

Art and Cultural Identity in the Construction of a Solidary World

Book of Propositions

The enormous dangers, the actual absurdity in rampant development done in all directions and without any real orientation of "techno-science," cannot be ignored in the name of 'rules' ordained once and for all, nor by a company of wise men, that would only become a tool, if not the subject, of a tyranny. What is required is more than just a reformation of human understanding; it is a reformation of the human being as social-historical being, an ethics of mortality, a transcendence of Reason. We do not have the need for a few 'wise men'. What we need is that a larger number of people acquire and exercise wisdom – which, in turn, requires a radical transformation of political society, establishing not only formal participation, but also a passion, by all, for common issues. After all, the last thing that the current culture produces is wise human beings.

- *Then, what is it that you want? To change humanity?*
- *No, something more modest than that: that humanity as a whole changes itself, like it has already done two or three times before.*

Cornelius Castoriadis (1)

1 - Global Context

In recent times, events have occurred at such a fast pace that our capacity to understand them has become limited. The fall of the Berlin wall, the failure of Socialism, AIDS, neo-nazi movements, ethnic intolerance, the threat here and there of not being able to govern, social exclusion, and signs of barbarism at the world level. Globalization. Globalization that looks to universalize dominant cultural values justifying all its sore spots and blemishes.

As the "Letter to Candidates", of the Intermunicipal Forum of Culture tells us, "...one of the negative results of globalization is a wide-ranging "up-rooting" process that undermines the way of life, that expropriates millions of human beings from their cultural point of reference and even from their way of life. In this way, an entire cultural process goes into decline, and in exchange, what is offered is a pattern molded by consumption, having a permanent emulator in the mass media, and which neutralizes all and any type of differences." (2)

The name, 'post-modern', has been used to coin the age we are living in. A rather vague name which hints at something 'passé', that we are in another moment in time, although we don't know exactly which moment or what it means. It seems to be commonly accepted that we are undergoing a crisis - and not just an economical or a social crisis. It is something much larger which concerns civilization. The word "crisis" can mean the erosion of something built up which then goes into decline, or it can mean the opportune moment for renewal, for "re-invention".

In our case – and here we are talking from a Western perspective - we lost the paradigms that gave us a point of reference. The general outlook is pessimistic. But isn't this just one side of the coin?

Eduardo Prado Coelho, a contemporary Portuguese thinker, questions the meaning of the "emptiness of ideas", which is usually linked to the "crisis of paradigms": "Emptiness of ideas? Some people believe so and they tend to paint a bleak picture of our times. We would be homeless and living among ruins – to use an expression consecrated by literature. According to a more progressive outlook, the landscape left after Communism would be of an ever-increasing desert. In view of all which is falling apart, we wait in anticipation for the improbability of a miracle. Other more conservative people, who believe in the nobility of the spiritual being, are horrified by the uniformity and emptiness of a mass culture and of a school in endless degradation. Other people, disturbed by the invasion of a "techno-science" they believe to be acephalous, glimpse the terrifying signs of nihilism and barbarism on the horizon. However, as a result of disaster itself, in which guiding or regulating signs are lost (as happens in every disaster), something moves - if we choose to follow the tenuous direction of that movement, it could grant us some happiness and even fascination – the enigmatic smile of a new century. When talking about the "emptiness of ideas", fundamentally the real tragedy is that today there are no ideas that liberate, nor ideas that provide fundamentals. In other words: no idea assures us of salvation, no idea is bearer of a truth that saves us, no idea dismisses us from being ourselves and from creating our own model and road to salvation. Furthermore: no idea is sufficiently strong enough on which to base a practice, to function as the science of praxis. Without stars to guide us, and without a navigational system that is precise merely on its application, we are now moving towards a sea of surprises and uncertainties." (3)

This makes us wonder: could it be that the certainties we had, which in fact proved false, were better than the uncertainties we are presently experiencing? Loss or liberation? We believe in both. Loss, because a lot of hope was deposited in what was lost. Liberation, because, free from the ties of a predetermined and rigid project, we are open to new adventures.

2 – Reinventing the World through Art

According to Nietzsche, only Art has the power of producing representations of existence, which makes it possible for us to live. (4) However Kolakowski believes that Art is "... a way of forgiving all that is evil and all the chaos of the world." According to him, Art organizes the way Evil and Chaos are perceived, introducing the comprehension of life in a such way that the presence of Evil and Chaos becomes the possibility of my initiative with regards to the World, which in itself carries its own evil and chaos. To make this possible, Art should discover what its appearance doesn't provide or reveal: the secret charm of its ugliness, the hidden deformities of its grace, the folly of its elevation, the poverty of luxury and the cost of poverty. In other words, Art should discover all the secret fibers suffocated by empiric qualities and that turns them into particles of our failure or of our pride." (5)

Like myths, Art allows us to touch upon the mystery of the World - its playful side, its pleasure and happiness. Art allows us to penetrate the unknown in search of partial answers, which maintain the élan for life. And all this is also linked to the search for solutions to problems that besiege us and threaten our survival. A survival which must have dignity in order to be valid, and should be shared in a world that is worthwhile living in.

Sometimes we forget that besides a lack of material goods, which brings about poverty and causes death to thousands of people, we also lack symbolic and spiritual goods. Art is the confluence between symbolic and spiritual goods, inspiring relationships among people and groups, renewing experiences and ties of solidarity, creating imaginary and poetic dimensions, indispensable for understanding others and oneself. Getting involved in Art makes our life happier and makes us more sensitive to everyday reality. It can contribute to the creation of a rich imagination, supported by the roots and the collective creativity of the present; and Art can also retrieve the poetic, which gives a meaning to community life through happiness, playful activity and imagination.

3 - Art and Society

According to Octavio Paz, a society without poetry or poetry without society does not exist. Poetry, in its broader sense, is understood as the settling of the world through Art. For Paz, a "society without poetry would be lacking in language: everyone would say the same thing or no one at all would speak", and poetry without society "would be like a poem without an author, without a reader and, strictly speaking, without words. Confined to a perpetual conjunction and solved in instant discord, both terms seek a mutual conversion: to bring poetry to social life and, at the same time, to socialize the poetic word. The goal is to transform society

into a creative community, into a live poem; and to transform the poem into social life, in an embodied image.

A creative society would be a universal society, where relationships among men, far from being an imposition of external needs, would be like a living tissue. (...) Such a society would be free because, as master of itself, nothing could influence or direct it. It would also be a solidary society because, unlike today, it would not be a society where some dominate over others (or rebel against this domination), but rather, the profile of this society would consist of the search for acknowledgement of people by their equals or, better yet, by similar people. " (6).

The reinvention or rediscovery of the World must pass through individual and collective imagination - a fertile landscape for artistic creation. The loss of a compass that guides us turns us into adventurers in a sea full of dangers and with the possibility of conquering new universes. In everything there is an act of will, both individual and collective. To dare should be our slogan. It is in the doing, with mistakes and successes, that we can build a new form of life, a more egalitarian, creative and happy life.

Throughout the ages, Art has recorded several civilizations, which it has documented and witnessed. Today, more than ever before, with the crisis of civilization, and aligned to this, the crisis of monotheism of Reason, it plays a fundamental role in human and cultural development. The language of art is perhaps one of the few that can speak directly to people's heart, particularly to the young.

4 - Art and Cultural Identity

In *Global Context*, the first section of this text, we mentioned that we are undergoing a crisis of civilization. If that is true, then identity is also subject to question: we would be undergoing an identity crisis. Kobena Mercer states that "identity only becomes a subject when it is in crisis, when something that is thought to be fixed, coherent and stable, is suddenly moved by the experience of doubt and of uncertainty." (7) And, what is "moved by the experience of doubt and of uncertainty", is what I am. In times of cloning, in which man claims, through genetic engineering, to create other beings, this is a question that makes sense.

What is the impact of globalization over cultural identity? Giddens states that "while different areas of the globe are connected to each other, waves of social transformation virtually reach the whole surface of the Earth. " (8)

This trend, which leads to cultural homogenization and is linked by a global market and reaches the privacy of homes through TV sets, builds a collective imagination through consumer appeal, reaching almost the whole "global village".

[Stuart Hall states that "was the diffusion of the consumerism, being reality or being](#)

dream that contributed to that effect of cultural supermarket'. Inside the speech of the global consumerism, the differences and the cultural distinctions, that until then defined the identity, they are reduced to a kind of international *lingua franca* or of global currency, in terms which all the specific traditions and all the different identities can be translated." (9)

Surprisingly, however, this trend of homogenization produces a pulse for the return to the roots that, sometimes, produces an exacerbated ethnic nationalism, followed by religious orthodoxy. This phenomenon makes all a more complex subject. It would not concern the substitution of the local by the global, but a matter of rearticulates the global as the local, under other garments.

At last, we should say that the concept of identity is rather problematic, raising the question: which identity do we have in post-modern times?

Let's conclude this polemic subject with some poetry by accompanying Severino (the main character of João Cabral de Melo Neto's poem, "Death and Life Severina") in his effort to say who he is, or, in other words, in his search for identity:

My name is Severino
I don't have another to talk of.
As there are many Severinos
Who is the pilgrimage saint,
they found it better to call me
Maria's Severino;
As there are many Severinos
with mothers called Maria,
I became the one of Maria,
of the deceased Zacarias.
But that still says little:
there are many in the county
due to a certain "colonel"
called Zacarias who
was the oldest
lord of these lands.
How then say who speaks
now to Your Graces?
Let's see: it is Severino
Of Zacarias' Maria,
from the Rib Mountain range,
bordering Paraíba.

But this still says little:
if there were at least five more
bearing the name of Severino,
children of so many Marias,
women of so many other,
already deceased, Zacarias,
living in the same thin and bony
mountain range in which I lived.
We are so many Severinos
The same in everything in life:
in the same big head
which balances with difficulty,
in the same swollen womb
over the same thin legs,
and the same, as well, because the blood
that we use has little ink.
And if we are Severinos
The same in everything in life,
we die from the same death,
the same severina death:
which is the death that we die
of old age before thirty,
of ambush before twenty,
of hunger, a little each day
(of weakness and disease
which is the severina death
that attacks at any age,
and even people not born).
We are so many Severinos
Equals in everything and in destiny:
of softening these stones
by sweating over them;
of trying to raise
lands always more extinct;
of wanting to extract
some clearing from the ashes.
But, to know me
better, Your Graces,

and to better follow
the story of my life,
I become the Severino
that emigrates in your presence. (10)

What is interesting in the beginning of this well-known poem by João Cabral, "Death and Life Severina", is the main character's search for identity. Initially by his name, which is the first and most explicit form of being or existing socially. But this attempt fails. It is defective because all the Severinos are not the same just in name, but "in everything in life." In view of this, all that remains for Severino is to identify himself as the one who speaks, distinguishing himself from the others in this way.

The question of identity is not an easy one. In the case of Severino, it represents the search of self-affirmation to the other that listens. The other is absolutely necessary for the assertion of self.

The other and me. In the case of Severino, his worthlessness is evident. His negation as an individual and as a collective being is contingent on the connections of power. A condition that he seeks and wants to revert when he migrates, trying to reinvent himself as a person.

The search for the universal passes through the particular. Only constituting myself as a subject, can I aspire to equality in my relationship with another. And it is precisely in this sense that Art accomplishes its role. Telling me who I am, through what I do; I speak and interact with others in a porous process which allows creative interactions concerning forms, manners, ways, sounds, colors and words. Creating is an inherent human characteristic. Man defines himself as a creative being. To create means to transform things, to give them sense and meaning. In transforming things, man also changes himself, in a dynamic process that is constantly created again. Man perceives and recognizes himself in all that he creates.

Potentially we are all creators, and Art, in all its multiple dimensions, is an incommensurable field of possibilities for the process of creating.

Art provides us with the possibility of experiencing cultural diversity, allowing us to recognize ourselves in a creative process. In extirpating the ethnocentrism that leads to stereotyped visions of other people, we can incorporate, through Art, our plurality, with its varying ways of building and rebuilding the World.

Today, the role of Culture is fundamental in the formation of the identities that are constantly changing, once we understand that Art is part of its whole.

It is through the imagination that man can project himself in time, imagining a universe to be created. This architecture of the future can be projected through Art,

which allows us multiple inventions, giving sense to our existence and leading us to take action.

In a sense, we can think of Art as serving as a counterbalance to the economic oriented ideology that "time is money", which shapes everything, including the imagination of men.

It becomes fundamental to fight for a collective imagination that allows us to reinvent a more egalitarian and solidary World.

5 - Proposals

5.1–The Art-Society Connection

Art is inseparable from the social, economic, political and cultural reality of different countries. Today, it carries out a fundamental role in "re-linking" society, in reorganizing the social fabric, which has come apart as a result of violence and of the underlying economic interest in social relationships. Art becomes the only possible language of intergenerational understanding and communication, particularly among young people. [With the homogenization of the speech of change](#), Politics has little to say and Art then assumes an importance never yet seen.

The crisis of paradigms brings uncertainty to the field of problem solving, as it does to the poetic, the unexpected and not just to a previous certainty. When one refers to the role of art, one does not mean that it should merely serve a good cause, while impoverishing itself aesthetically. Beauty is fundamental to human beings, this in itself makes Art worthwhile.

However, it is necessary to put its creative power, its uses and its capacity for generating enchantment in the right context. Not just a few people, but everybody should be Art creators. Therefore, the right to create is a condition for a better quality of life. Access to Art should be made available to all people, and the struggle for a better quality of life should be sought.

Finally, Art has the task of making the world a better place to live in. A place that is more than just a struggle for daily survival, a place for creative imagination, for dreaming - a utopia. It is important to highlight the importance of Art as an instrument enabling people to bear a new vision of the human being, and for its contribution in helping to elevate self-esteem, to humanize and emancipate the spirit; in other words, Art's contribution in making people and society better.

5.2 - Stimulating the Artist's Social Responsibility

Ezra Pound believes that artists are a race's antennas. According to our understanding, this means that the sensibility/sensitiveness captures languages, images, and realities beyond the concrete real and the imaginary. Art is the product of creative imagination, but it also is problem causing for the real. Octavio Paz

says that through poetry a world is revealed and another is created. Consequently, artists have an important place in society, and deserve special respect due to their sensibility and creativity. In many cases they serve as a reference and in some they serve as a myth. Art contributes to forming a community of emotions. Therefore, the artist's role is of utmost importance in changing the reality of different countries and enriching the imagination, in this way, increasing the quality of material and spiritual life.

Besides his art, as a citizen an artist can generate references of ethical behavior and can contribute to political and cultural changes in different societies, because modernization and globalization tend to create a market culture that negates the rich cultural processes of different countries.

5.3 - Defending the Right of Cultural Citizenship

The search for a better quality of life, economic development, the alleviation of poverty, the improvement of living conditions, the preservation of the environment and the renewal of politics are not the only things that are central in our society; so are the right to culture and to cultural citizenship. In contemporary societies, this should be a permanent fight, because modernization and globalization tend to create a market culture that negates the rich cultural processes of different countries.

The defense of cultural citizenship should also be understood as the right of invention without denying the value of ancestral culture. Cultural citizenship is the right to free cultural creation, the right of society to participate in the cultural decision-making processes, the right to information, the right to express diversity as the foundation of a true cultural democracy. Today, the struggle for fair and sustainable societies should include cultural citizenship as an indispensable ingredient for the processes of change.

5.4 - Strengthening the Cultural Diversity of Different Countries and Regions, and Stimulating Cultural Exchange

Each culture has its history, its wealth, its singularity and its own formation. It is in its diversity that solutions for the great challenges of humanity are found. However, defending diversity as a factor of cultural enrichment, should not hinder cultural exchange, or the blind defense of traditions. Some cultures experience rich narratives and myths, while at the same time disrespect human rights. This is unacceptable. For these cultures, experiencing cultural exchange can bring forth parameters regarding unknown rights in their history.

There is neither better quality of life nor full citizenship without the defense of cultural diversity. The unity of a country, of a region or of an area should never

inhibit the rich diversity and culture plurality that enrich concrete life and the imagination of different societies.

5.5 - Strengthening Cultural Identity in Face of Globalization

The globalization process has spread throughout the western and eastern world, and has stripped the character from rich cultures by commercializing relations that before were based on community life, on gratitude and on affectionate and symbolic exchanges. The economy-world has also stimulated the appearance of a culture-world, a globalization of objects and of the imagination. However, social and cultural movements and strong local identities have instigated a cultural rebirth, a re-elaboration of cultures or even movements (of cultural resistance) against a globalization that destroys and strips cultures of their characters. It is our understanding that 'essence' can be found at the local level, and 'appearance' at the global level, as stated by Professor Milton Santos.

Defending identity does not mean denying the process of globalization, or the encounter of several cultures in the world, but rather it means defending the traditions, ruptures and tendencies that identify a locality. It is this, and as a result of their cultural heritage, that human beings create sustainable life styles. The defense of a cosmopolitan, multicultural and global movement for solidarity should be our beacon.

The search for cultural unity and complementation through inter-cultural dialogue should commence as a result of this protection of cultural and artistic heritage. This avoids ethnocentrism and stimulates each culture to open itself up to other cultural matrices. Giving value to roots, ethnic groups and races, religions, shared history, cultural manifestations and artistic expressions should be the foundation from which all the processes of identity formation are structured.

5.6 – Stimulating the Population's Cultural Occupancy of Public Spaces

Art should come out from its institutional "temples" of cultural production to more accessible surroundings for the common citizen. The squares, streets and subway stations, should be places of artistic and cultural creativity and dissemination. Artists should come down from their pedestals so as to meet the common citizen - 'come down to earth', as it were and enlarge the uses of culture and art. Making art less sacred is a condition for amplifying of its role in society, re-enchanting the world through artistic language and thus, disseminating it.

5.7 – Building a Culture of Peace

Our societies practically don't know what lasting Peace is - market wars, military wars, civil wars rooted in daily life, silent wars that are the result of competition and of social desegregation. The cultivation of Peace should be one of the most important banners in today's society, and not only so that the Empire can reign

over the consensus and silence of the dominated, but as a condition for constructing a happier society in all fields of human activities and life.

Art, as builder of communities of emotion, as a celebration of collectivity, could play a fundamental role – as an aggregating essence and Peace builder. In this sense, campaigns for Peace, movements for Art and Peace in schools, art and peace meetings among young people, symbolic actions for peace and movements against disarmament could be carried out.

Inter-religious dialogue could contribute enormously to world peace. It is necessary to show that the language of art is convergent with peace in the day to day life of a society. It is necessary to develop artistic activities to promote peace and to stimulate the debate on the role of the media and its responsibility in building peace. The media has been one of the greatest propagators of war on this planet. Finally, the symbols of destruction can be re-defined and replaced with peace symbols, in other words, resist peacefully and with Art against the cruelty of the world and generate values of non-violence and solidarity.

5.8 – Strengthening Cultural Exchanges between Countries

We believe that one of the most fundamental roles of "The Chantier" and of "The Artists' College" should be cultural exchange. If we know little about our own cultures, let alone about other cultures.

With the aim of experiencing and establishing common and different points of interest for an intercultural dialogue, we can carry out planned immersions in our own countries with the presence of allied countries and intercultural caravans. Exchanges through the Internet and meetings are not really sufficient for real intercultural dialogue. Contact and intercultural "shock" are vital to the transformation of our societies and to the active role of The Chantier in a worldwide context. We also believe that The Chantier and The Artists' College should be built in different countries.

6. Experiments

6.1 – Street Chats

This is one of the experiments of the "Alliance for a Responsible and Solidary World" in Brazil. The Street Chat takes place in public spaces (streets, squares, subway stations, avenues, parks, etc.) and is carried out by a group of people that present and discuss important issues such as the construction of peace, ecology, art and culture, the woman's condition, the renewal of the politics, etc... with the population. The general theme of these 'Street Chats' is the society that we want to develop. The idea is to have real life experiences through direct contact with the population, and not just through networks and the Internet.

This proposal involves thousands of people that circulate in the streets and reach a large part of society through the media. In Vitória, in the Brazilian State of Espírito Santo, cultural groups have been talking to the population about racism, gender, culture, human rights, and food security. In the heart of downtown São Paulo, a group of Alliance members debated the renewal of the politics and participated and organized washing the City Hall, which was promoted by the national movement "Keep an Eye on your Vote." In this proposal, the idea of art is fundamental, it connects people and causes the debate, which is permeated with art at all times, to grow. Folk music, classical music, dummy theater, bands and others are presented. Symbolic action is also of fundamental importance to give meaning to the "Street Chats".

6.2 – The Stagium Ballet

The Stagium Ballet is one of the best known and respected art groups in Brazil. In the seventies it traveled and put on shows in the many different areas of the country. In 1974, for example, it traveled up the S. Francisco River valley, in the northeast of Brazil, and gave presentations in the small and impoverished towns along the riverbank. A group of 150 artists presented shows in the most unusual places, teaching ballet movements to the local population and organizing dance sessions with the children etc.

From 1990, the Stagium Ballet began working with dance in an educational context, including children and parents in their repertoire. This group started teaching corporal and postural techniques to teachers that knew nothing about them. Marika Gidalli, coordinator of the ballet, says: "the teacher arrives crooked and leaves straight". Teachers accomplish activities in class one wouldn't begin to imagine and obtain more concentration and creativity in the work with their students. They begin to work without the help of words. "

The Stagium Ballet also develops many other activities with poor children, prisoners, sick people and street children. Through art, these people change their way of seeing the world and change their attitudes in relation to life, their values and ways to teach and learn. In this manner, The Stagium Ballet helps these people to recover their self-esteem and to assert their citizenship.

6.3 - "Alagoas Presente!" Project

This project has been developed by the artist, Marta Arruda, in the city of Maceió and in other cities in the interior of the state of Alagoas, in the northeast of Brazil. The objective of this project is to promote leisure moments through artistic activities, and to stimulate and foment new artistic values as a means of contributing to the educational process. The project aims to encourage the population to develop an interest in preserving local works of handcraft, local

dances, music, literature, cultural resources and it aims to create the conditions for a better quality of life. It is a non-profit, educational work that was developed and operates with the help of people, volunteers, private corporations, donations and the eventual help from local governments of this region.

The project teaches art in the small towns. It holds collage, papier maché, clay, ceramic painting and drawing workshops, and it organizes conferences, folkloric presentations and painting murals. The formation of local artists is stimulated, as is their publicity. The project has affected about 10 thousand people in the places where it has been. It is a true cultural caravan that opens new pathways, mobilizes people, particularly the young, and involves public authorities by helping them to become committed to the project. It helps to arouse vocations, new artistic values, and generate actions that have a multiplying affect.

6.4 - Cultural Camps for Citizenship

Of the 970 experiments of public administration and citizenship, this project was selected by the Ford Foundation and by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation as being among the 20 most important Brazilian experiments. It is an experiment that takes place in the city of Itapeverica da Serra, with 130 thousand inhabitants, and located 30 kilometers from São Paulo. This city is located on the outskirts of urban São Paulo, and it has a high rate of violence, many gang wars to do with drugs and a lot of poverty. There are serious housing problems, living conditions are precarious and there are few public spaces available. The project intends to create alternative spaces in all these neighborhoods with inexpensive building materials such as eucalyptus wood, bamboo and walls made of mud, which is why it is referred to as a cultural camp. The basic idea is to build these camps with the help of the local population so that it can use these spaces for all sorts of social activities and as a meeting place to discuss serious neighborhood problems.

The most important idea is to put artistic and cultural activities in the right context, in an environment where citizenship can be ascertained, and to connect art with a group of social activities such as cultural events, peace campaigns and community participation in the city's budget. Artistic activities are organized from cultural workshops offering several artistic languages or mediums: theater, dance, painting, music, percussion, violin, keyboard, etc. Today, several dance groups already exist, formed by women that discovered their own capacities and their own place in society, through Art. A change in the behavior of young people, some of whom were former drug users, can be observed in this work. Some of them now consider themselves better human beings and others participate more widely in school activities or in community life.

6.5 – Museum and Special Public

This concerns an exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of S. Paulo (MAC) which is geared toward the visually disabled. The materials are selected by a person who is physically disabled to a certain degree. The educational materials are of a multi-sensorial nature. Part of the material is rubber and papier-mâché so as to allow an investigation of textures by touch. In this way, art can be the receiver of a public that does not normally attend these spaces. In 1998 the Museum of Contemporary Art organized a painting exhibition with a selection of ten works: eight oil paintings and ten sculptures in bronze. In each picture there was a reproduction, in relief, in papier-mâché and in rubber, that allowed the visual deficient to touch and appreciate the work. The work was only completed when the deficient received information on the history of art and the artistic work at hand. At the end of each visit, the visitor received a catalogue about the exhibition, with a version in Braille.

6.6 - Ecological Conscience and Education through Art

This work is developed by the movement "Artists for Nature", a non-governmental organization that includes about 500 Brazilian artists and educators. The movement exists since 1977 and it has already formed associations and ecological parks, it stages symbolic acts, and organizes and promotes marches. After many years of activity, it created the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park, in the central region of Brazil.

In 1986 it brought together 145 Brazilian artists in the Chapada dos Guimarães area to hold an exhibition named "Artists for Nature." Between 1992 and 1993, the participants of this movement undertook a pilgrimage along the S. Francisco River valley, on foot and by boat, with the aim of spreading ecological and cultural values. This movement organized manifestations of support for water preservation and launched a manifesto entitled "The river of dirty waters." UNESCO invited the movement to formulate the handbook that will outline the basis of environmental education in Brazil. All these activities are accomplished with art. Art is the motivator of all the programs and most of the participants are artists, art-educators or educators that have an affinity for this language or medium. The inspiring leader and organizer of this work is the artist and writer, Bené Fontelles, a former partner of Gilberto Gil, and with a vast work of art.

NOTES

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