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# Fábio Moura Penteado in São Paulo. Drawings for a Modern, Urban, and Democratic Architecture

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#### Abstract

Drawings represent ideas and concepts, not just an architectural project. The concept of the 'Architecture of the Crowd' establishes principles of an architecture in which people are protagonists. This architecture, in turn, relates in a harmonious way to the city, inviting people to enter, circulate, and interact with the space and other people, in a natural way.

Fábio Moura Penteado's architectural drawings representing these ideas and concepts were the focus of this study. The projects selected for analysis, dating back to the 1960s, are as follows: Araras Forum (1960), Campinas Coffee Museum (1960), Piracicaba Municipal Theater (1961), Campinas Opera Theater (1966), Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center (1967). Through the analysis of handmade perspective drawings, we can identify the presentation of ideas contained in their theoretical and conceptual discourse. The elements that define and compose the drawings are significant for the representation of their ideas: points of view from which the drawing was constructed; number of people, interacting, immobile or moving, and their location; automobiles and machinery; vegetation and landscape; representation of the accesses to the building with some welcoming element such as a marquee; indication of paths and routes. A point of view that has the ambition of a good, urban, modern society, from the perspective of ordinary people roaming the city and promoting meetings and events in a democratic, safe, and healthy environment.

Keywords: brazilian architecture, urban architecture, handmade drawing, perspective, 1960s modern architecture.

#### Introduction

"The exercise of drawing is for architecture (but not just for architecture) a first form of the image of though". Gregotti 2014, p. 14 [1]

In the 1960s, urban life was a relatively recent event, as Le Corbusier observed in his book *Urbanismo* [2009, p. 77]. The explosion of cities and urban life generated problems and demands that architects and urban planners could study, discuss, and bring solutions to.

During this period, a language of modern architecture was developed in São Paulo, the largest urban center in Brazil, which became known as 'Escola Paulista' (São Paulo School) and had as its master the architect Vilanova Artigas. Fábio Moura Penteado, an architect graduated from the School of Architecture of Mackenzie University, was one of the important architects who contributed to the discussions and achievements around solutions for an architecture that met the problems of big cities. He began his career as an architect in the 1950s. However, the 1960s and 1970s were the decades with most creations, with 29 and 34 projects respectively, among the 106 cataloged in this research, whether built or not. Thus, we selected projects from the 1960s for analysis. The projects selected for analysis, dating back to the 1960s, are as follows: Araras Forum (1960), Campinas Coffee Museum (1960), Piracicaba Municipal Theater (1961), Campinas Opera Theater (1966), Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center (1967). diségno 12/2023



Fig. I. Araras Forum, 1960. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.



Through this research, it could be verified that the concept of 'Architecture of the Crowd,' which underlies Moura Penteado's projects, created dignified, human, inviting spaces that promote meetings and harmonious coexistence between people, by the careful design of the site plan, accesses, the relationship between the building and the urban space, inviting vertical circulation elements, the organization of the architectural program, the creation of large distribution and living yards, the relationship between closed and open spaces, landscaping, among other solutions and design strategies.

The five projects here presented have a link to the urban environment in which they were designed and, in two cases, built. Without exception, the design of the building is always organized in such a way that, around or on it, a square is configured. This square, along with specific characteristics of each project, involving the organization of the program, definition of the circulation system, among others, welcomes and invites people to enjoy this space. Fábio Penteado belonged to a generation of architects which produces a lot of hand drawings revealing a history. Penteado is renowned for his ability to express himself by the means of drawings. Many important researchers, such as Luigi Vagnetti [Vagnetti 1958], Vittorio Gregotti [Gregotti 2014], Paolo Belardi [Belardi 2014], Mario Docci, Marco Gaiani, Diego [Docci, Gaiani, Maestri 2017], highlight the different types of drawing and representation in architecture and its importance. In this paper, we present a thought involving the elaborate handmade drawings of the selected project, involving site plans, vertical sections and perspectives. They are perspectives elaborated from the point of view of people moving in the urban environment of the large cities of São Paulo in the 1960s. Such drawings represent Penteado's idea of an 'Architecture of the Crowd,' which conceptually underlies his architectural work.

It is a point of view that aims to a good, modern, urban society, a glaze from the point of view of ordinary people walking around the city and promoting meetings and events in a democratic, safe and healthy environment.

#### Fig. 2. Coffee Museum, 1960. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.

Fig. 3. Sketch of the evolution of the Piracicaba Theater project. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.



## Fábio Penteado and the 'Architecture of the Crowd'

"From afar it is landscape. Up close it is monument. The square is the people". Fábio Penteado, 1962, p. 78

Fábio Moura Penteado was born in 1929 in the city of Campinas and studied architecture between 1948 and 1953 at Mackenzie University. During his life, several noteworthy events occurred, which contributed to the twentieth century sociocultural configuration of the state of São Paulo and Brazil.

His career began in an important period of the cultural context of the city of São Paulo, and along with other professionals of the time, Penteado took part in the Carvalho Pinto Government's Action Plan (1959-1963) to design numerous public buildings throughout the state –including hospitals, schools, and Justice forums–, which was essential for the development and realization of São Paulo's Modern Architecture [Giroto 2013, pp. 241, 242].

Although his architecture contributed to the consolidation of the São Paulo language of Architecture, his production has a close relationship with the initial generation of architects who gathered around the concepts and language of the teachings from the important master João Batista Vilanova Artigas, but it admits several references, as well, which define Penteado's architecture by a formal and expressive freedom, ensuring the uniqueness of his work among the works produced by architects working in the São Paulo School. The idea of a collective and civic architecture, a strong characteristic of São Paulo's Modern Architecture, permeates all of Penteado's work [Gitoto 2013, p. 68].

Penteado had a great importance for São Paulo's and Brazilian architecture. The study of his architecture indicates a latent concern to solve the problems caused by the great explosion of the urban population, always with special attention to the individual life of the people frequenting and experiencing it [Giroto 2013, p. XIV].

Thus, the architecture developed by Fabio Penteado became known by the conceptualization of 'Architecture of the Crowd'. On this rationale underlying the act of designing, the architect stated: "Perhaps the greatest role of architects in our time is to build new spaces for meetings and coexistence for the crowds of large cities. Suddenly, the design of buildings almost loses its meaning if the building, isolated from the urban landscape, does not communicate the participation of all people in what it can represent and live better. And certainly, the ideals of well-being and peace will have to be won by everyone, also with the strength and power of art and beauty" [Penteado 1998, p. 2] [2].

Thus, Fábio Penteado's architecture indicates that his projects are able to accommodate the multitudinous individual, seeking solutions at various realms, both for the city and its inhabitants. The drawings (handmade perspectives) illustrating the projects represent these ideas and concepts from the point of view of the people moving in the crowd of the modern city.

## The 1960s and the selection of projects

The 1960s and mid-1970s have been forgotten for several years by scholars, who consider them for three major moments: the modern movement, Brasília and the post-Brazília period [Junqueira Bastos, Verde Zein 2010, p. 51]. This approach makes it difficult to correctly understand the other events of these two decades that are equally important. According to Bastos and Zein , "from a purely quantitative point of view, Brazilian architecture will, in fact, from the 1960s, consolidate, expanding and unfolding new professional horizons" [Junqueira Bastos, Verde Zein 2010, p. 52]. Therefore, we selected projects from the 1960s for the intended analysis, focusing public spaces.

## Araras Forum

Designed jointly with José Ribeiro in 1960 in the city of Araras, countryside of São Paulo, the Forum (fig. 1) was one of the projects idealized by Governor Carvalho Pinto's Action Plan. According to Penteado, his intention "was to adapt the environment to the conditions of its users, making it more accessible and human, so that all layers of society could appropriate the space and feel at ease in it" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 56].

The offered land was an irregular five-sided polygon. In the geometric center of the lot, in a square-shaped layout, the architects organized the program to arrange the space of the building without doors, nor a lobby, but an inviting 'covered square', as in an extension of the urban space of





Fig. 4. Piracicaba Municipal Theater, 1960. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.

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Fig. 5. Campinas Opera Theater, 1966. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.



the city, with the purpose of people entering, sitting, and talking. On the ground level, the program develops in three different blocks connected to the square: jury room or auditorium; staircase and water tank; registry offices, administrative and service sectors. On the upper level are located the rooms of lawyers, prosecutors, and the judge's office, offering greater privacy and security [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 56].

In addition to the covered square, along with landscaping and a waterfall with a water mirror that promotes a quality of temperature, the other areas of the lot also have important role regarding coexistence and meetings, so people can get closer and enjoy this space.

Although the functional architectural program called for austere and serious spaces in a legal environment, the architects, starting from the theoretical conceptualization and above all from the 'Architecture of the Crowd', conceived an inviting building, with light forms of sinuously curved slab, under four pillars, which fulfills its function, but which is different from all the other forums that Fábio Penteado visited before designing it: "all [the forums] followed the same formula, imitating Greco-Roman buildings with columns, immense pompous portals, and very high ceilings" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 56].

"This project allows us to understand how the programmatic questioning, and the consequent architectural reproposition, are defined in function of the encounter between human being and architecture, thought in order to create conditions of autonomous action from the recognition of space as part of everyday life. From the breaking of barriers to the public appropriation of space, suggested as a territory of collectivity, it works towards demystifying the negative connotations that architectural imposition can cause" [Giroto 2013, pp. 18, 19].

The drawing here presented well represents the important ideas and concepts of his architecture. The bird's eye perspective reveals the whole of the building inserted in the urban area and the structure as defining architecture. People, cars and vegetation compose the urban scenery of the 1960s registered in this drawing.

We can notice the point of view of the user's gaze from which the perspective was elaborated, where people are observed circulating and interacting with the environment that indicates ways to access the building, privileging the harmonious and democratic relationship with the city. The built environment is represented with elements that reinforce the humanization of the space, such as vegetation and water, while indicating an urban environment with hints of automobiles, in a modern 1960s way of living.

## Campinas Coffee Museum

Designed jointly with José Ribeiro in 1960 for the city of Campinas, interior of São Paulo, the Museum was a proposal requested by the city hall with the intention of: "bringing together, in a single architectural and landscape ensemble, elements that tell the history and traditions of the cultivation, harvesting, processing, and preparation of coffee, from slavery to the present day" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 194].

The project, which includes a museum and a library, was designed for a plot of land located within the Taquaral Park, an important and noble area of the city to this day. The building is located under a typical coffee terrain with 200 meters of extension (fig. 2).

The formal configuration of the building follows the function of the proposed circular route, with a spiral ramp, and the main building houses the Museum. The other uses are distributed in a second semi-buried building with support sectors for the museum, such as management, restrooms, auditorium, hall, kitchen, restaurant, and bar. On the same level, the architect planned a large outdoor space, intended for open-air exhibitions, and two large staircases configured as meeting spaces, grandstands with a capacity of up to 5,000 people, as well as naturally constituting an element of vertical circulation.

The architects, despite the extensive terrain, decided to elevate the museum by creating, underneath it, a covered square working as a space for living and meeting and, according to the topograpical profile of the terrain, as a space for appreciating nature, both with a view of the coffee grounds and the lagoon. According to Giroto [Giroto 2013, p. 349], "the museum is presented as a large pure circular form, elevated on a traditional coffee ground, converted into an open public space".

In the drawings, we can verify important concepts of Planteado's architecture, involving a built environment merging with the public spaces of the city, in a welcoming and democratic way. The idea of the public square configured by the elevation of the building relative to the terrain invites users to a shaded living space to enjoy the lagoon and the museum's outdoor area, composed of a coffee ground simulating the originals of São Paulo's history.

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Fig. 6. Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center, 1967. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.

#### Piracicaba Municipal Theater

Designed together with José Ribeiro in 1960 for the city of Piracicaba, in the interior of São Paulo, the Municipal Theater shows the collectivist conception of Fábio Penteado to integrate the project into the life of the city, especially of students: "The chosen area was a square; a conventional solution could be to reduce it to a built-up block, with its four sidewalks merely widened. Then a project was born, one of those I consider my most beautiful projects, in terms of conception and design. It's a theater and it's a square" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 92].

The theater was commissioned for five hundred seats and the land provided views of the Piracicaba River.

"Taking advantage of this landscape, Fábio imagined a composition of planes that overlapped, constituting circular volumes that opened from a central point – like concrete flower." [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 92].

Besides the theater, the program housed a library, an exhibition hall, a cafe that would open onto a terrace with a small outdoor amphitheater, and a large square that could

be visited by the population at any time of the day, even if the theater was closed.

The sketches (fig. 3) reveal strategies for solving the program within the urban environment. While the perspective drawings (fig. 4) reveal the architect's intentions linked to the conceptualization of his theory of 'Architecture of the Crowd'.

Perspectives are constructed from the point of view of the user's gaze, of the people walking through the city and enjoying the public, social, and open spaces. From the point of view choosen for the design, it is possible to visualize the building and the free and unobstructed access routes as elements that are accessible or that encourage meeting and coexistence, such as the ramp with a slighting sloping, sinuous, curve, or the staircase that in addition to being an element of vertical circulation, in this case presents itself as a space of permanence, as a grandstand. The built environment reinforces an inviting, friendly and welcoming architecture. The accesses in this case are more related to the elevated square than to the theater itself, and this reinforces the architect's idea of creating public spaces and diségno || 12/2023



Fig. 7. Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center, 1967. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.





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Fig. 8. Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center, 1967. Source: Fábio Penteado Collection. Photo: Letícia Bortolo Martins, 2018.

environments for the city. The good amount of people indicates a sociable and democratic environment, added to the hint of automobiles, which reinforces the idea of a modern urban space. Vegetation is subtly represented to balance the relationship between building and city.

Still about the theater being frequented at all hours, Penteado states: "against that theater that only opens its doors at the time of the show, a theater that is used and has profitability 24 hours a day: if you use public money, you must ensure cultural profitability, as if it were the best business" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 92].

## Campinas Opera Theater

Designed together with Aldo Calvo, Alfredo Paesani and Teru Temaki in 1966 for the city of Campinas, interior of São Paulo, the theater project (fig. 5) also had a team of twelve professionals specialized in scenic technique, scenography, acoustics, and sound [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 95].

The theater was designed to cater for three types of presentation —large operas, medium, and small performances and it had a capacity of fifteen hundred people.

"The audience, designed in a single plan, had only one box for authorities, with independent access. Scenery changes were predicted by both vertical and horizontal systems, with the possibility of using two tangent swivels located at any point on the stage" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 95]. The second theater was designed to host comedy and arena in addition to Elizabethan, classical, and full stage.

The malleability of the scenic spaces is a consequence of a thorough study of several components: the composition of the internal space; the shape of the dome; the easy mobility of the armchairs, allowing varied arrangements in the audience; a a 5-metre high catwalk crossing the stage space; and an 8-meter-high swivel allowing rapid modification of the scene and of new lighting and sound installation resources [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 95].

The large land available meant that the architect could design two distinct theaters and, taking advantage of the natural slope, steps were designed forming a third outdoor space that would face the Taquaral lagoon, where an artificial island would play the role of stage [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 95].

Although the two theatres were apart, they would be interconnected by a common service gallery, containing rehearsal room, choir, supporting facilities, and dressing rooms. "All of them with natural lighting and ventilation -preserving the view of the lagoon-, instead of the traditional basements where such equipment is usually installed" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 95].

In the beautiful drawings for the Campinas Opera Theater project we can observe all the elements belonging to Fábio Penteado's architecture, which are represented through handmade perspectives. These perspectives are constructed using a centre of projection at the height of the gaze of the people walking through the space, revealing an urban space, open like a square, promoting encounters, permanence, and social interaction. The amount of people present in the drawings indicates the idea of public square, with cars, greenery, and the built landscape, the theater building. The elements that make up the Theater square contribute and stimulate permanence and interaction, such as the curved bench, the marguee marking the entrance and that can also be a shelter on rainy days or hot summer sun, typical in the São Paulo countryside.

## Campinas Cultural Coexistence Center

Designed together with Aldo Calvo, Alfredo Paesani and Teru Temaki in 1967 for the city of Campinas, interior of São Paulo, the Cultural Coexistence Center (figs. 6, 7) was the only project actually built.

The project was based on a program aimed on realizing a five hundred seats hall; however, keeping the built area occupied by a theater of this size, the architect managed to make a much larger project and resumed the guidelines and concepts used in the projects of the Piracicaba Municipal Theater and the Campinas Opera Theater [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 100].

When Penteado went to visit the 6,000-square-meter area made available by the city hall, he proposed expanding it by incorporating a neighboring area that was the former immense lluminense Square. Once this change was made, the two spaces formed a 40,000-square-meter large, circular square, which became a large roundabout for Júlio Mesquita Avenue, one of the most important avenues in the city.

The project divided the building of a standard theater into four blocks, as follows: "the largest of them is the performance room; the second defines the access to the set; the third is a bar that opens onto the square; and the fourth forms the work areas. These blocks are interconnected by a half-underground gallery, replacing the traditional *foyer*. At one point, the gallery has a higher ceiling height to allow the exhibition of larger objects. In addition, it could function as a 'covered sidewalk', allowing pedestrians to cut a path, enjoying the most varied exhibitions [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 100].

These four blocks face a large central arena that can hold up to eight thousand people.

Thus, "the flexibility of the spaces was understood as a basic condition for the effectiveness of the proposal, ensuring the expected multiplicity of use" [Moura Penteado 1998, p. 100].

The designs of this project have two strategies. One consists of drawings with a specific focus on an internal environment of the built complex, highlighting elements of construction and structure, reinforcing the qualities of São Paulo's Modern Architecture and its relationship with the new techniques based on the use of reinforced concrete, allowing greater spans and differentiated support designs. The environment reveals a space of social conviviality of great cultural relevance for that time, with the presence of many people. In the other representation strategy, we observe a drawing exploring the more artistic vertical section, without many technical references, but revealing relationships between the height of the environment and people, relationships with the square and the external environment, vegetation, and even other surrounding buildings (fig. 8). Again, we can see the emphasis on the structural expression of Penteado's architecture by the drawings of the vertical sections, with differentiated designs of expressive architectural forms in reinforced concrete.

## Discussion and final considerations

Fábio is an architect-thinker, an intuitive questioner of the dynamics of life, an attentive observer of everyday life, permanently concerned with human dignity. Mônica Junqueira de Camargo, in Penteado 1998, p. 9.

In the scenario of the state of São Paulo in Brazil, in the 1960s, time frame of this study, urban life was a relatively recent event, and the explosion of cities and urban life generated problems and demands that architects and urbanists could study, discuss, and bring solutions to. By the research developed, involving the drawing analysis and observation, starting from the assumption of the relationship between the concept of the 'Architecture of the Crowd', seeking a reflection on the relationship between concept and project in the architecture of Fábio Penteado, one can observe that the architect established principles for the development of an architecture that has people as its protagonist. An architecture that harmoniously relates with the city, inviting users to enter, circulate, and interact with the space and other people, in a natural way.

We verified in the selected projects that the concept underlying the projects created dignified, human, inviting spaces promoting meeting and harmonious coexistence between people through the careful design of the implementation, accesses, the relationship of the building and urban space, elements of welcoming vertical circulation, the organization of the program, creation of large distribution and conviviality courtyards, relationship between closed and open environments, landscaping and floor designs, among other design strategies.

After analyzing the five selected projects from the 1960s and their drawings, one can see that Penteado's architecture is restless and not content to propose the obvious, both concerning what was produced at the time and regarding the architectural program. Penteado brought innovative, creative ideas and questions to the debate.

"His projects are not content to propose new spaces for traditional programs, but express the vehement need to rework programmatic concepts. His proposals, regardless of the scale or technical specificity of the programs, end up constituting dynamic centers of coexistence [3]

Always rebelling against prefixed schemes, almost as a principle, Penteado does not allow himself to be imprisoned by the cliché; in his numerous projects, he subverts the program, questions, counter proposes, thinks about redesigns, in materials that allow a new scale of industrial equipment for inhabiting the space, for the urban [4].

The drawings reveal crucial elements for understanding Penteado's architecture. From the point of view choosen for each drawing, usually at the height of the ordinary user's gaze, we can visualize a series of elements carefully inserted in the representation.

In the Araras Forum, the elimination of an entrance door, of the lobby and the integration between public and private space broke the barrier between justice and users of that space. In this project, the architect brought the square under the building. In the Campinas Coffee Museum, the proposal to elevate the exhibition space by configuring a covered space at street level, in addition to taking advantage of the topography of the area for the inclusion of a staircase that is also a grandstand, show the concern to rethink the architectural program and add other roles to those already existing in the project. In this project, Penteado brought the square under the building, too.

In the Piracicaba Municipal Theater, taking advantage of the view of the Piracicaba River, Penteado had the intention of creating a space that was a square and a theater. Therefore, the architect designed terraces at the top of the building, which connected with the cafe, library, and exhibition hall and which could be used at any time of the day. In this project, he brought the square under the building for the third time.

The Campinas Opera House and the Cultural Coexistence Centre are two projects in which the main functions were conceived in different buildings; however, to unify them, the architect designed open spaces to be used for events, but also as meeting spaces. In these projects, Penteado has made the public square and the buildings into one.

The five projects here presented have a connection between the urban environment in which they were designed and, in two cases, built. Without exception, the design of the buildings is always arranged in such a way that, around it or on it, a square is formed. This square, along with specific characteristics of each project, involving the organization of the program, definition of the circulation system, among others, welcome and invite people to enjoy this space.

Through the analysis of handmade perspective drawings, we can identify the presentation of ideas contained in their theoretical and conceptual discourse. The elements that define and compose the drawings are significant for the representation of their ideas: points of view from which the drawing was constructed; presence of interacting, immobile or moving people and their location; automobiles and machinery; vegetation and landscape; representation of the accesses to the building with some welcoming element such as a marquee; indication of paths and routes.

The urban life scenario in the State of São Paulo in the 1960s represented in these drawings reinforce the conceptual intentions of the architect. Luigi Vagnetti observed in his book *Disegno* e *Architettura* that the representation assumes a significant characterization of an era as a living testimony of a taste and a period [Vagnetti 1958, p. 26]. These drawings are the representation of a thought and a testimony of a time. A point of view from an ambition of a good urban and modern society, from the perspective of ordinary people circulating around the city and promoting encounters and events in a democratic, safe, and healthy environment.

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#### Notes

[1] 'TL'esercizio del disegno è per l'architettura (ma non solo) una prima forma dell'immagine del pensiero''. All quotations from the text are translated by the authors.

[2] Text originally written in 1972.

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[3] Camargo Camargo, Monica Junqueira de, in Penteado 1998, p. 9.

[4] Scharlach Cecilia, in Penteado 1998, p. 9.

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