Gertrudes Altschul and the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: Modern Photography and Femininity in 1950s São Paulo

Paula V. Kupfer

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Gertrudes Altschul and the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: 
Modern Photography and Femininity in 1950s São Paulo

by

Paula V. Kupfer

Submitted in partial fulfillment 
of the requirements for the degree of 
Master of Arts in Art History, Hunter College 
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Introduction

Synopsis

This master’s thesis offers an in-depth study of the work of German-born Brazilian photographer Gertrudes Altschul and a careful consideration of her role in the history of modern photography in Brazil.¹ A Jewish immigrant to Brazil, Altschul developed her photographic practice within the ranks of the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) camera club from 1952 to 1962. As part of the FCCB, she responded to the modernist aesthetic imperatives of her time while crafting a refined and personal vision. The chapters that follow will examine the photoclub phenomenon, especially as it unfolded in São Paulo, and how the development of a modernist photographic aesthetic took hold within the FCCB. Altschul’s photographic production can be framed not only within this Brazilian modernist context, but also as the result of her unique perspective as an immigrant female artist. In addition to her artistic photographic prints prepared for circulation and exhibition within the local and international photoclub circuit, Altschul’s personal photograph albums reveal her role as an entrepreneurial workingwoman and their contribution to shaping her identity as an immigrant New Woman.

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¹ I wish to thank Sarah Meister, curator of photography at MoMA, for introducing me to the work of Gertrudes Altschul and for suggesting this research topic. I am also grateful for the invaluable connections she provided for my research in São Paulo, including the introduction to Altschul’s son Ernst and his wife Laura.
Altschul and the FCCB

Martha Gertrud Altschul was born in Germany in 1904. She lived in Berlin with her husband, Leon, and son, Ernst Oscar, until they were forced to sell Leon’s ladies’ hats factory in Berlin to an “Aryan” and began plotting an escape plan. The family fled Germany in stages: in 1939 they sent their son to live with relatives in London via the Kindertransport system; later that same year, the couple left on a ship bound for Brazil, where they intended to join relatives. Their ship was intercepted in France, however, and the Altschuls were placed in an internment camp in Bordeaux. Released after two months, Altschul boarded a ship to Brazil and was at sea from September 1 to October 29, 1939. The exact dates are unclear, but Altschul’s husband reached Brazil successfully sometime after she did. Once reunited in Brazil, in 1940, they sent for their son, who traveled to Belem do Pará on a convoy that was escorted out of European waters by submarines. The family came together again in 1941. In a poignant anecdote, Ernst recalled having no way to communicate with his mother following his arrival in Brazil: he had forgotten how to speak German, likely as a result of trauma, and Altschul spoke no English. Shortly after their arrival in São Paulo, Altschul and Leon began a home business constructing decorative flowers by hand for women’s hats and blouses; it would later grow into a successful enterprise called Arteflor. While it started as a small operation based out of the Altschul family home, it grew to include around twenty employees.

2 She was known in São Paulo and in photographic circles as Gertrudes Altschul.
3 Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 17, 2016.
4 Dates are indicated as handwritten annotation in Gertrudes Altschul’s first album (1939–52).
After living in São Paulo for a little over a decade, Altschul joined the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirantes in 1952 (Figs. 1, 2) and remained a member until her death in 1962. Various records indicate that Altschul was a dedicated photographer and enthusiastic FCCB member, especially during her most active period from 1952 to 1958. (In 1958, she fell ill to bone cancer and mostly stopped making photographs.) Her pictures circulated in publications and exhibitions during the 1950s: they were included in several issues of the Foto Cine Clube’s publication, the Foto Cine Boletim, between 1952 and 1962, and in catalogues for salons in São Paulo and beyond from 1953 to 1962. Despite Altschul’s relatively short career as a photographer, these published examples of her work—in addition to extant prints and contact sheets—allow an appreciation of her aesthetic and distinctive way of looking, which was often imbued with a subtle sense of disquiet.

In recent years, Altschul’s photographs have gained new exposure as part of a greater interest in the work and historic contributions of Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante. The publication of Helouise Costa and Renato Rodrigues’s 1995 volume A fotografia...

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5 When Altschul joined, admission to the club was contingent on submitting three 3 x 4 sample photographs along with an inscription form; see Raul Feitosa, Bandeirante: 70 anos de história na fotografia (Balneário Camborúi-SC: Editora Photos, 2013), 36. Altschul’s son, Ernst, confirmed that it was Altschul’s decision to join the FCCB although her husband was very supportive and her great champion. Ernst would sometimes accompany her to the club on weekends.

6 This is corroborated by Ernst Altschul and confirmed by a review of the issues of the Boletim in which Altschul appeared in photographs of social events but also listed in the rankings published on the last pages. She was present for yearly assembly meetings, salon exhibition openings, etc.

7 Altschul’s sudden decrease in production became clear in reviewing the FCCB’s Foto Cine Boletim and the catalogues of São Paulo salons: her work was consistently published in the Boletim and her prints included in the salon exhibitions from 1953 to 1957, but not thereafter. Her physical absence after 1957 is confirmed also in the General Assembly Attendance Record notebook kept at the FCCB Archive, rua Augusta 1108, Consolação, São Paulo. She signed the record notebook at the assembly meetings in 1953, 1955, and 1957, but not in 1959 and 1961 (attendance book, FCCB Archive). There is, however, evidence that Altschul’s prints circulated to other salons in Brazil and abroad after that date; her prints’ presence there, while absent from the São Paulo scene, was likely due to the fact that they were unique circulating prints and she was not making new work. Ernst confirms that she fell ill and was increasingly debilitated in late 1957, undergoing radiotherapy before her death in 1962. Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 28, 2016.
moderna no Brasil first awoke interest in the FCCB in Brazil and led to several showcases. In 2009, the Centro Cultural São Paulo exhibited *Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante*—70 anos (*Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante*—70 years), which commemorated the club’s anniversary with a presentation of historical works made by its members. In 2014, *Moderna para sempre*, a large exhibition of modern photography was held at the Itaú Cultural Center in São Paulo. The show comprised about a hundred works—many by former FCCB members, Altschul among them—from the collection of the Itaú Cultural Institute. In 2015, Casa da Imagem in São Paulo exhibited a selection of twenty-seven prints by Altschul, her first solo show. The recent and arguably most important exhibition highlighting the contributions of the FCCB, *Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: Do arquivo à rede* (*Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: From the archive to the network*), opened in late 2015 at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), showing 279 prints from the collection.

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club’s history.\textsuperscript{11} This exhibition marked the largest to date, by an institution acknowledging the FCCB’s contributions in the history of photography in Brazil. Significantly, it included twelve vintage prints by Altschul.\textsuperscript{12} Organized by decade, the show placed clear emphasis on the late 1940s and the decade of the 1950s, which represented the period in which the FCCB pioneered a modern visual language. While the exhibition showed works by figures such as Thomaz Farkas, Geraldo de Barros, Gaspar Gasparian, and German Lorca, whose contributions to Brazilian photography are widely acknowledged, the presentation also focused on lesser-known participants.\textsuperscript{13} This minority included Altschul, whose work on view displayed her interest in urban scenes, objects from nature, and graphic compositions. The exhibition additionally included works by many photographers whom Costa and Rodrigues did not feature in their photographic history, highlighting the democratic quality of the club and its status as an expansive amateur organization. The curators, Adriano Pedrosa and Rosângela Rennó, described the show as a “decisive step in the process of legitimation of modern Brazilian photography.” Their statement reflects the work, done at the archival level, of selecting these prints from the massive FCCB Archive as well as the subsequent donation of all 279 prints to the museum. The volume published alongside the exhibition, MASP- FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (São Paulo: MASP, 2016), reproduces all the photographs from the show. As the most complete illustrated tome of FCCB work...

\textsuperscript{11} The exhibition was accompanied by MASP- FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (São Paulo: MASP, 2016), a volume that depicts all 279 photographs included in the exhibition; 275 of them were donated by the FCCB while four additional prints were gifted to the museum by private donors.

\textsuperscript{12} The exhibition was on view from November 11, 2015 to March 20, 2016.

\textsuperscript{13} The exhibition also showcased the work of other figures who may have been less known to the museum’s audience: José Oiticica Filho (father of Hélio Oiticica), Kazuo Kawahara, Ademar Manarini, José Yalenti, Roberto Yoshida, and Eduardo Salvatore, longtime FCCB president.
published to date, it provides an expansive look at the camera club’s contributions and their importance in the history of Brazilian photography.¹⁴

Despite occurring almost two decades after the publication of their book, the various exhibitions that included Altschul’s work can be traced back to Costa and Rodrigues’s discoveries in *A fotografia moderna no Brasil*.¹⁵ It was not until the publication of this volume that Altschul’s work, and that of the FCCB overall, began to be recognized as critical to the history of photography in São Paulo. Their research, which resulted from combing through the issues of the *Foto Cine Boletim* and from an examination of the organization’s archives, brought to light the club’s history and made a case for their relevance within the worldwide panorama of modern photography.¹⁶

Altschul is notably the only woman mentioned in their project and, in selecting her photograph *Arquitetura* (*Architecture, n.d.*) (Fig. 3) for the cover of the first edition, the authors gave her work pride of place.¹⁷ “We found that the [Altschul] photograph summed up well the different issues relevant to modern photography during this period, such as the urban theme and the emphasis on geometry and the oblique angles,” Costa noted.¹⁸ The *Arquitetura* photograph, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, embodies many of Altschul and her peers’ focus on geometry and clean lines, but more importantly,

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¹⁴ See *MASP- FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante*.
¹⁶ Ibid.
¹⁷ This photograph appears with different titles: as *Composição* (Composition) (1957) in Costa and Rodrigues’s *A fotografia moderna no Brasil* and as *Arquitetura ou Triângulo ou Composição* (Architecture, or Triangle, or Composition) (n.d.) in *MASP- FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante*. Throughout the rest of this study, it will be referred to as *Arquitetura*.
¹⁸ Email interview with Helouise Costa, October 25, 2016.
conveys the photographer’s subtle but unmistakable point of view in describing the city as an overwhelming metropolis.

Although Altschul produced a significant body of work while she was part of the FCCB and has generally been acknowledged in exhibitions and studies that focus on the club, she has not received much individualized attention in existing histories of the medium in Brazil, much less internationally, despite being the only woman who made a robust body of work during the club’s most illustrious period. While she is mentioned in Costa’s books and features prominently in the MASP-FCCB catalogue, her story and work have never been examined in a systematic and monographic fashion. The present study hopes to remedy this. In reviewing most known examples of her photographic work, several key factors about Altschul’s practice become clear. She was an avid experimenter who made straight photographs, photograms, solarizations, and montage works. She had preferred subject matters: she made complex photographs of the city; focused on the shapes of plants through different techniques; sought geometrical patterns in the landscape around her through straight photographs; and made inventive studio setups, called “table-tops.” While her photographs followed the visual principles that the FCCB lauded, she registered a more intimate, responsive, and disorienting view of her urban environment than many of her male peers. There is also a private repository of Altschul’s work that allows a broader look at her practice: her son Ernst keeps an archive of three photo albums and several binders of negatives, contact sheets, and contact prints that offer a wider reading of Altschul’s interests and photographic explorations.¹⁹ The extensive binders offer a behind-the-scenes view at the photographs that she made for

¹⁹ Photograph albums viewed during visits with Altschul’s son Ernst Altschul, São Paulo, February 17, 23, and 28, 2016.
circulation and exhibition with the FCCB by disclosing the images made before or after, or variations of known works. While her FCCB photographs tend towards elegance and solemnity, Altschul displayed her gregarious personality in her private photo albums. She revealed aspects of her process of adaptation to life in São Paulo after leaving Germany in the way she photographed their home, friends, and family, and documented the Altschul family business and the groups of women that worked for them.

The cultural landscape of São Paulo in the 1940s and 1950s

The formal tendencies commended by the FCCB—and found in Altschul’s photographs—were part of a broader impulse toward abstraction in Brazil’s visual arts that began around 1945, following the eight-year Estado Novo dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas. The processes of industrialization during World War II and the developmentalist economic policy that was instated in the postwar period made this a prosperous time in Brazil. In São Paulo, new art institutions were built and opened to the public: On October 2, 1947, the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (Museum of Art of São Paulo, MASP)—the first modern art museum in the city—opened on the city’s central Avenida Paulista, housed in a striking modernist building designed by Lina Bo Bardi. In 1948, the Museu de Arte Moderna (Museum of Modern Art, MAM), was inaugurated in the Parque Ibirapuera. The first São Paulo Biennial took place in 1951, organized by MAM. It was the first international art biennial outside of Venice, and would become one of the most important art institutions in Latin America. The first two editions of the São Paulo Biennial (1951 and 1953) particularly framed and drove the aesthetic shift from a realist

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21 Ibid.
and figurative style to a modern and abstract one, a reflection of the formation of artists’ groups that advocated for a renewal of the visual language.  

São Paulo was one of the centers of Arte Concreta and its city center a hub for geometric abstraction: it was the original location of the Museo de Arte Moderna; of the Domus Gallery, the first to exhibit the style; and the Municipal Library, which hosted exhibitions and served as a meeting place for artists. The artist collective Grupo Ruptura (Rupture Group), held its first exhibition at MASP in 1952, causing a stir with the distribution of their “Ruptura manifesto,” wherein they argued that “the scientific naturalism of the Renaissance—the old process of rendering the (three-dimensional) external world on a (two-dimensional) plane—has exhausted its historical task.” In Rio, meanwhile, a group of artists explored Neo-Concretism, an approach that focused more on color and the phenomenological experience of art.

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25 Ibid., 45

These artist movements were supported by institutional changes: While the 1934 opening of the national university in São Paulo during the Vargas years had laid the groundwork for the city to develop into a progressive cultural capital, the city’s new Department of Art, installed in 1947, represented a new and important avenue of institutional support for the arts. (Critically, for photographers, the new department listed photography among its arts, a decision that was celebrated within the FCCB.27)

The city’s physical landscape was similarly metamorphosing with the addition of new and prominent modernist structures. The Ministry of Education and Culture in Rio, one of the first modernist buildings in Brazil, designed by Le Corbusier, had been completed in 1947, setting the stage for further modernist works that would be built throughout Brazil. In São Paulo, two of Oscar Niemeyer’s large-scale projects, the Parque Ibirapuera, a public park and the setting for the Museum of Modern Art and the São Paulo Biennial, and the Edifício Copan, a then-unprecedented housing structure that is today one of the icons of the São Paulo cityscape, began construction in 1951. Many more would be built during the 1950s, significantly altering the city’s landscape. The construction of the country’s new capital, Brasília, which began in 1956, represented the pinnacle of nationalist and utopian ideas as embodied by modernist architecture.

Parallel to architectural reshaping, cosmopolitan São Paulo was rapidly growing, especially due to the influx of its significant immigrant population. The steady flow of immigrants into the city since the turn of the century had been contributing to its development into a cultured and diverse urban center. As Jeff Lesser’s studies reveal, German Jews particularly began immigrating to Brazil in great numbers after the

Nuremberg Laws took effect in 1935, with immigrant numbers pre-1936 averaging 518 per year, and from 1936 to 1941, 1,312 per year.\textsuperscript{28} Altschul was one of many Jewish German immigrants who arrived in São Paulo in the late 1930s and early 1940s, escaping their persecution in Germany; in Brazil, she joined a vibrant community of Jewish émigrés and cultivated friendships with other Germans.\textsuperscript{29} Many immigrant artists, most of them from Eastern or Central Europe, enriched the São Paulo art scene, and quite a few contributed in meaningful ways to the development of modern art in Brazil. The Lithuanian modernist painter Lasar Segall, who immigrated to Brazil in January 1924, is perhaps the most recognized and celebrated.\textsuperscript{30} German photographer Peter Scheier (1908–1979), who immigrated to Brazil in 1937, was never part of the FCCB but became a well-respected photojournalist through his work for the Rio de Janeiro–based illustrated magazine *O Cruzeiro*; he is also known for creating photographic documents of many works of modernist architecture.\textsuperscript{31} In addition, a number of European photographers trained in photojournalism and with modern aesthetic settled in São Paulo: Hildegard Rosenthal, Pierre Verger, Marcel Gautherot, Jean Manzon, and Hans Günter Flieg all contributed rich photographs to the Paulista press. In addition, German photographers

\textsuperscript{28} Jeff Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 77–78: “Restrictive legislation, nativism, and lack of support were not the only impediments to Jewish migration in Brazil. Another obstruction came from German Jews who wondered if Brazil might be less a place of refuge and more one of trouble and misery. According to popular wisdom, Brazil lacked educational facilities and was believed to be a land of revolution and dictatorship. White collar refugees were afraid they would be forced to become day laborers and would not have the opportunity to purchase land or homes.” “The portrayal was so negative that between 1933 and 1936, when emigration from Germany was highest, Jews generally went to the United States, Canada, Palestine, or Argentina rather than Brazil.” After the Nuremberg Laws took effect, immigration to Brazil increased. Table 2.2, titled German Jewish Immigration to Brazil: 363 (1933); 835 (1934); 357 (1935); 1,772 (1936); 1,315 (1937); 445 (1938); 2,899 (1939); 1,033 (1940); 408 (1941); total: 9,427.

\textsuperscript{29} Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 23, 2016.


Alice Brill and Madalena Schwartz would contribute an extensive archive of documentary and photojournalistic work that represented the growing city and its inhabitants. Schwartz participated in the activities of the FCCB but she did not officially join until 1966, when its modernist period had passed and its photographers had moved on to a more humanistic, documentary style of photography, which closely corresponded with her aesthetic.

**The Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante**

The FCCB was founded as Foto Club Bandeirante (FCB) in São Paulo in April 1939.32 It was the formal organization of a group of amateur photographers who had been known to gather in the 1930s at the counter of Foto Dominadora, a photography and optics shop on Rua São Bento in São Paulo, to discuss their photographs and trade notes on techniques and equipment.33 In alignment with other such amateur organizations around the world, one of the FCB’s fundamental goals was the defense of photography as a fine art, which galvanized its members. The group’s thirty-one founding members included Eduardo Salvatore, a lawyer who would become the club’s longtime president; Antônio Gomes de Oliveira and Lourival Bastos Cordeiro, owners of the Foto Dominadora photography shop; and José Yalenti, an engineer who would become one of the club’s pioneering modern photographers.34 Especially in the early years, the *bandeirantes* were all men active in liberal professions with sufficient economic resources to afford and dedicate

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32 It would change its name to Foto Cine Club Bandeirante (FCCB) after a cinema section was added in 1946. See Chapter 1.
34 Lenzini, “Noções de moderno no Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante,” 19–20; other founding members included José Donati, José Medina, Waldemiro Morreti, and Frederico Sommer, the president Alfredo Penteado Filho and vice-president Benedito Junqueira Duarte, a columnist of the *Jornal Estado de São Paulo*. 
leisure time to an expensive hobby. The club’s activities centered on photographic excursions and meetings to discuss and evaluate the work of its members, who were all assigned a “level”: novíssimos (rookies), juniors, and seniors.\(^{35}\) In 1940, they began discussing the creation of a salon exhibition to showcase its members’ work, also a tradition of camera clubs around the world. The first São Paulo salon took place in 1942; each subsequent year, more amateurs submitted photographs for consideration, and visitor attendance grew.\(^{36}\)

Why the name, “bandeirantes?” In Portuguese, the word bandeirante means trailblazer and, to photography aficionados in late 1930s Brazil, it was synonymous with paulista, the word used to describe São Paulo–dwellers. It was the paulistas who had explored the backcountry of Brazil and would now, according to the FCCB’s founders, wave a new flag in honor of photography. These passionate supporters would propagate and perfect the art of photography in Brazil in order “to triumph over the indifference, disbelief, and ignorance about ‘photographic art’ common among art critics and the public.”\(^{37}\) The conviction of the Bandeirantes as trailblazers would be validated years later, particularly as the club’s visual aesthetic began to shift, in the mid-1940s, from a Pictorialist style largely associated with amateur camera clubs since the late nineteenth century toward a more modern style reminiscent of the 1920s European avant-garde and the New Vision and New Objectivity aesthetics. This move towards modernist and


\(^{36}\) The first salon received 400 works, of which 189 were exhibited; the third salon (1944) received 697 submissions and accepted 304; the fourth salon (1945) received entries from photographers in ten countries and attracted an estimated public of one hundred thousand visitors. Feitosa, *Bandeirante*, 31.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 13; original: José Donatti: “Por que Bandeirante? Era sinônimo de paulista; foram os paulistas que desbravaram os sertões do Brasil, e novos bandeirantes iriam ser estes outros paulistas que se propunham a levantar esta bandeira: propagar e aperfeiçoar, desvendando ao Brasil a arte fotográfica para com isso vencer a indiferença, a descrença e o desconhecimento da crítica artística e do público sobre o que era, verdadeiramente, a arte fotográfica.” *Foto Cine Boletim* no. 143 (ca. 1970).
abstracted forms in photography coincided with the medium’s rise in prestige; the most convincing evidence of this new esteem was the inclusion of a room of FCCB photographs in the São Paulo Biennial of 1953.³⁸

The History and Historiography of Modern Photography in Brazil

Although recent exhibitions and publications have taken assertive steps to write a more expansive history of Brazilian photography that alludes to the important contributions of the FCCB, they also confirm that this history has only recently begun receiving such attention. Within the field, Altschul’s narrative is unique: as an immigrant woman she was a minority figure in the club in the 1950s.³⁹ While her work has been featured alongside the men’s in the recent, aforementioned exhibitions and been the subject of one solo show, her story has not been explored in detail prior to this study.

Altschul’s work has been absent or mentioned only fleetingly in existing volumes on the history of twentieth-century Brazilian photography. While some of the early members of the FCCB, and a few of her peers, went on to have long careers in

³⁸ In 1953, due to the last-minute cancellation of José Clemente Orozco and David Alfaro Siqueiros, as well as the delegation of Haiti, the São Paulo Biennial found itself with an exhibition space to fill. At the suggestion of Geraldo de Barros, the director of the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), Dr. Wolfgang Pfeiffer, agreed to show a selection of photographs from the FCCB. In a note in Foto Cine Boletim No. 87, de Barros asserts that it was not his doing but rather that the quality of the photographs warranted the exhibition. The selection of photographs was made by Geraldo de Barros, Eduardo Salvatore, José Yalenti, and Ademar Manarini. See: Foto Cine Boletim No. 87 (1953), 12–13. No checklist of the exhibited works has been located, and it appears that the only documentation exists in the form of installation photographs published with de Barros’s article in the Foto Cine Boletim. Based on these photographs, Costa confirms that at least three photographs now in the collection of MASP were included in the biennial showcase: Balance (Balance), by José Yalenti; Vasos e plantas (Glasses and plants), by Gertrudes Altschul; and Fotograma n. 13 (Photogram number 13) by Geraldo de Barros. See: Helouise Costa, “O Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante no Museu de Arte de São Paulo,” in MASP. FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (São Paulo: MASP, 2016), 14.

³⁹ Altschul differs from other German-Jewish female photographers such as Schwartz, Rosenthal, and Brill, who typically worked as documentarians and photojournalists, capturing street life and current events, and whose extensive documentary work has already been published and celebrated. See: Brill, O mundo de Alice Brill (São Paulo: Instituto Moreira Salles, 2005); Hildegard Rosenthal, Maria Luiza Ferreira de Oliveira, and Beatriz Bracher, Metrópole (São Paulo: Instituto Moreira Salles, 2010); Madalena Schwartz and Jorge Schwartz, Crisálidas: Madalena Schwartz (São Paulo, Brazil: Instituto Moreira Salles, 2012).
photography, Altschul’s death in 1962 prevented her from such a blossoming. Existing histories of Brazilian photography, such as Boris Kossoy’s entry “Fotografia” in the História geral do arte no Brasil (A general history of art in Brazil) (1982), a broad-strokes history of photography in Brazil; Rubens Fernandes Júnior’s Labirinto e identidades (Labyrinth and identities) (2003), an overview of twentieth-century Brazilian photography that focuses on the 1948–98 period; or Um olhar sobre o Brasil: A fotografia na construção da imagem da nação (A look over Brazil: photography in the construction of the image of the nation) (2012), which charts photography as the medium that witnessed and helped create the image of Brazil as a modern nation, make only a passing mention of the FCCB as a whole. The breadth of work produced by its members and subjective, disquieting interpretations like Altschul’s are mostly excluded, suggesting that the relevance of the FCCB to the history of Brazilian photography is still being negotiated and appraised.

However, a number of volumes have started with the task of parsing this history: Raul Feitosa’s history of the FCCB, Bandeirante: 70 anos de história na fotografia (Bandeirante: 70 years of history in photography) (2013), discusses the club’s history in granular detail, including its shifts of power, struggles for survival, and bureaucratic inner workings.40 Rich with facts and quotations from the FCCB’s Foto Cine Boletim, this text is a key historical document of the club’s activities and year-by-year development and growth.

In O desafio do olhar, vol. II (The challenge of looking, volume II) (2013) Anna Teresa Fabris discusses the role of photography in the development of Surrealism and the New Vision in Europe and in the last chapter, reflects on how the principles of the New

40 Feitosa, Bandeirante.
Vision were received and channeled in Brazil.\textsuperscript{41} Fabris homes in on the connections between the historical avant-garde in Europe and the period of modernism in São Paulo photography that occurred decades later, exploring the different possible causes of the shift toward a modern way of looking. She first points to poet Mário de Andrade’s photographic experiments in the 1920s, whose modern gaze she attributes to his subscription to the magazine \textit{Querschnitt}. She also comments on the influence of international picture magazines such as \textit{Look} and \textit{Life}, whose photographic language was represented in Brazil through publications like \textit{O Cruzeiro}, and whose influence was heightened by the exhibition \textit{Artistic Photography} that took place at the Biblioteca Municipal in São Paulo in 1947, which will be discussed in Chapter 1 of this study. This last chapter in Fabris’s book is important in its specific consideration of ways that cultural forces in Europe and the U.S. influenced the shift of the photographic language in Brazil, epitomized in her analysis of the work of José Yalenti, Thomaz Farkas, German Lorca, and Geraldo de Barros.

Meanwhile, Heloísa Espada Rodrigues Lima’s dissertation “Fotoformas: A máquina lúdica de Geraldo de Barros” (2006), a monographic study on Geraldo de Barros’s \textit{Fotoformas} series, analyzes the artistic and cultural shifts in post-war São Paulo as they pertain to the development of the work of photographer and painter Geraldo de Barros. Her dissertation includes a chapter on de Barros’s photographic practice and his participation in the FCCB starting in 1949, which resulted in an at times embattled rapport due to the artist’s more daring aesthetic propositions, underscoring the degree to

which experimentation was a relative term within the club.\footnote{Heloisa Espada Rodrigues de Lima, “Fotoformas: A máquina lúdica de Geraldo de Barros,” PhD diss., Universidade de São Paulo, Escola de Comunicação e Artes, São Paulo, 2006.}

In *Fotografia no Brasil: Um olhar dos origens ao contemporaneo* (Photography in Brazil: a look from the origins to the contemporary) (2004), Angela Magalhães and Nadja Peregrino succinctly trace the main points of Brazilian photographic history from the nineteenth century to the present-day (2004), making a mention of the FCCB. Magalhães and Peregrino also study the history of the Brazilian photo-club movement in *Fotoclubismo no Brasil: O legado da Sociedade fluminense de fotografia* (The photo-club movement in Brasil: the legacy of the Fluminense Society of Photography) (2012), which focuses on the legacy of a camera club in the Brazilian city of Niterói and underscores the rich *fotoclubismo* movement in Brazil, with an emphasis on the FCCB’s important position within the network of *foto clubes*.\footnote{Angela Magalhães and Nadja Fonseca Peregrino, *Fotoclubismo no Brasil: O legado da Sociedade Fluminense de Fotografia* (Rio de Janeiro: Senac Nacional, 2012).}

Vanessa Sobrino Lenzini, a PhD candidate in São Paulo, focused her master’s thesis, “Noções do moderno no Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante: Fotografia em São Paulo (1948–1951)” (2008), on the FCCB specifically, tracing the club’s definitions of modernity and their implementation of a corresponding, modern aesthetic. Her study reproduces a selection of *Boletim* articles from 1948–51 that convey the ways in which the FCCB shifted its views and aesthetic positions towards a new visual language.\footnote{Lenzini, “Noções de moderno no Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante.”}

Expanding the narratives explored in these studies above, Rubens Fernandes Júnior’s recent volume *Papéis efêmeros da fotografia* (Ephemeral papers of photography)
(2015) focuses on the ephemera that surrounded the growing photographic industry in São Paulo, which supported the work of hobbyists and professionals alike. His enriching approach provides diverse material evidence of the effervescent decades during which the Foto Cine Clube rose to fame. This study, in which the author demonstrates his interest in the material history of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, is of particular relevance to the present research project. Fernandes Júnior’s investigation paints a picture of the shops and industries that bolstered the enthusiasm for the medium and examines the graphic language of objects such as labels, envelopes from photo-developing shops, and graphic design employed by photographic studios, which were often based on a Constructivist- or Bauhaus-inspired schemes, a reflection of some of their foreign owners. These materials, assiduously collected by Fernandez Junior and contextualized in Papéis efêmeros, expand the current understanding of the pervasiveness of photography and the level of development of an infrastructure—the availability of cameras and film for sale and experienced professionals who knew how to develop film, for example—that supported the work of FCCB photographers. This infrastructure also included instructive publications by camera companies and the colloquial expertise that photo-lab assistants transmitted to amateur photographers. Although the author does not mention Altschul’s work, he does establish, through his focus on the material and visual culture around photography, the degree to which images of women were ubiquitous on photography materials, an aspect that will be further examined in Chapter 3.

Altschul within a History of Female Photographers

46 Ibid.
This thesis takes a monographic approach to Altschul in order to do the important work of recording her oeuvre and contributions within the FCCB and to the development of modern photography in Brazil. The research and analysis developed in Chapters 1 and 2 depends heavily on the aforementioned historical and historiographical research of the past three decades as well as on recent critical perspectives, mostly developed by Brazilian scholars and curators. Their publications have established the Foto Cine Clube’s operation, its place in the artistic and cultural landscape of São Paulo in the 1940s and ’50s, and its existence as part of a regional and global network of amateur photography organizations. Their contributions have elucidated the FCCB context within which Altschul was working during the 1950s and underscored the rarity of her wide-ranging practice and her importance as an early maker of modernist photographs in Brazil.

Without primary sources available in São Paulo, however, the research for this thesis would have been impossible to stitch together. Several interviews with Altschul’s son Ernst at their São Paulo home, and the perusal of Altschul’s personal albums, which Ernst generously shared, offer a much deeper look into the artist’s practice of and passion for photography and into the ways that creative and enterprising spirit reached far beyond the inspired work she made within the FCCB. This study also draws on reports and texts published in issues of the Foto Cine Boletim kept by the FCCB Archive, as well as additional materials such as a general-meeting attendance book, correspondence records, and salon exhibition catalogues in São Paulo and other Brazilian cities. Repeated access to MoMA’s recently acquired Altschul prints was also invaluable in allowing close
observation of a set of photographs that will likely be read as the artist’s greatest achievements.

Due to its analysis of a wider selection of the artist’s photographs, incorporation of interviews with Ernst Altschul, and consideration of private photograph albums, this monographic approach to Altschul’s work proposes a more layered examination than any found in existing literature. The consideration of her photograph albums, especially, enrich the present account of her life and work: the private records unveil Altschul’s experience of modern femininity, revealing details about her life as an immigrant woman, artist, and worker in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo. More casual and familiar than her FCCB work, three albums ranging from 1939–62 represent a more private aspect of Altschul’s life, one that includes her family, friends, and activities such as weekend trips and vacations. These documents also reveal the way her photographic style shifted as a result of joining the FCCB and, documented across several pages in the first album, the workings of their family business.⁴⁷ Altschul’s life was determined by different experiences—her conditions as an immigrant, a progressive working woman, and a modern, sensitive image maker and artist—a condition that comes strongly to the fore in her albums.

In order to construct the analysis of Altschul’s work from the perspective of gender, especially in relation to her private albums, recent studies related to the study and histories of women in photography have been invaluable. Photography, History, Difference (2015), edited by Tanya Sheehan, provided lucid analyses of the expanded and complex narratives that emerge when existing histories are mined for excluded players

⁴⁷ All three albums are in the private collection of Altschul’s son, Ernst Altschul.
and when art historical studies are opened up to include vernacular objects. A question in Sheehan’s introduction brings much to bear in this study:

Thinking in new ways about the relations among photography, history, and difference can also involve reconceptualizing the place of particular constructions of identity—the imagined borders of selfhood and subjectivity—in writing about the medium. How have notions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality shaped photography’s historiography, and how might they perform different work in the future?  

In considering Altschul not only as an amateur photographer but also as an “other”—female, Jewish, immigrant/exiled—and bringing a more expansive eye to her photographic production both inside and outside the photoclub, a much more complex and rewarding history emerges. A recent volume edited by Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco, *The New Woman International* (2011), focuses on the study of the figure of the New Woman globally and contributes to a more complex consideration of Altschul. The editors’ introductory text complicates the image of the New Woman—no longer a figure only of Weimar Republic–Berlin, but a global phenomenon spread through photography and film. While their collection of essays does not include any case studies in Latin America—another reason that histories like Altschul’s need to be written—its contributions overall bring an expansive and reconceived point of view to telling the histories of women who broke out of molds. Other studies of women photographers, such as Naomi Rosenblum’s indispensable *History of Women Photographers* (2000) and selected essays from Abigail Solomon-Godeau’s *Photography at the Dock* (1991) bring to bear women’s experiences with photography; their analyses enrich the history of the

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medium by invoking themes from feminist studies. Both volumes underscore photography’s inherent modernity and the ways in which the medium implicated women, by virtue of the increased ease of access, almost from the start. These conditions, in turn, produced more female photographers and images of women’s lives, underscoring the great amount of work there is left to do to tell more female photographers’ stories in depth, to add to the existing accounts and work towards a balance of the dominant and existing histories of photography, which skew undoubtedly male. The aforementioned studies have proven critical in framing and lending nuance to this posthumous study of Altschul’s work as a necessary component in a more expansive history of photographers, particularly those, including women, who fall into the category of “other.”

From the vantage of the early twenty-first century, this thesis places Altschul within a history of female artists who have received their due late in life or posthumously. Given the acquisition of Altschul’s work by MoMA, it is likely that her work will now be inscribed more prominently in narratives of modern photography in São Paulo and globally. The acquisition represents a part of the museum’s recent initiatives to expand its collection and narrative of modern art. This is evidenced in the ongoing publication of three volumes of *Photography at MoMA*, organized by time period and presenting a more global and inclusive history, as well as in the critical tome *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art*, in which the museum invited critics and art

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51 The momentum has already begun, with Altschul’s photograph *Linhas e tons* included in the volume *Photography at MoMA: 1920 to 1960*, ed. Quentin Bajac, Lucy Gallun, Roxana Marcoci, and Sarah Hermanson Meister (New York: Museu of Modern Art, 2016), 324.
historians to cast a questioning gaze at the museum’s early history of excluding women.\(^{52}\)

In one of the book’s framing essays, Griselda Pollock pointedly asks how to respond to the fact that “despite everything that made the modernization of gender roles fundamental to modernity itself,” MoMA “systemically failed to register the intensely visible artistic participation of women in making modernism modern.”\(^{53}\) The question can also be posed vis-à-vis Brazilian photography history: Why are women’s contributions so scant, particularly in the period before 1960 (a turning point at which women began to develop important bodies of documentary photographic work)? Why has the history of photography in Brazil been developed with such limited consideration for the contributions of women? Most of the existing narratives of the FCCB have been written without consideration for its female members; it is in view of complicating this history that the present paper argues for the ways that Altschul worked within the au-courant visual language to craft uniquely nuanced photographs that go far beyond a simple search for geometry in the landscape surrounding her.\(^{54}\) The present study thus intends to contribute to a more diversified history of Brazilian modern photography through the examination of an immigrant woman’s point of view, insisting that her perspective adds richness to existing accounts. Altschul’s use of modernist visual language to craft a complex yet subjective photography offers at least some evidence to consider Abigail


\(^{54}\) Costa said recently that she didn’t pay particular attention to the role of women in the club during her research on the FCCB. Email exchange, October 25, 2016.
Solomon-Godeau’s poignant question: “What, if anything, changes when it is a woman who wields the camera?”

In the pages that follow, Chapter 1 will consider the origins of the photo-club movement in conjunction with the rise of Pictorialism, and examine the reasons why this aesthetic remained in vogue for much longer in Brazil than in Europe and the U.S. This is followed by a discussion of the factors that influenced the shift towards a modern style within the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante, emphasizing the roles of the club’s early innovators and an influential 1947 exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and exhibited in São Paulo, which contributed to the momentum toward a modern aesthetic.

Chapter 2 studies the photographs that Gertrudes Altschul made for discussion, exhibition, and circulation within the FCCB and the photo-club circuit beyond São Paulo. The discussion focuses on the different categories of work developed by Altschul, particularly her disorienting photo-montages of the city, her experimental photographs of plants, her straight photographs representing geometry in her environment, and finally her studio photographs, called “table-tops.” The close analysis of several photographs unearths some of the concerns that place Altschul’s practice decidedly within her time and in conversation with her peers’ while evidencing a point of view imbued with subjectivity and critical of modernity.

Finally, Chapter 3 proposes the figure of the New Woman as a way to understand Altschul as female immigrant artist, further developing some of the ideas charted in her

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photographs in the previous chapter. Altschul’s private photo albums are introduced into the discussion as a way to understand her awareness of her own femininity, as well as her consideration of women around her. The inclusion of the albums in the discussion offers a more layered reading of Altschul’s work and a broader context in which to understand her as an artistic figure in mid-century São Paulo.
Chapter 1

Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante: From Pictorialism to Modernism

When Gertrudes Altschul joined the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante in 1952, the club had been operating for thirteen years. During that time, it had grown in number of members and audience, moved into different headquarters, and expanded to include film. Its most salient shift, however, was the transition from the Pictorialist style promoted at the time of its 1939 founding to the modernist vision that took hold starting in the mid-1940s, for which the FCCB is recognized today. This chapter examines the roots of the photo club movement and its connection to Pictorialism, which took hold first in Europe and the U.S. and subsequently throughout Brazil. The text also addresses the reasons that Pictorialism, which waned in the U.S. and Europe in the 1910s, remained popular in the photo-club circuit in Brazil until well into the 1940s. Looking then to São Paulo in particular, the discussion shifts to the slow modernization of the FCCB throughout the 1940s, including an examination of an influential 1947 exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which is credited for adding momentum to the shift toward a modern aesthetic in Brazil.

Fotoclubismo as a Modern Phenomenon

The development of hobbyist camera clubs around the world occurred hand in hand with the expansion of Pictorialism, which came into vogue in the mid-1880s, reached its height in the 1900s, and prevailed into the 1920s. In reaction to the uses of photography by science and the illustrated press, Pictorialist image makers claimed photography as a
fine-art medium and concentrated on simple, romantic, or allegorical subjects in a soft-focus aesthetic. They printed their photographs on matte or textured papers via labor-intensive processes that underscored the primacy of a unique artwork. Pictorialism became fashionable in the late nineteenth century as a consequence of the increased availability of simplified photographic cameras and materials to members of a growing middle class; the style also represented a reaction to the industrialization of photography. “Pictorialists valued the symbolic control over industry, and a sense of superiority over the snapshotters, who did not even develop their own film,” writes Mary Warner Marien.56 The movement used photography in a counterintuitive way—resisting the medium’s mechanical modernity and its ability to represent the world with exactitude, using the camera to make timeless photographs that emphasized hand-worked processes. Photographers felt a certain amount of pride in this practice, which followed “a self-image of cultural heroism, striking back at the worst of the modern world.”57 Pictorialists defended the value of photography as fine art rather than as a mere reproductive technology or scientific tool, and imbued their images with subjectivity and emotions rather than objective information.58 They organized based on the defense of these values: the Wiener Kamera Klub (Vienna Camera Club) was founded in 1891; the English Brotherhood of the Linked Ring in 1892; and the Photo-Club de Paris in 1894. In the U.S., Alfred Stieglitz launched the Photo Secession group in 1902, calling to “advance photography as applied to pictorial expression” and “to draw together those Americans

57 Ibid. 
practicing or otherwise interested in the art.” 59 Alongside the Photo Secession, Stieglitz published the periodical Camera Work from 1903 to 1917, which featured texts and gravures that were representative of new styles in photography. 60

In the face of the rapid industrialization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the phenomenon of the photo club, called fotoclubismo, took hold with particular force in Brazil, bolstered similarly by a fast-growing industry of photography products that catered to amateur artists. The popularization of the medium manifested itself both in the establishment of photo organizations and in the launching of medium-specific publications. As with the groups that emerged in the 1880s in Europe and in the early twentieth century in New York, the Brazilian foto clubes took on as their mission the promotion of photography as a fine art and embraced Pictorialism as its representative aesthetic. Most of the clubs followed the framework of amateur groups elsewhere, basing their structure on internal competitions and regularly held salons. The earliest known association in Brazil, the Sploro Photo Club, was founded around the turn of the century in the southern city of Porto Alegre. In 1909, the São Paulo newspaper Revista Photographica began publication, the first known periodical dedicated to photography. Published until the 1920s, the Revista was dedicated to the “the exaltation of amateur photography on traditional themes” and featured the first known photography contest in Brazil, a common feature in international periodicals of this kind, which intended to stimulate its readers. 61 Other photography-centered publications followed, such as the

60 Marien, Photography: A Cultural History, 183.
magazine *Illustração Photográfica* (Photographic Illustration, 1919), which was associated with the Casa Stück, a supplier of photographic materials. *Illustração Photográfica* promoted products and featured articles on photographic technique, but also commented on the need for photographers to organize and on the importance of copyright law. The periodical published Pictorialist photographs and its readership included amateurs and professional photographers alike.62 In 1926 the magazine *Revista Brasileira de Photographia* (Brazilian Magazine of Photography) was launched by a group of professionals, mostly lawyers, which included Valêncio De Barros, an amateur photographer who would later help found the FCCB and become one of its proudest Pictorialist practitioners. The first São Paulo photo club, the Sociedade Paulista de Photographia, was also formed in 1926; Valêncio De Barros presided over its first salon in 1927. The Sociedade Paulista also produced a short-lived publication, *Sombras e Luzes*, which ceased when the club dissolved in 1929.63

Despite the increase in publications in São Paulo and the efforts of its short-lived camera club, the Brazilian capital Rio de Janeiro was the gravitational center for the photo-club movement until the 1940s. The Photo Clube do Rio de Janeiro, formed in 1910, was shortlived; however the Photo Club Brasileiro, established in 1923, became an important hub for the amateur photographic community. According to Paulo Herkenhoff, this photo-club was the fulcrum of Brazilian Pictorialism.64 The organization’s robust platform included *Photogramma*, a magazine first published in 1926, and the

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62 Ibid., 54.
63 Ibid., 54–58.
64 Paulo Herkenhoff, “Fotografia o automático e o longo processo de modernidade,” in *Sete ensaios sobre o modernismo* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, Instituto Nacional de Artes Plásticas, 1983), 42.
organization of an annual salon, the Salão Anual de Photographia, from 1924 to 1939.\textsuperscript{65} It remained a strong organization throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but weakened afterwards and faltered in 1953 upon the death of its president, Nogueira Borges.\textsuperscript{66} The work produced by the Photo Club Brasileiro, and by the São Paulo–based Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante in its early years, reflected an anachronistic attachment to Pictorialism. Even José Oiticica Filho—an original and groundbreaking artist who, like Geraldo de Barros, worked across media—was a staunch Pictorialist for the first years of his photographic practice.\textsuperscript{67}

The protracted hold of Pictorialism on the Brazilian photography-club circuit merits attention, especially in context of the consequently “late” arrival of modern photography. Brazilian photography historians describe, with chagrin, the dominant Pictorialist tendencies of the Brazilian photo clubs in the 1920s and 1930s; these critics are clearly aware that the language of photography had shifted towards modernity several decades earlier in Europe and in the U.S. Speaking of a desfasagem (difference in phase, or time lag), scholars such as Rubens Fernandes Júnior, and Helouise Costa and Renato Rodrigues note that modern photography arrived very late in Brazil.\textsuperscript{68} Costa and


\textsuperscript{66} Helouise Costa and Renato Rodrigues, \textit{A fotografia moderna no Brasil} (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1995), 81.

\textsuperscript{67} Oiticica Filho (the father of Hélio), an entomologist by training, joined the Photo Clube Brasileiro in the early 1940s and was involved in the foundation of the Associação Brasileira do Arte Fotografia (ABAF), a small but important organization that emerged in the wake of the Photo Clube Brasileiro. Through his training as a scientist, Oiticica Filho was adept at microphotography and, following his Pictorialist phase, experimented with abstraction both in photography and painting.

Rodrigues described photo-pictorialism as “an eclipse in the history of photography, inasmuch as it attempted to adapt the medium to the classical concepts of art which are completely antagonistic to it.”

Boris Kossoy, for his part, denigrates the degree to which practitioners within the clubs were prone to the idea of “artistic photography.” He describes their works as distorted visions of the Pictorialist movement, especially in their intent to make photographs that resembled paintings, even though this tenet was part of the international values of Pictorialism. In referring to this type of photography as a *deturpação* (misrepresentation) in its refusal of the “intrinsic characteristic of expressive photography”—the representation of reality—Kossoy reveals himself as a frustrated modernist.

In contrast to an academic art system not yet ready to incorporate photography, “fotoclubismo constituted itself as a parallel circuit with its own structures and rules where photographers could voice their convictions and pay attention only to their peers,” write Costa and Rodrigues. The photo-club circuit indeed embraced and fostered the medium’s “artistic” potential, but did not necessarily adopt critical positions or provide the analytical framework of an academic program. While these factors—the Pictorialists’ intention to promote photography as a medium for artistic expression, and academic programs’ much later acceptance of photography as a discipline—echo the developments that took place in the U.S. and Europe, the distinguishing factor in Brazil is the chronologically long sway of Pictorialism. Costa and Rodrigues conclude simply that,
despite radical changes in European and American photography during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, the international photo club sphere and its Pictorialist practice remained unchanged.\textsuperscript{72}

In their study of photography in São Paulo, Mônica Junqueira and Ricardo Mendes caution against confusing the terms modernity and modernism.\textsuperscript{73} While modernism in painting developed in São Paulo in the early 1920s, notably within the 1922 showcase of the Semana do Arte Moderno (Week of Modern Art, “Semana” for short), photography was curiously absent from this period’s exhibitions, despite its circulation in the press. Suggesting that the modernistas of 1922 may have already been outdated, Herkenhoff questions the modernity of the Semana for its exclusion of photography and film, which he calls, in a nod to Walter Benjamin, the most revolutionary reproductive techniques.\textsuperscript{74} And yet, incongruously, in 1922, poet Mário de Andrade (one of the organizers of the Semana) spoke to film’s inherently modern status in the opening statements of his avant-garde literary magazine \textit{Klaxon}: “KLAXON knows that the cinematographer exists. . . . Cinematography is the most representative artistic creation of our time.”\textsuperscript{75} Moreover, according to Junqueira and Mendes, the avant-garde poet Oswald de Andrade also, around this time, demonstrated a “diffuse conscience” of the impact of photography on the artistic field as an extension of the image universe of advertising and cinema.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{72} Costa and Rodrigues, \textit{A fotografia moderna no Brasil}, 37.  
\textsuperscript{73} Junqueira and Mendes, \textit{Fotografia: cultura e fotografia paulistana}, 41.  
\textsuperscript{74} Herkenhoff, “Fotografia: o automático e o longo processo de modernidade,” 42.  
\textsuperscript{75} “KLAXON sabe que o cinematographo existe. . . . A cinematographia é a criação artística mais representativa da nossa época”; see Mário de Andrade, ed., \textit{Klaxon}, no. 1 (May 15, 1922): 3.  
\textsuperscript{76} Junqueira and Mendes, \textit{Fotografia: cultura e fotografia paulistana}, 49–50: “Já nos anos 20, Oswald de Andrade demonstra uma consciência difusa do impacto da fotografia no meio artístico, amalgamado ao universo imagético da propaganda e do cinema.”
Modernity in the FCCB

At the time of its foundation, the FCCB had goals similar to earlier photo clubs: asserting photography as a fine art via the Pictorialist model. The Bandeirantes valued the subjective possibilities of photography, the emotionally charged images, and the allegorical representation inherent to Pictorialist photography. This tendency, however, initiated its slow dislodging starting in 1943, when Eduardo Salvatore (1914–2007) became the president of the FCCB: the changes that Salvatore instituted over the years steered the club in a modern direction, even if the first modern visual manifestations were still a few years off. An amateur photographer and lawyer, Salvatore saw potential for growth in the FCCB, both in terms of its regional influence and international outreach. He made monthly contests part of the club’s structure, reached out to other photo clubs to begin cooperative organization, and vowed to make the yearly photographic salons international. Significantly, the first salon under his mandate, organized in 1944, exhibited prints by photographers from seven countries, including the U.S., Canada, and England.77

The year 1946 brought pivotal changes to the FCCB. Under Salvatore’s leadership, the club added a film department that was based on amateur contests, workshops, and screenings; the name of the organization was subsequently changed to the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB).78 Cinema was added to the FCCB’s purview to gain a competitive advantage over regional camera clubs that only focused on still

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77 Feitosa, Bandeirante, 31.
78 Ibid.
photography. The inauguration of the film section was celebrated with the screening of two documentaries by Thomaz Farkas, one of the club’s early and youngest members. Concurrently, the FCCB opened a color photography section, commemorated with an exhibition titled *Kodacromes*, which presented slides by Guilherme Malfatti, Frederico Sommer, and Thomaz Farkas. That year, the FCCB also incorporated a *seccão feminina*, or “female section,” which offered women a fifty-percent-discount membership. Although the *seccão feminina* didn’t offer women any additional perks, this concession was the first step in the FCCB’s initiatives to remedy women’s scarce participation; most female members were motivated to join because their husbands were members. The club’s attention to attracting women can also be understood as part of its modernizing efforts.

Another change in 1946 was the publication of the first *Foto Cine Boletim*, a printed periodical that serves today as the club’s most complete and enduring record. The *Boletim* promoted members’ work by featuring a photograph on the cover and several inside in every issue. It included informative and instructive articles that ranged

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81 Ibid.
82 During an interview with German Lorca at Galeria FASS, São Paulo, February 19, 2016, he confirmed that the FCCB had very few female members in its early years.
83 Although the club’s registration form indicated the discount for women, the standard address line for members read still had only one option—“Sr.” for Mister—as late as 1952.
85 The covers were sometimes related to the content inside, such as a review of a certain member’s exhibition. The member photographs published within the *Boletim* were at times selections from a concurrent salon; at others, they were organized around a single theme, such as in *Boletim* 8, no. 95, in which all the double-spread photographs focused on the city (*Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 95: 14–15 [April–May 1955]). In other instances, the works selected seemed randomly grouped, such as in *Boletim* 7, no. 84 (1953), in which a photograph of a man playing the guitar is juxtaposed with a view that is elegantly framed by a window, without any clear link between the images.
in subject matter, from technique to artistic and philosophical questions. The Boletim also featured articles on internationally renowned photographers such as Edward Weston and Edward Steichen, and occasionally reprinted translated texts from foreign publications such as *Scientific American*. In the back of every issue, the periodical reported on recent member excursions, general meetings and exhibitions, and upcoming photographic contests and salons with their respective deadlines. Alongside, it also published the current “ranking” of FCCB photographers, which was based on a point system linked to monthly contests and participation in local and international exhibitions. The regular publication of the Boletim underscored the club’s earnestness in creating a comprehensive record of its activities and in offering its members access to different voices commenting on photography.

Taken together, the changes implemented up to 1946—the internationalization of the salons, the implementation of a cinema section, the inclusion of women, and the creation of a publication—increased the scope of the FCCB’s activities and contributed to its wider recognition both nationally and abroad. Salvatore’s efforts to internationalize

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86 Some of the articles were oriented toward technique, such as Rubens Teixeira Scavone, “Considerações sobre o Fotograma” (Considerations on photograms), *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 101 (August–November 1956): 23–26, or Odilon Amado, “Curso de Quimica Geral Aplicada à Fotografia” (General chemistry course applied to photography), *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 85 (December 1953): 14–17. Others ruminated more theoretical questions, such as the series “Fotografia é Arte?” (Is Photography Art?), which elicited responses from half a dozen different photographers and critics, published across several issues in 1956: José Geraldo Vieria in *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 101 (August–November 1956): 15–16; and Sérgio Milliet in *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 103 (1957): 11.


88 The publication was initially called Boletim Informativo (Informative bulletin) until it adopted the name *Foto Cine Boletim* in 1950. In addition to recording the activities of its members, the publication had the serious intent of discussing ideas about photography, partly in order to remedy the once-scarce availability of photography publications in São Paulo (see *Foto Cine Boletim* 122). It was an advanced and expensive publication for its time and despite ongoing patronage by local photography businesses, it often operated at a loss due to the high expense of printing. However, its quality was internationally acknowledged by photo clubs in Lyon, in Argentina, and even by the Photographic Society in America, which awarded it recognitions for its editorial content in 1949 and 1951. See: Raul Feitosa, *Bandeirante*, 115–121.
the salons signaled his readiness to facilitate a broader exchange and set higher stakes for the annual competition than had existed previously. This opening up to new influences also represented, prior to the founding of the São Paulo International Art Biennial in 1951, the value attached to transnational dialogue in the fields of art, evident in the conversations that were often published in the Boletim as transcriptions of lectures or essays by well-known cultural figures. The FCCB’s efforts to expand its reach bore fruit: its photographers began to receive international recognition, and the club an exclusive invitation, in 1946, to join the Photographic Society of America (PSA) as a member organization, and in 1950, to join the Federation Internationale de L’Art Photographique (International Federation of Photographic Art, FIAP).  

Modernizing forces were starting to rattle the Pictorialist foundations of the FCCB as well. By the mid to late 1940s, a handful of its photographers had begun to experiment with aesthetic propositions that lay decisively outside the purview of Pictorialism. Thomas Farkaz, José Yalenti, Geraldo de Barros, and Germán Lorca, had begun making images that discarded the soft focus and timeless, romantic tableaux of the countryside for a sharper look at form and geometry in the urban environment. (Ranked as the “Pioneers” of the FCCB in Costa and Rodrigues’s study, their work will be further discussed in Chapter 2). These artists used the camera as a documentary instrument that captured views from different perspectives, transforming everyday cityscapes into geometric abstractions. In contrast to nostalgic, bucolic propositions such as Valêncio de Barros’s Manhã luminosa (Bertioga) (Luminous morning, Bertioga) (1942) (Fig. 4) or Henri Laurent’s Paisagem do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro landscape) (n.d.) (Fig. 5),

89 The Photographic Society of America (PSA) named the FCCB the leader of the northern circuit of South American photoclubs. Feitosa, Bandeirante, 32. For the FCCB’s inclusion in FIAP see Feitosa, Bandeirante, 45.
the Pioneers captured the city differently. For example, Farkas photographed new, modernist construction in images such as *Side Facade of the Ministry of Education and Health, Rio de Janeiro* (ca. 1945) (Fig. 6), depicting a Lúcio Costa–designed building that was heralded as one of the finest examples of Brazilian modernist architecture. Farkas’s steep, low angle and the blank façade intersected only by an electrical pole and its enigmatic shadow recalls the work of photographers who participated in the aesthetics of the German New Vision and New Objectivity, which held at their core the desire for an objective and defamiliarizing representation of the world, much in opposition to the earlier, Pictorialist style.90

As Ute Eskildsen has written, photographers in inter-war Europe recognized the efforts of photographers like Heinrich Kühn, Robert Demachy, Gertrudes Käsebier, and Emil Otto Hoppé who had fought for the acknowledgement of photography as a serious art form. However, these innovative image-makers opposed “the so-called Pictorial photography in which the photographers imitated the sketchy Impressionistic view of period painters and relied on anecdote and voluminous atmosphere to win popularity in the annual salons.”91 The Brazilian photographers looking for new visual possibilities reacted similarly to their German forebears Albert Renger-Patzsch, Germaine Krull, and László Moholy-Nagy, who had pioneered these new formal approaches to photography in Europe in the teens and twenties. The Brazilians, too, began treating the camera as a

mechanical instrument capable of capturing the world in a realistic manner, but also as a machine that could offer new visual perspectives.\footnote{Ibid., 101.}

Different records prove that Bauhaus and European avant-garde publications were available in São Paulo at the Biblioteca Municipal in the early 1940s: *Photographs of Man Ray* was purchased in 1943 and Lázsló Moholy-Nagy’s Bauhaus book *The New Vision: Fundamentals of Design, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture* was donated in 1945.\footnote{Heloisa Espada Rodrigues Lima, “Fotoformas: A máquina lúdica de Geraldo de Barros,” Phd diss., Universidade de São Paulo, Escola de Comunicação e Artes, São Paulo 2006, 66–67.} In addition, the library acquired the exhibition catalogue *In Memoriam László Moholy-Nagy* in 1946, the same year it was published.\footnote{Ibid.} An interview with Thomaz Farkas revealed that some of the São Paulo photography shops, such as Kosmos, and bookshops, like Livraria Italiana, carried photography books.\footnote{Espada, “Fotoformas,” 66.} Through these volumes, São Paulo artists and FCCB members potentially had access to Man Ray’s *rayographs* (photograms), Moholy-Nagy’s inventive compositions and photograms, and new tendencies in design. In addition to the photographs reproduced in these volumes, Moholy-Nagy’s inclusive and expansive attitude towards creativity, which included the belief that anyone had the potential for artistic creation and the faculties to understand it,\footnote{Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, *The New Vision: Fundamentals of Design Painting Sculpture Architecture*, ed. Walter Gropius and L. Moholy-Nagy, rev. and enl. ed., New Bauhaus Books 1 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1938), 15. Moholy-Nagy wrote, “Every healthy man has a deep capacity for bringing to development the creative energies found in his nature, if he is deeply interested in his work.” “If we consider that anyone can achieve expression in any field, even if it is not at first objectively his best outlet, or essential for society, we may infer with still greater certainty that it must be possible for everyone to comprehend works already created in the field.”} would doubtlessly have resonated with amateur photographers.\footnote{Given the lack in São Paulo of an active scene of avant-garde photographers or modernist artists using photography in the 1920s or 1930s, there is little indication that any exchange existed with such figures in Buenos Aires or Mexico at this time. As this history and historiography is still being developed, however, it is a point that deserves more investigation.}
While photography was a part of the avant-garde artistic sphere in nearby Buenos Aires and certainly in Mexico in the early decades of the twentieth century, there were only isolated instances of modernist or avant-garde propositions involving photography before the late 1940s in Brazil. One of the early experimenters was the poet Mário de Andrade (mentioned in the introduction) who is often credited as the first Brazilian modernist photographer because of his experimentation with unusual angles and compositions during his travels throughout Brazil in the 1920s. Through his subscription to the German avant-garde magazine Der Querschnitt, de Andrade had been exposed to the work of photographers such as Eugène Atget, Man Ray, Krull, Berenice Abbott, Renger Patzsch, and other representatives of the German photographic vanguard. De Andrade’s photographic experimentations, although extensive (he made around 700 photographs), reached a limited audience and had limited repercussions on wider Brazilian visual imagery.

Another precocious figure in his use of photography in São Paulo was the poet Jorge de Lima, whose surrealist photo collages more closely reflected the avant-garde applications of photography elsewhere. Between 1930 and 1940, De Lima produced photo collages that conveyed the sort of provocation and uncanniness present in the works of Hannah Höch and John Heartfield. Collected in a 1943 volume titled A pintura

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98 For more on de Andrade’s photography, see Amarildo Carnicel, O fotógrafo Mário de Andrade (Campinas, São Paulo, Brasil: Editora da Unicamp, 1993); Mário de Andrade, Fotógrafo e turista aprendiz. (São Paulo, Brazil: Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros, 1993; Mário de Andrade, CAIXA Cultural apresenta Mário de Andrade: Emôgrafo, fotógrafo, poeta: De 23 março a 05 de maio de 2013 (2012).
100 Espada, “Fotoformas,” 95
101 An exhibition of Jorge de Lima’s collages took place at the Caixa Econômica Federal in Rio de Janeiro, March 16–May 2, 2010. A catalogue was published alongside: A Poesia Em Pânico: Fotomontagens (Poetry in panic: Photo-montages); it was launched alongside a symposium “O Surrealismo na Poética de Jorge de Lima e a Fotografia Moderna no Brasil” (Surrealism in the poetry of Jorge de Lima and in modern Brazilian photography), April 29, 2010. See also Herkenhoff, “Fotografia o automático e o longo processo de modernidade,” 43.
em pânico (Painting in panic), whose title acknowledged the tensions between the mediums of photography and painting, De Lima’s work received notice within avant-garde circles. However, in a way similar to de Andrade’s earlier photographic experiments, De Lima’s efforts had only a limited impact, and do not seem to have influenced the photographic practice of the Bandeirantes or the use of photography by artists in São Paulo outside the Foto Cine Clube. While both poets were highly respected in the literary avant-garde scene, they moved in different circles than the fotoclubistas; the majority of FCCB photographers were, after all, middle- and upper-class liberal professionals with a weekend hobby that took on greater importance through their increased participation in the photo club.

Although they made challenging propositions in the realms of painting and sculpture, modernist artists in São Paulo in the 1920s and ’30s for the most part did not use photography as part of their practice. It would be the FCCB photographers who inaugurated a modern visual vocabulary in photography. Following their early explorations in the late 1940s, photography then became part of the exhibitions program at the modern art museums in Brazil, and, in 1953, in the biennial. Despite their pioneering work, those FCCB photographers with the most original propositions—Geraldo de Barros, German Lorca, and Thomaz Farkas—would abandon the organization by the mid-1950s to continue developing their practice without the limitations imposed by the photo-club.

MoMA’s Artistic Photography Exhibition
The modern propositions by Farkas, Yalenti, de Barros, and Lorca triggered a sense of tension in the Foto Cine Clube between members who remained attached to Pictorialism as the only interpretation of an artistic photography and those who proposed a new way of looking. In 1947 the Museum of Modern Art in New York brought to São Paulo an exhibition that would constitute a turning point; the show caused ripple effects in the practice of local photographers and contributed to the simmering debates within the FCCB. Titled *Artistic Photography*, it took place at the Biblioteca Municipal in central São Paulo, on July 2–18, 1947.\(^{102}\) The presentation was an adaptation of the exhibition *Creative Photography*, organized by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and shown at the museum on March 6–29, 1945; its objective was to demonstrate “the tremendous possibilities of the camera as a medium of creative expression.”\(^ {103}\) It included reproductions of works by representatives of the “Straight Photography” aesthetic such as Paul Strand and Edward Weston, and from documentary photographers, such as Helen Levitt and Berenice Abbott. The name “Artistic Photography,” did not generate a warm reception among those in São Paulo who saw no connection between the realistic and unsentimental approach of those photographers and the traditional *fotoclubista* definition of “artistic” (pictorial) photography that they might have expected.\(^ {104}\)

The Museum of Modern Art had been organizing these exportable shows since 1945; as part of a new initiative to circulate exhibitions without costly fees, these events

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\(^{102}\) Both Fabris, *O desafio de olhar*, and Lenzini, “Noções de moderno no Foto-Cine Clube Bandeirante,” discuss this exhibition.


would serve to broaden the museum’s reach. As the press release announcing this program read,

To satisfy, at least in part, the craving for accurate and understandable information both visual and verbal about various phases of art, the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, is preparing in multiple form a series of small, compact but very complete exhibitions to be sold or circulated throughout the country and even abroad.105

As Heloisa Espada Rodrigues Lima writes, the alleged “craving for accurate and understandable information” was in fact one component in a larger program of U.S. cultural influence. MoMA’s peddling of their exhibitions was in keeping with the “Good Neighbor Policy,” led by the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt had established in August 1940, and which was piloted by Nelson Rockefeller. In the spirit of Pan-Americanism, “good will” missions of American university professors, journalists, artists, scientists, diplomats, and businessmen traveled to Brazil as part of cultural-exchange programs. Exhibitions and art-related exchanges, going both to and from Latin America, were an important part of the program, and included, for instance, the invitation of the Brazilian art critic Sérgio Milliet to spend three months in the U.S. as the program’s guest.106 Perhaps not coincidentally, Sérgio Milliet was director of the Municipal Library in 1947 when it hosted the MoMA show.

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105 “Creative Photography”; Elodie Courter, who had directed the Museum’s Department of Circulating Exhibitions since 1933, explains this new type of exhibition as the direct response to a demand. Miss Courter says: “The development of the new technique of multiple exhibitions came about as the result of an effort to supply the ever-increasing demand from many parts of the country for small, comprehensive exhibitions which could be transported easily and inexpensively. . . . We have accomplished this in the case of our Creative Photography exhibition which will be shown Wednesday for the first time anywhere. This 12-panel exhibition sells for only $25.00 and in this way examples of work by some of the finest photographers in the world will be available to the smallest camera club. Technically the process retains more than any other method of mechanical reproduction in the quality of the original photographic print.”

The exhibition was also sponsored by the Cultural Union Brazil–United States, in partnership with the FCCB and the photography magazine Íris Revista Brasileira de Foto e Cinematografia. The first commercial photography magazine launched in São Paulo independently from any photo-clubs, Íris had begun publication in January of 1947 with the goal of being objective, contributing to the technical and artistic knowledge of its readers, and publishing articles by local and foreign specialists. The magazine’s sixth issue reproduced the MoMA exhibition’s didactic text and photographic images in a volume that also contained translated articles from Popular Photography. The magazine did not otherwise include any commentary or analysis of the works on display, nor any reflections on their relation to photographic practice in Brazil. Instead, this installment of Íris was focused on the United States and on American photography. A photograph of the Statue of Liberty appeared on the cover, and articles inside referred positively to the work of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and to the ideology of Pan-Americanism, which is based on the principle that all American nations are united by common cultural ideals and interests. One of these texts specifically praised the cultural propaganda the U.S. government disseminated to promote U.S. photography and film. In her review of the issue of Íris, Rodrigues Lima concludes that, “the articles . . . made clear that the United States was the example to follow for Brazil.”

108 Íris 1, no. 6 (1947)
110 Espada Rodrigues Lima, “Panamericanismo e Straight Photography.”
111 Ibid.
In its promotion of U.S. photographic values—most certainly the Straight Photography aesthetic espoused by Paul Strand, Ansel Adams, and Edward Weston—the exhibition’s press release also delineated its didactic approach and principles:

In terms understandable to the amateur, this 12-panel exhibition demonstrates the tremendous possibilities of the camera as a medium of creative expression. Mounted on colored panels, more than two dozen major photographs by Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Helen Levitt, Berenice Abbott, Weegee, Henri Cartier-Bresson and other outstanding American and European photographers, are reproduced by an extraordinarily accurate process. A group of smaller photographs made particularly for the exhibition by Andreas Feininger, noted photographer who acted as advisor, illustrates certain technical points. The panels also include text and explanatory diagrams under the following headings:

The photographer is an artist
He works with a mechanical tool
His medium is a scale of values
He selects the subject
He composes with his camera
He selects the moment
The camera records infinite detail
The camera creates its own perspective
The camera extends or compresses space
The camera stops or prolongs motion
The camera translates color into black-and-white. 112

By drafting such a list, the exhibition placed emphasis on values and ideas that could be interpreted as a bridge between Pictorialist and modernist image-makers. The idea of the photographer as an artist who selects her subject and moment was not extraneous to Pictorialism, neither was the idea that the camera is the tool by which one can manipulate space and time. Nonetheless, the focus on the camera as a machine inserted a decidedly unromantic perspective into the Pictorialist conception of the medium. The idea that the camera could create its own perspective also ran contrary to the personal vision that Pictorialists so cherished as a key aspect of the medium. By inserting these ideas into the conversation, the MoMA exhibition proposed to its international audience a two-fold way

112 “Creative Photography.”
to consider photographic practice: from the point of view of the photographer and from the point of view of the camera, emphasizing their separate and defined roles.

Anna Teresa Fabris’s analysis of the *Artistic Photography* exhibition supports this bifurcated view of photographic practice, noting that the exhibition recast photography as the outcome of “the operator” (the photographer) and “the instrument” (the camera), shifting attention from photography as an interpretive medium to a documentary one, and from the camera as a translator of a romantic vision to a device for exact recording and reproduction (which in turn echoed the concept of the medium that Pictorialists had rejected in the first place). The sharper look of modernist and Straight Photography clashed with Pictorialism’s soft contours; so did the idea of the photographer as maker of images to “taker” of pictures, or framer of the world.

However, these new ideas resonated with the museum’s intentions and its vision of the medium, and signals an early instance in which the history of MoMA intersected with the history of photography in São Paulo. Despite the FCCB’s cosponsorship of the exhibition, the one review published within its pages was critical of the didactic posterboard support, which it found unsuitable for the presentation of supposedly artistic objects. The review also disparaged the content and technical, compositional aspects of photographs by Berenice Abbott, Wayne Miller, and Henri Cartier-Bresson, asking:

What artistic values could Berenice Abbott’s “Hardware Store” [*Hardware Store, 316-318 Bowery, Manhattan, January 26, 1938*] [Fig. 7] have, for example, a heap of bagatelles, in a flat photograph with frontal lighting, without any sense of depth, or the banal blatancy of squalid and hungry . . . Neapolitan children during the war, by Wayne Miller, or, even, “Children jumping among ruins” [*Seville, Spain, 1933*] [Fig. 8], by Henri Cartier, and others?

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113 Fabris, *O desafio de olhar*, 308.
114 Today, the museum’s efforts of broadening the history of modernity is driving certain collecting initiatives, such as the acquisition of Gertrudes Altschul’s prints.
115 Compur, “A exposição fotografias artísticas” (The exhibition “Artistic photography”), *FCCB-Boletim*
In certain ways, the reviewer’s comments don’t surprise: he had a valid point in commenting that poster reproductions achieved a weaker effect than original photographs would have, particularly in an environment that placed such value on the fine-art print. Paulista photographers were also not seeing this style of photography for the first time: they had been exposed to the documentary-style photographs of *O Cruzeiro* and *S. Paulo*; they just didn’t consider it fine art. (It was too early for the FCCB to view photography that reflected social concerns as having artistic merit; this would begin to change a decade later.) In categorically rejecting the notion that Abbott, Miller, or Cartier-Bresson’s photographs could have any artistic value, even though put forth by an institution as esteemed as MoMA, the reviewer confirmed the degree to which the FCCB remained attached to its ideas about Pictorialism as late as 1947.

Concurrently, FCCB leaders continued to promote Pictorialism in forums beyond the club’s quarters. While the *Artistic Photography* exhibition was on view, founding member Valêncio de Barros and photographer Jacob Polacow each gave a general-audience lecture at the municipal library. In his talk, Polacow described artistic photography as evoking emotional responses, whether ecstatic or disquieting, and he emphasized the importance of feelings. He championed the salon as a primordial venue for exhibiting photography, undercutting the presentation of the MoMA exhibition at the library. While Polacow acknowledged photographs that proposed more modern points of

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2, no. 15 (1947), quoted in Fabris, 310–11. Original text: “que valor artístico poderá ter por exemplo ‘Loja de Ferragens’ de Berenice Abbott, um amontoado de quinquilharias, numa fotografia com luz de frente, chata, sem relevo ou aquele flagrante banal de esquálidas e esfomeadas crianças napolitanas durante a guerra, de Wayne Miller, ou ainda, ‘Crianças brincando entre ruínas’ de Henri Cartier, e outras mais?”
view, such as José Yalenti’s *Paralelas e diagonais* (Parallels and diagonals) (1945), he did so only in terms relative to painting, referring for instance to Yalenti’s use of chiaroscuro.

Valêncio de Barros, in his presentation, made a distinction between artistic, documentary, and anecdotal photography, differentiating between the kinds of photographs used to illustrate magazines or albums (likely nodding to the documentary and photojournalism-oriented MoMA exhibition) and the artistic practice fostered, in constrast, by the FCCB. His presentation, while more technical than Polacow’s, also remained firmly rooted in the discussion of Pictorialism. The fact that their presentations were both transcribed and published across three issues of the *Foto Cine Boletim* in 1947 underscores the importance of their message to the club’s membership. The conceptual dissonance of having photographs by Strand, Lange, and Weston displayed at the library versus the exalting of Pictorialism within the same space, in 1947, only underscores the FCCB’s anachronistic aesthetic inclinations.

Although some FCCB members never completely shifted away from Pictorialism, for others there was, starting in 1949, a more deliberate turn towards a clean, sharp, abstracted aesthetic. That same year, as the FCCB celebrated its ten-year anniversary, its directors recognized that their Pictorialist style would become irrelevant.

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118 Ibid., 53–55.
if they continued to recycle the same visual and technical tropes.\footnote{This would, tellingly, happen with the modernist aesthetic as well, as the style became repetitive and unoriginal towards the end of the 1950s and resulted in the “dissolution of the modern,” as Costa and Rodrigues termed it. See ibid.} A note in the \textit{Foto Cine Boletim} acknowledged:

\begin{quote}
Now, we face a harder task. It is a new stage that begins. Facing an otherwise disintegrating stagnation, it is no longer admissible to continue with an endless repetition of the old photographic themes, following the same treatments. We must direct our steps towards searches and research, to tear open new perspectives for photographic art, before our objectives and frames decay.\footnote{Ibid., 44: “10 anos…” \textit{Foto Cine Boletim}, no. 36 (April 1949), 4–5. Original text: “Agora cabe-lhe uma tarefa mais árdua. É uma outra etapa que se inicia. Sob pena de assistirmos a uma estagnação desintegradora, não é mais admissível prosseguirmos numa repetição interminável dos velhos temas fotográficos, submetidos aos mesmos tratamentos. Devemos enveredar no terreno das busca e pesquisas, rasgando novas perspectivas para a arte fotográfica, antes que o bolor tome conta de nossas objetivas e dos nossos quadros.”}
\end{quote}

By framing the stakes of an aesthetic shift as a question of survival for the Foto Cine Clube, Salvatore injected particular urgency into the FCCB’s modernist project.

\textbf{A Slow Transition}

Despite Salvatore’s rallying cry, the wider Foto Cine Club membership was slow to embrace a modern style. While Pictorialist \textit{bandeirantes} continued to photograph the types of romantic landscapes and seascapes that were traditional within the genre, they also began to create more modern compositions such as still lifes of everyday objects like coffee cups, without necessarily giving up the soft focus of Pictorialism. As these experiments became more common, the attachment to the constraining and onerous developing processes integral to Pictorialism slowly eroded, and photographers began to experiment with a “reapproximation to nature” that allowed the development of a new
visual sensibility that was “disengaged from a purely technical question.”¹²³

Underscoring the gradual nature of the shift, Costa and Rodrigues emphasize that the construction of a modern aesthetic in Brazilian photography was accomplished by the “sum of innumerable individual research initiatives with explicit direction and often distant from each other in time, but that in the long-term allow us to identify the installment of a ‘new looking,’ a clear rupture with academic practice.”¹²⁴

A useful paradigm to consider the ways in which photographers in Brazil reinterpreted the modernist aesthetics of its European forebears and, to some extent, the Straight Photography principles of its U.S. neighbors, is the idea of antropofagia, proposed by poet Oswald de Andrade in his famous 1928 manifesto. As a metaphor for the way Brazilian artists absorbed European ideas and adapted them to their own environment, the concept of antropofagia was de Andrade’s way of coming to terms with the “discovery” of Brazil and of articulating a cultural and literary position that combined the history of European conquest and its ongoing influence on Brazilian culture and arts. Inspired by a Tupí indigenous group known for cannibalism, de Andrade conceived of a cannibal figure that “rather than curse the colonists, eats them up, thus taking over the enemies’ attributes to break down the barriers of their otherness.”¹²⁵ In drawing on international sources and simultaneously responding to local social and political realities, it was an imperative for artists and critics to make international trends “Brazilian,” to claim them for Brazil, and cope with cultural imperialism by either refuting or absorbing them. Used originally in literary criticism, the concept has been widely applied to modern

¹²³ Costa and Rodrigues, A fotografia moderna no Brasil, 48. Original: “Negar a hegemonia da técnica permitiu ao fotografo uma reaproximação da natureza e com isso o experimentalismo foi deslocado da questão puramente técnica para a construção de uma nova sensibilidade.”
¹²⁴ Ibid., 44.
Brazilian painting, describing the ways in which local artists looked to European movements such as Futurism and “tropicalized” them.

The idea of antropofagia may also apply to the way photographers in Brazil absorbed the principles of the New Vision and Straight Photography aesthetic to interpret their surroundings. Photographers grappled with a situation similar to that of concrete painters in Brazil. Local painters were inspired by the work of European modernists ranging from Cubists to De Stijl, and especially by the Swiss artist Max Bill, but also registered in their work responses that were specific to São Paulo, particularly the changing architectural landscape and rapid industrialization of the city. Similarly, Brazilian modernist photographers responded, as their European counterparts had in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, to the shifting environment around them, which included the consolidation of a national identity rooted in industrial development, cosmopolitanism, and a modernity based on modernist architecture, which itself embodied urban progress and optimism. Devoid of the ornamentation that characterized previous architectural styles, the designs of pioneering modernist architects proposed clean lines, sinuous curves, and bold visual elements that photographers captured in their photographs. Farkas’s photograph *Side Facade of the Ministry of Education and Heath, Rio de Janeiro* (1945) perfectly conveys these forces, grasping the new government building’s modernist aesthetic with a corresponding new photographic approach. As will be further explored in Chapter 2, Gertrudes Altschul also made photographs of the city that reflect modernist architecture; however, her interpretations of architecture were imbued with a subjective outlook that addressed disquieting aspects of the shifting urban landscape.
Chapter 2

Altschul, within and beyond the Escola Paulista

Upon joining the Foto Cine Club Bandeirantes in 1952, Gertrudes Altschul unwittingly also became a part of the *Escola Paulista*, the group of modernist photographers within the FCCB.\(^{126}\) During the 1950s, she and her peers focused on sharp lines, high contrast, unusual angles from above or below, and views that ventured towards abstraction—an unambiguous turn from Pictorialism. This relatively new emphasis on vision as opposed to artifice and on the concept of a photographic “eye” became so relevant in FCCB circles in the 1950s that the category of “photographic vision” was added to the traditional values of “composition” and “technique” as a criterion in contests.\(^{127}\) Whereas Pictorialists had embraced perspective, modernist photographers found conflict with this device for creating a sense of depth in their images. Not unlike painters, who embraced

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\(^{126}\) The term *Escola Paulista* was coined by critics writing for specialized magazines at the time, to describe the modern production of the FCCB. Costa and Rodrigues reprised the term to denote a subgroup of modernist photographers in the FCCB. In addition to Altschul, its main representatives were: Eduardo Salvatore, Marcel Giró, Roberto Yoshida, Ademar Manarini, Gaspar Gasparian, Ivo Ferreira da Silva, and João Bizarro Nave Filho. Costa and Rodrigues’s criteria for identifying these main representatives was their prolonged participation in the club and their production of a substantial body of work. Costa further notes that the Escola Paulista also included other photographers, whose work remains to be studied in greater depth: Agostinho C. Silva, Aldo Souza Lima, Alfi Trovato, André Carneiro, Camilo Joan, Eduardo Ayrosa, Eduardo Enfelt, Emil Issa, Francisco Albuquerque, Fredi Kleeman, Guilherme Malfatti, Herros Cappelo, Jacob Polacow, Jean Lecocq, João Minharro, José Louzada Camargo, José Mauro Pontes, José Reis Filho, Jorge Radó, Júlio Agostinelli, Kazuo Kawahara, Ludovico Mungioli, Mamede F. da Costa, Mário Fiori, Masatoki Otsuka, M. Laert Dias, Nélsom Doval, Nélsom Kojanski, Nélsom Pederline, Newton Chaves, Paulo Suzuki Hide, Raul Chamma, Renato Francesconi, Sérgio Trevelin, and Willian Brigatto. In: Costa, Helouise, and Renato Rodrigues, *A fotografia moderna no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1995), 59.

modernity by renouncing perspective and making work that underscored the flatness of the canvas, photographers moved towards propositions that emphasized the two-dimensional quality of their paper support.\textsuperscript{128}

In \textit{A fotografia moderna no Brasil}, Helouïse Costa and Renato Rodrigues identify Thomaz Farkas, German Lorca, Geraldo de Barros, and José Yalenti as \textit{Pioneros} (Pioneers) within the FCCB, acknowledging the photographers’ innovations in photographic style and subject matter. All four of them would have a profound effect on the development of modernist photography in São Paulo; as such they all have a place in the history of the medium in Brazil. In different ways, their work also had an influence on the work of Gertrudes Altschul. Yalenti was among the founders of the FCCB and an early adherent to Pictorialism. In the mid-1940s, however, he began to question the use of the camera to obtain painterly results and experimented with new ways to use photography’s unique properties to produce images with deep chiaroscuro that effectively defamiliarized urban environments (Fig. 9). Farkas, who joined the club in 1945, was one of its youngest members and had no attachment to or training in Pictorialism. He started out by making photographs focused on form, directing his lens towards textures, patterns, and rhythm.\textsuperscript{129} Farkas’s particular emphasis on capturing movement led him to become part of a Surrealist group that used photography as a means for depicting “psychological wanderings.”\textsuperscript{130} This inclination, which surfaces in photographs such as \textit{Movimento de praia} (Beach movement) (n.d.) (Fig. 10), and in urban vistas such as \textit{Apartamentos} (Apartments) (ca. 1945) (Fig. 11), likely influenced Altschul, whose own city landscapes

\textsuperscript{128} Costa and Rodrigues, \textit{A fotografia moderna no Brasil}, 91.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{130} Revista \textit{Iris} quoted in ibid., 50.
were loaded with great psychological weight.\textsuperscript{131} Although it appeared less frequently among her pictures, capturing movement was also a component of her photographic experiments. Lorca, for his part, focused on seemingly uneventful, quotidian scenes with an eye towards defamiliarizing and disquieting effects, and also ventured into Surrealist territory.\textsuperscript{132} His photographs like \textit{Cadeira com guarda-chuvas} (Chair with umbrella) (1951) (Fig. 12) or \textit{Malandragem} (Devious lifestyle) (1949) (Fig. 13) display, to a powerful effect, the connections he crafted between seemingly unrelated objects. Geraldo de Barros, who joined the club in 1949, was arguably the most experimental of the Pioneers, questioning the medium through double exposures, photograms, and pictures of inscribed and scratched surfaces. Building on an existing artistic practice, de Barros experimented most directly with abstraction and, following his \textit{Fotoformas} show at MASP in 1950, abandoned photography and turned to painting. In 1952, he was part of the groundbreaking inaugural exhibition of the Grupo Ruptura at the Sao Paulo Museum of Modern Art.\textsuperscript{133} Nevertheless, de Barros remained connected to the Foto Clube and was one of the figures responsible for the group’s inclusion in the second São Paulo Biennial in 1953. The early FCCB photographs of de Barros, Farkas, Lorca, and Yalenti had an important influence on the Foto Cine Club’s subsequent generation. Connections also exist between their distinctive and bold visual propositions and Altschul’s practice in particular, suggesting that their work was influential on her artistic investigations.

\textsuperscript{131} This photograph is also titled \textit{Fachada interior do Edifício São Borja}, ca. 1945. In Osbel Suárez, María Amalia García, Erica Witschey, and Fundación Juan March, \textit{Cold America: Geometric Abstraction in Latin America (1934–1973)} (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2011) this photograph appears captioned as part of a series of “Recortes” (cut-outs), suggesting it is a montage.

\textsuperscript{132} Costa and Rodrigues, \textit{A fotografia moderna no Brasil}, 53.

\textsuperscript{133} Espada Rodrigues Lima, “Fotoformas,” 9.
Costa and Rodrigues qualify the Pioneers’ aesthetic as independent of an explicitly modernist intent, arguing instead that they were all young photographers developing their personal visions without the burden of a background in Pictorialism. This point is debatable given the historical antecedents of modernist photography in Europe and the U.S. and knowledge about them in São Paulo, based on the studied circulation of avant-garde books as well as the 1947 documentary photography exhibition analyzed in Chapter 1. What is clear is that the *Escola Paulista* built on the Pioneers’ achievements and developed, even at times imitated, their distinctive and modernist vision. While each of the photographers in the Pioneer group had a unique approach, the *Escola Paulista* presented a somewhat more unified set of characteristics: a break from classical rules of composition; frequent use of radical chiaroscuro; emphasis on strong lines as compositional elements; abstract forms; and a tendency toward geometric motifs. Their photographic practice occupied a tense but productive space between perspective and non-perspective, figuration and abstraction, and within newly conceived notions of what subjects were worth photographing, marking a shift in focus from the interest in allegory and preciousness that had defined Pictorialism to the details of the everyday.

Gertrudes Altschul created a robust body of works that contributed to the modernist style of the *Escola Paulista*. She responded through her photographs to forms

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135 Costa and Rodrigues identified a third group, which they called “the dissolution of the modern experience.” It is not included in the main discussion as it feels somewhat as an outlier since the characteristics of this phase are less defined. This third category seems to serve more as a marker that the “high modernist moment” in photography had come to an end in 1957 with the exhaustion of the graphic visual language and with photographers’ absorption of other tendencies of photography, especially through photojournalism. See ibid., 73–81.
136 Ibid., 58–59. The authors of this volume also emphasize that a “defense of eclecticism” in the Foto Cine Clube in the early 1950s accommodated the modernist photographs of the Escola Paulista but also a wide range of other aesthetic propositions, many of which were of terrible quality (ibid, 68).
in the landscape around her, sought out geometry by focusing on lines and the play of shadows, and experimented in the darkroom by layering negatives to create new compositions. Apart from being one of the few women in the FCCB, Altschul distinguished herself by using the clean lines of the new visual language to express personal concerns and her reactions to life in a growing, and at times overwhelming, metropolis. While working within the aesthetic parameters appreciated and encouraged by the club environment, she found subtle ways to communicate uncertainty and disorientation despite the fact that the modernist photographic language was structurally oriented towards celebrating industrialization and progress. This ability to transmit disquiet within formally modernist photographs is one of the salient characteristics of Altschul’s work: Her unique point of view as an immigrant and woman comes strongly to the fore and elucidates connections with the tendencies of the so-called subjective photography movement.

**Assessing Gertrudes Altschul’s Work**

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of photographic prints that Altschul made between 1952 and 1962, the period when she was a member of the FCCB, but it is possible to make an educated estimate based on available materials. FCCB prints or photographs, in this case, refer to the photographs that Altschul printed herself or had

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137 Two women stand out within the FCCB in this period, Dulce Carneiro and Barbara Mors. Their occasional inclusion in issues of the Boletim suggests that they were active members; however, their photographic work has heretofore not been studied or celebrated. They were also not included in Costa and Rodrigues’s wider list of Escola Paulista photographers. While they were part of the FCCB–MASP exhibition in 2015, they were represented with one print (Mors) and three (Carneiro), paling in comparison to Altschul’s twelve.
printed at the time,\textsuperscript{138} with the intention of submitting them to the club’s regular contests and of stocking the club’s drawers, from which pictures were taken for submission to salons worldwide.\textsuperscript{139} The FCCB encouraged members to keep those repositories well stocked to ensure maximum visibility in other photo clubs and international salons. Size is a key factor in identifying Altschul’s photographs as pertaining to her FCCB work. The FCCB prints needed to roughly correspond to the dimensions specified by the club (24 cm minimum / 50 cm maximum) so that they would be salon-eligible.\textsuperscript{140} These prints varied between glossy and matte, although matte was preferred by some as the glossy aesthetic was often associated with commercial photography.\textsuperscript{141} Every print that had been accepted for a salon was marked on its verso with a stamp or label. Some of the club’s well circulated photographs, such as Altschul’s \textit{Folha morta} (Dead leaf) (Figs. 14, 15) and German Lorca’s \textit{Chuva na janela} (Rain in the window) (1950) (Fig. 16), accrued so many stamps and seals that the back of each print was completely covered. This system of sending out prints can be traced through records in the FCCB archive titled “Relações de fotografias enviadas” (Listing of photographs sent). Over two hundred typed “Relações” sheets encompass the years 1956 to 1962 and list the photographs that were sent out (Fig. 17). Organized alphabetically by each photographer’s last name with

\textsuperscript{138} Many photographers in the FCCB had prints prepared by a man named Otto. Otto worked at Fotóptica but eventually was in such high demand that he struck out on his own. Many in the FCCB used Otto’s printing services. Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 17 and 28, 2016.

\textsuperscript{139} In 1954, on occasion of an exhibition of José Yalenti’s work, Eduardo Salvatore, FCCB president, wrote in the \textit{Foto Cine Boletim} 8, no. 89 (May 1954), that fifteen years earlier 13 x 18 cm and 18 x 24 cm were normal sizes for prints and that 30 x 40 cm print would have been scandalous, not a photograph but a billboard. See: Helouise Costa, “O Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante no Museu de Arte de São Paulo,” in \textit{MASP- FCCB: Coleção Museu de Arte de São Paulo Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante} (São Paulo: MASP, 2016), 19.

\textsuperscript{140} The most widely available, large photographic paper was 30 x 40 cm, and most FCCB photographers’ work did not exceed these dimensions. An exception to this rule is José Yalenti, who was known to print up to 50 cm. Skype conversation with Isabel Amado, December 5, 2016.

\textsuperscript{141} The preference for matte prints was expressed by Ernst Altschul during an interview at his residence, São Paulo, February 23, 2017.
the titles of the photographs listed underneath, the pictures that were accepted would be labeled with a handwritten “A” for “aceitado” (admitted); most documents also included handwritten notes detailing the total number of prints that were accepted and the date when the photographs were returned to the FCCB following the exhibition. Based on these “Relações” documents, in addition to Altschul’s work included in recent exhibitions, as well as in salons during the 1950s, or reproduced in the *Foto Cine Boletim*, an estimate places her FCCB work at fifty to sixty prints.\(^{142}\)

The *Foto Cine Boletim* and the São Paulo salon catalogues serve as guides to Altschul’s participation in the club through their reproductions of her photographs; between 1952 and 1962, her photographs were included five times in the *Foto Cine Boletim*. The early appearances were striking, especially the first, in 1952, in which her elegant photograph of a leaf, *Filigrana* (Filigree) (Fig. 18), was shown opposite a picture by fellow FCCB photographer Ademar Manarini (Fig. 19).\(^{143}\) This photograph foreshadowed Altschul’s ongoing preoccupation with the leaf motif, as well as the frequent parallels drawn between her work and Manarini’s. The second publication was the most important, and consisted in the inclusion of her photograph *Linhas e tons*\(^{144}\) on

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\(^{142}\) This estimate is based on review of exhibitions and books, as well as the archival sources preserved at the FCCB. However, given the number of contact prints in the binders kept by her son Ernst, which she marked with lines in pencil or pen to indicate which portion of the image should appear in the final print, there could be more prints, either with the family or dispersed in collections (as with the surprising discovery that CIFO has one), but it’s difficult to make an educated guess beyond the works for which there is a concrete reference in the form of an image or title. The difficulty of dating her photographs remains, since titled were published in the *Foto Cine Boletim* and in salon catalogues without date. Only when I’ve seen a print and it included a label with a date in the back is there certainty as to the date. Otherwise, the earliest appearance guides the dating of her images in this study. For the moment, MoMA has labeled all ten of their Altschul acquisitions at “ca. 1950” even though Altschul didn’t join the FCCB until 1952, a discrepancy yet to be resolved.

\(^{143}\) *Foto Cine Boletim* 7, no. 81 (1953): 22. The photograph is listed as *Filigrana* here and in other places; a print of *Filigrana* is part of MoMA’s acquisition, however it is listed as *Untitled* in MoMA’s records.

\(^{144}\) It was referred to as *Linhas* in the *Foto-Cine Boletim*; however, the label on the back of the vintage print, now in MoMA’s collection, says *Linhas e tons*.
the cover of the Boletim’s issue 84 in 1953 (Fig. 20). A bold and beautiful composition, it reflected a confounding urban landscape that spoke to Altschul’s sustained interest in the growing city. Her last feature, in 1962, echoed her first: the photograph Filigrana was reproduced again, this time alongside her obituary, where it was praised as “one of her first successful works.” It was indeed well received: according to archival documents, from 1956–1962, it was submitted to salons eighteen times and accepted on eight occasions. Filigrana was also featured in Altschul’s first appearance in the Salão Internacional de Arte Fotográfica de São Paulo (International Salon of Photographic Art of São Paulo), alongside three of her other photographs in 1953, its twelfth edition. (A rare photograph of Altschul shows her posing with two of the four photographs included in this salon, Folha morta and Vasos e plantas [Fig. 21]). Salon catalogues published between 1953 and 1957 similarly attest to Altschul’s active participation. After 1957, as her practice wound down, her work was absent from the local salons but still circulated in exhibitions abroad, likely due to the fact that São Paulo

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145  Foto Cine Boletim 7, no. 84 (1953).
146  Other features in the FCB included her graphically striking photograph Composição (Fig. 9), reproduced on interior pages in the Foto Cine Boletim 9, no. 98 (January–April 1956): 12. Not long thereafter, a close-up of the veins of a leaf, Detras da cortinha (Fig. 10) was in Foto Cine Boletim 9, no. 101, (August–November 1956): 17.
147  Foto Cine Boletim 11, no. 131 (1962).
150  Four photographs by Altschul were included in each of the following salons: the 12th edition (1953), the 13th edition (1954), the 14th edition (1955), and the 16th edition (1957); the 15th edition (1956) included three. None of the subsequent salons and corresponding São Paulo salon catalogues during her lifetime— the 17th Salon in 1958, the 18th Salon in 1959, the 19th Salon in 1960, the 20th in 1961, and the 21st Salon in October 1962—included any of her works. Given her strong participation in the previous salons, this suggests that she did not submit her work for consideration altogether, rather than a sharp and sudden decrease in the quality of her work. This was confirmed by her son, as 1957–58 corresponds to the years when Altschul fell ill to bone cancer, which eventually caused her death.
salons demanded new work, whereas older prints could be “recycled” for salons and exhibitions elsewhere.\(^\text{151}\)

**Altschul’s Photographs of Buildings**

Altschul’s focus on the city reveals a thematic interest that was shared by members of the *Escola Paulista* and extended beyond the Foto Cine Clube, in great part due to the expansion of modernist architecture.\(^\text{152}\) In contrast to her colleagues, however, Altschul went further with her architecture photography: she played with the codes of vision, producing images that at first appear to be straight photographs, but after careful observation are revealed as montages. While others represented the geometry of the city and its buildings through straight photography, Altschul skillfully infused her works with a subjective vision through manipulation, offering a complex and nuanced point of view with connotative meanings.

Altschul’s two photographs of the urban environment—*Linhas e tons* (Lines and tones) (ca. 1950) (Fig. 22)\(^\text{153}\) and *Arquitetura* (Architecture) (1957) (Fig. 3)\(^\text{154}\)—are among her most complex and important. In addition to appearing formally and

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151 The “Relações” documents in the FCCB archive detail which works were mailed to salons abroad and indicate that Altschul’s prints were included almost every time the FCCB sent submissions to other clubs until 1962 (the latest accessible records). Only seven of the 195 documents reviewed did not include works by Altschul. Overall, her participation in salons outside of São Paulo can be gleaned from the “Relações” documents where her images were labeled with an “A”—for “aceitado” (admitted); from the listings in the back of the *Foto-Cine Boletim*, where its editors carefully kept track of FCCB members’ participation in international salons; and from the stamps on the back of her prints.

152 With the rise of modernist architecture came also the need and desire to photograph it. (See footnote 157.) Within the FCCB, the covers of the *Foto Cine Boletim* reflect the popularity of the architectural focus: out of fifty issues studied (1952–1962), ten covers reflected urban environments and buildings. The number grows to thirteen if covers alluding to transportation and industry are included. In contrast, there were seven covers (out of fifty) that featured more nostalgic photographs of towns or the rural countryside.

153 This photograph is among the ten prints that MoMA acquired in early 2016. In MoMA’s records it is listed as “c. 1950” but given Altschul’s entry into the FCCB in 1952 and the publication of this photograph that same year, 1952 seems a more accurate date.

154 This print is part of the FCCB collection given to MASP that was featured in the exhibition FCCB no MASP. It is reproduced in the accompanying book.
compositionally seamless, both photographs express Altschul’s anxieties about the upward growth of São Paulo and her feelings of urban angst, channeled through the use of photomontage and hyperrealism. At first, *Linhas e Tons* appears as a straightforward image, but after protracted observation its subtle but disorienting aspects reveal themselves. The bottom left corner of the photograph features a building with a neat grid of windows that covers one of its façade and three short, skinny antennas that project from its top. Protruding from the left side of this building is a light, triangular shape that lays flush against the left edge of the photograph. It is unclear if this shape depicts an actual wall or building, or if it was added as part of a montage in the darkroom. Another ambiguous shape snakes through the center of the composition. A sinuous line of two rows of mosaics stretches along the façade, from the top to the bottom of the “building” and the photograph. The mosaic edge contains what appears to be the ceiling of a structure supported by two columns or the floor; but it is difficult to precisely interpret the structure or decode the photographer’s vantage point. This loss of bearing is seductive yet confounding; the gentle, S-shaped mosaic line creates a curtain-like effect and proposes the surprising possibility that we may be looking up and down simultaneously. It is an uncanny, elegant composition that frames the elongated strip of sky running up the center of the composition and hovering above the building.

The second urban photograph, *Arquitetura* (1957) (Fig. 3), reveals a comparable sense of disorientation, if darker than *Linhas e tons*. It shows three buildings, in different shades of light gray, that reach up toward a black sky. At first glance, this photograph also seems to present an unassembled view, one that the photographer may have experienced herself, looking up in mid-1950s São Paulo. The buildings look new and
sharp with their straight edges, in keeping with the aesthetics of the modernist architecture typical of the city. Upon closer inspection, though, the angles created by the buildings’ walls and rooftops fail to cohere into a realistic image, and it becomes apparent that Altschul has used photomontage to achieve an unnerving effect: the buildings appear to lean into each other at impossible angles, with the outer border of the volume on the right side almost touching the building in the left corner. The empty windows and balconies of these ominous, impersonal, concrete giants show no trace of human life or habitation. The structures stand at perilous angles, menacingly crowded against the backdrop of a pitch-black sky, leaving only a hollow, dark triangle of open space.

With this image, Altschul did not intend to obscure the referent as occurs in some of her peers’ photographs; her referent—three buildings—is clear. In preserving the tangible object, she subverted other FCCB photographers’ tendency to deconstruct references to the scene they photographed. Instead, Altschul used photomontage to achieve a hyperreal effect, “to reinforce the realism of the photograph appealing to the sense of anguish that we experience when we live through the disorderly growth of our urban centers.” As with Linhas e tons, in Arquitetura the artist demonstrates her ability to convey a strong psychological effect within a seemingly simple architectural shot, displaying an economy of means and commenting, despite the lack of geographical specificity, on a quintessentially urban type of angst.

Arquitetura closely resembles Thomaz Farkas’s Apartamentos, briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter. Invoking his composition, in which the buildings also lean into 155

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155 Costa and Rodrigues, A fotografia moderna no Brasil, 66. Original text: “A artista utiliza a fotomontagem justamente para reforçar o realismo da fotografia, apelando para a sensação de angústia que temos ao vivenciar o desordenado crescimento dos nossos centros urbanos.”
each other, Altschul may have channeled some of Farkas’s Surrealist experimentations. Overall, her sly manipulations of recognizable architectural forms and highlighting of negative space convey her ability to use photography, the documentary medium par excellence, to create a defamiliarized, disorienting view. In both of Altschul’s architectural photographs discussed above, the idea of progress and growth is tainted by menacing undertones. The mood presented in these photographs is one of disorientation and loneliness that is underscored by the absence of people—the only nod to habitation is a half-lifted blind in Linhas’s diminutive building. Altschul seemed aware in both compositions of the negative space drawn by the sky, never expansive but rather enclosing.

*Escola Paulista* photographers and Altschul frequently portrayed architecture with a defamiliarizing effect. But Altschul’s tendency to not include human figures in her architectural views and her way of suggesting absence in the buildings she photographed, combined with the uncanny feeling her subtle montages evoke, reveal greater subjectivity than works by her male peers. In contrast with Altschul’s work, Nelson Kojranski and Eduardo Salvatore’s photographs of buildings and the urban environment include human figures, either to assert the primacy of man within the urban jungle or convey a sense of scale. For example, in *Composição com figura* (1955) (Fig. 23), Kojranski balances what looks like modernist or brutalist architecture with the figure of a man standing in its midst. This figure looks out into the distance, representing an

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156 Altschul made a few other upwards-looking photographs that appear in her contact sheets (Figs. 25, 26) but no known prints were made from those negatives. Perhaps they did not convey sufficient depth and layers to be printed, but they underscore her desire to look up and consider the towering city around her.

157 No photographs of architectural views made by female photographers were among the reviewed issues of *Boletim* nor in the FCCB catalogue published by MASP.
allegorical man rather than a portrait of an individual. The human figure at the center of the composition competes spatially with the architectural forms, and his position suggests that he may be surveying the scene with a sense of ownership or control. In contrast to Altschul’s photograph, here a human figure is visible and standing at the margin, rather than engulfed by the experience of the growing city; it does not overwhelm him. In contrast to Arquitetura, in which a viewer might feel threatened by the buildings, Kojranski’s Composição com figura presents a radically different perspective. Salvatore’s Visão Paulista (São Paulo view) (Fig. 26), published on the cover of the Boletim in 1953–54, shows the broad-shouldered silhouette of a man looking down from a building onto the city; similar to the work by Kojranski, Salvatore’s photograph sets up a distinct tension between person and environment. In this image, the male protagonist observes the urban sprawl from a safe distance. Here the city is not a menace; it is a distant, shining beacon. The man in Salvatore’s photograph comes across as a representation of the men making the decisions that led to industrial development and urban growth; it is difficult to imagine such a photograph with a larger-than-life female figure dominating a growing urban landscape. A point in common with Altschul’s work is the male artists’ use of new point of view: Kojansky’s offers neither context nor perspective, while Salvatore frames the man in such a way that he seems as large as the architectural photographs made within the FCCB recall Lucien Hervé’s sharp-angled and deeply contrasted photographs of Le Corbusier’s buildings in the 1940s and 1950s, suggesting a common photographic aesthetic for photographing modernist architecture at this time. Outside of the FCCB, too, several photographers in Brazil were deeply involved in the project of documenting modernist architecture, particularly the many projects that Oscar Niemeyer was involved with, including the construction of Brasília. These photographers include Marcel Gautherot, Hans Günter Flieg, and Peter Scheier. See: Kossoy, Boris, and Lilíia Moritz Schwarz. Um olhar sobre o Brasil: a fotografia na construção da imagem da nação, 1833-2003. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva; Madrid: Fundación Mapfre, 2012. The magazine Habitat, launched in 1950s, was doubtless influential for its discussions and reproductions of photographs of modernist architecture from Brazil and around the world. The magazine occasionally featured articles about photography from the FCCB, suggesting links between the publication and the Foto Cine Clube. See Fabiana Terenzi Stuchi, “Revista Habitat: Um olhar moderno sobre os anos 50 em São Paulo,” Master’s thesis., Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo (FAUUSP), 2007.
buildings in the distance. Altschul’s photograph, in contrast, obviates the representation of a figure altogether, revealing only her anxiety-ridden view of the city.

Other contemporary photographs of architecture without visible human figures approximate the feeling that Altschul achieved in her architectural compositions. Ivo Ferreira da Silva’s *Bandeira Paulista* (n.d.) (Fig. 27) illustrates the mammoth construction project of Oscar Niemeyer’s iconic Edifício Copan, focusing on the topography of gridded lines that contoured the sinuous building as it was built. The dramatic cropping gives no contextual information; instead it seems like an extra-human perspective given the photographer’s apparently straight-on proximity to the tall building. The emphasis is on the lines, the grid, and the curves rather than on the photographer’s position vis à vis the building. These photographs by Ferreira da Silva and Altschul share a strange sense of proportion and confusing dimensions: neither offers a clear indication of the buildings’ actual size. In contrast, Kojranski and Salvatoe’s views create a more obvious tension between the subject of the photograph and the city.

In contrast to renditions of architecture and disorientation by male members of the FCCB, Altschul’s more subjective approach in *Linhas e tons* and *Arquitetura* suggests an uneasy view of modernity, one that she shared with other female photographers working in the Americas. In Buenos Aires, German-born photographer Grete Stern was at this time making her *Sueños* series (1948–51) to illustrate a psychoanalysis column in the magazine *Idilios*. While stylistically and thematically different, Altschul’s photographs of the city recall the poignancy Grete Stern imbues in her images; both photographers conjure a disquieting sense of anxiety. Stern’s *Sueño 20: Perspectiva* (Dream no. 20: Perspective) (1949) (Fig. 28) is particularly disconsolate in its inclusion of an ominous
sky, both elements present in Altschul’s *Arquitetura*. Both *Sueño 20* and *Arquitetura* convey uneasy emptiness and vertigo, despite Altschul’s photograph being populated by buildings and Stern’s by ladders. Stern’s figure, propped atop the long set of rungs, is afraid of falling into nothingness; the viewer in Altschul’s photograph is fearful that the buildings will crush her. (Stern’s use of the ladder motif also relates to other photographs by Altschul [Figs. 29 and 30], which will be discussed later in this chapter.)

Altschul’s anxiety-ridden and upward-looking photographs also share a dystopian quality with Tina Modotti’s (1896–1942) photograph *Telephone Wires, Mexico* (c. 1925) (Fig. 31). In their views of the sky, both photographers picture symbols of modernity—architecture in Altschul’s case and telephone wires in Modotti’s—while simultaneously calling the modern project into question. The darkness in Modotti’s photograph, a combination of the phone wires’ points of intersection and the clouds behind them, invokes the feeling of doom embedded in Altschul’s architecture photographs, particularly *Arquitetura*. Modotti, like Altschul, observed Mexico City’s modernity from a female and immigrant point of view. These two artists’ attention to line and composition underscore their formal visual leanings while conveying a sense that the progress inherent in construction did not always inspire optimism and hope. Both artists point towards the darker underbelly of progress and to ways in which it may dwarf the individual unable to keep up with the speed of modernity.

In a similar vein, there are compelling parallels between Altschul’s work and the photographs of the American modernist photographer Berenice Abbott (1898–1991). In her portfolio *Changing New York* (1935–39), Abbott captured dizzying skyward views (Figs. 32, 33) that convey the scale of the city’s skyscrapers and the photographer’s sense
of impotence. In contrast with Altschul, Abbott created straight photographs without the manipulations of montage. However, they share the sense of anxiety that many people in growing megacities experience. While Abbott also produced other views in her New York City series, she powerfully registered the entrapment of standing with her camera in these canyons between skyscrapers. Abbott’s repetition of the motif to underscore its poignancy echoes Altschul’s need to manipulate her own compositions in order to underscore the ominous and sinister appearance of tall buildings.

**Altschul’s Consideration of Plants**

Gertrudes Altschul also explored the theme of plants with particular depth. In this series of photographs, she was especially attentive to the abstract patterns created by leaves and as with her works on buildings, Altschul’s photographs of natural elements are marked by her subjective viewpoint. She depicted plants in tightly cropped and directly focused compositions, and rendered them using photogram, montage, and solarization techniques, among others. Altschul likely made about fifteen photographs of plants, many more than her architectural compositions, her straight photographs of geometry in the landscape, and her table-tops, which will be discussed later. The focus on plants signaled Altschul’s interest in portable motifs that she could examine serially and through diverse

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159 Altschul’s sustained interest in plants is manifest in how many prints or reproductions exist: six of the twelve prints by Altschul in the MASP FCCB show (2015–16) featured images of leaves or flowers: *Composição com folhas* (Composition with leaves) (n.d.) (Fig. 35); *Folha morta* (Dead leaf) (n.d.) (Fig. 14); *Jogo de linhas* (Play of lines) (n.d.); *Margaridas* (Daisies), (n.d.); *Vasos e plantas* (Cups and plants) (1952) (Fig. 36). Her close-up photograph of a leaf *Atraz da cortina* (Behind the curtain) (ca. 1956) (Fig. 34) featured in the 15th International Salon in São Paulo in October 1956 and reproduced in the *Boletim* that same year. The picture *Delicado* (Delicate) (n.d.), a still life of a vase with flowers, was included in the 8 Salão Nacional de Arte Fotográfica (8th National Salon of Photographic Art), Bauru, State of São Paulo, on August 1, 1959.

Among the works featured in the Casa da Imagem exhibition were also a handful of photographs depicting small plants and flowers. *Untitled* (Fig. 38), focuses on the centrifugal force of a tropical leaf fanning outward, its leaves perfectly folded. The Casa da Imagem show also included two photographs of flowers, in the still-life genre. Other photographs listed in the “Relações” documents have titles like *Folhagem* (Foliage) and *Dois troncos* (Two trunks), further confirming her interest in nature.
techniques. Her penchant for botanical photographs also set her body of work apart from her peers since very few FCCB members produced comparably ample explorations of the subject; Ademar Manarini was the only one to make photographs of plants bearing resemblance to those by Altschul, but his depictions were fewer and more geared toward abstraction. Not only was Altschul the main FCCB photographers to focus on this motif during the 1950s, but her photographs of leaves were also among her most widely circulated works, particularly Filigrana (Fig. 18).  

There are many reasons that Filigrana, a photograph that conveys Altschul’s particular sensibility, was compelling in the 1950s and still today. The image depicts a whole, ornate leaf in a straightforward and elegant composition. Captured against a light, neutral background, the photograph emphasizes the leaf’s unique shape and sharp contours while bringing out its intricate veins. It shows how the leaf’s nervous center attaches to its thick, dark petiole, which curves away from the center and extends beyond the edge of the frame. The clarity of reproduction permits the leaf to be easily identified as originating from the Carica papaya plant, which produces the tropical papaya fruit. The photograph’s pristine specimen follows to a tee the textbook characteristics of the Carica leaf: its orbicular or ovate outline, deep lobes, prominent lighter midribs in each lobe, and lighter lateral veins. The composition makes the leaf look large; a corresponding entry in a botanical encyclopedia confirms the great diameter—usually two to three feet—of a Carica leaf. Altschul chose to emphasize the leaf’s monumental size by making it look as if it could barely be contained by the photograph: the apexes of

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160 Filigrana is one of MoMA’s ten Altschul prints; their catalogue lists it as Untitled. The tally of salons is based on the available “Relações” documents and may not be exhaustive.
162 Ibid.
two lobes extend past the edge of the photograph and the top of a third apex touches the edge of the frame ever so slightly. This work is distinctive for its remarkable amount of detail, especially in the leaf’s lattice-like veins, which read like a city seen from an airplane at night. Instead of identifying the plant, Altschul titled the photograph *Filigrana* (Filigree), thereby foregrounding its formal characteristics: the craft of filigree refers to an intricate approach to creating jewelry, in which very fine metal threads are bent into complicated designs. There is a clear analogy between the jewelry work and nature’s crafting of such an elaborate design. Altschul also seems to have chosen a photographic process—solarization—that would emphasize the structure of the leaf. By creating a dramatic contrast between the dark leaf and its light veins, Altschul skillfully achieves a defamiliarizing effect. Her choice to depict the leaf in *Filigrana* in a flat manner, eschewing a perspectival approach, made this photograph consistent with the modernist photographic language of the early 1950s.

The shape of the *Carica* leaf itself, with its nine lobes and multiple veins, facilitates an easy interpretation of the image; the artist enhanced this inherent legibility by gently leading the viewer’s eye from the central fulcrum along each one of the lobes. In emphasizing the referent, Altschul did not create a disorienting image, but rather one that simultaneously seduces and provides deeper meanings. In this way *Filigrana* differs from her other photographs, such as *Detras da cortina* (Behind the curtain) (Fig. 34), a composition in which she similarly honed in on the intricate network of a leaf’s veins, but framed the specimen much more tightly, excluding the contours of the leaf from the picture. Conversely, Altschul also featured leaves as part of her photograms, revealing only their contours, as in *Composição com folhas* (Composition with leaves) (Fig. 35)
and Vasos e plantas (Glasses and plants) (Fig. 36). In representing a single solarized leaf in Filigrana, as opposed to a group, Altschul remarked not only on its monumental size but also on the idea of singularity and individuality. A single leaf has necessarily been isolated from others and detached from its tree or stem. This type of staging could be understood as a metaphor for Altschul’s migration and her trajectory as an artist; she was forced by historical events to leave her community in Germany for São Paulo, resulting in an artistic practice that might not have blossomed in the same way had she stayed in the country of her birth. In choosing to represent a Carica papaya leaf specifically, Altschul depicted an autochthonous Brazilian plant, one that bears a popular fruit in the region. Her choice of subject underscores the idea that her identity as an artist was rooted and nurtured in Brazil.

An example that starkly contrasts with this easily identifiable photograph of a leaf is Altschul’s Untitled (ca. 1950) (Fig. 37). In some ways the opposite of Filigrana, its composition underscores not singularity but the disorientation that results from excess. While there is no evidence of its publication or exhibition history as with Filigrana, Untitled deserves consideration as one of Altschul’s most inventive and disorienting renditions of botanical forms, proposing a very different reading of nature. The densely populated frame is filled with a profusion of small, layered leaves, making its subject difficult to distinguish. It is unclear whether Altschul photographed a heap of actual leaves, an arrangement of cut-out photographs of leaves, or some combination of the two, 163

163 In her attention to the contours and fine details of leaves, Altschul’s Filigrana recalls experiments with camera-less photography from the earliest days of the photographic medium. Works such as Henry Fox Talbot’s (1800–1877) photogenic drawing Wrack (1839) (Fig. 41) and the cyanotypes of plant specimens prepared by another prescient female photography pioneer, Anna Atkins (1799–1871), such as Convalaria Multiflora (1884) (Fig. 42), speak to the way nature has been an archetypal subject for photographers. The quality of these images, enhancing a geometric flatness achieved by creating a light-based impression, conveys a particular sense of modernity.
layered through multiple exposures. What is clear is that this photograph, like *Filigrana*,
emphasizes a certain degree of flatness and completely does away with perspective.
Unlike *Filigrana*, however, *Untitled* possesses a shallow space and seemingly
impenetrable surface that causes the viewer’s eye to restlessly wander across the
decentralized image. In this sense, the photograph relates to the feeling of entrapment that
Altschul so skillfully conveys in her architectural photographs. In contrast to *Filigrana*, it
also suggests a drowning of individuality in a large group, a feeling that might represent
Altschul’s experience of São Paulo at times, or even her position within the FCCB, where
she was often in competition with others and outnumbered by men. One of Altschul’s
densest compositions, *Untitled* proposes another way in which the photographer skillfully
interwove objective form with a subjective approach.

As briefly mentioned earlier, Altschul’s sustained examination of natural
specimens was not common within the FCCB. While the *Foto Cine Boletim* occasionally
reproduced photographs that isolated natural elements, most were by foreign
photographers from other photo clubs. Ademar Manarini was the only FCCB image-
maker contemporaneous with Altschul who focused on the shapes of plants, leaves, and
trees; his photographs were also some of the most abstract among his peers. While he
appears to have experimented less with technique than Altschul, Manarini nonetheless

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164 These include: a photograph of flowers in a window frame by the Argentine Hugo Kalmar, published in *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 88 (April 1954): 19; *Simplicité*, a picture of a branch in an elegant metal vase, by Dutchman Jules Meeus, (ibid., 13), and a picture of a blooming branch by Verbeke, (ibid., 14), both published as part of a portfolio feature of Belgian photography in *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 93 (October–December 1954); a wispy composition by Maria Hoepfner, featured in *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 96 (June–July 1955): 13; *Lotus*, a photograph of a lotus leaf by Tsuneji Yagi as part of a showcase of Japanese photography in *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 96 (June–July 1955): 23; and a photogram by Veronesi, titled *Fotograma*, featured (and disparaged) in *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 95 (April–May 1955): 12. The only photograph by a Brazilian that featured a similar treatment is *Esboço* by Roberto Godoy Moreira, published in *Foto Cine Boletim* 7, no. 78 (October 1952): 14.
found ways to display natural objects in surprising ways. The composition *Nervura* (Nerves) (n.d.) (Fig. 39) isolates a section of a dark leaf, focusing on the shapes drawn by its veins. The composition is reminiscent of Altschul’s *Filigrana* and *Detras da Cortina*, but, more in keeping with the latter, Manarini’s image spotlights the leaf’s texture and form rather than treating it as a whole object. *Nervura* eschews the outer contours of the leaf, focusing solely on its pattern and areas of translucency. A second photograph by Manarini, *Untitled* (n.d.) (Fig. 40), accentuates the shadows cast by a group of leaves, creating a delicate composition that showcases the indexical capacity of photography to immortalize something as temporary as shadows. Here, the leaves are merely implied as opposed to depicted, echoing ideas Altschul conveyed in her photograms, in which the leaves’ outer contours are their only indicator. Manarini’s photographs of plant motifs, like Altschul’s, skillfully defamiliarize and comment on the formal possibilities of plants’ forms. In its more sustained focus on the subject, however, Altschul’s body of work speaks to her dedication to experimentation as well as to the ways the motif of nature connected to her life: not only did tropical Brazil offer a very different natural landscape than her native Germany, but the concept of plants as objects of beauty (i.e., flowers) lay at the root of her family business, Arteflor. Leaves and flowers played an essential role in Arteflor’s construction of decorative flowers to pin on women’s hats, blouses, and jackets; these objects from nature were the inspiration from which the family produced their livelihood. Altschul’s life was built on the success of

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165 This analysis is per Manarini’s photographs featured in 1952–1962 issues of the *Boletim* and the photographs of his included in the *MASP–FCCB* show.
166 This photograph was included in the 14th Salon of Photographic Art in SP in the section titled “Fora de seleção (Membros do juri)”—a section reserved for featuring the work of FCCB members who juried the salon. The photograph was reproduced in the *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 97 (August–October 1955): 15, illustrating an article titled “Arte moderna” (Modern art).
167 This photograph was featured in the *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 92 (September 1954): 13.
selling those flowers, which grants her interest in plants as photographic motifs a significance beyond her image-making practice.

Through her sustained analysis of plants, Altschul’s subjective focus is further illuminated, particularly her use of botanical motifs to comment on photography’s unique capability to lay bare nature’s complex shapes. In other words, she used the medium as a documentary tool for discovery, while perhaps also suggesting that plants could be read as metaphors for the photographic process writ large: leaves, like light-sensitive photographic paper, require light to exist. In addition, she presented these discoveries in visually unexpected ways in order to trigger curiosity and a sense of wonder in her viewer. By photographing both young and old leaves, Altschul also commented on cycles of life and decay. Given the artist’s survival of breast cancer in her thirties after a double mastectomy, this theme might have resonated with the fragility of her own body.

**Forms and Geometry in the Landscape**
Altschul’s examinations of the *forms* in the landscapes around her are amongst her most varied groups of photographs. Often eschewing an explicit sense of perspective, these works resonate the most with those of other *Escola Paulista* members. In her photographs of concrete barrels (Figs. 43, 44) and her views of a set of stairs and a ladder (Figs. 30, 31), Altschul created images with limited depth and deliberate, tight framing that enhance their sense of volume. In the case of the stairs, she emphasized their lines and the shadows they cast. In the pictures of concrete barrels, their curved and circular shapes dominate the composition. All four photographs reflect a strong contrast between light and shadow, where form and content are nearly completely collapsed into each other. The
barrels, however, possess a great thematic subtext; they are harbingers of the in-process industrialization of São Paulo and other Brazilian cities. These environmentally focused images also showcase a formal problem—the contentious dynamic between figuration and abstraction—that Escola Paulista photographers often debated. What was the best way to work with a documentary medium and represent the world as it was, while also challenging the way people were used to seeing? How could a photographer comment on current concerns—the expanding city, industrialization, etc.—without resorting to narrative forms like photojournalism? While Altschul’s photographs of stairs can be interpreted more as exercises in capturing different plays of lines, those of the concrete barrels, in particular, invoke a similarly dubious outlook on progress and its visible signs as in her architectural photographs. The close-up barrel image is claustrophobic, revealing no escape from the concentric circles and their dramatic shadows; the more wide-angle photograph shows the barren landscape surrounding the barrels, conveying a sort of agoraphobia. The dark tones of the prints underscore these disparate feelings of entrapment and abandonment.

**Altschul’s “Table-Top” Photographs**

The final category of works to be examined in this chapter is Altschul’s staged table-top, or studio, photographs which she made in the later years of her practice.168 These experiments included elegant set-ups at home, with which her son Ernst sometimes assisted.169 Because of her focus on table-tops, Altschul has been compared to fellow

168 Phone conversation with Ernst Altschul, December 9, 2016.
169 Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 17, 2016.
photographer Roberto Yoshida, the best-known practitioner of the genre in the FCCB.\textsuperscript{170} Yoshida’s table-tops showcase elaborate scenes that are narrative and imaginative and, in their use of figurines or little props, seem like they could be geared toward children.

While Altschul made images, found among her contact prints, that were similar to Yoshida’s, they appear not to have been printed nor published; either she was not sufficiently pleased with the results or, these prints exist(ed) but were lost or have not yet been discovered.\textsuperscript{171} Her contact sheets reveal clear parallels between Yoshida’s and Altschul’s experiments. For example, both in Yoshida’s Sky Champion (Fig. 47) and some of Altschul’s contact sheets (Figs. 48, 49, 50), each artist uses a similar type of little doll; these works also similarly imbue their figurines with life and create a scenario out of household materials within a modest and entirely fictional domestic setting.

In his informative article, Yoshida equated table-tops to still lifes (“natureza morta”) and established that each “should have elevated goals and subjects that are difficult to find in the realities of life” and that “only table-tops can achieve these [effects] with success.”\textsuperscript{172} In other words, Yoshida felt that table-top setups allowed photographers to capture scenarios that did not exist in the real world, delivering those scenes with an even greater texture than real-life versions could. Departing significantly from the modernist images that Yoshida and Altschul made elsewhere, the table-tops inject lightness into studio photography. The compositions are amusing, sometimes even

\textsuperscript{170} Yoshida’s photographs appeared on the cover of the Boletim twice during the period from 1954 to 1955 (Figs. 45, 46); he had an exhibition at the FCCB in 1954; and penned an instructive article on how to make table-tops in 1956. The covers were of Foto Cine Boletim 8, no. 92 (September 1954) and no. 96 (June–July 1955). A feature on Yoshida’s photographs, in honor of his exhibition, was also included in Foto Cine Boletim Year 8, no. 92. Yoshida’s article on table-tops, “Table-Top,” was in Foto Cine Boletim 9, no. 100 (June–July 1956). In addition to narrative table-top photographs, Yoshida also produced other work that was more modernist and formally experimental.

\textsuperscript{171} The contact sheets that include examples of her table-top photographs are kept by Altschul’s son Ernst.

\textsuperscript{172} Roberto Yoshida, “Table-Top,” Foto Cine Boletim 9, no. 100 (June–July 1956).
cute, and reveal a playful current within an environment that otherwise seemed to take itself very seriously and be quite regimented (the contests, the point systems, etc.). In the rest of his article, Yoshida underscored that the most important components of these scenes were the artist’s resourcefulness and use of lo-fi materials.173

While the set-ups with figurines seemed to have been unsatisfactory for Altschul, the experimentation likely helped her to develop the studio photographs that she did print, pushing her toward more personal and refined interpretations. This is further underscored by the knowledge that she made her table-top photographs after having several years of experience with the medium. Her table-top photographs reflect an able use of everyday materials, including rolled-up white posterboard, baskets, and movable light sources for an elegant effect, which is manifest in several of her studio still lifes. For example, in *Composição* (Composition) (Fig. 51), published in the *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 98 (January–April 1956), the artist elegantly used a basket as a prop. In the simple *Trio* (n.d.) (Fig. 52), on the other hand, she depicted chips or Frisbees positioned on the edge of a white and black surface, setting up a formal counterposition of light and dark.174 However, Altschul’s inventiveness with simple materials and her ability to use them to reveal a personal point of view is most successfully conveyed in *Untitled* (n.d.) (Fig. 53), a photograph of a cigarette perched on the edge of a small plate. In its evocation of subjectivity and cunning use of light and form, this photograph is as emotionally charged as those of buildings and leaves discussed earlier. The setup feels most modern through

173 Ibid.
174 *Composição* was published in *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 98 (January–April 1956): 12. There are many more examples of elegant table-to photographs in Altschul’s binder of contact prints, which belongs to her son. Some of these photographs include photographic materials like darkroom developing canisters, the round plastic things into which ones rolls the film prior to inserting it into the canister with the chemicals. Her contact prints also show her using eggs and flour to create inventive compositions, and more set-ups that include white flowers.
its purposeful highlighting of the different forms, but, more importantly, the cigarette conveys the notion of a confident, independent woman who has casually set it down in midst of a photo studio session. In addition to its formal elegance, this image offers avenues for a gendered analysis of Altschul’s process, which will be taken up in Chapter 3.

**Subjective Photography**

Altschul’s personally inflected photographs, particularly her emotionally charged rendition of cityscapes, experiments with leaves, and table-tops, connect her to the tenets of the Subjective Photography movement, which originated in Cologne, Germany, with a 1951 book and exhibition organized by Otto Steinert and the Fotoform group. The group had been established in 1949 by Wolfgang Reisewitz to encourage photographers to explore abstraction and other techniques developed by the New Vision photographers in their own unique ways.\(^{175}\) Rather than focusing on documentary realism, the group espoused the exploration of a personal vision through experimental photography, which they termed *Subjektive Fotografie* (subjective photography). The first exhibition of this type, held in 1950 in Cologne, included work by László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, among others.\(^{176}\)

In addition to the visual and semantic overlaps between Fotoform’s search for a personal vision and the themes in Altschul’s work, there were many intersections between the FCCB and the German group: there is a connection between the name of the


movement and Geraldo de Barros’s *Fotoformas* series, perhaps a reflection of Steinert’s exhibition in Brazil as part of the Tenth International Salon of Photographic Art in 1951, presented by the FCCB in São Paulo. Concurrently, *Íris* published an article about the salon that lauded Steinert’s works in the exhibition, one of which it reproduced. In 1952, *Íris* published an Otto Steinert photograph on its cover with the interior text “The Creative Possibilities of Photography” by Franz Roh, which had been translated from *Leica Photographie* and was accompanied by two more of Steinert’s photos. A correspondence log from the FCCB archives, furthermore, indicates that Otto Steinert wrote to the club on June 11, 1954, not likely the only such communication. If by 1955 Steinert’s work and ideas were not well known among the FCCB members, his exhibition *Otto Steinert e seus discípulos* (Otto Steinert and his students) at the Museum of Modern Art (MAM) in São Paulo that year would have disseminated his oeuvre and the principles that guided his and his students’ work. After the exhibition, the prints from the show were integrated into the FCCB archive, where they may have been used as didactic materials. To mark the occasion of this exhibition, the FCCB published in *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 97 (August–October 1955) an article by Rubens Teixeira Scavone in which he commended Steinert’s group for their embrace of multifaceted individual

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178 Ibid. Espada Rodrigues Lima is at work further researching the connection between Steinert and the FCCB in greater detail.

179 “Registro de correspondencia recebida” — São Paulo [dated] 16-3-1953, correspondence log, Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (1953–?). The subject of this particular correspondence is unknown—it is marked with a question mark, as were other foreign correspondences, likely because the secretary may not have been able to read understood it in German.


181 Espada Rodrigues Lima, “*Fotoform and Otto Steinert in Brazil.*” Espada Rodrigues Lima’s research, moreover, indicates that the fifty prints included in the Steinert exhibition remain to this day in the FCCB Archive.
visions, collected under the term “subjective photography.” In the article, Scavone mentions the work of Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Germaine Krull, Sophie Tauber-Arp, and Paul Klee as examples of the kind of experimental and wide-ranging practice which the exhibition advocated. Quoting these artists and supporting a heterogeneous and experimental form of photography, Scavone not only proved how far the club had come since its earlier days of committed Pictorialism, but also suggests that members of the FCCB, as well as Otto Steinert’s students, might all have been in visual dialogue with art historical figures.

**Altschul’s Vision**

By assessing these different foci within Gertrudes Altschul’s practice, a well-rounded notion of the photographer comes into view. Her montages of buildings in São Paulo reveal her apprehensions about the modernist project while paying homage to photographers that preceded her. Her tenacious experiments with leaves and flowers reveal her subtle approach as an image maker, while also conveying a less cynical point of view, one in which she embraced and elevated elements from the natural Brazilian environment. Her active looking at the landscape around her, in search of geometric compositions and striking graphic qualities, resonates with the Pioneers and the *Escola Paulista* photographers’ new ways of considering urbanity. It also channels the tension among those photographers between focusing on form versus content, and figuration versus abstraction. The detailed construction of her table-top setups, which can be gleaned from her contact sheets and her prints, reveal her inventiveness in conjuring

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elegant compositions from scratch. The consideration of these works elucidates the cunning ways that Altschul successfully injected into her photographs a personal point of view and pathos. It further shows how this subtext in her photographs, at times, went against the current of celebrating urban development and conveyed a critical position that communicated a more complex experience of modernity. Her photographs’ compelling qualities and success reside in the careful balance of the club’s demands and this unique and personal vantage point.
Chapter 3

Tracing the Feminine in Gertrudes Altschul’s Photographs and Albums

This last chapter considers the “New Woman” as a cultural figure whose mold-breaking characteristics apply in many ways to Gertrudes Altschul, providing an apt framework to gain a more complex understanding of her as an artist and individual. The modernity of the New Woman finds an echo in the use of female imagery to promote photographic products. While these images originated in Western Europe and the United States, they were also prevalent in São Paulo in the early twentieth century. This imagery offers inroads into the consideration of photography from a female perspective, a discussion that is followed by the examination of one of Altschul’s FCCB photographs from the vantage of gender, drawing on additional information from a contact sheet to examine her process. The analysis then turns to Altschul’s private photo albums, which offer a wider context for understanding her feminine self-awareness. By looking closely at several pages from her albums, a more layered and gendered reading of Altschul’s work emerges, an interpretation that serves to expand the understanding of her interests beyond those encouraged within the FCCB, and also to contextualize her focus on women, which reveals particular agency towards female labor, including her own.

Altschul as a New Woman

Gertrudes Altschul was a woman with a strong presence and energy; she played the accordion, enjoyed hosting parties and traveling, and possessed a good sense of humor.\footnote{Interview with Laura Altschul and Ernst Altschul, February 28, 2016.}

Born in 1904, Altschul came of age in Germany in the 1920s during the Weimar
Republic, a tumultuous political period in German history characterized, among other things, by women earning the right to vote in 1919, expanding their role in the labor force, and participating more actively in the arts. These new liberties coalesced in the visual representation of the Neue Frau, or New Woman, a “free” woman who challenged conventional gender roles and expectations.

Living in Berlin during this time, Altschul was likely exposed to the cultural idea of the New Woman, especially given the circulation of this type of imagery in advertising, illustrated magazines, and photojournalism.\textsuperscript{184} It is difficult to ascertain definitively whether or not this is the case, and, if so, to what extent her family subscribed to these more liberal values in terms of gender. The anecdotal evidence offered by her surviving family members, however, suggests that Altschul embodied some of the values today recognized as intrinsic to the figure of the New Woman, an idea that is bolstered by her development of a consistent and dedicated photographic practice. Altschul’s FCCB photographs, but even more so those collected in her personal photo albums, convey an assured female self-awareness that further underscores this analysis.

How can we understand this modern cultural figure? Or, as Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco ask, “was the New Woman flesh and blood, a metaphor, or both concurrently?”\textsuperscript{185} In Berlin, specifically, women became both the producers and audience for printed media, political actors exercising their right to vote, and mobile citizens who traveled for work or pleasure within their countries as well as abroad. The New Woman

\textsuperscript{185} Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco, “Introduction: Imagining and Embodying New Womanhood,” in \textit{The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film from the 1870s through the 1960s}, ed. Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press and University of Michigan Library, 2011), 1. I am grateful to Dr. Andrés Mario Zervigón for suggesting this title, which proved instrumental to the arguments developed in this chapter.
was not, however, defined by location, mode of dress, or profession. Her presentations ranged from radical to quiet, but “consistent in all of her manifestations [was] the New Woman’s radical challenge to the status quo”: she was a “jubilant figure who could not be contained by national boundaries.”

Within the category of the New Woman, the image of the “New Woman photographer” corresponds to a much smaller subset but represented a group on the rise, reflecting women’s more active participation in cultural life and the arts. One can draw parallels between the New Woman and her artistic or professional practice in photography and film, and conclude that she was “a creature not only of modernity but also of modern technology” — a “trailblazing figure . . . most at home in quintessentially modern, mechanically based forms of imagery.” The camera was for early-twentieth-century women not only the most timely artistic medium but also a tool for independent professional advancement. In their use of a reproductive medium that made possible a straightforward and truthful reflection of reality, women defined themselves as active participants in modern life. Ute Eskildsen has explained that the camera functioned for the New Woman as an “instrument of self-determination,” confirming her new identity and mirroring it back, allowing her to document her own and other women’s emancipation. As a medium based in technologies of reproduction,
photography was also uniquely suited for the propagation and spreading of the idea of the New Woman through the press and advertising industry.

The strong connection between photography and women was not unique to Weimar Germany. Since the introduction of the “Kodak girl” in the U.S. in 1893 and as the brand’s cameras became progressively smaller and easier to use, pictures of women became more ubiquitous in the promotion and advertising of cameras and film. The image of the “Kodak girl” was purposefully engaged to seduce would-be photographers to pick up the camera, while instructions were simplified so as to be intelligible “even to women.” The camera companies proposed a mostly romantic view of women, rooted in late-nineteenth-century ideas of femininity; there were, however, glimpses of more emancipated presentations, anticipating visions of the New Woman that would develop in the early twentieth century. While some depictions of the “Kodak girl” inscribed her in domestic settings—arranging her children for a portrait or looking at a photo album with her husband—there were, on the other hand, concurrent depictions that conveyed more independent stances: portrayals of women as travelers or single women. These ads suggest a shifting arena, revealing a spectrum that ranged from traditional, domestic depictions to more progressive manifestations of femininity. As Harriet Riches writes, “a certain construction of late-nineteenth-century American femininity defined this figure’s association with photography as a new, modern medium.” In other words, women’s

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192 Ibid.
identity as modern in their own right reinforced the modernity of the cameras themselves.\textsuperscript{193}

A recent study of the material culture related to photography in Brazil, conducted by Rubens Fernandes Júnior, proves that female figures were similarly used in the promotion of photographic materials in São Paulo.\textsuperscript{194} The “Kodak girl,” for example, spoke Portuguese in Brazilian advertisements, and comparable female figures appeared in drawings on materials related to Agfa and Gevaert photography brands. Women were depicted on the envelopes for photographs; in advertisements and magazines published by camera companies, such as Revista Kodak and Agfa Novidades; and in educational materials, including booklets and charts to guide the amateur.\textsuperscript{195} Just as their U.S. and European counterparts did, women’s depictions on photographic materials circulating in Brazil suggest shifting interpretations of femininity and womanhood. One advertisement, for the German company Agfa, shows an allegorical female figure dressed in flowy, draping clothing (Fig. 54). While her dress does not look modern, the gesture of her raised arm and her wind-swept attire convey freedom. Similarly, Kodak’s depictions communicated different messages: in one advertisement, the image of the coiffed, young mother taking a picture of her son (Fig. 55) highlights a traditional, domestic view of women, while another graphic from the same company conveys a radically different image. In this example, the Kodak woman is a graceful superhero, taking a dive into the void (Fig. 56), suggesting female empowerment, while recalling the Soviet artist Gustav Klutsis’s female athletes on the postcards he produced for the 1928 Spartakiada, a sort of proletarian Olympics, in Moscow (Fig. 57). Other brands also promoted emancipated

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Rubens Fernandes Júnior, Papeis efêmeros da fotografia (Fortaleza, CE: Tempo d’Imagem, 2015).
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 18.
images of women: an advertisement for the Belgian company Gevaert displays a lone woman with short hair, likely an airlines stewardess, suggesting the idea of free and easy travel (Fig. 58).

Local photography stores also contributed to this popular imagery. The São Paulo photography shop Kosmos Foto conveyed the idea of modern women in two separate ads. On one of their envelopes is the loosely drawn head of woman with short hair and plump lips, with a camera in front of one eye, suggesting the melding of the female face and the machine (Fig. 59). Another image—a young woman with a cropped haircut wearing a bathing suit, smiling coyly, and almost tauntingly holding the Voigtländer camera to her chest (Fig. 60)—is one of the least traditional and most daringly flirtatious female representations from Fernandes Júnior’s collection of paper-based photography materials.

The range of depictions of women underscores that the female image was shifting, and also that New Women were heterogeneous and not necessarily radical figures. Indeed, existing studies suggest that those who embodied this cultural motif “did not necessarily adhere to a singular way of appearing[,] but [could be] traced through ideas and practices.”196 Early New Women could often be identified by their bicycles, cigarettes, “rational” dress, education, and emancipation.197 While those features lend themselves to varying interpretations, particularly the latter three, they all convey the New Woman’s disruptive stance in her refusal of so-called feminine traits, such as “passivity,” “aversion to public space,” “indifference to sexuality,” and “lack of creative

197 Carolyn Christensen Nelson quoted in Otto and Rocco, “Introduction,” 6. The allusion to “rational” dress referred to a movement that had its roots in the U.S. in the mid-nineteenth century, which proposed rational (also called hygienic or reform) dress against the impracticality and restrictiveness of women’s clothing. In 1881 Lady F. W. Haberton and Mrs. E. M. King founded the Rational Dress Society, promoting a clothing style for women based on health, comfort, and beauty. See Christine Bayles Kortsch, Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women’s Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism (Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009).
New Women were active, they moved freely through modern cities, and some expressed their worldview through artistic means. In their representation on printed photographic materials, women were thus not only invoked as ciphers of modernity to promote the most contemporary medium, they were directly implicated in its production. Echoing the circulation of female-branded photo equipment and supplies, women photographers also traveled: through the city to make their photographs, to the darkroom to develop, or to photo-shops for equipment and repairs.

Gertrudes Altschul, too, embodied the stance of a New Woman. Her exposure to progressive ideas during her upbringing in Europe, and her experience as an immigrant in São Paulo following her family’s emigration from Nazi-occupied Germany, resulted in her becoming an independent and more open-minded woman than her Brazilian contemporaries. While not a revolutionary—after all, she was married and had a son—Altschul was an assertive workingwoman and an artist who conducted herself with an unusual level of emancipation. She was actively involved in her family’s decorative-flower-making business Arteflor, managing every aspect of its day-to-day operations. In terms of her photographic practice, anecdotal information from her surviving family members as well as records of her active participation in the photoclub yield an image of Altschul as an engaged, proactive, and experimental image maker. As mentioned in previous chapters, Altschul joined the FCCB on her own, without her husband, and once

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199 Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 28, 2016, and December 9, 2016.
200 Despite the confirmation on the part of Ernst that Altschul was in charge of the entire family business, the field for “occupation,” was left blank on her registration form for the FCCB. It’s not clear whether she did not indicate a profession or if the FCCB judged that participating in the family business was not on par with the professions of other FCCB members, who were lawyers, bankers, doctors, business owners, and journalists.
201 Her participation can be gleaned from the publication of her photographs in the Foto Cine Boletim, her participation in salon exhibitions, and her physical presence at club activities that can be gleaned from photographs of social events published in the Foto Cine Boletim.
there, crafted an unequivocally personal vision, further expressing her modern identity and emancipation through the practice of photography. Her artistic endeavors led her into the city, on excursions with members of the FCCB, and into the public arena through the exhibition of her photographs in the yearly São Paulo salons from 1953 to 1957.

Altschul’s obituary proves the respect she garnered among her fellow FCCB photographers. Published in the Foto Cine Boletim in 1962, the short text lamented that, “the FCCB and Brazilian photography have lost one of its most legitimate expressions, an artist of fine sensibility who honored the country she adopted as her homeland, participating with distinction in various international salons.” In this tribute, the FCCB recognized Altschul as a bandeirante who “project[ed] herself among few international female names consecrated to photography.” The obituary additionally described the national and international awards she won as “innumerable,” while her “personality and character, camaraderie, and spirit of dedication and cooperation captivated everyone in the club.” In other words, the directors of the FCCB acknowledged Altschul as a celebrated, rare woman who was a successful photographer in addition to her role as a devoted member of the FCCB.

There is further evidence of Altschul’s modern point of view, her embodiment of the ideals of the New Woman, and her stance as a woman aware of her femininity in two repositories of her work: her FCCB photographs and her personal albums, which she began assembling before joining the club and continued building throughout the rest of her life. Whereas the photographic prints made for the FCCB subscribed to a specific modern language and embraced particular aesthetic considerations in preparation for wide circulation (explored in detail in Chapter 2), her photo albums were made for private use and were thus assembled following only her own criteria.

The paragraphs that follow offer an analysis of one of Altschul’s table-top photographs, made as part of her FCCB production, that reveals particularly fruitful possibilities for a gendered reading. Later on, examination of pages from her album provides evidence of Altschul’s protofeminist stance and self-awareness as a New Woman. It must be said that the photographs that Altschul made for circulation within the FCCB, for the most part, did not take an overtly gendered point of view. After all, she was making photographs that conformed to the aesthetic criteria appreciated by the club, which needed to pass muster with the mostly male juries who selected works for submission to local and international salons. With the photographs she made for her albums, in contrast, there was no issue with displaying a more gendered perspective.

Detecting the Feminine in Altschul’s FCCB Work

While many of her photographs appear genderless on the surface in their pursuit of the modernist aesthetic parameters set by the FCCB, some of Altschul’s prints suggest a feminist awareness and offer a rich gendered reading of her work. While some may, too
easily in this author’s view, characterize her attention to plants and flowers as feminine, the photographs of such subjects are not ideal examples for a gendered analysis. As examined in Chapter 2, Altschul’s continuous photographic renditions of plants spoke more to her technical and formal experimentation and her embrace of the tropical landscape around her than necessarily to her identity as a woman. Rather, it is one of her table-top photographs—the image of a cigarette at rest in an ashtray, near a rolled-up piece of thin cardboard, with a light source at its center (Fig. 53)—that provides the best case study for a feminist analysis. The studio setup suggests that Altschul was fully in control of the scene, while its formal composition coincides with a modern way of looking.

The photograph suggests that the scene was carefully assembled with available materials (in keeping with some of the principles of the “table-top” genre laid out by FCCB photographer Roberto Yoshida). The image is organized diagonally, with its constitutive elements arranged along a wide band that extends from bottom left to top right. In the lower left corner, there is a dark plate with a lit, hand-rolled cigarette resting on its edge and a small cloud of smoke rising from its tip. The open end of a loosely rolled piece of white paper, seemingly illuminated from the inside, comes into the composition on a diagonal from the top right to the center, where it almost touches the plate. Its curved edge creates the elegant shape of a drop lying on its side while its dramatic light draws the viewer’s attention. The top of the paper lies in shadow and bears a small pencil inscription on its corner. The artist placed the cigarette directly in the path

203 While this image was not depicted in any studied salon catalogues, its existence as a larger print (10 13/16 × 12 3/16 in. [27.5 × 31 cm]) and the ways it follows parameters of the table-top genre as described by Roberto Yoshida in the Foto Cine Boletim strongly suggests that it was printed with the intention of circulating within the Foto Cine Clube. The absence of a title makes the tracing of this photograph within internal FCCB records more difficult.
of the light source so that the smoke wafting from it would catch and curiously move toward the light, as if drawn in magnetically.

In addition to the careful positioning of objects, other decisions influenced the composition of the final print. A 35mm contact strip (Fig. 61) reveals that the original image was taken with a wider angle and that the final print was a cropped version of the original frame. Soft lines drawn directly on the contact sheet indicate the section of the photograph that Altschul wanted to frame in the final print. The original take shows a larger part of the white paper, thus revealing more of the photograph’s apparatus and leaving less room for speculation as to how the white tear shape was crafted. The final print, with the frame drawn more tightly around the folded paper and the plate with the cigarette, is purposefully more ambiguous about the nature of its props. The contact strip also reveals that this photograph is one of three setups that Altschul tried out—based on the order of the contact prints, it was either the first or the last. The contiguous image on the contact strip displays a similar scene: a cigarette in an ashtray in front of a light source. Instead of the plain little dish depicted in the final print, however, in this alternate version Altschul used an ashtray made of glass or crystal, with the cigarette balanced on one of its broad edges, conveying a more glamorous effect. In the remaining version, the artist placed a white flower in the light beam instead of the plate with the cigarette. Likely a fake lily taken from Arteflor materials, she placed the bloom so that its petals open up toward the light. Altschul’s decision to print the version with the simple, dark plate prompts questions: Did that option offer more contrast between the object and the white tear-shaped light source? Did the crystal ashtray suggest a sense of luxury she did

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204 Other photographs from this contact sheet, not discussed in this chapter, reveal additional still-life, or table-top, setups with flowers, a material that Altschul had readily available due to her Arteflor business.
not want to convey? Did the flower make the photograph appear too feminine or was it too close to other still-life experiments with flowers?

Whatever concerns motivated Altschul to select this version of the photograph, the resulting image seems the most poignant example of the presence of the photographer in the image, the closest to a self-portrait among her prints. The darkness in the image suggests that Altschul created the still life at home, collapsing the borders between her professional photographic studio and her domicile, which was also the location of the family’s Arteflor business. The lit cigarette, with its graphically alluring smoke, suggests a lively scenario frozen in time by the click of the shutter. The smoke functions, too, as an indexical sign of its smoker, making the photographer’s presence felt within the image. And yet, Altschul did not include herself in the photograph. She also did not print the versions with the flower or the more distinguished crystal ashtray. It is possible that she felt that the current version most disguised her female voice; guided by the desire to be on par with her male peers, Altschul may not have wanted her photographs to read as gendered or as made by a woman.

Nonetheless, other artists and photographers have employed the motif of the cigarette, especially in conjunction with the representation of women, as a symbol for female modernity and independence. Robert Demachy’s *Cigarette Girl* (1899) (Fig. 62) has been invoked as an embodiment of modern femininity, given the subject’s self-assured stance. Germaine Krull’s *Self-Portrait* (1925) (Fig. 63), too, has been interpreted as an assertion of strong femininity in its embrace of masculine and feminine traits: the photographer’s face is mostly obscured and blurry behind the camera, while her hands and camera are in focus, with the ring on her pinky finger and the cigarette in her

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left hand prominently marking her identity. Her “emancipated cigarette-wielding hand,” writes Kim Sichel, was “surely a statement of liberation at a time when a woman lighting a cigarette at the 1924 Berlin Press Ball created a media scandal.”

Another very early example, often referenced in connection with audacious women photographers, is Frances Benjamin Johnson’s well known self-portrait from 1896 (Fig. 64), in which she sits in a chair with a stein of beer in one hand and a cigarette held defiantly in the other. Otto and Rocco emphasize in their study that “smoking most obviously” was one of the “habits of modern life formerly associated with men of all classes and women of the lower and working classes” that became available to New Women of middle and higher classes. Whether knowingly or unwittingly, with this picture Altschul inserted herself into a tradition of women’s self-representations, in which the female identity of the smoker was the utmost assertion of their modernity.

Gertrudes Altschul’s Albums

In contrast to the highly encoded photograph of the cigarette, Altschul’s personal albums reveal a different side of her female and feminine sensibilities. Assembled between the year of her arrival in São Paulo in 1939 and her death in 1962, they were undoubtedly personal objects, made not for public display or publication, but as a way to memorialize her life and the people in it, and to share with friends and family. She began this form of private photography before joining the photo club and continued it in parallel with her FCCB practice. The photographs included in the albums differ from the ones she made for the club. While the latter—“artistic” images—were mostly impersonal and objective,

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208 All three albums are part of the private collection of Ernst Altschul, Gertrudes Altschul’s son.
the former were casual, warm, and populated by family and friends, allowing her to weave a visual narrative that presents evidence of her living spaces, parties, weekend trips, and vacations. The albums also document her work life as part of their family business with its confection of decorative flowers, and depict the women who worked for her. In these photographs, which include more snapshot-style or documentary images of the women at work as well as posed group shots, she represented herself and women around her as proud and self-possessed, exalting the female worker, but also blurring the line between home and work, between hired workers and family.

As physical objects, photo albums are often examined within sociological or anthropological studies of material culture; in particular, scholars invoke these texts in regard to the construction of family identities and histories through photographs. There is much to consider on both fronts. While albums originated well before the invention of photography—as receptacles for poems, newspaper cutouts, drawings, or other paper-based media—one of their early uses in the age of photography was that of collecting cartes de visite of cherished family and friends as well as political and cultural figures. In Victorian England, the album form provided an outlet for upper-class women to express their creativity through photo collages, which often veered into playful and bizarre compositions made with printed reproductions combined with their own photographs.

Despite focusing mostly on the nineteenth century, existing scholarship on photo albums provides a useful framework for analyzing Altschul’s practice. As was the case with

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albums produced in the previous century, which were created in response to available materials, Altschul’s were objects where she considered the paper, the selection and arrangement of the photographs, as well as the captions. As Verna Curtis Posever confirms, in the first decades of the twentieth century, albums with leather or cloth covers, bound with string and blank, black pages, came into vogue; these correspond to the types of albums that Altschul used.\(^{211}\) Her first album (1939–52) is composed of loose leaves of brown cardboard separated by thin, translucent paper, all held together by a snakeskin-patterned cover. Her second one (beginning in 1954) has blank, teal leaves held together by a nondescript cover made of cream-colored cardboard; the third has a thicker, cushioned dark green leather cover that holds black cardboard sheets.

The contents of the three albums reveal details about Altschul’s life and emphasize her enactment of the female role as family “historians, the guardians of memory, selecting and preserving the family archive.”\(^{212}\) As early as 1939, in her first album, the artist documented her move to Brazil with a few photographs taken at sea, framing the journey as the first chapter of her new life outside of Germany, her family’s fate still somewhat uncertain. Although these images cast an optimistic light onto her new home country, they are also a poignant reminder of Altschul’s status as an immigrant and exile. In addition to family narratives, the first and second albums offer clues regarding Altschul’s shifting aesthetic in photography.\(^{213}\) Most of the photographs in the initial

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\(^{213}\) Altschul’s third album, beginning in 1954, was more of a scrapbook or travel album. It included pictures and ephemera related to a European trip with her spouse in 1954, when they visited Vienna, Paris, and various cities in France and Germany. Photographs, postcards, and menus, together with ephemera such as airline and train tickets, illustrate the couple’s first trip back to Europe after their migration to South America, presumably an emotional journey during which they became acquainted with a new, postwar
album have a loose snapshots style, anticipating Altschul’s more formal training within the FCCB, which did not begin until 1952. In fact, it was during a trip to Argentina, documented on the last pages of the first album, that she bought a Rolleiflex camera and began to take a more serious interest in photography, joining the FCCB not long after her return. Her second album, beginning in 1954, reflects the way her aesthetic changed as a result of her participation in the Foto Cine Clube. Many images formally resemble her FCCB work in terms of their composition and framing and even include examples of her photographic experiments, such as still-life setups of eggs (Fig. 65). The inclusion of these pictures in her album suggests the degree to which her pursuit of artistic photography became an intrinsic part of her life. This shift is also on display in photographs of botanical motifs (Fig. 66), including a dead leaf (Fig. 67, top right) that closely resembles the one in *Folha morta*, one of her best-known images within the club (Fig. 14). Altschul did not make portraits as part of her FCCB work, but she photographed friends and family for her albums, and the portraits in the second album also reflect new aesthetic considerations. When compared to those in the first, the later ones show that she began to make more portraits of individuals rather than of groups and that she took care that her subjects filled the camera frame, thus using the photograph’s boundary rectangle to its maximum potential (Fig. 68). In addition to albums, Ernst Altschul’s collection of Gertrudes’s materials also includes two ring binders, one filled with pages of square contact prints and another with contact sheets and their corresponding 35mm negatives. As a complete analysis of all of Altschul’s albums and contact-sheet binders exceeds the scope of this study, this discussion will focus on several

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*Europe. While the album provides additional biographical details about Altschul, it is, as a scrapbook/travel album less pertinent to the discussion here.*
pages from the first and second albums and to the clues they provide about Gertrudes’s attitudes towards other women and their work.

**Representations of Female Labor in Altschul’s First Album**

In the first album (1939–52), Altschul documented the inner workings of their family business, Arteflor. She photographed approximately twenty young women sitting around long tables, making the artificial flower arrangements to adorn women’s hats and clothing. Altschul photographed the women while they were working (Figs. 69, 70, 71, 72, 73), in small groups (Figs. 74, 75), or posed as in family portraits (Figs. 76, 77). In addition, her second albums include isolated studio shots of flower arrangements, some hand-tinted (Figs. 78, 79), displaying the product of their labor. Overt attention to the feminine is on display in these images, which cast Altschul as an assertive and active participant in the family business that, itself, catered to women. The inclusion of these pictures in her photo albums makes a strong case that this work was an important part of her life, as was confirmed by her son. Moreover, the photographs of these workingwomen display Altschul’s overall respect for their labor; the group shots in the garden (Figs. 75, 76, 77) especially reflect a sense of camaraderie.

Her managerial involvement in the family business—and the extent to which she identified with the world it created in their home—is evident in the many pages, and their corresponding captions, that Altschul dedicated to representing Arteflor. Some of the captions refer specifically to the flowers, with literal and metaphorical labels on pages

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214 Ernst described his mother as in charge of “everything” to do with Arteflor: she made the flowers, bought materials, and managed the group of women who worked for the company. Her husband, Leon, was in charge of the commercial aspects and distribution. Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 28, 2016, and December 9, 2016.
such as “Jardim das flores” (Flower garden) (Fig. 76) and “Sala das ‘flores’” (Room of “flowers”) (Fig. 69). These phrases imply a reference to the female workers as flowers, suggesting Altschul’s affective rapport with the ladies she photographed. Other captions embody self-awareness and convey the high degree to which she participated in the business, not only as a figure in charge, as on a page entitled “O mundo em que vivo” (The world I live in) (Fig. 70). The phrase also communicates the idea that a viewer of the album would see these pictures and understand them, by way of the caption, as a truthful representation of her life. Another page, titled “Turma” (“the gang”) (Fig. 75), juxtaposes photographs, from 1941 and 1943, of women who worked for Arteflor. This page suggests an awareness of passing time, and that Altschul harbored parental affection and concern for these women, looking over them as they grew and matured throughout the time they worked for her.

One image particularly stands out among these pages for its empowered representation of a woman: in a strong pose, a young female worker operates a specialized tool with one arm (Figs. 71, 72). The subject of the photograph stands, her upper body leaning slightly forward, with her gaze directed downward in concentration. Her attire, a collared dress cinched at the waist, is feminine without being overtly so; her hair is tucked under a white crocheted turban that makes her look ladylike while negating the sensuousness that her hair might have conveyed, were it visible. Her right hand holds the object on which she is working, presumably a flower, while her left arm operates the crank on the machine. The woman’s body language suggests strength and mastery of her craft. Invoking such a powerful pose, this picture recalls Margaret Bourke-White’s representation of women in her Life photo essay from 1943, in which she documented
female workers in steel factories in Gary, Indiana, during World War II (Figs. 80, 81). In Bourke-White’s photographs, groups of or individual women bend over work, such as welding, which is arduous, somewhat dangerous, and typically thought of as masculine. With their hair tucked away and their eyes clad with goggles, there is little except the suggestion of their smooth skin and delicate facial features that conveys they are women. Their body language, too, suggests mastery and concentration. While Altschul’s working woman appears more typically feminine and engaged in an activity—making flower decorations—gentler than the welding performed by the women in Bourke-White’s essay, the photographs share a sense of exaltation of the female figure as a capable worker, able to measure up to men in work environments, even industrial settings—a metaphor perhaps for Altschul’s own position as one of the few women in the Foto Cine Clube.

In her concentrated, assertive posture, Altschul’s composition and depiction of her woman worker also bears connections to the iconic “We Can Do It!” poster by J. Howard Miller (1943) (Fig. 82), which was part of a national campaign to attract women to the U.S. workforce at a time of labor shortages during World War II. The poster’s message that women are both strong and skilled, and that they need not sacrifice their femininity to work resonates with the focus, in Altschul’s photograph, on the woman’s assertive arm gesture and her concentrated gaze. Miller’s well-known avatar also used the woman’s arm as symbol of strength. What translates as grit and resolve in the poster comes through in the photograph as quieter fortitude and dedication to her craft, showcasing Altschul’s intention to confer dignity on and respect for her subject.
Compelling parallels also exist between Altschul’s photographs of the women at work and the women’s work itself: both activities, photographing and crafting, represent a specific category of female labor. Harriet Riches has written about feminized aspects of photographic practice that have grown out of “otherizing” photography by women as a separate category from men’s. Speaking to the connections between manual labor and women and addressing the historical origins of women’s photographic practice, she asks: “What can the gendering of the photographic discourse of/in the past tell us about the writing of photography’s history today?” Specifically, she draws a parallel between a traditionally female activity—sewing—and photography:

Like sewing, photography demanded patience, quiet contemplation, stillness, and attention to detail. It, too, was considered primarily reproductive rather than creative. But by embodying the feminine characteristics of needle-based pastimes that were necessarily relinquished by middle-class women as they began to traverse the boundaries of the home, around which feminine and masculine labor was divided in the ideology of separate spheres, photography carried these characteristics into the professional realm.

In Altschul’s case, the dynamic was reversed as she pursued the “needlework” professionally and photography as a hobby; however, her photographs of such work demonstrate the entirely female production team. In linking Altschul’s photographic practice and the skills involved in making decorative flowers for Arteflor, Riches’s discussion of the female skill of sewing applied to photography resonates further. Did Altschul possibly make this connection herself? Riches cites Patrizia di Bello, who has noted that a ‘lady’s touch’ was invested with a purifying and transformational power in the late-nineteenth-century industrial economy of machine manufacturing. The

\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{215} Ibid., 129, 131.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 136.} \]
\[\text{\footnotesize \textsuperscript{217} It was an entirely female team except for Altschul’s son Ernst’s occasional participation. Interview with Ernst Altschul, February 23, 2016.} \]
mediation of a woman’s touch in, for example, hand-embroidering factory-produced linen, became a means through which mass-produced objects acquired emotional content and affective power as they were brought outside and then brought into the home.\textsuperscript{218}

In the case of Arteflor, too, Altschul and the female workers created unique flower decorations one by one, contrasting with machine-made objects. Similarly, Altschul manually intervened in her albums (i.e. picture selection, layout, captions) and in the photographs themselves (i.e. tinting), with the objective of communicating something beyond what a single, entirely mechanically produced photograph could. The meticulous attention that Altschul dedicated to her architectural photographs, to a subtle and delicate effect, and the care with which she constructed her table-top setups (both discussed in Chapter 2), are also manifest in the care with which she made her albums. Furthermore, it coincides with the attention to detail required by the craftsmanship at the center of her flower-making business.

This wider reading of Altschul’s work—of both her FCCB photographs and her personal albums—clarifies that the sum of her sensibilities makes the most compelling case for her as a self-aware New Woman. Altschul embraced the dualities of being a proactive, self-assured modern photographer while also fitting the “traditional” role of a wife and mother, and projected a rewarding, complex identity as a worker. She was a champion of women’s work: as mother and wife, as the family archivist, through her artistic, photographic labor as part of the FCCB, as well as in her managerial role in Arteflor, with its staff of mostly women. Just as photography did for Gertrudes Altschul, their detailed, manual work likely put the women she employed on the path to lives of greater freedom.

\textsuperscript{218} Riches, “Picture Taking and Picture Making,” 138.
Conclusion

The mid-1940s to the end of the 1950s were a crucial period for the renewal of the photographic language in São Paulo. Mostly excluded from the modernist wave that consolidated in São Paulo during the Semana de Arte Moderna in 1922, photography remained outside the conversations of avant-garde artists until the 1940s, when it took on a greater presence in the city due to the exhibitions and the work of the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante. The relative confinement of an art photography practice (distinguished from the use of photojournalism in the press) to amateur clubs until the mid- to late 1940s led to the perpetuation of a Pictorialist language in Brazil for much longer than in the U.S. or Europe. Then, in the mid-1940s, different forces coalesced that brought about the modernist aesthetic and new ways of looking for which the Foto Clube Bandeirante is today recognized. The FCCB Pioneers and their new visual investigations, an influential photography exhibition by MoMA, the founding of the city’s new museums and their heralding of the photographic medium as worthy of their galleries were all instrumental factors in the development of a modernist photographic language in the 1950s—to which Gertrudes Altschul contributed in an important way. Today, the FCCB’s legacy is doubtless on a path to greater recognition following the exhibition at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in 2016 and the acquisition of the exhibition’s 279 prints by the museum, as well as through recent acquisitions of FCCB work by MoMA and the Tate. Nonetheless, this thesis proves how much work still needs to be done to analyze the individual contributions of FCCB photographers.
As this study on Gertrudes Altschul demonstrates, the FCCB’s environment was both regimented and open to experimentation, allowing photographers like Altschul to develop a multifarious and rich practice that included a personal point of view. Through her montages of buildings in São Paulo she conveyed her reservations with the rapid expansion of the city around her, while her formal experiments with leaves revealed a more sensitive side. In addition, her attention to form and to the delicate shapes of botanical specimens can be understood as an indication of her appreciation of the exoticism of the Brazilian landscape. Through her compositions that honed in on the geometry in her surroundings, Altschul demonstrated her appreciation of the new form of looking celebrated by the club in the 1950s, while her table-top images allowed her to create original compositions all on her own, exercising her creativity and transmitting her subjectivity in a different manner. Her works make clear that she appreciated the modernist language and learned how to use it, but also bent it to serve her desire for self-expression. In this, her approach to photography echoed the aims of the subjective photography movement led by Otto Steinert and his Fotoform group in Germany, a correlation that becomes even more convincing given the connections between the FCCB and Steinert. Altschul’s work ultimately conveyed a careful consideration of the modernity developing around her, a reflection of her experience of this historical moment from the vantage of being a woman and an immigrant in midcentury São Paulo. In her ability to use an aesthetic language destined for objective viewing to convey a subjective position, Altschul built a body of work that stood up to the work of her peers in the FCCB but also presents compelling connections to work made by photographers in other cities in Latin America, and in the U.S. and Europe.
There is doubtless a critical point to be considered in examining Altschul’s identity as a European woman contributing to the history of photography in Brazil. It is precisely the kind of narrative that merits close examination for the way it illustrates a constant exchange between countries and cultures. Her story proves how art historical narratives are the product of entangled histories: although Altschul’s identity was shaped by her native Germany, her development as an artist occurred in Brazil. Her modernist photographs were as much the result of some European and U.S. influences as a reflection of urban and cultural changes specific to São Paulo in the 1940s and 1950s, and personal factors inherent to her identity as an immigrant woman. This consideration of Altschul not as a stereotype of a European artistic export but as an individual artist—a woman—with personal imperatives and a unique perspective is further underscored when her personal albums are drawn into the conversation. In considering these physical objects as part of her artistic output and as objects that cast light on different parts of her life, a more textured image appears of her as an artist but also as a worker who engaged in a creative practice that echoes the labor she put towards her meticulous photographs. In offering a glimpse into Altschul’s construction of her identity as a woman and artist within her albums, and in considering her representation of the women who worked for her family business as strong, empowered individuals, Altschul made a larger statement about the value of women and their work, which in turn is reflected in the way she approached photography with dedication, diligence, and an unconventional point of view.

Under the guise of a monographic thesis, my study of the photographs of Altschul sheds light on the different contexts in which she existed as a woman and as an artist: in her home, as part of the family business, as a public figure of sorts, and as part of the
FCCB. The story of Altschul as an immigrant “New Woman” and an artist photographer in São Paulo, a city that was itself undergoing a complex process of transformation, only underscores the multiplicities of this particular modern moment. Ultimately, with an identity shaped by her German cultural heritage, her journey of immigration to Brazil, and her openness towards her new home in São Paulo, on the one hand, and an artistic sensibility influenced by the modernist photographic language of the Foto Cine Clube, on the other, Gertrudes Altschul emerges as an important figure whose quiet works add nuance to an effervescent and important moment in the history of Brazilian photography.
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*Foto Cine Boletins:*

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*Catalogues of Salon Exhibitions Organized by the Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante in São Paulo:*

XIII Salão Internacional de Arte Fotográfica, Galeria Prestes Maia, São Paulo [Foto Cine Boletim: Número Especial], November 1954 [catalogue].

14 Salão Internacional de Arte Fotográfica, Galeria Prestes Maia, São Paulo, October 1955 [catalogue].

15 Salão Internacional de Arte Fotográfica, Galeria Prestes Maia, São Paulo, October 1956 [catalogue].

16 Salão Internacional de Arte Fotográfica, S. Paulo [Edição Especial Foto Cine Boletim], 1957, Galeria Prestes Maia, October 1957 [catalogue].

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13a Exposição Mundial de Arte Fotográfica, Niterói, Brasil, organized by Sociedade Fluminense de Fotografia, 1960, Niterói Brasil.

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Fig. 1: Proposta para sócio No. 1008: Gertrudes M. Altschul (Member registration), Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante, June 29, 1952. Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
Fig. 2: *Ficha de sócio No. 1008: Gertrudes M. Altschul* (Member registration), Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante, July 9, 1952. Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
Fig. 3: Gertrudes Altschul, *Arquitetura or Triângulo or Composição*, n.d. Published in *Anuario Brasileiro de Fotografia [Edição Especial do Foto Cine Boletim]*, 1957
Fig. 4: Valêncio de Barros, *Manhã luminosa (Bertioga)* (Luminous morning, Bertioga), 1942. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 5: Henri Laurent, *Paisagem do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro landscape), n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 6: Thomaz Farkas, *Side Facade of the Ministry of Education and Heath, Rio de Janerio*, ca. 1945. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 8: Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Seville, Spain*, 1933. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2016 Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos, courtesy Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris
Fig. 9: José Yalenti, *Paralelas e diagonais* (Parallels and diagonals), 1945. Collection of Pirelli / MASP de Fotografia
Fig. 10: Thomaz Farkas, *Movimento da praia* (Beach movement), n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
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Fig. 12:  German Lorca, *Cadeira com guarda-chuvas* (Chair with umbrella), 1951. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
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Fig. 14: Gertrudes Altschul, *Folha morta* (recto), 1956. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 15: Gertrudes Altschul, *Folha morta* (verso), 1956. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 16: German Lorca, *Chuva na janela* (verso), 1950. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 17: Example of “Relações” (listings) document keeping track of photographs sent to Salon, São Paulo, July 25, 1962. Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
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Fig. 20:  *Foto Cine Boletim* 7, no. 84 (1953) (cover photograph by Gertrudes Altschul). Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
Fig. 21:  Gertrudes Altschul photographed alongside her photographs Folha morta [center, vertical] and Vasos e plantas, s.d. [right]. Likely taken at the 12º Salão Internacional de Arte Fotografica, São Paulo, 1953
Fig. 22: Gertrudes Altschul, *Linhas e tons*, ca. 1952. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 23: Nelson Kojranski, *Composição com figura*, 1955. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
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Fig. 26:  *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 95 (April–May 1955) (cover photograph by Eduardo Salvatore)
Fig. 27: Ivo Ferreira da Silva, *Bandeira Paulista*, n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 28: Grete Stern, *Sueño 20: Perspectiva* (Dream no. 20: Perspective), 1949. IVAM, Institut Valencià d’Art Modern
Fig. 29:  Gertrudes Altschul, *Untitled*, ca. 1950. Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 30: Gertrudes Altschul, *Untitled*, ca. 1950. Collection Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 31: Tina Modotti, *Telephone Wires, Mexico*, c. 1925. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
Fig. 32: Berenice Abbott, *Canyon, Broadway and Exchange, New York*, 1936. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
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Fig. 34: Gertrudes Altschul, *Detras da cortinha*, n.d. Published in *Anuário Brasileiro de Fotografia [Edição Especial do Foto Cine Boletim]*, 1957
Fig. 35:  Gertrudes Altschul, *Composição com folhas*, n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 36: Gertrudes Altschul, *Vasos e plantas*, n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
Fig. 37: Gertrudes Altschul, *Untitled*, ca. 1950. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York
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Fig. 39: Pages from *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 98 (January–April 1956) (featuring Ademar Manarini, *Nervura* [Nerves] (n.d.). Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
Fig. 40: Pages from *Foto Cine Boletim* 9, no. 97 (August–October 1955) (featuring Ademar Manarini, *Nervura* [Nerves], n.d.). Foto Cine Clube Bandeirante (FCCB) Archive, São Paulo
Fig. 41: Henry Fox Talbot, *Wrack*, 1839 (photogenic drawing). Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
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Fig. 45:  *Foto Cine Boletim* 8, no. 86 (January 1954) (cover photograph *Contos do bosque* [Tales from the forest], by Roberto Yoshida)
Fig. 46:  Foto Cine Boletim 8, no. 92 (September 1954) (cover photograph Metropole [Metropolis] by Roberto Yoshida)
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Fig. 51: Gertrudes Altschul, *Composição*, date unknown. Collection of Ernst Altschul
Fig. 52: Gertrudes Altschul, *Trio*, n.d. Collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP)
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Fig. 54: Representations of women in advertisements sponsored by Agfa and Kodak, early 1920s. Collection of Rubens Fernandes Júnior
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Fig. 56: Kodak promotional material, ca. 1920s. Collection of Rubens Fernandes Júnior
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Fig. 58: Advertisement from Belgian photography company Gevaert, ca. 1920s. Collection of Rubens Fernandes Júnior
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Fig. 60: Advertisement for Kosmos Foto featuring Bessa Voigtländer camera, 1930s–40s. Collection of Rubens Fernandes Júnior
Fig. 61: Gertrudes Altschul, Contact sheet showing variations on *Untitled*, 1950 (detail). Collection of Ernst Altschul

Fig. 62: George Demachy, *Cigarette Girl*, 1899. Collection of Imageworks, Art, Architecture and Engineering Library, University of Michigan
Fig. 63: Germaine Krull, *Self-Portrait*, 1925. Collection of Ann and Jürgen Wilde, Zülpich
Fig. 64: Frances Benjamin Johnson, *Full-Length Portrait, Seated in Front of Fireplace, Facing Left, Holding Cigarette in One Hand and a Beer Stein in the Other, in Her Washington, D.C. Studio*, 1896. Collection of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.
Fig. 65:  Gertrudes Altschul, [Page from second album], 1950s. Collection of Ernst Altschul
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Fig. 70: Gertrudes Altschul, “O mundo em que vivo” (The world I live in) [page from first album], 1940s. Collection of Ernst Altschul
Fig. 71: Gertrudes Altschul, [Page from first album], 1940s. Collection of Ernst Altschul
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Fig. 75: Gertrudes Altschul, “Turma” (casual, “the gang”) [page from first album], 1941/43. Collection of Ernst Altschul
Fig. 76: Gertrudes Altschul, “Jardim das Flores” (Garden of flowers) [page from first album], 1940s. Collection of Ernst Altschul
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Fig. 81: *LIFE* magazine cover, August 9, 1943, featuring photograph by Margaret Bourke-White. The LIFE Picture Collection / Getty Images
Fig. 82: Howard Miller, “We Can Do It” poster, 1943. Collection of the National Museum of American History, Washington, DC