

LINA BO BARDI



Lina Bo Bardi on the eve of the inauguration of the exhibition "Bahia no Ibirapuera", in Sao Paulo.
Photo Mirosław-Javurek. Courtesy Instituto Bardi.

The Journal #3 presents *Oficina Bo Bardi*, a film directed by Silvia Davoli, Andrea Balossi Restelli and Francisca Parrino.

The documentary tells us about the extraordinary work of Lina Bo Bardi in Brazil, the years she spent in Salvador de Bahia between 1958 and 1964, and her deep and immersive knowledge into the culture and traditions of a country, she used to define her "nation by choice".

This year the Italian architect, naturalized as a Brazilian citizen, is the recipient of the Special Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in memoriam of the 17th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, a recognition that sounds like a coronation for a queen of twentieth-century architecture.

In recommending this award, Hashim Sarkis expressed the following motivation: "Her career as a designer, editor, curator, and activist reminds us of the role of the architect as convener and importantly, as the builder of collective visions. Lina Bo Bardi also exemplifies the perseverance of the architect in difficult times whether wars, political strife, or immigration, and her ability to remain creative, generous, and optimistic throughout".

“Digging deeply into a civilization, into the simplest and the poorest, until you reach the populist roots, that is to understand the history of a country.”

Lina Bo Bardi

from Lina Bo Bardi, "L'impasse del design. L'esperienza del Nordest del Brasile", San Paolo, ILBPMB; Milan, Charta 1995, p. 25



OFICINA BO BARDI
Silvia Davoli, Andrea Balossi Restelli and Francisca Parrino
Italy, 2006, 26'

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR THE DIRECTOR

Why did you decide to do documentaries?

Silvia Davoli*: For the work I do (art historian / collecting) I have often dealt with very creative characters, some adventurous, others less. The trait that unites them, however, is that all have left a concrete sign of their passage. I like to recompose their stories and give life and meaning to places, objects and ideas.

How did the idea of working on Lina Bo Bardi come about?

SD: A restorer friend who worked for the government of the state of Bahia one day told me "you are a collector and you are Italian. We have just recovered the legendary collection of popular art by the architect Lina Bo Bardi, would you like to see it?". I was busy at that moment with something else, but that encounter was a fatal chance. In a few days I organized a small troupe from Italy, and for a month we interviewed about twenty people who had lived those adventurous Brazilian years with Lina: painters, sculptors, directors, actors, university professors, architects, engineers. Many of these interviews have not found space in the documentary because we have chosen a very particular narrative line. Alongside the great projects of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, the Casa de Vidro and the Ibirapuera exhibition in Bahia, we also wanted to tell a project that Lina cared very much about but failed to realize, that is to bring industrial design to Brazil by grafting it onto the very rich local artisan and popular culture. There is therefore a lot of unpublished material to which it would be interesting to reconsider.

A moment that impressed you during the work?

SD: Many years have passed. It certainly struck me very much when we went to interview Lina's sister at the Casa de Vidro in San Paolo. Lina Bo Bardi had not yet been "rediscovered" and access to the house was much less disciplined than it is now. With Andrea and Francisca, (*ndr* respectively director of photography and producer of the documentary), we explored the various rooms. It was magical, you could still feel the presence of Lina and Pietro Bardi.

The documentary that you would have liked to have done?

SD: *Mourning Rock* (Agelastos Petra) by Filippos Koutsaftis, a documentary shot in 2000 on Orphic myths and Eleusinian mysteries. It is difficult to describe it, because it is a fundamentally poetic documentary. The extraordinary fact is that it makes the past present and vice versa.

Your dream documentary?

SD: I would like to tell the biography of some objects that have had a very long life, having different symbolic functions in distant places, both geographically and chronologically. Objects such as the Lion of Piraeus in front of the Venice Arsenal or the Farnese Cup at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, which have miraculously come down to us through countless adventures.

*SILVIA DAVOLI
Director and art historian.

She specializes in the history of collections and patronage, with a focus on the 18th and 19th centuries. She is a research associate at the University of Oxford and curator of Strawberry Hill House (the Horace Walpole Collection). In addition to the documentary dedicated to Lina Bo Bardi, in 2022, she produced and directed the documentary 'Le Pietre e le Parole. Ritratto di Raniero Gnoli' with Adriano Aymonino and Federico Ferrario (Italy 2022, 20'), which received the "Studenti Unifi" 2023 prize at the Firenze Archeofilm festival. Collaborating with the same team, she directed the documentary "I marmi colorati dell'antica Roma" accompanying the permanent exhibition 'I colori dell'Antico' (The Colours of Antiquity) at the Capitoline Museums in Rome.