

## MAM São Paulo opens its 2024 program with a retrospective of George Love's work

*Curated by Zé De Boni, "George Love: além do tempo" ["George Love: Beyond Time"] is the first major exhibition since the artist's passing, featuring over 500 photographs. The collection includes a selection from Love's archive, preserved by the curator, who was also his friend, along with relevant objects from his history.*



George Love, *Ilha do Marajó*, 1971. Photography published in the book *Amazônia* and *Alma e Luz*

**George Leary Love** (1937 - 1995), an African-American photographer who had a prolific career in Brazil from the 1960s to the 1980s, will have a retrospective of his work displayed at the **Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo** [Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo]. On display from March 1 to September 1, the exhibition **George Love: além do tempo** [George Love: Beyond Time] is curated by researcher and photographer Zé De Boni, to whom Love entrusted part of his archive and relevant documents of his story. It will be the first major posthumous exhibition of the artist. The show is sponsored by Bradesco.

Featuring over 500 photographs in new prints and original vintage prints, the exhibition traces a timeline from the period before the artist's arrival in Brazil to his death in 1995. The curator explains that the exhibition is divided into 20 sections, as if the exhibition space hosted 20 individual exhibits of Love, each focusing on a theme or era. The sections also consider the places where George Love lived during his career: first in New York, then São Paulo, where he settled in 1966, a brief stint in

Rio de Janeiro, a retreat in New York after 20 years in Brazil, and his return to São Paulo in his final years.

Born in 1937 in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA), George Leary Love came from a humble and educated family. Photography unexpectedly entered his life, and he developed the craft autodidactically. Trained in Mathematics and Philosophy of Art, Love only discovered his passion for photography during his time in Indonesia, where his father worked in the diplomatic service. Upon returning to the United States, he moved to New York, where he began a successful career in photography.

In New York, Love became part of an *avant-garde* group called the Association of Heliographers, of which he eventually became vice-president. The group included significant names in American photography and, in the early 1960s, pioneered by providing a space for the exhibition of its members' works, closely observed by critics of the time. Additionally, they were the ones who started to commercialize color photographs, considered taboo at the time.

During the 1960s, Love also became involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), mostly composed of black students who promoted protests and direct actions against racial segregation in the United States. However, this issue is barely reflected in the photographer's work. He only made a few records that approached a rediscovery of his ancestry, including photographs of his family and some brief records of Harlem in New York, known for being a stronghold of African-American culture.

George Love left a significant part of his collection and archive with Zé De Boni, while another part remained in the United States with his former companion, Barbara Livesey, who donated the material to the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, the photographer's hometown, in the early 2000s. The curator spent years working on the material, in order to identify and interpret documents and photographs that were precariously grouped, to provide the public with a clearer and organized view. During the pandemic, the work intensified, resulting in this exhibition.

De Boni based his research on his intimate knowledge of George Love's work, having been a rare curator of an exhibition of the artist in his prime. Through interviews, documents, and letters obtained by De Boni, significant details previously unknown even to close friends of the artist are revealed, adding a special color to the interpretation of the author's work and personality.

A pioneer and innovator, Love was always at the forefront and is considered ahead of his time by his peers. From this, the name of the exhibition emerged. Additionally, the photographer had a certain mystery surrounding him, as little was known about his journey and how he became who he was.

"Since I've had this archive, I have been concerned with the destiny of making it accessible to researchers, scholars, students, and the public. Mainly because that was George's wish and that's what he entrusted me with," comments Zé De Boni. For the curator, the exhibition at MAM represents a significant step for the preservation of George's work and memory, while also celebrating the photographer's relevance.

According to Cauê Alves, chief curator of MAM: "In a time when the climate crisis is becoming more evident, the exhibition *George Love: além do tempo* [George Love: Beyond Time] draws attention to the artist's visionary and current perspective, as well as urgent environmental issues. MAM has one of the most relevant photography collections in the country, and the George Love exhibition contributes not only to its dissemination, especially in a less-studied context, but also to the construction of a more diverse history of photography."

### **George Love in Brazil**

George Love met Claudia Andujar during one of the photographer's trips to the United States. Following her invitation, he came to Brazil in 1966, and they lived together for 8 years. George humorously recounted that he didn't know what he came to do in the country, uncertain about what the Brazilian market offered for the more artistic type of photography to which he dedicated himself. He gained the favor of important people who encouraged him, such as Pietro Maria Bardi, founder of MASP, and Roberto Civita, then-president of the Abril Group.



George Love portrait, 1968, photographer from the *Realidade* magazine | George Love, s/d, from the book *São Paulo, Anotações*

The Abril Group was looking for creative photographers to collaborate with its journalistic publications, and George's portfolio caught the attention of publishers. Roberto himself would eventually invite him to photograph sports, a category never before explored by the photographer, prompting him to act "outside the box" and impressing everyone with the results. In this context, George made significant contributions to the magazine *Realidade*, an outlet that left a strong mark on Brazilian journalism for its in-depth reports.

During the early 1970s, he and Claudia Andujar were invited by Pietro Maria Bardi to carry out various activities on photography at MASP. There, they held pioneering exhibitions, enjoying freedom of thought and project execution. Simultaneously, George began to work commercially, investing in corporate photography, with his main clients being Olivetti, Eletrobrás, and Eletropaulo, always in projects with creative exuberance.

## **The Amazon**

Upon arriving in Brazil, George Love embarked on a trip to the Xikrin people's region in Pará with Claudia Andujar. In a special edition, *Realidade* magazine took them back to the Amazon, and the remarkable result initiated a deep dedication by both to the region. De Boni points out an "ethic norm" agreed upon by the two photographers, establishing that Claudia would work with indigenous communities, while George would focus more on the landscape. These records culminated in the photobook "Amazônia", a visual and narrative celebration of cultural diversity and the intimate connection between indigenous communities and the environment.

For George, the experience of photographing the region was marked by a dreamlike dimension in aerial images, given the vastness and exuberance of its biodiversity. In reminiscence of his work, he even expressed that the infiniteness of the Amazon was impossible to capture with a camera, but it was something that could be a dream pursued.

Another notable work of the photographer resulted from his interaction with the city he adopted, published in the book "São Paulo: Anotações", also acclaimed by critics.

However, it was with the Amazonian landscape that he celebrated his identification, and this is the main highlight of the exhibition. De Boni also mentions the book "Service Order 8696," considered by George as his "self-portrait," a theme that would be revisited in his posthumous book "Alma e Luz." These and other photobooks will also be on display at the MAM São Paulo exhibition, along with an unprecedented interview recorded in video by the curator himself in 1993.

## **About MAM São Paulo**

Founded in 1948, the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo [Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo] is a non-profit civil society of public interest. Its collection has more than 5,000 works produced by the most representative names in mostly Brazilian modern and contemporary art. Both the collection and the exhibitions favor experimentalism, opening up to the plurality of global artistic production and the diversity of interests of contemporary societies.

The Museum maintains a wide range of activities that include courses, seminars, lectures, performances, musical shows, video sessions and artistic practices. The content of the exhibitions and activities is accessible to all audiences through visits in Libras [Brazilian Sign Language], audio description of the works and video guides in Libras [Brazilian Sign Language]. The collection of books, periodicals, documents and audiovisual material comprises 65,000 titles. The exchange with museum libraries in several countries keeps the collection alive.

Located in Ibirapuera Park, the most important green space in São Paulo, the building housing MAM was adapted by Lina Bo Bardi and in addition to the exhibition rooms it has a studio, library, auditorium, restaurant and a shop where visitors can find design objects, art books and a line of products from the MAM brand. The museum spaces are also visually integrated with the Sculpture Garden, designed by Roberto Burle Marx and Haruyoshi Ono to house works from the collection. All facilities are accessible to special needs visitors.

**Information:**

***George Love: além do tempo [George Love: Beyond Time]***

Curatorship: **Zé De Boni**

Exhibition Period: **March 1 to September 1, 2024**

Location: **Milú Villela Room, Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo**

Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo

Address: Ibirapuera Park (Av. Pedro Álvares Cabral, s/nº - access through gates 1 and 3)

Schedules: Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm (last entry at 5:30pm)

Tickets: R\$30.00 full price and R\$15.00 half price. On Sundays, entry is free and visitors can contribute whatever amount they want. For advance tickets, go to [mam.org.br/visite](http://mam.org.br/visite)

\*Half price for students, with identification; low-income young people and the elderly (+60). Free for children under 10 years old; people with disabilities and companions; teachers and directors from the state and municipal public schools of São Paulo, with identification; friends and students of MAM; employees of partner companies and museums; members of ICOM, AICA and ABCA, with identification; employees of SPTuris and employees of the Municipal Department of Culture.

Telephone: (11) 5085-1300

Access for people with disabilities

Restaurant/cafe

Air conditioning

More information:

MAM São Paulo

[www.instagram.com/mamsaopaulo/](http://www.instagram.com/mamsaopaulo/)  
<https://www.facebook.com/mamsaopaulo/>  
[www.youtube.com/@mamsaopaulo/](http://www.youtube.com/@mamsaopaulo/)  
<https://twitter.com/mamsaopaulo>

press information:

**a4&holofote comunicação (MAM São Paulo)**

Marcus Vinicius Magalhães | [marcusvinicius@a4eholofote.com.br](mailto:marcusvinicius@a4eholofote.com.br) | +55 11 99295-7997

Gabriela Marçal | [gabrielamarcal@a4eholofote.com.br](mailto:gabrielamarcal@a4eholofote.com.br) | +55 11 96864-4263

Neila Carvalho | [neilacarvalho@a4eholofote.com.br](mailto:neilacarvalho@a4eholofote.com.br) | +55 11 99916-5094