

# **Circulation of a Centre-Narrative: The “École de Paris” and Exhibition Networks between Santiago de Chile, Recife, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Paris (1921–1930)**

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## **ABSTRACTS**

This text examines the circulation of a centre-narrative in the history of modern art, focusing on the international exhibitions in the context of the *École de Paris* (School of Paris) between 1921 and 1930. The label *École de Paris* emerged during this period to highlight the central role Paris played in the global modern art scene. By using this label, art history and art criticism often described the mobility of artists as a one-way street to Paris, attracted by the centre. To avoid this narrowing of perspective, the article examines instead how the label *École de Paris* was shaped, appropriated and reinterpreted within transatlantic exhibition networks. It demonstrates in what ways exhibitions were a means of active confrontation with the central status of Paris and the exclusivity of its art scene. The two case studies focus on exhibition networks of Grupo Montparnasse between Santiago de Chile and Paris, and of Montparnasse magazine between Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and São Paulo.

Dieser Text untersucht die Verbreitung eines Zentrum-Narrativs in der Geschichte der modernen Kunst und konzentriert sich dabei auf die internationalen Ausstellungen rund um die *École de Paris* zwischen 1921 und 1930. Die Bezeichnung *École de Paris* ist in dieser Zeit entstanden, um die zentrale Rolle von Paris in der globalen modernen Kunstszene zu betonen. Die Kunstgeschichte und Kunstkritik hat Mobilität von Künstlerinnen und Künstlern der *École de Paris* oft als Einbahnstraße beschrieben, da sie vom Zentrum angezogen worden seien. Dieser Artikel vermeidet eine solche Perspektivverengung und untersucht stattdessen, wie das Label *École de Paris* innerhalb transatlantischer Ausstellungsnetzwerke geformt, angeeignet und umgedeutet wurde. Er zeigt auf, auf welche Weise Ausstellungen ein Mittel zur aktiven Auseinandersetzung

mit dem zentralen Status von Paris und der Exklusivität seiner Kunstszene waren. Die beiden Fallstudien konzentrieren sich auf die Ausstellungsnetzwerke der Grupo Montparnasse zwischen Santiago de Chile und Paris und der Zeitschrift *Montparnasse* zwischen Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Paris und São Paulo.

In recent years, art history has taken numerous valuable steps to decentre the history of modern art.<sup>1</sup> The prominent position of twentieth-century art centres such as Paris and New York has been reconsidered, and numerous actors beyond the well-trodden paths of art historiography have come to light. But one methodological question keeps coming up in the face of these approaches: How does one deal with the fact that numerous historical actors – although they participated in the enterprise of animating art scenes outside these centres – repeatedly confirm the centrality of the cities mentioned? Considering these actors, the impact of the centre on the periphery seems to be validated. However, a more in-depth examination of the intricate relation between the centre and the periphery paints a very different picture.

A suitable subject to address such a question are the international art exhibitions of the so-called *École de Paris* (School of Paris) between 1921 and 1946. Between 1921 and 1930, artists and art critics from various countries who lived for short or long periods in the Montparnasse district of Paris organized 44 exhibitions in local cafés. Between 1927 and 1946, a total of 32 international exhibitions were held in 18 cities, including Moscow, New York, Paris, Prague, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Venice. They presented art from Montparnasse under the title “École de Paris” and were often organized by artists and art critics who had previously been active in the cafés in Montparnasse.<sup>2</sup> The *École de Paris* is neither an institutionalized art school nor a master-pupil circle, but rather a term coined by the French art critic André Warnod (1885–1960) in a two-part article in the Parisian daily *Comœdia* and his monograph *Les berceaux de la jeune peinture* in 1925. In these works, he described the phenomenon of numerous artists being attracted to Paris, more precisely to the artists’ district of Montparnasse, in the years before and after the First World War, which for him confirmed its status as an art centre.<sup>3</sup> Warnod’s writings shaped the canon of the *École de Paris* with its leading “masters” such as Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920), Jules Pascin (1885–1930), Marc Chagall (1887–1985), Tsu-

1 Cf. K. Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, Cambridge, Mass., London 2005; P. Mitter, *Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery*, *The Art Bulletin* 90 (2008) 4; M. Tiampo, Gutai: *Decentering Modernism*, Chicago 2011.

2 This article is based on extensive research on the international art exhibitions of the *École de Paris* under the title “*Montparnasse, carrefour du monde*”. *Die Erfindung von Paris als Kunstzentrum – von den Caféausstellungen in Montparnasse zu den internationalen Ausstellungen der “École de Paris”, 1921–1946*, which will soon be published by the Deutscher Kunstverlag (Berlin/Munich). See also A. Ruckdeschel, “École de Paris” In and Out of Paris (1928–1930): A Transregional Perspective on the Exhibitions of the “School of Paris” in Venice, Cambridge, Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro, in: *Stedelijk Studies Journal* 1 (2019), <https://stedelijkstudies.com/journal/ecole-de-paris-in-and-out-of-paris-1928-1930-a-transregional-perspective/>.

3 A. Warnod, *L’Etat et l’Art vivant*, in: *Comœdia*, 4 January 1925, p. 1; A. Warnod, *L’Ecole de Paris*, in: *Comœdia*, 27 January 1925, p. 1; A. Warnod, *Les berceaux de la jeune peinture*, Paris 1925.

guharu Foujita (1886–1968), and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who, according to the critic, had moved their very hearts and souls to Paris for an extended period of time. Following Warnod's writings, the idea of the *École de Paris* and its canon was largely adopted by art critics and French museums to describe the one-way migration of artists to France. Also the number of non-French artists active in Montparnasse in the 1920s and 1930s was reduced to a few outstanding examples, which Warnod mentioned in his works. It is precisely this restrictive narrative of the *École de Paris* that emerged at that time that still limits our present-day view of artist networks that intersected Montparnasse in the 1920s.

Contrary to previous approaches that use *École de Paris* as a term of analysis, for the phenomenon of attraction described by Warnod I will focus on the use of this term in exhibitions during its time of origin both inside and outside Paris and thereby highlight the circulation of a centre-narrative.<sup>4</sup> Many artists and critics described by Warnod were

- 4 After Warnod coined the term "École de Paris" in 1925, this label has been used consistently and soon passed into the research literature of art history, which has a strong focus on Parisian art activities. Commonly, two usages of *École de Paris* appear in the post-war decades, each referring to artworks and artists from Paris with subtle differences. The first *École de Paris* is understood to refer to the internationalized art milieu that was particularly active in the years before the First World War and in the interwar period. With regard to the temporal delimitation of this phenomenon, research differs, placing the starting point between 1901 and 1905 and the end point between 1929 and 1939. The second, or new, *École de Paris* is understood to be contemporary art from Paris in the immediate post-war period: B. Dorival, *Les étapes de la peinture française contemporaine*, Paris 1944; P. Francastel, *Nouveau dessin, nouvelle peinture: L'École de Paris*, Paris 1946. Research on the *École de Paris* before 1945 has been closely linked to research on Jewish, mostly Eastern European and Slavic artists, especially since the mid-twentieth century: W. George, *Les artistes juifs et l'École de Paris*, Paris 1959; K. E. Silver/R. Golan (eds.), *The Circle of Montparnasse: Jewish Artists in Paris 1905–1945* (exh. cat. Jewish Museum, New York), New York 1985; N. Nieszawer/M. Boyé/P. Fogel, *Peintres juifs à Paris, 1905–1939: École de Paris*, Paris 2000. The role of the Paris art market for the *École de Paris* has illuminated: M. Gee, *Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market Between 1910 and 1930*, New York, London 1981. Subsequently, the *École de Paris* has received attention, especially in the context of studies concerned with the tension between an internationalized art field in Montparnasse and claims to French supremacy in modern art. Romy Golan pays attention to it in a study relevant to the investigation of nationalism in interwar art: R. Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France Between the Wars*, New Haven 1995. For the first time, Laurence Bertrand Dorléac turned to the *École de Paris* from an institutional-critical perspective. She takes into account the historical change of the respective very open definitions of the phenomenon in art criticism and exhibitions after 1945. L. Bertrand Dorléac, *L'École de Paris: Un problème de définition*, in: *Revista de Historia da Arte e Arqueologia* (1995/1996), pp. 249–281. A major exhibition compiled a comprehensive collection of material and chronology on the *École de Paris* of the interwar period: J.-L. Andral (ed.), *L'École de Paris 1904–1929: La part de l'autre* (exh. cat. Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris), Paris 2000. The exhibition deals with the term *École de Paris* in two ways. On the one hand, it uses it in Warnod's sense to refer to the (mostly foreign) artists in Montparnasse; on the other hand, it deals critically with the term itself, especially Gladys Fabre's contribution, and emphasizes its different meanings for different groups. Thus, a perspective on the *École de Paris* as a result of the engagement of Parisian art dealers, art critics, and institutions come to the fore: S. Krebs, *L'École de Paris: Une invention de la critique d'art*, thesis, Paris 2009; K. C. Kangaslahti, *Foreign Artists in the École de Paris: Critical and Institutional Ambivalence between the Wars*, in: N. Adamson/T. Norris (eds.), *Academics, Pompiers, Official Artists and the Arrière-Garde: Defining Modern and Traditional in France, 1900–1960*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2009, pp. 85–112; K. C. Kangaslahti, *The École de Paris, Inside and Out: Reconsidering the Experience of the Foreign Artist in Interwar France*, in: J. Anderson (ed.), *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence*, Carlton VIC, Australia 2009, pp. 602–606; K. C. Kangaslahti, *Making the Cosmopolitan National: The Politics of Assimilation and the Foreign Artist in Interwar France*, in: M. Krüger/I. Woldt (eds.), *Im Dienst der Nation: Identitätsstiftungen und Identitätsbrüche in Werken der bildenden Kunst*, Berlin 2011, pp. 119–140. Robert Jensen examines the arrival of foreign artists in Paris and aims to draw attention to the question of where artists live and reside: R. Jensen, *Why the*

“transmigrants”, moving in networks between Paris and other places.<sup>5</sup> Not infrequently, and especially before 1932, it was these actors using and reapplying the label *École de Paris* and the idea of Paris as the centre of the modern art world, attaching the label to exhibitions held. Accordingly, my aim is to describe through two examples their various definitions, appropriation, and re-evaluation of this label within different local contexts. The function of the various (re)inventions of the *École de Paris* in exhibitions was to seek both symbolic and real/physical access to a contested field of modern art production in Paris.

Not least, this research is driven by the idea to expand previous research on the *École de Paris*, which has been centred on Paris. “[W]hat kind of picture of the centre can be seen not from the centre itself – the place usually occupied by the historian of modern art – but from a position that is marginal, according to the principle that one can see much more from the margins”?<sup>6</sup> asked art historian Piotr Piotrowski in his manifesto-like outline for a horizontal history of art that engages critically with its own geographical biases and centre-periphery dichotomies. Well aware that such a horizontal art history can be more of an ideal than a programme in view of the ever-new canon productions of institutions endowed with interpretive power, the following investigation has taken this inquiry as a guiding principle. This serves as a heuristic means to reveal how, at a given historical moment, the perspective on the centre was fractured and contested. How can affirmation of the centre be seen by non-central actors as more than the mere affirmation of an influence exerted on them? How can these forms of centralist thinking be understood as active contestation and reinterpretation that respond to different local conditions and that may have been strategic?

Focusing on two exhibition networks that unfolded between cities in Latin America – Santiago de Chile, Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro – and Paris between 1921 and 1930, this article highlights the staging in the exhibitions, the role of artists and art critics as exhibition organizers, and the art critical reflection surrounding the exhibitions. The analysis follows the basic assumption that these exhibitions actively confronted the supremacy of Paris (and of French-born artists) and followed local strategies in each case. They were organized by transmigrants who were anchored in and mediated between

School of Paris is not French, in: *Art@s 2* (2013), article 5. However, this emphasis on geography in the question is not followed by a broadening of the geographical perspective. The question of the multilocal anchoring of artists who came to Paris for a certain period, maintained permanent contact with other sites of modern art, or left the city again is not addressed here, and neither in previous research, nor in the most recent exhibition on the subject: J. Braillon-Philippe (ed.), *Chagall, Modigliani, Soutine... Paris pour école* (exh. cat. Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, Paris), Paris 2020.

5 In doing so, this study draws on a concept from migration studies. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc define transmigrants as “immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant inter-connections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state.” N. G. Schiller/L. Basch/C. Szanton Blanc, *From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration*, in: *Anthropological Quarterly* 68 (1995) 1, pp. 48–63, at 48. Transmigrants differ from immigrants insofar as they integrate into new local contexts in everyday life, economically and politically, but maintain their ties to the context of origin and often move between different sites.

6 P. Piotrowski, *On the Spatial Turn, or Horizontal Art History*, in: *Umění* 56 (2008) 5, pp. 378–383, at 380.

several local contexts. This article therefore does not seek to affirm the central status of Paris on a methodological level, but rather examines what local functions the exhibitions studied had. The cities in South America and Europe where the exhibitions took place thus do not appear as sites where the influence of Parisian art was confirmed; instead, these cities attest to their role in actively engaging with and re-evaluating art from Paris.

## 1. The Grupo Montparnasse in Santiago de Chile and Paris

My first example concentrates on the Grupo Montparnasse, which through a transatlantic network between Santiago de Chile and Paris, specifically in Montparnasse, shaped the image of Montparnasse as the centre of the modern art world in the 1920s, later being linked to the *École de Paris*.<sup>7</sup> The idea for the group was born in 1922 in a café in Montparnasse where its members met, together with an initiative for its first joint exhibition in Chile.<sup>8</sup> The Grupo Montparnasse initially consisted of five artists: the brothers Julio Ortiz de Zárate (1885–1945) and Manuel Ortiz de Zárate (1887–1946), Henriette Petit (French for Enriqueta Petit, 1894–1983), José Luis Perotti (1898–1956), and Luis Vargas Rosas (1897–1977). Although the group never used the label Grupo Montparnasse in Paris, they did so in exhibitions in Chile.

The first group exhibition took place in Santiago de Chile in October 1923 in the Sala Rivas y Calvo.<sup>9</sup> Vargas Rosas, who organized the exhibition, wanted it to create a rupture with Chilean academic painting with its Salon Oficial, which drew on European models and taught a true-to-nature depiction, clear compositions, and the use of local colours as artistic values until the 1920s.<sup>10</sup> The reference to independent art (*art indépendant*),

7 Cf. Instituto Cultural del Banco del Estado de Chile (ed.), Grupo Montparnasse y la Renovación (exh. cat. Instituto Cultural del Banco del Estado de Chile), Santiago de Chile 1991; Corporación Cultural de Las Condes (ed.), Grupo Montparnasse en versión original: Obras, cartas y documentos de los primeros pintores modernos de Chile (exh. cat. Corporación Cultural de Las Condes), Santiago de Chile 2010; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (ed.), 1900–1950: modelo y representación: Chile 100 años artes visuales (exh. cat. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes), Santiago de Chile 2000, pp. 79–90; E. Solanich Sotomayor, Escultura en Chile: Otra mirada para su estudio, Lo Barnechea, Providencia, Santiago de Chile, Valparaíso 2017, pp. 57–62; M. Greet, Transatlantic Encounters: Latin American Artists in Paris Between the Wars, New Haven 2018, pp. 41–42.

8 Luis Vargas Rosas first mentioned the initiative to a joint exhibition in a letter to Henriette Petit, which he wrote on 14 December 1922 at the Café La Rotonde. Archivo Christina Arellano, cit. in W. Díaz Navarrete/P. Lizama Améstica (eds.), Bohemios en París: Epistolario de artistas chilenos en Europa 1900–1940, Santiago de Chile 2010, pp. 260–262. In the French capital, four contact persons were of paramount importance to the newcomer Chilean artists, contributing to their networking with the local art scene. The painter Manuel Ortiz de Zárate was a link to the café scene in Montparnasse. A similar role was held by the illustrator Oscar Fabrès (1895–1961), who worked in the Paris office of the Chilean daily *La Nación* and was active as an illustrator for the magazine *Paris-Montparnasse*. The poet Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948), who had regular contact with the cubists Picasso and Juan Gris since 1917 and collaborated on the magazine *L'Esprit nouveau* in the early 1920s, was also an important contact in Paris. Cf. G. Fuss-Amoré/M. Des Ombiaux, Montparnasse, in: *Mercure de France*, 15 November 1924, pp. 117–118; Díaz Navarrete/Lizama Améstica, *Bohemios en París*, p. 329.

9 This was the venue of the auction house of Carlos Rivas Vicuña and Arturo Calvo Mackenna. Cf. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1900–1950: modelo y representación, p. 86.

10 Starting in 1913, however, a first group of artists formed in opposition to the academy, the Generación del Trece, which was oriented towards the Parisian bohemian scene of the belle époque and was close to the Grupo

which in Paris had successfully broken away from the structures of state academies and exhibition systems, could thus be fruitfully applied to the Chilean context. A rupture with the Chilean academic art system was also the guiding principle behind the second group exhibition of the Grupo Montparnasse, the Salon de Junio, held at the same venue in 1925.<sup>11</sup> Besides the works by the Grupo Montparnasse, child art, as well as a group of independent artists from Chile, this exhibition showed contributions at the Salon d'Automne, which was one of Paris's important annual exhibitions of independent art. In Santiago de Chile, it was represented on a small scale with works by Maurice Le Scouëzec (1881–1940), Suzanne Valadon (1865–1938), Manuel Ortíz de Zárate, and Camilo Mori (1896–1973) – the last being a Chilean painter who from then on would join the Grupo Montparnasse. In addition, the Salon de Junio presented a so-called cubist section with works by Juan Gris (1887–1927), Fernand Léger (1881–1955), Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973), Louis Marcoussis (1878–1941), and Pablo Picasso.

The Grupo Montparnasse thus worked on mobility in two directions, bringing Parisian independent art to Santiago while encouraging its members to travel to Europe. Concerning the latter, their travels often took them to Italy, Spain, and Germany, permitting their lives and careers to overlap several times.<sup>12</sup> The group's founding myth, however, was their experiences in Montparnasse, which gave the group its name. The group was supported in highlighting these shared experiences in the Chilean Press by the art critic Juan Emar (also Juan Emar, pseudonym for Álvaro Yáñez Bianchi, 1893–1964). In the Chilean daily *La Nación*, he published his column “Notas de arte” and a series of six articles, which reflect his conversations with the artists of the Grupo Montparnasse. Emar explained in the first article:

*Montparnasse, the artists' quarter of Paris, where cafés, academies, and exhibitions are the boiling point of much of the future of the visual arts, destroying many obsolete idols, burying many ideas, and sowing many seeds that later germinate. For the five exhibitors, this name does not mean the same pictorial tendency; for them, Montparnasse is not a school, it is not the same goal. It is a memory. [...] The Europe of art broke in them the unity of the limited and established principles of the past, in order to set in motion in each of them a steady and definite development towards themselves. It is the only common link. It is the one common truth that was revealed to all of them in Paris and crystallized there in Paris in the feverish Montparnasse.*<sup>13</sup>

Montparnasse through Julio Ortiz de Zárate. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 65–69; P. E. Zamorano, *Artes visuales en Chile durante la primera mitad del siglo xx: Una mirada al campo teórico*, Atenea (Concepción) (2011) 504, pp. 206–207; P. E. Zamorano, *Principales exposiciones de arte en Chile durante el siglo XX: circulación, recepción y debates escritos*, *Estudios Ibero-Americanos* 30 (2013) 1, pp. 118–119.

11 Cf. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1900–1950: modelo y representación, pp. 79–90.

12 Cf. Corporación Cultural de Las Condes, Grupo Montparnasse en versión original.

13 Transl. by the author, original quote: “Montparnasse, barrio de artistas en París, en cuyos cafés, academias y exposiciones bulle gran parte del porvenir de las artes plásticas y donde muchos ídolos caducos se han destrozado, muchas ideas rancias sepultado y no pocas semillas que luego germinaron, han sido sembradas. Para los cinco exponentes ese nombre no indica una igual tendencia pictórica; para ellos Montparnasse no es una escuela, no es un mismo objetivo perseguido. Es un recuerdo. [...] La Europa del arte rompió en ellos la unidad de princi-

Here, Emar clearly avoided seeing Montparnasse as a school and instead underlined the autonomy that the group's artists had earned and preserved during their stay in Montparnasse. In doing so, he emphasized the independence of these modern artists, who did not imitate the art of the Western metropolis, cubism or fauvism, or of each other, but found at this place an opportunity to discover their own artistic abilities. With this individualism, the Grupo Montparnasse also rebelled against the Chilean academic system with means they borrowed from Europe. Nevertheless, by referring to independent art, they aimed at cultural autonomy that remained paradoxically dependent on a European model. But this paradox was not seen as an obstacle. Rather, it expressed the complexity of a post-colonial situation in which self-chosen dependencies pave the way to creative autonomy.

Such intellectual identification with an artists' quarter depended on a real/physical anchoring of the artists in Montparnasse. This was guaranteed by the group's activities in the private art academies, which were open to foreign students and were points of contact for newcomers to the city and provided an anchor for transcultural networks.<sup>14</sup> In addition, after the First World War, the cafés in Montparnasse were important spaces where artists met from different countries who stayed in Paris for a short or long period. The most important of them, the Café La Rotonde, the Café Parnasse, and the Dôme, were located opposite each other at the crossroads of Boulevard Raspail and Boulevard du Montparnasse and, as meeting places, are an integral part of the memory of the neighbourhood's art scene.<sup>15</sup>

What is less known is that in 1921 artists transformed these cafés into exhibition spaces and one of the Grupo Montparnasse's members was especially involved in these events. Manuel Ortiz de Zárate was one of the first initiators of these exhibitions of the *Compagnie de peintres et sculpteurs professionnels* (Company of professional painters and sculptors).<sup>16</sup> It was founded in 1921 with a first group exhibition at the Café Parnasse and went on to exhibit in the quarter's cafés until 1930. These exhibitions were clearly fuelled by communist and internationalist ideas. This was particularly evident in the group's intention to reach out to the working class with their exhibitions in cafés, as well

pios limitados y establecidos de antemano, para empezar a marcar en cada uno una lenta y segura evolución hacia el hallazgo de sí mismo. Es el Único lazo común. Es la Única verdad común que para todos apareció allá en París y allá en París se cristalizó en el Montparnasse febril." J. Emar, "Grupo 'Montparnasse'", in: *La Nación*, 22. October 1923, p. 3, quoted in: J. Emar, *Escritos de arte (1923–1925)*, ed. by P. Lizama, Santiago de Chile 1992, pp. 53–54.

14 Petit studied at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, just as Perotti and Vargas Rosas had, who also attended the Académie Colarossi. Many younger Chilean artists (e.g. Héran Gazmuri and Inés Puyó), who would follow the Grupo Montparnasse to Paris after 1928, would study at the Académie Lhote.

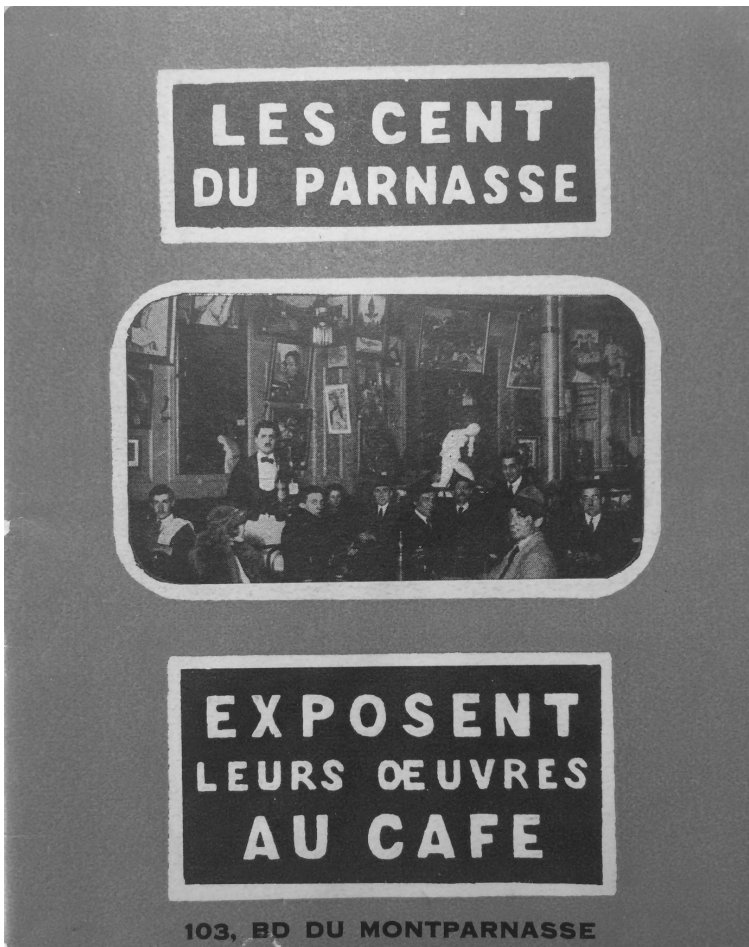
15 Cf. J.-P. Crespelle, *La vie quotidienne à Montparnasse à la grande époque, 1905–1930*, Paris 1976.

16 This artists' association has received little attention in the historiography of the artists' quarter Montparnasse. It was described by contemporaries: Fuss-Amoré and Des Ombiaux, *Montparnasse; J. Émile-Bayard, Montparnasse, hier et aujourd'hui: Ses artistes et écrivains, étrangers et français, les plus célèbres*, Paris 1927, pp. 384, 462–463. One of its founding figures is the subject of: S. de La Bouilleries/J.-P. Crespelle (eds.), *Auguste Clergé (1891–1963): Fondateur de la Compagnie des peintres et sculpteurs professionnels, fondateur du Salon populaire: sa vie, son œuvre*, Quimper 1991.



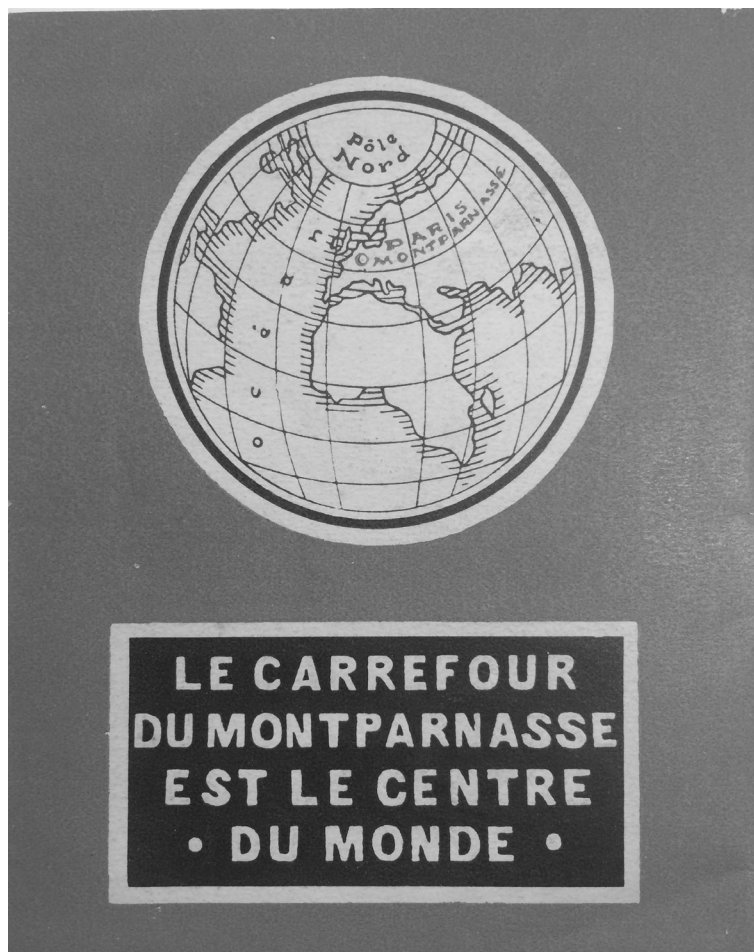
as in the exhibition texts of founding member Serge Romoff (1883–1937) – a Parisian writer, journalist, and sympathizer of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s who had fled from the Russian czarist empire during the 1905 Russian Revolution.<sup>17</sup> The exhibitions of the *Compagnie de peintres et sculpteurs professionnels* followed explicitly eclectic principles in terms of artists’ nationality and style. The participating artists of these exhibitions had different origins: for example, Chaïm Soutine (1883–1943, born in Smilavičy, Russian Empire), Tsuguharu Foujita (born in Tokyo, Japan), Gilani Abdul-Wahab (\*1890, born in Mehdiya, Algeria), and Manuel Ortiz de Zárate (born in Como, Italy, raised in Chile).

Figure 1: Front and back cover of the exhibition catalogue *Les cent du Parnasse*, June 1921, Café du Parnasse, Paris.



17 Cf. J. Flower, Serge Romoff – témoin inconnu, in: *French Cultural Studies* 27 (2016) 1, pp. 20–31.





Parisian galleries also started to lend paintings by famous French modern painters, such as Édouard Manet (1832–1883, born in Paris, France), Paul Gauguin (1848–1903, born in Paris, France), and Auguste Renoir (1841–1919, born in Limoges, France) to the cafés. These exhibitions clearly propagated an image of Montparnasse as the centre of the modern art world, as shown on the cover of the catalogue for an exhibition at the Café Parnasse: “The crossroads Montparnasse is the centre of the world” (see fig. 1).

The catalogue refers to the crossroads of Boulevard Raspail and Boulevard du Montparnasse, where the Café Parnasse was located. It is very likely that the exhibitions of the Grupo Montparnasse in Chile were influenced by these café exhibitions: With the exception of Mori, all of the artists of the Salon d’Automne section within the Salon de Junio in Santiago de Chile had also exhibited in the Parisian Café La Rotonde in January 1922, where Manuel Ortiz de Zárate had also presented his works.

Following the same ideal of Montparnasse being the centre of the modern art world, Manuel Ortiz de Zárate founded in 1924 the exhibition society Amis de Montparnasse, which went on to exhibit at the Café Parnasse, La Rotonde, and the Café Les Amis de Montparnasse – whose name the society adopted and whose interior the society designed. The Amis de Montparnasse was an important meeting place for artists from Latin American countries but also from Spain and Japan, gaining attention in Chile by a column written by Alberto Rojas Jiménez (1900–1934) on Montparnasse between 1924 and 1926.<sup>18</sup>

In Paris, the café exhibitions sparked a debate about Montparnasse as a site of international encounter that was linked to discussions about the role of the quarter in establishing artistic school movements. This became evident in the art magazine *Montparnasse*, which strongly supported the café exhibitions and was widely read by the cafés’ clientele. Paul Husson (1883–1927), the magazine’s editor, held that the crossroads of Boulevard Raspail and Boulevard du Montparnasse was a site of artistic migration and cosmopolitan mixture, reporting on the third exhibition at the Café Parnasse in 1922:

*Crossroads of the world, ideal city where everyone is a citizen of the same fatherland of Art, Montparnasse likes to give us, each season, the charm of a renewed assembly of young painters who have faith in their ideal of beauty. The Art School of Montparnasse! That may be a big word. But later, this term will definitely be used to describe the wonderful community of artists who work, suffer and dream on our predestined hill.*<sup>19</sup>

The example of the Grupo Montparnasse shows how these Chilean painters could shape, transform, and translate the idea of a School of Montparnasse that was later associated with the *École de Paris*. Since its establishment, the Grupo Montparnasse’s transatlantic programme pointed in two directions. On the one hand, the group members wanted to delve into the cosmopolitan art scene in Montparnasse, where national identity became invisible in what contemporaries described as a cosmopolitan hodgepodge and a school. In Paris, the citizenship of, for example, Manuel Ortiz de Zárate did not play a major role and was often unknown to art critics. He was later counted among the members

18 A. Rojas Jiménez, *Chilenos en París*, s. l. 1930. The Amis de Montparnasse was a clearly defined group whose members changed less than those of the Compagnie de peintres et sculpteurs professionnels. Its president was Ortiz de Zárate, whom Varese supported as general commissioner. The Belgian Gustave Fuss-Amoré (1877–1944) – whose wife, Elisabeth Fuss-Amoré (1879–1959), exhibited her works in this framework – was the group’s secretary, and the Spanish sculptor Julio González (1876–1942) supported the multinational organizing committee. The permanent membership was similarly international, and the society included, among others, a number of Japanese artists, such as Foujita and Shotaro Konishi. In addition, the Briton Nina Hamnett (1890–1956) and the painter Frank Overton Colbert (1896–1935), a descendant of the North American Chikaw, exhibited with the group.

19 Transl. by the author, original quote: “Carrefour du monde, cité idéale où tous sont citoyens de la même patrie de l’Art, Montparnasse se plaît à nous donner, à chaque saison, le charme d’une assemblée renouvelée des peintres jeunes et pleins de foi en leur idéal de beauté. L’Ecole d’Art de Montparnasse! Voilà peut-être un bien gros mot. Mais plus tard, ce sera sans doute en ces termes que sera désignées, la merveilleuse collectivité d’artistes qui travaille, souffre et rêve sur notre colline prédestinée.” P. Husson, *Exposition du Parnasse*, in: *Montparnasse* (1922) 7, pp. 4–5.

of the *École de Paris*. On the other hand, in the Chilean press and exhibitions the group members presented themselves as self-appointed diplomats of an independent Chilean art scene in Paris and as such as part of an international art community, but not as part of a wider school. Thus, Emar wrote in *La Nación* about Manuel Ortiz de Zárate:

*From Montparnasse, meeting point for artists from all over the world, he does an unexpected work of rapprochement between Europe and our country. A rapprochement that, let's hope, will be as effective as that of a skilled diplomat or that of a heavyweight champion scientist.*<sup>20</sup>

The position of the group was thus very calculated and consciously aligned between these two cities. Compared to the Parisian art scene, the Grupo Montparnasse meant moderate modernism. The painter Paul Cézanne was a role model for the group, for example for Vargas Rosas's painting *Techos de Puerto Montt* (1922–1925, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Santiago de Chile). None of the group members belonged to an avant-garde group in Paris, but they were oriented towards the anti-academic art of the private academies of Montparnasse, which is reflected in its many still lifes or landscapes. In Santiago de Chile, however, the group's works were understood as avant-garde art provoked criticism because of alleged cubist traits, although the group denied its proximity to cubism or, as in the case of Manuel Ortiz de Zárate, had stopped working in the cubist style. This Janus-faced stance between the Old World and the New World, between adaptation and autonomy, and between contributing to an idea of the School of Montparnasse and maintaining independence from it proved to be a successful artistic strategy in the changing Chilean art system of the 1920s. In 1928, the group's engagement in Santiago de Chile proved successful and sparked a broad debate about the art of the Chilean Salon Oficial. It had struck a chord with Chilean cultural politics, leading to alignments of the group members with the government of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1877–1960) and his authoritarian reformism. As a result of the dispute over the Salon Oficial, the minister of education Pablo Ramírez (1886–1949) closed the Escuela de Bellas Artes in 1928 and sent 27 artists to study at the free academies of Montparnasse – including Grupo Montparnasse members Camillo Mori and Julio Ortiz de Zárate, who were chief inspectors (Jefes de Inspección de Estudios Artísticas en Europa) of the programme and mentors of younger Chilean artists in Paris, some of whom would study at the Académie Lhote. Vargas Rosas also accompanied the group of Chilean artists in Paris and continued his artistic career there until 1939.<sup>21</sup>

20 “Desde Montparnasse, punto de cita de los artistas de todo el globo, hace él una insospechada labor de acercamiento entre la Europa y nuestro país. Un acercamiento que, esperémoslo, sea tan eficaz como el de un hábil diplomático o el de científico campeón peso pesado...” J. Emar, “Grupo ‘Montparnasse’. Manuel Ortiz de Zárate”, in: *La Nación*, 23 October 1923, p. 3, quoted in Emar, *Escritos de arte*, pp. 59–60.

21 Cf. Zamorano, *Principales exposiciones de arte en Chile*, pp. 123–125; P. Berrios, *La construcción de lo contemporáneo. La institución moderna del arte en Chile 1910–1947*, Santiago de Chile 2012, pp. 156–159; Greet, *Transatlantic Encounters*, p. 42.

The Grupo Montparnasse shows that artists’ activities were not always oriented towards the centre of Paris. Understanding and presenting oneself as part of a Montparnasse art scene of central importance could also have the goal of changing the artistic situation in Santiago de Chile. To this end, the group formed a transatlantic structure that helped the members to anchor themselves either real/physically or symbolically in Montparnasse. For the group members, these two functions were weighted differently. Manuel Ortiz de Zárate, Petit and Vargas Rosas were able to shape their careers in the interwar period primarily in Paris, opening up opportunities for Chilean and other non-French newcomers; Julio Ortiz de Zárate, Mori and Perotti benefited in Santiago de Chile from experience and symbolic capital gained in Paris.

## 2. The *École de Paris* in Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro and the Parisian Magazine *Montparnasse*

The second example not only reveals how the idea of the *École de Paris* originated in the transatlantic exhibition networks of the leftist circles of the cafés in Montparnasse, but also highlights that, unlike in the case of the Grupo Montparnasse, such networks could also sometimes fail at one of their anchor points. This example centres around the artist Vicente do Rego Monteiro (1899–1970), who pursued his artistic career between Brazil and France. He was born in Recife and came to Paris in 1911 where he studied at the private academies in Montparnasse.<sup>22</sup> Rego Monteiro returned to Brazil several times, during the First World War and after the Great Depression. He also showed works at the “Semana de Arte Moderna” in São Paulo in 1922 – an arts festival and milestone of Brazilian modernism – and had several exhibitions in Paris in the 1920s, where he was promoted by the gallerist Léonce Rosenberg (1879–1947). From 1929 to 1930, he was a co-editor of the *Montparnasse* magazine, already mentioned above for its supportive role for the café exhibitions and their international artists during the 1920s.

In 1930, Rego Monteiro and the other editor of the *Montparnasse* magazine at that time, the French art critic Géo-Charles (pseudonym for Charles Guyot, 1892–1963), decided to organize a travelling exhibition in Brazil of the *École de Paris*. The exhibition first took place from 19 March until 2 April at the Teatro Isabel in Recife, then moved to the Palace Hotel in Rio de Janeiro, and finally in June was transferred to the Palacete Glória in São Paulo. Previous research on this exhibition has focused on its reception in Brazil.<sup>23</sup> In

22 Cf. V. Rego Monteiro, Depoimento do pintor e poeta Vicente do Rego Monteiro (1969), in: Vicente do Rego Monteiro: pintor e poeta, Rio de Janeiro 1994; W. Zanini, Vicente do Rego Monteiro: Artista e poeta, 1899–1970, São Paulo 1997; M. L. G. Atik, Vicente do Rego Monteiro: Um brasileiro da França, São Paulo 2004; E. Wolfe, Paris as Periphery: Vicente do Rego Monteiro and Brazil’s Discrepant Cosmopolitanism, in: The Art Bulletin 96 (2014) 1, pp. 98–119; L. Bader, Quelques visages de Paris (1925): Reiselust und bewanderte Bilder aus Brasilien, in: U. Kern/M. Schneider (eds.), Imitatio – Aemulatio – Superatio: Bildpolitiken in transkultureller Perspektive: Thomas Kirchner zum 65. Geburtstag, Heidelberg/Merzhausen 2019, pp. 223–241.

23 Zanini, Vicente do Rego Monteiro, pp. 256–272; M. Dos Anjos/J. V. Morais, Picasso “visita” o Recife: a exposição da Escola de Paris em março de 1930, in: Estudos Avançados 12 (1998) 34, pp. 313–335.

the following, more attention will be paid to the role of the *Montparnasse* magazine and Rego Monteiro's involvement between France and Brazil. The 58th issue of *Montparnasse* served as an exhibition catalogue and was sold not only in Paris but also in the bookstore Libreria Moderna Granja & Ca in Recife. The magazine reported on the *École de Paris* in Brazil but was also, in an opposite direction, intended to familiarize a French-speaking public with the new spirit (*esprit nouveau*) of Brazilian modern art.<sup>24</sup>

For the travelling exhibition, 98 works of 60 artists were transported to Brazil. Many artists of that exhibition were collaborators of the *Montparnasse* magazine. Additionally, many of them exhibited at the Parisian Salon des Surindépendant and were close to purism and surrealism, which had previously played a peripheral role in the context of the café exhibitions in Montparnasse and in the *Montparnasse* magazine. Rego Monteiro was one of the exhibitors at the Salon des Surindépendants and thus demonstrated in Brazil his active involvement in an exhibition that was founded as a more progressive alternative to already existing salons of independent art in Paris.<sup>25</sup>

The travelling exhibition in Brazil specifically tried to convey an image of the *École de Paris* that followed a cosmopolitan ideal by not dividing the exhibition into national sections but rather by using the label Paris to represent the developments of an internationalized art field. Such an exhibition format was also embraced by the Salon des Surindépendants, actively setting itself apart from the national sections of the Salon des Indépendants. Rego Monteiro and Géo-Charles's exhibition countered Warnod's idea of the *École de Paris*, in which French masters played the leading role, as the organizers did not want to convey any perceived superiority of certain national groups in the exhibition and therefore hid national origins.

Unlike in other exhibitions of the *École de Paris*, many Latin American artists appeared as part of a cosmopolitan community that claimed Paris as its centre. It showed works by Vicente do Rego Monteiro and his brother Joaquim (1903–1934), Tarsila do Amaral (1886–1973), Manuel Rendón (1894–1980), and Germaine Derbecq (1899–1973), who after her marriage to Pablo Manes (1891–1962) had become Argentinian. The *Montparnasse* magazine had already tried from 1928 onwards to establish such an alternative view of the *École de Paris*. The Belgian painter Pierre-Louis Flouquet (1900–1967), who was a collaborator of *Montparnasse* and contributed a work to the exhibition in Brazil, wrote in the magazine about the Parisian Salon d'Automne – a salon of independent art, where many foreign artists were exhibited:

24 M. Wellisch, *L'esprit nouveau au Brésil*, in: *Montparnasse* (1930) 58, pp. 9–10.

25 The Salon des Surindépendants was founded in 1928 and made it a requirement that its members could not exhibit works in any other invitational or juried salon. Cf. M. Greet, *An International Proving Ground: Latin American Artists at the Paris Salons*, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos. Nouveaux mondes mondes nouveaux*. *Novo Mundo Mundos Novos*. *New world New worlds* (2017), <http://journals.openedition.org/nuevomundo/70847> (accessed 14 May 2020). There is an overlap between exhibitors of the Salon des Surindépendants in 1929 and the *École de Paris* exhibition in Brazil: Léopold Survage (1879–1968), Jean Lurçat (1892–1966), Rego Monteiro (Joaquim and Vicente), Alica Halicka (1894–1975), Auguste Herbin (1882–1960), Francisco Borès (1898–1972), Hernando Viñes (1904–1993), Gounaro (Giorgos Gounaropoulos, 1890–1977).

*There is nothing specifically French about this Salon. As much as the Salon des Indépendants, it is a very Parisian Salon, i.e. European, i.e. global. Its ensemble is international. Its substance is international. Derived from the great guiding principles revealed by the masters who gave life to the School of Paris, it expresses the said school in more or less plastic, subtle nuances. School of Paris! Yes, but a School of Paris imagined by a thousand foreign brains tested by the spiritual fever of artists of all latitudes.*<sup>26</sup>

One of Picasso's gouache artworks, which was part of the travelling exhibition in Brazil and reproduced in *Montparnasse* magazine, was the first piece by the artist shown in that country and supported this idea of the *École de Paris* as an international melting pot of modern art that *Montparnasse* proclaimed. In 1924, the gouache was reproduced on the title page of the roman à clef *Les Montparnos*, by Michel Georges-Michel (1883–1985) about the cosmopolitan *bohème* (bohemian) environment of Montparnasse – which was widely debated in Paris. The story played in the cafés of Montparnasse and the theatrical adaptation of the novel presented a café exhibition as stage set in the first act.<sup>27</sup> For a Parisian audience engaged in debates about the cosmopolitanism of the Parisian artists' quarter of Montparnasse and the mixing and overcoming of national identities, Picasso's work must have been an obvious allusion. The idea of a cosmopolitan Parisian art scene was also underscored by the exhibitions' special focus on the cubist (and post-cubist) works by Fernand Léger and Georges Braque. This tendency towards cubism and post-cubism mirrored the profile of the *Montparnasse* magazine, whose former editor Paul Husson saw cubism as a precursor to world art (*art mondial*) and a future cosmopolitan synthesis of humankind in Montparnasse.<sup>28</sup>

It is important to point out the partial and local failures of this exhibition project. Regarding the Brazilian reception, a note by Rego Monteiro stated:

*1929–30 / Montparnasse magazine with Géo-Charles, poet / Exhibition of the School of Paris in Recife, Rio, São Paulo. Zero monetary success, crisis everywhere in Brazil. The modernists very late, our exhibition caused rather embarrassment for those who thought they were modernists who spoke of modern art without ever having seen a piece except in photographs.*<sup>29</sup>

- 26 Transl. by the author, original quote: “Pareil Salon n’a rien de spécifiquement français. Autant que le Salon des Indépendants, c’est un Salon bien parisien, c’est-à-dire européen, c’est-à-dire mondial. Son ensemble est international. Sa substance est internationale. Dérivée des grands principes directeurs révélés par les maîtres qui donnèrent vie à l’École de Paris, elle exprime la dite École en nuances plus ou moins plastiques, plus ou moins subtiles. École de Paris! Oui, mais une École de Paris rêvée par mille cerveaux étrangers éprouvée par la fièvre spirituelle d’artistes de toutes les latitudes.” P.-L. Flouquet, *Le Salon d’Automne*, in: *Montparnasse* (1928) 53, p. 13.
- 27 M. Georges-Michel, *Les Montparnos*: Roman nouveau de la bohème cosmopolite, Paris 1924; M. Georges-Michel, *Pourquoi j’ai écrit ‘Les Montparnos’*, in: *Paris-Soir*, 3 June 1927.
- 28 Husson was of the opinion that modern art should seek a new directive that was not bound to thinking in terms of geographical borders, striving towards world art through an artistic synthesis. P. Husson, *Directives*, in: *Montparnasse* (1923) 23, pp. 2–3.
- 29 Transl. by the author, original quote: “1929–30 / Revue Montparnasse avec Géo-Charles, poète / Exposition de l’École de Paris à Recife, Rio, São Paulo. Succès monétaire nul, crise partout au Brésil. Les modernistes très en retard, notre exposition a causé plutôt de la gêne pour ceux qui se croyaient des modernistes [et] qui parlaient



The exhibition did not generate a broad response in the local press and was only discussed with little enthusiasm. Several reasons for the failure can be listed. The art market did not welcome the paintings, which was reinforced by the Great Depression, and the art field in the state of Pernambuco and its capital Recife around 1930 and the Brazilian art debates were structured very differently than in Paris.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, there was a divide between the modernists of the north-east and the south of the country. On the one hand, there were the intellectuals and artists of the “Semana de Arte Moderna” in the south, who advocated a connection to the international avant-gardes while simultaneously establishing cultural independence. On the other hand, there was the regionalism (*regionalismo*) movement in the north-east, centred around the sociologist and friend of Rego Monteiro, Gilberto Freyre (1900–1987). He focused on the region of the north-east, which he understood as the origin of a specifically Brazilian cultural configuration due to the landing of the Portuguese colonizers and the history of slavery. The specificity of this region, according to him, was the incorporation and mixing of different cultural European and non-European elements, which he understood as the basis of a Brazilian modern identity.<sup>31</sup> The exhibition did not react cleverly to this split and even neglected to seek strategic alliances on a rhetorical level, even though it was supposedly looking for a contact with the new spirit in Brazil. Although the avant-gardes of the south supported the *École de Paris*, Rego Monteiro and Géo-Charles, however, failed to highlight closing ranks with regionalism in the north-east.<sup>32</sup> This led to the exhibition being read, especially in Recife, not as a cosmopolitan show, or a show about cultural mixture, but as a survey of art from France.

From my point of view, however, there is another important reason for the failure of the exhibition in Brazil. Unlike the Grupo Montparnasse, Rego Monteiro and Géo-Charles transplanted a Parisian debate into the Brazilian context, which seemed unimportant and decontextualized for a local public. They expanded the Parisian art sphere by campaigning in Brazil for the recognition of foreign artists in Paris. While in Brazil a positive response was largely absent, the exhibition, viewed from a Parisian perspective, made a contribution to attacking xenophobic Parisian art criticism and ostracism via the Brazilian detour. Géo-Charles followed this programme in a two-part article for the *Correio Paulistano*.<sup>33</sup> Here, he tried to debunk the xenophobic Parisian art criticism, which wanted to prevent foreign artists from having a place in the Parisian art world and its

d'art moderne sans avoir jamais vu un exemplaire sinon par photo [...]” Quoted in: B. Emery, *Brésil baroque, nouveau Brésil, la vision de Géo-Charles*, Grenoble 1994, p. 46.

30 Cf. Dos Anjos/Morais, Picasso “visita” o Recife.

31 Cf. P. Burke/M. L. G. Pallares-Burke, Gilberto Freyre: *Social Theory in the Tropics*, Oxford 2008, pp. 45–50; 59–66; Wolfe, *Paris as Periphery*.

32 The exhibition was supported by Brazilian modern artists and poets of the South: Mário de Andrade (1893–1945) organized the exhibition room in São Paulo, Menotti Del Picchia (1892–1988) published articles, and Tarsila do Amaral contributed two paintings to the show.

33 M. Del Picchia, *Arte Moderna. Uma informação do crítico Géo Charles sobre o momento esthetico mundial I*, in: *Correio Paulistano*, 15 June 1930; M. Del Picchia, *Arte Moderna. Uma informação do Crítico Géo Charles sobre o momento esthetico mundial II*, in: *Correio Paulistano*, 17 June 1930.



museums. The text vehemently opposed Camille Mauclair (1872–1945), who was one of the most ardent and xenophobic Parisian critics of the *École de Paris* and who had attacked the *École de Paris* with accusations that it was a gang of drug-using, parasitic “métèques”.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, this Parisian struggle had repercussions as far away as Brazil. Mauclair led an attack on the Brazilian *École de Paris* exhibition in the Buenos Aires press, causing official representatives of French institutions to stay away from the opening.<sup>35</sup> As a result, Géo-Charles organized a protest of foreign artists against Mauclair on his return from Brazil to Paris. In a protest article entitled “Une protestation. Les artistes étrangers contre M. Mauclair”, printed in the Parisian journal *Paris-Soir*, Géo-Charles defended the right of foreign artists to represent the *École de Paris*.<sup>36</sup> He also stated that many Brazilian artists and intellectuals, who were very well informed about the Parisian art scene, had supported the *École de Paris* in Brazil. Géo-Charles pointed to the long-standing tradition of French art that had depended on the contribution of foreigners even earlier, at the time of the School of Fontainebleau, and that acquired these special qualities only through cultural exchange. While Géo-Charles still affirmed the superiority of French art, he also universalized a certain form of art produced in Paris by foreigners by inserting into this belief the need for a non-French contribution. He drew particular attention to the contributions of South American artists to the *École de Paris*, which, for him, seemed a necessary antidote for sustaining anti-academic impulses. In Géo-Charles’s protest letter, the *École de Paris* exhibitions in Brazil thus appeared as an initiative of organizing non-French artists who resisted an ideal of a pure French art defined by *jus sanguinis* and the ascription of national identity of artists by blood.<sup>37</sup> This example shows that the art critical framing of the Brazilian exhibition of the *École de Paris* was very much oriented towards Paris. It shows us that some of the exhibition projects could also fail in some parts of their networks due to the complexity of transcultural dynamics that remained unregistered or disrespected. But this example also leaves us with the question as to which standards we use to measure the success or failure of these exhibitions, since they often pursued several goals in different cities. Measured against the Parisian background, the *École de Paris* exhibition in Brazil meant an important contribution to the struggle for recognition of marginalized artists and stood for a pluralistic, leftist scene that also gave Latin American artists space in Montparnasse to develop and present their work. In this sense, the Brazilian exhibition of the *École de Paris* was not just focused on a Paris, but created a connection between the Parisian and Brazilian art scene. It used the detour abroad to fight the exclusivity of the French art scene and finally also to create a gateway to a symbolically embattled place that could eventually be used by Brazilian and other non-French artists.

34 C. Mauclair, *La farce de l’art vivant: Les Métèques contre l’art français*, Paris 1930.

35 Cf. Zanini, Vicente do Rego Monteiro, p. 265.

36 Géo-Charles, *Une protestation. Les artistes étrangers contre M. Mauclair*, in: *Paris-Soir*, 27 August 1930.

37 In what way the Parisian discussions about the *École de Paris* were related to the legal foundations of French citizenship (*jus soli* vs. *jus sanguinis*) is illustrated by Kangaslahti, *Foreign Artists in the École de Paris*.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the function of a comparative study of the *École de Paris* exhibitions outside of Paris and France. Such an analysis helps to understand networks of modern art together with a very historical moment when the canon of the *École de Paris* had not yet solidified into what we know it as today. Rather, a number of geographically dispersed but interconnected historical episodes appear, in which the concept of the *École de Paris* was created and transformed between different sites of modern art. In doing so, transcultural networks arise, demonstrating that the actions of the actors studied were not always centred around Paris. What perhaps can be considered as the strongest common thread among these exhibition initiatives is that they helped to provide symbolic and real/physical access to a contested good: the supposed centre of modern art, Paris. As the artists Rasheed Araeen would later point out, many artists from the former colonies were concerned with finding “entry into a space that was previously forbidden and a demand for recognition, irrespective of the nature of the artist’s work.”<sup>38</sup> The same is true for both the activities of the Grupo Montparnasse and of Rego Monteiro and Géo-Charles in Brazil. However, the way each found access to the centre of Paris was different.

The Grupo Montparnasse chose the path of double anchorage – on the one hand, through exhibitions in Santiago de Chile, in which they presented themselves as Parisian artists, and, on the other hand, through involvement in the café exhibitions in Montparnasse, through which they became part of a cosmopolitan art scene in Paris. The group eventually aimed to gain recognition in a reformed Chilean art system that would eventually encourage further residencies of the group members in Paris. The two editors of the Parisian art magazine *Montparnasse* Rego Monteiro and Géo-Charles chose a different path. They sought conflict with xenophobic positions within Paris in order to provide foreign artists with access to Paris. Through the detour of the Brazilian traveling exhibition, they thus tried to gain visibility and credibility in Paris, where, until 1932, there were hardly any exhibition opportunity within public and renowned institutions for artists attributed to the *École de Paris*. What the two examples have in common is that they highlight the importance of alternative meeting places, the cafés in Montparnasse, where non-French artists and critics could organize themselves – even with French colleagues – to establish both symbolic and local access points to the embattled centre of Paris.

Such access points subsequently disappeared. Not only did the *Montparnasse* magazine have to cease publication in the wake of the 1930 economic crisis, but also many cafés in Montparnasse were also increasingly commercialized and touristized, in turn pushing out big part of the art scene. The *École de Paris* found its way into the French official exhibition system in 1932, when room 14 was set up in the Parisian Musée du Jeu de Paume

38 R. Araeen, The Artist as a Post-Colonial Subject and This Individual’s Journey Towards ‘the Centre’, in: C. King (ed.), Views of Difference: Different Views of Art, New Haven 1999, pp. 229–255, at 235.

to show Warnod’s “masters” of the *École de Paris*, and in the future, the view on the cosmopolitan art scene in Paris solidified as a one-way migration to Paris. A look at the early history of the creation and dissemination of the label *École de Paris* allows us to avoid perpetuating such a centric perspective on artistic mobility and exhibition activities.