

SPECIAL REPORT

BRAZIL

Protests (right) about corruption and weak public services stand in contrast to the celebrations when Rio was awarded the 2016 Olympic Games



Big, bold and banking on tomorrow

The South American giant has staked its place in the economic super-league. All it needs to do now is modify its tax laws, clamp down on corruption and oversee two global sports fiestas. No problem? By Adrian Ellis



Brazil's dramatic economic growth and its transition to a representative democracy have gone hand-in-hand with an expansive and influential cultural life. Brazilians are justifiably proud of their contributions to music, architecture, literature and the visual arts. *Antropofagia* – the assimilation and transformation of other cultures into something distinctively Brazilian – has been a recurring theme in a culture that produced Oscar Niemeyer's sensuous take on Modernism, the Tropicália movement's way with Rock 'n' Roll and Hélio Oiticica's labyrinthine installations. So, in this spirit, is there something distinctively Brazilian about Brazil's approach to museums and galleries?

Any stab at an answer needs to be put in context. Today Brazil is, along with Russia, India and China (collectively known as Bric), one of the countries deemed most likely to overtake all G7 members by 2027. It is the seventh-largest econ-

Economic strength and political legitimacy have made Brazil a player

omy in the world; it has the world's fifth largest population (201 million); it enjoys a healthy balance of payments surplus built on rich natural resources and buoyed in turn by historically high world commodity prices and a late but dramatic appearance as an oil exporting nation; its historic dependency on the US as a trading partner has been replaced with multiple trading relationships, most significantly with China; and, largely as a consequence, it rode out the 2007 to 2008 global meltdown relatively easily.

Military dictatorship is a receding memory: Brazil is now a stable democracy, led – at least until the October 2014 elections – by President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party, herself imprisoned by the *ancien régime* in the early 1970s. Economic strength and political legitimacy have, together, made Brazil a player on the world stage, with the World Cup and Olympics bearing down on it as proof.

That said, rapid growth has also meant rapid urbanisation, with only 10% of the

Highs and lows

5th: Brazil's place in the world league table of mobile phone ownership

\$2.2 trillion: GDP in 2012, but growth is now slowing. Brazil became the **7th** largest economy in the world in 2010, however the distribution of wealth is extremely unequal, and crime is a major problem

87% of the population lived in urban areas in 2010. There are **20m** people in São Paulo, **12m** in Rio de Janeiro and **4m** in the capital, Brasília

201 million people make Brazil's population the **5th** largest in the world

74% of Brazil's electricity comes from hydroelectric plants. The country has vast natural resources (it is the **12th** largest crude oil producer in the world) and is a pioneer in renewable energy

15 births for every **1,000** people place Brazil **132nd** out of **223** countries ranked by birth-rate by the CIA

54% white, **39%** mixed race, **6%** black and **1%** other, according to the 2000 census, give Brazil one of the most diverse populations in the world

713 of Brazil's **4,105** airports have paved runways

21% of the population was living on **\$2** per day in 2003. This number fell to **11%** by 2009

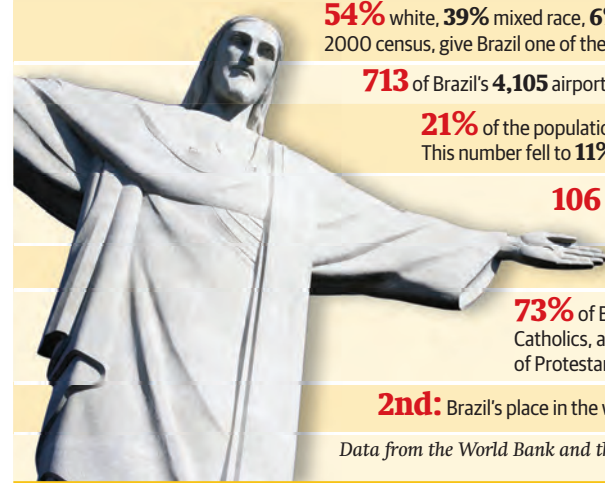
106 million people make up the **6th** largest labour force in the world

30 is the average age of a Brazilian

73% of Brazilians identify themselves as Roman Catholics, although the faith is declining as the number of Protestants (currently around **15%**) rises

2nd: Brazil's place in the world league table of cocaine consumption

Data from the World Bank and the Central Intelligence Agency



population left in rural areas, and the emergence of infrastructure-starved megacities like São Paulo (population 20 million, and the largest conurbation in both the Americas and the southern hemispheres) and Rio de Janeiro (population 12 million), with their luxury malls framed by *favelas*.

A fuller realisation of the country's economic potential and social and political maturity is cramped by corruption at pretty well every level of government; by organised and disorganised

crime; by lawless logging of the Amazon; by a historic lack of investment in basic infrastructure; and by a formidably bureaucratic, multi-tiered public sector. Although the trend-line is improving, the country is also marked by extreme income inequality and comparatively low educational attainment. Even putting aside issues of basic social justice, this makes for a shortage of skilled workers and expensive bottlenecks in the labour market. Healthily, this litany of woes is recited regularly in a free press.

So the recent chapters of rapid growth have been choked-off by a credit squeeze, cuts in social welfare and increases in energy, utility and transport costs. Inflation is running at a little under 7%. The public protests against fare increases that hit the world's headlines in June are a manifestation of the pressures that the newly affluent middle and working classes are feeling, as their economy adjusts and cools off a little.

The street demonstrations are also fed by anxieties about skewed national priorities and buyer's remorse for the successful bids for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, when there is still such a glaring need for more basic infrastructure – transport, schools and hospitals.

There is also a widespread fear that these high-profile events are going to be chaotic and embarrassing. The Pope's recent visit was received rapturously but it did not inspire confidence in Brazil's capacity to handle the logistics and crowd control that 2014 will need. The Papal Fiat was, along with the press corps, gridlocked within an hour of landing at Rio's airport. Eduardo Paes, Rio's mayor, summed up the dry run for next year thus: "We scored closer to zero than ten."

This landscape, with its peaks and troughs and conundrums, translates fairly readily into the museum sector. *The Art Newspaper's* annual round-up of exhibition attendance in 2011 identified three of the top ten exhibitions internationally at the Rio branch of the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil. The following year saw the same bank's spaces in São Paulo and Rio stage four of the top 20 international exhibitions. These are corporate galleries and the subjects are not usually the stuff of world-topping blockbuster. Meanwhile the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) reports that 92% of Brazilians have never visited a museum or gallery. This interesting conundrum – globally high attendance and globally low levels of participation – is not about bad data: it is about the first of two distinctively Brazilian funding mechanisms that work alongside, and sometimes

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SPECIAL REPORT

BRAZIL

The bigger picture



A MODERN HISTORY

KEY:
CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS
POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS

1905
The Pinacoteca do Estado opens in São Paulo, initially with only 26 paintings

1914
Brazil declares neutrality in the First World War on 4 August. But, by 11 April, it has broken diplomatic ties with Germany after German submarines sink Brazilian vessels

1917
Brazil declares war on the Central Powers—the only Latin American country to do so

1922
The first Modern Art Week is held in São Paulo. Participants include the Modernist painters Tarsila do Amaral and Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, and the writer Plínio Salgado (who would later found the fascist Integralist movement)

1928
Oswald de Andrade publishes the *Cannibal Manifesto*, arguing that Brazilian artists should "cannibalise" diverse influences. His brother Mário (above, right) publishes *Macunaíma* (left), a novel allegorising Brazil's cultural heritage. Tarsila do Amaral paints *Abaporú* (above, left), "man who eats"

1930
President Washington Luís is ousted in the "Bloodless Revolution" and Getúlio Vargas becomes the unelected president. Vargas's policies become progressively more right wing as he suppresses the communist movement and tolerates the rise of the fascist movement, Integralism

1937
Vargas establishes the Estado Novo (new state), abolishing political parties, centralising the police force and imposing strict censorship. He seizes emergency powers on 10 November, citing the imagined threat of a communist revolution, cancels the forthcoming election in January and dissolves Congress

1942
Although Vargas (below) has equivocal feelings towards fascist Germany, an economic alliance with the US leads to Brazil's declaration of war on the Axis Powers on 22 August

1945
Vargas is deposed in a coup and the Second Republic is founded with a new constitution the following year. Vargas is, however, elected to the new senate

1947
Italian art critic Pietro Maria Bardi and the Brazilian entrepreneur and newspaper owner, Assis Chateaubriand, found the Museu de Arte de São Paulo

1949
Inspired by New York's Museum of Modern Art, a group of bankers found the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. In 1958, the museum opens a building (below) designed by Alfonso Eduardo Reidy

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against, the framework for federal, state and municipal museums: the Rouanet Law.

Rouanet Law

Named after the politician who introduced it in 1991, the Rouanet Law remains on the statute book despite being under constant low-level threat of repeal or amendment. It allows corporations and individuals to fund cultural activities rather than pay tax (see p24), so there is little difference for the putative taxpayer between paying tax anonymously (no exposure) and paying for culture loudly (lots of exposure). For large corporations and wealthy individuals in a notionally high-tax nation, these alternatives to paying tax have formidable advantages. In effect, the government pays the piper but the corporation or individual calls the tune.

Although some of this foregone tax goes into strongly branded corporate sponsorship of public institutions, overseen by a National Committee for Culture Incentives at the Ministry of Culture (with the energy giant Petrobras, the largest company in the southern hemisphere, featuring prominently), it has also been a major impetus behind the phenomenon of networks of corporate galleries hosting high-profile exhibitions,

often with free entrance. Oi, a phone company, manages the Oi Futuro Art and Technology centres and its competitors Vivo and Embratel have similar gallery networks. Correios, the national postal service, and banks such as Banco do Brasil (the blockbuster winner), Santander, Itaú and Caixa Econômica have all established one or more often, a chain of galleries and arts centres as an alternative to paying corporate taxes. For the most part, of course, they are also free of the

"The ultimate goal is to ensure that the right to memory is exercised in a broad and democratic manner"

costly responsibilities associated with the care of large historic collections or with a wider scholarly or educational mission.

The Rouanet law has also served, on a similar basis, to support ambitious and occasionally spectacular private museums such as the extraordinary cultural complex, Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim, founded by the mining magnate Bernardo Paz in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais (see p22), and the Casa Daros which opened this March in Rio, devoted to

contemporary Latin American art. It is difficult to say how many of the 70-odd non-commercial galleries and museums under planning and construction identified by the Brazilian Institute of Museums (Ibram) are premised wholly or in part on Rouanet, but it is a significant number.

Many museum professionals are understandably ambivalent about the long-term impact of the law, largely because it amounts to the private governance of public money. The cultural spaces are privately owned, branded, curated and directed, and the strategic thrust is informed by public relations, rather than a more conventional mission. But, realistically, it is unlikely that if the tax break were lower than 100%, tax receipts that accrued would find their way to or through the ministry of culture.

A second important and uniquely Brazilian institution is the SESC (Social Service of Commerce), founded in 1946 as one of a series of enduring welfare measures hammered out between the government and industrialists to thwart the threat of communist infiltration of the workforce in the immediate post-war years. The SESC is a private, not-for-profit entity funded through an earmarked 1.5% payroll tax on employers. This generates significant funds—especially given Brazilian growth rates—

for broadly cultural and social initiatives across all the arts, covering capital, revenue and the establishment of cultural enterprises.

While the threat of communism has receded, the mandate remains, extending throughout Brazil. A quarter of the budget goes toward a network of art and recreation centres, with São Paulo's SESC Pompéia, designed by the late Lina Bo Bardi (the architect of the equally remarkable Museu de Arte de São Paulo), acting as a sort of flagship. SESC today constitutes a formidable force for social inclusion through culture, well and securely funded and with a clear mandate for using cultural engagement as a means for building community. But it is also a privileged monolith.

The broad social agenda of SESC is clearly in stark contrast to the commercial logic of Rouanet. But while their agendas pull in different directions, they both essentially represent the privatisation of large areas of tax-funded cultural provision, and are much more radical in their long term impact than, for example, the "arms-length" type arrangements that exist for non-departmental public bodies in the UK—or that São Paulo has recently adopted for the management of several cultural institutions, liberating these from the confines of national,

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In brief

Marina and the shamans

A documentary about Marina Abramovic's three-month journey visiting shamans in Brazil is set for a release in theatres in March 2014. "The Current: Marina Abramovic in Brazil", which is being produced by the Brazilian film company Casa Redonda, follows the artist as she studies in the small town of Abadiânia with the "faith healer" João de Deus, communes with crystals in the southwest region of Minas Gerais and attends the annual religious Sunrise Valley festival in the central city of Planaltina. "I came to Brazil to look for places of power," Abramovic (above) says in a trailer for the film. The trip began as a quest to rejuvenate her body and mind after her 2010 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She now hopes to incorporate the traditions she studied, including crystal healing and blood rituals, into the Marina Abramovic Institute in Hudson, New York. The venue, which is devoted to long-duration performance art, is expected to open in 2015. J.H.

Oil state opens arts centre

A new 26,500 sq. m arts centre (below) is scheduled to open in Espírito Santo—the Brazilian state that has been attracting new investments since oil reserves were discovered there last year. The steel production company ArcelorMittal-Cst is financing the construction of the concrete building, which will be run by the local government as part of a broader effort to develop the region. Designed by the architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha and local firm, Metro Arquitetos, the centre will be located in Vitória, a coastal city north of Rio. "Cais das Artes", which is to house an art museum and a theatre overlooking the ocean, is scheduled to open in next June. J.H.



An annual biennial?

The organisers of the Bienal de São Paulo are aiming to produce a major show every year. "We're trying to find a way to make an annual exhibition. We have the structure—the internal production, communication and the space," says Luis Terepins, the president of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo. The next show, "30 Vezes Biennial" (30 Times Biennial) is scheduled to open on 20 September in the Oscar Niemeyer pavilion. The exhibition will feature more than 250 works by around 120 artists who have been included in previous editions. The organisation wants to take the show on the road: "Education is a key concern for the foundation and we're planning to take a part of the collection to several other cities in Brazil the year after the biennial, so that it can be seen by young people all over the country," Terepins says. C.B.

Cai Guo-Qiang's tipped ship

Exhibitions in Brazil regularly top our annual attendance survey, so it is little surprise that more than 700,000 visitors have seen an exhibition of works by Cai Guo-Qiang. "Peasant Da Vincis", during its travels from Brasília to São Paulo. With an attention-getting obelisk, *Complex*, 2010, (above) in the shape of an upended aircraft carrier as a centrepiece, visitor numbers could easily top a million by the end of the show's run at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro (until 23 September). H.S.



Museum body re-elects head

Hans-Martin Hinz, the former deputy minister of culture for Berlin, has been re-elected as the president of the International Council of Museums (Icom) for a second three-year term. The appointment was announced last month at the end of the organisation's annual general conference, held in Rio (10-17 August). Hinz defeated Carlos Roberto Ferreira Brandão, the curator of entomology at the Museu de Zoologia in São Paulo, for the position. Hinz, who served on Icom's executive council between 2004 to 2010, says he will now focus on promoting better communication among the group, which has around 30,000 members in 137 countries. J.H.

**1951**

The Italian-Brazilian industrialist Cicillo Matarazzo founds the Bienal de São Paulo. Since 1957, the biennial has been staged in a pavilion specially built by the architects Oscar Niemeyer and Hélio Uchôa (right)

**1951**

Vargas is elected president but quickly becomes unpopular with the public and the military. Rather than resign, Vargas kills himself in his

palace on 24 August 1954

1956

The First National Exhibition of Concrete Art is held at the museums of Modern Art in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The Concrete Art movement draws inspiration from the Dutch De Stijl group, and the work is largely abstract and geometric

**1956**

Construction begins on Brasília (below), the country's new capital. Brasília is not completed until 1960. Architect Lúcio Costa creates the master-plan, with buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer

1959

In reaction to the Concrete movement, the poet Ferreira Gullar publishes the *Neo-Concrete Manifesto*, which "denies the validity of scientific attitudes and positivism in art and restores expression". Neo-concrete artists such as Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica create work for the movement

1964

Democratically-elected president João Goulart (above) is overthrown in a US-backed coup and Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco is installed as military dictator. Rapid economic growth goes hand in hand with political repression and huge social inequality for the next 21 years

1967

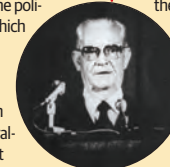
The Tropicalia movement (Caetano Veloso, above left, and Gilberto Gil) emerges amid political repression. Inspired by the *Cannibal Manifesto*, the movement's musicians and artists aim to synthesise the avant-garde with popular culture. The exhibition "New Objectivity Brazil" opens in Rio

1969

A group of artists in Paris publish *No to the Biennial of São Paulo* detailing the political oppression. France boycotts the biennial and a number of other countries (including the US, Spain, Belgium and Holland) withdraw or limit their participation. In total, 80% of the invited artists decline to participate

1974

Ernesto Geisel (below) becomes president. He relaxes some of the military government's hard line policies, which allows the steady growth of liberalism but doesn't threaten the stability of the government

**1978**

A fire at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro destroys 1,000 works—almost the entire collection

**1979**

Geisel handpicks his successor, João Figueiredo (below). Although Figueiredo was one of the architects of the 1964 coup, his policies follow Geisel's. He relaxes press censorship and redistributes 47,000 acres of land from Brazil's wealthiest to the country's poorest

1985

The "Great Canvas Biennial": curator Sheila Lerner juxtaposes paintings by established artists with works by emerging artists, suggesting they are of equal merit. Several artists remove their work in protest

TIMELINE
CONTINUES P22

state and municipal government. These are extended, very large-scale experiments in cultural planning.

These two devices also lie behind much of what catches the headlines—whether high profile *grands projets* and blockbusters for the Rouanet Law or the innovative community engagement for SESC. But standing a little behind those headlines is the deep network of federal, state and municipal museums that has evolved with the nation, states and cities of Brazil. Only one, Rio's Museu Nacional, predates independence and then only by a few years. It was founded in 1818 by the Prince Regent Dom João, later King Dom João VI, of Portugal, and funded at a time when Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarve—incidentally, the only time a city outside Europe was the capital of a European empire.

Since independence, another 3,199 museums have been established according to Ibram, the organisation created by the ministry of culture in 2008 as the beefed-up successor to the Department of Museums and Cultural Centres. Its mandate is oversight for both the 28 federal museums and the development and management of a national framework for museum development.

Ibram has modest resources—direct expenditure on culture is less than 1% of the federal budget—but its national plan for the museum sector has a clear focus and is rooted in the country's strong museological traditions, dating back to the establishment of the Escola de Museologia in the Museu Histórico Nacional in 1932.

The plan's preoccupations with ethics, access, equity, stewardship and professional development are more universal than Brazilian, but there is one important, if perhaps not unique, emphasis for a country as ethnically, geographically and socially diverse as Brazil. In the words of Angelo Oswaldo, the president of Ibram: "The ultimate goal is to ensure that the right to memory is exercised in a broad and democratic manner throughout the country. A museum's social function is to contribute to the development of community life, civic consciousness and the idea of belonging to a national identity. That is the relevance of museums in our times: not only to gather collections,

Demonstrators climb Bruno Giorgi's *Meteoro* sculpture in Brasília in June



documents and works of art, but also to be a dynamic center for cultural action."

He cites the Museu da Maré, located in Rio's Favela da Maré, as an exemplar. It tells the story of this slum neighbourhood and was developed with one of Ibram's tools, the Pontos de Memória (Memory Points), an incentive programme that aims to identify, support and consolidate collective memory initiatives from various social groups throughout Brazil. Another example might be the Museu da Língua

Portuguesa that opened in the Luz railway station in São Paulo in 2006, imaginatively using interactive technology to show the relationship between politics, history and language. In the same vein, Rio's Museu Nacional has developed a series of programmes to reach out to marginalised young people and offer alternatives to a life of crime and addiction to children living in the streets and youths from penitentiaries. These initiatives may seem like prevailing orthodoxy to hard-boiled museum folk but, in the context

of Brazil's extremes, they also feel like moral imperatives.

The desire for museums, and indeed the arts more generally, to serve a wider community has led to what may become a third distinctively Brazilian strategy and one that may have an impact as profound as the Rouanet Law or SESC. This is the Vale-Cultura or cultural stipend. President Rousseff has recently proposed, and congress accepted, the expansion of an initiative of her predecessor, Lula da Silva, introducing a stipend of R50 (\$25) a month for everyone earning below five times the minimum wage, to be spent on a wide range of cultural activities from museums to music downloads. Employers (again) will cover 90% of the cost of the stipend but this can be deducted (again) from their income tax. Workers will pay the remaining 10%, and it will be administered through an electronic debit card—a sort of voucher system for culture. Another significant funding stream, with all the same pros and cons as educational vouchers, but at the same time, fascinating, big, bold, Brazilian.

• The writer is the director of the Global Cultural Districts Network (www.gcdn.net) and a founder of AEA Consulting (www.aeaconsulting.com). Additional reporting by Niki Cosgrove of AEA Consulting

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