

# The South American Way. The cultural facilities designed by foreign architects in Brazil\*

*Ai, ai, ai, ai*

*Have you ever danced in the tropics?*

*With that hazy lazy*

*Like, kind of crazy*

*Like South American way*

*(Carmen Miranda/AI Dubin / Jimmy Mc Hugh. South American Way, 1939)*

## Introduction: The foreign presence among us

Throughout the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the arrival of internationally recognized celebrity architects has moved the Brazilian architecture scene, previously closed off with its own dynamics and internal issues. In this context, this article proposes a reflection on a series of highly visible cultural facility projects recently designed by renowned foreign architects who have joined the contemporary architecture tradition in Brazil.

Their presence prompts a series of possible discussions: How do architects from different sociocultural contexts respond to the specificities of the country's condition? What kind of dialogues can be established with the culture, history, city, landscape and architectural tradition? Will they be able to generate debates that imply urban transformations and impact the country's own architectural culture?

Above all, it is important to remember that Latin American cultural history has been deeply marked by foreign presence. More than an agent of transformation, Central European heritage is a fundamental fact of our background. The cultural identity of our countries has been formed not as the recovery of an original, native identity, but rather based on an "umbilical" relationship with the Iberian colonizers. In fact, to a large extent the identity building efforts observed in the young Latin American nations in the nineteenth century were to demonstrate to Europe -many times more than to ourselves- our value as a nation and as an independent culture, built with "civilizing" values equivalent to and at the same time different from those of the parent country (Perrone-Moisés, 1997, pp. 246-247).

The oscillating movements between localism and cosmopolitanism, which Brazilian literary critic Antonio Candido recognized as latent in the evolution of Brazil's spiritual life (1985, p. 109), took on greater complexity in the twentieth century with the appearance of the modern avant-garde in art and architecture, and the important arrival of immigrant architects from Europe to various Latin American countries.

For example, Le Corbusier is considered the paradigm of the foreign architect in America, especially after his visits to Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in 1929, as well as thanks to his subsequent work as a guest consultant for government projects in Brazil in 1936 and his project for the Bogotá Master Plan between 1947 and 1951. The memory of his presence inevitably recalls the dimension of his legacy in modern Latin American architecture, especially in Brazil, where his ideas have been decisive in the construction of an internationally acclaimed modern autonomous architectural production.

But it is necessary to differentiate the establishment of architects from other countries from those who, like the French master, have visited for a limited time and because of specific assignments. Different degrees of contact and knowledge of the place produce equally different interpretations and responses.

Although not new, the international circulation of projects -and not necessarily of their authors- is a phenomenon that has grown exponentially due to increased globalization, particularly since the last two decades of the twentieth century.

In the specific case of Brazil, the context of redemocratization and economic crisis throughout the 1980s delayed the country's full integration into globalized dynamics. This happened years before in the so-called "developed" countries and has become a significant trend in this country in the first decade of the twenty-first century due to the favorable economic situation and international visibility provided by the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Buildings from different programs were designed by foreign architects interested in "sinking their teeth into" an emerging and therefore promising market. Notable among other examples of projects built, and not counting the many unsuccessful projects, are: the numerous corporate headquarters that large specialized offices such as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), Kohn, Pedersen & Fox, Pickard Chilton, Arquitectónica, Cesar Pelli, and Norman Foster built in metropolises such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro; the equally specialized sports architecture projects, including the Salvador de Bahia soccer arena (2009), by Schultiz Architekten, and the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Park (2011), by AECOM; residential buildings in Sao Paulo by Daniel Libeskind (2015) and Fermín Vázquez (2016); a luxurious hotel by Jean Nouvel, currently under construction in Sao Paulo; the small office building Leblon Offices (2016), by Richard Meier in Rio de Janeiro; and the Arena do Morro sports and education complex (2014), by Herzog and De Meuron, in a slum in Natal, in northeast Brazil.

However, no other kind of architectural project has had a greater impact in the country's general and specialized press than museums and cultural centers. Their great symbolic potential frequently enables them to be located on sites with extreme urban visibility, and have high budgets, functional flexibility and freedom of expression, which awakens the greed of both architects and politicians.

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In recent years, Brazil has experienced a considerable increase in the construction of cultural facilities with different scales and purposes, with which it has improved its still insufficient cultural infrastructure. However, the unprecedented rise in large museums designed by architects who have international celebrity status is a new phenomenon that seems to indicate the country's late entry into the "museum era." Since the final decades of the last century, museums idealized as entertainment centers capable of attracting hordes of visitors were a trend observed in Europe and the United States, driven by the consolidation of the postmodern culture of leisure and the mass culture industry (Montaner, 2003: 8).

The architectural configuration of the cultural facilities discussed in this article could not be understood well without this (incomplete) preamble. Based on a small selection of projects restricted to some of the cultural facilities with the greatest impact on the contemporary Brazilian scene, the article proposes a reflection on the recent performance of foreign architects and the way in which they structure their point of view on the specific conditions of this country.

The Iberê Camargo Foundation (1998-2008), by Álvaro Siza Vieira; the City of Arts (2002-2013), by Christian de Portzamparc; the Museum of Tomorrow (2011-2015), by Santiago Calatrava; and the Museum of Image and Sound (2009-under construction), by Diller Sofidio + Renfro, are part of broader political and urban projects, which certainly resonate in visions that, although they have not emerged in Brazil, shape narratives about how the country is conceived or how it would like to be perceived by the world.

## Discussion: South American Way

The project developed by the Portuguese Álvaro Siza for the headquarters of the foundation that houses the work of the painter Iberê Camargo (1914-1994) in Porto Alegre inaugurated a series of museums designed in Brazil by foreign architects. The foundation is private and was built with corporate financial support and Siza was selected by the board of directors.

This alone gives the building a unique position in relation to the other projects addressed here, which were built through state initiatives and mainly financed with public funds supplemented with private money. Likewise, it is an exception as one of the few museums in the country entirely dedicated to the work of a single artist, with which it seeks to establish part of its architectural dialogues.

Installed on a narrow piece of land formerly part of an old quarry, the building sits between a rocky wall and an avenue with fast traffic that separates it from the shores of the lake that bathes Porto Alegre. Considering such an urban environment, the Portuguese architect's well-known ability to integrate architecture into place had to meet another challenge common to Latin American cities: to create a context. The museum fits into the landscape filling the void left by the quarry's excavations. It takes advantage the fragmented volume and marked sculptural quality of the resulting space, which quickly became one of the favorite images of the city (Figure 1).

The deep historical and cultural link between Brazil and Portugal underlies the forms designed by Siza in his first Brazilian project. In addition, they hold personal emotional relationships and professional references that are an inextricable part of his background:

*My father was born in Belém del Pará and went to Portugal at the age of 12. I have grown up with my grandmother telling stories of Brazil, reading comics from Globo Juvenil and eating guava candy. (...) Affonso Eduardo Reidy, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer ... The images of the hills, of the slums ... All that has been fixed in my mind (Siza, 2012, p. 42).*

Indeed, Siza's relationship with Brazilian architecture is old and refers to the times when the catalog of the famous exhibition *Brazil Builds: architecture new and old, 1652-1942*, arrived in Portugal. Exhibited in 1943 at the MOMA, it showed a successful way to achieve modernity without neglecting the vernacular, the traditional and the historical. Thus, the architect remembers:

*I remember that (Fernando) Távora had bought -I don't know where, but not in Portugal- the book *Brazil Builds*, which presented recent buildings by Oscar Niemeyer, Lúcio Costa and others of the Brazilian avant-garde. The presentation he had made about it at the school, deeply marked [our] spirits, because it evoked Le Corbusier, that we imagined alone, to fight for modernity. (Machabert and Beaudouin, 2009, p. 29).*

Many authors recognize the possibility that this historical and vital framework has potentiated an architectural narrative continually furrowed by intense dialogues between Portuguese and Brazilian architectures. According to Flavio Kiefer,

*Siza is recognized as an admirer of Brazilian architecture and tells that Niemeyer was an important part of his training. He showed that he went to find in the cultural roots of Brazil part of his references. There you can see, both features of a structuralist-brutalist of São Paulo architecture, and the sensuality of the curves and white walls of Oscar Niemeyer's architecture. (2010, p. 130).*

Other prominent critics, such as Ana Vaz Milheiro (2007) and Luciano Margotto (2016:208) corroborate such approaches, mainly based on the strong visual relationship that the museum

establishes with the open passageways of Lina Bo Bardi in the SESC Pompeia (São Paulo, 1977-86). Also, Kenneth Frampton identifies in the “fractured tendons of some calcified monster” (2008, p. 93) imagined by Siza an evocation of Bo Bardi’s work, with echoes of Le Corbusier’s brutalism, especially in La Tourette (1956-1960) and in the Supreme Court of Chandigarh (1952-1959).

Similarly, the hanging ramps and the use of reinforced concrete, a symbol of the modern Brazilian tradition and a material until then uncommon in Siza’s work, are the main elements that confirm the intention to reference Brazilian architectural culture (Figure 2). From that perspective, Otávio Leonídio comments:

*After all, it was not difficult to recognize, even in the first images of the ‘Brazilian Siza’, more or less explicit references to local modern architecture. Or perhaps we would not be allowed to see in those reinforced concrete ramps (especially the external cantilevered ramps, drawn out from the main body of the building) the impact of free gestures and the structural feats of the architecture of Oscar Niemeyer, Lina Bo Bardi, among others? (2009, p. 34).*

References to the modern Brazilian repertoire had already been explored in the Pavilion that Siza designed to represent Portugal at Expo ’98 in Lisbon, whose distended canopy of prestressed concrete evokes both the great Portuguese sea voyages and the smooth curves of Niemeyer.

The search to acquire foreign accents and languages is a common attitude in the projects designed by Siza outside Portugal. In this attempt to acclimatize to environments that are strange to him, Rafael Moneo recognizes a strategy based on the manipulation of excesses and extravagances that transform architecture into narration, in which it is possible to identify figures and characters that engage in dialogue. “Siza on foreign land is more schematic than on his own” (2008, p. 218).

But in this case, in addition to the architectural references, formal expressionism also reveals an intense dialogue with the anguished and complex spirit of Iberê Camargo’s painting, materialized in the contrast between the labyrinthine spatiality of the closed passageways with the regularity and opening of the exhibition halls.

The unequivocal existence of these dialogues incorporates the complexity of Siza’s design methods, mixing diverse references and different worlds, moving “[...] between conflicts, commitments, miscegenations, transformation” (Siza, 1995, p. 59). To the relations with the LeCorbusierian brutalism made by Frampton, Guilherme Wisnik adds that in the Iberê Camargo Foundation Siza seems to reverse the extroverted gesture of Niemeyer, leading him back to the Lusitanian cave (2008, p. 52).

Thus, if, on the one hand, there is a sculptural component that approximates the uniqueness of Niemeyer and Bo Bardi’s buildings, on the other, the Porto Alegre museum is an architecture sculpted and seated on the ground, something different than the light touch on the ground that constitutes one of the central characteristics of modern Brazilian projects. In this sense, Carlos Eduardo Comas recognizes that the closed character of the building opposite the immense panorama that surrounds it has displeased many people, including architects, who consider that once again backs were turned on the city, ignoring the specific demands that museum architecture requires (2008, p. 123).

According to Edson Mahfuz (2000), initially the building was not well received by local architects, mainly due to the fact that it was designed by a foreigner. They alleged cultural colonialism and asserted that Brazil was no longer the first world’s backyard. Kiefer understands this negative reaction as part of a xenophobic tradition in Brazil that celebrates the export of Niemeyer’s architecture while rejecting the opening of the market to the “foreign invasion” (2010, p. 131).

Regardless, as Jorge Figueira observes, the Iberê Camargo Foundation demonstrates that the cultural differences of each country contain within them the swaying movement of proximity/distance between Portugal and Brazil. That is why it is understandable that Siza’s work -which carries the European root of modernity for contemporary times- is little known and loved in Brazil, something that the Porto Alegre museum has made it possible to overcome, after all. (2012, p. 6).

For the Spanish critic Anatxu Zabalbeascoa, it may be cliché to say that Brazil strips architects. However, she remarks that the Iberê Camargo Foundation and, shortly after, the appearance of the building designed by the Franco-Moroccan Christian de Portzamparc for the City of Arts in Rio de Janeiro, indicate that something in the country may also make them “dance” (2014).

Portzamparc is from a generation of architects trained throughout the decade of the 1960s who have declared their admiration for the modern Brazilian experience (Leonídio, 2008, p. 177). The testimonies of figures like Rem Koolhaas, Zaha Hadid and Norman Foster about the attraction and stimulus that Niemeyer’s free forms exerted on their works are well-known:

*Like many architects of my generation, I began to discover Brazil through cinema, and later through architecture, in photos and books, before starting my architecture studies. And it was looking at images of Niemeyer’s works that I wanted to become, one day, an architect like him (Portzamparc, 2008, p. 153).*

Surrounded by a great deal of discussion and controversy, the main intention of his Rio de Janeiro building was to shelter the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra in a large artistic complex dedicated to musical arts, inspired by the City of Music in Paris (1984-1995), Portzamparc’s own project.

The building is set in the middle of a large intersection formed by the crossing of the two

main avenues of Barra da Tijuca, a neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro designed by Lucio Costa in 1969 in accordance with the precepts of modern urbanism. The immense plain that characterizes the 15 kilometers between the sea and the mountains in this part of Rio needed an urban seal that would give the monotonous landscape urban personality. Just like in Siza's museum, one of the primary functions of the City of Arts architecture was to create a meaningful urban context (Figure 3).

Only a monumentally sized, imposing building would be able to manage the vast horizontality of the panorama. Therefore, Portzamparc elevated the concert halls and other functional areas for the first floor, providing more visibility to the built volume. Two large parallelogram-shaped slabs act as geometric containment for winding planes that start from the ground floor and define the enclosed spaces of the upper level. The movement of the undulating sheets in concrete evoke Niemeyer's forms which, in the architect's words contain "the poem of rhythm, of proportion, but also of the line that dances and the volume that surrounds" (2009: 10).

As in the Parisian City of Music, the spatiality of the Brazilian building is marked by the prominence of the circulation network, creating wide spaces for coexistence between the concert halls and combining several buildings within one. But in Rio, the relationship between opening and closing observed in the French project has been reversed, thus configuring an architecture characterized by exteriority and the open relationship with the weather and landscape.

The ground floor has been maintained as a large covered square whose allusion to pilotis, long used in modern Brazilian architecture, is reinforced by the profusion of water mirrors and by the stone mosaics that characterized the gardens of the artist and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994). In the same vein, the atmosphere imagined as an extension of public space is reminiscent of the solution that characterizes Rio's Museum of Modern Art (1954) by Affonso Eduardo Reidy (1909-1964). On both ends, sinuous ramps recall those of the Brazil Pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair, designed by Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer (Figure 4).

The architect himself declares that he imagined the building as a great modern Brazilian house, a great lookout over the city, a tribute to an archetype of the Brazilian architecture of the 1950s (Portzamparc, 2013).

According to Otavio Leonidio's analysis (2008, p. 185), the difficulty that many Brazilian architects have encountered in dealing with that project comes from the poise with which one handles the modern Brazilian repertoire. After all, Portzamparc's position is diametrically opposed to the reverent inhibition with which Brazilian architects often look at the work of modern masters.

Yet, Leonidio (ibid.) believes that the project renews the belief in the potentially sublimating ability of exceptional architectural forms in urban space, perhaps the most distinctive trait of modern Brazilian architectural production.

The City of Arts was part of an urban strategy that aimed to promote the image of Rio de Janeiro through the implementation of large cultural facilities in important parts of the city, designed by internationally recognized architects. Announced in 2000, the frustrated plan to establish in Brazil the first branch of the Guggenheim Museum in the southern hemisphere was part of an initiative that sought to repeat Bilbao's success with the spectacular Frank Gehry museum inaugurated in 1997.

The American foundation commissioned Jean Nouvel to design an iconic museum. According to the architect himself:

*The first condition for the existence of this museum is its commitment to attraction, the obligation to satisfy the desire of visitors who go to see it and consider it 'indispensable' [...]. Create something that has never been seen; create a new need. Touch heartstrings: we are in Rio de Janeiro. And we know it. We want to participate: the museum must become a living organism of the port, an emblematic monument of the city and a special place immersed in a specific territory. (Nouvel and Jodidio, 2008, p. 440)*

To achieve this goal, between one exhibition hall and another, pieces of rainforest would be mixed with references to the decadent landscape of the city's port, where the museum would be built. Water mirrors and even a 30-meter-high artificial waterfall would complete the scene intended to attract thousands of visitors captivated by highly scenographic architecture (Figure 5).

*Here Jean Nouvel reproduces the wild image of America for civilized Europeans, from travelers' narratives to exotic tourism stereotypes. For a Carioca, the route would produce the feeling of being a foreigner in his or her own land (Arantes, 2012, p. 48).*

The reference to the Nouvel project is important because in the same place where he had imagined his extravagant tropical Guggenheim, Santiago Calatrava managed to carry out his project for the Museum of Tomorrow, dedicated to sustainability issues and inaugurated in the context of euphoria produced by the Olympic Games.

Calatrava's architecture poses as a huge urban sculpture on Mauá Pier, a large jetty built to receive tourists who arrived in Brazil for the World Cup in 1950, and that had been underused for many decades.

The unique landscape condition of the pier and its urban location opposite one of the city's best-known squares, amplifies the iconic potential of the architecture. The museum

imposes itself as an elongated horizontal volume that ends in large overhangs on its two extremities, thereby conferring lightness to the large built mass.

The project-context relationship is perceptible only in the limitation of its height, which seeks to preserve the view for the Monastery of Saint Benedict -17th century baroque heritage located at the top of an adjacent hill- and in the intention to expand the public space by introducing a park around the building (Figure 6).

A declared admirer of Niemeyer, of the composer Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) and of the macaw Blu, star of the animated film Rio (2011) (Pessoa, 2015), the architect declares he sought to wring out the city's genius loci by means of a "*monument to beauty, movement and music*" (Calatrava, 2012). However, the project clearly derives from the conjunction between its own language and the specific constraints of the site.

Referring to his bridge in the Spanish city of Mérida (1988-1991), which could perfectly apply to his Rio de Janeiro museum, Calatrava affirmed:

*it's like going against all that a priori humility of wanting to join the context in a subordinate way [...]. It seems appropriate to me to plant an extravagant object and make a technical display in a context of technological underdevelopment such as Mérida. I don't know! Provokel* (Moix, 2016, p. 34).

In this regard, the dynamism that technological "solar spines" imprint on the architecture is more an exercise of their ability to manipulate the mechanics of structures for aesthetic purposes than a reference to the rhythm of Rio. By the same token the skeletal forms of the museum are representative of a personal signature whose references are closer to the repertoire of Catalan modernisme than to an alleged inspiration in the bromelias, endemic plants of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest.

Apart from that, the water mirrors that circle the museum reveal some difficulty in relating to the scale of the landscape, and before suggesting continuity with the waters of Guanabara Bay, they instead highlight its insignificance in the face of the immensity of the ocean.

The place, taken advantage of for its physical and cultural attributes, was also used as justification for the architectural definition of Rio de Janeiro's new Museum of Image and Sound (MIS), which is still under construction. The project by the Americans Diller Scofidio + Renfro won the competition held in 2009, in which other international star system figures participated in addition to important Brazilian architectural firms.

Located opposite iconic Copacabana beach, the museum's front facade is defined by external stairs that form a folding connection between the sidewalk and the terrace. Just as the architects affirm, the graphic design of the waves of the famous boardwalk designed by Burle Marx served as inspiration for the museum's architectural layout (Diller Scofidio + Renfro, 2010), imagined as an extension of the boulevard that unfolds vertically, turning the building into an comprehensive promenade architectural.

The scheme, although it fits well with the context, does not seem to result only from the intrinsic characteristics of the environment and its artistic culture, but rather reflects the emphasis given by the office to the pathways through the architecture, as demonstrated by unexecuted projects for the Eyebeam Museum of Art and Technology (2004) and for the Vagelos Education Center (2016), both in New York (Figure 7).

The external circulation system that characterizes the project takes advantage of the warm climate and the beauty of the Rio panorama, providing visitors with new places to contemplate it.

The open staircase sometimes invades the internal spaces, marked by the visual integration between the floors and the broken views of the landscape, which open periodically from the museum's interior as if they were part of the presented content.

Nevertheless, this intense relationship with the city is restricted to the building's preferential facade, exceedingly closed to the narrow street behind. The strategy seems to metaphorize the logic of cultural entertainment that drives the construction of the museum, which opens onto one of the best-known tourist areas in the world, while turning its back on many areas of the city that do not even have a simple neighborhood library.

Alternately, the proposals submitted to the same competition by Shigeru Ban and Daniel Libeskind were less subtle in their references to the built imagery of Brazil.

As in the winning project, the volumetric measurements of the museum imagined by the Japanese architect contrasts with the surrounding morphology. Known for experimentalism with innovative materials and techniques, Ban designed a museum suspended in a kind of bubble defined by its characteristic wood framework and membrane, freeing the ground floor as a multifunctional area open to the city. This argument for form reveals the superficiality, stereotyped and extemporaneous, of the architect's knowledge of Brazil: the reference to the female body, based on the recovery of Oscar Niemeyer's speeches (Viana, 2014, p. 167). The result, in addition to being a caricature, is an autonomous object that does not even seek to relate to the land, the landscape or the morphology of the environment.

Libeskind began by identifying abstract focal points drawn from the location of the city's geographical landmarks, such as Sugar Loaf, Dos Hermanos Hill and Mount Corcovado, to structure the shape of the museum as the newest icon to participate in the landscape. On this he unclearly superimposed musical scores and a text by the poet Haroldo Campos, belonging

to the Brazilian Concretism movement. His ability to combine parts to form a powerful narrative syntax, such as that developed in Berlin's Jewish Museum [1988], is not repeated in the MIS, where the insertion of planes and stained glass windows results in a weak and caricatural overall result resembling the Carmen Miranda fruit hat (ibid, 95) (Figure 8).

In fact, the allusion to Carmen Miranda seems to be quite appropriate to illustrate the vision contaminated by the exoticism that was built about Brazil throughout the twentieth century. Her exuberant personality masterfully represents the export image that was very convenient during the time of cultural massification, which underlies songs like *South American Way* [1939].

## Conclusion: The foreign view and us

The presence of internationally renowned architects in Brazil challenges the foreign view of us, Latin Americans, but is also a warning about the way we have seen ourselves.

The projects briefly analyzed here are mere glimpses of a much broader and more complex interpretative scheme that goes beyond the boundaries of architecture and delves into the field of the history of ideas and international geopolitics. The movement of architects around the world shows the ambiguities of globalized times: while seeking an international hypermodern character, old stereotypes are reinforced.

Referencing the country's modern culture and architecture seems to be nearly an obligation for the foreigners who have recently designed projects in Brazil. That said, the projects studied show that there are nuances in the way of working with such a referential universe.

The Iberê Camargo Foundation reveals that becoming personally involved and knowing the country deeply results in a well-formed, complex architectural narrative, something extensible to Portzamparc's City of Arts, although its referential structure is based on a display of more easily identifiable images.

In the museums designed by Calatrava and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, their strengths and weaknesses already seem unrelated to the dialogues they claim to try to establish with the place from their historical and cultural points of view, and are therefore dispensable. Calatrava himself relativizes the local/global dichotomy:

*I was born in Spain, I worked in Switzerland, then I lived in Paris, now I live in the United States. People keep saying that I am Spanish, but I left Spain when I was 22 years old. What place do we belong to? What is local for me? (2012).*

Calatrava's question can be extended to a context where globalization has erased the borders attributed to the individual nationalities of architects, blurring the very lines that distinguished that which is "one's own" from that which is "foreign". Hence arises a question that this short text does not pretend to answer, but which it considers important to reflect upon: Can starchitect architecture be Latin American?

Finally, the unexecuted projects by Nouvel, Ban and Libeskind are the most typical representatives of a stigmatized and prejudiced vision of the country of "samba, soccer and carnival". Indeed, the imagery of a natural, wild and cultureless world, in contrast to another supposedly better and more civilized one, has accompanied Latin American countries since colonial times. Created by Europeans and reinforced by the establishment of our initial self-image, this thinking is marked by the acknowledgement of cultural and economic delay and underdevelopment in comparison with Europe. "*The image of a unique Latin America, poor but cheerful, ignorant but lively, precisely suits the perspective of hegemonic cultures*" (Perrone-Moisés, 1997, p. 252).

Anachronistic and dissatisfied with the globalized context, that kind of reading reveals the persistence of a point of view that still divides the world between "center and periphery", ignoring the decentralizing tendencies observed by Marina Waisman that challenge hegemonic models and favor the existing pluralism in various local projects [2013, p. 86].

It should be noted that, unlike the "center", the "periphery" was always open to exogenous cultural contributions. Brazilian and Latin American cultural identity has formed and transformed based on different traditions, crosses and cultural mixtures, increasingly familiar to the globalized world, demonstrating that the coexistence between identity and difference does not necessarily evolve into reciprocal cancellation.

Finally, it is important to broaden the scope of the analysis of architectural objects to discover the motivations behind many of these great internationally visible cultural facilities. Stakeholders in pretentious urban transformation plans related to major sporting events and the desire to once again show the "core countries" a high level of civilizing progress, these projects are based on "successful" models tested in Europe and the United States, whose paradigm dates back to the opening of the Parisian Pompidou Center in 1977, by Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano, which would later be renewed by the Guggenheim designed by Gehry in Bilbao.

If there is something that unites the diverse Latin American countries, it is the urban condition. The architecture that contributes to cities should seek solutions and answers that comprehend and appreciate the characteristics of the subcontinent's complex cities, moving away from a vision that understands the European city as ideal or better. Therefore, if there is something wrong with the way foreigners construct their perspective of us, we must also reflect on the way we have interpreted ourselves.