to Europe's civilising mission, a critique of the inescapable violence of its colonial process. Thus, de Andrade's call to Brazilians to purposely adopt a primitive identity was intended to challenge rather than reproduce the demeaning implications of the binary between the primitive and the civilised that had been imposed by colonialism. While demonstrating this process by appropriating the avant-garde literary genre of the manifesto, the text expanded the network of Modernism to include Brazil and interpolated that country's intellectual and artistic contributions with the international avant-garde of the 1920s.

Herkenhoff understood this notion of a savage Modernism, introduced by a Brazilian critic seventy years earlier, as an early model of a non-hierarchical critical construct capable of acknowledging what he termed "*precedents* and *parallels* in the history of art" [emphasis in original] across time and regions.[15] When Herkenhoff employed anthropophagy to structure the biennial's artistic project, therefore, he did so in opposition to the canonical understanding of High Modernism as something which originated in Europe, was only latterly exported to the US, and from there to the rest of the world. This use of anthropophagy, then, a nationalistic concept closely associated with Brazil, allowed him to spotlight that country's contribution to a decades-long effort to effort to re-shape the relationship between centre and periphery and provide a distinctly Brazilian imprint to an expanded concept of modernism. Herkenhoff's adoption of the concept of anthropophagy, referring to the ingestion and selective elaboration of European heritage, thus allowed him to advocate for nationalism and cosmopolitanism at the same time – an apt choice for a biennial whose historical mission was to place Brazilian art in active contact with the art of the rest of the world and to gain recognition for São Paulo as an international artistic centre.[16]

According to Herkenhoff, his main aim as the chief curator in the *Historical Nucleus* section was to offer viewers a non-Eurocentric history of art in a series of exhibitions that he framed as "histories of cannibalism",[17] thereby adopting an indigenous concept that implied a dialogue with Europe even as it challenged

13
See, for example, Carlos Zílio, *A Querela do Brasil: a questão da identidade brasileira na arte. A obra de Tarsila, Di Cavalcanti e Portinari 1922-1945* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1997).

14
Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto Antropófago", *Revista de Antropofagia* 1, no. 1 (May 1928), 3-7.

15
Herkenhoff, "General Introduction", 36.

16
The director of the first biennial, Lourival Gomes Machado, wrote: "By its very definition, the biennial should fulfill two main tasks: to place the modern art of Brazil not in mere confrontation, but in lively contact, with the art of the rest of the world; and, simultaneously, to try to achieve for São Paulo the position of world artistic centre. To have Venice as a reference was unavoidable..". Cf. *1 Bienal do Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, 1951), 15. Available at: https://issuu.com/bienal/docs/name3fe634, accessed December 2023.

17
By the time the catalogue was produced, Herkenhoff had expanded the concept of anthropophagy to cover the whole biennial as well as the *Historical Nucleus:* "In search of an occurrence of extreme density in the history of Brazilian culture, the curatorship of the XXIV Bienal de São Paulo has arrived at the historical moment of antropofagia. In art history, the concept is deeply non-Eurocentric and is orienting the XXIV Bienal, particularly the *Núcleo Histórico*". Ibid.

modernity's foundational notions of originality and purity. In addition to his own contributions to this section, Herkenhoff asked an international team of twenty-five art professionals to compose multiple individual and group exhibitions on topics such as *Dada and Surrealism* (displaying works by André Masson, Francis Picabia, and Salvador Dalí, among others) and *Monochrome* (showing artists such as Kasimir Malevich, Cildo Meireles, Hélio Oiticica, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Yayoi Kusama, Robert Ryman, and Yves Klein) as well as monographic shows of the work of individual artists such as David Siqueiros, Francis Bacon, and Tarsila do Amaral. He and his assistant, Adriano Pedrosa, compiled and distributed pedagogical material on the concept of anthropophagy to all the other curators involved in the *Historical Nucleus* exhibition, thereby allowing them to capitalise on anthropophagy's historical investment in devouring European cultural products as a means to incorporate North Atlantic artworks into a show dedicated to the history of cannibalisms from a Southern viewpoint.

In his own portion of this section of the biennial, Herkenhoff chose to present a series of transnational and transhistorical juxtapositions between Brazilian and canonical European or North American artworks in displays he termed "contaminations", or dialogical insertions of contemporary Brazilian artworks into the history of art intended to allow more balanced exchanges between artworks coming from different hemispheres and time periods.[18] In an earlier article addressing the power relations between the North and South in Western cultural exchanges, Herkenhoff had wondered whether it was even possible to "establish a dialogue in a landscape of outstanding hegemony", noting that even if material inequalities did not restrict artistic quality, "they may most certainly affect the social circulation of cultural assets".[19] Acutely aware that even Brazilian artworks that were as aesthetically powerful as European ones lacked the same visibility in the art world, Herkenhoff seized the 1998 biennial as an opportunity to shift the terms of that exchange by employing what Brazilian Concrete poet Haroldo de Campos had defined as anthropophagic appropriation: a subversive form of dialogue that could enable Latin American intellectuals to participate in an international conversation while maintaining and affirming their local differences.[20] In short, the curatorship of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo provided Herkenhoff with a new and highly visible venue in which to embody his arguments and reconfigure both the biennial and the larger history of art away from its Eurocentric focus. In that sense, he conceived of the show as a meta-exhibition, one intended to simultaneously critique the canonical narrative of art history, promote Brazilian contemporary art, and offer a new curatorial model based on this transhistorical and transnational conversation among artworks.

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As Herkenhoff later explained, the purpose of such contaminations was "to establish a dialogic gesture with the inclusion of a meaningful artwork of a Brazilian artist in the room of a European or North-American artist, as in the case of Barrio and Schendel. Although some misunderstood it, contamination allows for exchanges, infers a faith in the object's potency, is able to sustain itself — no matter the circumstances. And it has the function of demonstrating historicity: as in contrasting Lygia Clark and Mira Schendel with Eva Hesse and Louise Bourgeois, who were grouped in the same area for the first time". Herkenhoff, "Bienal 1998: Princípios e processos", 17.

19
Herkenhoff, "The Void and the Dialogue in the Western Hemisphere", in *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, ed. Gerardo Mosquera (London: InIVA, 1995), 69-76. The term "dialogue", formerly favoured among Latin American thinkers, has recently been widely replaced by the term "in conversation", as acknowledged in the titles of the latest book series launched by the CPPC (e.g., *Ferreira Gullar in conversation with / en conversación con Ariel Jiménez*, 2012), perhaps reflecting an attempt to escape from the former term's evocation of a narrow understanding of Hegelian dialectics.

20
In his 2008 review of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, Herkenhoff cited Haroldo de Campos' 1980 essay "Da razão antropofágica: diálogo e diferença na cultura brasileira" ("Of anthropophagic reason: dialogue and difference in Brazilian culture"), which was revised and published in English in 1986, as a key reference for the biennial. De Campos was a co-founder of the *Noigandres* magazine (1952) and one of the main figures in the international Concrete Poetry movement, which believed that "authors of a supposedly peripheric literature" should appropriate universal codes and reclaim them as part of their own artistic patrimony.

To further assist the foreign curators – those he had invited to participate in the *Historical Nucleus* section – to adopt anthropophagy as a "model for cultural practice" and an "open and dynamic" concept intended to be "non-Manichean, deconstructive, transcultural, and appropriationist",[21] Herkenhoff also produced a dialogical model of contamination in a chart intended to both encourage curators to explore dialogical relationships among its multiple entries and spotlight the history and geopolitics of the regions included within the show. Graphically, and consistent with the curator's stated purposes, the various branches of this diagram revolved around the name of a famed Brazilian artist, Tarsila do Amaral, the most popular painter in what had become known as the first modernist generation of Brazil and whose life and work directly evoked the central role of anthropophagy in Brazilian Modernism. Tarsila had been married to de Andrade at the time he wrote the "Anthropophagic Manifesto", and not only had a sketch of her famous 1928 painting *Abaporú* (meaning "man-eater" in the indigenous Tupy language) been used to illustrate the manifesto but, according to her own account, the painting itself had served as the original inspiration for the anthropophagic art movement.[22] [fig.1]

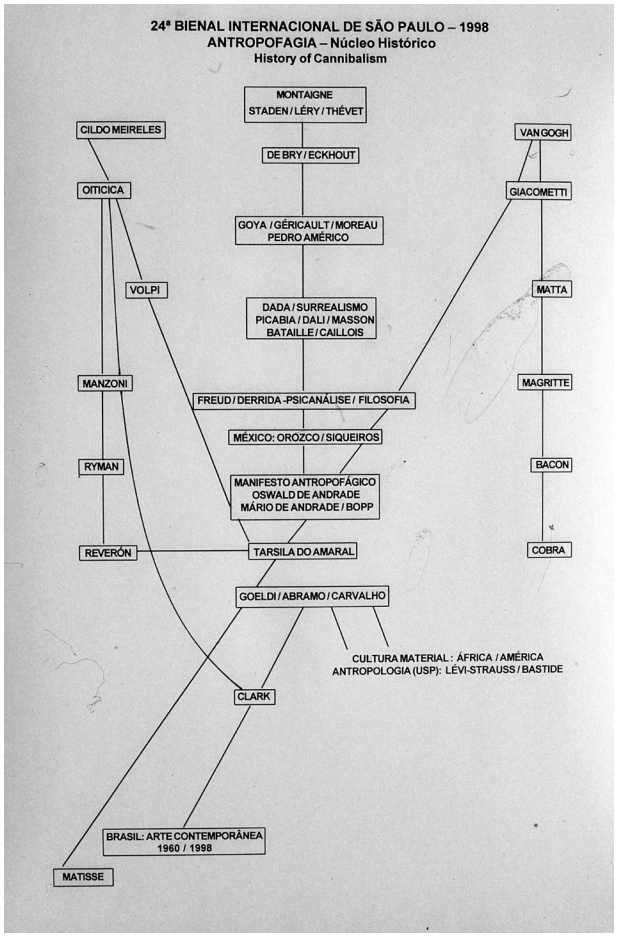

fig. 1
Paulo Herkenhoff, Diagram, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo (FBSP), 1998. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP. Source: São Paulo Biennial Foundation Archive.

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"XXIV Bienal de São Paulo", Institutional Release, 1997. Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1385, folder 5.

22
For more on Tarsila's work, see Aracy Amaral, *Tarsila: Sua obra e seu tempo* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1975) and Tarsila and Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand. *Tarsila do Amaral. Cannibalizing Modernism* (São Paulo: MASP Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, 2019). According to Tarsila herself, "The anthropophagic movement of 1928 had its origin in a work of mine that was titled Abaporu, anthropophagus. A solitary monstrous figure with huge feet sat in a green lane, a folded arm resting on the knee, a hand sustaining the weightless minuscule head. In front of this figure, a cactus explodes into an absurd flower. This canvas was drafted in January 11, 1928. Oswald de Andrade and Raul Bopp – the creator of the infamous Cobra Norato poem – stood in shock in front of Abaporu and contemplated it at great length. Imaginative as they were, they believed that from there could stem a great intellectual movement". Tarsila do Amaral, "Pintura Pau-Brasil e antropofagia", *RASM, Revista Anual do Salão de Maio*, no. 1 (São Paulo, 1939): n.p. Available at: https://digital.bbm.usp.br/bitstream/bbm/6936/1/45000033262_Output.o.pdf, accessed december 2023.

Above and below this centrepiece, the central column of Herkenhoff's map traced a chronological line of descent for cultural cannibalism, beginning with the 16th century European authors Michel de Montaigne and Hans Staden and moving to colonial chroniclers and 18th century artists who had disseminated tales about cannibalism in the new world. These were followed by a list of later artists who had depicted scenes of violence associated with cannibalism, including Goya, Géricault, Pedro Américo, members of the Dada and Surrealist circles, the Mexican painter David Siqueiros, and Brazilian modernists. From there, the column split into two, with one branch continuing the list of Latin American names and the other consisting of references to Brazilian literature, cinema, and music. While Herkenhoff's map presented time vertically, it arranged space horizontally in the form of two outer lateral columns containing only modern and contemporary art references – one predominantly featuring Latin American artists, interrupted only by the monochrome show, and another presenting European artists or Latin American artists who worked in Europe (including Van Gogh, the Cobra movement, and Roberto Matta, a Chilean painter associated with the Surrealist movement). In an attempt to prompt the transatlantic conversation he had called for in his earlier article, Herkenhoff's chart graphically represented both the geographical divide between Latin America and Europe and, by placing anthropophagy as a potential mediator of that divide, his curatorial intention for the *Historical Nucleus*.

The *Historical Nucleus* show embodied the intention behind Herkenhoff's map by including both contemporary Brazilian works and historical works for the purpose of re-assessing the dominant historiography of contemporary art and by framing that art within a local perspective.[23] Within the Surrealist show, for instance, curator Dawn Ades chose to include Brazilian artist Vik Muniz's *Sigmund Freud* (1997), a portrait of the founder of psychoanalysis painted in chocolate. Even though Muniz's contemporary work obviously post-dated the earlier avant-garde movement, it nonetheless served as both a visual reminder of the importance of Freud's theories to the work of the Surrealists and a ludic reference to cannibalism: not only could a person theoretically eat the father of psychoanalysis, it appeared to suggest, but chocolate, a Mesoamerican food, had been "cannibalised" by the Europeans during colonisation. By mixing European modernist references and colonial critique, Muniz's drawing thus offered a contemporary evocation of de Andrade's 1928 manifesto.

fig. 2
Works by Tunga and Albert Eckhout. Participation at the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, Historical Nucleus, 1998. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP.

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For an extensive analysis of the *Historical Nucleus*, see the PhD dissertation by Elisa de Souza Martinez, "Textualidade Antropofágica: a curadoria da XXIV Bienal de São Paulo" (São Paulo: PUC, 2002).

As part of constructing his own cannibal dialogue within the *Historical Nucleus*, Herkenhoff placed a 1986 sculpture by Brazilian artist Tunga, *TaCaPe*, near Albert Ekhourt's 17th century canvas, *Dance of the Tarairiu* (1641-43). Despite their temporal and formal differences, the two artworks were visually linked by a common element: the baton, which was depicted mimetically by the Dutch painter in the war dance performed by the Tapuya natives and updated by Tunga in a cluster of iron held together by powerful magnets in his sculpture. Viewed side by side, the two works juxtaposed different artistic formats, temporal traditions, and representational and symbolic modes of elaborating Brazil's anthropophagic tradition and colonial history. Elsewhere, Herkenhoff similarly positioned Adriana Varejão's 1993 painting *Proposal for a Catechesis – Part I Diptych: Death and Dismemberment* (*Proposta para uma Catequese – Parte I Morte e desmembramento*) next to a display of books by 16th century European travelers in Brazil opened to their stories and illustrations of the anthropophagic scenes appropriated by the Brazilian artist in her work. In a room showcasing the work of the artist Frances Bacon, Herkenhoff also placed one of Artur Barrio's *Bloody Bundles* (*Trouxas Ensanguentadas*, 1969) – an "object" consisting of blood, cow meat, paper, and rope tied together with cloth that evoked the fate of the *desaparecidos* during the Brazilian military dictatorship – near Bacon's *Triptych* (1976), with its similarly visceral display of the human body. Within this context, *Bloody Bundles* provided a concrete example of what Gilles Deleuze famously referred to as the "body without organs" he identified in Bacon's canvases. [figs. 3, 4, and 5]

Beyond the confines of the *Historical Nucleus* section, Herkenhoff chose to further emphasise the geopolitics of the exhibition by making a couple of modifications to the *Universalis* section previously introduced by Aguilar in response to debates among art professionals over the territorialisation of the cultural arena. First, he altered Aguilar's earlier division of the showcased regions by separating the Middle East from Europe and Oceania from Africa and by incorporating Brazil into Latin America, resulting in seven regions of the world: Africa, curated by Lorna Ferguson and Awa Meite; Latin America, curated by Rina Carvajal; Asia, curated by Apinan Poshyananda; Canada and the United States, curated by Ivo Mesquita; Europe, curated by Bart de Baere and Maaretta Jaukkuri; the Middle East, curated by Vasif Kortun and Ami Steinitz; and Oceania, curated by Louise Neri. Each of these reconfigured geographies was intended to be presented independently as a self-standing exhibit that would enable each curator in this collective exhibition to weave together several local traditions through their selection of artists. Second, he carefully selected members of the section's curatorial team in a conscious effort to foster critical geopolitical reflection. Herkenhoff, hoping to encourage a wider selection of artists, insisted that all the curators in this part of the 1998 show, unlike those in the previous biennial, were actually based in the region for which they were

fig. 3
View of the *Historical Nucleus* at the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, 1998. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP.

fig. 4
Works by Artur Barrio and Frances Bacon. Participation at the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, *Historical Nucleus*, 1998. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP.

fig. 5
View of the *Historical Nucleus* at the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, 1998. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP. Copyright Wanda Svevo Archive / FBSP.

responsible. For the new Middle East region, for instance, Herkenhoff invited one curator from Turkey (Kortun) and another from Israel (Steinitz), whom together, recognising that adequately representing the art of an entire region that had never before been included in an international contemporary art exhibition was impossible, decided not to include a Turkish or Israeli artist among the four they selected for inclusion.[24] The integration of Brazil into Latin America rather than as a separate region as in the previous biennial also posed something of a problem for Herkenhoff and Pedrosa, who did not want to limit the number of non-Brazilian artists (especially following their late decision to include a fourth main section solely for Brazilian artworks), which they resolved by increasing the number of works Carvajal could include from eight to ten.[25]

24
Ami Steinitz, email to Adriano Pedrosa dated March 9, 1998, titled "re: Roteiros, meeting, urgently, as usual", Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1379.

25
Email from Pedrosa to curators of *Routes,* January 22, 1998, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1366.

To curate those regions that continued to play a dominant position in the contemporary art world, Herkenhoff deliberately chose professionals who worked at their margins, selecting curators from Finland (Jaukkuri) and Belgium (Baere) to represent a unified Europe and a US-based Brazilian curator (Mesquita) to curate US and Canadian artworks.[26] That the members of the curatorial team he selected clearly understood and shared Herkenhoff's intentions is suggested by an email from the curators of the European region to assistant curator Pedrosa and other curators, in which they described the approach they had adopted as presenting "a 'europe of the small countries'" in response to "the shift from an 'universalis' with a 'list of best artists' to a 'roteiros'". [27] Herkenhoff's deliberate focus on non-hegemonic parts of the globe, even when representing mainstream areas, was intended to encourage the inclusion of artists and movements outside of what curator de Baere would later term a "global representative system" in which artists are carefully chosen to stand for their nation, typically in a celebratory and nationalistic manner (such as Chinese Cao Guo Quiang's selection to represent China and Ukrainian-born Ilya Kabakov's representation of Russia in the previous biennial).[28] The final configuration of this new curatorial programme featured fifty contemporary artists from around the world.[29]

Although Herkenhoff had not explicitly linked his instructions to the curators responsible for this collective show to the Brazilian modernist concept of anthropophagy, unlike those issued to those involved in the *Historical Nucleus* section, this team of regional curators decided on their own volition both to employ it within their respective exhibitions so as to privilege the work of artists from underrepresented areas within their regions and, borrowing a line from de Andrade's 1928 manifesto, to re-name the show *Roteiros* (routes) repeated seven times. As curator Poshyananda described his own use of anthropophagy in a letter to Herkenhoff, "I am keen to create this section as a Third/Fourth world section; these are the countries [Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Burma] hardly ever represented in biennales, but the works and contents are extremely strong".[30] This strategy of peripheral articulation, implicit in de Andrade's concept of anthropophagy and explicit in the notion of Third Worldism and the dependency theory widely adopted among Latin American intellectuals during the 1960s and 1970s, reflected an assumption that cultural marginalisation, analogous socio-economic conditions, and similar political

26
During my 2011 conversation with Herkenhoff, he stated that he would remain unconvinced that the art world's historical hierarchies had been dissolved until a Brazilian art historian was invited to write about a non-Latin American artist, which may shed new insight into his choice of Mesquita to curate the US and Canada region. Although Mesquita's curatorial selections were unoriginal, focusing mostly on established conceptual artists, his essay in the catalogue provocatively employed de Andrade's strategy to appropriate and alter several critical texts by authors such as Zygmunt Bauman and Mari Carmen Ramírez, such as introducing the idea of a "Latin North-America" by performing small alterations in the original text of the latter.

27
Bart de Baere, email dated March 12, 1998, titled "our weekend homework, coming from Helsinki through Ghent", Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1379.

28
"Addressing Progressive Social Values", delivered at the Apexart international conference (Honolulu, Hawaii, 2004). Available at: http://www.apexart.org/conference/debaere.htm, accessed December 2023. In that lecture, de Baere criticised the "global representative system, in which key artists have been singled out to stand for their country, some on the level of official celebration, others on the level of contemporary hype" and specifically cited Cao Guo Quiang and Ilyba Kabakov as examples.

29
Although this biennial did make a much stronger geopolitical message, as reflected in the bold choice of asking a Brazilian curator, Ivo Mesquita, to select North American artists, it did not necessarily translate into a bolder choice of artists. For example, the US/Canada section of *Roteiros* included General Idea, Sherrie Levine, and Jeff Wall, all of whom were already major names at the end of the 1990s, albeit previously little seen in Brazil. Márcia Fortes comments on this unsurprising selection in an exhibition review dated from January 1, 1999 published in Issue 44 of *Frieze Magazine*. Available at: https://www.frieze.com/article/xxiv-são-paulo-biennial, accessed December 2023.

30
Fax transmission, March 9, 1998. Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Wanda Svevo Archive, Box 1379.

struggles could forge a shared identity among Third World nations.[31]

As employed in the *Routes* section of the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, therefore, anthropophagy lost much of its nationalist inflection and came instead to signify the inclusion of marginal voices and operate on the political behalf of peripheral geographical zones, including Latin America as a whole. As curator Carvajal stated in her catalogue introduction to the *Routes* section, the Brazilian notion of *antropofagia* had provided a "foundational image for critical reflection about the intellectual and cultural autonomy of Brazil and its ability to challenge hierarchical relations", one that had "initiated a crucial discussion in Latin American cultural history" that at the turn of the millennium not only continued to be valid but offered international curators a framework through which they could actively incorporate their local histories, political perspectives, and artistic contributions into the dominant art historical discourse.

Despite Herkenhoff having officially identified Lyotard's concept of thickness as the overarching concept for the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, the show quickly became associated exclusively with the Brazilian modernist concept of anthropophagy, thereby highlighting Brazilian art to an even greater degree than Aguilar's biennials had previously. For Herkenhoff, anthropophagy was a cultural strategy that "offered a dialogue model – the anthropophagic banquet –" through which he could subvert a geopolitical imbalance in which US and European art was declared original and Latin American art was dismissed as derivative.[32] Through its use of anthropophagy as a device to create a transhistorical and transatlantic dialogue through the deployment of contaminations in the *Historical Nucleus* and as a voice for the Global South in *Routes*, the 1998 Bienal de São Paulo has since been widely recognised as playing a predominant role in a genealogy of important shows that constituted the so-called global turn in art history. Its groundbreaking impact on the integration of theories and artists from other parts of the globe into the mainstream art world has resulted in its being the only South American exhibition included in Bruce Altshuler's anthology *Exhibitions that Made History* and in Afterall Books' book series on Making Art Global.[33] Indeed, Philip Vergner, the curator of the Walker Art Center's 2003 show *How Latitude Becomes Form: Art in a Global Age*, has lauded this biennial for "offer[ing] an alternative history of art, not an institutionalized art history" and, in so doing, suggesting that "there are as many art histories as there are art historians, as many cultures as there are cultural lenses".[34] As a result of Herkenhoff's curatorial intervention, both the Bienal de São Paulo and Brazilian contemporary art gained new international currency as part of what would become known as a global art world.

31
During the heyday of dependency theory in the 1960s and 1970s, Third Worldism came to represent an effort to articulate a new political identity for the Americas in parallel to Latin Americanism that was also adopted in the art world. See, for instance, Peruvian art critic Mirko Lauer's essay that promotes the experience of poverty as a common identification in the continent and beyond. Mirko Lauer, "Notes on the Visual Arts, Identity and Poverty in the Third World". In *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary art criticism from Latin America*.

32
Herkenhoff, "General Introduction", 36.

33
Bruce Altshuler (ed.), *Biennials and Beyond. Exhibitions that Made Art History, 1962-2002* (London: Phaidon, 2013); Lisette Lagnado and Pablo Lafuente, *Cultural Anthropophagy and the 24th Bienal de São Paulo* (London: Afterall Books, 2005).

34
Philippe Vergne, "Globalization from the Rear: 'Would You Care to Dance, Mr. Malevich?'" in *How Latitudes Become Forms: Art in a Global Age* (Minneapolis MN: Walker Art Centre, 2002), 20. As its title implies, the show formulated a notion of global art as the result of a juxtaposition of regional constructions of art, intended as an antidote to mainstream art historiography centred on production from Europe and the US and associated with Cold War internationalism. Herkenhoff's strategy of contamination has also had an impact on other exhibitions, such as *F[r]icciones F[r]ictions* (Reina Sofia, 12 Dec. 2000-26 March 2001) curated by Adriano Pedrosa and Ivo Mesquita.

Author's Biography

(Ph.D., Duke University) is assistant professor at Brandeis University. Before, she was an assistant professor at California State University, Fullerton, at McGill University, and the Kindler Distinguished Historian of Global Contemporary Art at Colgate University. She has held post-doctoral fellowships at the Getty Research Institute and in International Humanities at Brown University. She is currently finalising a book manuscript, *Framing Latin American Art*, which examines how artists and critics in Brazil have mobilised the tropes of earlier generations. Her additional research interests include exhibition histories, cultural interchanges between South and North, and localised forms of avant-garde art. She has published essays in *Stedelijk Studies*, *Arts*, and *ArtMargins*, among others.