

Vilanova Artigas and the Meanings of Concrete in Brazil

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Brazil has a recognised modern architectural tradition, led by Oscar Niemeyer, whose work was distinguished since 1943 by his free forms enabled by reinforced concrete. Before that, however, the country already harboured important yet less known experiments with concrete, which were responsible for a wide process of modernisation of the productive relations in construction. The architect João Vilanova Artigas participated in these two moments bringing relevant theoretical and project-based positions to understand the meanings of reinforced concrete in Brazil. Finally, in 1956, different criticisms converged to make Artigas the leader of a radical school based on exposed reinforced concrete. The three moments that divide this text contemplate the changes in construction in Brazil, and point out inflections in Artigas' production: his early 'constructive moral'; his approximation to Niemeyer; and the displacement of monumental figurativeness to the very construction.

Biographies:

Felipe Contier is an architect (FAU USP, 2009), a PhD student in the history of architecture (IAU USP). He works on the relations between architecture and construction, focusing on the 1960s.

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