

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES *FOTOCLUBISMO: BRAZILIAN MODERNIST PHOTOGRAPHY, 1946–1964*, HIGHLIGHTING A PREVIOUSLY UNDER-STUDIED CHAPTER OF PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY

NEW YORK, September 29, 2020 — The Museum of Modern Art announces *Fotoclubismo: Brazilian Modernist Photography, 1946–1964*, the first major museum exhibition of Brazilian modernist photography outside of Brazil. On view March 21–June 12, 2021, the exhibition will focus on the unforgettable creative achievements of São Paulo’s Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante, a group of amateur photographers widely heralded in Brazil, but essentially unknown to European and North American audiences. *Fotoclubismo* is comprised of over 140 photographs drawn generously from MoMA’s collection; together, they bring forward the extraordinary range of achievements of this group, provide valuable insight into the way photographic aesthetics were framed in the 1950s, and afford opportunities to reflect on the significance of amateur status today. The exhibition is organized by Sarah Meister, Curator, with Dana Ostrander, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Photography.

The vast majority of Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante members were amateurs, meaning they pursued photographic activity without any professional motive or affiliation. The club’s longtime president, Eduardo Salvatore, earned his living as a lawyer, and the list of professions on the membership cards includes industrialists, accountants, journalists, engineers, biologists, and bankers. While photography was an activity pursued outside their day jobs, FCCB members were nonetheless quite serious about their artistic ambition and their photographs were often quite dynamic and innovative. Works such as Geraldo de Barros’s *Fotoforma, São Paulo* (1952–53), Thomaz Farkas’s *Ministry of Education and Health, Rio* (c. 1945), or Gertrudes Altschul’s *Filigree (Filigrana)* (c. 1952), for example, represent a few of the radical experimentations with process and form and underscore the discovery of inventive compositions within everyday life. FCCB members responded to the abundant originality of contemporary Brazilian architects, and their attentiveness to the fertility of abstraction as a creative strategy emerged alongside peers in design, painting, and literature. Considering these works together provides a compelling context through which to explore the complex status of the amateur, evolving biases of taste or judgment, and local dynamics of race and gender.

Beyond creating photographs, a critical aspect of the club’s activity was their monthly *Concursos Internos* (internal contests) and *Seminarios*, in which photographs were submitted for peer review and discussed in public and private forums. This allowed members to both socially and intellectually engage with the medium of photography and afforded them the chance to display and share their work with fellow members and more broadly. The annual salon they hosted and *Boletim*, a monthly magazine published by the

FCCB, both demonstrate the breadth of activity pursued under the aegis of the club and highlighted the club's achievements to the international circuit of salons in which they participated, including Otto Steinert and his fellow "Subjective" photographers in Germany and the Société Française de la Photographie in Paris.

Fotoclubismo will be installed along two intertwined, complementary threads within the galleries: monographic and thematic. Of the display's six sections, each is anchored by a focused monographic presentation of an individual member: Geraldo De Barros, German Lorca, Gertrudes Altschul, José Yalenti, Marcel Giró, and Thomaz Farkas. These sections begin and end with thematic groupings that suggest the breadth of the photographic community active in São Paulo at that time and offer additional context for the individual achievements. Each theme is derived from the monthly *Concursos Internos* held at the FCCB, which prompted members to respond to a certain theme, often awarding the winner with full-page reproductions and cover features.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue, presenting Brazilian modernist photography to an international audience for the first time, situating these achievements within the broader contemporary art scene in Brazil as well as within a dynamic network of photographers around the world, and offering fresh insight into the status of the amateur in the postwar era.

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