

ANOTHER

BARDI

Wendelien van Oldenborgh

REALITY.

BO

AFTER

LINA

Cooter and

Reaper &

Mariana Castillo

Deball

Mike

ENG

6 April - 3 July 2016

“An awareness of a reality goes hand in hand with a political awareness, with regard to both economics and the architect’s sense of moral responsibility.”

Lina Bo Bardi

Another Reality. After Lina Bo Bardi

We found a factory with a very beautiful, architecturally important, original structure, and no one messed with it... The starting point for the design of the SESC Pompeia Leisure Centre was the desire to construct another reality.

(Lina Bo Bardi, The Architectural Project, 1986)

After a three week transformation process open to the public, almost all works in *Display Show* have been gradually replaced by works for *Another Reality. After Lina Bo Bardi*. This transformation offered us the opportunity to involve the public in what usually remains hidden: the creative process of exhibition-making. In collaboration with Céline Condorelli we thought up a dynamic choreography in which, temporarily, new works were shown on the works of *Display Show*, with dismantled, wrapped works waiting for transportation and artists sharing their thoughts on Lina Bo Bardi during public events.

This period beautifully demonstrated that an exhibition is always the result of a collective process in which thinking and making come together.

Lina Bo Bardi was also interested in the creative process. First and foremost, she saw art as work and liked presenting it as such, without the usual aura surrounding artworks. To her a simply designed utensil was just as important as a painting by De Chirico. She regarded an exhibition as a form of communication and education and this is exactly how we are approaching *Another Reality*. Instead of focusing on the results, the exhibition zooms in on the way in which Bo Bardi arrived at these results. We display the ideas she used as the basis for designing her buildings and furniture, creating posters and magazines and designing exhibitions and sets. We do this not only by showing her own work, but also by inviting artists who have approached Bo Bardi's work in an interesting way, who have used her work, referred to it, quoted it; in short who work *after* Bo Bardi. In this way, the work can be read anew and experienced as a contemporary phenomenon.

This exhibition addresses Lina Bo Bardi's practice through the work of the artists Céline Condorelli, Leonor Antunes, Manuel Raeder & Mariana Castillo Deball, Mike Cooter and Wendelien van Oldenborgh; through drawings, photography and film, books and documentation and through an

extensive program of activities that examine her ideas about exhibiting, education, history, play, design, architecture and popular culture.

Lina Bo Bardi

“She did not start from zero. She inhaled everything.” José Celso, the director of the Oficina Theatre, who worked closely with Lina Bo Bardi, describes her as an anthropological artist because she always absorbed everything in her surroundings and was able to transform it from the perspective of the here and now. Marcelo Ferraz, who for a long time was a close associate of hers, remembers her repeatedly saying: ‘Do the semiotic analysis of the reality and only then, begin to work’. She taught him that architects should serve society. This is why user-friendliness was important and beauty wasn’t important at all, according to Marcelo Suzuki, one of the other young architects that Lina worked with in the 1980s. Another architect, Edson Elito, reminisces about the exuberant drawings and water colours she produced to add new lines of approach to the technical drawings he made for the Teatro Oficina.

It is hard to describe Lina Bo Bardi (Rome, 1914 - São Paulo, 1992) from a single perspective. Although she was trained as an architect, her work encompasses so much more than buildings alone. Her conviction that architecture was not a goal in itself, but

a way of improving living conditions and enabling a different reality, has its origins in the war years in Italy. Here she learns to appreciate the way in which those who have the least find the most imaginative solutions to everyday problems. And she develops a sensitivity to dealing with and presenting the past in the present. When she leaves for Brazil with her husband Pietro Maria Bardi in 1946, she takes these skills and ideas with her.

In Brazil she further expands her specific and generous body of work that includes buildings, homes, restorations, exhibitions, chairs, magazines, texts, posters, theatre settings, jewellery, costumes and interiors. Specific as in juxtaposing generic and exchangeable, because she always works from a given situation and with the means at hand. Generous because the work not only leaves room for its users, but also for different interpretations. Human beings always take centre stage; they are the main characters in the space. Lina’s drawings show how she introduces this human perspective: they are often visualizations of future use or programmes.

In the 1950s, Lina and Pietro direct the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), that is temporarily located in an office building on the Rua 7 de Abril. Here they experiment with a variety of museum set-ups that do not use the walls.

The exhibitions are often educational in nature and the set-ups are an invitation to study the works. The magazine *Habitat: Revista das Artes no Brasil* is part of the museological strategy. It discusses MASP's exhibitions, as well as Brazilian architecture, art and culture as a whole, with both attention for the new Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro and for anonymous forms of folk art.

At the end of the 1950s, an invitation to give a series of lectures at the University of Salvador de Bahia, in the northeast of Brazil, eventually leads to her staying in this city for about six years. As a director, architect and curator, Lina works for museums of modern and folk art. In Salvador, once the centre of the sugar and slave colonial reality, she rediscovers the creativity of ordinary people, their knowledge of crafts and the beauty of functional and simple utensils. Lina builds an unusual collection of everyday tools and local handcrafts and makes sure these are not 'musealized' to become folklore, but continue to be part of living culture. She also opens up workshop spaces in the adjoining buildings and establishes a School for Industrial Design and Crafts. Her ideal is a museum that functions as a school.

Her time in Salvador also leads to a series of unique exhibitions. In 1959 she creates the setting for *Bahia no Ibirapuera* in which she shows a variety of artefacts from Bahia (varying from ex-votos to statues and rugs)

for the São Paulo Biennale. In 1964, *Nordeste* follows in Salvador, on the occasion of the opening of the building she restored for the museum of modern art (Solar do Unhão), showing the culture and civilization of the northeast as part of everyday practice. Five years later, during the public opening of the MASP, (European) masterpieces are suspended in air on glass 'painter's easels' while one floor below, the everyday creativity and craft of the Brazilians themselves is celebrated in the exhibition *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro* (The Hand of the Brazilian People). Both set-ups are attempts to break down the Western elitist idea of what constitutes art.

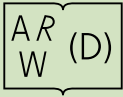
Because of a complicated political situation, Lina is forced to leave Salvador in 1964 and has to abandon her unfinished work. In the 1980s she returns at the request of the mayor to draft a restoration plan for Salvador. Only a small number of the interventions proposed by Lina are realized, including the Casa do Benin, a public housing project and the Restaurant Coaty on de Ladeira de Misericórdia. Here she demonstrates what she means by the concept of 'the historical present': not cultivating the past, but activating the spirit that is already there, among other things by adding new (concrete) elements.

Another restoration project, but in a completely different sense, is SESC Pompeia, an abandoned oil barrel factory where she realizes a cultural centre with sport facilities.

She mainly chooses to do so because of the spontaneous use of the building that had developed over the years and which she adopts as her point of departure. She creates a communal house for the residents of the adjacent neighbourhood where they can sit, talk, eat, read, create, look, play sports, sunbathe, hang about, sleep, play chess, learn, drink, swim and listen together. Sesc demonstrates what humane architecture can look like, without being small scale or historicized. In that sense it is a kind of culmination point in Lina's work where her ideas on community and collectivism, on exhibiting and education, on theatre and landscape, on the role of history and the importance of functionality, on form and the social all come together.

References

Paul Meurs, *Het werk van Lina Bo Bardi* in: de Architect, 1994 – 5, p 63-67
Zeuler R.M. de A. Lima, *Lina Bo Bardi*, New York, 2013
Interviews with Lina Bo Bardi's associates by the Architekturmuseum der TU in Munich, on the occasion of the exhibition *Lina Bo Bardi 100. Brazil's alternative path to modernism*, 2014. These interviews will also be on display in the lobby of Stroom.



Attempts to Read the World (Differently)

“For at least 2500 years every generation thinks that the time has come when the changes taking place can no longer be overseen. The saying by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus ‘Everything flows, nothing stays’, is an example of this and every generation since has retained this feeling. But all this time, there have also been attempts to navigate together in this chaotic world.”

Philosopher René Gude

With the program *Attempts to Read the World (Differently)* Stroom Den Haag looks in a searching, intuitive way at our present world,

the rapid developments therein and possible futures. We search together with artists Fernando Sánchez Castillo, Céline Condorelli, Dunja Herzog and Neil Beloufa. These artists take the first steps in a different reading, interpretation and imagining of the world, the recalibration of a navigation system, the search for new forms of knowledge, information or communication. It is not the search for an overarching central truth but rather for a variety of possibilities and interpretations.

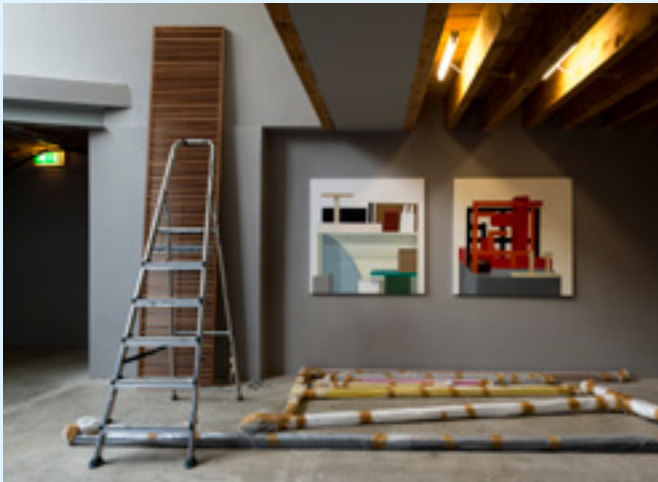
Céline Condorelli’s contribution to *ARW(D)* is a series of exhibitions with the following statement as its guiding principle: *Our inheritance was left to us by no testament.* The shape of an exhibition is always a way of dealing with inheritance and allows us to research and articulate our relationship with it. Furthermore, an exhibition also offers a context in which relationships to the world are made possible.

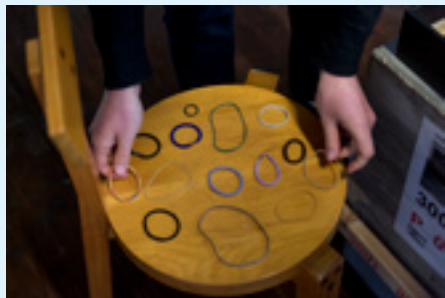
After *Display Show*, the exhibition she curated with Gavin Wade and that focused on what it means to show things, Condorelli contributed with a choreography for the exhibition changeover and produced an upcycled Lina display: a timber structure with plants from Brazil. A new work by Bo Bardi will be displayed on it each week. This presentation is a prelude to a series of new works and an exhibition in the spring of 2017 around the idea of the exhibition as a garden and playground.

Another Reality in progress









Contributions



Céline Condorelli

Reality (After Lina Bo Bardi), 2016

A timber structure forms a pergola carrying plants: sugar, cotton, rubber, coffee, cocoa, tobacco. *Reality (After Lina Bo Bardi)* is both a study for an installation, and a physical and conceptual framework for the exhibition at Stroom, “a poor architecture, not in a sense of impoverished but in the artisanal sense of achieving the maximum communication and dignity with minimal, humble means.”

For an exhibition at MASP in 1970 Lina Bo Bardi constructed a timber display carrying coffee branches. Perhaps the work of Lina Bo Bardi in Brazil cannot be understood outside its conditions of production, in a context utterly conditioned by the successive booms of plants both tied to colonialism and global capitalism, that both developed and destroyed its economy.

Her questions towards the construction of an architecture were: “*Is it valid? Where reality is concerned, we need to establish just which reality the architecture should address. An awareness of a reality goes hand in hand with a political awareness, with regard to both economics and a (...) sense of moral responsibility.*”

Reality is not what is out there but what is intelligible, comprehensible, readable, visible - and it is tied to what one chooses to

look at and side with. I like this position, that knowledge should always be linked to action, and that every layer of action is political, ethical and material at the same time.

Leonor Antunes
Lina, 2016

The work *Lina* is a sculpture made of brass wire and brass tubes. When I visited The Glass House in 2008, I measured different parts of the house. This piece comprises the 1:1 scale of the wooden parquet, that Lina used for the back part of the house, where she and her husband Pietro had their private spaces.

I am interested in the dialogue that (indigenous) knowledge establishes within a certain perspective of modernity in Brazil. How architects like Lina Bo Bardi engaged with the vernacular, with Afro-Brazilian culture and native expressions of the Brazilian Northeast; which serves as a dramatic counterpoint to the recent notion of the 'Presence of the Past'. Bo Bardi's passion for new engineering solutions and for the handicrafts of the complex ethnic demographics of Brazil's regions were not the nostalgia for a world before modernism, but rather a legacy regarding a belief in the artwork as representing an ongoing engagement in a process, rather than a singular assertion of an object as an utopian frozen moment.



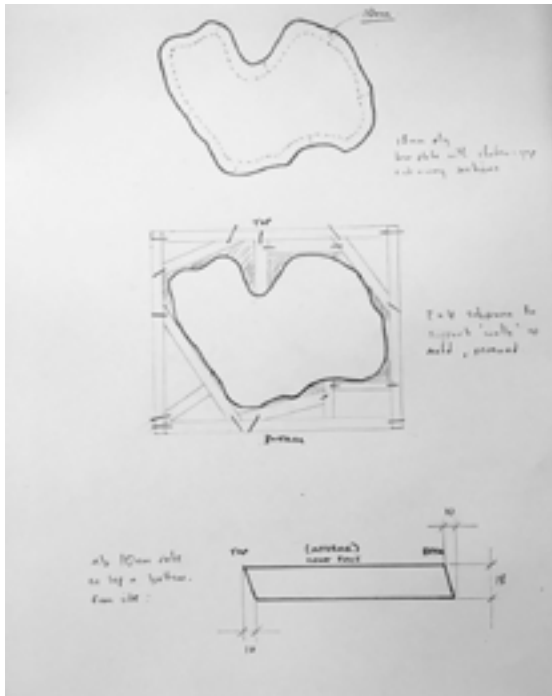


**Mariana Castillo Deball
& Manuel Raeder
*Bichos fantasticos***

Early in her career Lina Bo Bardi was working together with Gio Ponti for Domus magazine in Italy. Already at that time her first colourful illustrations were published inside the magazine.

Her drawing style got more refined over the years and formed a crucial part of her work, as her drawings don't resemble the typical architectural drawings that try to be mathematically precise and pay a lot of attention to construction details. Lina's sketches are precise in another way. In her drawings she always tried to create more of an atmosphere juxtaposing her proposals with trees, plants, animals and insects, pinpointing functions and describing elements within her sketches. Many times she worked with local artisans that constructed her chairs or even elements of her architecture, allowing a production method that is more related to the hand crafted and individually produced object rather than the mass produced.

The seating sculptures '*Bichos fantasticos*' have been built by local artist Ilse Versluijs and are hand crafted seats out of papier mâché of enlarged animals/insects that occupy the space at Stroom, like the insects and animals that occupy Lina's buildings.



Mike Cooter
The Mouth of Hell
(after Gregório de Matos, Lina Bo Bardi)

I became aware of Bo Bardi through her display structures, enigmatic and formally

elegant supports that at once negotiated the need for unnecessary architectural contrivance, whilst simultaneously drawing attention to the constructed nature of display. Further research was to reveal a practice both formally audacious and politically consistent, creating structures and environments both porous and intensely engaged with the people who activate and use them; temporary and permanent architectures built to foster, and function symbiotically, with diverse forms of sociality. It is these structures' openness and adaptability, coupled with their playful puncturing of modernist formality - organic forms perforate the utilitarian cast concrete façades of many of her built structures - that form the basis of the work presented at Stroom.

These apertures, or removals, were originally re-fabricated in 2015 as a series of tables, in this case taken from the windows of Sesc Pompeia (São Paulo), built to support artworks and artefacts related to the productivity of voids and the objects that furnish living environments. The enabling capability of Bo Bardi's apertures is reiterated in the full-size reproduction of the 'removed' section from the façade of Teatro Gregório de Matos (Salvador). The window to the bar that enframes the city becomes an explicit staging protocol in the exhibition for the work of Bo Bardi and others, and a practical monument to the care taken to cultivate sociality and to organic interventions in rigid systems.



Wendelien van Oldenborgh
Lina Bo Bardi: The Didactic Room

Lina Bo Bardi: The Didactic Room brings forward two distinctive features from Lina Bo Bardi's practice: rigorous formal choices and a free, generous spirit. When Lina Bo Bardi presented the collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) on glass, it was

an expression of her desire to liberate the artworks from fixed interpretations and to enable new relationships between the works and the public. On the other side of the glass, behind the paintings, labels the same size as the work itself were placed that not only featured the title of the work and the usual information about date and material, but also carried information about the artist or artistic movement. *Lina Bo Bardi: The Didactic Room* uses the formal composition of reproductions of Bo Bardi's glass easels, showing pictures from a collection, and at the same time offering space for a wide variety of activities within the visual interaction of artworks and references. The *Didactic Panels*, the collages replacing the original labels behind the artworks, unite the various layers of formality and freedom both with regard to use and interpretation. The installation echoes the inherent possibility in Lina Bo Bardi's work of joining opposites as well as her desire to offer space for what she calls: "cultural citizenship, practised at its highest form".

In the current set-up, especially developed for this exhibition at Stroom Den Haag, the artworks have been selected from lovingly compiled, local private collections that in my view bear a relation with the legacy of Lina Bo Bardi. The *Didactic Panels* were made in collaboration with Grant Watson for an earlier display of the same work at the Van Abbemuseum in 2010.

Display Show

Another Reality contains traces of *Display Show*: the wallpaper in the upstairs exhibition space is by James Langdon & Peter Nencini (*Make Do Mutations*), the mural on the grey walls downstairs is by Flore Nové-Josserand and was part of her installation *City Growth Blues* and the composition of coloured blocks from Céline Condorelli's *After image (Gray and Bayer)* is still visible on the windows.



Community of Practice

The Community of Practice, in short CoP, is a study group consisting of young architects, artists, art historians and education programmers. Between December 2015 and April 2016, its members assembled during weekly meetings in order to exchange ideas and knowledge and to take the various disciplines united in this CoP as the point of

departure for reflecting on a public program to accompany this exhibition. For their contribution, the CoP links the work and legacy of Lina Bo Bardi to that of the architect Aldo van Eyck, based on their shared preference for humane architecture on a human scale, as well as their love of concrete and their use of simple elements that have a social function in the public space.

The CoP proposes to build a dynamic platform for a public program, preferably the courtyard of the Stroom building, and has chosen a simple base to achieve this: a concrete building block. During the exhibition, these concrete building blocks can be used to create various pieces of furniture – chairs, stools, tables, platforms and a bar – that all support the public program. *After* Aldo van Eyck, these simple elements are as self-evident as they are inviting in a social space and closely connect to the programme that was thought out by the CoP. This combination provides a special link between the work and legacy of Lina Bo Bardi, Aldo van Eyck and the larger, underlying theme of '*display as support structure*' that is essentially important in this exhibition.

The CoP members are Wieger Ambagts, Kaj van Boheemen, Josje Hattink, Jana Mol, Charlotte Thomas, Lesley Wijnands, Rory van Wingerden and it is supervised by Margriet Brouwers (Showroom MAMA).

Colophon

Production and installation:

Stroom Den Haag team with the cooperation of Charlotte Thomas (research), Ilse Versluijs (production of the work by Mariana & Manuel), André de Kam, Harold de Bree and Ton Schuttelaar (construction & installation)

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Cover: Studio Manuel Raeder

Photography: Eric de Vries

Stroom School

Parallel to the exhibition there will be an in-depth program of lectures and discussions. See insert or www.stroom.nl for full program.

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