

Museum intervention on urban space: history, culture and citizenship at “Lagoa do Nado” Park

Intervenção museal no espaço urbano: história, cultura e cidadania no Parque “Lagoa do Nado”

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Abstract: Between the years of 2003 and 2009 the Abilio Barreto Museum of History (MHAB), at Belo Horizonte, formulated a policy of collections dedicated to increase the range of objects to be comprehended as museum artifacts. Considering the urban space as memory support, the museum promoted museum interventions, in which the history of city places was narrated through panels housed in display cases made of steel and glass with a concrete base, designed to integrate (and communicate with) it. Addressing here the last of these projects, I will consider the experience of musealization of the place, a private grange that would be claimed by residents to become a city park and receive a cultural center. Crossing the material obtained in field studies with archival research, and contrasting everyday life and official records, the survey resulted in an exhibition that addresses the configuration of the place in its dynamics and complexity, as an area disputed by different actors in different historical contexts.

Keywords: Urban history; museum interventions; place; city; social movements.

Resumo: Entre 2003 e 2009, o Museu Histórico Abílio Barreto (MHAB), de Belo Horizonte, formulou uma política de acervos dedicada a ampliar o leque de artefatos passíveis de tratamento museológico. Considerando o espaço urbano suporte de memória, realizou intervenções museais, em que a história de lugares da cidade era narrada por meio de painéis acomodados em expositores feitos em aço e vidro com base de concreto, concebidos para integrar (e dialogar com) aquele. Abordando aqui o último desses projetos, reflito sobre a experiência de musealização do lugar, sítio particular que seria reivindicado por moradores para se tornar parque municipal e receber um centro cultural. Cruzando material obtido em trabalhos de campo com a pesquisa em arquivo e contrastando cotidiano e memória oficial, a pesquisa resultou numa exposição que aborda a configuração do lugar em sua dinâmica e complexidade, como espaço disputado por diferentes atores em diversos contextos históricos.

Palavras-chave: História urbana; intervenções museais; lugar; cidade; movimentos sociais.

Between 2003 and 2009, the Abílio Barreto Museum of History (MHAB) of Belo Horizonte (Capital of Minas Gerais State, Brazil), carried out initiatives to formulate and deploy a policy of collections to broaden the range of artifacts that could receive museological treatment, going beyond the limits of its traditional collections. This new mindset somehow brought to light considerations that

were initiated in the preceding decade when the institution had undergone a period of profound changes, the height of which was the inauguration of a new headquarters more suited to meet its functions, which until that time had operated in an old adapted mansion. In the midst of what was called a “revitalization process” (PIMENTEL, 2004) was a critical analysis of what made up the museum’s collection and the concepts of History and City, which, up to that moment, had guided its activities. In general, the result of this consideration was the idea that

[...] the urban space, when being built and disputed, is crossed by multiple temporalities, methods of appropriation and diverse social uses, which are often conflicting. [...] From this point of view, it has become critical for the museum to consider the diversity of documents and socially engendered opinions about the city and its history, and to democratize the definition of the collection to be acquired, considering the various social players involved. (GARCIA, 2009, p. 62, freely translated).

By adopting more refined and critical historiographical conceptions, it proposed an innovative way to understand the relationship between the museum and the city, understood as an artifact, product and vector of social relations, as suggested by Ulpiano T. Bezerra de MENESES (1985). From this premise, the author went on to suggest the concept of operational collection, which would include

[...] certain spaces, landscapes, structures, monuments, equipment - in short, socially appropriate, and sensitive areas and objects of the urban fabric, perceived not only in its document load, but in its ability to nourish urban representations." (MENESES, 1985, p. 201, freely translated).

The understanding of urban space as a holder of memories gave rise to the launch of decentralized museum activities distributed around the city, which widen “the fields of approach to the city’s history [...] incorporating aspects rarely addressed by conventional museums”.¹ Since the progress of discussions by MHAB’s technical staff in the 1990s and the first initiatives that sought to incorporate this perspective (GARCIA, 2009, p. 63-64) have already been reported in detail, it is noteworthy to mention here that many proposals only became a reality in the following decade, when the “revitalization process” was successfully completed, bringing significant improvements to working conditions and greater input regarding human and material resources.

The year 2003 represented a turning point in the museum’s recent history, completing 60 years of existence. The historical research work received a better structure with the creation of a specific

technical division, dedicated to conducting research that would support the making of exhibits, publications, and other museum activities. Alongside, the Permanent Committee of Collections Policy, constituted as a result of a forum held in May of that year, allowed MHAB to establish appropriate administrative and museological practices to properly forward donations, transfers, and disposals. More importantly, a proper board was established for the development and implementation of the collections policy with several members from the technical staff. From the beginning, one of the guidelines of this policy was its role within the city space, until then guided by the concept of an operational collection. However, during the work it became clear that using the 'collection' category posed a risk, especially when it is accompanied by the adjective 'operational', which could somehow bring complications to

[...] mask the distinction between urban space, variable, subject to multiple appropriations and the dynamics of social life, and the museum's collection, comprised by artifacts removed from their original cycle of intended use and subjected to a series of procedures to preserve them. (GARCIA, 2009, p. 69, freely translated).

This problematic issue led me to propose the concept of **museum intervention**, betting

[...] on a tool that shifts resources from the museum itself to the urban space, without, however, intending for the former to encompass the latter [...] museum interventions interact with the urban space itself where they are installed, enabling reflection on the assigned meanings and actions performed, so as to articulate the production of memory and meaning in the practices and relationships of social groups in the city context. (GARCIA, 2009, p. 69-70, freely translated).

Projects that culminated with the completion of museum interventions *MHAB: operational collections in Belo Horizonte/Praça Sete, Ilha da Prudente* and *History of the Lagoa do Nado Cultural Center*. Implemented as of 2006, the interventions remain embedded in the space where they were installed, holding display panels made of steel and glass with a concrete base. Although they are distinct experiences in certain aspects (size of active team, resources available for implementation, typology of selected locations), they share a methodology that covers research, collection policy, development of display stands, design and assembly of exhibits. I choose to only address the last of these projects, ²which resulted in the exhibit *Lagoa do Nado: a place and its stories - Ranch, Park, Cultural Center*, ³inaugurated in 2009, whereas this choice favors a vertical approach as work methodology and allows to reflect upon the experience of museumizing the location. I have divided the following explanation into three parts: the first deals with the research methodology, highlighting the importance of fieldwork; the second summarizes the results achieved; and the conclusion addresses the

exhibit, seeking to demonstrate the construction of a narrative journey that joins the research and the venue of the park itself.

A survey of the city

The adopted perspective entailed treating the city itself as a research field for History. The urban mosaic called for an interdisciplinary approach, which - at any rate - is the keynote of Urban History. In this realm of study, the traditional methodological arsenal is brought into dialog with conceptual tools created in many fields, such as urban anthropology, geography, cultural studies, and social sciences. In this sense, a schematic and reductionist vision was overcome, which sought to present the city's history only from the official point of view, in the words and deeds of those who govern it, forming a linear and homogeneous narrative that dismisses discontinuities and clashes. Therefore, it is not necessary to corroborate the widespread belief that contemporary metropolises are a source of chaos and disintegration. As José Guilherme MAGNANI suggests, it takes a focus adjustment to realize, *up close and from within* that metropolises present “[...] new patterns of exchange and spaces for sociability and rituals of public life”. (MAGNANI, 2002, p. 26, freely translated).

It is worth noting that an important theoretical resource to account for this adjustment was the use of the concept of “place”, defined as space that gains uniqueness through the forms of its appropriation by city dwellers. (ARANTES, 1994 and 2000; CARLOS, 1996; FERRARA, 1993; NORA, 1993). Unique, however not univocal, since, according to Mariza VELOSO, “[...] the urban space houses flows of information, goods and different, extremely complex forms of sociability, which mark the existence of multiple territories”. (VELOSO, 2003, p. 110-111, freely translated). Nevertheless, as the same author considers, this diversity does not exclude the possibility of communication between social groups, nor does it eliminate the presence, even momentarily, of the “convergence of meaning” that plays a part in the construction of a public space. (VELOSO, 2003, p. 111). Here, it is fruitful to suggest an approach to geographical studies because this construction occurred between confrontations and negotiations driven by different and unequal players. The territory was objectified by social relations, which modified the space. (SAQUET, 2007, p. 66). Therefore, it is fitting to consider that the city was disputed and molded by various territorial phenomena. (VALVERDE, 2004, p. 122).

These references were extremely relevant as support for the teamwork method: aside from the usual archival research, we began conducting fieldwork in selected locations to receive the museum interventions. We began by observing the relationship of visitors with the park, through walks that were recorded with digital equipment (cameras and recorders), which allowed for full image and sound documentation used to capture the diversity of uses and forms of sociability engaged in by the community. As I will show later on, from the statements collected and the identified collection it was possible to perceive the production of meanings and representations about the park in different historical contexts. Of course, the methodology in question does not eliminate the validity of archive research, but rather it interacts with it, “[...] shedding light on overshadowed points during the official memory discourse, demolishing certainties of models that disregard the dimension of daily life, instigating new directions for research”. (GARCIA, 2009, p. 66, freely translated).

The main goal was to show the physical and symbolic transformations of the space because of its appropriation by different historical subjects. The main plot is the history behind the creation of the Lagoa do Nado Farm Park in Belo Horizonte, divided into three chronological sections. The land, which belonged to the family of an important politician and local businessman from 1934 until its expropriation (1), would be claimed by the region’s inhabitants and organized groups to become a public area, a shift from 1970 to 1980 (2), evidencing the emergence of discussions regarding issues, such as environment, culture, and social rights. After it was finally established as a municipal park in the 1990s (3), a cultural center came to be set up there, given the recognized importance of the place as a regional center for the creation and enjoyment of different cultural manifestations. Following those milestones, I present a summary of achieved results and comment on them to show how the research on document custody institutes, public and private archives was combined with fieldwork methodology .⁴

Making history in the park

In 1934, Américo Renê Giannetti⁵ purchased Olaria, Lagoa, Olhos D’Água, Curral dos Borges, and Córrego do Nado farmlands. (COUTO, 1992, p. 155). In the latter, he created the farm reserved for his family’s leisure, a get-away spot for holidays and weekends,⁶ which was later transformed into Lagoa do Nado Farm Municipal Park.⁷ In addition to a main house, the owner had built a swimming pool, a soccer field (which no longer exists) and a dam on the stream, forming a lagoon that became home to Trahira fish (*hoplias malabaricus*), frogs and alligators.⁸ A piece of land was donated to City Hall to comprise the area that would later be flooded during the construction of the Pampulha dam. The

remaining areas were subdivided as of 1938 by the Mineira Real Estate Firm, which belonged to A. R. Giannetti, and currently include the districts of Jardim Atlântico, Santa Amélia, Santa Mônica, Planalto, Itapoã, and Santa Branca, plus a part of Portugal Ave.

The review of archival documents - including therein a valuable foray into Mineira Real Estate, which yielded copies of blueprints and graphic materials that showed the subdivisions in the region - was supplemented by interviews with family members, which is certainly a mundane practice. However, the fieldwork opened other possibilities, such as the interview with one of the oldest inhabitants of the region, who had no great involvement with the family and spoke from the point of view of those who lived near the site. Undertakings in surrounding areas made decisive changes to the territorial profile, which were striking to people who already occupied the place:

There was no water, there was no power, there was nothing here. I washed clothes, pulled water from Lagoa do Nado, at a spigot over there [...] When I moved here to the pond I just had my shed, that's all. There was nothing else, no [...] It was very fast. My goodness! It was too fast.⁹

After the death of Giannetti, the farm gradually fell into disuse. In 1973, the area was claimed for public use and the implementation of municipal works. There are indications¹⁰ that the City Hall's original intention was to build a park; however, the decree signed then¹¹ only established that any work of public interest could be carried out. In the 1970s, the intensification of urban and populational growth led to the establishment of the Metropolitan Area of Belo Horizonte (RMBH).¹² The State government's concern regarding the creation and maintenance of green areas in the Capital motivated PLAMBEL¹³ to develop the “Urban Parks Program”, reserving the area of Lagoa do Nado for one of the 14 parks that would be created in the metropolitan area.

Nevertheless, if the document recognizes the existence of “a landscape that favors contemplative leisure”, it also states that “its primary function [...] is geared toward serving the peripheral population living in housing units that lack open spaces for public use”.¹⁴ It also indicates favorable conditions for installing sports courts and playground, and proposes reorganization of the pond to allow the use of rowboats and pedal boats. In this context, urban parks were seen as spaces for setting up equipment that would provide forms of recreation and socialization considered appropriate - including for consumption in bars, restaurants or picnic areas - and concern for the preservation of natural sites, when it arose, took second place.

At the end of the decade, however, no work had been performed, and City Hall just had to reactivate the expropriation via a decree¹⁵, which simply determined that the area would be used for building a park. However, in December 1981, the state government, through the Savings Bank of the State of Minas Gerais (Minas Caixa), acquired the land from the real estate firm and announced the construction of a housing development. It was an authoritarian gesture, typical of that period, which threatened to just toss out and disregard the expectations that had been created around use of the old farm. That was what prompted protests from residents and various collective mobilizations involving the participation of organized civil society, demanding to preserve the area and execute works for the creation of a public park.

Official documentation and press sources allow for verification of the interest of municipal and state powers in the location - with varying strengths and intentions - but these were limited to highlight the indispensable role of social movements for the creation of Lagoa do Nado Farm Municipal Park. Even during the period in which it did not receive the necessary interventions to become fully accessible to the public, though it was already expropriated, locals frequented Lagoa do Nado. In their reports, the abandonment of the site, the uncontrolled growth of vegetation and the fires mingle with memories of their own childhood, a time when they swam, fished or foraged for fruits in the area that belonged to the farm, which some refer to as *Mata do Janete*. In our first fieldwork contacts we realized that these forms of appropriation ended up being mentioned even in interviews with people who had not participated in that moment and did not belong to that generation. Therefore, the memory of this period would play an important role as champion of daily practices identified in the territory definition movements that sought to establish themselves in uses that would be reflected in local culture.

In the late 1970s, residents of neighborhoods such as Itapoã, Planalto, Campo Alegre, Santa Branca, Santa Amélia, and Vila Clóris already used the press to demand the creation of Itapoã Park, “[...] green area that had been promised by City Hall and that was threatened to be returned to former owners [...]”.¹⁶ Remember that this participation gained strength within the broader re-democratization of the country, still under the authoritarian rule of the military regime:

[...] as of the 80s, the territories began to be used to represent the activities of urban social movements. With the populational growth of Brazilian cities in the preceding decade, problems of overcrowding, lack of social justice, poor quality of life, violence, and economic inequality also increased. Chaotic growth derived from this set of factors brought a variety of players and scenarios for public space. In this sense, the discourse regarding the territory started to consider new possibilities by becoming a crucial element of demands in the cities. (VALVERDE, 2004, p. 120, freely translated).

Reoccupying the public space and emphasizing the role of civil society, social movements demanded that rights of citizens be restored and expanded. They brought to the political arena demands from parties usually excluded from the decision-making process and presented new forms of collective mobilization. (PAOLI; TELLES, 2000, p. 106).

Environmental issues began to integrate the public agenda along with the more common subjects like health, employment and housing. Then a change of perspective on “green areas” occurred, which emphasized the need for their protection against the voracity of urban growth and industrial production. In this context, young locals prepared a play denouncing the pollution generated in the park area by the company Central Beton. They organized the Whole Green (Verde Integral) Group, guided by the Minas Association for Environmental Defense (AMDA). With the information that it could be built into a housing development, the entities, along with resident associations from the neighborhoods Itapoã, Planalto and Grupo Escolar Lídia Angélica (now Municipal School), organized a march in defense of Lagoa do Nado, which occurred on April 4, 1982 with the presence of over 2,000 people, fairly reported in the media.¹⁷ The following year the struggle for creation of the park would be consolidated further when the same young people organized the 1st Lagoa do Nado Festival and created the Lagoa do Nado Ecological Cultural Association. (ACELN).

From then on, there were various forms of action and community mobilization, such as marches, hugs around the park, meetings, task forces for planting trees, petitions, letters to responsible political representatives demanding measures, parties, theatrical and musical performances, music festivals, sporting and educational activities, among many others. Interestingly, the organized movement was also very careful in regards to memory around their actions. Through one of the founding members of ACELN, the research team was able to peruse a file, even though it was not completely organized, which brought very diverse documentary evidence of all the activities and actions mentioned. Evidence of the great power of mobilization and effective collective construction of meaning that established the territoriality of the park was the many references to the *hugs* (the first one held in 1987), even in testimonials from people who had not even participated:

A very beautiful mobilization at the time; I did not participate, but it was a symbolic embrace in the park and was very striking at the time. It was something that was done by the community, the people really got involved. It was really the culmination: now it is ours. This symbolic embrace was very beautiful.¹⁸



IMAGE 1: Choir presentation during the program of the 6th Festival of Lagoa do Nado - 1988. Author unknown. CCLN Collection.



IMAGE 2: Poster for the 6th Festival of Lagoa do Nado. Author unknown. ACELN Collection.

These actions, particularly the annual festivals organized by ACELN, which were attended by thousands of people, make clear the relationship between culture, ecology and new forms of participation that would emerge in the context of democracy carried out. They also highlighted the playful nature of the mobilization and occupation of public space strategy, the skillful use of media and História (São Paulo) v.32, n.2, p. 87-104, Jul/Dec. 2013 ISSN 1980-4369

social networks in tasks and obtaining resources - including local commerce. The emphasis on organized civil society without direct ties to political parties unveiled a new attitude toward institutional policy, which is suspicious of traditional channels, proposed to monitor and participate in the management of public resources and assets, expanding legal instruments and representation venues. (PAOLI & TELLES, 2000, p. 109). Among the many records that were accessed, the VHS tapes with festival images were the best evidence of this political dimension:

I remember when I was already here for the first time four years ago, I didn't even live here in Belo Horizonte yet here at the Lagoa, at 1 am it seems, and it was the first time that people were really wanting to fight for it. And, I saw that people were just not crazy at all. They were so ready for it, you know? And, I'm seeing that this is a reality. Now this business of elections, and all ... let's see how this business goes. They can say whatever they want, but we will not leave.¹⁹

Indeed, culture played a crucial role in demonstrations around the Park over the years. However, it was a dimension that was always present among patrons and how they, including artists, made use of the space. The demand for creating a Cultural Center in Lagoa do Nado came from the community and reinforced by the results of a survey taken in the neighborhoods of the region by ACELN in 1984; however, it only happened in 1993. The survey revealed a point of tension between the organized movement and the City Hall's Municipal Department of Culture (SMC). The clash around the cultural center, identified in documentation belonging to CCLN, ended up appearing more clearly when addressed in interviews, including civil servants in the cultural sphere who were directly involved in this matter.

Due to popular pressures, began a long process of park configuration that would go beyond the 1980s. Protests continued amid maintenance problems arose due to staff shortages; works were halted due to lack of funds and partial openings of some structures. The importance of community involvement over those years was apparent when it confronted the delays and inefficiency of some public officials, since various demands were met. After many renovations and constructions were completed step-by-step, the park was finally completed in 1994 with funds obtained through an agreement between PBH and MBR Mining.²⁰ Field research revealed its importance precisely for addressing the period following the creation of CCLN and the park's completion, since it permitted a record of many forms of use and sociability in daily life, such as sports, children's games, leisure time or breaks from work, or even the marks left by a couple in love on a tree trunk.

Conclusion - an exhibit on/about a municipal park

As I stated earlier, the methodological options adopted in the research were decisive for building the narrative and the consequent development of the museum intervention within the park. Here, I wish to highlight three points that can be explored: the identification and selection of collections for the displays; the organization of modules and their respective contents; expographic design, highlighting the positioning of exhibitors in specific areas of the park and use of visual communication resources to create an identity for each module and simultaneously establish the conceptual connection between them.



IMAGE 3: *Exhibitor positioned in Lagoa do Nado Municipal Park - 2009.* Clarita Ribeiro Gonzaga. MHAB Administrative Collection.

In the discussions that guided meetings around the MHAB collection policy, the great limitation of the institution's collection to address the issues that we had begun formulating was clear. The envisioned History and City perspective had to make room for voices hitherto silenced, forgotten, for dimensions of the urban experience hitherto neglected. Going to the city was indispensable, and even more so was not expect “her” to go to the museum. The researchers’ contact with the place and the people who take ownership of it turns out to be transformative of social reality: by “[...] learning the História (São Paulo) v.32, n.2, p. 87-104, Jul/Dec. 2013 ISSN 1980-4369

social meanings of historical places by discussing them with urban audiences [...]” (HAYDEN, 1996, p. 13) the historian acts as a mediator in a process of democratization of historical knowledge about the city. It is not about taking a condescending or patronizing position before this possibility for participation, since it “[...] does not replace the specific problems of historical and aesthetic appreciation of cultural assets [...] but it also provides a reference - a source of meaning [...]”. (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 1994, p. 106).

Remember that changes made in the wake of New Museology, as of the 1970s, entailed the broadening of the notion of “museum object” and defense for the increasing community participation in museum. (ALMEIDA, 1996). These changes are apparent in debates and statements made in international meetings on the matter, as well as in new practices adopted by institutions that emerged in this context, such as community museums, ecomuseums, touring museums, among others. (CERÁVOLO, 2004, p. 258-262). In brief, a contemporary definition of heritage follows, as it is adopted at entities such as the ICOM and UNESCO, recognizing heritage from a holistic or comprehensive perspective, including material and immaterial culture in all its complexity, as well as natural assets. While recognizing these changes, it is crucial not to lose sight of the fact that:

Heritage does not pre-exist as such. Its selection, as well as the choices to approach it, is not an unbiased act; it depends on the point of view of selection, the meaning to be assigned to cultural products, and the use one wants to make them. (MOTTA, 2004, p. 125, freely translated).

Consequently, there is a scenario of experiences that precede and underlie the initiative at Lagoa do Nado. Thus fieldwork served to engage citizens in the research of material and symbolic records of the history of the park, while through this contact we identified potential collaborators who could be interviewed and/or provide collections to be included in the exhibit. Indeed, it was that rich collection, consisting of newspaper clippings, posters, photographs, letters, and interview transcriptions, that made up almost everything reproduced on the displays. In addition to meeting the needs of the narrative composition, from the historiographical and museum point of view,

This enables one of guidelines established for the collection policy, which is to expand it and diversify it from this movement by the museum toward the city. In addition to the recorded and transcribed interviews, it is also possible to incorporate, after the procedures established by the Commission, items belonging to specific individuals identified during the research. (GARCIA, 2009, p. 66-67, freely translated).

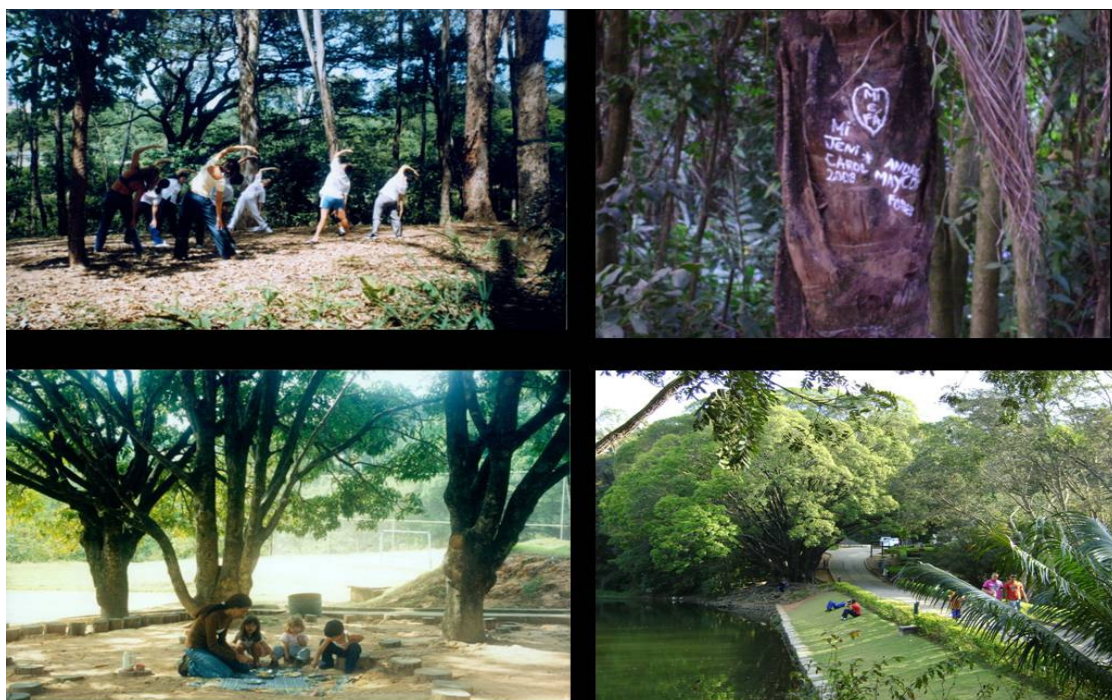


IMAGE 4: On the left, from top to bottom: *Yoga workshop at Lagoa do Nado Park* – s/d. Author unknown. Myriam Amorim Rezende Collection; *Picnic in Lagoa do Nado Park* – undated. Author unknown. Myriam Amorim Rezende Collection.

On the right, from top to bottom: *Inscriptions carved in the tree at Lagoa do Nado Park* – 2008. Télió Cravo. MHAB Administrative Collection; *People resting at the lakeside*– 2008. Télió Cravo. MHAB Administrative Collection.

The content of the exhibit was organized into three modules (corresponding to three exhibition areas) which deal with different thematic and chronological clippings, related through the history of the place. To a certain extent, the design of the modules followed the chronological sections presented in the previous section. However, the idea arose of giving greater thematic unity to each, as they would be positioned far apart from each other. This option also favored the collection selection process, guiding the choice to cover the period addressed while the theme simultaneously ensured a clearer perception of relations between the different items reproduced, the interviews transcribed and the historiographical texts that formed the displays.

I transcribe below a synthetic description that was used by the team as a basic script for selecting assets and writing the texts for each module:

Lagoa do Nado, from farm to park: space transformations

The first module presents a brief biographical account of Américo René Giannetti, businessman and Mayor of Belo Horizonte in the 1950s, former owner of the Lagoa do Nado Farm Park, where his *História* (São Paulo) v.32, n.2, p. 87-104, Jul/Dec. 2013 ISSN 1980-4369

family's farm was located. It deals with the delimitation of the Park and surrounding area, since the land was purchased by the Mineira Real Estate firm, owned by Giannetti. It depicts the formal and informal occupations of the space, symbolic and material transformations of the place over time, as well as the new relationships that were being established as the region was being urbanized.

The park-farm and citizens: a historical perspective

The second module shows the transformation of the place into a public area, as of the declaration of its Public Use and consequent expropriation of the land, decreed by the city of Belo Horizonte in 1973, until the opening of the Park in 1994. It especially highlights the mobilization of local residents to preserve the area and create the Park, through actions that sought to connect culture, ecology and popular participation.

The cultural issue and social space

The third module deals with the establishment of the Cultural Center, in the context of the 1988 Constitution, when culture started to be considered a defining agent of rights and focus of specific public policies. Considered a strategic space in prime location, the Lagoa do Nado Cultural Center (CCLN) structured its range of activities based on neighboring community demands, but it eventually extrapolated the Park's surrounding area, with a program of ongoing activities aimed, above all, to democratize and decentralize culture.

During walks taken in the field, the research team sought to map the park in order to determine the appropriate placement of exhibitor points, in order to connect the specific chronological and thematic content to its location. Two locations near the entrances were chosen, positioning the module referring to the farm in an area closer to that identifiable in the reports of use by the Giannetti family. The module dedicated to mobilization was placed near the entrance that was mentioned in some local resident reports of residents as improvement gained through their demands. The module that dealt with the Cultural Center was positioned near the mansion, in an area where a stage for cultural performances sponsored by CCLN is usually set up. All modules together compose the narrative of transformation and appropriation of urban space. Its architectural design follows the same pattern, which encourages

the idea of unity between them. The graphic design of display panels, in turn, actually performs the function of ensuring a visual identity for each module, with the use of a different color background in each (beige, blue and green).

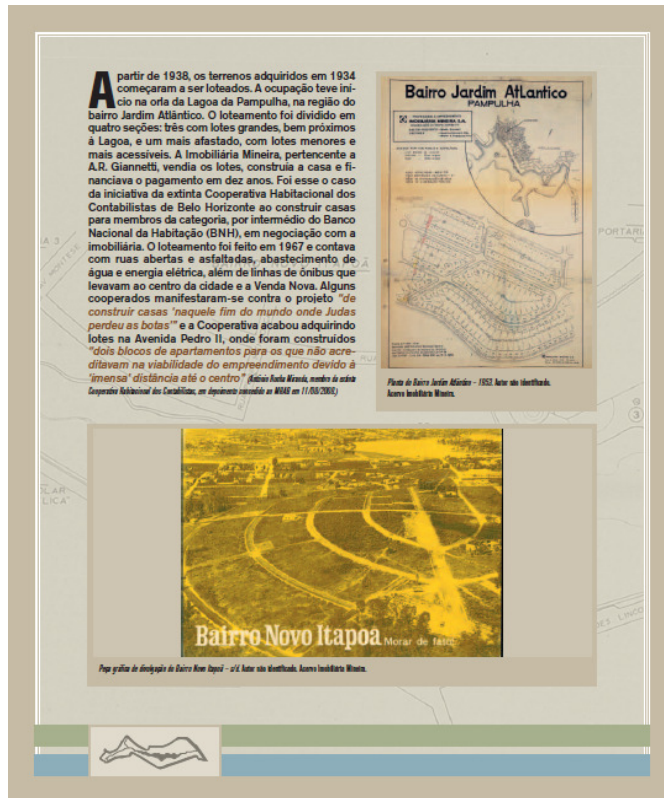


IMAGE 5: Digital reproduction of the module. A display panel LAGOA DO NADO, FROM FARM TO PARK

On the other hand, a stylized map of the park was created, reproduced at the lower edge of the panels, which indicates the position of each of the modules and promotes the perception of their coordination while simultaneously inviting the public to walk through the park with the intention of completing a journey that interconnects them. By building this route, the public actively builds an interpretation of transformations of the territory in which they move.

In the case of Lagoa do Nado, you can see that the transformation from farm into a park, from territory that implied a social distinction into one that implies the possibility of public use, also underwent technical and bureaucratic appropriation determined by the authoritarian state. On its display panels, the exhibit incorporates the memory of community engagement and participation, documented in newspapers, photographs and testimonials, evidencing disputes over its social and historical significance. What the exhibit's narrative unveils, through this remarkable trajectory of negotiation and persistence, is the meaning of the collective construction of the city through the lens of

a critical reading of its history and heritage. History reveals the shaping of a city location in its dynamics and complexity, from a space idealized from different points of view to the space constructed by different interacting players. It is in this sense that the museum intervention does not identify with the obsessive heritage defining and “museumizing” of the city (Jeudy, 2005) and refuses to make a spectacle of memory. (HUYSSSEN, 1999). It recognizes that the city cannot be catalogued. An exhibit that does not reflect such impossibility will be mere legend of the urban landscape, replacing the possibility of knowledge production with pre-fabricated discourse in order to sell an “image”. The idea of a museum intervention places history in its rightful setting, in the city.

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Notes

¹ DIRETRIZES para a pesquisa histórica no MHAB. Belo Horizonte: Museu Histórico Abílio Barreto, 1995. 7f. Manuscript. (MHAB. Administrative Archive).

² This article benefits from the research conducted between 2008 and 2009. I coordinated the team, also including the historians Clarita Ribeiro Gonzaga and Isabela Tavares Guerra, and the interns Bruno Valverde, Isabella Figueira, Rafaela Campos, Sarah Ferraz, and Télió Cravo. I thank everyone involved, as well as those who granted interviews and collections. Some reflections are the result of dialog with colleagues and students of the Graduate Program in Integrated Management at UNIVALE Territory, to whom I also extend my gratitude. A preliminary version of this work was presented as a lecture during the local event *MHAB in winter* in 2011, and another - an extended version, was presented verbally at the 23rd ICOM Conference, held in Rio de Janeiro in August 2013.

³ Inaugurated on Oct. 30, 2009 as a result of a partnership between MHAB and the Lagoa do Nado Cultural Center (CCLN). On other projects, see GARCIA, Luiz Henrique A. O lugar da História: intervenções museais no espaço urbano em Belo Horizonte. **Anais da VII Semana dos Museus USP**, São Paulo, p. 62-70, 2009.

⁴ The research was conducted between March and December 2008. For a complete list of sources consulted, see the exhibit's catalog. GARCIA, Luiz Henrique A.; GONZAGA, Clarita R. **Lagoa do Nado: um lugar e suas histórias** Sítio, Parque, Centro de Cultura. Belo Horizonte: MHAB, (Exhibit Catalog), 2009.

⁵ Son of Italian immigrants, he was born on April 20, 1896. He graduated from Escola de Minas in Ouro Preto in 1923, led various undertakings, demonstrating an entrepreneurial profile that leveraged, as of the 1930s, the diversification of production based on moving State resources. He entered the public life as State Secretary between 1947 and 1950. After being elected, he became Mayor of Belo Horizonte on January 31, 1951 and died while still in office on September 6, 1954.

⁶ Taken from the interview with Marília Giannetti, granted to MHAB on July 24, 2008.

⁷ Currently, the preserved area measures about 300,000 m².

⁸ Taken from the interview with Murilo Giannetti, granted to MHAB on August 11, 2008.

⁹ SOUZA, Maria Eva de. Belo Horizonte, July 31, 2008. Audio CD (34 min.). Transcript p 16. Interview granted to the Research Department at MHAB.

¹⁰ **ESTADO DE MINAS**. Belo Horizonte, Sept. 1973, p. 07.

¹¹ BELO HORIZONTE (MG). Decree no. 2.408 dated Sept. 05, 1973.

¹² BRAZIL: Supplementary Law no. 14 dated July 08, 1973.

¹³ Authority intended for the study and preparation of planning policies for RMBH.

¹⁴ ALVES, Marieta Vitorino de Campos et al. Parques urbanos: grandes áreas verdes para a RMBH. **Fundação JP**, Belo Horizonte, v. 6, no. 9, p. 56-69, Sept. 1976; **ESTADO DE MINAS**. Belo Horizonte, Apr. 25, 1982.

¹⁵ BELO HORIZONTE (MG). Decree no. 3.568 dated Sept. 14, 1979.

¹⁶ **ESTADO DE MINAS**. Belo Horizonte, Dec. 09, 1979.

¹⁷ Youth group makes from Planalto march in defense of the forest. **ESTADO DE MINAS**, Belo Horizonte, p. 7, April 03, 1982, Uma área de lazer para o Planalto. **Diário da tarde**, Belo Horizonte, Apr. 05, 1982. Notebook 1, p. 5; MINEIROS fazem marcha para preservar mata. **O Globo**, Rio de Janeiro, April 05 1982; Para evitar que a ‘Mata do Janete’ e a ‘Lagoa do Nado’ sejam destruídas. **Jornal de Casa**, Belo Horizonte, April 11 to 17, 1982.

¹⁸ BARROS, Paulino Caldeira. Belo Horizonte, July 19, 2008. Audio CD (32 min.). Transcript p 13. Interview granted to the Research Division at Abílio Barreto Museum of History.

¹⁹ Excerpt from a speech given by musician Marku Ribas during a musical presentation at the 6th Festival of Lagoa do Nado in 1988. VI FESTIVAL Lagoa do Nado. CRAV, 1988. 3 video tapes. (122 min.; 184 min.; 120 min.), VHS, color.

²⁰ **JORNAL DA PAMPULHA**. Belo Horizonte, Apr. 09 to 15, 1994.

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