

Edite Galote Carranza

SANTA MARIA DOS ANJOS CHAPEL: ONE ALTERNATIVE WORK

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ABSTRACT

Celebrating one hundred years of the birth of architect Lina Bo Bardi, her works are still relevant today, inciting the curiosity of researchers, artists, and other architects all over the world. This is due to the quality and scope of her creations in the fields of scenography, artistic design, critiques, and, of course, architecture which are particularly filled with artistic subjectivity, ideals, and a philosophical backdrop. Among her projects, the one we should pay closest attention to is the Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel, 1978, and located in the city of Vargem Grande Paulista. Although it might be considered a simple project, it is in fact a dense and syncretic work which is an representative project of the alternative to status quo architectural. This article aims to analyze the chapel and its relation to the concept of *national-popular*, concept of Te-Ató, Franciscan faith and culture high culture and popular culture in order to understand its communicating directly with the extensive cultural and political scenario.

KEYWORDS

Modern architecture. Architecture history (São Paulo State).
Counterculture. Theatre. Popular culture. Project.

DOI: [HTTP://DX.DOI.ORG/10.11606/ISSN.2317-2762.v24i42p46-62](http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/ISSN.2317-2762.v24i42p46-62)

Pós. R. Progr. Pós-Grad. Arquit. Urb. FAUUSP, São Paulo, v. 24, i. 42, p. 46-62, 2017

CAPELA SANTA MARIA DOS ANJOS: UMA OBRA ALTERNATIVA

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RESUMO

Celebrando cem anos de nascimento da arquiteta Lina Bo Bardi, seu trabalho continua incitando a curiosidade de pesquisadores, artistas e arquitetos de todo o mundo, devido tanto à qualidade, à subjetividade artística, às ideias, aos ideais e à filosofia de fundo como à amplitude da obra nas áreas de cenografia, *design*, crítica, museologia e arquitetura. Entre suas obras arquitetônicas, a Capela Santa Maria dos Anjos, de 1978, em Vargem Grande Paulista, SP, merece maior atenção. Embora possa ser considerada singela, a Capela é uma obra densa e representativa da Arquitetura Alternativa ao *status quo* arquitetônico paulista. Este artigo analisa a Capela e sua relação com os conceitos de *nacional-popular* e Te-Ato, a fé franciscana e as culturas erudita e popular, a fim de contribuir para o melhor entendimento da obra que dialoga com a cena cultural e política da época.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Arquitetura moderna. História da arquitetura paulista. Contracultura. Teatro. Cultura popular. Projeto.

INTRODUCTION

“This is another one of our trifles... As always, there was no money. But the result is ‘formidable’. In the interior there is even resonance and mysterious voices during the ceremonies.”

Lina Bo

Located in the Franciscan Priests Retreat, in the municipality of Vargem Grande Paulista, Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel, from 1978, by Lina Bo with Marcelo Ferraz and André Vainer, is a project which harmonizes Franciscan faith, erudite and popular cultures, playwrighting Te-Ato, and Gramscian national-popular concept.

The Chapel was conceived simultaneously to the construction of Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church (1976-1982) and SESC-Pompeia (1977-1986), as Lina Bo resumed activities after a period of professional silence, during which she had stayed reclusive and refused projects (1972-1876). During these years of “*persecution and anguish*”, in the words of friend Joaquim Guedes (1992, s/p), Lina Bo had permitted that Carlos Marighella and Carlos Lamarca met at the Casa de Vidro (MAGALHÃES, 2012, p.368). Due to this supposed support of armed fighting, she was prosecuted and arrested by the Second Army, she later self-exiled to her sister’s house, in Milan, in 1973 (RUBINO, 2002, p.102-3).

Lina Bo actively participated in the cultural resistance to the Military Regimen in two fronts: as editor of *Mirante das Artes, Etc.* magazine, published articles such as “A tortura questão de método”, “Operação Bandeirante”, and “MEC-USAID”, controversial for the “Lead Years”; as scenographer for Teatro do Desbunde, conceived costumes and settings for *Na selva das cidades* (1969) and *Gracias Senõr* (1971), materializing the concept of Te-Ato, by José Celso Martinez Corrêa (Zé Celso).

The set comprised of Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel, along with Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church, SESC-Pompeia, and Oficina Uzina Uzona Theater, marks a moment of projectual synthesis and conceptual cohesion in Lina Bo’s career.

This paper analyzes Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel from the following parameters: syncretism between erudite and popular, exchange of projectual ideas, relationship to the philosophical concept of national-popular, Franciscan faith, and Te-Ato dramaturgy, which are approached throughout the text based on our doctorate research *Arquitetura Alternativa: 1956-79* and on the papers “Casa Valéria Cirell and the national popular” and “Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel: veranda national popular”, in the light of new reflections such as the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary character of the proposal.

THE VERANDA-ED CHAPEL

Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel [Fig. 1] stands out from the other buildings that form the Retreat for Franciscan priests due to its implantation on an elevated plateau by the woods and building techniques.



Fig. 1 – Chapel viewed from the Retreat's entrance, recently-built
Source: Instituto Lina Bo e Pietro Maria Bardi, São Paulo.

Unlike the other buildings in the Retreat, built with enclosing masonry and overlaid and painted white, with natural aluminum casement and glass, apparent reinforced concrete structure and fiber cement tile roofing, the Chapel is made from reinforced structural concrete block masonry, externally overlaid with cement-and-dirt mortar applied in thin coats.



Fig. 2 – Wooden mashrabiya door, wooden benches designed by Lina Bo, and flooring paginated from the wall vertex. Photo: Edite Galote Carranza, 2011.

Internally, the Chapel has a single nave, with high altar, and attendance located in two symmetrical blocks. The space organization evidences the altar axis, element dear to Christian worship spaces, and preserves visual privacy. The attendance benches are wooden [Fig. 2], identical to those designed for Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church, from 1976, and then partially replaced by chairs, also wooden. The space solution – with leveled altar and attendance and benches without the traditional kneelers, which contradicts tradition – seems to us less like a wish to innovate than a just adequacy to the democratic spirit. In this sense, it is likely that there may have been an exchange of ideas between the projects for the Chapel and for Oficina Uzina Uzona Theatre, a hypothesis discussed further on.

The access to the interior of the Chapel takes place through a single wooden door, in mashrabiya latticework [Fig. 2], clear reference to Brazilian Colonial architecture; the mashrabiya was incorporated to the architect's projectual repertoire since the project for Casa Valéria Cirell, from 1958, and also used in the SESC-Pompeia project. The interior is lit by high wooden and glass casements, which enable visuals of both the surrounding woods and the sky – from the perspective of the attendance.

¹ As per statement by Marcelo Ferraz in interview to the autor, in May 18th, 2012.

The Chapel's roofing is made of wooden framing and ceramic tiles and, on the internal face, the ceiling is made of tongue-and-groove wood boards, having received only varnish painting. This solution replaced the initial conception, which would have been waffle concrete slab, abandoned due to resource scarceness, in the words of architect Marcelo Ferraz,¹ who was part of the project.

The internal flooring of the Chapel is made of lean pigmented concrete – the popular burnt cement flooring – in dark green color, appreciated by the solution given to the expansion joints, whose design represent a projectual approach [Fig. 2]. Instead of adopting grid-patterned joints forming rectangular planes, which would be simpler and more common from an execution point of view, the demarcation of the joints unites the floor plan vertices subdividing the floor into planes. The internal walls received fine overlay and latex white painting.

The prismatic volume of structural masonry received a salient and encircling veranda, which is the *strong idea* of the project. Executed with round-branch framing, raw-trunk beams and columns, and thatch roof, the veranda conveys a vigorous expression to the work. The solution recovers the concept of veranda-ed churches of Brazilian religious architecture from the Colonial period, where the veranda – intermediate space between sacred and profane – sheltered the non-initiated in the Christian rite (CORONA; LEMOS, 1998, p.32).

In Brazilian architecture historiography, the veranda, or *copiar*, was cause for debate between sociologist Gilberto Freyre and architect historiographer Luis Saia. To Freyre, the existence of verandas in Colonial Brazilian chapels registers the influence of the patriarch big house in religious architecture, since churches assimilated the *copiar* from sugar mill farmhouses and that: *“nothing is more interesting than certain churches in Brazilian countryside with front or side verandas like any house”* (FREYRE, 1980, p.19). Luis Saia refutes the sociologist's thesis: *“I do not believe, however, that the existence of veranda in certain Brazilian chapels may be sufficiently explained by the residential architecture of the big houses”* (SAIA, 1939, p.104); to him, the origin of Brazilian veranda-ed churches traces back to the first Christian times and to the Roman basilica, proved by the use of the narthex and that, *“in fact, in the Iberian Peninsula the veranda-ed chapel was already found, both in the cities and in rural areas”* (SAIA, 1939, p.104). He also states that the most remote Brazilian example of *copiar* is Nossa Senhora da Penha Chapel, in Espírito Santo, from 1570, which follows religious architecture tradition, not domestic, as claims Freyre, with verandas alongside the *“main [building] but almost independent from it”* (SAIA, 1939, p.105). Historian and architect Carlos Lemos also discusses the origin of the veranda, arguing that Paulista urban and rural veranda-ed chapels are different. To Lemos, urban chapels are a *popular* version of the Iberian galilee, which followed the *“ancient canonical determination that impeded the presence of non-baptized people in the temple and, for them, a sheltered place outside the nave was then reserved, where the baptismal font was”* (LEMOS, 1992, p.11).

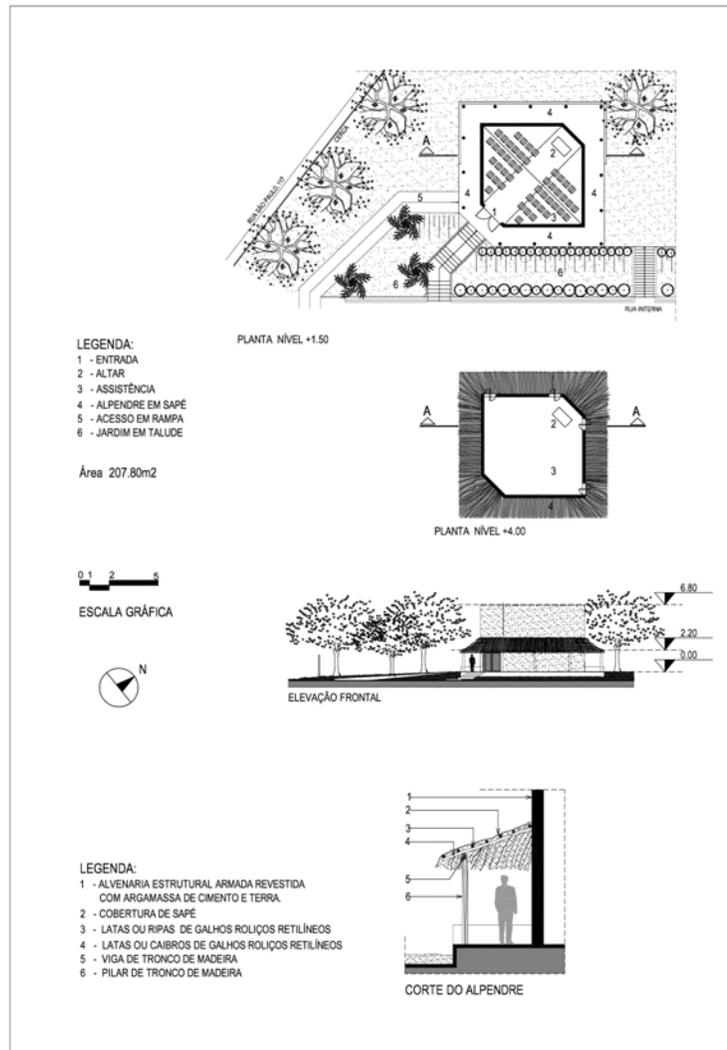
According to Lúcio Costa, after the first *“pouca dura [short-lived, in free translation] chapels”*, *“numerous veranda-ed chapels as was common in Portugal”* were built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (COSTA, 1995, p.512). At the time, at the then city of São Paulo dos Campos de Piratininga, where all buildings were made of rammed earth, the chapel was situated in one of the two rooms adjacent to the veranda (SAIA, 1972, p.134).

The most remote example of an isolated chapel was the Luz Chapel, built by Domigos Luiz – the coalman – when he moved to Campo do Guaré, current neighborhood of Luz. Designed to the image of Our Lady of Luz, it served as shelter to the first Franciscans who arrived to Paulista lands, around 1583. Despite there being no record of this example (CARRANZA, 2007), it would probably have been veranda-ed, since that was the main characteristic of the churches from the period, such as Pátio do Colégio, which was also veranda-ed (LEMOS, 1992, p.1). The verandas were progressively abandoned in the city, as they were destroyed by mules or oxen that lived unbound and took shelter in them (SAIA, 1939, p. 105). In the rural environment, however, all Paulista chapels in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were veranda-ed (CERQUEIRA, aug 2015, p.78).

One of the oldest examples from this period is São Miguel Church, that has a veranda with masonry columns and ceramic-tile roof, veranda that replaced the original roof, from 1622, made of wood and covered with thatch (SAIA, 1939, p. 18). Another example is Santo Antônio Chapel in São Roque, both veranda-ed as Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel. Therefore, the veranda-ed chapel is the traditional concept of Paulista religious architecture of the first centuries, true monuments: *“The Paulista veranda-ed chapels consist of the most important architectural monuments, witnesses of the consolidation and conquest of the colonizer to various regions of Brazil”* (TIRAPELI, 2003, p.152). The projectual approach by Lina Bo creates a historic arc between erudite, in the attention to the interpretation of the symbols of the most remote Christian architecture, and popular, in the adoption of materials and techniques specific to a vernacular culture, i.e., the (a-historical) know-how, connected to local tradition.

The conception of the Chapel [Fig. 3] follows the encircling form, which is typical of the Paulista coffee-farm big houses, at the same time as it recovers the salient solution for verandas from the origins of Paulista religious architecture. The veranda that shaded the houses’ load-bearing walls would have originated *“precisely from the bungalow, the rural building”*, and was commonly adopted in the sugar mills in the coastal region of Rio de Janeiro state (LEMOS, feb 2012). The salient veranda surrounding the building only appeared in *“São Paulo with coffee, taken by families from Bahia escaping the draught that devastated Chapada Diamantina in the last decades of the nineteenth century”* (LEMOS, feb 2012). At that time, the veranda fulfilled the function of separating and categorizing spaces for the individuals – as was the case in religious architecture –, for *“it was in the veranda that the farmer or lord met with associates or plantation slaves. It was from there that he gave orders or supervised services”* (CORONA; LEMOS, 1998, p.34). The veranda was designed as a bordering strip between the private and public spheres. In order to better understand these spheres, we invoke Hannah Arendt and her book *The human condition*: *“The distinction between the public and private spheres, faced from the point of view of privacy and not of the political body, is equivalent to the difference between what must be shown and what must be hidden”*, such as the women who ensure the prole’s survival. Still according to the author, referring to the Greek polis, both women and slaves *“belonged to the same category and were kept from foreign sight – not only because they were someone else’s property, but also because their lives were ‘laborious’ and dedicated to bodily functions”* (ARENDDT, 2007, p.82).

Fig. 3 – Floorplans, frontal façade, and section of the veranda
Source: Edite Galote Carranza drawing, 2015.



Thus, the veranda is the space where the family patriarch established contact with the public sphere and practiced his actions – welcoming guests and visitors, the priest for ceremonies, and ordering the slaves; the woman, on the other hand, was kept in the private sphere and did not have permission to go to the veranda or the chapel, not even to attend the ceremonies, keeping behind the mashrabiya windows, following the Muslim tradition of the Moors who occupied the Iberian Peninsula.

The veranda, or *copiar*, is very common in Northeastern residential and religious architecture and would have been brought to São Paulo by migrant families from Bahia. According to Luis Saia, in the Northeast, there is great typological variety of verandas, due to the presence of *latada*, building technique comprised of raw wood struts, branches, and vegetal straw coverage which, “generally alongside the dwelling, technically independent and separated from the main building, is a mixed solution from the Northeast encircling the entire building” (SAIA, 1939, p.103). As it seems, Lina Bo had proposed – but not executed – a *latada* for the shed of

Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church, with raw wood trunk pillars and thatch (BARDI, 1999, [s.p.]). Nevertheless, in the Chapel, she subverts the veranda's original purpose, that functions there as a foyer that shelters the churchgoers – simple people who arrive at the sight on foot through the dirt road, while they converse and await the start of the ceremony.

We conclude that Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel is a syncretic erudite-popular project. Erudite because it traces back to early Christian times and to the Roman basilica and recovers the concept of Iberian galilee of traditional Brazilian religious architecture; and popular for bringing the salient and encircling *copiar* built with the backcountry popular architecture typical technique: *latada* [Fig. 4]. Yet, recovering the veranda-ed chapels built from rammed earth with *latada copiares* was not the only guideline of the architectural concept, as we will see.

THE FRANCISCAN CHAPEL

Years before the Chapel project, Lina Bo had expressed her admiration for the works of the first religious people who arrived to Brazilian lands in the Colonial period and set to building: *“Decidedly, the Franciscans, Jesuits [...] who five centuries ago landed here to build churches [...]. And, deep down, if we consider the few but slightly surviving documents, left us an admirable lesson of property and perfection”* (BARDI, 1952, p.15).

In adopting *latada* and the cement-and-dirt mortar overlay, Lina Bo pays tribute to the builders of those remote Paulista chapels who she admired, at the same time conveying to the building a potent feature of “Poor Architecture”; and, there, *poor* not in the sense of lacking, but of *“[an architecture] that expresses maximum communication and dignity though the smallest and most humble means”* (BARDI, 2009, p.147-54), concept created to justify the project for MASP and that also justifies the Chapel's thatch veranda: *“Through a popular experience, I arrived at what could be called Poor Architecture. I insist, poor not from an ethical point of view. I believe that at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo I eliminated cultural snobbery, so dear to intellectuals (and architects nowadays), opting for direct, bare solutions”* (BARDI, 2008, p.100).

Fig. 4 – Technique: *latada*
Source: Instituto Lina Bo e
Pietro Maria Bardi, São
Paulo. Photo: Suzana
Coroneos.



Lina Bo would have gotten inspiration “from the intimate poetry of Brazilian land”, as she explained years before, in the text “Bela criança” (BARDI, 2009, p.70). Moreover, the “humble means” employed in the project for the Chapel serve the purposes of the founder of São Francisco de Assis, whose wish was to follow Jesus Christ’s word “more radically”. Franciscan friars declare that their main goal is “to evangelize and serve preferably the poor, marginalized, and alienated [...]. Thus, Franciscan province of Imaculada Conceição do Brasil, with all its brethren, has as general grounds in its evangelizing action the following of Jesus Christ, poor, crucified, and resurrected, as did Francis of Assisi.”²

Thus, the conception of a “Poor Architecture” of “humble means” – *latada*, *mashrabiya*, cement-and-dirt mortar, and burnt cement flooring – designed to the Franciscan order of Imaculada Conceição do Brasil is coherent with the values of the Franciscan faith, of beatitudes and poverty, which suggests the idea of spiritual childhood. Considering that the team was leading another Franciscan project, Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church (1976-1982), it is reasonable to assume they’d pursued the religious theme and that the search for poverty had taken on a symbolic character of pursuit for the roots of such faith.

However, apart from the recovery of Brazilian architectural culture and harmony with the Franciscan faith, the Chapel has other layers of meaning. It reveals projectual cohesion, considering that the project follows the same philosophical concept which motivated, twenty years earlier, the conception of the Valéria Cirell House, i.e., Gramscian national-popular.

² On the Franciscan values, see the institution’s official website: <http://www.franciscanos.org.br>, access in: March 14th, 2012.

³ Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was born in Ales, North of the island of Sardinia, Italy. Son of a humble family, he arrived at the Turin University to attend Arts and Letters thanks to a scholarship obtained in competition..

THE NATIONAL-POPULAR CHAPEL

From the beginning of the 1950s, when she led *Habitat* magazine, Lina Bo proved to be an architect adherent to the *praxis* philosophy of Antonio Gramsci,³ one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party. The magazine published several articles recovering Brazilian popular culture and vernacular architecture: “Cerâmica do Nordeste”; “Porque o povo é arquiteto”, photographs of vernacular architecture, slums and celebrations of Northeastern carnival; Northeastern raftsmen and the popular art of *ex-voto*, amongst others. From this set, we emphasize the article “Construir é viver” by E. Villa, which presents the step-by-step of self-construction of a wooden house with thatch roofing (VILLA, abr-jun 1952).

As professor of the subject Theory and Philosophy of Architecture at the Escola de Belas Artes in Salvador, Lina Bo revealed her knowledge of Gramscian philosophy: “How about philosophy? Philosopher is a specialist, a technician, like an engineer or a doctor, but closer to every man, for his specialty is thinking, and every man thinks, and only some amongst men are engineers or doctors” (BARDI, 2009, p.83).

As chronicler of *Diário de Notícias* newspaper, Lina Bo published in her Sunday section “Crônicas de arte, de história, de costume, de cultura da vida. Arquitetura. Pintura. Escultura. Música. Artes Visuais”, where she refers indirectly and directly to the philosopher:

[...] We wish to remember here Antonio Gramsci, who in the book *Gli intellettuali e organizzazione della cultura*, faced with great clarity, over thirty years ago, the problem of technical humanism. [...] Seeking to comprehend the science-art duality which tends to fusion and unification, in the formation of the new intellectual, aware of the new cultural problems, which condemns whether the old intellectualized pretentious-literary, or the limited scientific positivism. New humanism tends to fusion, in a technical view of the world, of cultural problems. [...] In this sense of technique-art synthesis and in this process of simplification, being totally technical or totally aesthetic man, thus renewing the old antithesis: West-East of the exclusively theoretical man: the Western; and the exclusively aesthetic man: the Eastern. It is in this synthesis ability that we recall Antonio Gramsci” (BARDI, 2009, p.110, 112).

Antonio Gramsci criticized “*intellectual aristocracy*” arguing that all men are intellectuals, but not all “*perform in society the role of intellectuals*”, since “*every man, outside his profession, develops any given intellectual activity, i.e., is a ‘philosopher’, an artist, a man of taste, participates in a conception of world*” (GRAMSCI, 1966, p.6, 8). In regards to popular culture, Gramsci distinguishes folklore as “*indigestive cluster of fragments*” resulting from various world views and national-popular culture as a more “*humanistic*” world conception, capable of unifying the people. To him, it concerns a struggle “*for a new humanism*”, a movement of “*intellectual and moral reform, dialectized in the contrast between popular culture and high culture*” (GRAMSCI, 1978, p.360). Gramscian thinking influenced Italian cultural production in the literary critique of Carlo Salinari, in the cinematographic Neorealism of directors Luchino Visconti and Pier Paolo Pasolini, in the cinematographic critique of Guido Aristarco (COUTINHO; KONDER, 1966, p. 1-7), in the anthropology of Alberto M. Cirese and L.M. Lombardi Satriani (CANCLINI, 1988, p.64), in the post-World War II literature (CARPEAUX, 2008, p. 2766), in the architectural critique of E. Pérsico and G. Pagano, both editors of *Casabella* magazine, and in the architecture of Ernest N. Rogers and his commitment for balancing tradition and modernity (MONTANER, 2007, p.81). Gramscian thinking is still present in Latin America: “*Gramsci is today part of Latin-American culture to the point where his categories of analysis penetrate the theoretic discourse of social sciences, historians, critics, and intellectuals in general*” (ARICÓ, 1988, p.26-46).

According to Carlos Nelson Coutinho,⁴ Lina Bo was one of the first people to publicly cite Antonio Gramsci in Brazil: “*To Lady Lina, as we lovingly called her, Bahia was a real expression of what Gramsci called national-popular*” (COUTINHO, 2006, p.191). Therefore, her interpretation of the *national-popular* concept diverged from that adopted by Brazilian leftist artists, intellectuals, and architects in the 1956-1964 period (ORTIZ, 1988, p.162), whose main goal was the “*search for the Brazilian people*”, who supposedly needed enlightenment to fight its alienation (in Marxist terms), in order for it, the people, to become agent of profound socioeconomic transformations (GARCIA, 2004). The Gramscian national-popular concept adopted by Lina Bo refutes local leftist culture by considering popular knowledge in a horizontal manner, and not hierarchically.

⁴ Carlos Nelson Coutinho, studios of Antonio Gramsci’s work, confirmed that Lina Bo was one of the first people to publically speak of the author in Brazil. Message received by edite.galote.carranza@usp.br, in November, 2011.

It is due to this interpretation of Gramscian philosophy that Lina Bo values the heritage and knowledge of foremen in exploring more detainedly the sense of local architectural culture, as well as not recognizing values of erudite architectural culture as opposed to popular architectural culture, but relating them dialectically. This attitude by the architect also reveals itself in other areas where she operated, such as museology, scenography, editorship, and critique. As the national-popular philosophical concept became one of the vectors of architectural conception, the project for the Chapel, in our view, has another layer of meaning: the transdisciplinarity.

In philosophy, the *trans* prefix is “much used by contemporary philosophers to create new terms, opposing a notion to that which it surpasses, and this surpassing may, incidentally, be understood in different senses” (LALANDE, 1999, p.1149). Thus, to E. Morin, transdisciplinarity is “usually [characterized] by cognitive schemes that surpass the subjects, sometimes with such virulence that put them into a trance. In short, it is the complex networks of inter, poli, and transdisciplinarity that operate and play a fecund role in the history of sciences” (MORIN, 2002, p.49). To B. Nicolescu, who corroborates Morin’s opinion, transdisciplinarity, as the *trans* prefix itself indicates, “regards that which is at the same time between subjects, through different subjects, and beyond any subject. Its goal is the comprehension of the present world, to which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge” (NICOLESCU, 1999, p.51). Finally, to S. Antônio, “transdisciplinarity is a new conception of knowledge, new epistemic matrix, a new method of investigation, exposure, and of manner of teaching and of learning [which develops] a new comprehension of the human being and of the world – as network, web, weft, tessitura” (ANTÔNIO, 2002, p.30, our italics). It regards, therefore, a view of the world which postulates a dialogue between subjects “reconciling” sciences, art, literature, poetry, history, and applied social sciences, as the subject: architecture.

We conclude that Lina Bo, who always traveled with aplomb between different areas of knowledge, crossed subject borders in the conception of the Chapel due to her multidisciplinary world view. From our point of view, transdisciplinarity is present in the project for the Chapel in so far as the national-popular philosophical concept, external to the subject of architecture, guides its architectural conception. Such conclusion does not nullify the previous discussions – recovery of erudite-popular architectural culture and harmony with Franciscan faith –, but, on the contrary, reinforces them. We continue with another transdisciplinary application, now to the dramaturgic concept, Te-Ato.

THE TE-ATO CHAPEL

The internal space of Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel was revolved with few elements: unbound chairs instead of the traditional benches with kneelers, bible pedestal, a large crucifix behind the altar, two brackets for sacred images, and a white marble altar flanked by two candle holders [Fig. 5]. Simple and uncluttered, the solution is fully justified by the project’s low budget. Yet, a detail stands out: the absence of the altar’s elevated plane.

Traditionally, the altar is separated from the nave by an elevated plane, because it is the most important point of any church. According to Corona and Lemos (1998,

Fig. 5 – View of the altar from the entrance door. Casements and altar leveled in relation to the attendance
Photo: Edite Galote Carranza, 2011.



⁵ Personal information in interview with José Celso Martínez Corrêa to the author in 2012.

p.37, 106), “*primitively, were the altars very simple, no more than a table. Later, the practice of placing the altar against the wall arose, and the wall started to receive decorations*”, that is to say, the installation of an engraved wood panel with “*niches and planks for images or casements for pictures or low reliefs*”, or yet solutions for isolated and unbound altars, “*Roman-style*”, without altarpiece. The first veranda-ed chapels built in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had the following characteristics: “*churchyard, veranda with door and two small grated windows, with low windowsill, so that the churchgoers, even from the outside, could see the altar, separated from the nave by an arch and, many times, crowned by a small cupola defining of the sacred space*” (COSTA, 1995, p.512, our italics). It is the Jesuit solution brought by architect Francisco Dias (1538-1633) for single-nave churches (COSTA, 1995, p.513). Therefore, in Jesuit churches, nave and altar are delimited by the crossing arch, which “*will be a constant in churches in Brazil*” (TOLEDO, 2012, p.71). The elevated plane to separate the altar, however, is a constant in temples of different churches.

As we have seen, the Chapel is veranda-ed, single-naved, with unbound high altar – ergo “*Roman-style*” – and with no altarpiece, choir or collateral chapels. But, in a project which distinguished itself by the repertoire and research, what would have motivated the suppression of the traditional elevated plane of the altar? It is fitting to remember it was adopted by the architects of Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church (1976-1982), project equally modern, Franciscan, and contemporary. Our hypothesis is the ideia and ideals exchange with the Te-Ato dramaturgy, by Zé Celso.

After a five-year exile, Zé Celso returns to Brazil in 1979, to rebuild his career at the Oficina Uzina Uzona Theater, where he is to this day (CORRÊA, 1998, p.335). One of his first providences upon arrival was to seek Lina Bo and resume the remodeling project for the Theater,⁵ idealized in 1969, when the architect and the dramatist traveled to Florianópolis for the filming of *Prata Palomares*. During the trip, they discussed the elimination of the Italian stage,

inadequate to the Te-Ato dramaturgic concept (CORRÊA, 1998, p.131). Lina Bo proposed a radical remodeling, which would completely demolish the project by Flávio Império and Rodrigo Lefèvre (CARRANZA, 2013). The Te-Ato dramaturgic concept, which presupposes complete integration between actors and spectators without the “forth wall”, was materialized for the first time in the play *Gracias Señor*, when Lina Bo created a scenography of few elements, almost empty, just a pedestal and a wall with inscriptions such as: “it is forbidden to spit”, “prohibited area”, “it is forbidden to smoke” (CORRÊA, 1998, p.320). In the group’s interpretation, *Gracias Señor* would be an “anti-spectacle, where the values of rhythm, order, good production do not matter, and our spectacle becomes a joint investigation with the people in the room” (CORRÊA, 1998, p.194). For the critics, the spectacle would be “ambiguous, anarchist, irresponsible, hermetic, poetic, paradoxical, and excessively theatrical” (CORREA, 1998, p.334). *Gracias Señor* represents the high point of the so-called Teatro do Desbunde, that is to say, a counter cultural theater reactive to the censorship artists faced after the decree of Institutional Act number 5 (AI-5), in 1968, which marked the point of inflection and recrudescence of the military regime.

Upon resuming her career after four years of professional silence, Lina Bo was involved in the following projects: Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church (1976), SESC-Pompeia (1977), Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel (1978) and Oficina Uzina Uzona Theater (1979). Thereby, it is possible to observe the exchange of projectual solutions, amongst which: the recuperation of the brick masonry left exposed both in SESC-Pompeia and in the Theater; the organic-shaped casements (holes) of the sporting buildings in SESC-Pompeia and in the first *croquis* for the Theater, which were denominated “buracos de espanã”; the use of mashrabiya latticework in SESC-Pompeia and in the Chapel; raw-wood trunks in the Chapel’s veranda and in the footbridges in the conception drawings for the Theater; unbound benches in Espírito Santo do Cerrado Church, the Theater and the Chapel. These details denote the exchange of ideas between projects, but, between the Chapel and the Theater, there was transposition of ideas.

Lina Bo conceived some proposals for the new Oficina Uzina Uzona Theater. The 1980 *croquis* show the radical conception, without stage, adequate to the Te-Ato concept. The conception presupposed an ample great hall with leveled floor, whose stage was delimited only by the different between flooring: wood for the actors and seating area with “cement floor (burnt or not burnt?)” (BARDI, 2008, p.259), as well as unbound chairs, without the traditional organization in rows. The conception did not move forward, but Lina Bo and Edson Elito’s final project contemplates a stage-street which follows the Te-Ato concept (CARRANZA, 2013).

In opposition to traditional church configuration with elevated altars, Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel was conceived with leveled flooring for the altar and attendance, according to the aforementioned concept. This solution seems to us very significant, especially at that historic moment, of “political opening”, Amnesty Law and fall of the AI-5, which signaled the country’s redemocratization and led to the end of the military regime, in the 1980s (NAPOLITANO, 2014). Equally meaningful is the Chapel’s location, in the municipality of Vargem Grande Paulista, close to Ibiúna, where the historical UNE meeting took place, when a thousand students were arrested, for the AI-5 forbade meetings. We consider

Fig. 6 – Remodeled Chapel
Photo: Edite Galote Carranza,
2011.



that, if the Chapel's external shape reflects the architect's reclusion period and could be "*read as a metaphor for the dark period the country faces, especially from 1964*" (OLIVEIRA, 2006, p.30), the internal space could be equally read as a metaphor for the political opening heading for democracy.

In conclusion, Lina Bo's scenic architecture and costumes integrate the Teatro do Desbunde, a countercultural manifestation of criticism and cultural resistance to the military regime. Thus, it is possible to assume that, at that historic moment of political opening, Lina Bo wished to create spaces that allowed not only religious communion between priest and churchgoers, but also civic communion between citizens, that is to say, a democratic space, transposing to the religious space the dramaturgic concept of Te-Ato and its respective ideals.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the national context, Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel [Fig.6] diverges from the production of Paulista Brutalist Architecture and Paulista Brutalist School, its contemporaries, in the terms defined by Ruth Verde Zein (2005, p.107): use of more advanced technology, emphasis on the concept *architecture as structure*, project guidelines with generally plane roofing and grid ceilings, "*using uni or bidirectional waffle concrete slabs*"; desire for serialization and industrialization of components. We observe points of contact between the Chapel and poet Thiago de Mello's house, by Lúcio Costa, with raw wood trunk structure, rammed earth and thatch roof (COSTA, 2007, p.20). Both projects are from 1978 and could be included in the set of Brazilian "marginal opus": "*[...] there is an important work that has been growing in Brazil, but that has all the traits of marginal opus. It is marginal opus, almost cursed opus, due to the excessive importance of the official historical weight of the so-called official-Brazilian-modern-great-architecture*" (GUEDES, 1977, p.23).

In the international context, the Chapel nears the conceptions of the so-called Latin American modern "Otra arquitectura", whose main characteristics are respect for local context, aiming for spaces with use of intermediate technologies, and innovation based on the existing and the traditional (ARANGO, 1989), whose result would be in accordance with socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the place where they are located (BROWNE, 1998). The Chapel could also be included in the discussions on "Critical Regionalism", expression created by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lafavre in the 1980s and discussed by Kenneth Frampton. It is a "more original [movement], that arose as a response to the new problems created by contemporary globalization, of which is strongly critical"; a kind of commitment with the location and "with the use of regional architectural elements as a means to face an oppressing or dominating universalist architectural order" (TZONIS; LAFIVRE, [1990] 2006, p.521, 523). To Frampton, it is an authentic architecture, based on "consciousness of location and on tectonics" and on the association "between political consciousness of a society and the architect's production", as opposition to the International Style (FRAMPTON, [1983] 2006, p.503).

We understand that, in valuing the location's culture, the tactile and the visual, as well as reinterpreted vernacular elements, Lina Bo's architecture refutes the Paulista architectural *status quo*. This is because her production as multidisciplinary architect crossed borders due to artistic subjectivity and the exchange of ideas and ideals with Brazilian cultural and countercultural scene. The Chapel's project is representative of such attitude.

Santa Maria dos Anjos Chapel is a work belonging to the Alternative strand of Paulista modern architecture, for the syncretism between erudite and popular, for radically recovering and reinterpreting Franciscan faith, for the transdisciplinary conception, motivated by both Gramscian national-popular philosophical concept, which addresses popular references without distinction or hierarchy, as well as the transposition of the Te-Atto dramaturgic concept, political and countercultural, to the conception of the religious space.

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Editor's note

Date of submission: 05/18/2016

Acceptance: 02/21/2017

Translation: Confraria de Textos – Helena Meidani

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