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Photograph by Philip Sinden

Roberto Silva Q&A

ARCHITECTURE

by Emma O'Kelly

Roberto Silva runs his own landscape architecture practice in London.

What are you currently working on?

I am writing a book about South American gardens and working on an outdoor installation that I'm pitching to Inhotim sculptural park in the Brazilian state of Brumadinho. I am designing two new gardens in south London and writing a landscape design course for the university of Pernambuco. There are a lot of interesting projects that might happen, like doing a country garden in Brazil and restoring a garden designed by Burle Marx in a Rino Levi building in Higienopolis, Sao Paulo.

Why did you end up setting up a practice in London rather than returning to Brazil?

While was studying my MA in Landscape Architecture at University of Greenwich I designed the Foster garden, which got a lot of media attention. I decided then to carve my name as a designer here rather than going back to Brazil. The British sensibility appreciates art, gardens and plants.

Do you think there are many opportunities in Brazil if you are a landscape architect?

I guess now more than ever as Brazil is doing well economically. Sadly, there are

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not as many large scale projects as there were in Burle Marx's day. Instead, we have recreational areas and residential and pocket gardens, and Brazilians are learning to appreciate these more now.

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Through Darkness to Light

Which is your favourite Burle Marx project?

The roof garden of the Safra Bank in Sao Paulo. It is a cross fertilization of land art and garden design. He did not use many plants but the shapes are beautiful. Burle Marx was a man of the masterplan and had a great connection with the rhythms and poetry of its lines.

What Brazilian things do you do here in London?

I actually don't do anything Brazilian here. I'd rather watch Coronation Street and have a cup of tea.

Do you think London is tapped in to the Brazilian way of life in any way?

It's impossible to translate the Brazilian lifestyle to England. The UK is too formal and sophisticated to do so. Brazilian sophistication comes from the informality of the people and places. The best things happen spontaneously and ideas come from the botecos table. When Brazilian places open in London they try to be sophisticated and close down a year later; or they attract the wrong sort of people.

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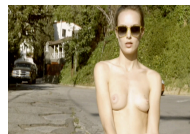
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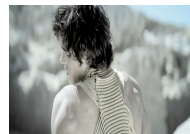
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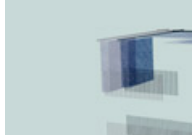


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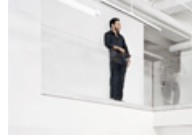
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