

**GERALDO DE BARROS**

[1923 - 1998, Brazil]

Geraldo de Barros began his investigations into photography in the mid-1940s in São Paulo. Invited by a friend to photograph soccer teams, de Barros's first camera was built from a kit. Intrigued by the medium, he soon lost interest in pursuing commercial photography. He built a small photo studio, bought a 1939 Rolleiflex, and, in 1949, joined the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante, which was one of the few forums for the city's photography enthusiasts. Members of the group were interested in pictorial photography, and de Barros's explorations of abstraction were met with little interest; his photographs were rarely included in the club's exhibitions. That same year, de Barros was invited to create a photo laboratory in the new Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), an important gesture towards including photography in contemporary art spaces.

De Barros's work from this period is characterized by scraped negatives, multiple exposures, and an interest in chance occurrences. In 1950, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) invited de Barros to exhibit his photographs and he showed a selection from his *Fotoformas* series. The exhibition led to a fellowship opportunity to study abroad in Europe. Ironically, his studies in Europe would redirect his artistic work away from photography. While traveling, he studied painting and printmaking and met important artists and theorists including Max Bill, Giorgio Morandi, and Francois Morellet.

In 1952, de Barros returned to Brazil, and he became a central figure in São Paulo's Concrete art movement (also known as "Concretism"). Interested in industrial design and modernization processes, he founded a collectivist furniture factory, Unilabor, in 1954.

Although internationally known for his innovations in photography, de Barros actively worked with the medium only during two periods of his life: 1945-1951 and 1996-1998.

De Barros made montages, superimposing images from the urban landscape of São Paulo over geometric forms. In failing health in the late 1990s, he returned to photography, creating a series of work called *Sobras*, in which he used family photographs as his foundation for collage, montage, and new geometric explorations. De Barros died in 1998.

De Barros's works have been shown in a number of selected exhibitions, including *FORMA BRAZIL*, Americas Society (AS), New York City, New York, USA (2002); *Geometry of Hope*, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA (2007); *Fotonoviembre 2007, IX Bienal Internacional de Fotografía*, Centro de Fotografía Isla de Tenerife, Spain (2007); *Geometric Abstraction: Latin American Art from the Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Collection*, Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA (2001); *Geraldo de Barros: Fotoformas e Sobras*, Fundação Arpad

Szenes – Vieira da Silva, Lisbon, Portugal (2017); *Making Art Concrete*, Getty Center, Los Angeles, California, USA (2017); *Konkrete Kunst, 50 Years of Development*, Helmhaus Zürich, Switzerland (1960); *Geraldo de Barros*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil (2021); *The Revolution is Dead. Long Live the Revolution!*, Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland and Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Switzerland (2017); *Brazilian Photography, Labirinto e Identidades, 1946-1998*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (1999); *Geraldo de Barros, painter and photographer*, Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland (1993); *Fotoformas: Retrospective*, Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland (2000); *Cuasi-corpora, arte concreto y neoconcreto de Brasil*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Mexico, Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico, and Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM), Brazil (2003); *First show of contemporary Latin American photography*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico (1978); *Modern Art in Brazil*, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires (MAMBA), Argentina (1957); *Heteropías. Medio Siglo Sin Lugar (1918-1968)*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS), Madrid, Spain (2000); *Misselbeck*, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal (2002); *First National Exposition of Concrete Art*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), Brazil (1956); *Brasiliãna MASP: Moderna contemporânea*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), Brazil (2006); *Misselbeck*, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany (1999); *Constructed Dialogues: Selections from the Latin American Collection in the inaugural installation of the Nancy and Rich Kinder Building*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA (2020); *Sobras e Fotoformas, Retrospective*, Museum Ulm, Ulm, Germany (2001); and *Constructive project in Brazilian Art*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil (1977).

De Barros's works are included in numerous important collections, such as Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, Florida, USA; Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC), Caracas, Venezuela and New York City, New York, USA; Fonds d'art contemporain de la Ville de Genève (FMAC), Geneva, Switzerland; Max Bill Foundation, Zurich, Switzerland; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, France; Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS), São Paulo, Brazil; Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP), Brazil; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), Brazil; Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba, Brazil; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York City, New York, USA; and Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil, among others.