

INTERNATIONAL BRUTALISMS

'BRAZILIAN CONCRETE' & BRUTALIST ARCHITECTURE

STUDENT RESEARCHER | RAPHAEL SELBY | Master of Architecture Student
SUPERVISOR | DR. STEPHEN PARNELL | Lecturer in Architecture

The research is centred on the current discussions on cultural heritage and importance of brutalist architecture in Britain and around the world, with focus on the Brazilian context. These buildings, loved or hated, are of great architectural importance from 1950s-1980s.

In my research I analysed specific brutalist buildings in Brazil (a country with a rich heritage in concrete architecture) and held interviews with academics and architects, to formulate an understanding of the importance of brutalism in the Brazilian context, and how it adds to the discourse of 'International Brutalism'.

From the field study it was clear that key characteristics of Brazilian Brutalism are its material and structural honesty (the way the building's construction is visually expressed); an interplay between monumentality and the human scale; and an integration of public space which creates a blurring of public/private space and inside/outside space.

RESEARCH AIMS | WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BRUTALISM IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT? | HOW DOES 'BRAZILIAN BRUTALISM' RELATE TO AN 'INTERNATIONAL BRUTALISM'?

METHODOLOGY | BACKGROUND READING ON 'BRUTALISM' & PERIODICALS | VISITING ARCHITECTURE JOURNALS & BRUTALIST BUILDINGS IN BRAZIL | INTERVIEWS & MEETINGS WITH ARCHITECTS & ACADEMICS.

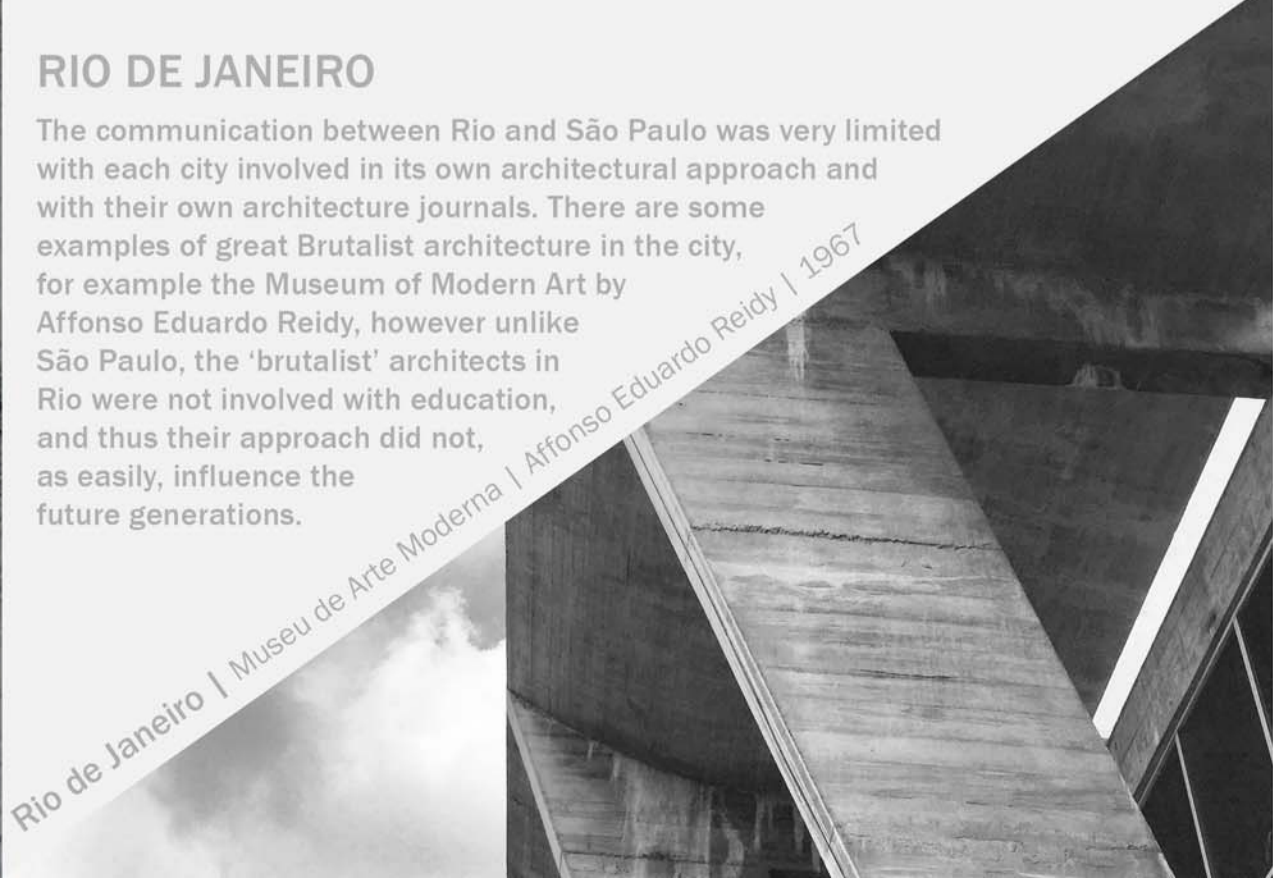
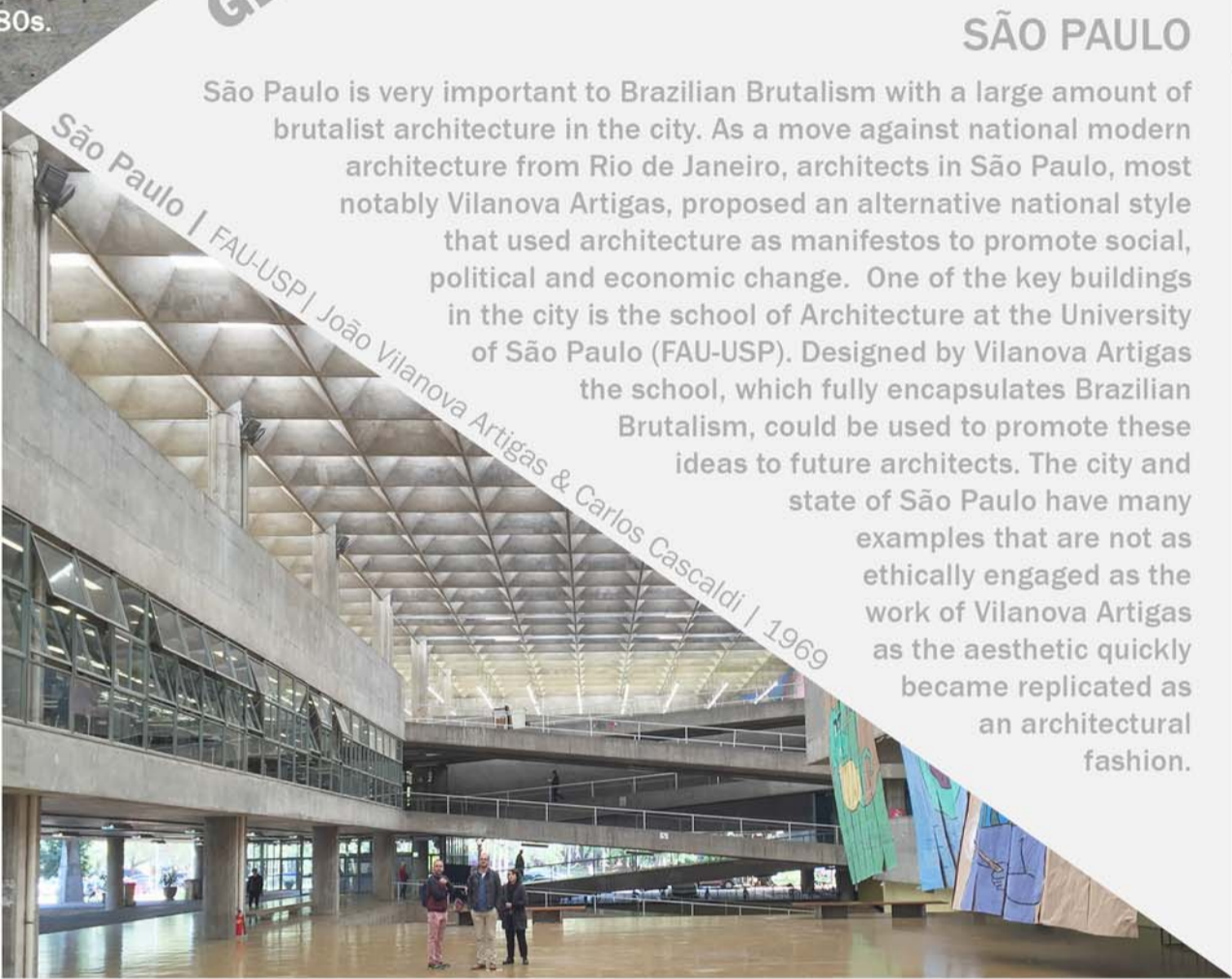


MAP OF BRAZIL | CITIES VISITED

RESEARCH BLOG
www.brazilianconcrete.wordpress.com



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW



SÃO PAULO

São Paulo is very important to Brazilian Brutalism with a large amount of brutalist architecture in the city. As a move against national modern architecture from Rio de Janeiro, architects in São Paulo, most notably Vilanova Artigas, proposed an alternative national style that used architecture as manifestos to promote social, political and economic change. One of the key buildings in the city is the school of Architecture at the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP). Designed by Vilanova Artigas the school, which fully encapsulates Brazilian Brutalism, could be used to promote these ideas to future architects. The city and state of São Paulo have many examples that are not as ethically engaged as the work of Vilanova Artigas as the aesthetic quickly became replicated as an architectural fashion.

BRASÍLIA

In Brasília, two building typologies were of particular interest. With the construction of Brasília as the country's new capital in 1960, foreign countries were invited to construct new embassies in the city, with a brief to reflect the modernity of Brasília as well as its own country. Several of the embassies that were constructed have a brutalist aesthetic with the Italian and Mexican embassies being of particular interest. The University of Brasília also involved the construction of various Brutalist buildings with interesting integrations of inside/outside /public/private space as the buildings are situated within the university campus.

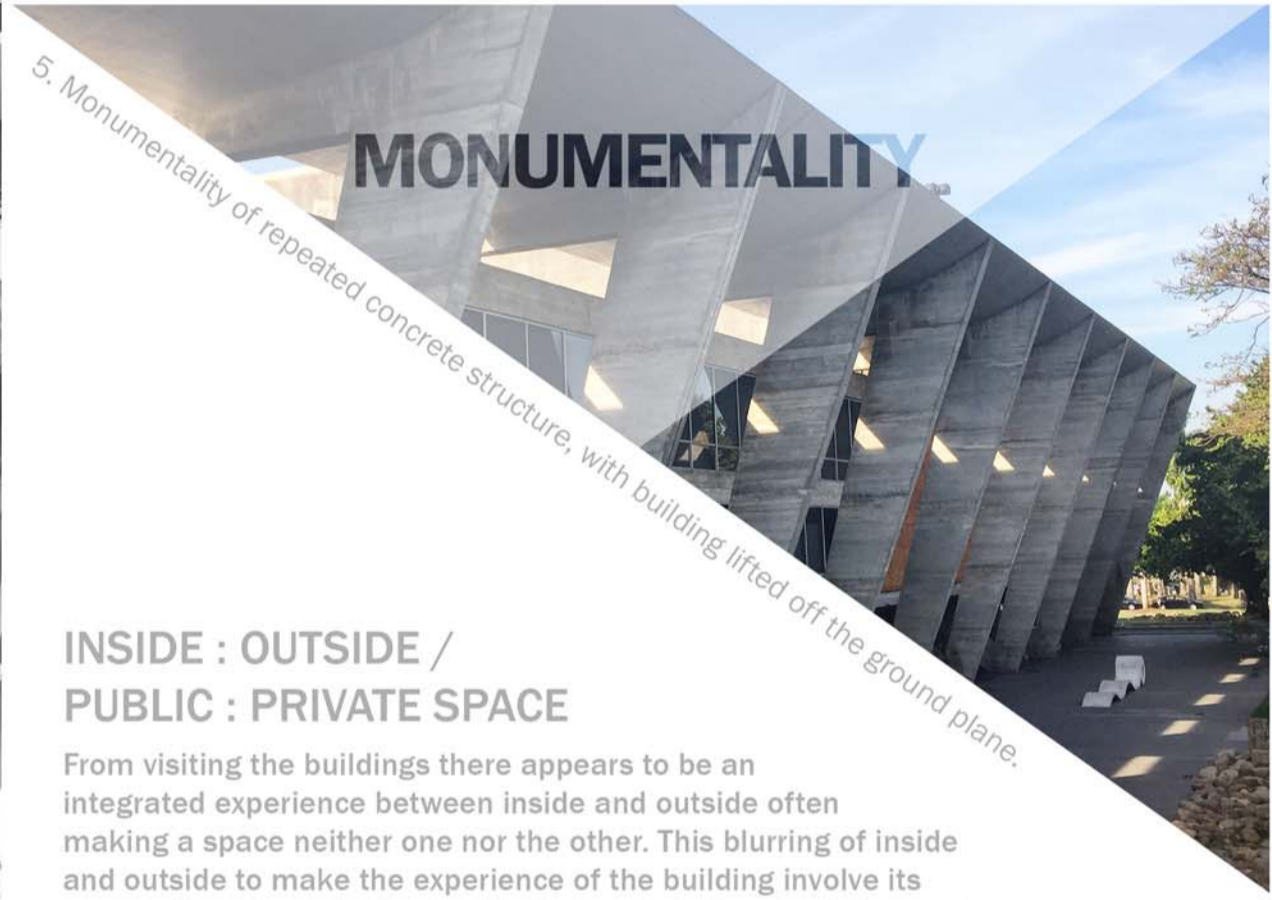
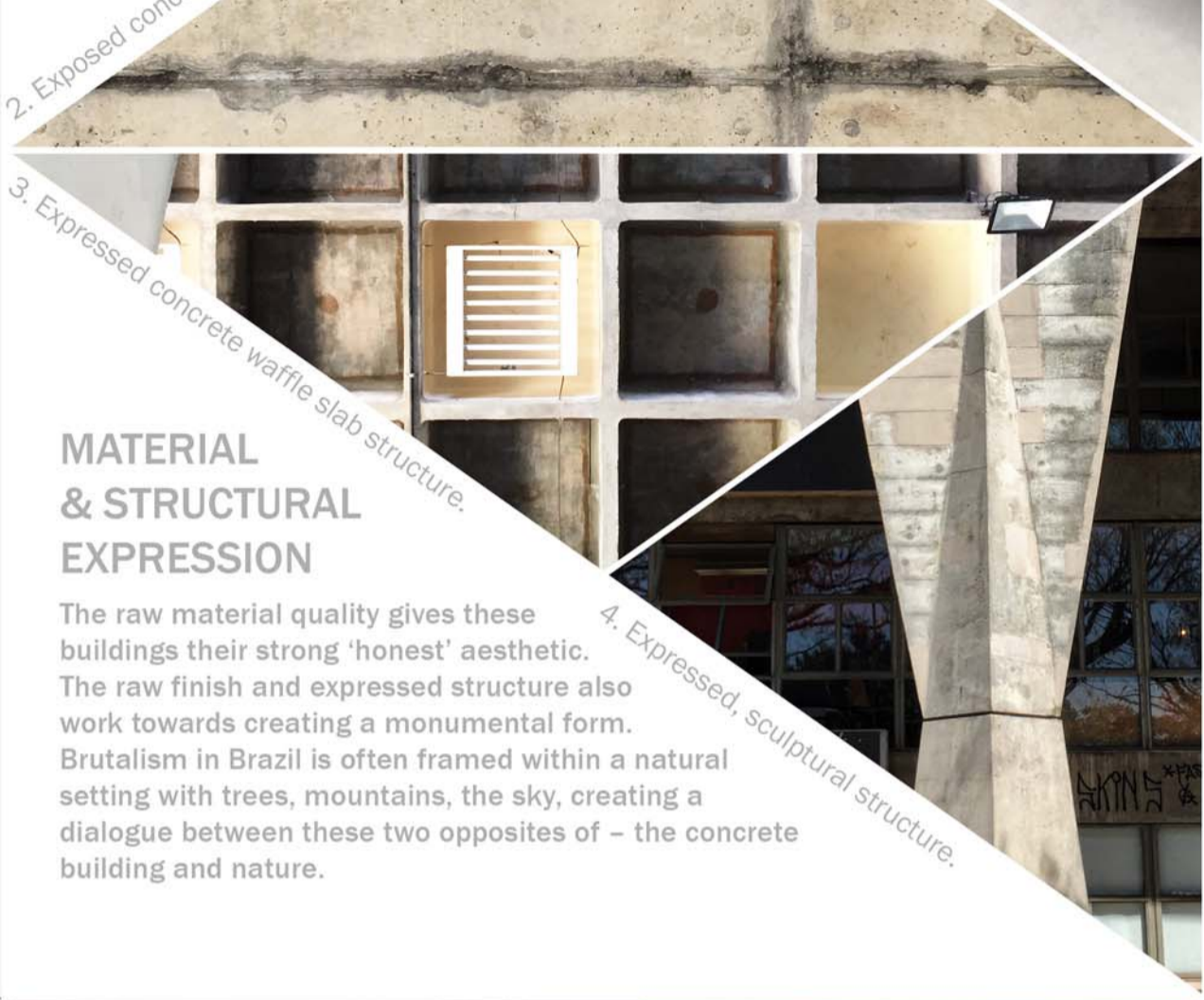
SALVADOR

Salvador is famous for the colonial architecture of its World Heritage protected Historic Centre, however in the 70s an Administration Centre for the State of Bahia was built outside the city, with various brutalist examples by the architect João Filgueiras Lima. The three buildings I focused on built one year after the other (a church, an exhibition centre and the secretary buildings) tell very interesting stories, with regard to their architectural intent and their current condition and use.

RIO DE JANEIRO

The communication between Rio and São Paulo was very limited with each city involved in its own architectural approach and with their own architecture journals. There are some examples of great Brutalist architecture in the city, for example the Museum of Modern Art by Affonso Eduardo Reidy, however unlike São Paulo, the 'brutalist' architects in Rio were not involved with education, and thus their approach did not, as easily, influence the future generations.

RESEARCH THOUGHTS & ANALYSIS



MATERIAL & STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION

MATERIAL & STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION

The raw material quality gives these buildings their strong 'honest' aesthetic. The raw finish and expressed structure also work towards creating a monumental form. Brutalism in Brazil is often framed within a natural setting with trees, mountains, the sky, creating a dialogue between these two opposites of - the concrete building and nature.

MONUMENTALITY

INSIDE : OUTSIDE / PUBLIC : PRIVATE SPACE

From visiting the buildings there appears to be an integrated experience between inside and outside often making a space neither one nor the other. This blurring of inside and outside to make the experience of the building involve its surroundings has a lot to do with the tropical climate of the country.

The ground plane is very important in Brazilian Brutalism as it's manipulation decides how the building is entered and approached. It is often a moment of transition, a transition between public space to private space; a transition from space designed by the architect and not; and a transition from leaving the ground and descending or ascending into the building. The ground plane is often used to bring public space into the building with minimal thresholds creating the blurring of inside/outside.

INSIDE : OUTSIDE / PUBLIC : PRIVATE SPACE

BUILDING KEY

1. Anhembi Tênis Clube | João Batista Vilanova Artigas & Carlos Cascaaldi | 1961 | São Paulo
2. Galeria Adriana Varejão | Taccoa Arquitetos | 2008 | Brumadinho
3. Restaurante UnB | José Galbinski & Antonio Carlos Moraes de Castro | 1975 | Brasília
4. FAU-USP | João Vilanova Artigas & Carlos Cascaaldi | 1969 | São Paulo
5. Museu de Arte Moderna | Affonso Eduardo Reidy | 1967 | Rio de Janeiro
6. Museu Brasileiro da Escultura | Paulo Mendes da Rocha | 1995 | São Paulo
7. Instituto Central de Ciências UnB | Oscar Niemeyer & João Filgueiras Lima | 1971 | Brasília
8. Reitoria UnB | Paulo Zimbres | 1975 | Brasília
9. Vila Aspicuelta | Taccoa Arquitetos | 2013 | São Paulo
10. Galeria Leme | Paulo Mendes da Rocha & METRO Arquitetos | 2012 | São Paulo
11. Mexican Embassy | Teodoro González de León & Abraham Zabludovsky | 1976 | Brasília
12. Escola Jardim Ipê | Decio Tozzi | 1965 | São Bernardo do Campo

ETHIC : AESTHETIC

It is easy to group buildings by a shared aesthetic, in terms of their materiality, monumental form and demonstration of structure. In terms of the ethic it is more difficult as not all brutalist examples are driven by an ethical manifesto; as well as buildings which are not considered brutalist which do have an ethical approach.

On the other hand, 'Brutalism as an aesthetic and not an ethic' is dependent on the definition of 'ethic' - if the architectural style was replicated and copied the ethic of the material quality and expression of structure is carried through, even if a political or social ethic is lost. This 'ethic' is of particular interest as the aesthetic is the result of the ethical treatment of material and structure.

ETHIC : AESTHETIC

'CONTEMPORARY BRUTALISM'

Concrete is key to all of Brazil's modern architecture and in São Paulo especially this resulted in the addition of various brutalist buildings to the city's urban fabric. These buildings, most notably the city's school of architecture FAU-USP, have been a great influence for younger architects in the city. This has resulted in a revival of a brutalist aesthetic from various young architects who appreciate the materiality and unique qualities that concrete possesses, and have demonstrated this is some excellent recent works.

'CONTEMPORARY BRUTALISM'

HUMAN SCALE

MONUMENTALITY & HUMAN SCALE

The image of Brutalism is often of a building which demands attention due to its strong presence and exaggeration of scale, creating monumentality. This monumental scale disrupts the relationship between a human being and the building and therefore attention is made to smaller-scale details which relate to the human experience, creating two opposite scales.

MAINTENANCE

In the majority of buildings that were visited their visual appearance had been affected by weathering and discolouring as well as buildings that had structural problems. There were also buildings that required adapting for function or programme. This all leads to decisions having to be made in terms of maintaining the integrity of the building, however, depending on who are making these decisions and for what motive, the architectural qualities of the building are often ignored. This was very obvious in the case of the gymnasium at Clube Atlético Paulistano and the school Escola Jardim Ipê.

MAINTENANCE

CONCLUSION

The age of the country is key to Brutalism in Brazil and the meaning of Brutalism in the country. Due to the country only being established in 1889, Brutalism was a movement to create an architectural identity for the country in terms of a cultural manifestation of its social, political and economic present and its aims for the future. Brutalism began as architectural manifestos but as its architectural qualities began to influence others it became a fashion that was replicated and interpreted around the country. This however, does not mean that Brutalism is purely an aesthetic as its approach to material, structure and space is ethical.

Brutalism in Brazil may be chronological similar, and aesthetically similar to global Brutalism but as the country was not affected significantly by WW2 its historical background is completely different. The buildings themselves, have a different spatial organisation and relationship to public/ exterior space, compared to other brutalist architectures, due to Brazil's tropical climate. These factors contribute to the overall experience of the building, which makes 'Brazilian Brutalism' different to other countries.

