

RA

Press Release

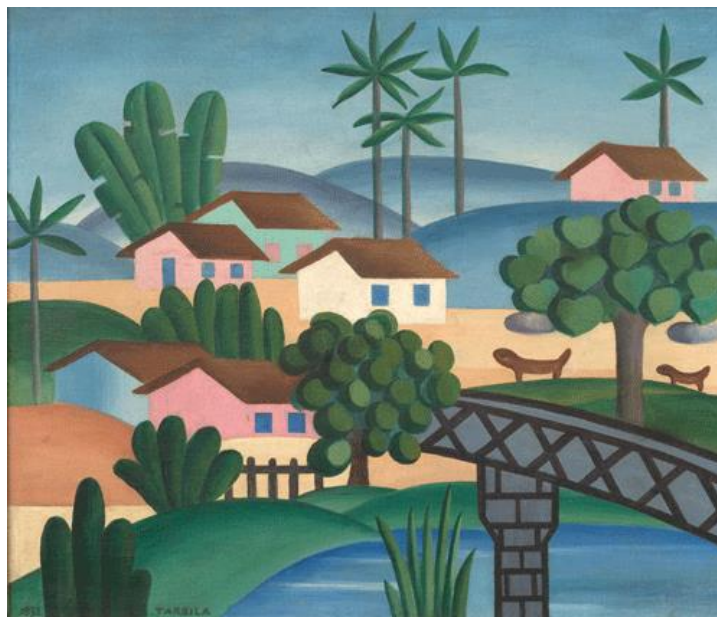
Royal Academy of Arts

Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism

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Main Galleries

28 January – 21 April 2025



Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism, a major new exhibition at the Royal Academy, will feature over 130 works from the 1910s to the 1970s by ten important Brazilian artists and will capture the diversity of Brazilian art at this time. In early twentieth century Brazil, artists were adapting contemporary trends, international influences and artistic traditions to create a new modern art; art informed by and celebrating its distinct, vibrant cultures, identities and landscapes. The majority of works in the exhibition will come from rarely seen Brazilian private collections and will be shown alongside those drawn from Brazilian public collections, most of which have never been exhibited in the UK.

The ten featured artists will include pioneers of early Brazilian Modernism, a movement spearheaded by Anita Malfatti followed by Vicente do Rego Monteiro, the Jewish Lithuanian emigré Lasar Segall, Candido Portinari and Tarsila do Amaral, now internationally celebrated as a leading female figure of Brazilian Modernism. The exhibition will also include the self-taught artists Alfredo Volpi and Djanira da Motta e Silva, an artist of indigenous descent, Afro-Brazilian artist Ruben Valentim, the early Neo-Concrete polymath Geraldo de Barros, and the artist and architect Flávio de Carvalho, who was also one of Brazil's first queer performance artists. Each of the artists will be represented by at least ten works, many of whom will have their own dedicated gallery space. Collectively the works will take the visitor on a journey through 70 years of a new art in Brazil which moves from figuration to abstraction.

The exhibition will also feature a section dedicated to the historic *Exhibition of Modern Brazilian Paintings*, which took place at the Royal Academy in 1944, the first exhibition of modern Brazilian art in the UK. Initiated by the Brazilian Government and supported by the Foreign Office, 168 works by 70 artists were donated and exhibited to raise funds for the war effort, specifically the RAF Benevolent Fund. Around 23 works were purchased from the exhibition and donated to UK museums. *Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism* will include four paintings which were originally shown in the same galleries 80 years ago in a section that celebrates that gesture of solidarity by Brazilian artists.

Brazil was seen as a land of opportunity and sanctuary with its vast territory and huge natural resources. Alongside a multiplicity of Indigenous cultural groups were descendants of the original Portuguese colonisers and of enslaved West Africans (slavery was only abolished in 1888), as well as a wide variety of immigrants, not only from Europe but significant populations of Japanese, Syrians, Italians and Germans among many others. Urbanisation led to the expansion of cities such as Rio de Janeiro (the capital until 1960 when Brasília was inaugurated) and São Paulo; with immigration came new political, social, economic and artistic ideas.

Brazilians were no longer interested in following Europe and North America, not just in terms of literature, poetry, theatre, music and design but also, significantly, in art. Brazil was seeking its own identity, one that was freed from external influences and that reflected the reality of life in Brazil. Artists began to emerge in the 1910s wanting to be modern, reflecting new forms of expression that many had been exposed to in Europe (mainly in France between the wars) and in the US. These artists returned to Brazil reflecting these modern tendencies but adapting them to create new forms of art that celebrated their national identity. *Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism* will be a unique opportunity to see a broad variety of work by these ten significant artists together, who represent the particularly diverse nature of such a multi-cultural society and vividly illustrate this century of cultural change in Brazil.

Artists

Tarsila do Amaral (1886–1973)

Anita Malfatti (1889–1964)

Alfredo Volpi (1896–1988)

Lasar Segall (1891–1957)

Vicente do Rego Monteiro (1899–1970)

Flávio de Carvalho (1899–1973)

Candido Portinari (1903–1962)

Djanira da Motta e Silva (1914–1979)

Rubem Valentim (1922–1991)

Geraldo de Barros (1923–1998)

Organisation

Exhibition organised by the Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Arts, London. The exhibition is curated by Dr Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Chief Curator, Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Roberta Saraiva Coutinho, former director of the Museu Laser Segall in São Paulo and current director of the Museu da Língua Portuguesa, São Paulo with Dr Adrian Locke, Chief Curator, Royal Academy of Arts.

Exhibition tour

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

7 September 2024 – 5 January 2025

Royal Academy of Arts, London 28 January – 21 April 2025

Accompanying publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with texts by Fabienne Eggelhöfer, Roberta Saraiva Coutinho, Giancarlo Hannud, Cacá Machado, Guilherme Wisnik, Maria Alice Milliet, Eduardo Jorge de Oliveira, Gênese Andrade, Alecsandra Matias de Oliveira and Ana Paula Cavalcanti Simioni. It will be published in German and English editions. The English edition will have an additional text on the Royal Academy's 1944 *Exhibition of Modern Brazilian Paintings* by Adrian Locke.

Dates and Opening Hours

Press view: Thursday 23 January 2025, 10am – 2pm

Dates: Tuesday 28 January – Monday 21 April 2025

10am – 6pm Tuesday to Sunday

10am – 9pm Friday

Admission

From £21; concessions available; under 16s go free ([T&Cs apply](#)); Friends of the RA go free. [25 & under](#): 16 to 25 year olds can access a half-price ticket ([T&Cs apply](#)).

Tickets

Advance booking with pre-booked timed tickets is recommended for everyone, including Friends of the RA. Tickets can be booked in advance online (royalacademy.org.uk) or over the phone (0207 300 8090).

Images

Publicity images for *Brasil! Brasil! The Birth of Modernism* can be downloaded via this [link](#). By downloading the images, you acknowledge and accept the terms and conditions. These images can only be reproduced to illustrate a review or criticism of a work or report as defined by section 30 (i) and (ii) of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

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Image Caption

Tarsila do Amaral, *Landscape with Bridge*, 1931. Oil on canvas, 39.5 x 46 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of Almeida & Dale Galeria de Arte – Photo: Sergio Guerini. © Tarsila do Amaral S/A.

About the Royal Academy of Arts

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded by King George III in 1768. It has a unique position in being an independent, privately funded institution led by eminent artists and architects whose purpose is to be a clear, strong voice for art and artists. Its public programme promotes the creation, enjoyment and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education and debate.

The Royal Academy is an independent charity. It does not receive revenue funding from the government so is reliant upon the support of its visitors, donors, sponsors, patrons and loyal Friends.

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