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ANITA MALFATTI

100 YEARS OF MODERN ART

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ANITA MALFATTI

100 YEARS OF MODERN ART

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GREAT HALL

CURATED BY
REGINA TEIXEIRA
DE BARROS

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the exhibition that inaugurated Brazilian modernism, *Anita Malfatti: 100 Years of Modern Art* gathers at MAM's Great Hall about seventy different works covering the path of one of the main names in Brazilian art in the 20th century.

Anita Malfatti's exhibition in 1917 was crucial to the emergence of the group who would champion modern art in Brazil, so much so that critic Paulo Mendes de Almeida considered her as the "most historically critical character in the 1922 movement."

Regina Teixeira de Barros' curatorial work reveals an artist who is sensitive to trends and discussions in the first half of the 20th century, mindful of her status and her choices.

This exhibition at MAM recovers drawings and paintings by Malfatti, divided into three moments in her path: her initial years that consecrated her as "trigger of Brazilian modernism"; the time she spent training in Paris and her naturalist production; and, finally, her paintings with folk themes.

With essays by Regina Teixeira de Barros and Ana Paula Simioni, this edition of *Moderno MAM Extra* is an invitation for the public to get to know this great artist's choices. Have a good read!

CON-
TENTS

ANITA MALFATTI, ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER

REGINA TEIXEIRA DE BARROS

One hundred years have gone by since the *Exposição de pintura moderna Anita Malfatti* [Anita Malfatti Modern Painting Exhibition] would forever change the path of art history in Brazil.

The first recognized modern art exhibition in Brazil—open between December 12, 1917, and January 10, 1918—comprised fifty-three works by Anita Malfatti, twenty-eight of which being landscape and portrait paintings; ten prints; five watercolors; the remaining were drawings and caricatures. The set represented a summary of a six-year output by the artist, comprising her years of training in Germany (1910–1913) and in the United States (1914–1916), as well as recent works realized when she came back to São Paulo.[1]

Before Malfatti's exhibition, São Paulo had only seen rigorously or close to strict academic art shows. At first, the exhibition was received with awe and curiosity: Visitations were intense, and Malfatti sold eight works. However, after Monteiro Lobato's critic, "A propósito da exposição Malfatti" [Regarding Malfatti's exhibition], published in the afternoon edition of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* on December 20,[2] most local critics echoed the judgment of that renowned literate, and five works that had been acquired were returned. The critic was so virulent that Malfatti's name has been associated to Lobato's ever since.

A passionate adept of naturalist art, Lobato began his appreciation of Malfatti's show by saying:

> There are two species of artists. One of them is composed by those who see things normally and consequently create pure art, keeping life's eternal rhythms and adopting classical processes of the great masters to concretize aesthetic emotions. Those who follow this path, if they possess genius, are Praxiteles in Greece, Raphael in Italy, Rembrandt in the Netherlands, Rubens in Flanders, Reynolds in England, Lenbach in Germany, Iorn in Sweden, Rodin in France, Zuloaga in Spain. If they merely possess talent, they will add to the myriad of satellites gravitating around those everlasting suns. The other species

1) For a detailed panorama of Anita Malfatti's life and work, see *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço* by Marta Rossetti Batista (Edusp; Ed. 34, 2006), a must read in any study about the artist. This historian devoted years to research Malfatti's life and work, and her studies unfolded into countless works in many different forms such as academic dissertations, books, and exhibitions.
2) The article was published two years later in the book *Ideias de Jeca Tatu* as "Paranoia ou mistificação?" [Paranoia or mystification?], the title for which it is better known.

is formed by those who see nature abnormally and interpret it under the light of ephemeral theories, under the strabismal suggestion of rebel schools, emerged here and there as boils of excessive culture. They are the products of exhaustion and sadism of all periods of decadence; they are the fruit of the end of seasons, spoiled since birth. Shooting stars shine for an instant, most often with scandalous light, and soon disappear into the darkness of oblivion. Even though they deem themselves as new, as precursors of an art still to come, nothing is older than abnormal or teratological art: It was born with paranoia and mystification. Psychiatrists have studied it for a long time in the treaties, documented in the many drawings that adorn internal walls in insane asylums. The only difference is that this art is sincere in insane asylums, a logical product of brains deranged by the most bizarre psychoses; and outside of them, in public exhibitions, heralded by the press and absorbed by crazy Americans, there is no sincerity, no logic—they are pure mystification.

The article goes on disdaining modern art-isms, but Lobato does recognize Malfatti's competence:

> That artist possesses vigorous, uncommon talent. Rarely through a work twisted to the wrong direction so many, so precious latent qualities can be noticed. From any of those small frames, one can realize how the author is independent, how original she is, how inventive she is, the high degree in which she possesses countless both innate and acquired most fertile qualities to build a strong artistic individuality. However, seduced by theories she calls modern art, she entered the realms of a highly debatable impressionism and devotes her whole talent to a new kind of caricature.

The famous author goes on listing a series of "disagreeable considerations," as he puts it. However, he once again interrupts his criticism to modern art's "excesses" to make an exception: "Ms. Malfatti's painting is not cubist, so that these words are not directly addressed to her; but since she added to her exhibition some cube-like character, it makes us believe that it tends to her as some supreme ideal." And he justifies his harsh words:

> A true friend to an artist is not one who showers them with laudations, but one who gives them a real opinion, although harsh, and translates clearly to them, with no reservations, that which everyone thinks on their backs.... If we saw on Ms. Malfatti nothing but "a lady who paints," like hundreds around, without denouncing a spark of talent, we would keep quiet, or maybe we would devote to her half a dozen "candy" adjectives that the sugary press always has at the ready when talking about ladies.[3]

One hundred years have gone by since the *Exposição de pintura moderna Anita Malfatti* and, since then, a myth has been crystallized around the "sensitive of Brazil"—as Mário de Andrade would refer to the artist—and her "tormentor," Monteiro Lobato. Rumor has it that Malfatti would never recover from this incident and that her brief apogee was followed by extreme, definitive decadence.[4] Contemporary critics were unanimous in using terms such as "retraction," "retrocession," and "step backward" to refer to her output after 1917. Even her great friend Mário de Andrade made a statement in this sense: "After the exhibition, Anita retreated. She went home and disappeared, wounded." And still, "uncertain, trembling between these different orders she gradually lost herself."[5]

Now, blaming her change in painting to the trauma Lobato might have caused to her extreme sensitivity is actually not realizing how watchful Malfatti has always been regarding different branches of artistic debate in her time. Both in Brazil and Europe, modernism was constituted not only by historic avant-gardes, by the transgressive proposals of the isms, but also by a moment of revising art history, of looking at tradition not to condemn it, but to establish a dialog between past and present.

In light of that, the *Anita Malfatti: 100 Years of Modern Art* exhibition presents a selection of works covering different aspects of her output and shows her as an artist who is sensitive to the artistic trends around her, responding consciously to discussions unfolding through the first half of the 1900s. The show aims at presenting a slice of Malfatti's production under the light of these issues and, thus, it is divided into three different moments: The first years that consecrated her as the "trigger of Brazilian modernism";[6] her years of training in Paris and her naturalist output; and, finally, her paintings with folk themes.

3) Monteiro Lobato quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 211.
4) Thankfully, Anita Malfatti's output is being reviewed over the past few years by a new generation of art historians who are gradually demystifying the current narrative. See the Selected Bibliography at the end, particularly publications by Ana Paula Simioni, Renata Gomes Cardoso, Roberta Paredes Valin, Sônia Maria de Carvalho Pinto, and Tadeu Chiarelli.
5) Mário de Andrade quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 235 and 245.
6) Expression coined by Mário da Silva Brito in *História do modernismo brasileiro 1. Antecedentes: a Semana de Arte Moderna* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1974).

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Malfatti's interest in art started at home, seeing her mother paint and give painting classes. At twenty, encouraged by her godfather Jorge Krug, she traveled to Germany[7] to pursue her artistic training. She settled in Berlin, which, in a fortuitous coincidence, would also be the destination for many artists from the expressionist avant-garde, which certainly contributed to the path Malfatti's painting would take. During the period she stayed there, the German capital city hosted members of Die Brücke [The Bridge] and New Secession, saw the launch of the Der Sturm magazine and gallery, staged exhibitions by French impressionists, Nordic expressionists, and Italian futurists.

Soon after her arrival, Malfatti studied drawing at the Royal Academy of Berlin. She had classes on color theory under Fritz Burger, of painting technique under Bischoff-Culm, but it was Lovis Corinth who revealed to her the power of color. Years later, Malfatti would describe how moved she was when she first saw an exhibition by her master: "The paint was thrown with such an impulse, with such slides and sudden stops that it looked like life itself was running away through the canvas."[8]

In 1912, Malfatti went to Cologne to visit the fourth Sonderbund, the great exhibition of European modern art, with works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Schiele, Kokoschka, Nolde, Matisse, the Nabis, cubists from the School of Paris, expressionists from The Bridge and Der Blaue Reiter [The Blue Rider], as well as notable retrospectives of Van Gogh and Munch.

Even though Malfatti has lived in the epicenter of German expressionism, those influences would only reflect in her way of painting when she moved to the United States, a few years later. From her German sojourn, few works are left: Some attempts into metal etching and paintings such as *A floresta* [The Forest] and *O jardim* [The Garden], done during the summer vacations of 1912 in the village of Treseburg. Even though these open-air paintings reveal her initial interest in color—here, applied through small juxtaposed brushstrokes without mixing and with quite diversified hues—these landscapes are structured with basis on traditional principles of escape lines and perspective, and are closer to impressionist experiences.

As well as landscapes, the portrait genre would also be a constant throughout her artistic path. In *Retrato de um professor* [Portrait of a Teacher], done in Germany, one can see the traditional framing of the picture, but more boldness in color usage and brushstrokes distributed in different directions, sometimes blurring outlines, here and there. In *Meu irmão Alexandre* [My Brother Alexandre], painted when she came back to Brazil, in early 1914, Malfatti resorted to new resources: the white opening on the shirt and the pale face of the leaning figure contrast with his jacket's and the surroundings' dark, cold tones, and split the screen diagonally.

In 1915, recently arrived in New York, Malfatti attended, for a brief moment, the Art Student League, whose teachings were anchored in the classical tradition. Few months later, she was introduced to the work of Homer Boss and, together with a course peer, she went to look for the "Modern teacher, a great misunderstood philosopher who let everyone paint as they wished,"[9] who was taking advantage of the summer to work on Monhegan Island with a few students. It was on that occasion, in that isolated small island on the Canadian border, that the repertoire assimilated in Germany manifested: During her two-month sojourn, Malfatti painted *O farol* [The Lighthouse], *Ventania* [Wind Storm], *Paisagem (amarela)* [Landscape (Yellow)], and *Marinha (penhascos)* [Seascape (Cliffs)], among other views on the island that would consecrate her as a pioneer in Brazilian modern art. In them, patches of bright colors and sharp contrasts structure the compositions, pointing to the impact expressionist and fauvist painting had had on the artist. In *O farol,* winding brushstrokes of citric yellow, purple, white, and pink collide on the stirred-up clouds at dusk; wind is also present in the maze of greens on the bushes and the hairdo of orange-colored vegetation on the hill. In *A ventania*, sky and land—and everything that manifests between one and the other—are taken by the materiality of curves translating the commotion of nature wrapped by the wind. In *Paisagem (amarela),* a less material painting than the others, the graphisms of naked branches on the forefront oppose the color patches that organize the remaining of the landscape. Years later, Malfatti would explain: "I was painting with a different tuning fork, and it was that song of color that comforted me and enriched my life."[10]

7) Her chosen destination alone—certainly impelled by her mother's family German origin—makes Anita Malfatti a unique artist, seeing that most Brazilian artists would go to Paris to pursue their artistic training.
8) Anita Malfatti, "A chegada da arte moderna no Brasil" (lecture, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, October 25, 1951), published in *Mestres do modernismo* (São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado, 2004), 261–274.
9) Anita Malfatti, "1917," *Revista Anual do Salão de Maio – RASM* (1939), unnumbered.
10) Malfatti, "A chegada da arte moderna no Brasil", 267.

Back to New York, Malfatti continued to work with Homer Boss, a character around whom many refugees from WWI gathered, among them Marcel Duchamp and Juan Gris, Russian writer Maxim Gorki, ballerinas Isadora Duncan and Napierkowska, as well as Sergei Diaghilev, director of the Russian Ballets. Just like Berlin, the city was ebullient with innovations presented at the Armory Show in 1912 and in Alfred Stieglitz's up-to-date 291 gallery. The isms—cubism, expressionism, futurism—were resonating in New York and, once again, Malfatti was at the right time and place where art transgressed, and modern life went on intensively.

In the exciting environment of the Independent School of Art, Malfatti painted portraits "with the same spirit that landscapes had inspired us."[11] The unnatural colors of the portrayed, the unexpected framing, the anatomical deformations, the contrasts between shape and color, the expressive extravagances—to the eyes of the savvy—caused awe when exhibited in the provincial 1917 São Paulo.

In *Mulher de cabelos verdes* [Woman with Green Hair], the angled face with pointy ears and chin, pug nose, and arched eyebrows contrasts with the body's and the background's curvaceous volumes, accentuating the sinister air of the portrayed lady. Just like in the painting *Meu irmão Alexandre*, the strident green in the cleavage reverberates with the hair's greenish mass and with the lines of the same color present in the face's architecture. Chromatic dissonances add to the model's enigmatic, even scary expression.

In the painting *A estudante* [The Female Student], red patches distributed in different parts of the body contrast with others in citric yellow, lending the young model an unhealthy appearance. Her curved posture and her shoulders projecting to the front, outlined by thick color lines, denounce a mix of annoyance and discouragement. Purples and greens dominate the background and reflect on the student's clothing.

A estudante russa [The Russian Student], a painting deemed to be a self-portrait, has a soberer coloring: both the costume of the artist and the background on which she is represented are filled with a thin layer of ink, so as to resemble at times the watercolor effects, at times the effect of the charcoal pencil. Probably realized before Malfatti was encouraged to throw herself at the effusion of colors, this painting already presents some characteristics that would be constant in the later portraits—painted under Boss' guidance—as the red seat and the proportions between figure and canvas.

If on the one hand, in her female portraits, the models are recorded sitting, mostly on three-quarters and from a slightly "from above" perspective, in *O japonês* [The Japanese Man], on the other, the painter seems to have taken their position. Observed from this point of view, the male figure becomes monumental; its extremities extrapolate the limits of the canvas. In that painting, strangeness does not emerge through contrast, but through the analogy of pink, purple, and brown tones shared by the figure and the background.

In her pastel and charcoal works, the portrayed subjects have distorted traces and, just like in the paintings, they are framed so as to cover most of the paper's surface, having the top of the head invariably suppressed. Emphasis on psychological aspects is present in works such as *Retrato de mulher* [Woman Portrait], *O secretário da escola (Retrato de Bailey)* [The School Secretary (Bailey Portrait)], and *Homem sentado (dormindo)* [Man Sitting Down (Sleeping)]. The same "mutilated" framing is frequent in the large-format nudes that she did—also in charcoal or pastel—at Homer Boss's school. In her male nudes, Malfatti highlights the vigor of moving muscles, utilizing thick lines and fumed zones to accentuate body mass. In her female nudes, on the other hand, she favors finer, albeit no less expressive, lines. That series of drawings was not included in the 1917 exhibition—probably because they represent a disturbing theme in itself. After all, it was expected that young bourgeois ladies were pretty, well mannered, and homemakers, obeying rules dictated by the classical canon.

Back to São Paulo in August 1916, Malfatti was twenty-six. Well-traveled and updated, she found a timid artistic milieu, mostly asleep in the comfort of academic textbooks. For her family, the result of her studies abroad revealed a great disappointment and, as her biographer Marta Rossetti Batista describes, the artist put her works temporally aside.

In mid- 1917, Malfatti sent a painting to the Concurso do Saci competition promoted by Monteiro Lobato. Upon commenting some of the works that had been submitted at *O Estado de S. Paulo* news daily, the critic would show his disapproval regarding Malfatti's painting:

> Ms. Malfatti also sent her *ism* contribution. A traveler and his horse, leisurely riding on a red road, fall apart in a horror fit when they see hanging from a bamboo rod something otherworldly. The rider falls apart, the horse falls apart, trying to get away from its own neck, which extends long as if it were made from the best rubber from Pará. Falling-apart genre. Like all paintings in the *ism* genre, cubism, futurism, impressionism, Marinettism, it is *hors-concours*.[12]

Lobato's words caught the attention of writer Arnaldo Simões Pinto, director of the *Vida Moderna* magazine, and of future modernist Di Cavalcanti. Together they came to see Malfatti and, excited with the uniqueness of her images, they proposed to her to do an exhibition—the *Exposição de pintura moderna Anita Malfatti*.

As well as taking from storage part of the output set aside for the show—set in a room lent by Count Lara at Rua Líbero Badaró—Malfatti presented more recent works, done after she came back to Brazil, such as her painting *Tropical*. In tune with the nationalist debate happening in São Paulo at that time, in addition to the banana-tree leaves, *Tropical* displays on the foreground a still life that stands out thanks to its naturalist treatment. In opposition to the tropical fruits, the woman has a more synthetic finishing, which characterizes her more as a human type—a mulatto—than as an individual.[13] Even though *Tropical* is an iconic painting of Malfatti's interest for seeking some Brazilian imaginary, it is important to highlight that issues with a nationalist theme were already present in works done in the United States. Even though she was in a full "pictorial idyll,"[14] disclosing the universe of colors, in that occasion, Malfatti already showed interest for such themes—just like other foreign artists living in New York did. In her pastel *O homem de sete cores* [Man in Seven Colors], the human figure shares forefront with banana-tree leaves; blues, greens, and yellow, the colors of the Brazilian flag, dominate the composition. Coincidently or not, these are the dominating colors in *A boba* [The Fool], a painting that also shares characteristics with the other portraits done at the Independent School of Art such as highlighting psychological details, image building through color patches, untraditional framing of the figure, etc.

When Lobato published his comments regarding *Exposição de pintura moderna Anita Malfatti* exactly one hundred years ago, young author Oswald de Andrade was the only person who would publicly intervene to defend the show, which would come to be ground zero for Brazilian modernism. Malfatti's pioneering character would only come to be recognized by a more numerous group of intellectuals four years later, precisely at the Semana de Arte Moderna de 1922 [Week of Modern Art of 1922] when her works occupied the spotlight at the hall of São Paulo's Municipal Theater. For the show during the Semana, twenty of her works were selected, highlighting her modernity, among them, some that had been exhibited in 1917, as well as one pastel nude and recent works with Brazilian themes.[15]

The connection between Malfatti and the group of future modernists had gradually become closer: she had met Di Cavalcanti, Oswald and Mário de Andrade at the time of the exhibition in 1917; she had shared space in the studios of Pedro Alexandrino and Georg Elpons with Tarsila do Amaral between 1919 and 1920; she had become close to the group of young writers Guilherme de Almeida, Sergio Milliet, and Menotti Del Picchia at the turn of the decade.

The alliances from that time were recorded on portraits she made of her friends, among them three of Mário de Andrade and one of Amaral—who had been introduced to the others by Malfatti in the second half of 1922, during one of her returns from the French capital. If on the one hand, on Mário de Andrade's pastel, she used marked contrast on the planes that make up the image, on Amaral's, on the other, she chose a more naturalistic approach with subtle hues highlighting her friend's elegance. The intimacy of the group is recorded on the delightful drawing *Grupo dos Cinco* [Group of Five] from 1922 in which Amaral and Mário de Andrade play the piano, Del Picchia and Oswald de Andrade rest on the floor, and Malfatti naps on the couch. Other testimonies of this conviviality are canvases painted at the same time, by Malfatti and Amaral, having as subject the bunches of daisies Mário de Andrade had sent to Amaral.[16] On Malfatti's painting, the white flowers on the foreground gradually give in to color patches that virtually propagate to the whole of the canvas.

In 1923, Malfatti traveled to Paris with a grant from the Pensionato Artístico do Estado de São Paulo [Artistic Boarding School of São Paulo State]. Contrary to the other Brazilian modernists who arrived at the City of Lights in the early 1920s, Malfatti was already a mature artist. On the first two years, she said, "I attended academies and free courses, I visited studios, I sought on salons the

11) Idem.

12) Monteiro Lobato quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 191.
13) Regarding this painting, see Tadeu Chiarelli, "*Tropical*, de Anita Malfatti," in *Arte brasileira na Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo*, ed. Taisa Palhares (São Paulo: Cosac Naify / Imprensa Oficial / Pinacoteca, 2009), 134–145.
14) Expression used by the artist to describe her sojourn in the United States. Malfatti, "A chegada da arte moderna no Brasil," 267.
15) Regarding Anita Malfatti's participation in the Modern Art Week, see: Aracy Amaral, *Artes plásticas na Semana de 22*, 5th ed. (São Paulo: Editora 34, 1997).
16) Apropos, see: Aracy Amaral, *Tarsila sua obra e seu tempo* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2003), 69–70.

most advanced things that were being made.... I am very curious and thus my exhaustive peregrination through the big city seeking things to see, to learn."[17] The most advanced thing she saw and learned was the recovering of realistic, naturalist, and classic trends and, with them, the valorization of the *métier*. Innovations belonged to the past.

Regarding her discoveries in Paris, Malfatti wrote to Mário de Andrade:

> Fortune has turned for me. See how many good things. In my painting, I will come to a great phase. I made a huge discovery "for me." I know that now I will always be able to attain harmonious unification of my hues and the relationship between them in a way that all of them seem like parts of the same whole—finding out the "local color" and applying it simultaneously, according to the problem to be solved. The same system in the rhythm of the drawing.... I will work now with method and understanding, and I know this marks the beginning of an era.[18]

During the five years she lived in Paris, Malfatti drew a great deal. If her works on paper had large dimensions in the United States, now, more numerous, they were set to the size of notebooks and acquired a new purpose. As if in a journal, she recorded ideas that could be used in future paintings, made color notes, diversified themes. In order to train her left hand, due to the congenital problem in the other hand, she drew countless graphite and China ink nudes—now mostly female—from living models. In that new phase, she outlined bodies with fine and delicate traces, but at the same time they were firm and precise.[19]

Her search for refinement in her *métier* also guided a new series of paintings in which the means employed to do the work and technical ability are evident concerns, as these qualities marked her entire output during the phase at the French capital. She enlarged her repertoire of technical and compositional solutions by attending free courses and visiting contemporary exhibitions. During her vacations, Malfatti traveled through Europe and, in those occasions, she recorded French and Italian town landscapes on delicate watercolors as well as in oil paintings with naturalistic hues and careful brushstrokes. While her views near the water allude strongly to Albert Marquet's seascapes, both for the palette and the thorough treatment of the painting, *Paisagem dos Pirineus, Cauterets* [Pyrenees Landscape, Cauterets] alludes to landscapes by Paul Cézanne, organized through the juxtaposition of short color brushstrokes.

During the period sponsored by the São Paulo State administration, Malfatti also innovated her image repertoire by painting interiors and scenes of women on balconies.[20] In *Interior de Mônaco* [Monaco Interior], the room on the forefront is structured through patterns: table cloth, wallpaper, valance—not to mention the checkered floor—that are abundantly decorated with floral motifs in neutral tones. The dark space is suffocating and opens to another, in which light and air seem to circulate: some subtle luminosity reflects from the blue robe the figure that has its back to us is wearing, projecting nothing but a slight shade on the floor. Both the white plane of the door that stands ajar and the floor's red patch guide the viewer's gaze towards a space beyond that which is presented to us. This device is quite common in interior paintings by French artists contemporary to Malfatti such as Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard, as well as in those by Matisse.

Henri Matisse was a reference as well for the two paintings in which solitary women are portrayed on balconies, particularly in regard to the use of architectonic elements as a resource to present sequential planes, creating a certain depth. Both in *Chanson de Montmartre* [Montmartre Song] and *Mulher do Pará* [Woman from Pará (State)], the figure is situated between the parapet's bars and the ornate curtains. Furthermore, both are framed by Venetian blinds and, once again, it is possible to glimpse a space (now shaded) beyond the balcony. However, similarities stop here. *Chanson de Montmartre* is a painting that intends to be simple: the young lady with doll traits and virginal dress waters small flowers, accompanied by her cat (with a red bow) and a bird. The disproportion between the figure and her house with a compressed roof reiterates the naïve aspect of the set. On the other hand, *Mulher do Pará* is a provocative painting: a proud woman with her see-through dress, red shoes and choker, faces the passerby. Her hieratic pose and her weird big, ornate hair suggest immobility, and wait. The sophisticated curtains have no kinship to the simple curtain of *Chanson de Montmartre*, just as there is no similarity between the rooms behind the two figures: in *Mulher do Pará*, one does not glimpse a small twin bed; the configuration of furniture inside the dark room is up to the client's imagination. Looking at this work, it is inevitable to make associations with two paintings by Édouard Manet: *Le balcon* [The Balcony] and *Olympia*. The former, for the color analogies and the place chosen for the portrait; the latter, for the eroticism and the direct gaze towards the viewer.

The state's grantees were committed to following the program's rules: by the end of the apprenticeship, they had to prove their studies by presenting two copies of works by masters recognized by art history, as well as one original composition. Malfatti reproduced Jean-François Millet's *Les glaneuses* [The Harvesters] and Eugène Delacroix's *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* [Women of Algiers in their Apartment] (both copies belonging to the collection of Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo). She worked extensively on *Puritas* (a religious painting that can be seen at the Museu de Arte Sacra de São Paulo), but she ended up presenting *Tropical* as proof of her originality.[21]

Malfatti was back to São Paulo in September 1928. A few months later, she prepared a solo show with her Parisian output, according to determinations of Pensionato Artístico. Her contained art, "with no excesses," that she displayed received some praise and some less positive critics. Years later, Malfatti would take stock: "I was sure that my work was good; both the French and American moderns had said so spontaneously, with no stakes.... I knew those critics had no basis."[22]

In the 1930s, Malfatti taught at the Escola Americana, the Escola Normal do Mackenzie College, and at her studio. In parallel, she was a frequent contributor to distinguished shows, among them one of Brazilian art at the Roerich Museum in New York, in which she exhibited as well. She took part in the committee of the Salão Revolucionário [Revolutionary Salon], invited by Lucio Costa, got involved in the events of Sociedade Pró-Arte Moderna [Pro-Modern Art Society], joined the artists of Família Artística Paulista [São Paulo's Artistic Family], and was part of organizing commissions for many different salons, having exhibited her work in most of them. Sofia Tassinari, who trained under Malfatti for eight years, would confirm that the artist was involved with her peers on a testimony about the 1930s: "[Malfatti's] home was always full, with people coming for tea or drinks before dinner; they would often dine there, and meetings in the evenings were frequent. With this, I met all painters from that time; I often saw Volpi, Zanini, Rebolo, and Pennacchi."[23]

In that time, she painted mostly portraits of family members, friends, intellectuals, and members of the elite, as well as religious themes. The pictures of her niece Liliana and her friend Antônio Marino Gouvêa display a naturalistic treatment in close dialogue with tradition. They are built with careful brushstrokes and refined colors, and both present one particularity compared to other portraits of the same period: a neuter background is replaced by a landscape and by the reproduction of one of her paintings, respectively. Liliana poses before a delicate landscape by the sea, whose treatment harks back to treatment from the Renaissance, while on the background, in Gouvêa's portrait, is *Lago Maggiore* [Lake Maggiore], a painting by Malfatti that belonged to the collection of her friend who is portrayed. The representation of Baby de Almeida, modernist poet Guilherme de Almeida's wife, and of Carolina da Silva Telles, daughter of the "modernist dame" Olívia Guedes Penteado, manifest many analogies among them: beyond the fact that both canvases have the same dimensions, the women portrayed are in similar positions, with similar cleavages and necklaces. The light auras circling their heads add to these parallels, lending a slight theatrical air to the figures, particularly to Baby de Almeida's. In Flávio Motta's portrait, done in the early 1940s, a fumed effect of the brushstrokes combined with the model's lost eyes add a dreamy air to the young artist.

In 1944, Malfatti traveled to Belo Horizonte to take part in the *Exposição de arte moderna* [Exhibition of Modern Art] organized by Guignard and joined a group of artists to visit the historical towns, where she saw processions and festivals—themes that she would incorporate into her repertoire of images from then on. *Na porta da venda* [In Front of the Grocer's], *O trolinho* [The Small Trolley], *Trenzinho* [Small Train], and *Samba* are from that period; they are paintings in which Malfatti inserted groups of three to four people, each one focused on one activity. In *Porta da venda*, the scene framed by a St. John's pole and a garland displays three groups on the foreground, each one suggesting a different narrative: while two women exchange ideas and impressions in front of one of the grocer's doors,

17) Anita Malfatti quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 319–320.
18) Letter from Malfatti to Mário de Andrade, 1925, quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 321.
19) Regarding Malfatti's drawing, see Ana Paula Simioni and Ana Paula Camargo Lima, "Desenhos de Anita Malfatti: Coleção de Artes Visuais do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros," *Anita Malfatti*, ed. Lygia Eluf (Campinas: Editora da Unicamp; São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 2011), 11-15; and Roberta Paredes Valin, *Cadernos-diários de Anita Malfatti: uma trajetória desenhada em Paris* (master's dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 2015).
20) Malfatti also devoted herself to a series of biblical passages, for which Maurice Denis and the journey to Florence were certainly key references.
21) Regarding Malfatti's choice to donate an older painting, see: Chiarelli, "*Tropical*, de Anita Malfatti," and Marcelo Mattos Araujo, *Os modernistas na Pinacoteca: o Museu entre a vanguarda e a tradição* (doctoral dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 2002).
22) Malfatti, "A chegada da arte moderna no Brasil", 167.
23) "Depoimentos sobre Anita Malfatti: Sofia Tassinari (Os anos 30)," *O Estado de S. Paulo* (December 13, 1969). Literary Section, 3.

in front of the other, an old man accompanied by children admires a horse; in the middle of the street, a mother is occupied with her children. The dirt pavement—figured through a patch of beiges and browns—frames two small homes and gets to the woods at the back of the scene.

Just like in this painting, the others are stages for different events that unfold in different planes, always with calculated brushstrokes and moderated tones. While *O trolinho* and *Trenzinho* obey a similar logic of spatial structure, *Samba* stands out for its homogenous and soft background over which figures in circles seem to hover.

That set of paintings with folk themes flirts with some "simplification" in space construction, close to that adopted by naïf artists. In a letter addressed to Mário de Andrade after his death, she updates him: "I researched all techniques and came back to simplicity, directly; I am not more modern or outdated, but I write and paint that which enchants me."[24] Contrary to what the modernist historiography preaches, adhesion to a folk language does not represent one further step of Malfatti's towards the abyss. Once again, Malfatti reveals herself to be aware of the debate going on in the artistic milieu that, in that second half of the 1940s, was discovering and exalting naïf artists such as José Antônio da Silva and Heitor dos Prazeres. Other artists who were assimilated by the art system in that decade turn—such as Emídio de Souza, Djanira, Cássio M'Boy, and Tereza D'Amico—adopted vernacular vocabulary and formal solutions typical of primitive painting, even though they had been trained in studios or had had formal artistic training. Malfatti followed this movement closely, as she would visit Souza often in Itanhaém and frequently met with M'Boy at Embu. Thus, when she incorporates "simplicity," she does it intentionally, in tune with current discussions, avoiding accommodating in that which was familiar to her.

In that sense, her paintings *Festa de Georgina* [Georgina's Party] and *Vida na roça* [Life in the Country] are extreme paintings in which Malfatti renounced the faded palette, and chose bright colors and filled the space with small scenes distributed through the zigzag of rivers and roads that traverse the canvas. Simplicity is deliberated here, the result of an open attitude, receptive to innovations, a posture that her contemporary critics were not able to understand.

Thus, one hundred years after *Exposição de pintura moderna Anita Malfatti*, it seems to us that it is crucial to reexamine the artist's output under the light of a wider view of modernism, not restricting the understanding of her production to the discourse elaborated by the modernist. The exhibition in 1917 was, undoubtedly, a watershed in Brazilian art history and deserves to be celebrated as such. However, Malfatti's contribution to modernism in Brazil is not restricted to the formal innovations she presented in 1917. Her commitment to experimentalism was always present in other periods in her path, be it in the radicalism with which she launched herself into her return to order, be it in her bold appropriation of the "folk mode" in the last years of her life.

At the end of the day, Monteiro Lobato was right when he recognized, one hundred years ago: "In any of those little paintings one can realize how independent its author is, how unique she is, how inventive she is, the high degree of her countless qualities, both innate and acquired, all of them most fertile for her to build strong artistic individuality."[25]

24) Anita Malfatti, "Carta para Mário de Andrade, Caminho do Céu," in Mário de Andrade, *Cartas a Anita Malfatti* (Rio de Janeiro: Forense Universitária, 1989), 40.

25) Monteiro Lobato quoted in Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 206.

ANITA MALFATTI: FROM THE CENTER TO THE MARGINS... A NECESSARY REVISION

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On an international perspective, there were rare, really very rare, women artists who stood out during modernism. An extended research by Catherine Gonnard and Élisabeth Lebovici recorded three thousand female artists acting in the European art world between 1900 and 1930. Even though this figure represents only 10 percent of the overall estimated total of artists (about thirty thousand), few of them are known today. How many female names associated to cubism, fauvism, or Dadaism can be quickly pointed out or have their works available in museums? That is, even if these artists have had some renown in life, they were "almost immediately excluded by art history's harsh selection."[1]

A renowned chart devised by Alfred Barr—a notable MoMA director in its first years—evidently signals male dominance in the avant-garde, attributing to Cézanne, Seurat, and Gauguin "paternity" in gestating future foundation movements of modernism. As Griselda Pollock pointedly notes, why does this happen? Were there no women among modern artists? Why are all names in the canon male? According to the author, the problem is not the actual presence of women in that circuit, as it certainly existed, but the manner in which the history of modern art is built as selective discourse normalizing gendered practices.[2] Among them, we need to observe a highly masculine artistic mythology associating artistic genius to transgressive elements of a lifestyle considered as "bourgeois," guided by the binomial work-family. It is a matter of building a figure of the modern artist based not only on the art produced but on their lifestyle forged as an "artist lifestyle" rejecting established order by embracing transgression experiences such as Bohemia, dandyism, free eroticism directly opposed to traditional marriage.[3] To build oneself

1) Catherine Gonnard and Élisabeth Lebovici, *Femmes Artistes/Artistes Femmes, Paris de 1880 à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 2007), 8–9. Translated into Portuguese by the author and converted into English by the translator.
2) Regarding this, Griselda Pollock says, "...Over each movement a named artist presides. All those canonized as the initiators of modern art are men. Is this because there were no women involved in early modern movements? No. Is it because those who were, were without significance in determining the shape and character of modern art? No. Or is it rather because what modernist art history celebrates is a selective tradition which normalizes, as the *only* modernism, a particular and gendered set of practices? I would argue for this explanation. As a result any attempt to deal with artists in the early history of modernism who are women necessitates a deconstruction of the masculinist myths of modernism." Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and Spaces of Femininity," in *Vision and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1988), 50.
3) Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse. Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture & Society* (Nov. 1985); Gill Perry, *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Manchester University Press, 1995).

as a modern artist meant, thus, to brandish a series of rupture and freedom acts that were virtually inconceivable to the women belonging to those same generations.

From this perspective, the Brazilian case poses an interesting uniqueness. Differently from virtually all international experiences, here, women were recognized as *protagonists* of modernism. Anita Malfatti is today considered as the one who introduced the avant-garde languages in Brazil—a symbolic key place, however oscillating, historically, as we intend to discuss. Next to her is Tarsila do Amaral, whose recognition has not always been sure and stable throughout the 20th century, but who is, today, undoubtedly pointed out as the most prominent artist in the 1920s by synthesizing the ideal of national painting in tune with the art avant-gardes abroad, which was, then, the motto embraced by the first generation of moderns.

VIEWS ON ANITA: FROM MODERN TO REGRESSIVE

Anita Malfatti is a controversial character in Brazilian art history, and she has been receiving solid analysis.[4] It is hard today to observe her output without being contaminated by the history of reception she had through time. Through a series of discourse layers, representations about Malfatti were molded—first cited as modern, taking a position of victim next and, finally, of "regressive" artist.

A brief summary of these discourses: Malfatti conquers a prominent place after her exhibition in 1917 when for the first time, a local artist exhibited works capable of challenging the predominating realist-naturalist taste by bringing to Brazil paintings incorporating free chromaticism from an expressionist matrix she came to know in her training journeys in Germany and the US.[5] It is worth noting that these were then uncommon destinations for Brazilian artists who usually had Paris as their primary reference for training. Even less common was a woman, Brazilian, no less, to travel by herself, for years, supported by her family, seeking training to become a professional artist. During this brief period, her peers in her generation—such as the then illustrator Di Cavalcanti and young writers Oswald de Andrade and Mário de Andrade, all of them still beginners in the São Paulo culture world—distinguished her innovative character and championed her in the pages of São Paulo newspapers, opposing the notorious criticism she had received from Monteiro Lobato. From that point on, Anita Malfatti had her historical importance connected to her condition of the catalyst of the modern movement. More than her works, it was her *function* as a victim that allowed, according to that perspective, for artists (all of them male) to recognize themselves as "modern." Ultimately, it was the "Anita affair" that fostered the creation of the group who, later, would organize the Semana de 22 [Week of 22], an event repeatedly praised for its modernist narratives. Mário da Silva Brito's article, to this day a valuable reference, is exemplary in this sense:

> Lobato was cruel, as well as incompetent for the job he was doing. Anita Malfatti, young and pioneering, battling against the social and family environment, needed encouragement and warmth.... However, indirectly, he consecrated the one who, at first, was his victim. "Anita Malfatti"—notes Menotti Del Picchia—"entered then our artistic martyrology. **The result: Modernism gaining space, this celebrated painter became a saint of sorts from the demonic wing of the reformers. Her name carries the prestige of thaumaturges and martyrs."**
>
> **Lobato had, above everything else, the non-intended and non-coveted merit of gathering around that mocked painter the group of the moderns.** Next to her are many of the youngsters who would organize and take part in the Week of Modern Art a few years later. Her exhibition is the first phase in this innovative starting point.[6]

Malfatti is described as someone whose merit was that of having gathered the group of the moderns, and it is worth noting that this was not her intention. With that, she is stripped of any kind of agency regarding the fate of development of modern art in Brazil. In that process, the artist exerts, according to Paulo Mendes de Almeida, a merely "polarizing function."[7] Thus, in these narratives, the artist and her works weaken and lose a central role they had in their original context.

The artistic path developed in France between 1923 and 1928 contributed significantly for her to come to occupy, more and more, a place of fragility in the historiography of Brazilian modern art. Most studies about Brazilian artists in the 1920s prioritize those who, in that decade, spent time in Paris, then considered the world's art capital; it is the case of Vicente do Rego Monteiro, Antônio Gomide, Victor Brecheret (landed in 1921), and Anita Malfatti, Tarsila do Amaral, Di Cavalcanti, and sculptor Celso Antônio (who arrived in 1923).[8] Among them are also included those who adopted certain particular aesthetic parties. Thus, artists with different orientations are set aside, even though they were their contemporaries and were in the same center as those mentioned above. Helena Pereira da Silva Ohashi, Alípio Dutra, Tulio Mugnani, Angelina Agostini, among many others, because they were not considered "modern," were not subject of attention either by their generational peers or by later historiography. It was expected that Brazilian artists, once in Paris, would follow a determined path: that they would embrace some kind of modernism—preferably cubism—and that, through it, they would mold some "Brazilian international art."[9] That is, there was a need to mold production synthesizing international modern language with a kind of "native" iconographic lexicon.

However, in Paris, Malfatti did not follow the anticipated, desired path. Instead of radicalizing her path through marked ruptures with tradition, she invested in the opposite sense, doing that which was conventionally called a "return to personal order."[10] This is evident not only in her painting, now with a notably faded palette, a "smoothing of her technique," according to researcher Renata Cardoso, which takes her far from intense chromatic contrast characteristic of works from the 1910s,[11] but also in her drawings, which lose the expressivity of her charcoal male nudes (also present in the excellent study for *A boba* [The Fool]) and become more precise, fine, and devoted to capturing—mostly female—body poses exhibited in private academies where she trained in Paris.[12]

How to explain to her generation peers something that was only understandable as retrocession? As Tadeu Chiarelli pointed out very well, in a moment when the group of moderns was still seeking legitimacy in Brazil and abroad, it was hard to accept that the artist was deliberately seeking any artistic path different from the one championed by them. In that sense, external causes needed to be forged to explain the artist's derailing:

> We can believe that to those who, from the beginning, were struggling to build an ascending, triumphant history for modernism in São Paulo, it would not be interesting to face the need to try to understand the reasons that led one of the leading local artists to devote herself to avant-garde experimentation to abandon such a path and embrace tradition.... After all, how to lend credibility to an aesthetic-ideological movement whose first major artist abandons its postulates to embrace those that, theoretically, should have been overcome? **Resorting to disrespectful argumentation towards the artist, they transformed Anita Malfatti—at the time a woman seeking professionalization and with experience abroad included (something that would not be a small feat for a Brazilian woman, with a congenital handicap, in last century's second decade)—they transformed this professional into a woman who was nothing but insecure, capable of hindering her own output due to a newspaper critic.**[13]

ANITA *WITH* TARSILA: ARTISTS, WOMEN, MODERN, AND LATIN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Beyond Malfatti's supposed "deviations," another complicated recurrence was configured in historiography, that of a supposed competition between her and Amaral, who would have been a hindrance

4) The production about the artist is large, it is impossible to list all the works here. Please refer to the Selected Bibliography for some highlighted pieces.
5) Mário da Silva Brito, *História do modernismo brasileiro 1. Antecedentes: a Semana de Arte Moderna* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1974); Paulo Mendes de Almeida, *De Anita ao Museu* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1976).
6) Brito, *História do modernismo brasileiro*, 6th ed. (1997), 54. Highlights by the author.
7) Mendes de Almeida, *De Anita ao museu*, 23.
8) Marta Rossetti Batista, *Os artistas brasileiros na Escola de Paris: anos 20* (doctorate dissertation, Escola de Comunicações e Artes, Universidade de São Paulo, 1987). About the presence of other artists in the French capital city at the time, see: Marcia Camargos, *Entre a vanguarda e a tradição* (São Paulo: Ed. Alameda, 2011).
9) Sergio Miceli, "Anita Malfatti: gênero e experiência imigrante," in *Nacional estrangeiro. História social e cultural do modernismo artístico em São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003). Regarding this, see: Annateresa Fabris, "Modernismo: nacionalismo e engajamento," in *Bienal Brasil Século XX*, ed. Nelson Aguilar (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal, 1994); Annateresa Fabris, "Vanguarda e modernismo: o caso brasileiro," in *Modernidade e modernismo no Brasil* (Campinas: Mercado de Letras, 1994).
10) Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço* (São Paulo: Ed. 34/Edusp, 2006).
11) Renata Gosmes Cardoso, "Anita Malfatti em Paris, 1923–1928," *19&20* (Rio de Janeiro) 9, no. 1 (Jan/Jun 2014). Available at http://www.dezenovevinte.net/artistas/artistas_amalfatti.htm (in Portuguese).
12) About nudes done by Malfatti in the 1920s, see particularly Roberta Valin, *Cadernos-diários de Anita Malfatti: uma trajetória desenhada em Paris* (master's dissertation in Brazilian Cultures and Identities, IEB-USP, 2015), 57–70.
13) Tadeu Chiarelli, "*Tropical*, de Anita Malfatti," in *Arte brasileira na Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo*, ed. Taisa Palhares (São Paulo: Cosac Naify / Imprensa Oficial / Pinacoteca, 2009). Highlights by the author.

in her career.[14] Amaral is taken as the paradigm of a continuous journey by following a path that goes from post-impressionist art to avant-garde geographically and symbolically associated with an ascending line traced between São Paulo and Paris. Meanwhile, Malfatti is constructed almost as an inverted reflection, constituting a paradigm of "regressive" journey as, instead of radicalizing her path towards that which was modern (understood, generally, as unique), when she went from the center of the modernist experience in peripheral São Paulo, she ended up encountering, in the French capital city, the fringes of avant-garde.[15]

However, it is necessary to review these comparisons, first because, as Maria de Fátima Couto[16] has pointed out, they are neither natural nor evident, they do not emanate from any kind of formal similarity emerging from their works but from strictly biographical components such as the artists' gender. Other than that, it is worthwhile noting that such comparisons that often acquire analytical outlines are based on reckless use of contemporary sources such as correspondence between Mário de Andrade, Amaral, Malfatti, Milliet, and other agents of the time that sought to explain Malfatti's removal due to resentments towards her former friend. However, as I said before, these writings mirror feuds of the time and must be analyzed within their particular context.[17]

Anita Malfatti who comes to us today results from a set of discourse layers accumulated over a century of her presence in Brazilian artistic scenes. There is no way to recover a pure, unbiased, or original regard to her output and her works, but it is indeed possible to revisit them under the light of new paradigms, always subject to updates and criticism. Among them, it would be worthwhile to reconsider the notion of artistic "retrocession" that permeates modernist narratives. In parallel, it is important to give back to the artist mastery over her acts, her choices, and, lastly, we need to contextualize them. With that, Malfatti becomes not an excrescence or a victim, much less some unique heroin, but a historic subject who acted in a still-undefined field of possibilities, comprising many different understandings of what "modern" was. The notion of retrocession presupposes its opposite, that is, artistic progress, which is something indefinable and indefensible. Furthermore, it comes from a clear conception of modernism that disregards diversity of schools, movements, and conceptions that were present—and competing—in Paris in the 1920s. Mostly, her generational contemporaries rebuffed Anita Malfatti's path due to her initial approach to painter Maurice Denis,[18] who would have isolated her from the small, but powerful, circle comprising Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, Sergio Milliet, Yan de Almeida Prado, and Mário de Andrade, among others. Maurice Denis had established his name with the Nabis in the late 1800s, but, in the 1920s, he was seen by Brazilians as a traditional, "official" artist due to his defense of religious painting renovation and a series of public commissions of decorative character he had received. That supposed isolation displays, of course, the group's aesthetic choices, but it cannot be taken as evidence that those parties were the only possible or legitimate ones. In letters exchanged with Mário de Andrade, she herself displays keen, sensitive awareness of that complicated process of which she was a part:

> Now courage, get ready as I will give you "bouleversante" news. I am classic! As a futurist, I am dead and have been buried. I am not laughing, no. It is the truth; you can recite the Ite in pax in my futurist phase or rather modern because I have never belonged to a particular school.
>
> I am neither sad nor happy. That's it. I work and work, and this is what came out. I cannot force myself to please anyone. In this I am, stay, and will always be free. Actually, all, or almost all great artists here are going through this enormous problem. Matisse, Derain, Picasso. All of them are currently living this reaction. I had been apprehensive because of that, but today I saw many artists who ensured me that this is the current phase in Paris. We're back to Mother Nature...."[19]

The painter shows she is aware of the process later known as "return to order," something many artists were going through in the interwar years, among them three who had already established their names between avant-gardes.[20] At that moment, they were moving away from the most radical research that would happen later and were going back to elements associated with tradition such as human body figuration, landscape (sometimes linked to regional or national discourse) or even, in Derain's case, religious themes; meanwhile, formally, the canvases seemed to recover a certain appreciation for the most artisanal aspect of picture making. The Brazilian painter justified her options by inserting herself within an internationally generalized trend. Furthermore, she stressed her freedom from any school and her independence regarding any group, any obligation to "please" whomever.

Years later, still in Paris, in one of the letters written to her privileged interlocutor again Malfatti reveals keen awareness regarding methods she was developing, explaining them with assurance to Mário de Andrade:

> I have high hopes for the exhibition I may do next year! So many were happy, maybe there will be a little bit for me too, don't you think? Therefore, I will tell you a bit about my painting. I continue to work freely without following any fixed school or any teacher. I am, thus, well inserted into my time. I do not worry, the same way I have never worried, with originality. This note comes by itself. I seek within simple, direct, and balanced composition the most subtlety in color quality. I try to preserve the drawing and the values always fair and severe. I could explain better saying that my work's whole poetry is in the colors. It is through color that I always try to say that which moves me. In my composition, form and value [are] subject to the immutable laws of painting science. My paintings are not random things. I solve all my problems beforehand and then quickly execute. When I let the temptation of improvisation take myself, it is an endless streak of doubt and powerlessness. In Florence, I learned to do incisions and apply gold like the ancients did. I've been going to the Louvre every day for the past three months. I am applying the last touches to Raphael's *Belle jardinière*. I will also copy Delacroix's *Femmes d'Algier* because I believe that painting marked an era. It is distinctly the note of transition between the old world and the new. I see now so clearly that <u>all</u> modern art sucked its science from ancient art and if the same basic rules were not found on both, there could be no understanding between one other and other. Will our whole revolution bring us the fruit of a new Renaissance? When we are old, maybe we will be able to watch the new miracle of centuries![21]

Beyond revealing herself aware of the methods she was utilizing in her compositions, she also offers a reflection of theoretical nature on the relationship between modern art and tradition, named here through ancient masters such as Raphael and modern masters such as Delacroix. Copying was a required procedure for those with scholarships from the state of São Paulo, which was exactly her situation in Paris. However, Malfatti adds sense to her "duty": respecting and learning the "great art" from the past's masterpieces. Thus, modern art is perceived not as rupture, but as the new unfolding of a history of long-term forms. She was not alone in this process, it was indeed a dominant theme in interwar France, and Maurice Denis was actually one of the champions of "tradition rebirth," which

14) Regarding this, see: Gilda Mello e Souza, *O baile das quatro artes. Exercícios de leitura* (São Paulo: Livraria Duas Cidades, 1980). The author says: "However, it is not hard to evaluate what would have been, for Malfatti, her daily confrontation with Amaral's beauty. It is false to rationalize saying that she was a prestigious artist and the modernists' admiration for her art was enough. Did they, by any chance, show strictly artistic interest towards Amaral? Didn't they consider her, as well as a great painter, the 'wondrous fallen from heaven,' the 'little country girl wearing Poiret,' 'goddess,' 'mistress of balance and measure, enemy of excesses'?," 271.

15) Batista, *Anita Malfatti no tempo e no espaço*, 313; Miceli, *Nacional estrangeiro*, 97; José Carlos Durand, *Arte, privilégio e distinção: artes plásticas, arquitetura e classe dirigente no Brasil, 1855/1985* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1989).

16) Maria de Fátima M. Couto, "Caminhos e descaminhos do modernismo brasileiro: o 'confronto' entre Tarsila e Anita," *Revista Esboços* (Florianópolis: UFSC), no. 19 (2008). Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/2175-7976.2008v15n19p125 (in Portuguese). Accessed on 11/8/2016.

17) Bibliography on the correspondence with Mário de Andrade is extensive, however, I would highlight: Marilda Ionta, *As cores da amizade na escrita epistolar de Anita Malfatti, Oneyda Alvarenga, Henriquieta Lisboa e Mário de Andrade* (doctoral dissertation on Social History, Unicamp, 2004); Marco A. Moraes, *Orgulho de jamais aconselhar: a epistolografia de Mário de Andrade* (São Paulo: Edusp/Fapesp, 2007).

18) Sergio Milliet did not hide his dismay when he wrote: "Anita is unfortunately working with Maurício Denis." See: Yan de Almeida Prado, *A grande Semana de Arte Moderna* (São Paulo: Edart, 1976), 68. In his communication with the artist, Mário de Andrade often complained about her initial approach to "that religious artist" whose name he could never remember. Andrade wrote, "My friends know me well and never said anything negative about you or your works to me, however, I felt they were losing their interest in you. I felt and I suffered. I believe they are behaving badly, Anita. Because, if you changed your orientation, if you don't share the exact same opinion that they do, this is no reason for them to avoid you. We should never put theory before friendship. Second, talent is something that if we have, we do not lose it for nothing. If they one day recognized you were talented, they should wait and see what you are going to do in your new path. And say their opinion honestly. That is what they should do. I think they made a mistake this time. But don't get upset about it, my Anita...."

19) Letter from Anita Malfatti to Mário de Andrade. Paris, February 23, 1924. Universidade de São Paulo's Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros collection.

20) Regarding her "return to order," see: Tadeu Chiarelli, *Novecento Sudamericano* (São Paulo: Instituto Italiano de Cultura, 2003); Ana Gonçalves Magalhães, "Uma nova luz sobre o acervo modernista do MAC USP," *Revista USP* (São Paulo), no. 90 (2011); Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia. Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

21) Letter from Anita Malfatti to Mário de Andrade, Paris, November 17 and 18, 1927. Universidade de São Paulo's Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros collection.

was felt with urgency before the devastation suffered between 1914 and 1919.[22] Many authors connected to the avant-gardes devoted themselves to reflecting upon the relationships between contemporaries and ancients, such as Lionello Venturi in his famous article "Il gusto dei primitivi"[23] and Carlo Carrà, a futurist painter who in 1916 wrote an article devoted to Giotto from a perspective close to what he championed.[24]

It seems that, in her French period, Anita Malfatti tried to assimilate themes and debates that were "in the air," propagated by that which was conventionally called School of Paris. In that sense, rather than responding to the pleas and agenda of her origin group, Malfatti sought a different path, staying with internationalism, balanced modernism, and dialogue with the Western pictorial tradition, which was in effect in the French capital city as well. And that might be the greatest difference between her and her peer Tarsila do Amaral; that is, the way in which both developed distinct strategies to insert themselves in the modern French circuits of their time.

By analyzing the presence of four Latin American women—Tarsila do Amaral, Lola Cueto, Anita Malfatti, and Amelia Pelaez—in Paris in the 1920s, Michele Greet shows that their reception success was proportional to the way in which they were capable of responding to demands for exoticism and primitivism arising in the French artistic field to which they were subject. Thus, while Amaral soon understood that "Paris was fed up with Parisian art" and developed "local" themes in her paintings, with Rio de Janeiro landscapes or favelas, imaginary, exotic creatures (Cuca), or national types (black women), through formalization that brought her closer to a certain primitivism valued by that same circuit, Lola Cueto from Mexico chose to "recover" objects associated with some native facture, seen as ancestral from her country, through tapestry, pieces that were then recreated through modern languages learned from the avant-gardes. Anita Malfatti and the Cuban Amelia Pelaez, on the other hand, devoted themselves to a different kind of international insertion, thus avoiding, at first, to construct works with local "accents." As Greet demonstrates quite well, while the two first ones were quite successful, the latter two were less noticed in international circuits. Their reception has less to do with the quality of their works, considering the mastery of techniques they displayed, than with the way in which they presented themselves, more or less promptly, ready to occupy the places that were expected from them as artists from the "South," that is, as spokespersons for autochthon heritages and, therefore, primarily seen as primitive and exotic.[25]

It is, thus, crucial to review, under the light of a more complex picture involving relationships between artistic centers and peripheries,[26] in a maze of artistic groups vying for leadership in the modern setting, the places occupied by Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral. Generally speaking, narratives tend to fix them on opposite ends; thus, on the one side would be Amaral, the muse, and on the other Malfatti, the martyr. Even though with opposite signs, both face quite reified archetypes of possible kinds of femininity, which are elaborated from elements much more based on psychbiographical aspects than related to their works. In this international geography of modernism, of which Brazil was a part, both show how to construct oneself as a modern artist "in the feminine" meant to inhabit a very limited set of possibilities oscillating between conservative extremes such as muse-woman or fragile-woman. The exhibition presented to us now is an invitation to go beyond these discourse places that are, even unintentionally, the fruit of generalized views. In order to break away from this, it is crucial to revisit the works in their production contexts, which means looking at them under the light of varied, undefined quarrels for what was understood as modernism then, quarrels that thrived in the world's many cultural capitals.[27] Malfatti experimented and acted on this context from her quite particular position as artist, woman, Brazilian, but trained in Germany, the United States, and France, who "chose" paths and answers that were different from those canonized by her generation.

22) Claire Maigon, *L'Âge Critique des Salons : 1914-1925. L'Ecole Française, la tradition et l'art moderne.* (Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2014).
23) Lionello Venturi, *Il gusto dei primitivi* (Bologna: Ed. Nicola Zanichelli, 1926).
24) Carlo Carrà, "Causerie sur Giotto," in *L'Éclat des Choses Ordinaires*, ed. Isabel Violannte (Paris: Éditions Images Modernes, 2015).
25) Michele Greet, "'Exhilarating Exile': Four Latin American Women Exhibit in Paris," *Artelogie*, no. 5 (October 2013). Available at: http://cral.in2p3.fr/artelogie/spip.php?article262. Accessed on 11/8/2016.
26) Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Les avant-gardes artistiques 1848-1918. Une histoire transnationale* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2016); C. Ginzburg and E. Castelnuovo, "Domination symbolique et géographie artistique [dans l'histoire de l'art italien]," in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (Paris) 40, no. 1 (1981).
27) Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, *Nul n'est prophète en son pays ? L'internationalisation de la peinture des avant-gardes parisiennes, 1844-1914* (Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2009).

O FAROL, 1915 — Oil on canvas 46.3 x 61 cm — Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand MAM RJ

NU MASCULINO (SEGURANDO BASTÃO), 1915/16

Charcoal and stumped charcoal on paper
62.3 x 47.5 cm

Private collection

O JAPONÊS, 1915/16

Oil on canvas
61 x 51 cm

Visual Arts collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

TROPICAL, C. 1916

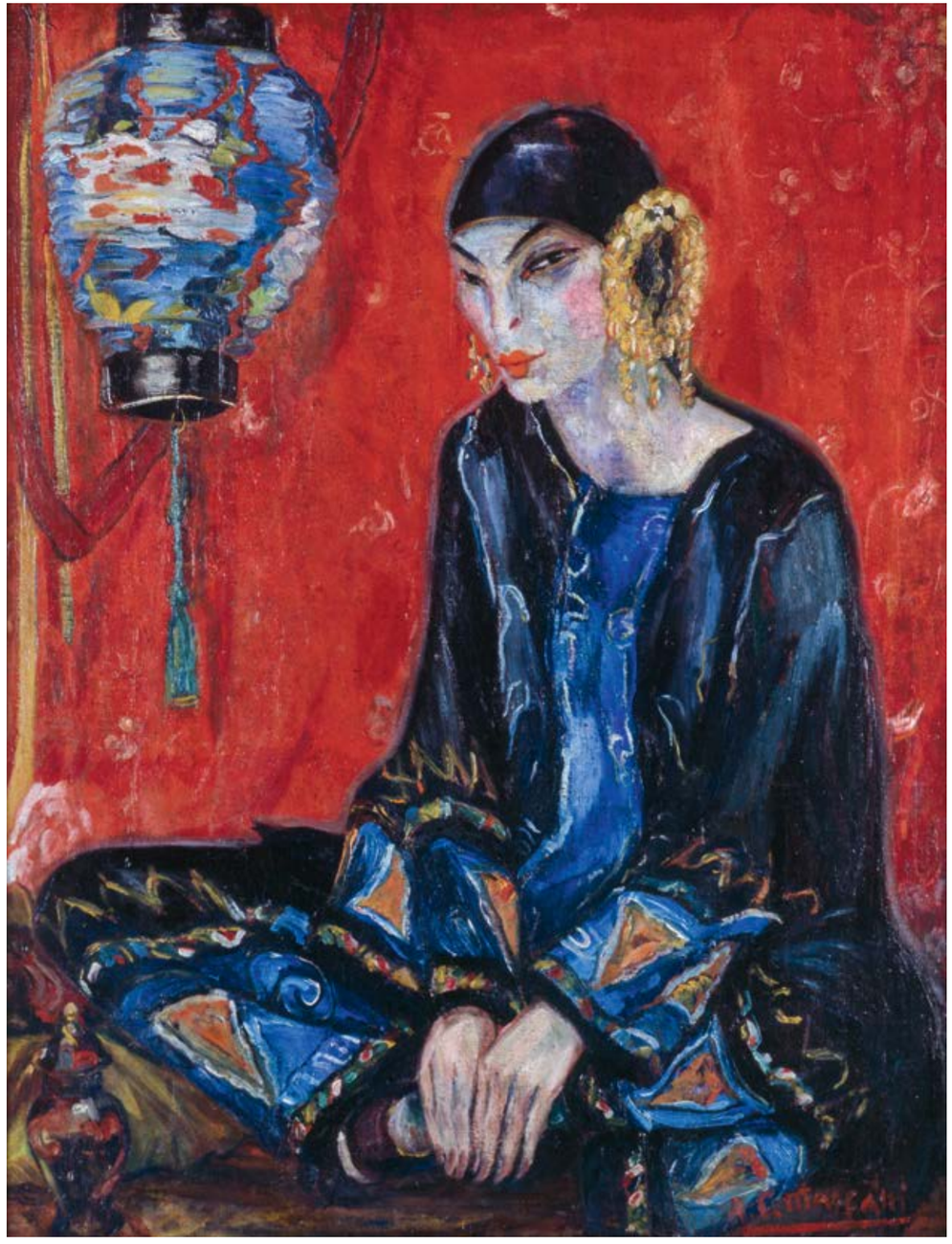
Oil on canvas
77 x 102 cm

Collection Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil. Gift of the artist in compliance with the Pensionato Artístico Act, 1929

CHINESA, 1921/22

Oil on canvas
100 x 77 cm

Private collection



RETRATO DE A.M.G, C. 1933

Oil on canvas
95.5 x 90.3 cm

Collection N.B.E.

NU DEITADO (CABELOS
AO VENTO), C. 1925

China ink and graphite on paper
21.9 x 28.1 cm

Collection Museu de Arte
Contemporânea USP

VIDA NA ROÇA, C. 1956

Oil on wood
63 x 87 cm

Collection Almeida e Dale Galeria de Arte

WORKS IN EXHIBI-TION

BURRINHO CORRENDO (MAGAZINE COVER COPY), 1909

Oil on canvas
29.5 x 20 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

A FLORESTA, 1912

Oil on canvas glued on cardboard
20.5 x 29 cm

Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand
MAM RJ

O JARDIM, 1912

Oil on canvas glued on cardboard
23.5 x 29.5 cm

Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand
MAM RJ

PAISAGEM, C. 1912

2005 edition
Etching
9 x 12 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

PAISAGEM (COM DUAS ÁRVORES À DIREITA), C. 1912

2005 edition
Etching
12.5 x 17.5 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

MOÇA COM MÃO NO QUEIXO, C. 1912

2005 edition
Etching
12.5 x 17.5 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

FIGURA FEMININA (INACABADA), C. 1912

2005 edition
Etching
15.5 x 11 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

MOÇA COM FITA NOS CABELOS, C. 1912

2005 edition
Etching
12.5 x 10 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

RETRATO DE UM PROFESSOR, 1912/13

Oil on canvas
50.5 x 40 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Brasileira – MAB-FAAP

ÁRVORES E ÁGUA, 1914

Etching
8.5 x 14.2 cm

Private collection

MEU IRMÃO ALEXANDRE, 1914

Oil on canvas
43 x 57 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

A ESTUDANTE RUSSA, C. 1915

Oil on canvas
76 x 61 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

O FAROL, 1915

Oil on canvas
46.3 x 61 cm

Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand
MAM RJ

MARINHA, MONHEGAN, 1915

Oil on canvas
35.5 x 46 cm

Collection Instituto Moreira Salles

PAISAGEM (AMARELA), MONHEGAN, 1915

Oil on canvas
41 x 50.5 cm

Collection Instituto Cultural Capobianco

DORSO MASCULINO, C. 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
68 x 48 cm

Private collection

A ESTUDANTE, 1915/16

Oil on canvas
76.5 x 60.5 cm

Collection Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand

O JAPONÊS, 1915/16

Oil on canvas
61 x 51 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

NU CUBISTA N. 1, 1915/16

Oil on canvas
51 x 39 cm

Private collection

BARCOS, 1915/16

Watercolor and graphite on paper
19.7 x 27 cm

Private collection

O HOMEM DE SETE CORES, 1915/16

Pastel and charcoal on paper
60.7 x 45 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Brasileira – MAB-FAAP

NU FEMININO, COSTAS (GRANDE NU), 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
62.4 x 47.5 cm

Collection Arte da Cidade / Centro Cultural São Paulo / SMC / PMSP

O SECRETÁRIO DA ESCOLA OU RETRATO DE BAILEY, 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
61.5 x 47 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea USP

RETRATO DE MULHER (ESTUDO PARA *A BOBA*), 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
59 x 40 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Brasileira – MAB-FAAP

NU FEMININO (FRENTE), 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
62.2 x 47 cm

Collection Sandra Brecheret Pellegrini

NU MASCULINO (SEGURANDO BASTÃO), 1915/16

Charcoal and stumped charcoal on paper
62.3 x 47.5 cm

Private collection

NU MASCULINO (CAPINANDO), 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
60.5 x 43 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

NU FEMININO, SENTADO (COM PANEJAMENTO À ESQUERDA), 1915/16

Charcoal on paper
60.5 x 45.5 cm

Private collection

MARINHA (PENHASCOS), 1915/16

Oil on wood
26.1 x 36.1 cm

Private collection

TROPICAL, C. 1916

Oil on canvas
77 x 102 cm

Collection Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil. Gift of the artist in compliance with the Pensionato Artístico Act, 1929

ACADEMIA VIII, C. 1916

Charcoal on paper
62 x 47.5 cm

Collection Gilberto Chateaubriand MAM RJ

PAISAGEM (ESTUDO), 1920s

Watercolor and graphite on paper
18.5 x 26.1 cm

Private collection

CASARIO NA ENCOSTA (COM VULCÃO E AEROPLANO), 1920s

Watercolor on paper
27.5 x 36.8 cm

Private collection

NU MASCULINO COM BASTÃO I, 1920s

Charcoal on paper
63 x 48.5 cm

Collection MAM, gift of Emanoel Araujo

NU COM JARRO II, 1920s

Charcoal on paper
63 x 48 cm

Collection James Lisboa

NU DE COQUE EM PÉ, 1920s

Graphite and China ink on paper
35 x 27.5 cm

Private collection

CHINESA, 1921/22

Oil on canvas
100 x 77 cm

Private collection

FIGURA FEMININA, 1921/22

Pastel on paper
47 x 31.2 cm

Private collection

GRUPO DOS CINCO, 1922

Pen and color pencil on paper
26.5 x 36.5 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

MÁRIO DE ANDRADE NA PAULICEIA (CARDÁPIO), C. 1922

China ink and gouache on paper
9.7 x 7.9 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

RETRATO DE MÁRIO DE ANDRADE III, C. 1923

Oil on canvas
44 x 38 cm

Visual Arts Collection, Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros USP

VENEZA, CANAL, C. 1924

Watercolor and graphite on paper
16.5 x 26.5 cm

Private collection

INTERIOR DE MÔNACO, C. 1925

Oil on canvas
73 x 60 cm

Collection BM&FBOVESPA

LAGO MAGGIORE, C. 1925

Oil on canvas
46.2 x 54.8 cm

Collection Antonio Augusto Gouvêa Pedroso

VISTA DO FORT ANTOINE EM MÔNACO, C. 1925

Watercolor on paper
25.5 x 34.5 cm

Collection Max Perlingeiro

NU DEITADO (CABELOS AO VENTO), C. 1925

China ink and graphite on paper
21.9 x 28.1 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea USP

NU DE COSTAS, RECLINADO EM DIAGONAL II, C. 1925

China ink on paper
27.5 x 29 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

PORTO DE MÔNACO, 1925/26

Oil on canvas
54 x 64.5 cm

Collection Museu de Arte Contemporânea USP

CHANSON DE MONTMARTRE, 1926

Oil on canvas
73.3 x 60.2 cm

Collection James Lisboa

PAISAGEM DOS PIRINEUS, CAUTERETS, 1926

Oil on canvas
45.8 x 54.8 cm

Collection José Thomaz Assumpção

MULHER DO PARÁ (NO BALCÃO), 1927

Oil on canvas
80 x 65 cm

Collection Milú Villela

NU EM PÉ, INCLINANDO-SE, ENTRE PEDRAS, 1928

China ink on paper
26 x 19.5 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

CAROLINA DA SILVA TELLES, 1929/30

Oil on canvas
46 x 40 cm

Private collection

BABY DE ALMEIDA, 1929/30

Oil on canvas
46.5 x 41.5 cm

Collection Casa Guilherme de Almeida – Governo do Estado de São Paulo – Secretaria de Cultura

VOLUTAS E NU SENTADO (TRANÇAS PRESAS), 1930s

Graphite and China ink on paper
23 x 35.5 cm

Collection Sylvia Malfatti

HOMEM DE CALÇÃO, INCLINADO, 1930s

Graphite on paper
33 x 24 cm

Private collection

HOMEM DE CALÇÃO SENTADO, EMPUNHANDO BASTÃO, 1930s

Graphite on paper
33.7 x 24.1 cm

Private collection

RETRATO DE A.M.G., C. 1933

Oil on canvas
95.5 x 90.3 cm

Collection N.B.E.

LILIANA MARIA, 1935/37

Oil on canvas
65 x 54 cm

Private collection

TRENZINHO, 1940s

Oil on canvas
34.2 x 43.8 cm

Collection Paulo Kuczynski Escritório de Arte

O TROLINHO, 1940s

Oil on canvas
39 x 47 cm

Collection Roberto Marinho / Instituto Casa Roberto Marinho

MARINHA, 1940s

Oil on canvas
51 x 61 cm

Collection Decio Antonio de Gouvêa Pedroso

ITANHAÉM, 1940s

Watercolor on paper
16.5 x 26.5 cm

Private collection

NA PORTA DA VENDA, 1940s/50s

Oil on canvas on wood
26.3 x 36.8 cm

Private collection

SAMBA, 1941/45

Oil on canvas
39.3 x 49.3 cm

Private collection

FLÁVIO MOTTA, 1941/42

Oil on canvas
40.3 x 32.7 cm

Private collection

RETRATO DE PAULO BOMFIM, 1943/45

Oil on canvas
51 x 45 cm

Collection Paulo Bomfim

FESTA DE GEORGINA, C. 1952

Oil on canvas
45 x 55 cm

Private collection

VIDA NA ROÇA, C. 1956

Oil on wood
63 x 87 cm

Collection Almeida e Dale Galeria de Arte

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ANITA MALFATTI: 100 YEARS OF MODERN ART

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