



OF SOIL, STONE AND WORD: A MEMORY BUILDING IN SÃO PAULO – THE PÁTIO DO COLÉGIO

ERICA FERRARI

Doutoranda no programa de pós-graduação da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo- FAUUSP- R. do Lago, 876 - Butantã, São Paulo - SP, 05508-080
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9306-0421>
E-mail: ericaferrari@usp.br / ericaferrari@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

We experienced a proliferation of memory spatialization during the 20th century. The production of monuments and the conversion of buildings from historical sites into museums reflected national interests and those of local elites in the consolidation of values through certain historical cuts. The crisis in relation to traditional monuments and places of memory reveals the contemporary emergency for other historical narratives, the vindication of renewed uses of the city space, and the struggle for more social equality. This research starts from the reflection on the concept of monument on patrimonial policies and on the construction of memories in the public sphere, taking as object of study the 'Pátio do Colégio', site of São Paulo city foundation.

Keywords: Monument; memory; Pátio do Colégio; visual arts

RESUMO

Vivemos uma proliferação da espacialização da memória nas cidades durante o século XX. A produção de monumentos e a conversão de edifícios de sítios históricos em museus refletiram os anseios nacionais e de elites locais na solidificação de valores por meio de determinados recortes históricos. A crise em relação aos monumentos e lugares de memória tradicionais revela a emergência contemporânea por outras narrativas históricas, a reivindicação de renovados usos do espaço da cidade e a luta por mais igualdade social. Este trabalho parte de uma reflexão acerca do conceito de monumento nas políticas patrimoniais e na construção das memórias na esfera pública, tomando como objeto de estudo o Pátio do Colégio, logradouro de fundação da cidade de São Paulo.

Palavras-chave: Monumento; memória; Pátio do Colégio; artes visuais



INTRODUCTION

The monument in the middle: of the square, the avenue, the landscape. Sometimes, we have the feeling that someone inserted the monument of homage into the place by a sudden will, without really observing the dynamics of the place. Or that this dynamic overcame the work and it remained on the sidelines, flanking the public space. We observe in certain public places in São Paulo a disconnect between a planned intention and its everyday function within the urban context. Many places where we find these monuments are living spaces for the working, low-income or marginalized population. However, this lively activity clashes with the built environment.

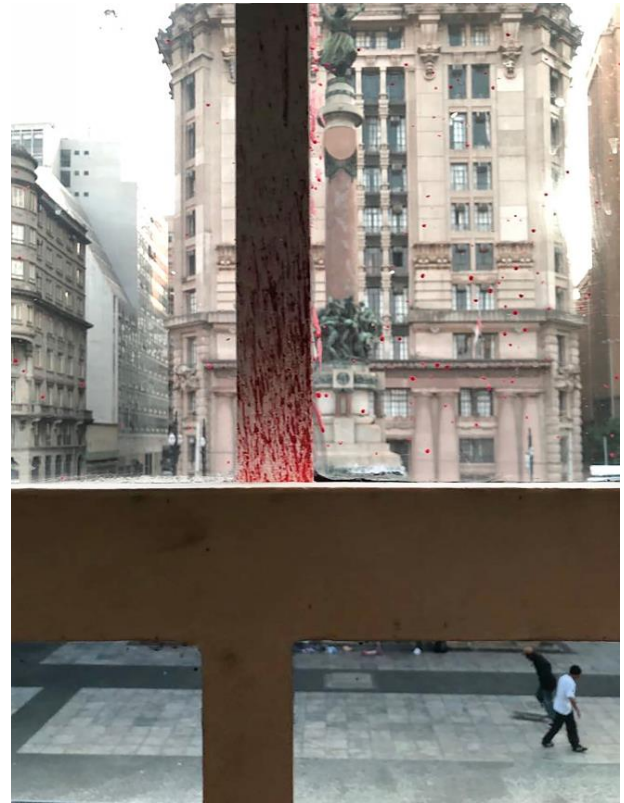
These traditional spaces of homage are then configured as ‘postcards of memory’: the obsession with the spatialization of memory in the 20th century generates places of ‘urban absence’ that represent the mythical. In this operation, very identified with post-war contexts, the place suffers a suspension of its daily practices and the possibility of physical changes, remaining in a state of ‘suspension’ (HATUKA, 2017). We can think of this concept in relation to our spaces, considering the development of São Paulo in the last century as a process of shock for its population. Then, they are presented almost as a reverse homage to this shock: there are symbolized the ‘heroes’ and ‘pride’ of the city, but its surroundings are enjoyed by the population not represented in the homages. The election of these ‘heroes’ and the construction of a story of ‘pride’, of genesis, is a commitment that is part of a mythical elaboration. They are characters coined from real evidence, but incorporated as ideological mirrors of a broad task of politically necessary identity construction at a given moment.

“Headed by leaders or other key actors in society”, the construction of these places of honor often ends up functioning as a reminder of the social power of a group – families, religious communities, political organizations. These points of memory and reference in the city help “to form the social and political unit

of each population” from the exploration of memory as a construction fostered by collective experience, whose fixation is given by operations structured by social arrangements (HATUKA, 2017). The group’s memory needs to be “reconstituted on a common foundation” that is operated “from data or notions that are both in our minds and in the minds of others, because they pass incessantly from these to the other and reciprocally, which is only possible if they made and continue to be part of the same society”. It also “necessary a crystallized set (with some real and some fictitious data)” by which it can be activated. From this evocation, we relocate ourselves in relation to this specific context of the past. If we cannot “recreate in us the feeling of what has already been seen”, there is a discontinuity effect in relation to this context (HALBWACHS, 2006). We can relate this phenomenon to certain monuments in São Paulo: as forced constructions, produced in response to the interests of small groups with great influence on urban management: “the idealizer becomes a kind of spokesperson for local history, calling himself heir to the characters of the past, a title that gives him enormous prestige” (UHLE, 2005). In other words, the idealization and construction of certain monuments reflect the desire of the influential, intellectual, political or economic elite at a given time.

About a monument in São Paulo

Some of the most politically significant monuments in the city, that is, those that would be ‘in charge’ of morally symbolizing the history and people of São Paulo, began to be articulated based on discussions by influential articulators in letters, newspapers and restricted circles. Often, a ‘cause’ began to take shape in public discussions and a social and political movement emerged in favor of the celebration of something that still remained without a physical symbol in the city. This movement, however, required a decisive factor for the completion of the work: a vacant site. Thus, urban reforms become opportunities, as they enable the insertion of a new element into the landscape.



Figures 1 and 2. Views of the Pátio do Colégio – the square and from inside the window, 2017. Digital photography.

The ‘Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]’ is an example of this set of factors. Started in 1909 and completed in 1925, the work was installed on the founding site of the city, Pátio do Colégio. The architectural transformations and uses that this space has undergone over the centuries can be considered a synthesis of the changes in São Paulo. Originally, it was a simple building, transformed into a school with a chapel by the Jesuits. Transferred to the State in 1759, the school was converted into Government Palace and the courtyard became a square with a fountain and gardens. Gradually, the characteristics of the original architectural ensemble, made of rammed earth in the colonial style, were modified, adapting to the prevailing taste and function. In 1896, the chapel was demolished, after a strong storm that destroyed its roof and damaged its interior. From then on, the place was identified only with governmental and civic functions, with no more reference to religious worship.

Public authorities and elites wanted to build an image of modernity for the city at the end of the 19th century. Several actions took shape, from the aforementioned disengagement of the religious function of the place to the hiring of Ramos de Azevedo to design two new buildings in the surroundings, for the Secretariat of Finance and for the Secretariat of Agriculture, inaugurated in 1891 and 1896. The place was referred to at the time as the Largo do Palácio, in a symbolic remodeling seen as positive, as progressive, suppressing colonial, Catholic and indigenous history. In any case, it remained a meeting place for intense social activity. This functionality began to take on other contours from the 20th century onwards:

[...] the numerous urban reforms that took place in the first two decades in the central region of the city contributed to modifying the landscape of its initial occupation. In general, the urban planning that guided these reformulations intended to improve

the road flow: streets were widened and new viaducts and avenues emerged. Among them, the Boa Vista Viaduct, next to the Pátio do Colégio [...]. The ‘vocation’ for circulation, which would little by little supersede all other activities concentrated in the downtown, promoted a second moment of emptying of social practices concentrated in the Largo do Palácio (LIMA, 2003).

In this context of reforms to promote the circulation of automobiles, to ‘adapt’ the city for the new century and, simultaneously, the loss of certain traditional functionalities of space, the debate began on a monument to the founders of São Paulo, which it would become the first great monument of the republican era. The project began with a discussion published in the newspaper between Ramos de Azevedo and engineer Adolfo Pinto.

[...] there was no monument in the city that celebrated the trajectory of the people of São Paulo, a theme already explored by intellectuals in interpretations that highlighted the specificities of the Bandeirante ‘race’. The São Paulo Historical and Geographical Institute, for example, created fifteen years earlier, already brought together numerous scholars of local history (ULHE, 2015).

The idea of establishing a symbology was already in full debate. The confluence between this ideological debate and the infrastructure reforms at the Largo do Palácio provided the necessary conditions for the installation of the new monument. The public notice to send projects was launched and the winner was sculptor Amadeo Zani.

The idea of installing a monument there reveals a paradox: the need to physically mark the foundation site with a collective memory device represents the emptying of all those practices that endowed this space with its

symbolic and active charge in meanings and uses. This ephemeral memory, reduced to enjoyment in transit, fulfills an allegedly compensatory function for the loss that the “vocation” of circulation has imposed on users of the city and of this space (LIMA, 2003).

This ‘designing’ of the functionality and characteristics of a given urban space often gives us the feeling of the intention to build visually elaborated scenarios, but which would help to sterilize the previously existing social life. These operations reveal the articulation between specific architectural constructions, the urban fabric and the demand for road flow. These scenarios would work to be seen from the car window, as panoramic screens and, ultimately, could also become places of ‘urban absence’. The construction of a statuary set of significant dimensions at the popular interaction point in the Largo do Palácio helped to modify the existing scale relationship between the pedestrian and the surroundings.

Narrative and time for the monument

The parameters for intervention actions in the city change, complement each other and sometimes coexist in a contradictory way. The desire to modernize São Paulo at the end of the 19th century guided several demolitions and remodeling of historic sites and the attempt to ‘erase’ the origin seen as ‘not glorious’ of the city. However, just a few decades later, the idea of modernizing also included the intention to create a historical identity for the city, transforming the notion of this ‘inglorious’ past into a stage suitable for the construction of heroic episodes. In this sense, the intentions are in a middle ground: it is necessary to build the new, but also to refer to a certain cut of the past.

In the specific case of the ‘Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]’ the story that should be described in the work was indicated in the public notice, as well as the intention of the homage:

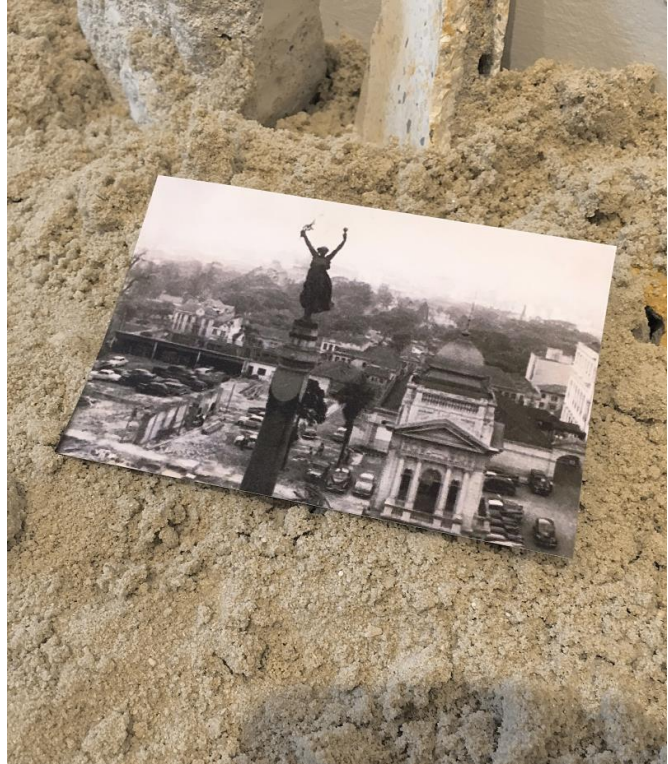


Figure 3. Views of the Pateo do Colégio – the monument and destruction, 2019. Digital photography of artistic installation: Erica Ferrari, 'Of soil, stone and word', 2019.

Considering that the foundation of São Paulo is a fact to fill the people of this land with the most just and noble pride, not only because of the sublime virtues that immortalized the memory of its heroes, but also because of the decisive influence that the small but extraordinary nucleus of energy and work exerted on the discovery and civilization built in the midst of barbarism and at the cost of such intrepid and selfless sacrifices. If for a long time it has been unbuttoning in the splendid reality that should have been the dream of those who founded the work, it should be seen that, if there is anything that needs to be justified in the justice of history, it is certainly not this homage to the august of the leaders of the foundation of São Paulo, but the delay in paying them this homage¹.

The notice provided two basic historiographic references: the 'Crônica da Companhia de Jesus no Estado do Brasil' ['Chronicle of the Society of Jesus in the State of Brazil'], by Simão de Vasconcelos, and the 'Conferências preparatórias do terceiro centenário do venerável José de Anchieta' ['Preparatory Conferences for the third centenary of the venerable José de Anchieta'], organized by Teodoro Sampaio. In addition to key characters to be portrayed – Anchieta and other figures who took part in the foundation of São Paulo. The intention of the public notice was that the work reflected the interpretations presented in the narratives of the books cited. However, both are accounts of writers circumscribed in their contexts and times.

[...] it is important to note that a text of this nature (by Simão de Vasconcelos), written in the 17th century, guided the narrative of a monument built at the beginning of the

¹ Public notice for the construction of the 'Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]'. In: *Jornal O Estado de S. Paulo*, May 1909. Quoted by UHLE, Ana Rita. *Operários da memória: artistas escultores do início do século XX e o concurso do 'Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]'*. *Anais do Museu Paulista*, vol.23 no.2 São Paulo July/Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-47142015000200139>

20th century, especially when we observe in the documents the insistence of the creators on “scientific rigor” of the work and the “historical truth” of the event, characteristics of a typically nineteenth-century discourse, indebted to a methodical history (UHLE, 2015).

In other words, a document, in the case of a written report here, is considered as a mirror of the facts, and not as an interpretive approach subordinate to the historical situation of its reporter.

Another hypothesis for the choice of these base references could be the election of these biased narratives, as logical predecessors of the exalted discourse of the time – the valorization of the Jesuits and Bandeirantes (explorers in early Colonial Brazil) as civilizing agents.

The question of the lack of neutrality of the historical narrator will become a fundamental part of the culture of later memory. Every document, ultimately, is in itself a monument, because obtaining the status of a document presupposes the act of choice and the construction of an intention on the part of those who promote this act. Therefore, every document is a selected and partial moment of the History (LE GOFF, 2003).

This entire debate around the ideological construction of São Paulo’s origins takes another approach with the modernists from the 1920s onwards, also praising the idea of miscegenation and the search for an original and proper Brazilian cultural expression, in addition to the heroism of the flags. In a few years, the historical recovery of the ‘Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]’ and its formal conception already seem somewhat limited. Between the launch of the public notice for the competition to carry out the work in 1909 and its inauguration in 1925, there is a thickening of the discourse on national

identity and the way to engage it in artistic practice in other ways. The monument, in its conception, dialogued with the nineteenth-century characteristics of the Largo do Palácio and fixed in the physical environment a memory that had been lost (about the foundation of the city).

The transformations, in addition to the discursive ones, also take place in the Largo’s functional dynamics. The Government Palace was completely removed from the site just five years after the monument was completed. The building served as the headquarters of the Department of Education until it was completely demolished in 1953, starting the long process of rebuilding the school. With this, the purpose of the monument lost its meaning. The replica of the Jesuit architectural ensemble, as it had been in the remote past, surpassed the traditional allegorical monument in significance.

However, this type of monument (rescuing historical protagonists in reference to the foundation of the city) continued to be built especially until the 1960s, such as the ‘Monumento a Anchieta [Monument to Anchieta]’, of 1954 and the ‘Monumento à Fundação de São Paulo [Monument to the Foundation of São Paulo]’, of 1963. Many monuments had been planned up to three decades in advance of their launch, but the structure and time required for implementation took a long process. Political issues also influenced the delay. Between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century, there was a greatest proliferation of traditional monuments, because, from then on, the historiographical methods themselves were gradually transformed:

[...] since the 1940s, attacks on narrative historiography began, based on the chain of unique facts (events) in the structure of a report or ‘intrigue’ (argument), events that, in turn, respond to individual actions. This way of doing historiography characterizes political history that, traditionally, was ‘the’ history. [...] there is a process of autonomy



Figure 4. Views of the Pateo do Colégio – the Government Palace, 2019. Digital photography of artistic installation: Erica Ferrari, 'Of soil, stone and word', 2019.

of historical explanation in relation to the 'self-explanation' of the report; however, beyond this, the object of historical study itself changes, as the subject of history, recognizable, identifiable, gives his place to autonomous entities – nations, social classes, mentalities, etc. The new history is a history without characters and therefore cannot be a report (WAISMAN, 2013).

These speeches would have a monumental quality due to their allegorical character. Their abandonment would take place through the use of a systematic archaeological description. The change in the way of understanding History directly influenced the way of transposing it to the public sphere of the city: the traditional monument became inadequate.

The inadequate monument

The 'Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]' was built at the genesis point of the city as a primordial symbol for the identity of São Paulo. We cannot know exactly how this claim was reflected at the time of its completion, if in fact the monument achieved its intention. What we can attest to is that today it has little representation. It is an unknown work, which was surpassed in importance by the larger monuments and in the city's 'newer' places, such as the 'Monumento às Bandeiras [Monument to the Flags]' by Victor Brecheret, inaugurated in 1953 next to Ibirapuera Park. The location of its installation also underwent a profound change in typology and use,



Figure 5. Views of the Pátio do Colégio – simulacrum with spray painting, 2019. Digital photography of artistic installation: Erica Ferrari, 'Of soil, stone and word', 2019.

which made it a 'monument in the middle of the road'. The reconstruction of the chapel and the Jesuit school in front of the monument changed the relationship of space with the population. The configuration that existed between the former Government Palace, the public buildings and the work, which had the same scale and architectural style, was lost.

The reconstructed school became a self-referential museum, inaugurated in 1979. Turning a building into a museum is common in the contemporary policy of historic preservation. The construction goes into a state of suspension as a museum-monument. In the case of the Jesuit School, in addition to its complete reconstruction for this purpose, the establishment of the museum took place in addition to the reconversion of the site to the 'Pátio do Colégio', hiding the memory of the palace and the square.

The museum, called Padre Anchieta Museum, has different environments with religious, educational and historical objects. In the exhibition room on the ground floor, we can observe drawings of different physical configurations and a model of the place at the time of the first Jesuit construction in the 16th century. This set has an informational character, being highlighted in school visits in elementary school. On the upper floor, we find a collection of objects used in Catholic ceremonies and worship, from different places and times. The purpose of this exhibition is not really clear, remaining as a collection available for public visit by the religious order itself. In an adjoining room, there are some paintings that refer to religious characters in São Paulo, such as Father Anchieta himself. In the outer area of the museum, we find the remains of one of the rammed earth walls of the original building, protected by a metal and glass frame. Opposite is the chapel's crypt, which originally housed the remains of the city's first notorious inhabitants. Finally, in the center, among various sculptures, three capitals of the columns on the facade of the former Government Palace reside in the middle of the garden and the restaurant that operates there.

These physical and functional transformations of the Pátio do Colégio, in addition to political issues about land ownership (of the State, Municipality or the Society of Jesus) and the way it is used in urban dynamics (such as a school, government headquarters or museum), come from the aforementioned change in the way of narrating History in the city's public space. Instead of symbolizing the events with allegories in a traditional monument, generally consisting of a base, column, groups of characters in metaphorical action and figures, it was decided to preserve or reconstitute the physical elements that were part of this History. In other words, the new Jesuit school becomes a monument much more relevant in the population's imagination than the 'Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]', a work made to have this

function. If we analyze it better, we can see that certain monuments and heritage landmarks are carried out at a moment when the asset or memory of historical significance is about to disappear. In the case of the monument to the founders, the original configuration and functionality of the site were disconnected from space in the late 1800s. This led to the need to build an allegorical work to this lost context. At the same time, the reconstruction of the school for its transformation into a museum also did not regain its lost function: its original feature remained absent, no longer in keeping with its contemporaneity. The museum building also did not restore what was there before. The memory of an event can never be guaranteed by the rescue promoted: “the physical manifestations and their symbolic meanings are all temporal and integrated in the present time” (HATUKA, 2017). The simulacrum building offers a fixed and reproducible image. The city’s physical instability crucially affects its inhabitants and, considering the context of the transformations that São Paulo underwent in the 20th century, we realize the importance of providing a stable memory linked to its founding place.

Rewritten memories

Three decades of intense demolition and construction in the city – from 1950 to 1970 – aligned the idea of progress with the idea of rebuilding memory: on the one hand, the beginning of the preservation policy, with the actions of IPHAN and the listing of historic sites from the 16th to the 17th centuries; on the other hand, the implementation of the subway and road works and the massive demolition of buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Period of the highest modernism and the postmodern turn, along with the period of greatest intensity of the dictatorship and the economic miracle, in which the rural diaspora and the demographic explosion created a marginalized population mass in cities, without access to its roots and its rights. Thinking about this displacement and housing growth concomitant to the great physical transformations of the city, we understand the shock aspect that we can link to the constitution of São Paulo. For Benedito Lima de Toledo, in ‘São Paulo:

three cities in a century’, the city “is a palimpsest – an immense parchment whose writing is scraped from time to time, to receive another new one, of inferior literary quality, in general” (TOLEDO, 2007).

In fact, the city’s economic activity and the use of civil construction as an outlet for surplus capital and a source of surplus value are key points in this palimpsest. Toledo warns of the risk of São Paulo becoming a ‘city without history’, given the disappearance of documents on its urban evolution, which has marked consequences for the population.

Auguste Comte noted that mental balance is largely due to the fact that the material objects with which we are in daily contact change little and offer us an image of permanence and stability. It is as if it were a silent and immobile society, foreign to our agitation and our mood swings, which gives us a sense of order and stillness (HALBWACHS, 2006).

When that doesn’t happen, when we are faced with the new,

before we can adapt, we go through a period of uncertainty, as if our own personality is at stake. Our surroundings are the mark of ourselves and the others we relate to. And it also denotes social and cultural distinctions, which belong to a certain group (HALBWACHS, 2006).

If there are major political conflicts, agitations, but the material structure does not change, the population manages to continue their routines, their identification with normality. We might think that the preservation of memory places is directly linked to this fact.

Today, the phenomenon of museums in urban transformation is the central point of attitudes and discussions regarding cities, their memory and functionality. The Anchieta Museum in the Pátio do Colégio was inaugurated almost twenty years after

the demolition of the 19th-century Palace in the same place. The simulacrum building was built as a symbol of national origin, compatible with the modernist practice of safeguarding and primordially listed of its chosen conceptual and formal predecessor, colonial architecture. If this had been ‘disfigured’ by the time, it seemed coherent to rebuild it. Between the 1950s and 1970s there was a massive destruction of urban centers around the world. The destruction was focused, as well as what should be listed as heritage. The vast majority of eclectic buildings, for example, were worthless. The old urban fabrics could be rebuilt under parameters of rational space efficiency, to meet the demands of automotive and modal transport, keeping certain monuments.

At the same time, in a protectionist attitude, many modernist works were listed as heritage soon after their construction. A second layer of this aspect is the registration of facsimile works. This practice presents itself as a construction of material history that validates the present parameter at that time. Therefore, it was appropriate to rebuild colonial buildings, with modern techniques, to ensure the material historical

lineage in the landscape. Concomitantly, the practice of rebuilding old buildings was used on a large scale in the Post-War period. Like the Colégio do Pátio, its reconstruction was based on iconographic research. In a loop, the physical construction in the city becomes what was portrayed by an artist or photographer.

The Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage (CONDEPHAAT), created in 1969, claimed that the new building in the Pátio do Colégio was a ‘falsification of the landscape’, thus determining the suspension of its works, only resumed a few years later by court decision (LOMONACO, 2004). What is impressive is that this *mise-en-scène* already appeared as a discussion regarding the preservation of the city since the beginning of the 19th century. One of the first theorists of historical heritage, the architect Viollet-le-Duc, saw it as a “foundation of urban art”: “it is about presenting the monument as a spectacle, showing it in the most favorable angle”. Therefore, “to restore a building is to restore it to a complete state that may never have existed at a given time”, instituting “in practice a militant interventionism” through “an ‘ideal’



Figure 6. Views of the Pátio do Colégio – the ruined capital of the palace, 2017. Digital photography.

conception of historical monuments”. From this perspective, whether the building was old or not was irrelevant; its function as an image, as a symbol was essential, disconnected from the idea of the value of originality. For Choay, “in most cases, the restoration remains faithful to the principles of Viollet-le-Duc” (CHOAY, 2006).

From the 20th century onwards, this ideology took on a new contour with the photographic image and its possibilities for reproduction and re-elaboration of the form of access to cultural goods. The celebration of the city’s image as a product through photographic postcards is noteworthy, whose incredible scenes made the place portrayed a monument and emptiness at the same time. For Viollet-le-Duc, radical restoration was the confirmation of the death of a past that was no longer there. Perhaps postcards could be the final, retouched photo used for posterity. However today this photo seems to be constantly changing.

The possibility of uninterrupted reconstruction and mobilization of different memories by all users of social networks modifies the dispute for memory in the public

sphere, traditionally established in the physical space of the city. The crisis of the traditional monument follows the struggle for other historical narratives and for the use of public space in a certain way, which promotes a pulverization of the demarcation of different memories throughout the city. The obsession with the culture of memory, then, has two faces: that of contestation and that of consumption. In addition to the places receiving attention for their history in the process of reviewing it, they also become attractive for tourism, for the consumption of a city as a bearer of unique and specific memories. The proliferation of memorials and museums and the insertion of the spectator as an active agent of them is configured as part of the cultural tourism industry and allows these places to be entertainment points within the logic of the ‘economy of experience’. This logic has been increasingly present in cultural life since the end of the 20th century, it seeks to replace part of the consumption of goods and services by offering personal experiences. On the other hand, from the 1970s onwards, the expansion of studies on collective memory with a special focus on “genealogies of lost or oppressed identities helped to foster the posture of the citizen who participates

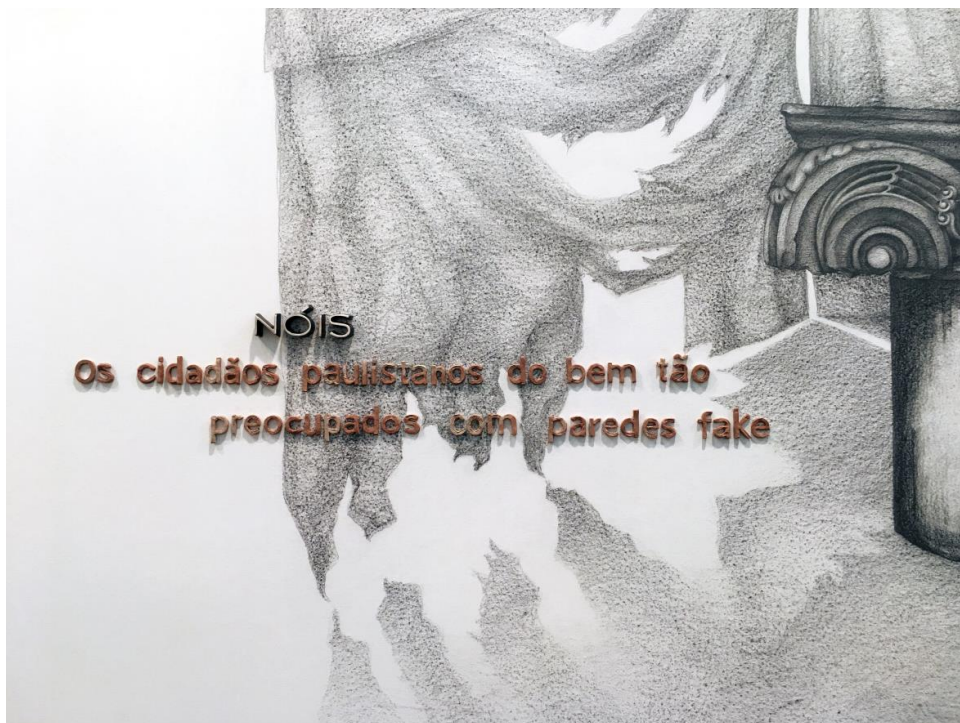


Figure 7. ‘Of soil, stone and word – good citizens’, 2019. Digital photography of artistic installation: Erica Ferrari, ‘Of soil, stone and word’, 2019.

in the city's built environment" (HATUKA, 2017). Collective memory is seen as an elastic material, changing the citizen's attitude towards city planning and architecture from the 1960s onwards, making them active in the process.

The curiosity for the places where memory crystallizes and takes refuge is linked to this particular moment in our history. Moment of articulation where the awareness of the rupture with the past is confused with the feeling of a shattered memory, but where the shattering still awakens enough memory to pose the problem of its incarnation (NORA, 1993).

History is a construction of critical interpretations in the present time, and no longer a continuous narrative. The city is the "concrete sphere of negotiation in relation to narratives", and "discursive changes transformed the memory map of the city from an instrument of social struggle into an instrument of power" (HATUKA, 2017). Pierre Nora observes this process as an integral part of the decolonization of peripheral nations, the end of memory societies (the groups that ensured the transmission of a given collective memory), the end of memory ideologies (which normalized the passage from the past to the future) and the "very mode of historical perception that, with the help of the media, has expanded prodigiously, replacing a memory focused on the heritage of its own intimacy with the ephemeral layer of today" (NORA, 1993).

The broader meaning of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological 'limits' of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative boundaries of a range of other dissonant, even dissident voices and histories – women, colonized, minority groups, the bearers of policed sexualities. This is because the demography of the new internationalism is the history of postcolonial migration, the narratives

of the cultural and political diaspora, the great social displacements of peasant and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, the austere prose of political and economic refugees. [...] My emphasis on the temporal dimension in inscribing these political identities – which are also potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity – serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. The linear equivalence between event and idea, which historicism proposes, generally gives meaning to a people, a nation, or a national culture as an empirical sociological category or holistic cultural entity. However, the narrative and psychological force that nationality presents in cultural production and political projection is the effect of the ambivalence of 'nation' as a narrative strategy (BHABHA, 2014).

Finally, what this demonstrates is the interruption of the link between the adequacy of history and memory linked to national development. When the interpretation of the past is reconstructed, "it means that we no longer fully identify with its heritage. Questioning a tradition, however venerable it may be, is no longer recognizing oneself as its only bearer" (NORA, 1993). The loss of the monument's memorial hegemony is also linked to the development of the press in the 19th century, effected with the improvement and dissemination of artificial memories whose "image and sound recording techniques, which imprison and restore the past in a more concrete form than if they direct directly to the senses and sensibility" (CHOAY, 2006).

Equity and transmission

At the beginning of the 15th century, the concept of historical monument was formed during the Renaissance, but it was after the French Revolution

that the idea of national heritage was linked to the construction of local identities. The Historical Monuments Commission was created in 1837 to “protect the remains of antiquity, the religious buildings of the Middle Ages and some castles” (CHOAY, 2006). During the 20th century, there was an expansion of the protectionist scope to practically “all forms of the art of building, erudite and popular, urban and rural, all categories of buildings, public and private”. Finally, “the heritage domain is no longer limited to individual buildings; it now encompasses clusters of buildings and the urban fabric: clusters of houses and neighborhoods, villages, entire cities and even clusters of cities” (CHOAY, 2006). The consecration of the historic monument is then directly linked to the advent of the industrial age and its consecutive destruction. Preservation is perhaps one of the great inventions of modernity, considering that every idea of modernization raises the question of what to keep (KOOLHAS, 2014).

At the end of the 20th century, heritage would no longer be just what was built as a monument, architecture, city, but what was built by traditions, by social practices. Basically, just like the physical buildings, it would be everything that was in danger of destruction, of annihilation. Since the 1990s, in Brazil, for example, goods from different historical sources have been listed as national heritage, such as the *Candomblé terreiro Axé Ilê Obá*. This type of recognition also pointed out ways to safeguard a popular and dynamic memory. In addition, from the 2000s onwards, the registration of intangible assets was instituted, defined by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) as “practices and domains of social life that manifest themselves in knowledge, crafts and ways of doing things; celebrations; scenic, plastic, musical or playful forms of expression; and in places (such as markets, fairs and sanctuaries that house collective cultural practices)”². These goods are configured as actions developed in a society, sometimes linked to specific places and recognized by a social and cultural

relevance that forms identity and memory. They are not symbols built with the intention of permanent representation, but they are temporal and change with the actions of the individuals involved.

This relative new perspective on heritage and institutional actions for the preservation of memory is consistent with changes in the perception of history and provides a legitimate social role for groups and activities that have not been officially valued until then from the allegorical (the traditional monument), to the reconstruction (of the lost historical object), to the action (which builds memory with everyday human practice): it seems to be a path towards an evolution on the practices of building memory, but perhaps it is from in fact a spiral, an attempt to adapt the complexity of the current memory concept with the horizontality and correlation that once existed in ‘memory societies’. This is the challenge of transmitting collective memory in a contemporaneity in which the digital plays a preponderant role, both ensuring the safeguarding of memory in unlimited virtual files, as well as providing, suppressing and incessantly feeding everyday memory and the heritage and global tourism industries.

In the specific case of the ‘Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]’, the initial movement to encourage the discussion about the new symbol in the public space was based on letters, newspapers and social circles from protagonists of social and cultural life of the city. Today, the newspaper’s function of making public the desire of certain groups and endorsing the population’s opinion for an ‘improvement’ seems to have shifted to advertising in the broadest sense of practice. In addition to the traditional means of communication, the promotion made by internet and application users is configured as an articulation of causes and promotion of memories. We can deepen the construction of the memory of a place beyond its physical constitution and the actions developed there with the insertion

² In: <http://portal.iphan.gov.br>

of the plurality of information generated in social networks. Through the production of photos and texts about these historical spaces loaded with layers and meanings, we end up identifying ourselves with certain aspects that are transmitted to us and we perpetuate them. The phrases and images on the networks forge collective memory as much as books and newspapers in other times. It is a wide field that becomes more complex every day, a powerful vehicle for the relationship between people and the memory of the city. New documents are configured, instantly disseminated by digital media, enabling other narrative constructions or reiterating existing ones. Both in the physical historical site and in its virtual documentation, there is an intention to apprehend a place and a time, converting them into records of a reality. However, there are incessant choices implicit in this movement.

On the Instagram platform, we observe how the Pátio do Colégio and the 'Monumento à Glória Imortal aos Fundadores de São Paulo [Monument to the Immortal Glory to the Founders of São Paulo]' are interpreted by those who visit them today. Social media is a direct way to access what kind of memory is established in a broad part of the population and what questions arise through observations of certain symbols and

indices. Among the most common is the idea of the place as the 'cradle' of the city, the point 'where it all began' and 'first building'. Also misunderstandings such as attributing the Pátio as ground zero of São Paulo and about the dates of the constructions. In fact, there is little mention of the school as a replica, it figures in popular memory as the original 16th century building. On the other hand, we can identify posts criticizing religion and the 'oppressive' relationship of Catholic doctrine, solidarity activity with the homeless population that inhabits the Pátio and references to love-hate for the 'concrete jungle' city. "It may be time to develop another approach in relation to heritage and memory, one that does not physically impose itself and redirects the focus to the virtual sphere" (HATUKA, 2017). The dynamism of changes in São Paulo can be seen as a driving factor in this movement. In this sense, the appreciation of everyday social practices and the digital environment are powerful sources to make the enjoyment of the city dynamic and in continuous transformation.

In many cases of intense political change, monuments figured as key points in a historic and symbolic cleansing. Decapitated statues, destroyed sets, works removed from public space to be placed in



Figure 8. 'Of soil, stone and word – Capital at the construction site', 2019. Digital photography of artistic installation: Erica Ferrari, 'Of soil, stone and word', 2019.

warehouses are examples of our memory of a great bankruptcy and the replacement of the inadequate for a new model. At another time, during the bombings of World War II, records showed the enormous effort of the Italian government and citizens to protect their monuments, with sandbag barricades and wooden and iron structures, as if these works were such an intrinsic part of the nation, and losing them would mean dismantling their own identity. Today, it seems that our monuments remain in a zone of existence between these two examples of preservation/destruction: on the one hand, the need to replace them is intensified, given the symbolic desolation they generate in a certain way; on the other hand, the desire to preserve them as something that contains history, whatever is represented there. From this dispute, what we actually perceive is a claim for rights symbolically expressed in public spheres, for greater equality of voices and usufruct. This battle is the spirit of our age.

A simulacrum will never be the guardian of a memory that does not belong to it, but it will be a vehicle for others. The Pátio do Colégio is not a symbol of the glorious origins of São Paulo, but the built complex that perhaps most represents its history: as an overlapping of constructions and destruction triggered by the visions and interests of different groups according to the economic and political panorama. As Foucault pointed out, that an archaeological approach, can be the instrument for this battle over contemporary memory.

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