

WE DO THE WORK, YOU DO THE PLEASURE

Brazil

Where hearts were entertained in June
We stood beneath that amber moon

He's gone.

Tomorrow was another day
The morning found me miles away
With still a million things to say



First...

In 1960, the Federal Capital of Brazil was moved from Rio de Janeiro to the geographically central and more neutral locale, of Brasília (Distrito Federal). Designed in 1956 by architects Oscar Neimeyer and Lucio Costa with landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, Brasília was planned with modernist principles of access, utopia and democracy in mind.

Thousands of miles north of that utopian interior - north of the tropic of cancer and a couple of meridians west - is another *Brasília*.

Here, in a gallery space, interiors are internalized, and duplicated; framed in a house and fragments of film, shown in a space that is split, divided, teased.

The house is owned by Gail Anderson - philanthropist, world traveller, arts worker - and was designed in 1970 by architect Bill Boucock in the Mount Royal area of Calgary, Alberta.

GAIL ANDERSON

He had done a house in the country for a guy I had gone to art school with in Winnipeg. I saw his house eventually, and wow. So I phoned Bill because... I wondered if he'd be interested in building a house for us. He said, "Well, my houses are..." - he speaks kind of slowly - "not really city houses."

"Well this isn't like a city lot either. Why don't you come over and see it?"

"The other thing is, I don't make any money [designing] houses so I want to be with people who are on the same wavelength as I am, so if you want, like..." - he didn't say mansion but that's what he meant - "then I'm not your architect."

I said, "No, no. We want something contemporary." We had an idea of having a garden in the middle of [the house], because this is the 70s of course...

Next!

They sent me here.

JAY MOSHER

I began [by] observing reactions of friends who had visited the house. Their enchantment with the architecture, [the] interior garden...

What is an interior garden really?

I think gardens in general are about escape. They almost become a coping mechanism for an entropic existence. Everything around us (including ourselves) is moving and breaking down at different speeds. A garden (interior or exterior) forces us to stop and take pause. They freeze time. This is where ideas about exoticism and temporality become significant. It's the sensation of longing for something – like a point or place in time – that manifests itself through gardens.

A leaf alone, a thicket of twigs; as if the garden is either winding down, or getting ready to take over...

I like to think it's taking over. The lone leaf could almost be nature's calling card.

Can a house be a portrait?

Every object in the house and where/how it's placed supports this. Because of the videos tenor, there are moments when it felt lifeless despite all the growing florals. This was the most difficult part of putting this work together. Making sure *Brasília* didn't come across as a commemorative piece.

By the by, I saw the most wonderful idea

The film referenced in *Brasília*, is *Brazil* (1985) and was written by Terry Gilliam, Charles McKeown, and Tom Stoppard. The film centers on Sam Lowry, a mid-level technocrat, working in a futuristic convoluted society; a dystopian world with an overreliance on poorly maintained and inefficient machines. A woman continually appears in his dreams, a metaphor for escape from his mind-numbingly insular and controlled life. *Brazil*'s bureaucratic, totalitarian government is reminiscent of the government depicted in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

A slip of tongue. A happy accident. Origins obscured through multiple temporalities.

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There have been instances throughout this work where *Brasília* has been misspelt as *Brazilia*, both by others and myself. I thought this accident was a wordplay that showcases general misconceptions about place, specifically one that is foreign to us. With the inclusion of the shag rugs [in the space], again, we see more wordplay at work here (i.e. shag, shagging).

[But] it is still unknown why Gilliam chose *Brazil* as the title. Maybe he read the story in the paper one morning and found that the dictatorship he's been portraying in his film also mirrored *Brazil*'s government at that time. With *Brazil*'s now dissolved dictatorship, the film could be considered an optimistic narrative for civilization.

Can't make a move without a form.

I always liked this idea of reprising a formal element within an exhibition, much like branding. Relating this approach to Gilliam's *Brazil*, I recently read that Ary Barroso's 1939 song "Aquarela do Brasil," (the leitmotif in the film) was reprised so often in the score that composer Michael Kamen said he started to think he might have written it himself. This is interesting to me – obscuring origins.



< Sunlight filters through slatted blinds into a southeast-facing room used for breakfasts and for greenhouse chores. A glass roof gives an outdoors feel.

> The south side of the house has entrance decks and terraced flower gardens. Behind the door, a sheet of glass protects the atrium garden from cold air.



Chinook light filters through a trussed ceiling. Clerodendron thick under foot. Gang-planks and wood walkways connect spaces floored by terracotta. Beau, draped nearby, eyes closed, 'foxing it.' Pulleys and chains line a windowed roof, poppable. Moon-shaped sconces are spaced – out of reach – on thick support beams. A polar bear trophy relaxes under the furniture. This plot, once deliberate; now wild.

The block drops away like an ocean shelf, slipping north toward the city. To sleep here must mean to dream about packed suitcases, couches like organs, and large steering-wheeled cars.

Now as twilight beams the sky above
Recalling thrills of our love
There's one thing I'm certain of
Return I will
To old Brazil

Brasília

Text by Peta Rake on the occasion of *Brasília*, a solo-exhibition by Jay Mosher at Untitled Art Society, an artist-run centre in Calgary, Alberta.