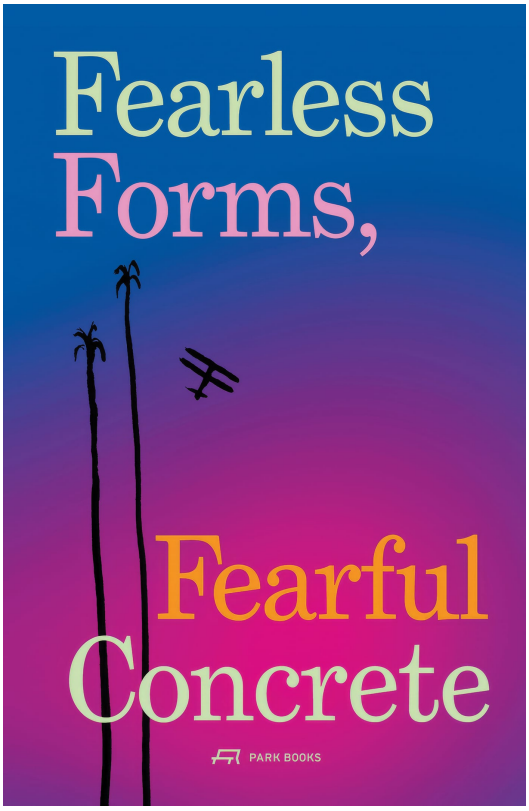
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Fearless Forms, Fearful Concrete

The Onset of Brazilian Modern Architecture

André Tavares

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- A highly readable, entertaining history of modernist architecture and reinforced concrete as a defining building material in early 20th-century Brazil
- Examines subtle connections between a wide range of topics, from technology to eugenics, from medicine to construction techniques, from prostitution to urban renewal
- A vacation read for architects and a broad audience interested in architectural history
- Brazil's modernist architecture and its interrelated cultural and literary sources enjoy lasting international interest

Fearless Forms, Fearful Concrete reads like an architectural soap opera in early 20th-century Brazil. The book is about new technologies, cultural debates, and the dawn of modernism in architecture, with novel reinforced concrete as a reference point. The design for Brasília, the country's new capital, marks a culmination of Brazilian anxieties around national identity: camouflaged under whitewashed surfaces of iconic buildings, engineers and architects created the narratives to support their projects.

The protagonists are leading figures of Brazil's architectural modernism, such as Lucio Costa, Joaquim Cardozo, and Oscar Niemeyer, and international artists and intellectuals including Tarsila do Amaral, Monteiro Lobato, Le Corbusier, and Blaise Cendrars. Their complex web of relationships illustrates boundaries of public discourse and the subtle connections between a wide range of topics, from technology to eugenics, from medicine to construction techniques, from prostitution to urban renewal.

For decades, 20th-century architecture was uncritically portrayed and praised as an organised, well-intended contribution to order and progress in society. Today, the negative impacts of construction and tensions concealed by public discourse are finally receiving due attention. André Tavares's book contributes to a critical examination of celebrated modernist architects' means and methods without ignoring their achievements and limitations.

André Tavares is a Porto-based architect, researcher, curator, and director of architecture publisher Dafne Editora. He is the author of *Architecture Follows Fish, Vitruvius Without Text,* and *The Anatomy of the Architectural Book.*







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