



The experience of art at the Juliano Moreira Colony in the 1950s

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Abstract

Osório César's and Nise da Silveira's work tends to be featured in investigations of the relationship between artistic expression and psychiatric knowledge in Brazil in and around the 1950s. However, there were other experiences at the time, such as the painting done in the Praxis Therapy Department of the Juliano Moreira Colony, in Rio de Janeiro. The absence of any research of this experience prompted a search for documents that culminated in the analysis of old issues of *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira* and other sources. The results indicate some peculiar features of the art done at the colony, such as the encouragement of copying and reproducing photographs as a form of therapy, differentiating it from the other experiences mentioned.

Keywords: praxis therapy; art therapy; Juliano Moreira Colony; Osório César (1895-1979); Nise da Silveira (1905-1999).



Investigations of the relationship between art and psychiatry in Brazil often tend to highlight two particular experiences. The first was spearheaded in the early twentieth century by Osório César (1895-1979), a physician at Juquery Hospital, in Franco da Rocha, a town in São Paulo state. Researching the role of art in the field of psychiatric care, his work focused on psychoanalytical interpretations of paintings produced by the patients at his institution. Over the years, art came to be incorporated into some of the hospital's services as a therapeutic approach, along with occupational therapy. Another experience took place at the National Psychiatric Center (Centro Psiquiátrico Nacional), in the Engenho de Dentro district of Rio de Janeiro. There, Nise da Silveira (1905-1999) coordinated a painting and modeling workshop, which stood out amongst the range of activities put on by the Occupational Therapy Department there, in the mid-1940s. Through this work, Silveira realized that art could be a way of accessing the inner world of people with schizophrenia due to the interpretation psychiatry could make of the images that spring from the unconscious.

Though these two cases are the most prominent in studies of this subject (Frayze-Pereira, 1995; Dias, 2003; Andriolo, 2004; Ferraz, 1998; Lima, 2009; Melo, 2009; Dionísio, 2012), research of the Bispo do Rosário Contemporary Art Museum (Museu Bispo do Rosário Arte Contemporânea) revealed that activities involving artistic expression were also being used in other psychiatric institutions in and around the 1950s, including at the Juliano Moreira Colony. As such, in a quest to find out more about how art interacted with psychiatric knowledge and practices in Brazil, it seemed pertinent to analyze the artwork done at the Juliano Moreira Colony as well.

Located in the Jacarepaguá district of Rio de Janeiro, the colony started offering its patients art activities in a bid to multiply and diversify its offer of praxis therapy – as occupational therapy was called at the time. The art workshop came into being at the same time that Nise da Silveira and Osório César were investigating similar avenues with their patients, even leading to exhibitions of paintings being held inside and outside the institutional setting. The presence of art produced in this workshop at an exhibition held during the First International Congress of Psychiatry, held in 1950 in Paris, where paintings by patients from the two other institutions were also exhibited, indicates that the art produced at the Juliano Moreira Colony also received some attention at the time.

Today, under the official title of the Juliano Moreira Municipal Institute of Health Care (Instituto Municipal de Assistência à Saúde Juliano Moreira, CJM), the colony offers a number of alternative services in the field of psychiatric care. Amongst a broad array of approaches – also used at the former National Psychiatric Center, now the Nise da Silveira Municipal Institute of Health Care (Instituto Municipal de Assistência à Saúde Nise da Silveira), and at Juquery Psychiatric Hospital (formerly the Juquery Asylum) – art activities continue to serve as a connection for opening and transforming the institutional space, especially since the psychiatric reform. Furthermore, CJM still has a permanent exhibition space, called the Bispo do Rosário Contemporary Art Museum, which was created in the 1980s. As such, studying the conditions that enabled the emergence of this cultural space could help shed light on how knowledge and practices at the colony developed in such a way that over the decades art became part of the treatment offered there.

The importance of this research lies in the fact that so few facts are known about art-related activities at the Juliano Moreira Colony before the movement that led to the psychiatric reform, which is not the case of the work done by Osório César or Nise da Silveira. As such, documental research was undertaken of the experiences involving art at the colony in the 1940s and 1950s. Documents kept at its research center were studied, as were documents at the National Library (Biblioteca Nacional), in Rio de Janeiro, which yielded the following finds: the catalogue of the First Exhibition of Applied Female Art and Painting, held in 1950 at the Juliano Moreira Colony; copies of *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira*, an in-house journal published sporadically between 1948 and 1954 (Brasil, 1948, 1949, 1951a, 1953, 1954); and reports by the colony's Praxis Therapy Department from the 1950s. A supporting literature review was also conducted with the aim of the understanding the contexts in Brazil that enabled relationships to be established between artwork, praxis therapy, and psychiatry-related knowledge and practices.

The documents and other texts were read according to the model of analysis proposed by Rosa, Huertas, and Blanco (1996), which involves searching the historical settings and the theoretical and methodological conceptions expressed explicitly and implicitly in the sources, as well as the language used by the authors and other factors in a bid to absorb as much from the texts in terms of understanding and interpretation as possible. This method, in conjunction with the literature review, was especially important in the analysis of *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira*. The sections from this journal highlighted in this article were selected for their subject matter (art and praxis therapy) or for how they could shed light on the context under investigation (internal activity reports and reports on congresses and conferences by staff members).

In line with the analysis procedure adopted here, the topics below reproduce the same format, first presenting data from the literature review in order to give a better understanding of the context in which the documents were produced, followed by analyses of the documents themselves, drawing on an interpretative approach that encompasses the art activities taking place at other psychiatric institutions around the same time.

Work, art, and therapy in the Brazilian context

In order better to understand the relationship between art and psychiatry-related knowledge and practices at the Juliano Moreira Colony, it is important to understand how occupational therapy was being incorporated into psychiatric care in Brazil and what other therapeutic approaches were also used. Initially named the Jacarepaguá Colony of Psychopaths (Colônia de Psicopatas de Jacarepaguá), the Juliano Moreira Colony was founded in 1924 under the motto *Praxis Omnia Vincit*, or “work conquers all.” The main therapeutic activity for its inmates was farm work. Since the mid-nineteenth century, this kind of institution had been widely supported by psychiatrists in Brazil, who saw its combination of institutionalization and labor as a more effective form of treatment for mental illnesses. This support ensured its widespread adoption in public health policies, constituting one of the main recommendations for the treatment of people with mental illness up until the mid-twentieth century (Venancio, 2011).

The first psychiatric institution of this kind in the country was established in the late nineteenth century. The Juquery Asylum (Hospício do Juquery), the first farm colony in the state of São Paulo, was set up in 1898 by Franco da Rocha (1864-1933) in line with the guidelines set forth at the International Congress of Physiological Psychology in Paris in 1889 (Pereira, 2002), which recommended creating farm colonies attached to asylums (Venancio, 2011). The emergence in Brazil of this kind of institution resulted from a proximity between the burgeoning profession of psychiatry in Brazil with its sister profession in France, with its focus, among other things, on moral treatment (Pereira, 2002; Portocarrero, 2002; Venancio, 2003). This moral dimension spawned different practices and knowledge in Brazilian psychiatry, including the creation of farm colonies. As such, alongside other socially constructed discourses absorbed by psychiatry, the moral value of work came to exert a direct influence on the conception of what was normal and what was pathological. In other words, psychiatry took upon itself the task of returning to society treated, cured subjects fit for work (Resende, 2007). This was the thinking behind the spread of farm colonies for mental health patients in several states in Brazil.

In the early twentieth century, the valuing of labor in mental health treatment gained new impetus thanks to the experiments of a German psychiatrist, Hermann Simon (1867-1947). Simon advocated what he called “active therapy,” claiming that pathological phenomena could be overcome by offering an individualized work regimen of an increasing level of difficulty, helping to bring about the patient’s re-adaptation and reeducation (Melo, 2001). His method became widely known and was gradually introduced to the mental health policies in Brazil. However, although the concept had been developed at the turn of the century, it only reached Brazil after World War I (Dias, 2003). For instance, the psychiatrist, director of the Tamarineira Hospital, creator of the Barreiras Colony, and formulator of the Pernambuco Mental Health Care Service (Serviço de Assistência a Psicopatas de Pernambuco), Ulisses Pernambucano (1892-1943), only introduced occupational therapy on a large scale at the institutions under his care in the 1930s. Medeiros (2001) reports that in a talk given in 1938, Pernambucano sustained that care for people with mental illness should ideally include, amongst other things, what he called “Simon’s system.”

Although agricultural colonies became widespread in the field of health care, farm labor was always only one of a range of activities. One of these was art, which some patients produced spontaneously, sparking the interest of some medical practitioners. As early as the 1920s, some Brazilian psychiatrists were starting to express an interest in offering scientific explanations for the artistic manifestations of people with schizophrenia. According to Andriolo (2004), Ulisses Pernambucano was the first to study and talk publicly about what he called “art in the insane.” In Rio de Janeiro, taking inspiration from Pernambucano’s talks, Sílvio Moura wrote a doctoral thesis, presented in 1923 at the Faculty of Medicine, in which he discussed the “artistic manifestations of the insane.” In the same year, Osório César spent an internship at the Juquery Asylum in São Paulo, then joining its ranks as a physician two years later. In 1924, he published his first article for the asylum’s journal entitled “Primitive Art in the Insane.” However, his main work on the subject was a book, *A expressão artística nos alienados* (The artistic expression of the insane), published in 1929, in which he presented a study of artworks he had come across in the institution’s indoor

and outdoor spaces since his first year there, taking a largely Freudian psychoanalytical approach.

Although scientific interest in the art produced by psychiatric patients in Brazil can be seen so early on, it was only as of the mid-1940s that it acquired greater visibility – albeit still in limited circles – enabling the incorporation of art into the range of therapies on offer in mental asylums. In other words, it was only at this time that specific departments given over specifically to art for the treatment of mental illness were created in the field of psychiatric care. While these initiatives were looked down upon by the prevailing form of psychiatry, of an organic bent, their creation was fundamental for ensuring the activities were granted official status as therapeutic practices. This recognition came about in the field of medicine through the institutionalization of workshops for drawing, painting, and other forms of art with the approval of psychiatric hospital managers. It is fair to say, then, that the experience of art at psychiatric health services in Brazil gained a degree of prominence, especially the painting and modeling studio at the Occupational Therapy Department, created in 1946, and Museum of Images from the Unconscious (*Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente*), founded in 1952, both at the former National Psychiatric Center, under the management of Nise da Silveira (Gullar, 1996; Melo, 2001).

However, aside from Silveira's now acclaimed work, other similar experiments at psychiatric institutions in the southeast of Brazil also sprung up in the mid-twentieth century, making this period particularly fecund for cross-fertilizations between the knowledge and practices of psychiatry and art. Specifically, in 1949, an Art Department was set up at the Juquery Asylum under the psychiatrist Mario Yahn (1908-1977) and then his successor, Osório César (Ferraz, 1998; Lima, 2009). Likewise, as mentioned earlier, the first experiments in art at the Juliano Moreira Colony came about at the same time. However, it should be noted that although all three institutions introduced art activities for treatment purposes, they each had different goals, methods, and resources. Some of these differences will be seen in the next section, which discusses the art experiments at the Praxis Therapy Department of the Juliano Moreira Colony.

The painting workshop at the Praxis Therapy Department of the Juliano Moreira Colony

In the early 1940s, the Ministry of Education and Health was restructured, resulting in the reorganization of the National Department of Health and the creation of a National Service for Mental Illnesses. It was part of a centralization strategy justified by the state as an attempt to modernize mental health care in the country (Braga, 2015). One of the consequences of this change, which included the establishment of outpatient care for mental health patients (Lougou, 2006), was that the Juliano Moreira Colony was also restructured and acquired the status of a hospital-colony (Venancio, 2011). In this process, alongside the encouragement of new therapeutic practices of an organic nature, which had first started being used in the 1930s, the range of praxis therapy was also diversified at the country's psychiatric institutions, although farm labor continued to be the most widespread form in the colonies. As such, by the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Juliano

Moreira Colony was offering a number of recreational, sporting, and artistic activities as part of its care program.

There was a reason for this multiplication of therapeutic methods. As of the 1950s, the Juliano Moreira Colony started being actively encouraged to introduce praxis therapy, which was one of the key health care strategies of the National Service for Mental Illnesses (Braga, 2015). As one can see, the praxis therapy was now being seen as a suitable complement for organic treatments, which were still preeminent in the field of psychiatry, since they gave it the “scientific complexion” it needed. This explains why the analysis of *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira* and the other documental sources revealed that both strategies were valued at the Juliano Moreira Colony in and around the 1950s, even if their respective use was far from proportional.

The analysis shows that there was more neurology- and biology-related research interest than there was research into therapies designed for the rehabilitation of patients or treatments based on praxis therapy. However, in the sections of the *Boletim* that discuss biological approaches, which nonetheless constitute the lion’s share of the journal, there are also some items on arts-related topics. There are, for instance, a good many reviews, abstracts, reports, articles, and notices by a variety of authors that demonstrate a degree of interest on the part of the institution in the visual arts, music, literature, etc. Our study focuses exclusively on the contributions that refer to praxis therapy in general and art in particular.

In an official report presented in October 1948 at the 5th Brazilian Congress of Psychiatry, Neurology, and Forensic Medicine – to which Osvaldo de Moraes, then the head of the Praxis Therapy Department of the Juliano Moreira Colony, and Nise da Silveira were invited to speak – and reproduced in its entirety in the *Boletim*, the director of the institution, Heitor Péres (1949, p.6), explains his vision of praxis therapy. Entitled “Total Praxis Therapy: therapeutic occupation at hospital-colonies for psychopaths – brief general considerations,” the report stresses the rehabilitational and community nature of praxis therapy. Its function was to reproduce within the asylum space as many of the human activities common outside its walls as possible, or, to borrow his words, “healthy collectivities.” The idea was to humanize the hospital, giving it “life,” influencing the contingent of inpatients and offering a counterpoint to individual therapy.

To this end, alongside productive labor, praxis therapy should also include other activities. According to, the report, “it is therefore clear that parallel to work – which is a cure for all evils, to quote the ancient masters – there should also be: sports, group exercises, modern recreation such as radio and film” (Péres, 1949, p.7). Along with such activities, he also mentions theater, reading, and what he calls “bibliotherapy.” Different issues of the *Boletim* attest to the fact that most of these activities were indeed offered at the Juliano Moreira Colony, even movie screenings. One issue, from 1949, reproduces in its notices section a note left by one “guest” on the director’s desk:

Ulisses Vianna Unit. – My impressions of yesterday’s film. – The film shown yesterday at the screen in this Unit was top notch. – It seems to me that the film is in series. The characters appeared wearing old-fashioned clothes. – In particular, there was a hunchback who the viewers enjoyed because of the role he played. – It is worth

continuing to show films at this Unit. It educates, pleases and delights the patients. Signed Julio Mascarenhas – 3.10.1949 (Brasil, 1949, p.42-43).

According to another news story in the *Boletim* in 1948, there was also a PA system that played programs broadcast by Rádio Nacional, one of the leading radio broadcasters at the time, offering “light music” in the morning and “erudite music” in the afternoon, serving much of the institution (Brasil, 1948). The system was expanded in 1950 to cover all the departments at the Juliano Moreira Colony (Brasil, 1951a).

Through these projects, labor activities continued to be developed. In the Praxis Therapy reports of 1950 and 1951, the activities included farming, manufacturing, and trades (sowing, horticulture, agriculture, gardening, fishing, bee keeping, joinery, wickerwork furniture making, pottery making, upholstery etc.), ancillary office work, administrative work, work as a doorman, in the storehouse, and in the pavilions, as well as drawing and painting (Brasil, 1950, 1951b). Although, only five of the over three thousand patients are mentioned as being engaged in the last two activities, the visual arts was given more coverage than other praxis therapies, including music, games, and other recreational activities, in the *Boletim* reports on non-organic therapies in the 1950s.

One of the main drivers for this was likely the fact that in 1950 the first Exhibition of Applied Female Art and Painting was held there. In the same year, at the 1st International Congress of Psychiatry, in Paris, there was also an exhibition of Psychopathological Art in which Brazil took part, submitting 395 works from the Juquery Asylum, the National Psychiatric Center, and the Juliano Moreira Colony (Andriolo, 2004). Both exhibitions raised the public profile of praxis therapy, especially the painting workshop that had just been set up at the Juliano Moreira Colony. In the 1951 *Boletim*, a passage from a 1950 report is reproduced about the exhibition held at the colony. It conveys something of the enthusiasm at the visiting public’s response:

A gratifying event in 1950 was the Exhibition of Applied Female Art and Painting, held from May to July, with outstanding success, for, it fully attained the objectives: to show all people, the general public, people of all classes and all cultures, *in loco*, with the natural contingencies of the hospital setting, through art and manual labor, craftwork, that the mental patient is not incapable, useless, lost, human dregs, as the layman may think. ... It was an excellent opportunity to initiate, in our environment, through the most legitimate of recourses, that which the psychopath lacks – REHABILITATION (Brasil, 1951a; emphasis in original).

As for the therapeutic aspects of the activities, the introduction in the exhibition catalogue, written by Heitor Péres and reproduced in the report, indicates three features which, in his view, justified the use of art in the context of psychiatric care: art therapy helped to heal, constituting a subtle ramification of praxis therapy; art functioned as an instrument for penetrating the innermost psyche of the patient; and the art produced by the patients helped to prove that mental illness did not destroy or ruin personality (Péres, 1950).

The first thing that stands out in this text is the fact that it frames art therapy as “a subtle ramification of praxis therapy” (Péres, 1950, p.2), which shows that the patients’ artwork was seen as one aspect of healing through work, and the activity was incorporated into

one of the institution's founding pillars (Venancio, 2011). The discourse of the exhibition report reinforces the interpretation that the only thing that separated art therapy from the other activities was the final product, as can be seen in the following passage: "Finally, culminating, in the improvement of the healing occupation, the adoption of art came to be tried, especially pictorial art" (Brasil, 1951a).

Furthermore, the methods used in the art workshops, as explained in the catalogue, demonstrate a tendency towards guided and standardized work. For instance, the texts that present the colony's patient-artists show a strong encouragement of reproduction, copying, and figurative expression. Writing about patient H., for instance, Heitor Péres (1950) explains that "in this patient the most appropriate art therapy orientation has been that of encouraging him to copy *d'après nature*, stimulating better contact with the environment, avoiding the spontaneous composition that heightens his dissociation and thus his psychic maladjustment" (p.6; emphasis in original). As for another patient, identified as J.G., it is observed that "therapeutically he is being led as much as possible to the objective plane: copies, amplifications, suggested topics etc." (p.7).

The main objective of the work at the Juliano Moreira Colony was different, then, from Nise da Silveira's goals at the National Psychiatric Center. This is because free expression was strongly encouraged in several departments there, even those in which art activities were not pursued (Melo, 2009). For Silveira, the core function of the service should be to develop spontaneity, especially through "catalyzing sentiments," which could burgeon simply through the presence of the monitor (Melo, 2009). As such, the treatment she developed was based on the emotional and symbolic relationships set up at the Occupational Therapy Department, and not just the products resulting from them, like paintings and drawings. In this sense, the artwork at the Occupational Therapy Studio did not have a diagnostic purpose. According to Melo (2009, p.49), there, "expression was not just about expression, but was a means towards the objective of rehabilitation."

The use of painting as a praxis therapy at the Juliano Moreira Colony was also a far cry from how it was used by Osório César (2007). His understanding of art included the idea of freedom: "For art to be genius it has to be free" (p.123). Furthermore, he believed that preventing free and spontaneous expression could affect the very psychic structure of an individual, curbing his creativity. This position can be seen as early as 1929 in a study of his entitled "Artistic expression in the insane," where he stresses that the use of copying and reproduction in the treatment of mental patients should be abolished, in view of the fact that it could stifle the "creative artist" (César, 1929).

The introduction in the Juliano Moreira Colony exhibition catalogue also indicates another role for art in the context of psychiatry: as an instrument for penetrating a patient's innermost psyche. In the words of Heitor Péres (1950, p.2), art functioned as a "chemical developer" capable of "revealing the unfathomed aspects of the infirmity." This view, which sought to identify signs of madness through the observation of the patients' artwork, was the view that had prevailed in the field of psychiatry in Europe in the early nineteenth century (Melo, 2009) and continued until the mid-twentieth century amongst the Brazilian psychiatrists who addressed the subject, even in the psychoanalytical interpretation proposed by Osório César (Andriolo, 2004).

Once again, it can be seen that the work of Nise da Silveira went against the grain, seeing artistic expression itself as the primary justification for such activity. As mentioned earlier, she believed the main function of occupational therapy to be the opportunity it gave for images from the unconscious and their concomitant drivers to be expressed (Silveira, 1981). As such, expressive activities were healing of themselves. This effect could be achieved provided the environment was propitious for patients to act spontaneously, giving vent to the content of their unconscious. Furthermore, Nise da Silveira was highly critical of what she called the pre-formed concepts of psychiatry about the paintings and drawings of mental patients. Refuting this pathologizing approach, Silveira (1981, p.14) held that traditional psychiatry insisted on looking at these paintings merely to find signs of symptoms and psychic deterioration.

Interestingly, the public exhibition of works by the “guests” of the Juliano Moreira Colony (as its patients were called in the *Boletim*) in 1950, which were subsequently put on permanent exhibition in 1953 (Brasil, 1953), was also designed to be a means of showing to the public that mental illness “should not presuppose deterioration” (Péres, 1950, p.2). However, his view of the role of artistic expression in the context of clinical care differed from Silveira’s insofar as he felt it was only possible provided such paintings displayed classical themes and figurative images.

While a 1952 article by Heitor Péres, “The psychiatric criterion in the interpretation of modernist painting,” does not center its discussion on paintings by psychiatric patients, it does help give us an understanding of how he saw artistic activity. Although he claimed to recognize the value of the work being done by the art avant-garde at the time, he was categorical in his criticism of the movement: “This does not stop it being abnormal, flagrant, in the eyes of any specialist, for its innumerable, unequivocal, unharmonious manifestations” (Péres, 1952). Any painting that did not fit into the classical figurative mold – i.e., was done spontaneously by members of the vanguard or revolutionaries from the field of art – could be compared to drawings done by children or patients from a psychiatric hospital, which, he claimed, almost always revealed “sickly personalities” (Péres, 1952). This discourse reveals another divergence in the experiences presented here.

Heitor Péres’s criticism in this article of the avant-garde artists of his day again stands in stark contrast with Osório César’s and Nise da Silveira’s experiences in the field of art. César’s first studies were largely inspired by his proximity to the modernist movement, which was took off in Brazil after the Modern Art Week in 1922. The esteem in which he held his patients’ work came in part from the comparisons he drew between them and the prevailing aesthetic of that movement, which championed the values of liberty and subversion. Indeed, Osório César had such a rich exchange of ideas with the first modernists, a group that also interacted intensely with psychoanalysis (Facchinetti, 2000), that he could fairly be considered one of the people responsible for introducing new modes of art interpretation to the movement (Andriolo, 2003).

Likewise, while Heitor Péres believed that this kind of art was akin to pathological art, Nise da Silveira found strong allies in the art avant-garde, interacting with artists and critics beyond the walls of the psychiatric institution to actually influence the field of art (Melo, 2011). Meanwhile, when setting up the Occupational Therapy Department in 1946,

Silveira counted on the help of an employee from the National Psychiatric Center who went on to become a leader in the concrete art movement in Brazil, Almir Mavignier. While working as a studio monitor, Mavignier was captivated by the patients' artwork and helped get it shown in exhibitions outside the hospital. Thanks to the public exposure of these works, Nise da Silveira's art workshop ended up attracting the attention of and influencing several artists, including Abraham Palatnik and Ivan Serpa, as well as the art critic Mário Pedrosa (Melo, 2011). Thus, the works by Osório César's patients and the patients at the Occupational Therapy Department were brought into direct, positive interaction with Brazilian avant-garde artists. The two experiences shared not only the aesthetic ideals of this movement, but also its political conceptions, expressed in the need to break away from hegemonic values.

A paradox can be identified in the art experience at the Juliano Moreira Colony that is not just methodological, but also ethical and political. While there was an understanding that mental illness was not an implacable force for destruction, as was generally believed, and that it did not necessarily result in inevitable deterioration (Péres, 1950, p.2), there was great support for research into and the use of aggressive methods for the treatment and cure of mental pathologies – the very ones so harshly criticized by Nise da Silveira for stripping patients of all dignity and transforming them into automatons. One such method was electroconvulsive therapy, mentioned in a passage from the colony's annual report about its participation in the 1st Latin American Congress on Mental Health, held in July 1954 in São Paulo (Brasil, 1954).

The 1954 report reveals that the use of art in mental health care was not seen as being inconsistent with the use of aggressive methods. One key contribution the Juliano Moreira Colony took to that congress, according to the report, was a film on lumbar-pubic electric shock therapy, described as an "original care and therapeutic method for sordidness" (Brasil, 1954). According to a note in one of the issues of *Boletim* from 1953, a film on the same subject had been produced for a session of the Brazilian Society of Neurology, Psychiatry, and Forensic Medicine in 1952, reporting on the excellent results of electroconvulsive therapy in fighting incontinence and constipation (Brasil, 1953). However, the same report demonstrates considerable interest in the artwork of the patients, making reference to the General Exhibition of Painting and Drawings by Psychopaths, Abnormal Children, and Delinquents, put on at that event, as well as the presence of two works by Antônio Bragança, an artist who was a patient at the colony, at the 4th Salon of Still Life Art organized by the Social Food Service (Serviço de Alimentação da Previdência Social) in 1953.

Heitor Péres was actually a great admirer of the work of Egas Moniz (1874-1955), creator of the prefrontal leukotomy, better known as the lobotomy, to whom he paid tribute in the first article in the 1953 *Boletim*. In this, he also differed from Nise da Silveira, who refused to accept such therapies, which she regarded as acts of violence against her patients. The absence of any criticism, such as that voiced by Silveira, of organic treatment methods by the doctors involved with praxis therapy at the Juliano Moreira Colony is confirmed by the fact that José Ferreira Muniz Sobrinho, the physician who was appointed head of Praxis Therapy there in 1949, gave a talk on psychosurgery that very year, presenting an overview of the technique and criteria for its use in the chronically ill. Without indicating

any aversion to such treatments, Sobrinho (1949) stated that praxis therapy was beneficial for the reeducation of patients who had undergone such surgery.

It is also important to point out some institutional features of the art therapy adopted as a treatment at the Juliano Moreira Colony in and around the 1950s. Despite serving just five patients in 1950, as mentioned earlier, praxis therapy involving art went on to appear more often in the *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira* as the decade progressed. Some of the points supporting this have already been mentioned, but another is the importance put on visits by illustrious persons to the exhibitions of paintings by the patients.

The visits mentioned in the newsletter include Dinah Silveira de Queiroz, a Brazilian novelist, in 1950; Jean Delay, professor of clinical psychiatry in Paris, in 1951; Austregésilo de Mendonça, professor of psychiatric medicine at the Belo Horizonte Faculty of Medicine, in 1953; Maria Leontina, an artist and monitor at the Painting Department of the Juquery Asylum (the year of whose visit we were unable to ascertain); Melo de Moraes, dean of the University of São Paulo, in 1954; and Luís da Silva Ramos, director of the Center for Educational Guidance of the São Paulo Department of Education, in 1954. Alongside the visits to the exhibitions, the *Boletim* mentions visits by important persons to the social centers and needlework studios in the women's pavilions.

Interestingly, the *Boletim* gave virtually no print space over to the many other activities, of lesser prestige, in which most of the patients at the colony were engaged. Alongside notes on the artworks, cited in articles, reports, and chronicles, and the reproduction of photographs of the patients' paintings and exhibitions in almost all the issues published as of 1950, only music and recreation received similar coverage, especially in the form of articles and photographs of the spaces in which they were practiced. This tends to indicate that the praxis therapy activities that called for more dexterity and more concentration or that were closer to an experience of enjoyment, reproducing a sense of calm and wellbeing, were the ones that were highlighted as illustrations of the work undertaken at the Juliano Moreira Colony.

Final considerations

The analysis of the issues of *Boletim da Colônia Juliano Moreira* and other documents brings to light new data on the art activities at psychiatric hospitals in the 1950s. Painting was particularly featured in the coverage of praxis therapies in the *Boletim*, even though it was offered to a very small proportion of the inmates. This brings to mind a word of warning expressed by Goffman (2005) about ritual practices undertaken in total institutions, where it is common to build up an image of an "ideal inmate" and relate them to an "ideal management team" in a bid to cover up an institution's problems. As Goffman (2005, p.93) puts it,

The murals painted by inmates, that prisons, asylums and other institutions proudly exhibit at very visible sites, are not proof that the inmates as a whole are encouraged to do art work or that they feel inspired by the environment, but provide proof that at least one inmate could do his work.

At Juliano Moreira Colony, as has been said, just five patients were doing the art workshops in 1950 and 1951, which, compared with the other activities done by the other patients, is a negligible number.

Nonetheless, the attempt to create a good image for the institution may perhaps explain all the attention given to the visual arts there. Art output would certainly have attracted more attention than heavy manual labor, ancillary or administrative jobs, and in that sense it could also be used as a way of building, in the social imaginary, a sense of the institution's good functioning because, when viewing the work – and not the patients – viewers could be induced to ignore the diseases or the problems in the public health system, seeing only what was good and beautiful or signs of recovery. In other words, the number of patients who did the painting workshops was minimal, but their work represented the success of rehabilitation: the production of work considered to be of a “high level” appreciated by a portion of the medical and artistic classes.

Finally, the absence of any express reference to the theoretical and methodological framework underpinning the art praxis therapy in the material analyzed here made it necessary to draw comparisons with other experiments in the field. The work done by Nise da Silveira at the Occupational Therapy Department of the National Psychiatric Center and by Osório César at the Arts Department of the Juquery Asylum served as parameters for understanding the introduction of painting to the praxis therapy workshops at the Juliano Moreira Colony. The few texts Heitor Péres wrote about the colony's approach indicate certain dissimilarities between it and the other two experiments discussed here. It is also worth noting that unlike César and Silveira, Péres did not publish any significant research on the use of art in praxis therapy, nor was he directly involved in such activities. He appears to have been more of a supporter of it not just in his discourse, but also as the founder of the *Boletim* and director of the institution.

The non-existence of any one person to symbolize the experience of art at the Juliano Moreira Colony does not make it any less important, because it was nonetheless found that there was some production and circulation of artworks done by the Juliano Moreira Colony patients at the same time that Nise da Silveira's painting and modeling workshop was attracting the attention of those interested in this kind of activity. According to Dias (2003, p.58), “the pioneering and innovative nature attributed to the Museum of Images from the Unconscious meant it ended up outshining the work of other therapeutic approaches in the country that were investigating links between art and madness at that time.” This is why more in-depth study is required to uncover more details about the painting workshop at the Juliano Moreira Colony, and especially the people in charge of praxis therapy there at the time, Osvaldo de Moraes and José Ferreira Muniz Sobrinho, since the documents analyzed here leave many unanswered questions concerning the work they did. This information could help to build on the perspective reached so far about the interchange between art and psychiatry in Brazil, especially in Rio de Janeiro, where the practices and theorizings of Nise da Silveira are taken by most as the only portrayal of this moment in history.

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