**Abstract:** Until now, no major biography of note was produced on Eugene de Proença Sigaud. In portals specialized in art or dictionaries of painters, concise biographies of one page repeat the same information exhaustively. This short article doesn’t seek to redeem Sigaud from this silence. It proposes, instead, to understand why figures considered "minor" remain in the recent history of art in the country, as well as understand the processes of memory perpetuation and appreciation of the work of certain historical agents instead of others. The canons of modern Brazil create their own narrative criteria of the past, where the economy of discourses of the artistic quality and the interested and exclusive use of collections create invisibility and omissions, a process which Sigaud, whose eloquent visual work isn’t seconded by texts, interviews and extensive documentation is exemplary. In pursuit of these silences, this brief article elects the poor reception of the work of Sigaud, his leftist political position, and his training as an architect as its wires of conduction to look through these aspects, poorly studied to date, guiding to launch the hypothesis that contribute for understanding the work of this painter.

**Keywords:** Eugênio de Proença Sigaud; biography; Brazilian modern art; memory.

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**Resumo:** Até o presente momento, nenhuma biografia de fôlego foi produzida sobre Eugênio de Proença Sigaud. Em portais especializados em arte ou em dicionários de pintores, biografias concisas de uma lauda repetem as mesmas informações à exaustão. Este breve artigo não busca redimir Sigaud deste silêncio. Propõe, outrossim, entender por que persistem figuras consideradas “menores” na história da arte recente no País, bem como compreender os processos de perpetuação da memória e de valorização da obra de certos agentes históricos em detrimento de outros. Os cânones sobre o moderno no Brasil criam seus próprios critérios de narrativa do passado, em que a economia dos discursos da qualidade artística e o uso interessado e exclusivista de acervos criam invisibilidades e omissões, processo deste do qual Sigaud, cuja obra visual eloquente não é secundada por textos, entrevistas e farta documentação, é exemplar. Na busca destes silêncios, este breve artigo elege a má recepção da obra de Sigaud, seu posicionamento político de esquerda e sua formação como arquiteto como seus fios condutores, buscando por meio destes aspectos pouco estudados até o momento guiar-se para lançar hipóteses que contribuam para a compreensão do trabalho deste pintor.

**Palavras-chave:** Eugênio de Proença Sigaud; biografia; arte moderna brasileira; memória.
The reader will have to decide in his next Internet connection to enter, prosaically, the words "Sigaud" and "Auction", and will be surprised by an avalanche of art auction sites, more or less prestigious, that sell ink, gouache or pen drawings, oils on canvas or on wood panel, tempera, furniture or reproductions signed by Eugênio de Proença Sigaud (1899-1979). This profusion of images, of certified or obscure origin, mostly portraying construction workers, makes Sigaud simultaneously one of the most "viewed" and less studied modern artists of Brazil. And this is just one of the contradictions that can be associated with him.

What processes of historical invisibility are generated by simultaneous profusion of images and shallowness of information on the same character?

To date, no important biography was produced on Eugênio de Proença Sigaud. On sites specializing in art or dictionaries of painters, concise biographies of one page exhaustively repeat the same information. A monographic book published in 1981 (and which omits several aspects of the work and life of Sigaud) and a recent dissertation on the design and decoration of the mural of Jacarézinho Cathedral in Paraná state, reinforce this gapped silence. Even the tributes published in the year of his death in 1979 were limited to repeating earlier texts already published on the artist during his lifetime. Besides the works mentioned, three other short texts sought to present Sigaud's biography: one in 1952 by art critic and native of Espirito Santo, Lindolpho Barbosa Lima (1952); the monographic book edited by Quirino Campofiorito (1945) on Sigaud in the 1940s, and his essay published in the book written by Gonçalves under the title “The work of E. P. Sigaud”. This framework is complemented by scattered references made by Frederico Morais and Mário Pedrosa about the artist, particularly on the stage of painting called "proletarian".

This short article seeks not to redeem Sigaud from this silence - although its author believes it worthy of an extensive historiographical work to assess his trajectory, or an intellectual biography that repositions the history of modern art in the country. It proposes, instead, to understand why figures considered as "minor" in the recent history of Brazilian art persevere, as well as understand the processes of perpetuating the memory and appreciation of the work of certain historical actors over others. The canons of the modern in Brazil create their own narrative criteria of the past, where the economy of discourses of artistic quality and the interested and exclusive use of collections create invisibility and omissions, a process for which Sigaud, whose eloquent visual work is not abetted by texts, interviews and extensive documentation, is found to be exemplary. In pursuit of
these silences, this brief article chooses the poor reception of the work of Sigaud, his leftist political positioning, and his training as an architect as its guiding lines, seeking to steer through these aspects little studied so far in order to propose hypotheses that contribute to understanding this painter's work.

Image summarizing the Sigaud trait, of the construction worker preparing the framing pillar recently filled with cement, shaped against the sky alongside other fellow workers and concealed by the rest of the building referring to the heroic and manly workers portrayed by socialist countries or to the representation, also pursued by the photographic work, of poses and twists of the body in the act of labor. The body of the worker became the autonomous brand of the works of Sigaud, who, however, was keen to stress that this was not an imagined worker, but a worker witnessed in loco, as in his perspective as architect and builder. Asked if he lived solely from art, Sigaud replied "I wish. But I'm also an architect [...]. As an architect and builder, I find the reasons for my paintings. The work of construction is the usual subject". (ARTES, 1947, p. 7).

In the 1930s, the social issues pursued by the painting are as present as the search for new languages and new individuals of the paintings. The theme of factory work, which was already included in the nineteenth century lithographs, acquired between the late nineteenth and early twentieth the mastery of great theme. Social trends or not, the work – and the workers – earn permanent their space among Brazilian painters as well. In the late nineteenth century, immigrant
painters produced descriptions of offices and workplaces such as primitive mills, the manufacturing of butter, woodwork and carpentry. In the early twentieth century, these universes gave way to scenarios in which urban environs are dotted with factories and warehouses and the scenarios of industrialization mingled with growing urbanization.

The way of representing the world of the visual arts industry in Brazil is yet to be traveled. The assumptions of unity made possible by the work of a specific author, or the geographic area in which he served, strengthen industry and work as recurring themes. When we touch the artistic collections that represent the industrial activity from the late nineteenth century - the paintings on the presence of industry in the suburbs of the cities, and the stained glass windows and panels in the existing administrative factory buildings, photos of workers on industry albums - we envisage the theme of industrial landscape. When Andre Lothe wrote his Treatise on Landscape Painting, he wondered if there was any sense in painting scenes along the river banks while "there are entire landscapes of metal, made by man. Pillars, gasometers and reservoirs combine among themselves in almost as many varieties as the elements of nature... The 'human labor' of our day, which longs for its Virgil, should not wait too long for its artists".2

A pictorial representation of urban transformations brought to the foreground the urban factories and manufacturing equipment in the Brazilian industrialization process, figured in both suburbs and in areas previously almost rural, and in central regions in smaller cities; by factories which initially used of waterways for energy production to disposal or dumping of products. The formal radicalism of Workers (1933) of Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973), whose

[...] multitude of heads covering almost the total area of the painting, against the second shallow background of buildings and factory chimneys "indicates" the lyrical and political structure 'content' (the power of renewal and social effervescence that may be contained in the Brazilian amalgamation of races, of which São Paulo and its rising labor movement provided the promising image) with the requirements of the formal structure of painting. (SALZSTEIN, 1997, p. 10-11).

Seen as a summary work on the subject, Workers fits into a broader tradition in which the "industrial landscape", in addition to portraying the urban transformations marked by symbols of industry, is a concept that also includes works depicting the industrial scenario, the workers, their dilemmas and suffering. Loosely understood as representative of "social issues", these choices were present in the works of Candido Portinari (1903-1962), Clovis Graciano (1907-1988), Fulvio Pennachi (1905-1992) and Eugenio Sigaud.

The first assumption made here is that the choice of Sigaud by workers is not isolated. Sigaud can easily be compared to his contemporaries, such as the artists of the Santa Helena Group. These artists shared some formal learning of the art of drawing or engraving, as graduates of Arts...
and Crafts Schools or for having started in the labor market as painters of signs and environment decorators. As noted by Patricia Freitas in her studies (FREITAS, 2008, 2010), unable to rely solely on their livelihood from the sale of their works of art, these artists had other professional functions.

Mario Zanini (1907-1971), the son of Italian immigrants, worked as a painter-decorator in 1933 with Francisco Rebolo (1902-1980). Rebolo, the son of Spanish immigrants, studied at Grupo Escola da Mooca, worked as an employee in a cigarette factory, in the delivery of hats, and then as painter-decorator. Others began their careers as painters of signs and posters, as did Clovis Graciano. Fulvio Pennacchi was a painter-decorator, and worked with funerary art and advertising. José Pancetti (1902-1958) worked in 1921 in São Paulo, at Oficina Beppe, specializing in decorative wall painting, as poster and wall painter. Alfredo Volpi (1896-1988) work as a carpenter, woodworker and bookbinder, and in 1911, went on to work as painter-decorator.

Mário de Andrade, with his rhetorical ability to create groups with internal logic, called this particular group - the Santa Helena Group – the "laborer-painters", precisely because he saw them romantically as proletarians able to portray their own daily lives, the dapple of factory chimneys in the background of simple houses, in their Sunday walks.

One cannot expect, however, that the painter said to be "laborer" is one that portrays, by logical proximity, the theme of workers. It is not the Santa Helena that has a straight dialog faced with workplaces, such as ports, factories, or through chimneys outline the body of the worker, as a winner or loser. This language is realized in murals and on the trail of Diego Rivera (1996-1957), Alfaro Siqueros (1896-1954) and José Clemente Orozco (1893-1949). Within the conception of to whom the mural should help the human being to become human, there was Sigaud. The "extension of the pictorial field" proposed by Mexican muralists had a decisive influence on him. (PEDROSA, 1981, p. 14-16). His fascination with the mechanized abstraction of machines and tools, the architectural immensity of skyscrapers, and the workers portrayed in his paintings created a second nature that could only fully manifest in the language of the mural or panel. According to Frederico Morais, the work of Sigaud was in fact founded on a "grandiloquent symbolism" with his muscular flying Lucifers (as in Eco of the Mountains of America) where the influence of Hodler, and the theme of Seelinger is detected. (MORAIS, 1979).

In typescript in 1978, an elderly Sigaud indicated the artists he most admired. In this text, besides Rivera, Orozco and Siqueiros, we find José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) and Rafael Garrido (1951). Also, Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) and O. Kokoschka (1886-1980) and, from the contemporary national artists to him, Helios Seelinger (1878-1965) – "he showed up at the exact time"; Oswaldo Goeldi (1895-1961) – "Incredible", Carlos Oswald (1882-1971), Armando Vianna (1897-1992) – "one of our best artists" and Roberto Magalhães (1940) – "people like him come along once in every century". The unraveling of the network of influences and devotions of Sigaud
Sigaud, the painting laborer

sheds light on his work and returns it to debate of its time. It clearly reinforces that the aesthetic choices he made between the 1930s and 1940s are those that he will pursue throughout his work.

Eugênio de Proenca Sigaud assumed the nickname of "laborers’ painter" probably created by Campofiorito. His formation can be referred to as eclectic - just the expected between artists and architects of the early twentieth century. Born in Rio de Janeiro, graduated as an agronomist-engineer in Belo Horizonte, Sigaud joined the free course at the National School of Fine Arts in 1921, to where he returned in 1927 with the intention of becoming an engineer-architect in 1932.

Newspaper Diário do Comércio of Rio de Janeiro summoned, with embarrassing regularity, the student, Sigaud, to the secretariat, to regularize his tuition debts. This perception is confirmed by the narrative of the painter's son, Mr. Paulo Sigaud, who often heard of the extreme financial difficulties with which the artist found himself grappling with to study and graduate. A career as an architect, which was now overlapped to that of agronomist, allowed Sigaud to reach the financial independence to continue to paint, to marry and raise a family. As we will see later, his performance in architecture was not only parallel to that of artist and fundamental to his livelihood, but it also founded the formal speech in his work.

Having been a student of Modesto Brocos, the National School of Fine Arts (ENBA), seems to be the key to understanding Sigaud. According to the Painter, in the Free Course class taught by Brocos there was also a "a rebel group to the old tradition of the scholar, and together, we started the struggle for Modern Art. The group had the participation of Quirino Campofiorito, Reis Júnior, Alberto Dezon and Oswaldo Goeldi". Sigaud studied at ENBA at a time of upheaval, in which an art with desires for social art came in a clear collision course with what Sigaud himself refereed to in an interview as "people painting and thinking like in 1800 [...], in a completely hostile environment to non-academic art, where professor Brocos encouraged experimentation".

The artistic career of Eugênio de Proença begins in 1923 with the exhibit at the Primavera da Guanabara hall. In the following year, he enrolled in Salão Nacional [National Hall], where he presented the decorative panel called Echo of the mountains of America, which according to critic and also painter Jordão de Oliveira (author of one of the only pictures of Sigaud), brought "a gigantic Indian, more struck that painted [quotes added], from the top of a mountain, talking to the horizon, and a condor with outspread next to him." In 1936 he won the bronze medal for the encaustic Mulato Head. Only in 1942 would he receive its most significant institutional award, the Silver Medal of the Modern Division for the encaustic A statue and the street, work of "well designed lines with a firm stroke and original composition".

In the 1930s, the Federal District (where Sigaud had chosen to settle since coming from Belo Horizonte in 1923) was the destination of various artists from around the country in search of training schools and a growing art market, galleries, dealers and collectors that generated a new
national art scene. Sigaud was at the forefront of the organization of the profession and the role of modern painters. He participated in the creation of the Núcleo Bernardelli [Center], an initiative closely followed by the creation of the Pro Modern Art Association ("SPAM") and the Modern Artists Club ("MCC"), both in 1932, in São Paulo. In 1935, other groups were organized, such as Santa Helena and Seibi (Group of Plastic Artists), in São Paulo, and the Portinari Group in Rio (in which Sigaud also participated). Such associations protected painters from the successive economic crises and somehow built an adequate space for the circulation and sale of works of art.¹

The affirmation of modern artists in the Brazilian art scene was complemented by the creation of the National Museum of Fine Arts in 1937 from the National School of Fine Arts (ENBA) and from the modernization of its technical reserves, with the acquisition of the works of modernists. The NMBA therefore became, in spite of much criticism (including from Sigaud), a combining agent of Brazilian fine arts in the first half of the 1940s and the key equipment to the construction of the artistic field in Brazil.² When the Professional Association of Fine Artists was created in 1946, Sigaud is present and assumes as member of the Audit Committee. (DIÁRIO DA NOITE, 29/03/1946, p. 9). Modern art had come a long way to achieving legitimacy, displacing the art perceived as traditional and academic: when Sigaud first presented his exhibitor's card at the National Hall in 1924, it had been signed by Rodolpho Amoêdo, Rodolpho Chambelland and Archimedes Memoria. Twenty years later, he would be one of the people responsible for the modern art section of the Halls.

A fine artist who learned the techniques of oil painting, gouache, pen and ink drawing, stained glass, stenography, mural and architecture, Sigaud embraced the theme of the workers and moved uncomfortably in the art world of his time. To Frederico Morais, Sigaud

[…] did not limit to showing the worker on scaffolding on buildings, he also showed them in the street, amid the rattling traffic, amid industrial plants, railways, bridges, yards, docks, going from city to field, showing the muscular, strong and black workers in coffee plantations, or on the coast, between salt and grit.

For the critic, Sigaud's style was

[…] manly, something rude and crude in energy of volumes, in bold colors - metallic red that burns like fire in blast furnaces and torches - in the largeness of a rattling and edgy design, in the option for the first planes that streamline and dramatize the composition. (MORAES, 1982, 70-72).

The fact that his works were displayed and he was awarded in the U.S. (honorable mention at the Riverside Museum in New York with the painting Exodus of Slavesin 1939), and the contact established with Lombardo Toledano, Mexican labor leader and president of the Confederation of
workers in Latin America, sealed this trajectory. The Mexican leader took the award-winning painting by Sigaud *The work*, to decorate the office of the dean of *Universidad Obrera Nacional*. (COLUNA, 1944). In 1945, openly militating in the Communist Party, Sigaud was one of the organizers of the Fine Artists' exhibition to the Communist Party of Brazil. Much later, in one of the last (and rare) written reflections that he left typewritten in the 1970s, Sigaud said: "that the exhibition to the Party represented the social power of the art I made: to date I portray the misery of our lower class; my painting is socialist; I have not changed much since then." (apud GONÇALVES, 1981, p. 38).

In fact, friend and critic Quirino Campofiorito divides the pictorial work of Sigaud into four stages: between 1921 and 1924 he ranks it as a learning phase; until 1935, as an objective painting phase; in the two years that followed, he identifies a phase of intensive research for techniques and materials for mural and easel; and from 1937 onwards, extending to the end of his life, he sees one and the same phase, where inspiration in the proletarian themes pursues the pictorial work. A final phase lasting five decades is undoubtedly dating that is somewhat surprising; only one study and systematic cataloging of the work of Sigaud can prove or disprove such claim.

Federico Morais said that among all members of Núcleo Bernardelli [Center], Eugênio Sigaud was the only one who developed a clearly social thematic, and that he affirmed in an interview: "I have always exalted the anonymous worker, always denounced life massacred by the system. I have always been aware of the social function of art. In my view, all art can contribute to instigate political debate, thus indirectly improving the life of man". (MORAES, 1986, [s/p]). The image of the painter who had opted for rugged features and who "struck more than painted" was defined. "Living in a world of troubles, he could only be an anguished painter. The anonymous drama of the humble, those humiliated daily, is the preferred theme of this painter. His theme is the 'shadows of men, the tatters of people, of workers, laborers'.". (ANDRADE, 1941, p. 5).

One realizes how the social themes and the insistence on the figure of the worker, the humble or exploited laborer (according to the taste or inclination of those described) was being woven throughout the career of Sigaud and not built *a posteriori* as an analysis of his work. In 1940, or in 1979 when he died - or even today - Sigaud remains as the "painter of workers".

We all admire the reactionary art [sic] of the Painter of the Brazilian sub-race, as he called himself. A name sought in the coteries of Amarelinho coffee and hallways of the School of Fine Arts, Sigaud has imposed himself through the audacity of his different art [...] Eugenio Sigaud seems ashamed to paint like the others. Thus, the reason for his paintings featuring only motives of cruel realism, purely anti-sentimental [...] Enlightened by a thriving cerebralism, this rebel artist does not paint, for example, a cabin full of poetry, but the formidable skyscraper, in whose construction, resigned and humble workers - indigenous and European crossbred colored types toil under the weight of a dramatic struggle. To feel the tragedy of the slave he does not draw skeletal black figures: compose a procession of
distressed, primitive beings with protruding muscles. They therefore give the impression of his inescapable disgrace with the outlay of brutal energies and through a dark determinism. One must recognize that Eugenio Sigaud is a different painter.

This last quote, besides reaffirming the author's original trace, draws our attention to another point: as constant as its theme "workers", one of the continuus in Sigaud's work is its rejection among peers within the art Halls and the market in general. Although, as mentioned, he helped found the Núcleo Bernardelli [Center] in 1931, more than once did the group reject his paintings in their exhibitions. Also, by staying adamant to one of the original premises - the democratization and renewal of the teaching of art and especially the introduction of changes to the rules of Art Halls – Sigaud appears to have earned long-term dislike.

"Fought in the "coteries" of Café Amarelinho and the hallways of the School of Fine Arts", as described by Fon-Fon's article in 1940, comunist – defender of the mural painting as the last bastion of political and social art – a few times gained recognition in the Halls of Art through medals or honorable mentions; and criticism in contemporary newspapers kept a tense while inattentive relationship with him. The press sometimes referred to him as futuristic, other times ridiculed him, referring to him as rude. Only in columns of fine arts captained by friends such as Quirino Campofiorito and Jordão de Oliveira, did he receive praise, though not regularly. The insistence on social issues and suffering, and his trace of almost unpleasant results seem to have contributed to the rejection of his work between the modern establishment and consequently the art market in general.

![Figure 2 - Charge by Mendez for the magazine O Cruzeiro, 24 August 1935](image-url)
Sigaud, the painting laborer

Ary de Andrade would then express his discomfort:

This is not the first or the last time that I will be occupied by this artist. I have repeatedly spoken of his work [...] which has not received the attention that it deserves [...]. I have repeatedly spoken of the campaign of silence imposed on him, one that is vile, cowardly and so commonly practiced today [...] We enter the hall and no one needs to say anything. Everyone already knows who Portinari's students are. For Sigaud managed to remain Sigaud. Despite the campaign of silence imposed on him. He knows that no one builds a work of art for the future at the expense of mutual praise, and to please cliques. He knows that only the future brings true renown. (O RADICAL, 08/10/1942, p. 3).

Apparently, the "cliques", real or perceived as such, isolated the painter. This annoyance was also recorded, for example, in the text "Sigaud and an injustice", of 1959, published in the journal Momento by his friend Alberto Costa Dezon (1897-1979):

A rare Scholar, Sigaud is perhaps the best technically prepared of all Brazilian painters. His love of art encouraged him to broaden his expertise [...] Now what surprises us the most is the fact that an artist of such category, with all those real predicates, has been depreciated by successive juries of art halls that have contributed to the prize of travel abroad. (apud GONÇALVES, 1981, p. 57-59).

If the situation of "persecuted" was not a construction of (self) image of the painter, it is difficult to say, since in any interview or typewritten paper left, not even once, did Sigaud explicitly complain of injustice or persecution. This cry came from those close to him. In the art columns, however, the laconic comments or omissions are constant.12 More difficult still it is to assess whether or not his clear option to be a leftist militant interfered in his removal. Portinari was also a leftist painter after all. But unlike him, no one wove a net of studies and references around Sigaud. Neither dis his family motivate it.

The long and fruitful life of Sigaud made him undergo the crisis of the Brazilian avant-garde, the ostracism, the tiny musealization of his art and self-imposed silence of the years of the civil-military dictatorship. Until his death in 1979, he had suffered difficult times in the New State and, it seems, equally difficult during the dictatorship. This last sentence is the least known of all, and the most biographical study - by Gonçalves, produced in 1981, and therefore before the period of democratization - about him is silencing.

Communism espoused by Sigaud in 1930 was reaffirmed in various ways in the following years. In 1935, in articles published in the journal Bellas-Artes (created and directed by Campofiorito), Sigaud defended muralism by stating that

The new architecture created with reinforced concrete, large internal and external surfaces, which necessarily require the architect to reuse them for the complements
of buildings. [...] It is not forgivable that our painters let an educational movement of artists and the people in that direction (of the wall decor) go stalling as it is necessary to carry out this campaign to the public to educate and help them understand that beauty is not as costly as they believe. [...] How could we know the splendor of past eras, struggles for the social and mystical dream without the arts? 

The easel limited him, concludes the aforementioned “The work of E. P. Sigaud” by Campofiorito. In this work he highlights Sigaud's obsession for mural art, which he could only practice a few times, with the exception of his performance in the Cathedral of Jacarézinho, north of Paraná, where, paradoxically, in a decoration for the purpose of Catholic indoctrination, he was able to practice what he believed to be popular art. 

Sigaud moved with his family to Jacarézinho in 1954 and remained there until 1958, having painted in that period 600 m² of panels and domes.

In addition to this ultimate experience, according Campofiorito, the artist made rare panels sometimes to decorate private homes, for example, "Blacks in the formation of the crop", made in the palace of the Tijuca district, 4 meters wide by 2.20 meters tall; or, the murals that adorn today the headquarters of the Union of Clearing Agents, also in Rio de Janeiro.

Nevertheless, Sigaud was definitively associated with wall art. We have already mentioned his admiration for the Mexican muralists, which was probably aroused, as well as for Portinari, through the lecture by the muralist Siqueiros in the Modern Artists Club in 1933. The murals he
craved for were not the private spaces, but the public spaces or buildings belonging to the Government. Sigaud was one of the defenders of mandatory decoration in public buildings. It is a fact that murals, frescoes and panels as decorative language were common in the nineteenth century. However, the issue here is less about technique and more about the proposal. The murals by Sigaud were designed as an art to reach the people and to portray them. Here is a feature that seems fundamental to me: the mural is also an inseparable art of architecture, and Sigaud as an architect is thus much more than "an architect sustaining an artist".17

In general, the importance of architecture in his work is an aspect that has been largely relegated. Eugenio Proença slowly completed his architect-engineer course, but once graduated, he designed and built with regularity until the 1960s. His early studies in the 1930s, indicate the prominence of the theme of architecture.

In "First Idea ..." comments Sigaud:

From what I've noticed, in composition studies, when it follows a discipline (such as the composition in architecture), it becomes balanced, although cold, but a vitality depends on two main factors, talent and feeling of beauty. Thus the precariousness and poverty in a more modest composition among Brazilian artists.

Art and architecture were in frank dialog.

The regulation of the architect profession was formalized in 1933 through the founding of the first Regional Engineering, Agronomy and Architecture Board ("CREA") in Rio de Janeiro. In the same year, a newly-graduate Sigaud advertised his services of "designer and builder" as Sigaud & Cia, indicating: "Design at the free choice and taste of the client. Build with strength, comfort
and economy” (see picture 6). From May 25th, 1940, Sigaud obtains a license from city hall as architect-engineer graduated from the School of Fine Arts to work with his individual office.

Among the works of Sigaud as an architect (as compiled by Luis Felipe Gonçalves) are Banco Guimarães Building (Rua do Ouvidor 79); the design of the Barracks of the Fort of Copacabana; the Chácara Moreninha Balneary, in Paquetá; Bananal Balneary-Hotel, in Ilha do Governador; the Jorge Amaral 19-storey building, which is the headquarters of the Clearing Agents Union of Rio de Janeiro, inaugurated in 1950, and which holds in its main hall, as mentioned, important murals made by Sigaud representing activities at the port (at Rua Mayrink Veiga, 4); the decorative design for the Saint George church at República square, also in Rio de Janeiro; the sports facilities of the School of Agronomy, and the facilities and several designs for Universidade Rural; The plafond of the Honor Hall of the center for civil construction of Rio de Janeiro and the mosaic “Work Allegory” at Praça José Garoto in São Gonçalo, Rio de Janeiro.

To these I add almost a hundred residences designed in Rio de Janeiro and Niterói, for which more precise research still needs to be performed; decoration for the Pavilion of the Aquarium of the Rio de Janeiro Zoo (1951) (which, like the mosaic in São Gonçalo, no longer exists), and his design of the art-deco building at Epitácio Pessoa, 1674, Lagoa, which today houses Bar Lagoa18. The emphasis of the architecture in the work of Sigaud is also expressed in the theme of the paintings and the accuracy of the forms, and surely in his performance in the choice of niches and walls in the Cathedral in Jacarézinho.

Figure 6 – Jornal do Brasil, 30 Jun. 1933.
Unlike other contemporary artists, Sigaud did not devote himself exclusively to the art nor did he obtain from it his livelihood. If this labeled him as a "part-time" artist by his peers, it is a fact that needs to be investigated. However, the second continuum of Sigaud (that may complement or even explain some of his rejection by some artistic circles) is linked to his immutable leftist political positioning. In an interview with Frederico Morais, he said:

"I am a Communist. As an Engineer, I have always dealt with workers, which explains the choice of my themes. I have always been aware of the social role of art. I have always engaged in politics. In my view, everything serves political interests. Freedom of creation, however, is essential." And yet, on his painting: "It was never a gratuitous act, not even my architecture. It is, above all, a conscious and firm attitude, a purpose with artistic, political and social goals. I celebrate especially with it the magnitude and greatness of the humble labor of the worker, this anonymous worker in all sectors of the greatness of this country. (MORAES, 1979).

Attention is also drawn to the type of press interested in Sigaud's work: in the newspapers A Manhã, O Radical, Tribuna Popular and Imprensa Popular, the painter's constant presence and his "proletarian motives". He rarely and incidentally appears in other papers. It is this interested press that allows us to follow his political career.

In 1945, Sigaud headed the public telegram sent in support of Yedo Fiuza (COM O CANDIDATO, 1945), candidate of the then Communist Party of Brazil to the presidency. In 1946, he manifests his support to Prestes on different occasions, and the public telegram in which "the
Committee of Plastic Artists guarantees their solidarity for the patriotic stance taken in the interests of the homeland against the colonial capitalism", where Sigaud signs next to Portinari, Athos, Campofiorito, Deveza Carlos Scliar, among others. (OS ARTISTAS, 1946).

In the same year of 1946, Sigaud served as professor of painting at the newly founded People's School, linked to the Communist Party; and is present in a protest against violence against workers employed in claims for wages and living conditions (see image 5). He also organizes tours in October 1946 to paint outdoors in Copacabana, whose income from the sale of the works went to Imprensa Popular [People's Press] (which will replace the Tribuna, circulating between 1951 and 1958).

Figure 8 – Tribuna Popular, 21 Jun. 1946.
In January 1947, involved with the campaign of Luiz Carlos Prestes, and responsible alongside Campofiorito for the preparations of the rallies, Sigaud is referred to by the press as "artist of the people". In 1948, Sigaud exposed himself in a column of *Diário da Noite*, condemning a lecture by Pujals Sabaté, painter (1898-1965), delivered in the Hall of the Military Club:

> Mr. Editor, After attending the conference held by my colleague Sabaté at the "Fine Arts Hall" of the Military Club, so as not to disturb the concluding ceremony of the interesting event, I failed to register my immediate protest against the reproachable intent of the speaker to promote the animosity of the military against modern art, seriously compromising his colleagues. He chose to do so rather than to explain the sense of the artistic evolution of our days. He committed a grave injustice in saying that modern art in Brazil and around the world has subversive, anti-social and even anti-nationalist actions. Premature and risky judgment for the modern movement, which, like all artistic movements, is characteristic of the constant human restlessness. I think my colleague Sabaté should find an opportunity in the military or civilian environment to remedy what he said, doing justice to the art and his seriously offended colleagues. After all, modern artists have removed Brazil from artistic anonymity abroad. Modern artists are arguably the builders of a new artistic expression in our country. It is Sabaté himself who recognizes the delay of fifty years among academic artists and conservatives. (ARTES, 01/04/1948, p. 5).

That same year, Sigaud makes a drypoint portrait of Luiz Carlos Prestes and illustrates tales of Carlos Lacerda in *O Jornal*. Finally, in 1955, in the article "With Juscelino and Jango and against the coup", Sigaud endorses his condemnation of any coup attempt. (TRIBUNA POPULAR, 02/10/1955).

What happens in the next two decades could be referred to as a long period of silence. In the period in which he stays isolated in Jacarézinho, hired by his brother, Bishop Geraldo Sigaud to decorate the works of the Cathedral, the painter seldom manifests about politics. In the 1960s, the silence deepens, either by the artist, self-censorship, or the censorship imposed on the national press. His ingestion into Loja Maçônica Urias in 1958 may or may not have be related to the silence. In any case, we see Sigaud again in a long article in the magazine *Revista de Domingo* of *Jornal do Brasil* of 1977, where the artist is portrayed in comparison with his bishop brother, a conservative figure of strategic importance in the politics of the military. In his last impressive interview before his death, and at 78 years, an atheist and leftist Sigaud says of his brother: "I find him to be reactionary and would say that is production line is unproductive. (REVISTA DE DOMINGO, 1977, p. 14-17) It seemed little compared to the statements made by the bishop, author of books like *Carta Pastoral de Saudação* (1947), *Catecismo anticomunista* (1962) or *Cartas Pastorais sobre a Seita Comunista* (1963) and one of the founders of the Brazilian Society for the
Protection of Tradition, Family and Property ("TFP"), such as “confessions from terrorists are not obtained with caramel” or “there is full freedom of the press in Brazil”.22

In an interview granted by the painter to Norma Couri, the watchful eye recognizes the words repeated by Sigaud during the civil and military dictatorship years: "I do not want to, and cannot say what I think".

As noted by Federico Morais in Crise das vanguardas brasileiras, during the dictatorship the impracticality of the Brazilian modern design and disruption of the visual arts system in Brazil via political persecution of artists, the discrediting of institutions like museums as opposed to fluctuations in the art market dictated by commercial galleries and auctions also relegated art criticism to a minor role, suited to the "diplomacy of half-words and to the involuntary and clumsy commitment, with private benefits or not, of subordination to the new established order". (MARI, 2012, p. 426). This outcome was also reported in 1975 by Mario Pedrosa, and it is pertinent to assume that part of Sigaud's rejection was the perverse result of the arts system having closed under the market logic experienced in those years. "The art show becomes art fair, and dealers start to dominate. The laws of the capitalist market do not forgive: art, once it assumes exchange value, becomes a commodity like any ham". (PEDROSA, 1975, p. 257).

In 1964, a peculiar "Manifesto" of Sigaud written in condition of 18th Degree of Freemasonry, questioned the reasons why Freemasonry failed to opine on the recent events in the country:

Is it the cowardly fear of taking action, being cautious against so common coercive and police measures in those occasions? The lack of political debates in the good of the Fatherland did not favor us, nor did it reinvigorate us. It just put us on the sidelines of the latest developments in these last ten years, from 1954 to 1964. The fear of oppression cowers more that it strengthens.23

We are here in the planes of silence, and silence seems to be a good key to shut these brief considerations about "the artist who painted the slain man".24

Paulo Sigaud, son of the painter, remembers the smock that his father used and his strong gestures while painting. "Dirtied up a lot, had no such thing as being ecstatic [...] liked to play ... but did not talk much". Paulo describes his father as aloof and shy, which would explain his difficulty to speak and be understood. Sigaud was born with what is commonly referred to as "gueule-de-loup" or bilateral cleft lip, which is a crack that runs through the upper lip and palate, and which made phonation almost impossible. According to his son, it explained in part his late marriage, the difficulty in graduating (due to oral examinations applied in ENBA) and the difficulties of appearing in public. He also said that Sigaud had been slightly more talkative in his old age when his denture covered his palate, making it easier to understand what he was saying, in spite of his
voice caught in his throat. Sigaud spoke softly, and spoke poorly. His writings (produced without regularity) created such brief interruptions in these silences that they only reinforce them.

This brief paper has tried to identify this collection of silences, self-imposed or otherwise, regarding the relief of E. P. Sigaud as a modern artist. There are omissions in the historiography as regards his performance as an artist, as an architect and illustrator, but there is also the silence of his peers about his art; and his own silence, especially during the period of civil-military dictatorship in Brazil. The less he spoke, the more furiously he painted. In the 1960s and 70s, he would produce up to two paintings per day.

One must redirect Sigaud to where he belongs, in a more immediate circle within the history of art in Brazil, in a wider and broader circle of art that was immediately inspired by industry and the workers' theme. This social history of art speaks to both the history of institutions of interest to the artistic field (principals with their orders, academia, market, groups of artists) as well as the history of artistic phenomena in direct relation to the social structure, when the material conditions of artistic production are questioned. The inspiration flirts with the social history of post-war art of Marxist thematic, with authors such as Antal, Hauser and Klingender. His texts create pictorial conventions of representation of labor, large hands and feet, the bodily twists in laborious efforts, the disproportionate size in-between machinery, the archaeological picture of the job site (steel plant, mine or mill). Given these silences, the question remains: is it an intellectual biography of an artist primarily from his pictorial and built work?

It is still common in the narratives of trajectories to justify the biographical effort almost with an apology. This apology does not happen here. As already noted, American historian Oscar Handlin, in a text from 1979, said "the real subject of the biography is not the whole person or the society altogether, but the point where both interact. The situation and the individual illuminate one another". (HANDLIN, 1979, p. 276, free translation). E. P. Thompson said the same thing when he wrote one of the finest intellectual biographies ever written on artists, that his intent was

\[\text{[\ldots] identify the tradition of [William] Blake, his particular situation within this tradition, the repeated evidences, themes and nodal points of conflict, which indicate his position and the way the mind meets the world (italics added). To do so implies in a historical study and attention to sources that are external to Blake - sources which are often unknown to Blake himself. (THOMPSON, 1993, p. XXIX).}\]

Silences: there is little saved of Sigaud's documents. According to his son, the artist himself did not keep his papers because he had no perception of posterity. Many of the articles he wrote and did not publish disappeared. Many of his paintings are in private hands, and a few museums. There are no letters, and the library has vanished. Part of his books was with Andrea Sigaud; some were
with Paulo, and others were donated by him to the Library of the University of Brasilia. Nothing has remained of his architectural designs. Many were with the city hall of Rio, all made of starched screen paper: as the gum disappears along with moisture, only ink traces remain.

However, Sigaud's art work exceeds four thousand drawings, murals and paintings, including buildings and architectural designs, a political and purposeful piece (in newspaper articles and interviews), and assisted by the perceptions of his peers and successors. His multifaceted career continues after his death through the erratic journey of his works in art auctions and in private collections. If these scattered works, never assembled in one collection and rarely gathered in exhibitions, continue on their way, can they be "heard"? Studying a life entails having it as a nodal point of a gathering of forces, aware that the whole experience is not only irrecoverable but that it is also rebuilt based on our research.

Figure 9 - Arts and Letters Appendage, 9 Feb. 1947

References


Sigaud, the painting laborer


DIÁRIO DA NOITE. Rio de Janeiro, 29 MAR. 1946.

IMPRENSA POPULAR. Rio de Janeiro.


O CRUZEIRO. Rio de Janeiro, 24 ago. 1935.
Cristina Meneguello

O JORNAL. Rio de Janeiro.

O PAIZ. Rio de Janeiro.

O RADICAL. Rio de Janeiro, 8 OCT. 1942.


TRIBUNA POPULAR. Rio de Janeiro, 02 OCT. 1955.


Notes

1 This is the book of Luiz Felipe Gonçalves (GONÇALVES, 1981) and the work of the Master in Social History from State University of Londrina, Luciana de Fátima Marinho Evangelista. Luciana's work is rather based on a certain "local memory" of Sigaud's visit to Jacarézinho city in the 1950s and his decorative work in the city's Cathedral; the Gonçalves' work, in turn, is laudatory narrative that is little academic, rather timid in some passages, on key issues such as the author's political opinion, trying to pacify Sigaud's conflictive relationship with his brother, a conservative bishop who had a prominent role in the dictatorship years in Brazil.

2 Cited by GLAVOČIĆ, 2005. It was while visiting the exhibition prepared by Glavočić, still in 2005, that I first had the inspiration for the research I conducted on the work portrayed in the works of art in twentieth century Brazil. The primary objective did not reside in the analysis of the works, but in finding a common language in which the paintings of industrial representations were understood as historical testimonies of these landscapes. I have relied on the concept of industrial landscape and its understanding from the original concept of industrial landscape and themes related to the study of visual culture as the the establishing of image in dialog with its contemporary aspect, in a crossing of discourses. To discuss this is beyond the scope of this text.

3 E. P. Sigaud. Os meus artistas preferidos e alguns comentários sem ordem (My favorite artists and some comments without order). Typescript, dated 1st May 1978. Note that when Sigaud wrote, Roberto Magalhães was still his son-in-law. He had been married to the painter's daughter and also artist Andrea Sigaud between 1965 and 1978.

4 In the memorabilia of the painter's son, engineer Paulo Sigaud, graduating as an agronomist-engineer would have been a promise paid by the painter to his grandmother in Minas. After graduation, Sigaud is said to have mentioned: "I have
graduated, I have 25,000 réis, and I am going to Rio de Janeiro.” I am immensely grateful to Paulo Sigaud for his kindness in granting me the interviews about his father in May 2012. After the death of the painter’s daughter, he is now his only next-of-kin. Understandably, his information is mixed with the texts he read about his father and his own memories. Thus, another Sigaud is shown.

5 E. P. Sigaud. Notas soltas (Loose notes), typescript dated August 1972. Campofiorito and Dezon were painters who kept a long and lasting friendship with Sigaud.

6 Interview with Norma Couri on May 6th, 1977, Jornal do Brasil. Brocos (1933) wrote the manual Retórica dos Pintores (Rhetoric of Painters), reading that seems to have had significant impact on the Sigaud’s reflections (available in facsimile at http://www.dezenovevinte.net/txt_artistas/brocos_retorica.pdf).

7 The awards obtained and the Exhibitions and Biennials in which Sigaud participated were listed in GONÇALVES, 1981. Kontrast – A Manhã, 20 Jul. 1939, O Paiz, 15 Jan. 1947. See, for example, published permits on industrial activities in Brazil, running the fresco “History of Printing” in the building of the newspaper A Gazeta.

11 Jordan de Oliveira presents his Portrait of E. P. Sigaud as artwork 222 in the Art Hall of 1948. (DIÁRIO DA NOITE, 13/01/1948).

12 In the column Bellas-Artes of Diário da Noite, dated March 11th, 1944, for example, a single word is reserved for Sigaud: “Weak”.

13 E. P. Sigaud. Porque é esquecida entre nós a Decoração Mural? (Why is Mural Decoration forgotten by us?), July and August of 1935. The Bellas-Artes, periodical devoted entirely to the arts, was created and published by Campofiorito between 1935 and 1940, and was closed by pressure of the Press and Advertising Department (“DIP”).

14 The Evangelists dissertation ventures to assert that the painter’s choices would have been almost atheistic, like in the manner he represented religious figures, or for using simple figures of the city of Jacarézinho as models.

15 Unable to confirm the reference of Campofiorito or to discover if the panel still exists.


17 Still, the same lacunar look applies to Sigaud as Illustrator. For this article, no extensive research on this topic was performed, but the potential is clear. Sigaud’s drawings punctuated the Notas de Arte (Art Notes), column of critic Quirino da Silva (1897-1981) in the journal Diário da Noite in the 1970s. But he had long before illustrated chronicles and stories in the press, like in the Suplemento Letras e Artes (Letters and Arts Appendage) of newspaper A Manhã in the 1940s. He also illustrated the books of Marques Rebelo (pen name of Eddy Dias da Cruz) such as Marafá (1935), A estrela sobe and Oscarina e Três Caminhos (1966) and made the book cover of Libertação econômica of Arthur Carneir and other authors (1952).

18 The journal O Paiz, for example, published the permits for building construction or reconstruction, with the addresses of the works and names of their owners. Because the family did not keep the designs, the only way to document Sigaud’s work as an architect in the cities of Rio and Niterói is to discover these buildings and their original addresses. See, for example, published permits on O Paiz in 03/07/1934, 06/07/1934, 10/07/1934; 31/07/1934; 01/08/1934 until 24/08/1934.

19 O motivo trabalhista no Salão Nacional de Belas Arte (The laborist motive in the National Fine Arts Exhibition), chronic written by Genaro Ponte in A Manhã, 07 Sep 1941. In fact, in the pages of A manhã cultural themes actually appeared through its communist writers and critics, such as in the emphasis to the proletarian novel as a paradigm of the Brazilian novel, while The Working Class (official body of the Brazilian Communist Party - PCB) rarely addressed cultural issues.

20 See, for example, Tribuna Popular, 15 Jan. 1947.

21 Upon the death of Lacerda, Sigaud publishes in the newspapers a lament and heads invitations to the 7th day mass.

22 In the same year of the interview, the bishop Sigaud sent accusations to the Holy See against bishops D. Pedro Casaldaliga and Tomaz Balduino, pointing them as communist infiltrators that had to be expelled from the Church. See, for example, Jornal do Brasil, 21 Jul. 1977, Documento Sigaud chega ao Vaticano (Sigaud’s Document reaches the Vatican).


24 Headline of his obituary in Jornal do Brasil, 08 Aug. 1979. Sigaud died on the 6th. Apparently, the painter had suffered lifelong heart disease, difficult to diagnose. In the opinion of his son Paulo, probably because he practiced a lot of sports, such as racing and swimming, his health condition had improved, providing him such longevity. In the 1920s and 1930s, for example, Sigaud had swam from Rio to Niterói several times.

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Cristina Meneguello is PhD in History and Professor of the Department of History, University of Campinas.

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