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# ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

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## A Lifetime of Collecting: Pietro M. Bardi and Lina Bo Bardi's Archive

Sol Camacho 

**ABSTRACT** Thirty years after its creation, this article provides insights into the Instituto Bardi's archive, responsible for over 40,000 items from Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi's collection. It discusses the Bardi couple's intention of creating an archive within the space of their dwelling as part of a broader preservation plan of their design, which involved the foundation of a cultural institution and the historical listing of their residence, Casa de Vidro, in Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil, along with the furniture and artwork within it. Furthermore, this essay discusses the main challenges faced in the establishment and operation of an architectural archive in the Brazilian cultural, economic and political context, as well as the dynamics involved in the preservation of its items in parallel to the dissemination of Lina and Pietro's *oeuvre*. In addition to discussing and examining matters specific to the Bardis' archive collection, this essay raises questions of archival systematization that need to be addressed according to specific situations, such as accessibility of the contents, loan policies, and financial stability.

But linear time is a Western invention, time is not linear, it is a marvelous tangle where, at any moment, points can be selected and solutions invented, without no beginning or end.

— Lina Bo Bardi<sup>1</sup>

In the decades following their mid-century arrival in Brazil, the Italian couple of Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992) and Pietro Maria Bardi (1900–1999) contributed meaningfully to the country's cultural landscape in various fields through their collaborations and individual endeavors, grounded by a unique shared perspective on architecture, design, museology, modernity, and popular culture.

Pietro Maria Bardi met Lina Bo in 1943 amidst the war and political turmoil in Italy, where both had been developing their careers. Bardi was a self-taught journalist, gallerist and merchant, collaborator of numerous magazines, and founder of the magazine *Quadrante* and Studio d'Arte Palma in Rome. Bo graduated as an architect in Rome five years prior, and had since been working in Milan with Carlo Pagani (1913–1999) on a range of editorial projects, collaborating with magazines such as *Domus*, *Lo Stile*, *Bellezza*, and *Grazia*. The couple married in 1946 and shortly after left for Brazil, where they would spend the rest of their lives; the decision to establish themselves in São Paulo was a result of Pietro's collaboration with Assis Chateaubriand (1892–1968) in the creation of the Museum of Arts of São Paulo (MASP). In his nearly thirty years as director of MASP, Bardi advanced numerous cultural projects, original exhibitions, and pedagogical programs such as the Institute for Contemporary Art (IAC, 1951), through which he promoted a program of lectures, workshops, and external exhibitions. He maintained a prolific career as the author of fifty books, approaching themes related to the arts, national culture, modernity, and architecture.

In Brazil, Lina Bo Bardi found a conducive environment to foster a multidisciplinary career as a curator, editor, designer, and architect. Through her innovative, context-driven, and socially aware projects, namely Casa de Vidro (1951), Solar do Unhão (1959), MASP (1968), SESC Pompeia leisure center (1986), and others, Bo Bardi has become one of the most influential architects of Latin America from the Modern period. Since the 1990s, Bo Bardi's *oeuvre* has been acknowledged more widely, propelled by the 1993 publication of the book *Lina Bo Bardi*,<sup>2</sup> along with a series of exhibitions organized by Instituto Bardi in the following years.

Instituto Bardi was created by the Bardi couple in 1990 to extend their efforts to promote Brazilian culture and art.<sup>3</sup> They defined the mission of the private, nonprofit institution to encourage study and research in the areas of architecture, design, urbanism, and Brazilian popular art. The Institute maintains a vast and valuable documentary archive, including almost all original drawings of Bo Bardi's built and unbuilt projects, but also furniture design, jewelry design, scenography, expography, illustration drawings, and writings, as well as the Bardis' art and furniture collection, their private library, photographs, personal and professional correspondences, manuscripts and research documents, amassing over 40,000 items.<sup>4</sup> Instituto Bardi is headquartered at Casa de Vidro (Figure 1) in Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil, the first constructed



**Figure 1**

Casa de Vidro, view from the garden. Photo by Marina D'Imperio, São Paulo, 2017. © Courtesy Instituto Bardi / Casa de Vidro.

project of Bo Bardi, which had been the residence of the couple for forty years. Listed as historical heritage in 1987, Casa de Vidro is an icon of Brazilian architecture, unique in its amalgamation of modernist ideals and local traditions.

The task of reflecting upon the archive of Instituto Bardi and its purposes of disseminating the Bardi couple's activity and contributions to the cultural landscape of twentieth century Brazil demands that thirty years after its foundation we consider its activity and role within a broader cultural context. Departing from the experience of the Bardis' archive, considering the Latin-American scenario where it is inserted and the broader global scale in which it operates, this article discusses the main challenges faced in the establishment and operation of an architectural archive in Brazil, as well as its cultural and historical relevance.

In her early autobiography, Bo Bardi, an Italian *emigrée* from war-torn Europe, recalls her amazement with the possibilities encountered when first arriving in Brazil in 1946:

Arrival in Rio de Janeiro, by ship, in October. Dazzle. To those arriving by sea, the Education and Health Ministry building advanced like a great white and blue ship against the sky. The first message of peace after the flood of the Second World War.

I felt myself in an unimaginable country, where everything was possible. I felt happy, and Rio had no ruins.<sup>5</sup>

The drastically different socio-historical backgrounds between Italy and Brazil are reflected in the postures and cultural policies toward conservation practiced in each country. From their experience in both contexts, the Bardi couple developed an inspired understanding of heritage and preservation, which permeated their professional activity throughout their lives.

Lina expressed her views on preservation initially through her writings; she maintained a prolific editorial production in Italy as a collaborator and column author for several magazines. In 1945 she co-founded with Carlo Pagani and Bruno Zevi the magazine *A (Attualità, Architettura, Abitazione, Arte)*, “dedicated to presenting reconstruction issues to a non-specialized audience.”<sup>6</sup> Later on, in Brazil, she put these ideas into practice in adaptive reuse projects, notably the rehabilitation of a partially burnt building for the design of the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (MAMB, 1965) and the repurposing of an old factory in São Paulo to host the cultural activities of SESC Pompeia (1986). In these projects, she combined old structures with carefully crafted additions to enhance and enliven the existing conditions. But beyond her rehabilitation designs, every project conveyed a modern understanding of the past and communicated her philosophical ideas and personal sensibility on the entanglements of the past with the present. Similarly, Pietro's *oeuvre* incorporates and expresses his stance and concern about conservation and preservation, especially through his works in the museological field, both in Italy and Brazil, and his studies on national art and culture from a historiographic approach, which translated into exhibitions and publications on contemporary, historical and popular art. A project that embodies the couple's shared interests and ideologies in this cultural field is the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MASP), a cultural institution conceived by Bardi along with Chateaubriand, for which Bo Bardi designed the iconic building – a glass box held up by enormous pillars and beams executed in concrete, creating an open public plaza at the street level – as well as the notorious expography of glass easels within it.

From the early days of the MASP, Pietro Bardi expressed and put into practice his interest in displaying and discussing architecture, promoting two exhibitions, one of Le Corbusier's works in 1950 and another on landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx (1909–1994) in 1952. The collection of letters archived at MASP is filled with correspondences conveying Pietro's intention of organizing exhibitions of international architects such as Walter Gropius (1883–1969), Charles (1907–1978) and Ray Eames (1912–1988), and Alvar Aalto (1898–1976). Given the early interest and committed efforts from its creator and then director, the absence of a dedicated architecture department at the Museum is curious and noteworthy.

It was only in 1993, twenty years after the inauguration of the São Paulo Architecture Biennial at Ibirapuera, that MASP would return to its early ideas of exhibiting architecture. Fábio Magalhães, then director of the museum, proposed creating an Architecture Department recognizing the importance of the debate on architecture in the cultural field. He invited architect Anne Marie Sumner to create an exhibition program around the work of architect Peter Eisenman for the first exhibition. Although the exhibition had the potential to activate the debate on contemporary architecture and was of excellent quality,<sup>7</sup> it was the first and last of the short-lived Architecture Department. When analyzing the Eisenman exhibition and the failure of MASP's architectural exhibition program, curator Agnaldo Farias stated that “[a]rchitecture is far from being important to the artistic production because it is preferably addressed to a professional category,” pointing out that in this context international architecture exhibitions “were expensive and far from attracting the attention and resources of art sponsors.”<sup>8</sup>

In this context, it is important to notice the cultural status of the architecture archive in relation to the art archive. Architecture stands in a peculiar position between art and applied sciences; the interest in documents, photographs, and objects of its representation is commonly limited to a niche of architects and professionals of adjacent practices rather than a broader audience. An architect's archive is not regarded with the same cultural relevance as that of an artist. It most often has no comparable commercial value as it does not circulate within a market as the art pieces do, which poses difficulties about the funding for the conservation of such items. Jordan Kauffman in his book *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990* traces some key moments in the US and Europe where architectural drawings gained meaning for museums, collectors and galleries through the 1970s and into the 1990's,<sup>9</sup> but that moment did not transcend to our contemporary context in Brazil.

With all its architectural richness, Brazil does not have a single Architecture Museum, Architecture Department within a museum or a national archive dedicated to Architecture such as the French Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine (Paris), the American National Building Museum (Washington DC), the National Collection for Dutch Architecture and Urban Planning, held at Het Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam), or those that can be found in comparable Latin American realities like the Museo Nacional de Arquitectura at the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Mexico City) or the Museo Archivo de Arquitectura del Ecuador (Quito). Hence, the options for preserving an architect's documental legacy in Brazil are few and far from popular knowledge. The archival material is most commonly inherited and kept by the architect's family, the office associates or donated to a public university (state or federally-run), whose architecture faculties often maintain an archive.

The work that has been carried out by federal universities in Brazil in preserving and promoting the collections of various architects is

of enormous relevance. Eduardo Augusto Costa, a researcher at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo, emphasizes the cultural role of architectural archives:<sup>10</sup>

The archives and collections associated with the architects represent, therefore, decisive structures to understand the unfolding of the historiographical revision and also the place occupied today by the Brazilians in an international scenario, where archives and collections have assumed a structural place of the actions related to the field.<sup>11</sup>

One of Brazil's earliest archives dedicated to architecture and urbanism is the Laboratório de Fotodocumentação Sylvio Vasconcellos, founded in 1954 at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, which holds over 50,000 photographs.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the largest and most important collection for the history of Brazilian architecture and urbanism is that of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of São Paulo (FAU USP), which since 1970 houses an Architecture Drawings Collection within its Library, where drawings, sketches, and photographs from 7,800 projects by renowned architects are preserved and made available for research purposes. Their collection amounts to over 400,000 pieces comprised of donations by about forty architects, including Rino Levi (1901–1965), Carlos Millan (1927–1964), Eduardo Augusto Kneese de Mello (1906–1994), Abrahão Velvu Sanovicz (1933–1999), Ramos de Azevedo (1851–1928), Giancarlo Palanti (1906–1977), Gregori Warchavchik (1896–1972), Rodrigo Lefèvre (1938–1984), Joaquim Guedes (1932–2008), Oswaldo Bratke (1907–1997), Rosa Kliass, and Roger Zmekhol (1928–1976), amongst others.<sup>13</sup> Another relevant example in the preservation of architectural collections is the Núcleo de Pesquisa e Documentação (NPD), founded in 1982 and hosted at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (FAU UFRJ), responsible for over 20,000 documents, including photographs, scale models, maps, magazines, and books.<sup>14</sup>

Exceptionally, a few of the most well-known and prolific architects have a cultural foundation established to maintain their legacy, either by their arrangement or as a late initiative by their family or associates. This is the case with architect Oscar Niemeyer (1907–2012, Fundação Oscar Niemeyer), architect and urbanist Lucio Costa (1902–1998, Casa de Lucio Costa), and the landscape architect Burle Marx (Instituto Burle Marx). Guaranteeing the financial stability of these cultural institutions is the most pressing challenge, especially in a political landscape where public policies and investment in culture and research have been consistently decreasing.

The topic of architecture archives in Brazil recently gathered unprecedented media and professional attention, when in September 2020, Pritzker-laureate Brazilian architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha (1928–2021), then ninety-one years old, announced the donation of his

professional archive in its totality to Casa da Arquitetura, a Portuguese private nonprofit cultural institution established in 2007. The donation comprises over 8,800 items spanning over 320 projects, with approximately 6,300 analog drawings, 3,000 photographs and slides, 300 publications, and a collection of scale models made by the architect encompassing his professional activity from the 1950s to the current days.<sup>15</sup>

The architect's decision to transfer his archive from Brazil to Portugal yielded varied responses from professionals, researchers, and cultural institutions in the country. Many regarded the donation as a controversial move, some even implied its bearing of colonial undertones.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, a support letter was signed by Brazilian architects upholding Mendes da Rocha's decision.<sup>17</sup> FAU USP addressed the donation announcement in a public letter, stating that despite "numerous exchanges and proposals for receiving his collection," the architect's sovereign decision differed from their expectations.<sup>18</sup> Nuno Sampaio, executive director of Casa da Arquitetura responded to the criticism by reiterating their commitment to making all of the collection digitally available for researchers, implementing an institutional partnership with FAU USP, albeit the terms of this partnership have not been specified.<sup>19</sup>

At the end of 2018, Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil, São Paulo (IAB SP), a nonprofit institution whose objective is to discuss themes related to the professional activity of architects and urbanists, initiated efforts to conceive a network of architecture and urbanism archives. This network would aggregate institutions dedicated to the research, conservation, and dissemination of these materials, enabling the sharing of experiences, systems, and practices related to archive policies in addition to developing means for disseminating the work of the archives and carrying out joint cultural activities. This network, which started with a meeting in September 2019 attended by Monica Junqueira (FAU USP), Aline Sanches Coelho (IAU USP SC) Angelica Benatti (FAU Mackensie) Marianna Boghosian Al Assal (Escola da Cidade) and myself (Instituto Bardi) had not yet materialized, and shortly after Casa da Arquitetura announced the archival donation, IAB SP published an open letter furthering the urgency of this initiative.

There is a need for the immediate construction of a policy of incentive and valorization of collections of architecture and urbanism in the country. Such archives are essential to research in primary sources, as a critical methodological procedure for the development of readings on the history of Brazilian architecture. This lack of policy and financial incentive structures seems even more urgent due to the critical situation in the country where cultural policies are under constant attack and funds abatements. Within this context, the departure from the country of the professional collection of architect Paulo Mendes da

Rocha appears as an aggravating factor, which reinforces the urgency of a broad institutional articulation.<sup>20</sup>

One of the central concerns expressed by those opposing the donation is the belief that the physical distance would hamper access to the original material from Brazilian researchers, highlighting the value and importance of the archival location. Furthermore, the democratization of the archive enables intellectual and cultural developments based on the materials in the collection. Whether continuous, speculative, or contrasting, the advancement of activities and discussions around these themes promotes results in the contemporary context. The social role of an architectural archive should be a purpose inherent to its management and consequently to the creation of its operating policies regarding handling, accessibility, dissemination, and other matters; otherwise, they may result in a hermetic and sterile collection, telling but one story. "Archives are places of knowledge, memory, nourishment and power,"<sup>21</sup> and as such opening them to researchers, readers and visitors to consult for pleasure or study is a deliberate act to allow new readings and interpretations.

Since its creation, the mission of Instituto Bardi has been associated with an educational approach that is inseparable from its preservation in such a way that it is inconceivable to think about the safeguarding of the archive dissociated from its dissemination efforts in the form of research and cultural activities. The sharing of the archive's materials with students, researchers, and professionals interested in the discussions of art, architecture, and culture was the main reason for the creation of the Instituto Bardi. During my tenure as cultural director, Instituto Bardi received hundreds of requests for consultation, loans, and reproductions, from some of the most renowned and forward-thinking institutions, museums, publishers, editors, curators, authors, and general researchers from Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the USA, evidencing the contemporary relevance and reach of the Bardis' work.

The architecture archive has a particular role in allowing unbuilt architecture projects to find space and reverberation within the discipline. Lina Bo Bardi designed several architecture projects that were not built, and yet they are highly relevant within her work and key to understanding her *oeuvre* and legacy. Such is the case with the competition proposal for Anhangabaú public space, the Belém Cultural Center, and the Affordable Houses. Furthermore, archiving allows preservation of the legacy when conservation cannot be applied to the built environment. An example is the Chame-Chame house in Salvador. Designed by Bo Bardi and built in 1964, the house was demolished twenty years after its completion. Yet, all of its drawings and photographs are conserved in the archive, disseminating its relevance along with the ideas behind it.



**Figure 2**  
Lina Bo Bardi and Pietro Maria Bardi at Casa de Vidro, Vera Albuquerque, São Paulo, December 5th 1989. © Courtesy Instituto Bardi/Casa de Vidro.

The implementation of research and accessibility policies is fundamental to the dissemination of any archive. It should be defined according to each institution's specific conditions, in a manner that is consistent with its goals and priorities and the material that constitutes it. Despite the current and historical lack of governmental funds to support cultural institutions and heritage overall – or because of it – these institutions continuously reinvent themselves to preserve their heritage, survive financially, and maintain their missions of cultural dissemination.

### **The Creation of Instituto Bardi**

The case of the Bardi's archive is a peculiar one because their heritage comprised not only documents and works of art but also their dwelling: Casa de Vidro, a Glass House designed by Lina Bo Bardi, where the couple lived for forty years.

During their elderly years, Lina Bo Bardi and Pietro Maria Bardi (Figure 2) started taking actions to safeguard their cultural legacy.<sup>22</sup> In 1985, they filed an application for Casa de Vidro to be listed as historical heritage in São Paulo. In the letters compiled in the application process in Condephaat (Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage of São Paulo), the couple made clear that the

heritage listing of the house was part of a broader preservation plan of their design, which involved the foundation of a cultural institution at Casa de Vidro, and the historical listing of the furniture and artwork within it.

In a letter to Modesto Carvalhosa, then president of Condephaat, Pietro Bardi requests that the creation of a cultural institution in Casa de Vidro (at the time referred to by Lina and him as “Morumby house”) should be taken into consideration in the listing process:

Allow me to complete the idea of my wife, Lina, regarding the possibility of assigning our house and art objects to a foundation that can transform it into a curious example of a residence of immigrants, who contributed to the promotion of the arts in Brazil [...].

I think that the Morumby house, once restored, at our expense, with its forest-garden, could be set with a series of works of art of a certain value, to one day be visited by a public interested in knowing a part of the history of the renewal of national museography. [...] In practical terms: the Foundation's responsibility would be the conservation and safeguarding of a collection of works of art. Everything would depend, then, on the listing, by the Heritage authority, of the construction of an architectural singularity of the “50s.”<sup>23</sup>

The Condephaat approval document for the listing of Casa de Vidro states that the subsequent step after the listing would be the creation of the foundation, as suggested by Bardi, foreseeing, in accordance with the intention of institutional use of the heritage site, the construction of an area for the library and an auditorium at Casa de Vidro, as well as the opening of the listing process of the movable assets within the house.<sup>24</sup> The listing of Casa de Vidro by São Paulo state heritage authority Condephaat in 1987 was followed by the municipal listing by Conpresp in 1991 and a national one by Iphan in 2007. In 2010, the Bardi Institute filed a list of 146 movable assets in Iphan from the Bardis' collection, which resulted in the extension of the historical listing in 2013 to include works of art, furniture, design, and objects. It is worth mentioning that most of the Bardis' library was donated to MASP on the museum's thirtieth anniversary in 1977, inaugurating its Research Center.

In 1990, following Condephaat's listing of Casa de Vidro, the couple consolidated the plan of founding the Instituto Quadrante,<sup>25</sup> headquartered in the house to develop “cultural activities and studies related to the history of art and architecture.”<sup>26</sup> Pietro and Lina were named life-long president and vice-president, respectively; the Institute's founding members were professionals close to the couple. At a

constituent meeting chaired by Bardi in May 1990, the creation of a society was formalized with the intention of “instituting a private entity that can develop alone or in conjunction with the São Paulo Museum of Art – Assis Chateaubriand – MASP and, also, with national and foreign entities, cultural activities and studies related to the history of art and architecture.”<sup>27</sup>

The institute’s founding mission statement, which has been upheld to this today, established its vision and dissemination intent, declaring that its nonprofit objectives are cultural and artistic. The Bardi couple donated the resources obtained through the sale of a painting from their collection, “Portrait of Don Sebastian Maria Gabriel de Bourbon Bragança,” from 1820, by the Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746–1828), whose value constituted the endowment fund for the preservation of the Casa de Vidro and its collection to make the Institute financially viable. The endowment was extinct almost a decade ago. It was also established that in the event of the dissolution of the Institute, all its assets should be donated to MASP.

### **The Bardis’ Archive**

Collecting was an interest acquired by Lina in her childhood and maintained throughout her life. In her 1947 essay “Stones Against Diamonds,” she wrote:

Ever since I was a child I have collected things, small stones, little shells from the rocks in Abruzzi, pieces of wire, small screws. Then something enormous happened, a chicken (special for Sunday lunch), had in its stomach, a collection of bits of glass and stones polished by water action: green, rose, black, brown and white. Mother gave them to me as a present, and that was the beginning of my collection alongside my small box of face powder, made from blued steel from a German cannon after the victory in France during the First World War.<sup>28</sup>

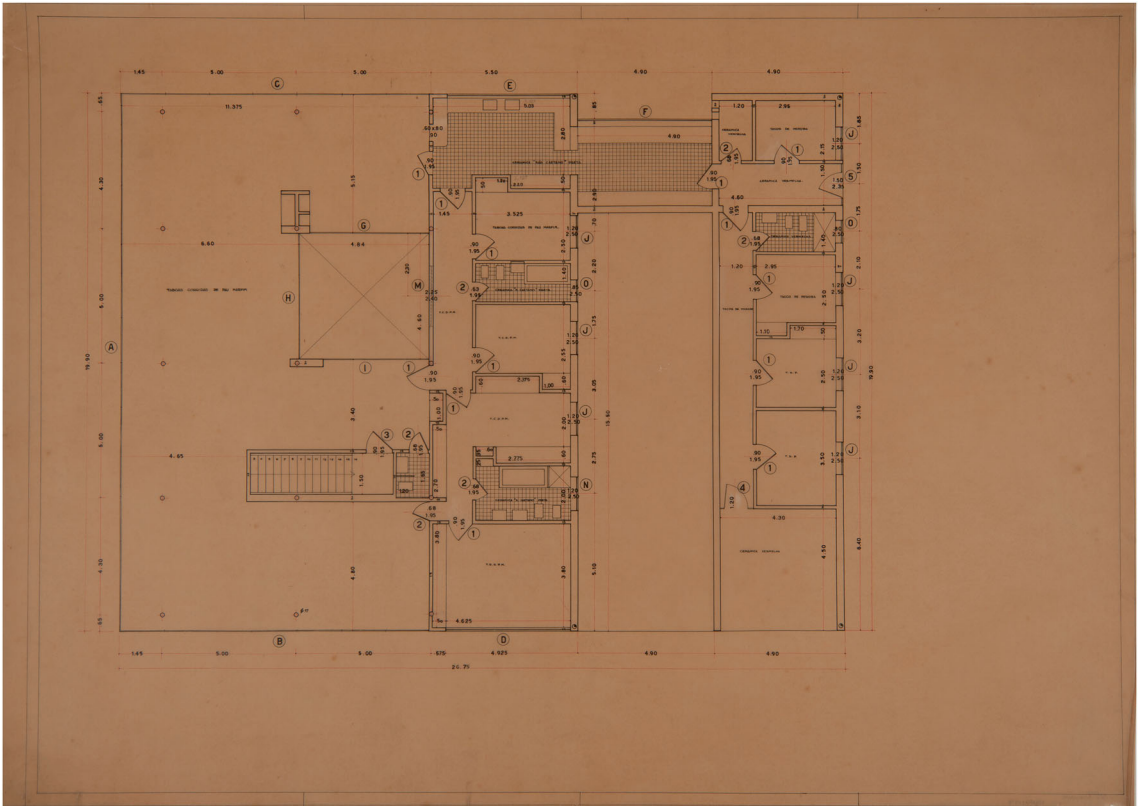
Her keen attention to pebbles and stones later reverberated in design details for projects in which they were integrated, such as the retaining walls of Casa de Vidro, the walls of Casa Valéria Cirell and Casa Chame-Chame, and the floors of SESC Pompeia. Lina advanced her collecting habit in Brazil, expanding her fondness for tiny objects and fragments to incorporate a collection of handcrafted objects and popular artwork from her trips to the Brazilian countryside. This practice was portrayed in the 1969 exhibition *A Mão do Povo Brasileiro* (The hand of the Brazilian people), curated by Bo Bardi for MASP, which displayed around a thousand objects crafted by Brazilians from the Northeast to the South of the country, introducing the popular material culture into the museum environment.<sup>29</sup>

Pietro shared the same personal interest in collecting. From 1917 to 1946, he kept a complete personal archive, with documents, letters, and books that he brought to Brazil from Italy. Decades into his professional activity in Brazil, in 1983, he trusted his Italian archive to Riccardo Mariani, who expressed the intention of writing a biography and organizing an exhibition, in an arrangement in which Mariani was committed to delivering the archive in its entirety to the Archivio di Stato di Roma following Bardi's desire. However, according to Eugenia Gorini,<sup>30</sup> former assistant to Bardi, Mariani, who received the uncatalogued but complete archive delivered neither the book nor the material to its promised destination. Mariani never answered the multiple contact attempts by Professor Bardi or his Milanese lawyers. The archive was partially delivered at the Archivio Storico Civico e Biblioteca Trivulziana at the Castello Sforzesco, in Milan – the location of the missing items, such as the letters between Bardi and Ezra Pound (1885–1972) is unknown. The loss of a significant part of his Italian archive was a great disappointment for Bardi. It prompted him to contemplate the preservation of his Brazilian archive, creating an institute at Casa de Vidro.

After the donation of Casa de Vidro to Instituto Bardi and Pietro's death the Institute decided to systematize the couple's belongings and patrimony into an archive. At that time, the Bardis' collection consisted of objects residing in the house, which included Lina's original drawings, architectural or not, Pietro's art collection including paintings and sculptures of varied artists and styles, along with pieces of Brazilian popular art, and furniture acquired through the decades, chinaware, home appliances, part of the couple's library, national and international magazines, photographs of their personal and professional lives, letters, notes, receipts and a vast array of documents and objects testifying to Lina and Pietro's lives and the relevance of their professional trajectories.

To this day, the Institute remains responsible for this patrimony. However, some valuable furniture pieces of the living room and artwork were sold during the sharing of assets with Bardi's heirs from his first marriage. As an art merchant, Pietro used to sell and often replace the artwork in the house, which gave the space a fluid feature. However, throughout their lives, many objects and artwork accumulated and filled Casa de Vidro. The quantity and variety of the remaining objects make their conservation and categorization a complex task. They must be understood within the physical context of Casa de Vidro and the territorial context of its garden. In this perspective, the residence itself is part of the archive as an example of elements and solutions of modern architecture, just like the garden, including more than 800 classified species of trees and plants, native and foreign, representing a small part of the Brazilian rainforest.

Although the archive location in Casa de Vidro, in the former guest rooms and service rooms (Figure 3) is not ideal according to aspects of



**Figure 3**  
Lina Bo Bardi, Casa de Vidro upper floor plan, ink on tracing paper 59.3 × 83.8 cm, São Paulo, c.1951. © Courtesy Instituto Bardi/ Casa de Vidro.

material safety, it has never been possible to implement a plan to transfer it to a more appropriate and safe location. The artistic, intellectual value and historic importance deserve a state-of-the-art environment-controlled museum type archival room. The couple's desire to build an annex in the land parcel of Casa de Vidro that could adequately accommodate the collection is expressed for the first time in a correspondence written by Pietro to Ettore Camesasca in 1976. The process of listing the residence by Condephaat in 1986 also contained drawings of a proposal to adapt the residential space to accommodate the Institute's headquarters that was yet to be created. Although these modifications were stated as the following steps upon its listing, the Institute's board members have not managed to raise the necessary funds to realize the project. The idea of the annex building did not evolve further than the initial sketches both by Pietro and Lina, and there are no registers of floor plans, sections, or elevations designed for that purpose. In 2015, Sonia Guarita do Amaral (1939–2019), then president of the Board, requested architect Roberto Loeb, from Sao Paulo, to design the annex for the house with an archive, auditorium, and visitor's center. The proposal was submitted and denied by the federal conservation heritage

authority (Condephaat). The Board then decided to suspend the plans for the annex, resubmitting a less ambitious project only in 2019. I designed the new conservation project supported by the research done for the Conservation and Management Plan that was developed with the support of the Getty Foundation.<sup>31</sup> Even this new smaller plan was reduced and only takes care of the urgent matters of glazing and steel frames, entrance gates, roof tiling impermeabilization and partial tree management but no changes for a better archive location, nor the needed adaptations for visitors, such as a restroom module and an accessibility ramp. The Institute is attempting to improve the internal articulation of projects, to implement a clear vision for its archive and cultural program. Until today, the Institute's collection remains located in the bedrooms at the Casa de Vidro, with only a few adjustments.

Beyond the materials that belong to Instituto Bardi, some of Lina and Pietro's belongings were given to colleagues and friends during their lifetimes. These include drawings, photographs, and even part of Lina's wardrobe, which was donated back to the Institute by Isabella Callia, daughter of the Callia Maris couple and life-long friends of Lina and Pietro, valuing the integrity of the Bardis' inheritance. However, the owners still keep original photographs and drawings. The construction of a network between the owners of materials that are part of the Bardis' legacy is yet to be created as a necessary step to facilitate a complete understanding of the couple's work by researchers.

Such a diverse set of belongings allows different stories to be told, weaving threads and connections that can deepen our analysis of the Bardis' ideas, questioning and reviewing them. It is the role of art and architecture critics to theorize Lina and Bardi's work, and for that, the recognition of the couple's archive is essential.

There is also work to be done in deciding how to regulate the availability of documents to the general public, if any, potentially differentiating public and private access to materials in the collection. This distinction of access usually regards personal materials that might be sensitive due to their relation to living people. To complement the discussion of personal narratives within the archive and the emergence of the couple's global image, together and as individuals, it is also necessary to consider the nonphysical elements contributing to this construction. This relates to the oral stories shared by the people who maintained a relationship with them. These personal details raise questions about the threshold between the artist and their *oeuvre*. The archive must consider if such stories should be documented and incorporated in its collection as a tool for better understanding the persona behind the archived works.

### **Archive's Systematization**

The first effort of organization was done in 1989 by Lina's collaborators Marcelo Ferraz, and Marcelo Suzuki with her support in preparation for a short one-week exhibition at FAU-USP. Shortly after Lina Bo Bardi passed away in 1992, Ferraz, André Veiner and Suzuki together with Isa Grispum

Ferraz started a more systematic organization with the purpose of publishing a book following Lina's instructions to pursue such publication only after she died, using a squared album-like format. The book was the base for her archive.<sup>32</sup> With the development of the publication Ferraz also organized a series of exhibitions around the world in recognition of the architect's *oeuvre*. The cataloging of Lina's drawings was done by project and in chronological order. Since Pietro was still residing at Casa de Vidro, the Institute was headquartered at the Studio, a small wooden construction built as a workspace for Lina's collaborators in 1986. The activities of the Institute were transferred to the main house in 2009 to optimize and improve operability in the proximity of the archive.

The first systematization with a museological approach occurred in 2007, with the coordination of Anna Carboncini, a former assistant to Bardi and a board member of the Institute and the team of four conservation technicians directed by Malu Villas Bôas, an employee of the archive. In 2009, with the support of Caixa Econômica Federal (CEF), the Institute catalogued many drawings, systematizing the archive, accommodating the peculiar diversity of Lina's work within international archival standards. Furthermore, Lina's entire drawing archive, which comprised 7,500 items, was digitized in high resolution. In 2011, with the support of the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP),<sup>33</sup> the Institute carried out a few infrastructure adaptations. It also purchased dehumidifiers, flat file cabinets, rolling art storage racks, and mobile shelving to better accommodate the archive in the service and guest rooms of the house. Also, in 2011 with Petrobras' support, a number of pieces from Lina's archive were cataloged, mostly textual documents, adding up to the twenty-thousand files, achieving the complete cataloguing of the Bo Bardi archive. An understanding of the archive was established, recognizing its conservation as a priority but furthermore the possibilities for its exploration, use and interpretation allowing for dozens of publications, exhibitions and articles that have taken Bo Bardi's work in the last decade to a continuous rising appreciation that has permeated to new generations of architects, designers, and theorists.

During the early organization of the archive, a decision was made to separate the material between the Lina Bo Bardi Fund and P. M. Bardi Fund. The Lina Bo Bardi Fund includes drawings of architectural projects (Figures 4 and 5), illustrations, scenography and expography drawings, industrial design, costumes, and jewelry, as well as a documentary archive of 11,500 documents related to her professional activity, and a collection of 15,000 photographs of projects carried out throughout Lina's life. The P. M. Bardi Fund contains correspondence with national and international figures and photographs related to artists and exhibitions,<sup>34</sup> manuscripts, research documents, and rare books.

According to Anna Carboncini,<sup>35</sup> the separation of the archive was a questionable decision since the couple was united, both in life and in professional ideas. The division ended up giving greater

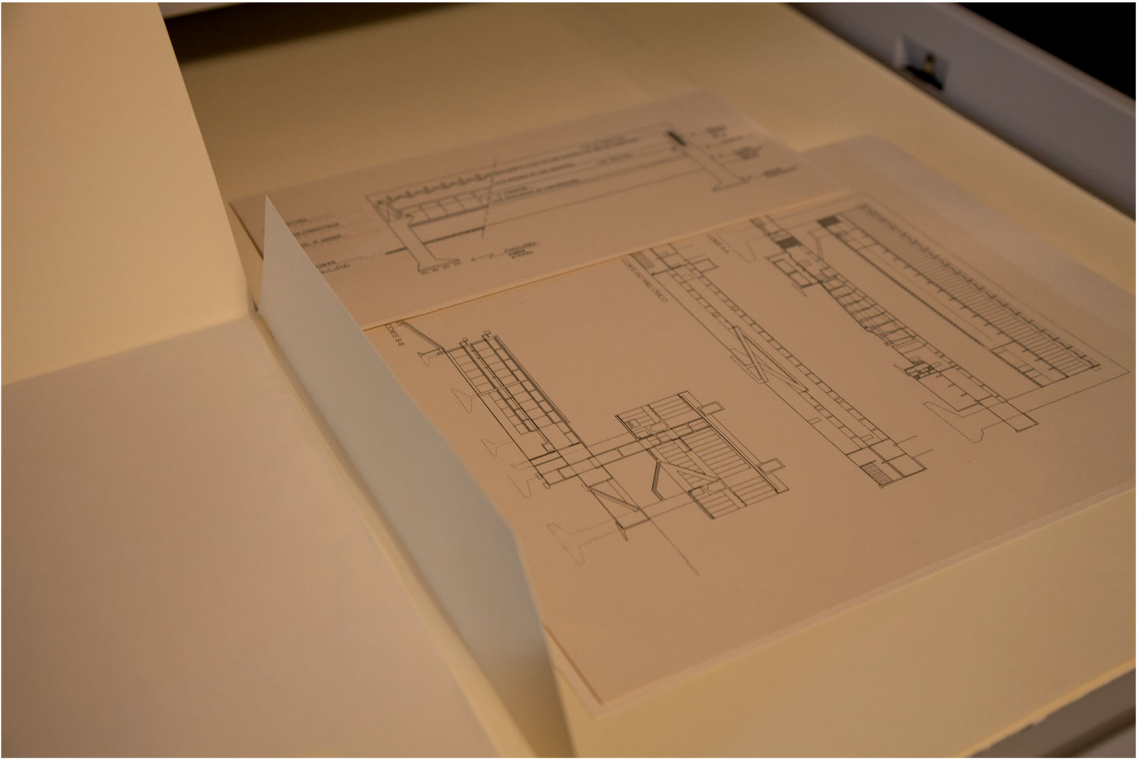


**Figure 4**  
Instituto Bardi's archive room, flat file cabinets and archivist showing an original color hand drawing titled, *Belvedere Perspective*, ink and dry pastels over parchment paper, 49.9 × 69.5 cm of MASP by Lina Bo Bardi. Photo by Marina Lima D'Imperio, São Paulo, 2017. © Courtesy Instituto Bardi/Casa de Vidro.

visibility to Lina's collection over Bardi's. She credits this outcome to the visual qualities of Lina's archive when compared with Pietro's work, which comprises written theories, ideas, and connections, but includes less visual materials.

The systematization of Lina's original drawings was a unique endeavor given the diversity of the files to be catalogued – the lifelong collection is composed not only of technical drawings, which accounted for about 20 percent of them, consisting mainly of mixed-media freehand drawings, process and development drawings. The Institute decided to create a combined cataloging method between architecture and museology, in an unconventional, although simplified method, departing from the material's specific aspects.

Lina's documentary archive was organized in a complex framework. It was decided that it would be appropriate to organize the documents through an archival numbering system different from those used for the drawings catalogued by projects. The documents, magazines, and photograph boxes are stored in high-density mobile racks due to the small space availability, making it accessible to senior researchers by appointment only, attended by the Institute's archival assistant. The



**Figure 5**

Instituto Bardi's archive room, flat file cabinets and technical drawings of MASP by Lina Bo Bardi, photo by Marina Lima D'Imperio, São Paulo, 2017. © Courtesy Instituto Bardi/Casa de Vidro.

cataloguing effort enabled the development of an online platform for preliminary research in the collection without physical contact with original drawings. Although outdated, access through the website is the main tool for researchers worldwide to visualize (in low resolution) Lina's drawings; other archival material like pictures, letters, documents and magazines are not available for online visualization.<sup>36</sup>

Although quite exemplary compared to other private Brazilian art or architecture archives the Instituto Bardi archive's cataloging and organization still needs updating. The Board needs to reach consensus on the guidelines and policies for the better functioning of the archive, especially regarding costs and permits for reproduction copyrights, which today account for a significant portion of Instituto Bardis' annual budget. The integrity and quality of the cataloging work impacts its use value and research. Regarding the criteria for systematizations, the Guide to the Archival Care of Architectural Records states that:

Archival arrangement is based on the philosophy that each document is created for a purpose as part of a process which gives the document its meaning. By placing each document

within this context and ensuring that it is assigned to its proper place in an organizational framework, archival arrangement is designed to protect all of the evidence that is associated with the historical circumstances of its creation, and to ensure that it can be interpreted and reinterpreted.<sup>37</sup>

As the fifth article of the 1964 Venice Charter for monuments states, “[t]he conservation of monuments is always favored by its designation as having a useful function for society,”<sup>38</sup> a notion that Fabiana Perazolo and Flora Bello Milanez suggest could be extended to architectural archives. The archive should guarantee the physical integrity of its contents over time. Still, their preservation should be supported by complementary actions that ensure its accessibility and relevance to contemporary society and a broad public beyond architects and architecture enthusiasts. David Peyceré – a French architecture archive expert has written extensively on the subject of access and dissemination of architectural archives, noting that “outreach to the general public naturally is not part of the mandate of all archives. However, since buildings cannot be brought into the exhibition hall, architectural records can be an effective part of exhibitions, publications and visual displays.”<sup>39</sup>

In this sense, the everyday work at the Bardis’ archive allows Lina’s buildings to travel together with her drawings, documents, objects and photographs and expose her work as an exemplary designer, and that of P.M. Bardi as a laudable museum director and visionary educator in the Brazilian cultural landscape of the twentieth century. The archive’s management through its different administrative generations has positioned the Bardis’ ideas at hand in the present national and international architecture scene through exhibitions, publications and seminars obtaining recognition and even long-overdue posthumous awards.<sup>40</sup>

Lina Bo Bardi’s philosophy on the relevance of historical heritage in the present was expressed during a 1989 lecture at the University of São Paulo when she was asked to describe her ideas for the preservation of historic buildings and restoration work.

[...] this is what I was talking about when I spoke of the historical present. In architectural practice, there is no such a thing as the past. Whatever still exists today, and has not died, is the historical present. What you have to save – or rather, not save, but preserve – are the typical features and characteristics of a time that is part of our human heritage.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the significant internal and external challenges, as the custodian of the Bardis’ work, Instituto Bardi intends to activate the archive through the preservation, dissemination, and translation of values inherent to Lina’s and Pietro’s professional practices into the contemporary

conversation to ensure that the cultural legacy left by the Bardi couple is carried out through time and reinterpreted as part of our historical present.

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### Notes

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2. Ibid.
3. Officially named Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi. In 2015 the Institute's Board, following my proposal, voted in favor to adopt the simplified name Instituto Bardi as a communication strategy, updating graphically its logo and adding "Casa de Vidro" to it.
4. Lina Bo Bardi's archive accounts for over 11,500 documents of which over 6,500 are drawings related to her professional activity, as well as a collection of 15,000 photographs of all projects carried out throughout her life. Pietro Maria Bardi's archive comprises 12,000 items ca.
5. Lina Bo Bardi, "Curriculum Literário," in *Lina Bo Bardi*, ed. Marcelo Carvalho Ferraz (São Paulo: Instituto Bardi / Casa de Vidro, Romano Guerra Editora, 2018), 11.
6. Renato Anelli, "The Bardi Couple's Project in Brazil: From Cultural Action to the Construction of Their Own History," in *Casa de vidro: Lina Bo Bardi Architect. Conservation Management Plan*, ed. Renato Anelli; supervised by Marcelo Suzuki (São Paulo: Instituto Bardi / Casa de Vidro, 2019).
7. Agnaldo Farias, "Architecture Exhibitions in Brazil, A Brief History," *Revista arq.urb* 20 (December 2017): 135–139.
8. Ibid., 137.
9. Jordan Kauffman, *Drawing on Architecture: The Object of Lines, 1970–1990* (Cambridge, MA; London, UK: MIT Press, 2018).
10. I thank Fabiana Perazolo and Flora Bello Milanez for suggesting to look at the work of Eduardo Augusto Costa.
11. Eduardo Augusto Costa, "Arquivos e Coleções de Arquitetura: A revisão historiográfica em debate," Proceedings of the 13<sup>o</sup> Seminário DOCOMOMO Brasil, Salvador, October 2019.

12. See: <http://www.arq.ufmg.br/museu/index.php/laboratorio-de-fotodocumentacao-sylvio-vasconcellos> (accessed February 20, 2021).
13. Eliana de Azevedo Marques, "Serviço de Biblioteca e Informação da FAU USP," *Revista da pós 20* (December 2006): 226–238. See: <https://www.revistas.usp.br/posfau/article/download/43495/47117/> (accessed June 22, 2020).
14. Costa, "Arquivos e coleções de arquitetura."
15. This followed Paulo Mendes' 2015 donation of the project Museu Nacional dos Coches and the 2018 donation of seven architecture projects to the same institution. "ACERVO DE PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA NA CASA DA ARQUITECTURA." See: <http://casadaarquitectura.pt/acervo-paulo-mendes-da-rocha-na-casa-da-arquitectura/> (accessed November 19, 2020).
16. José Lira, "Arquitetura, acervos e barbárie," *Folha de São Paulo*, December 9, 2020. See: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/opiniao/2020/09/arquitetura-acervos-e-barbarie.shtml> (accessed November 19, 2020). Giacomo Pirazzoli, "Paulo Mendes da Rocha, os arquivos e as feridas coloniais do Brasil," *Vitruvius, Resenhas Online* 19, 226.01 (October 2020). See: <https://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/resenhasonline/19.226/7906> (accessed December 9, 2020).
17. PORTAL VITRUVIUS, "Um abraço no Paulo. Em respeito a Paulo Mendes da Rocha," *Drops, Vitruvius* 21 (September 2020): 156.03. See: <https://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/drops/20.156/7882> (accessed February 20, 2021).
18. FAU USP: [https://www.instagram.com/p/CE60\\_iSgnoT/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CE60_iSgnoT/) (accessed November 19, 2020).
19. See: Casa da Arquitetura instagram account <https://www.instagram.com/p/CFAjH8uFNXV/> and open letter at <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/opiniao/2020/09/o-sentido-publico-e-universal-dos-acervos-de-arquitetura.shtml> (accessed January 10, 2021).
20. "Rede de acervos de arquitetura e urbanismo," Institute of Architects of Brazil, São Paulo. Translation by author. See: <https://www.iabsp.org.br/rede-de-acervos-de-arquitetura-e-urbanismo/> (accessed November 19, 2020).
21. Randall C. Jimerson, "Archives for all. The importance of Archives in Society," 15th Congresso Brasileiro de Arquivologia, June 2008. See: <https://brapci.inf.br/index.php/res/download/56666> or <https://my.tlu.edu/ICS/icsfs/JimersonArchivesForAll18pg.pdf?target=0df0c395-ce3e-4678-9ade-19fb68245749> (accessed March 19, 2021).
22. Accounts of friends and collaborators of the couple often suggest that Lina was initially reluctant about Pietro's idea of creating a foundation, but later embraced it.
23. Pietro Maria Bardi, letter to Modesto Carvalhosa, October 29, 1985. Council for the Defense of Historical, Archaeological, Artistic and Tourist Heritage, process number 24938.
24. Deliberation document for the listing of Casa de Vidro by Condephaat, signed by Modesto Souza Barros Carvalhosa in September 1986.
25. The name Instituto Quadrante had to be changed due to a namerights reclamation. It was changed to Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi, now named and communicated as Instituto Bardi.
26. Instituto Quadrante's foundation document, São Paulo, May 15, 1990.
27. Ibid.
28. Lina Bo Bardi, "Stones Against Diamonds (1947)," in *Stones Against Diamonds*, ed. Lina Bo Bardi (London: Architectural Association, 2013), 35.
29. Fabiana Perazolo and Flora Bello Milanez drew my attention to Lina's early collection habits and sensibly linked it to "The hand of the Brazilian people" exhibition, which indeed exposes Lina Bo Bardi's interest in collecting.
30. Eugênia Gorini Esmeraldo, "Breve comentário sobre o papel de Pietro Maria Bardi e a fundação do MASP," *Modernidades Latina: Os Italianos e os Centros do Modernismo Latino-americano*, seminar organized by Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo. See: <http://www.mac.usp.br/mac/conteudo/academico/publicacoes/anais/modernidade/pdfs/>

- EUG\_PORT.pdf (accessed February 20, 2021).
31. In 2016 Instituto Bardi was granted \$195,000 USD by the Keeping It Modern Program of the Getty Foundation. The project was coordinated by Renato Anelli with the collaboration of Marcelo Suzuki, a team from the Instituto de Arquitetura e Urbanismo de São Carlos and myself representing Instituto Bardi.
  32. Marcelo Ferraz interviewed by Maíra Teixeira, in Maíra Teixeira, "As casas de Lina Bo Bardi e os sentidos de habitat" (Doctoral dissertation, Brasília, Universidade de Brasília, 2014), 214.
  33. São Paulo State Research Support Foundation. The project was prepared in late 2009 and approved in April 2011.
  34. The Bardi's archive was quite fragmented since many things were left in his office at MASP, making the archive belonging to the institute only a portion of Bardi's life collection.
  35. Anna Carboncini, "Private Collections: Constitution, Archives and Dissemination," Architecture Archives Seminar, Instituto de Arquitetos do Brasil, São Paulo (February 6, 2020). See: <https://www.iabsp.org.br/?noticias=acompanhe-ao-vivo-o-seminario-acervos-de-arquitetura-iabsp-itaucultural> (accessed February 20, 2021).
  36. [http://www.institutobardi.com.br/busca\\_banco.asp](http://www.institutobardi.com.br/busca_banco.asp) (accessed February 20, 2021).
  37. Maygene Daniels, "Arrangement of Architectural Records," in *A Guide to the Archival Care of Architectural Records, 19th–20th Centuries* (Paris: International Council on Archives (ICA), Section on Architectural Records, 2000), 75. See: <https://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ArchitectureEN.pdf> (accessed June 23, 2020).
  38. The Venice Charter, Italy, 1964. See: <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/uploads/ckfinder/arquivos/Carta%20de%20Veneza%201964.pdf> (accessed June 23, 2020).
  39. David Peyceré, "Access and Dissemination: Research and Exhibitions," in *A Guide to the Archival Care of Architectural Records, 19th–20th Centuries* (Paris: International Council on Archives (ICA), Section on Architectural Records, 2000), 119.
  40. Lina Bo Bardi will be granted at the inauguration of the 17th International Architecture Exhibition the Special Golden Lion award, in memoriam, for Lifetime Achievement from La Biennale di Venezia. This was announced on March 8th 2021, see <https://www.labiennale.org/en/news/lina-bo-bardi-special-golden-lion-lifetime-achievement-memorial> (accessed February 20, 2021).
  41. Lina Bo Bardi, "An Architectural Lesson (2013)," in *Stones Against Diamonds*, ed. Bo Bardi, 116–117.

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