

THE LANDSCAPE QUESTION IN BRAZIL THROUGH ROBERTO BURLE MARX

A QUESTÃO DA PAISAGEM NO BRASIL ATRAVÉS DE ROBERTO BURLE MARX

Alexandra Maria Aguiar Leister*

ABSTRACT

Burle Marx believed that the landscape's aesthetic dimension was an essential concept for human life. In Brazil, Burle Marx's landscapes enrich our thoughts on landscape architecture, often borrowed from international authors. In this context, this article, based on the theoretical framework of philosophy and geography, leads to a reflection on landscape based on the works of the Brazilian master of landscapes, Roberto Burle Marx. His professional career is a unique contribution to deepening the issue of landscape. As a dyad, his theoretical concepts of nature were transformed into livable landscapes. In this ethereal process, the master built places worthy of awakening the senses. This article reflects on his theoretical concepts of landscape, the way he transformed them into landscape architecture projects and his thoughts about the future of the Brazilian landscape.

Keywords: Landscape. Nature. Burle Marx. Landscape architecture.

RESUMO

No Brasil, as paisagens de Burle Marx enriquecem o pensamento sobre a paisagem, emprestado, com frequência, de autores internacionais. Este artigo, debruçando-se no referencial teórico dos campos da filosofia e da geografia, conduziu uma reflexão em torno da paisagem com base nas obras do mestre brasileiro Roberto Burle Marx. Sua caminhada profissional revela uma contribuição singular no aprofundamento da questão da paisagem. Como uma díade, sua concepção teórica da natureza transformava-se em paisagens vivenciáveis. Nesse processo etéreo, construiu lugares dignos de despertar olhares sensíveis. Este artigo reflete os conceitos teóricos de Burle Marx sobre a paisagem, sua maneira de transformá-los em projetos paisagísticos e suas considerações em relação ao futuro da paisagem brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Paisagem. Natureza. Burle Marx. Paisagismo.

1 LANDSCAPE, NATURE AND ART

"Never more will we find the Peace of Eden, but we can try to reach it, creating relaxing places that enrapture us."
(Burle Marx, 1962, p. 67).

Petrarch's climbing of Mont Ventoux¹ in 1335 is the prelude to the modern perspective on landscape. For the first time, man's gaze contemplates nature. The

¹ Mont Ventoux or Monte Ventr (in Portuguese) is a mountain in the Western Alps of France.

* Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from The University of Texas at Arlington and Sustainable Design of the Built Environment from The British University in Dubai, Cardiff University. PhD student in Architecture and Urbanism College, University of São Paulo, Landscape and Environment Area. Scholarship from the Coordination of Improvement of University Level Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Capes). CV: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5185156364161316>

struggle between the inside and the outside during that experience, awakened only by “the willingness to see a place known for its altitude”², surprised the poet. Upon coming across the landscape and experiencing the “[...] unusual light air and the stunning sight [...]”³, Petrarch was ravished by the view. (PETRARCA, 1336, p. 68). However, reading Saint Augustine’s words, the philosopher found himself “[...] annoyed at the admiration he still felt for terrestrial things, when he should have learned a long time ago, from the pagan philosophers, that there is nothing admirable besides the soul, that nothing is great before its magnitude”⁴. (PETRARCA, 1336, pp. 70-71).

To Philippe Nys (1997, p. 35), the Ventoux climbing experience, though conflicting, was⁵ “[...] the foundation of a new landscape hermeneutics as a universal internal experience”. Thus the landscape arises and, concomitantly, a rupture between man and nature. Later, by the end of XVth century, despite the fact the use of the word ‘landscape’ was often associated with landscape paintings in the Renaissance, it was only six centuries after Mount Ventoux climb that the question bloomed in Philosophy, Geography, painting, and poetry.

George Simmel (1913), sociologist and pioneering theorist of the landscape question as a human thought category defended, in his first text on this subject – *La tragédie de la culture et autres essais* –, that landscape is a spiritual process, the appreciation of which demands a break from the sentiment that nature is a separate unit. It is, though, the entirety; it does not have fragments. It is the universe’s endless chain, “[...] the fluid unity of the movement of transformation”. (SIMMEL, 1913, p. 25). On the other hand, landscape is nature’s delimitation of a fleeting or more prolonged visual field. The human look, when reordering and dividing nature’s particular units, creates landscapes. And the greatest support for those units is described by Simmel as “landscape’s *Stimmung*” (1913) or “landscape’s atmosphere”:

The landscape [...] is born the moment that juxtaposed natural phenomena on the ground are reunited in a particular unit, different from that in the thinker’s visual field (the thinker with his causal thought) or that of nature’s worshipper with his re-

^{2,3} Extracted from *Familiarum Rerum Libri IV*, I. Translated from Latin into French by Denis Montebello. Translation French-Portuguese Vladimir Bartolini for the sole purpose of supporting the UPA 5834 disciplines, The Landscape in the Urban Everyday Life’s Design and AUP 5882, Landscape and Art – Contemporary Interventions, from the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2013.

^{4,5} French – Portuguese translation Vladimir Bartolini for the sole purpose of supporting the UPA 5834 disciplines – The Landscape in the Urban Everyday Life’s Design and AUP 5882 – Landscape and Art – Contemporary Interventions, from the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2013.

⁶ SIMMEL, Georg. **La tragédie de la culture**: et autres essais. Translation from original German into French: Sabine Cornille and Philippe Ivernel, Paris, Rivages Editions, 1988. French – Portuguese translation Vladimir Bartolini for the sole purpose of supporting the UPA disciplines 5834 – The Landscape in the Urban Everyday Life’s Design and AUP 5882- Landscape and Art – Contemporary Interventions, from the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2013.

^{7,8} According to Bartolini, V., (2013, p. 15), the word *Stimmung* can be roughly translated as “atmosphere” or “state of the soul”.

ligious feelings, that of the worker or of the strategist with his final target. (SIMMEL, 1913, p. 25).

Landscape is perception. The *Stimmung*⁸ or “atmosphere”, “state of mind”, grounded on the landscape requires demarcation and should not be mistaken for nature itself, which is the whole, it does not have any fragments and goes beyond the systematic understanding of its classification elements. Simmel (1913, p. 25) argues that the viewer’s look on landscape goes beyond the detailed observation of nature. It is a “[...] psychic state and rests on the viewer’s affective reflection and not on external things devoid of consciousness [...]”. It is necessary that such content captivate our spirits since the *Stimmung* of a landscape is objective, linked to the landscape, but as Assunto remarked (2013), each individual has a specific view that is associated with the expression of its formal unity.

Simmel (1913) asks if the *Stimmung* would not be a spiritual formation, for it is intangible, living only in the soul. However, he points out that it is not an abstract concept because each landscape has its own *Stimmung*, i.e., this *atmosphere* comes down to the feeling the landscape has triggered in the viewer, and this feeling, in its most legitimate way, is linked solely to the landscape experienced by the individual.

In his text “Landscape: aesthetics function in modern society⁹”, Joachim Ritter, German philosophy historian, says, “[...] the landscape is nature aesthetically showing itself to a being who contemplates it, experiencing feelings”. (RITTER, 1978, p. 55). Nature as experienced in cities or the bucolic nature, in the context of country life, alone are not landscapes, i.e., those scenes “[...] only become landscape to the man who turns to them in order to freely enjoy the spectacle and to be himself in the midst of nature without seeking practical purposes”. (RITTER, 1978, p. 55).

Ritter (1978) points out that the meaning of Petrarch’s climb was associated to the reasons for the climb itself. At that time there was an intellectual context that allowed “[...] the interest in Nature as landscape [...]” and its contemplation or *Theoria tou Kosmou*. To the author “[...] contemplation in nature means whenever the spirit turns to the ‘Whole’, to the ‘Divine’”. (RITTER, 1978, p. 50). Thus,

[...] Nature in its totality no longer finds its expression in a scientific concept that does not speak of heaven and earth. It is the sensitive impression that starts to provide both the image and the aesthetic and poetic languages that allow representing it in its belonging to our existence and establishing its own truth. (RITTER, 1978, p. 60).

⁹ RITTER, Joachim. *Paysage: fonction de l’esthétique dans la société moderne*. Translation from original German into French: Sabine Cornille and Philippe Ivernel, Paris, Rivages Editions, 1997. French - Portuguese translation Vladimir Bartalini for the sole purpose of supporting the UPA disciplines 5834, The Landscape in the Urban Everyday Life’s Design and AUP 5882, Landscape and Art – Contemporary Interventions, from the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2013.

The historian also reflects on Schiller's poem "The Promenade" (1795), where the interpretation of landscape occurs due to the freedom and reification of nature, i.e., to live freely is to master nature. "The aesthetic enjoyment and interest in nature present, as prerequisites, the freedom and domination of society over nature". (RITTER, 1978, p. 64). In the face of the urban expansion, nature, which is less obvious in cities, becomes an object and fails to exercise its primary function of subsistence. Man gets to dominate it and contemplate it.

To Augustin Berque (1994), orientalist geographer, the meaning of landscape lies in the complex interaction between object and subject. For its theoretical construction the author employs the terms "médiance" (in French), the meaning established between the subjective (society) and the objective (physical environment); and "trajection" (also in French), i.e., a constant motion exchange between the subjective world and the world composing reality. "Marked simultaneously by *médiance* and historicity, the landscape is *trajective*."¹⁰ (BERQUE, 1994, p. 41). Finally, he uses the term "écumene", which describes the relationship of man to the terrestrial habitable extension: "Landscape is a relative and dynamic entity where nature and society, the viewer's gaze, and the environment are in constant interaction". (BERQUE, 1994, p. 26). Therefore, according to the author, landscape is not obvious, it is not the same for everyone and does not exist at all times, since it is a particular phenomenon, involved in social life.

In the same sense, but with a view on landscape sustained by foundations in the natural world, Adriana Serrão (2014) thus approaches this question:

Landscape relates, in a broad sense, to a portion of nature, a part of the natural reality, a different unit containing natural beings in their own element. Therefore, it comprehends the solidity of a set, integrating its entirety in it, besides the whole vital body. A non-idealized set, but real, present and, as such, visible and sensitive, offering itself to perception. (SERRÃO, 2004, p. 91).

Serrão (2004) introduces philosopher Rosário Assunto's theories to outline a category of natural landscape based on the philosophy that should be distinct from the interpretations of "view or place of view, panorama, framing, natural picture, the background of things, and shapes" (p. 92). Landscape as part of nature is man's experience in it, i.e., the scenery is always "the experience of us living in it". (ASSUNTO, 1994, apud SERRÃO, 2004, p. 92). Assunto (2013) looks at landscape through aesthetic philosophy and metaphysics, explains Serrão (2014), taking it out of the "[...] sphere of representations and images to place it in the order of being; [...] before any representation of the world, landscape is a place in the world where nature becomes the object of an integral experience".

¹⁰ BERQUE, Augustin. **Cinq propositions pour une théorie du paysage**. Translation of the original by Vladimir Bartolini with the sole purpose of supporting the AUP 5810 – The Landscape in the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2013.

Landscape is the “way” in which the synthetic unity of “matter” (territory) and “content or function (environment)” is expressed a priori (in the Kantian sense: not the “unification” of data received separately, but the necessary unity that conditions its presenting to consciousness); [...] The concrete environment, the environment that we live in, and the one we live on, by living in it, is always the environment as a territory: landscape. (ASSUNTO, 1994 apud SERRÃO, 2004, p. 93).

According to Serrão (2014), the intense process of modernization that started with the industrialization was responsible for the breach between culture and nature “[...] threatening the very existence of nature as a natural principle”. The situation in which we find ourselves today demands guiding principles in knowledge and action, and the idea of landscape can restore the world’s unity, as “[...] the landscape category provides multiple synthesis capabilities and will allow, by bridging gaps, the establishment of transitions in a world threatened with disintegration”. (SERRÃO, 2014, p. 4).

Of opposing trends, landscape philosophy brings different perspectives together, “[...] it is ontology, in determining the essence and the intrinsic qualities of the landscape [...]”, i.e., it is the union of spatiality and temporality; it is aesthetics, which goes beyond the beautiful and the sublime as a means of appreciating and attributing value; “[...] it is the ethics, by taking a position as regards the direction, the possibility and the limits of human action”. (SERRÃO, 2014). Thus, the philosopher adopts landscape as a mediator category in imminent problems such as “[...] the destruction of the traditional city and the balance between the urban and the rural; the crisis of nature and doubt with regard to the naturalness of the natural; the ecological crisis and the advent of environmental awareness”. (SERRÃO, 2014, p. 5).

Considering the landscape polysemy, some concepts used in our country today are largely anchored in translations of foreign authors. As explains Bartalini (2012, p. 6), “[...] there are no Brazilian titles that propose to treat it in a proper perspective, a substantive one, in which landscape, as a topic to be theoretically contemplated, considered from the clear position of a deliberate intention (i.e., a *thesis*), is not diluted or implied in other themes.” However, despite the fact we do not have significant publications that contemplate landscape as an object of study, we have the works of Roberto Burle Marx, such as paintings, books, gardens, notes and lectures. In this sense, we could claim that his legacy is pivotal to discussions on landscape in Brazil, since his works still reflect social problems, landscape questions, and environmental issues that encourage intimate reflections on nature, the city, and art as a means of enlightening the soul.

In this perspective, it is worth mentioning his contribution to, for example, the discussion of landscape as a mediator category in problems of environmental imbalance or even for reflections on how our society relates to nature. The landscape, virtually ignored during the Middle Ages, whose concept surfaced with the birth of painting in the Renaissance, is still a complex issue for science and often obscure to the common man.

If in antiquity or the Middle Ages, religion was the main cause for the lack of a “sense of nature”, creating conflicts of the soul and fear of the unknown, today the scantiness of such feelings could be rooted in the vertiginous urban development and technologizing? We have never been so close to nature and its processes. Extraordinary high definition scenes of places we would never dream of visiting are within our eyes’ reach. Technological benefits are incalculable; however, as the philosopher said, “the fact that we observe nature and its mutations, or may distinguish every detail would not be enough for us to see a landscape”. (SIMMEL, 1913, p. 20). It would be necessary that such content captive our spirits.

Progress seduces us and hinders our direct contact with the natural world. When landscape is not perceived, it cannot “captive”. Nature, chimerical in more urbanized areas, is quite often not experienced, and perhaps for this reason, less often arouses our curiosity. So, we return to archaic feelings of fear of the unknown. Nature today is strange to many. Industrialization, which shaped modern society, dramatically changed many landscapes where the “civilized” represses the remnants of the existing nature in cities. The destruction of landscapes should cause indignation in our society, but we are missing a sensitive look at nature’s issues; therefore, people’s awareness of “the public importance of landscape” is essential. (QUEIROGA, 2012, p. 27).

If painting managed to bring out the sense of landscape in modern man, what could then make this feeling blossom in contemporary man? We reach the contemporary age technically equipped, socially connected through media, and confident that we understand the universe; however, we must be careful not to break away from nature, an essential part of human existence. With the fast devastation of our tropical landscapes, it will be difficult to have hills to climb or remarkable sights to look at. Will technology be man’s “Augustinian conscience guide”, who as well as Petrarch, will not let us enjoy this experience? How, then, do we awake the sensitive look to rescue the sense of landscape in our country? Alain Roger (1999, p. 1) explains:

[...] the historical and cultural perception, of all our landscapes – field, hills, the sea, deserts, etc. – does not require any mystical intervention (as if they descended from the heavens) or mysterious (as if they came out of the ground), it operates according to what I call, borrowing a word from Montaigne, an artialization.

According to the author, we can artialize a country to convert it into landscape *in situ*, for example, through gardens or *Land Art*.¹² Thus, one directly inscribes the

¹⁰ ROGER, A. **O nascimento da paisagem no ocidente**. In: BARTALINI, Vladimir. COLÓQUIO INTERNACIONAL DE HISTÓRIA DA ARTE, 10, São Paulo, 1999. Translation of the original by Vladimir Bartalini with the sole purpose of supporting the UPA 5834 disciplines – The Landscape in the Urban Everyday Life’s Design and AUP 5882 – Landscape and Art – Contemporary Interventions, the Postgraduate course, FAUUSP, 2º sem. 2013.

“[...] artistic code of materiality of the place on the ground, the natural base”. The other way to artialize a country would be *in visu*, i.e., indirectly and “[...] from the collective gaze, providing model views, perception schemes and delight”. (ROGGER, 1999, p. 1). In this case, gardens that take shape through landscape architects’ work and are part of cultural and social processes become important elements in the sense that, according to Rogger (1999), they may allow the landscape visualization.

In this logic, in complexity and scale, the works of Burle Marx are experiences capable of providing the observer with many opportunities to see the landscape through shapes, colors and textures. As McHarg said, Marx “[...] synthesized his search for art with his knowledge of plants. He understood the beauty of the native flora and raised the use of Brazilian plants to a form of art with his projects.¹³ (McHARG, 1996, p. 126). Through his training as a “[...] landscape architect, environmentalist, botanist, gardener, painter, draftsman, engraver, weaver, sculptor, painting teacher, jewelry designer, opera singer [...]” (DOURADO, 2009, p. 9) he transformed nature into priceless works capable of awakening the sensitive look. Marx transcended theory and transformed landscape concepts of art, society, and culture into matter, i.e., he “artialized” Brazil. His philosophical conceptualization of the built landscape was based, as he himself defined:

[...] on the historical direction of all ages, recognizing in each period the expression of aesthetic thought manifested in the other arts. In this sense, my work reflects modernity, the time when it was processed, but it never loses sight of the reasons of its own tradition, which are valid and necessary. If they asked me what was the first philosophical attitude I adopted towards my garden, I would just answer, “exactly the same that translates the Neolithic man’s behavior: that of changing the topographical nature, adjusting it to the human existence, individual and collective, utilitarian and pleasurable [...]” (MARX, 2004a, p. 24).

Art and his frequent attention to giving rise to “perception” are a constant in his career. In a lecture given in 1966, Burle Marx expounded his views on art and Brazilian landscape:

¹² A Land Art, “art that is made directly on the landscape, sculpting the earth itself, often using earth moving equipment, or building structures on the landscape using natural materials such as stones or branches” (Tate Land Art, 2015), it was a movement against the superficiality and commercial character of American art in the 1960s. There are several examples of successful Land Art projects made by renowned North American and European artists such as Robert Smithson, Christo, Walter de Maria, Richard Long; However, this movement had little repercussion in Brazil. Despite the promising beginnings with works by Cildo Meireles in the 1960s such as *Mutações Geográficas – Fronteiras RJ-SP* (Geographic Mutations – Mutations – Fronteiras RJ-SP, Land Art did not gather the same strength here as in other countries. This weakness may however, have resulted from the focus of the critics at the time on artists specializing in sculptures, installations or galleries, not attributing the status of art to Landscape Architecture. However, foreign specialists acknowledged “the new possibilities that Land Art artists were trying to explore in terms of locations and sensitive space experiences.

¹³ “[...] he synthesized his pursuit of art with his knowledge of plants. He understood the beauty of the native flora, and elevated the use of Brazilian plants to an art form with his designs”. (MCHARG, 1996). The text in Portuguese is a free translation of the researcher.

[...] the artist should take his vocabulary from observation of the human fauna, its habits, customs and contradictions, locating them and relating them to nature and to the landscape, to which they imprint their character being, in turn, modeled by nature itself, so the artist, with his own expression, will be able to convey his message of poetic emotion. (MARX, 2004b, p. 72).

In this regard, it is worth emphasizing the importance of the landscape design field for enriching discussions on the theme, which are currently rooted in geography and especially in philosophy. Burle Marx taught us that the landscape designer, besides offering new perspectives on the matter, could also awaken, in the city man, a sensitive look to landscapes:

The social mission of the landscape architect has this pedagogical side to it, which is to communicate the feelings of appreciation and understanding of nature values to the crowds, through contact with the garden and the park. In Brazil where there is, in part, this lack of love for whatever is planted, experience has taught me that it takes a lot of persistence in order for you to be able, through the clash of opinions, to bring about an understanding of the importance of our action and contribution to cause a mentality shift [...] (MARX, 2004c, p. 94).

The landscape's *Stimmung* created by Burle Marx stimulates man's relationship with Nature and awakens emotions because the landscape, as explains Ferriolo (1997), emanates from *theoria* and is the result of the man who goes out into Nature. Parks, gardens, woods and squares redeem us, for a moment, from the hectic life in the cities. Thus, the scenery that instigates the contemplation of nature contributes to looking at the "whole" towards the "Divine". Moreover, the landscape works of Marx demonstrate numerous possibilities for creating places that provoke, fascinate, and thus arouse a sense of landscape.

2 TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPE

The landscape question in the works of Burle Marx reaches the status of a theory with concepts and unclouded goals. His reflection, focused on the importance of consciously intervening in landscapes, is summed up by the dialogue with the location and the use of nature as art, attributing value to the native flora. Through the practice of landscape design Burle Marx changed nature into spaces for contemplation in the city. Just as Simmel said (1913, p. 21): "[...] nature, which, in its being and its deep sense, ignores all individuality, is relocated by the human eye [...]". Burle Marx in his landscape conceptualization teaches us that:

The sight is what is constant in it. [...] it is everything we embrace by looking; [...] it is not static because all its constituent elements are liable to self-transformations

as well as mutual changes; a territory is made up of an infinite number of landscapes, partially overlapping one another and, although the word “landscape” does not give away any specific information as to their characteristics, it is evident that to the viewer, any scenery has a series of defining elements that differentiate it from other infinite other landscapes. (MARX, 2004d, p. 127).

His works demonstrate how landscape is “singular and unrepeatable”. (SERRÃO, 2013). His philosophic conceptualization of the built landscape was based on the historical direction of all ages, identifying in each period the aesthetic thought expression manifested in the arts. His works reflected the modernity and the date they were created, never losing sight of the “[...] reasons tradition itself [...]” (MARX, 2004a).

In Nininha Magalhães Lins’ project, in Rio de Janeiro, one can observe the creation of landscapes that seduce the human eye by means of the subtle manipulation of nature, which dilutes itself in the pristine background (pictures 1, 2 and 3). A permanent feature of his works was the dialogue with the place, sometimes agreeing and connecting it with the landscape, other times carefully denying the surroundings, seeking aesthetic - functional solutions to make the location pleasurable. (MARX, 2004).



Picture 1 Nininha Magalhães Lins’ residence, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, July/2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 2 Nininha Magalhães Lins' residence, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 3 Nininha Magalhães Lins' residence, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, July/2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.

In 1962, the landscape designer said, “[...] the art of planning a garden is very – perhaps the most – complex one, requiring an understanding of other arts, a willingness to learn from nature”. (MARX, 2004, p. 54). Burle Marx painted the landscape by carefully composing with natural elements liable to being molded, such as trees, shrubs, flowers, ground covers, and stones. Unpredictable natural processes could also provide unique moments capable of awakening the senses, the *Stimmung*, in the gardens. “Clouds and rain can change the shape of a garden. Its whole proportion will change when the reflections disappear or when a sudden storm deposits puddles in unexpected places.” (MARX, 2004e, p. 56).

Thus, Marx (2004) demonstrated how the juxtaposition of cubist plastic attributes to the natural elements’ abstractionism attracted him to new experiences of creating landscapes to be contemplated. In this way, he used the natural topography as the surface for his compositions, giving the elements found in the area the function of plastic organization materials, creating unique projects within a unit, mixing the art of painting with that of the built landscape. Many of his works gently anchored monumental buildings to the topography, harmoniously integrating them into the landscape, as we can see, for example, in the BNDES building project (picture 4).



Picture 4 BNDES Building, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2010.
Photo: Quapá collection.

In the same way, in the gardens of the Macunaíma building in São Paulo (pictures 5, 6 and 7), built in 1980, the nature, that gently permeates the building awakens



Picture 5 Macunaíma Building, São Paulo, SP, 2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 6 Macunaíma Building, São Paulo, SP, 2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.

the sensitive look through landscaped and artistic elements such as the “termites nests”, as Marx used to call the mounds covered in Portuguese stone from where bromeliads popped up, softening the strong architectural lines and anchoring the building to the landscape.

His compositions valued the elements of the Brazilian native flora, portraying a new aesthetic vision in the use of vegetation. In his project for the Casa Forte public garden (1934), in Recife (pictures 8 to 12), Marx enriched his work by using Brazilian native species from the Amazon and the Atlantic rainforest such as the *Victoria amazonica* (Queen Victoria’s water lily) and *Sibipiruna* (*Caesalpinia pluviosa*). At the same time, the use of foreign species in a garden with such strong geometric design of European inspiration managed to dialogue with the place turning it into a pleasant public space for the landscape contemplation experience. A public plaza inserted in that urban fabric was not just a cultural act of construction, but for building new values and perceptions about elements of the Brazilian Northeastern landscape in line with the urban landscape.

With more organic lines, though striking ones, the Ministro Salgado Filho square (pictures 13 to 17) or the Airport Square, as it is known in Recife, a project from 1957, gently counteracts with the environment where it is located. Through traits that resemble his paintings, Burle Marx conceives a garden that stands out in the urban fabric and synchronously produces spatial experiences through masses of vegetation, sometimes denying the surroundings, sometimes exposing them, while using abstract forms to create spaces that awaken the appreciation of the gardens and their surroundings.

As for the Flamengo Park project, in Rio de Janeiro (pictures 18, 19 and 20) his concepts are manifested in a place that synchronously dialogues with the city and with the existing nature, creating a powerful urban space that provides many opportunities for one to experience the tropical landscape. His insight into understanding the space between the rigidity of the city on one side and, on the other, the lightness of the bay, makes the park design a place that masterly relates to the local environment.

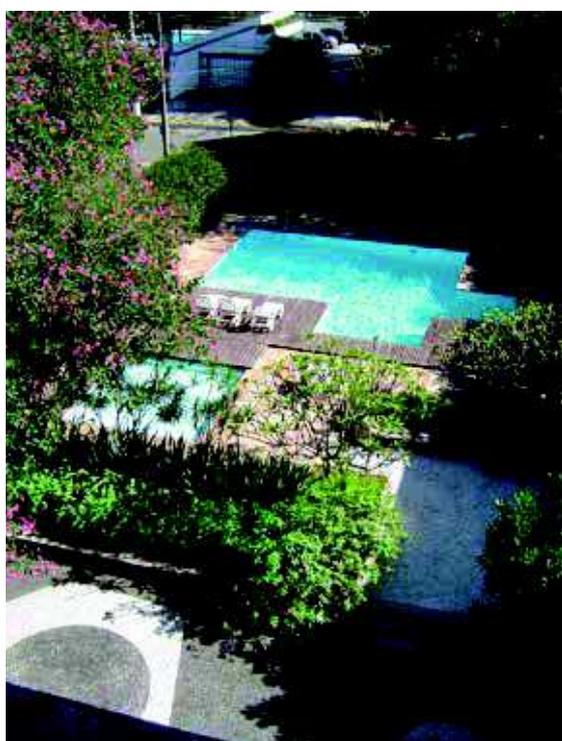
The surrounding landscapes of Rio de Janeiro, city or hills, integrated harmoniously into the spaces, reinforce his knowledge, and often simultaneous use, of visual and scenic arts in space creation. According to Tabacow, it is often instinctive to draw parallels between painting, gardens and sculptures in the works of the landscape designer, for he “[...] always used to bear in mind the peculiarities of each of these manifestation forms and never disregarded the characteristics and subtleties inherent to them”. (MARX, 2004a, p. 25).

Subtleties so deeply rooted in his soul that Marx constantly meditated on the Brazilian garden culture, where roses, geraniums, carnations, and chrysanthemums, among other species of European vegetation, dominated the gardens of that time. European immigrants brought in their luggage the landscape they had left behind and changed our landscapes to serve their memories. It is interesting to observe

today, in many cases, how this foreign garden culture permeates our country. We have, somehow, a tendency to value the foreign, from cars to plants. Burle Marx (2004f) used to say that when people learned that the exuberant species he used in his works were Brazilian, they expressed a profound lack of interest. In this sense, he stated that the role of the landscape designer is unique because it can interfere in the unstoppable destruction of nature.

If, in the vegetation specifications of our projects, we seek to use the Brazilian native flora, and what is very important, if we fight to achieve this specification, we will be saving many endangered plants. (MARX, 2004f, p. 168).

Burle Marx always sought references in the local landscape and in the recognition of the indigenous flora for conscientious and sensitive interventions, since the understanding of the local vegetation could contribute to a more balanced intervention in the environment. The landscapes' transformation demands a sensitive look from the landscape architect, as he or she should be able to understand the different stages of nature, its processes, and peculiarities, so the professional will then be able to foresee the changes over time."[...] A plant is a living being, demanding its own conditions for living. But, at a small cost, it presents us with its own dynamics, with the flowering, fruit bearing, falling leaves and even death." (MARX, 2004f, p. 168). And even in death would Marx find beauty and create landscapes (picture 21).



Picture 7 Macunaíma Building, São Paulo, SP, 2005.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 8 Casa Forte Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Ana Carolina Magalhães, 1996. Quapá collection.



Picture 9 Casa Forte Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Ana Carolina Magalhães, 1996. Quapá collection.



Picture 10 Casa Forte Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Macedo, 1997. Quapá collection.



Picture 11 Casa Forte Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 1997. Quapá collection.



Picture 12 Casa Forte Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2002. Quapá collection.



Picture 13 Ministro Salgado Filho Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2014, Quapá collection.



Picture 14 Ministro Salgado Filho Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2014. Quapá collection.



Picture 15 Ministro Salgado Filho Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2014. Quapá collection.



Picture 16 Ministro Salgado Filho Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2014. Quapá collection.



Picture 17 Ministro Salgado Filho Square, Recife, PE.
Photo: Silvio Soares Macedo, 2014. Quapá collection.



Picture 18 Flamengo Park, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2008.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 19 Flamengo Park, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2008.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 20 Flamengo Park, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2008.
Photo: Quapá collection.



Picture 21 Olívio Gomes Family residence, Vale do Paraíba, São José dos Campos, SP, c. 1970.
Photo: Marcel Gautherot/ Moreira Salles Institution Collection.

3 BURLE MARX'S LANDSCAPES: AN ADAGE TO THE FUTURE

The landscape within the cities was a continual theme for meditation throughout Burle Marx's career. The staggering urban growth's effects disturbing the cities' character, deforming life's essence, represented a constant source of discomfort to him. In a lecture given in 1983, Marx described the increasing assaults on nature that decimated the original vegetation due to land speculation, voraciously invading the hills and eliminating their perspectives. (MARX, 2004g).

When speaking about the ecological consequences of construction without criteria, such as the Rio-Santos highway, for example, the designer emphasized that this kind of intervention caused not only the destruction of the fauna and flora, but also the destruction of "[...] a landscape of incalculable scenic value [...]" (MARX, 2004h, p. 149).

Burle Marx was very concerned about some issues regarding the process of urbanization, which made a huge impact on the landscape architect's profession. In his view, the aggressive population density increase brought about by the cities' verticalization caused a major impact on comfort standards. In addition, the sacrifice of green areas for land and real estate speculation, without the necessary compensation, turned cities into arid areas with little shade, not to mention the annihilation of the architectural heritage so as to make room for new buildings. "They forget that the coexistence of times, crystallized in the accumulated work of many generations, is one of the charms of the cities." (MARX, 2004g, p. 186).

In the whirlwind of unfavorable actions against life in cities, Burle Marx emphasized the importance of gardens. Despite the fact that parks and public squares are considered places for leisure and contemplation, they are not designed with the accuracy required to meet the needs of a population plagued by the cities' chaos. As he put it, the projects for public spaces in the city or in countryside, "[...] add nothing to our training, already so weak, concerning the knowledge of the indigenous flora". (Marx, 2004g, p. 186).

His concerns in the 1980s already reflected a deep feeling of unease about the country's sustainability. Imagine now, how Burle Marx would react to the current situation of our large cities and many social actors' neglect towards Nature in urban areas. It has been over three decades since then, and we continue coveting the minimum remaining spaces in the concrete jungle, often not reflecting on our lives' consequences to the environment.

Believing that nature found in parks, squares, streets, and gardens represented a "[...] patrimony worthy of defense, preservation, and promotion by all media and means [...]", Marx stated in a conference given in 1966:

[...] the city man is more than squeezed and suffocated in his house, where the current order is 'minimum standards', it's necessary to create large free spa-

ces where people can breathe, get in touch with nature, have the opportunity to meditate and contemplate a flower or a plant in a quiet place [...] (MARX, 2004b, p. 74).

To him, man's contact with nature, and particularly the education of young people towards the natural processes would offer a solution to environmental preservation in our cities. This fact is the only viable measure to save our country from total desertification, ensuring a more balanced life as a legacy for future generations.

We must have our children get in touch with nature; make them understand the treasure they possess. Make them plant a tree, understand the importance of trees, teach them not to mutilate them. Show them the importance of all ecological associations. Teach them to collect seeds, to sow, to plant small seedlings, to express love for them so that they can thrive. Make them come to see plants as living beings that have the right to grow, blossom, bear fruit, instilling in them the importance of perpetuation, the wonder of expecting buds to grow, coming into bloom. Teach them to observe the richness of the fertilization phenomena - sometimes made by bees, others by birds, the wind or water. One comes to see the complexity that Nature is all about, where the most amazing associations arouse aesthetic emotions caused by the shapes, the rhythms, and the exuberance of colors. (MARX, 2004g, pp. 186-188).

As advocated by Burle Marx years ago and today evidenced by extensive research in several different areas, children are instrumental to protection, dissemination, and nature conservation; not to mention the abundant benefits gained by the direct contact with the natural world. The American architect and urban planner, Robin Moore, described an example of this relationship in a research project with babies where he reported a fascinating example of learning through a simple experience in nature. A ten-month-old boy, wearing only diapers noticing a cricket on a stone in the garden, a direct experience that exemplifies the power and, at the same time, the simplicity of how nature teaches. The boy moves towards the cricket, pauses for a few minutes just watching the insect, and tries to catch it. The cricket jumps and lands on a tree trunk. The little one follows it and, watching curiously, comes very close to it once again, whereupon the cricket jumps away trying to hide. (MOORE; COSCO, 2000). Moore explains that after the contact with this new creature, the child's worldview gains another dimension. Next time he comes across a similar phenomenon, whether by the contact with a beetle or a butterfly, he will retrieve his previous experience. Therefore, he will build an understanding of his surroundings and learn how nature operates. An adult can supplement these experiences by reading books with pictures of those animals and explaining quantities, colors, and sounds. (MOORE; COSCO, 2000).

However, a great number of children currently contemplate Nature through technology instead of direct experiences. How, then, will we sensitize these future citizens to the environment? Burle Marx's gardens emerge as powerful stimulation tools for the senses, so necessary to children and adults. For centuries nature has been recommended, for example, as a "[...] tonic, soothing and enhancing creativity [...]", and a place where, as explained Thoreau, "[...] my nerves are stabilized, my senses and my mind do their job"¹⁴. (CRAMER, 2007, p. 302).

Burle Marx (2004) used to defend the presence of nature in public spaces and eventually left us with important teachings on urban structures such as parks, as he used to say, "[...] they are essential to urban life". They are places for spreading nature's wealth, for creating landscapes that touch people and make them perceive it. A park, as described by the designer, with appropriate dimensions for each city, with a botanical garden for intensive planting (with species diversity to enrich other gardens, streets, squares) and capable of providing experiences in the botanical field presents much more significant dimensions to the population than we can assume.

Exploring and affiliating with life are complicated processes in the human mental development and many theories about man's relationship with nature try to explain trends, attitudes, and perceptions. Even the biophilia hypothesis, coined by Edward O. Wilson¹⁵ (1984), which talks about the human innate tendency to affiliate with nature and its processes, would be insufficient to explain each of our experiences when in a place created by Burle Marx. His tropical landscapes evoke unique feelings that constant change each time we gaze at them.

Until today, the spaces the Brazilian master of landscapes has bequeathed us awaken varied emotions. The sensibility evoked by his projects, result from the harmonious contemplation of carefully manipulated nature brought out by the use of colors, textures, organic lines, and geometry that does not offend, but gently controls the environment, connects it with the surroundings, creating unique places tempting those who experience them. His projects awaken a connection between man, place, and nature. The artist is gone, his landscapes remain, and it is up to us to preserve his projects and continually sensitize future generations.

¹⁴ "[...] my nerves are stabilized; my senses and my mind do their work [...]". The text in Portuguese is a free translation made by the researcher.

¹⁵ Edward O. Wilson, American biologist and Pulitzer Prize winner used the term Biophilia to describe the tendency to focus on life and natural processes. We have a "[...] congenital tendency to affiliate with other life forms and this re-flects on our daily lives" (WILSON, 1984, p.1). Biophilia is a proposal that focuses on understanding the relationship of man with nature in its most basic concepts. Wilson explains that the biophilic trend, though not the object of scientific study to prove its truth, "is clearly evident in everyday life" (WILSON, 1984, p. 85); it unfolds in fantasies and responses of individuals since childhood.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Burle Marx's works demonstrate, through landscaping and art, how to transform respect for nature into landscapes worthy of awakening the human sensitive look. His concepts of nature, landscape, and art touch those who experience any of his projects. His design legacy, a true artistic expression, represents the strong theoretical dimension that guided his way of transforming nature to create landscapes, one of few Brazilians until today to ever triumphantly venture into these paths.

This text exposed how landscape architecture can contribute to the enrichment of the landscape question through the legacy of Roberto Burle Marx. His works, monuments dedicated to the Brazilian flora, add to the process of landscape creation through his sensibility, the struggles for environmental conservation, and an endless love of nature. His professional and personal experiences leave us with the mission to educate our youth to protect his works. There is no doubt that the "landscape" definition is polysemic, and Marx's works indicate that the landscape design field in Brazil can significantly contribute to further develop these meanings. The uncertainty that prevails is, then, how to preserve his landscapes so that they continue contributing to awakening emotions and soothing our souls. In one of his last lectures, delivered in 1991 about art, science, and landscaping, which does not deserve paraphrasing, Marx said:

Life is a function of this great mystery that surrounds us more and more. [...] God is the Supreme Creator, the Omniscient One and thus, incapable of doubt or curiosity. Therefore, the more we approach Him, imitating Him in His creative capacity, the less will we feel the spur of curiosity (among other discomforts of course). Considering it this way, art works as a kind of magic in the same way as when, in the prehistoric caves, the hunter painted animals to gain the power to hunt them down. Thus considering, the same thing that moved our ancestor troglodyte artists keeps moving every act of contemporary art in our effort to understand and better find ourselves in the Universe. (MARX, 2004, p. 219).

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