

Photography, Race & the Modern Impulse in Brazil (New York, 2–3 May 17)

The Museum of Modern Art, NY, and The CUNY Graduate Center, May 2–03, 2017

Deadline: Dec 12, 2016

Abigail Lapin

CALL FOR PAPERS

"In Black and White: Photography, Race, and the Modern Impulse in Brazil at Midcentury"

This conference investigates Brazilian modernist photography, its relationship to race, and its place within a dynamic international network of images and ideas. From experimental work that resonates with broader postwar trends of creative photographic expression to modern forms with local and sometimes ethnic inflections, photographers were instrumental in formulating new visual languages in Brazil. Since 1939, the São Paulo-based Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) nurtured a wide range of avant-garde practices that anticipated many elements of Concrete Art in Brazil featured at the first São Paulo Biennial in 1951. This diverse group included photographers from immigrant communities such as São Paulo's growing German, Jewish, Italian, and Japanese populations. These artists participated in international networks of exchange around the globe that increased their visibility and expanded their approach.

Taking FCCB as a starting point, this conference stretches the boundaries of what we understand as experimental art in Brazil in the mid-twentieth century. Photography has been largely excluded from current scholarship about Brazilian modernism and abstraction, and Brazilian photographers of this era have been overlooked in narratives around modern photography.

The aims of this conference are thus threefold: first, we seek studies that examine the distinctive nature of Brazilian modernist photography. Second, we hope to explore photography within the context of modernist and abstract art in Brazil, probing the relationship of modernist photography to other marginalized media and art forms such as mail art and Afro-Brazilian art. Third, we encourage an international perspective that investigates networks of modernist photography through transnational photo clubs, salons, exhibitions, and the many magazines that flourished domestically and across Latin America, the United States and Europe.

We invite papers by scholars, artists, and advanced graduate students from diverse fields that engage critically with these potential topics:

- Brazilian modernist photography and modernist practices across Latin America that speak to these traditions
- Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante members and their activities, and São Paulo at midcentury

- Race and gender within Brazilian photography, particularly at midcentury
- Intra-Latin American and hemispheric exchanges of abstraction and modernist photography
- Domestic and international salons, exhibitions and contemporary magazines
- Photography in relationship to established narratives of Brazilian painting and sculpture

The event will be composed of an evening keynote panel at The Museum of Modern Art on May 2nd, and the conference on May 3rd at The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Interested parties are invited to submit a paper abstract of no more than 400 words along with a CV to abigail_lapin-dardashti@moma.org by Monday, December 12, 2016.

This conference is sponsored by The Museum of Modern Art and The Graduate Center, City University of New York (the Center for the Humanities, the Advanced Research Collaborative, and the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean). It is convened by Abigail Lapin Dardashti and Sarah Hermanson Meister.

Reference:

CFP: Photography, Race & the Modern Impulse in Brazil (New York, 2-3 May 17). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 17, 2016 (accessed Sep 17, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/13952>>.