

## Press Release

### ***Lina Bo Bardi Drawing***

15/02/2019 – 26/05/2019

Curated by Zeuler Rocha Lima

In collaboration with Fundació Banc Sabadell

**The Fundació Joan Miró presents *Lina Bo Bardi Drawing*, the first exhibition to focus specifically on the role of drawing in the life and work of the Italian-born Brazilian architect.**

**The exhibition features a carefully selected collection of a hundred drawings from the Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi, bearing witness to the importance of drawing in all the stages of Bo Bardi's multifaceted career.**

**The project has been curated by another architect, Zeuler Rocha Lima – also an artist, researcher, and international expert on Bo Bardi – with support from the Fundació Banco Sabadell.**

**Until the end of May, *Lina Bo Bardi Drawing* invites visitors to discover the broad, rich range of reflection and the output of one of the most outstanding architects and intellectuals of the 20th century, who bridged the gap between art and life using the language she felt to be her own: drawing.**

**Barcelona, 14 February 2019.** The architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914-92) always felt a strong connection with drawing. Throughout her lifetime and in all the realms of art she ventured into, drawing was always present. Rather than a tool for designing, drawing was a fundamental means of expression for Bo Bardi, arising from a strong sense of curiosity and doubt. Drawing was her language, the extension of her thoughts, and the vehicle for her mind's explorations. Ultimately, it was her most genuine way of examining, feeling and relating to the world.

Bo Bardi discovered drawing as a child, through her father – an amateur painter – and received her training in art and architecture in her native Italy. After developing a unique and successful career in Brazil, Lina Bo Bardi is now considered one of the most outstanding architects of the 20th century and has been internationally acclaimed for her work as a designer, editor, curator and intellectual. Her oeuvre lives on as a cultural lesson in which aesthetic aspirations merge with ethical concerns.

While many architects, designers and artists debated – and continue to debate – about the formal aspects of space and artistic production, Bo Bardi devoted her career to understanding the profound connection between the practice of drawing and the acts of everyday life. From her point of view, people, rather than architects, are the true protagonists of architecture. Although only a small number of her architectural projects were actually built, Bo Bardi was highly prolific in the fields of furniture design, graphic design, as well as set and exhibition design, and never set up a hierarchy among the different registers within the broad range of her practice.

*When we design, even as a student, it is important that a building serves a purpose and that it has the connotation of use. It is necessary that the work does not fall from the sky over its inhabitants, but rather expresses a need. [...] In conclusion, you should always look for the ideal, decent object, which could also be defined by the old term «beauty».*

LINA BO BARDI

Throughout her lifetime, Bo Bardi documented her imaginative visions and creative processes in many sketches. Over six thousand sketches and drawings from her personal archives are held today at the Instituto Lina Bo e P. M. Bardi in São Paulo, Brazil. The exhibition at the Fundació sheds light on a concise and carefully-selected collection of one hundred of these drawings, curated by Zeuler Rocha Lima. *Lina Bo Bardi Drawing* is a constellation of images which invites visitors to discover the relevance of drawing in the career of this unique architect and make free associations between the numerous facets of her output. The drawings, produced with a variety of techniques – pencil, watercolour, gouache, felt pen, pen and ink – also reveal her broad view of design and architecture, accessible to everyone, in which she merges different artistic sensibilities that are fed by nature and everyday life. To quote the curator, «Her drawings are highly personal. They constitute an emotional exercise that goes beyond intellectual practice [...] clearly, in her hands, drawing involved a quest for knowledge and intimacy. It was an act of love. And, like all forms of love, it was full of challenges, contradictions and ambiguities».

The *Lina Bo Bardi Drawing* exhibition is divided into four thematic areas: space considered as a stage for **living** and for **seeing** and observing the objects and the minute realities of everyday life; **plants** as props; and **people**, the true protagonists of these spaces. «Through drawing», – Rocha Lima notes –, «she observed, imagined, and aspired to understand and transform reality, both externally and internally. She idealized a better world to live in, for herself and for others».

The exhibition begins in an area that focuses on the natural world as it is imagined in Lina Bo Bardi's drawings. Plants had been present in Bo Bardi's drawings ever since her childhood, as a symbol of life cycles and of nature. In 1956, when she visited Barcelona, Bo Bardi discovered Antoni Gaudí, whose interest in plants and organic forms definitively changed the Brazilian-Italian architect's language from that moment on.

People are an ongoing theme throughout Bo Bardi's drawings. The exhibition continues to address this aspect in an ensemble of pieces in which the human body appears not only as a physical object or reference, but also as a way of being in the world, both individually and collectively. According to Rocha Lima, Lina Bo Bardi «produced commanding and yet sometimes childlike hand drawings and sketches in their simplicity and colorfulness, seldom associated with mainstream twentieth century architects. She pictured joy and humanness».

Through her continued practice of drawing, Lina Bo Bardi created an original visual culture which is the subject of the following section of the exhibition. Given her experience in publishing, Bo Bardi knew how to use images to promote values and generate innovative ways of seeing. After moving to Brazil in 1946, she merged her knowledge of graphic design with popular culture, her appreciation of spontaneous forms of expression and the different traditions with which she was familiar.

Her body of work conveys her conviction that life had to be at the center of the way we conceive objects, buildings and spaces, as is apparent in the last section of the exhibition: As the curator notes, «her drawings are a reminder that everyday life is multifaceted and full of possibilities, a place for working and dreaming, for individual and social existence». The show closes with *Lina Bo Bardi, Curator*, a video originally produced by Zeuler Rocha Lima for the *Lina Bo Bardi 100* exhibition at the Architekturmuseum in Munich in 2014, celebrating the centenary of the architect's birth.

To highlight the impact of Gaudí's work on the language of Lina Bo Bardi, a selection of photographs from the series that Joaquim Gomis devoted to Gaudí's architecture will be on display in the foyer of the Fundació Joan Miró during the exhibition. Likewise, the sketches for the original design of the exhibition, also by Zeuler Rocha Lima, will be shown in the participatory space, paying tribute to the distinct spirit with which Lina Bo Bardi imbued her curatorial work and her exhibition designs. The project is completed with a programme of related activities and a monograph signed by the curator – an international expert on Bo Bardi – published by the Fundació Joan Miró in collaboration with Princeton University Press for the English edition.

*Lina Bo Bardi Drawing* tells the story of a woman who was driven by ethics and modesty as an artist and an architect who based her language on the principle of

simplification –a principle which she happened to share with Joan Miró. Both artists viewed drawing as an everyday practice which they maintained throughout their lives. To quote the curator, «while proficiency in hand drawing has lost prominence in the arts in general and in architectural practice in particular, Lina Bo Bardi's drawings remain an always fresh reminder of the continued importance and value of free, authentic thinking and of skillful, educated hands».