



Collections of the sexagenarian Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center at the University of Brasilia

***Acervos do sexagenário Centro de Planejamento Oscar Niemeyer
da Universidade de Brasília***

***Colecciones del sexagenario Centro de Planificación Oscar
Niemeyer
de la Universidad de Brasilia***

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Abstract

Brazil's new capital, Brasília, and the University of Brasília (UnB), inaugurated in 1960 and 1962, respectively, are the result of the confidence in the national cultural capacity and of substantial investment in the country's development. In order to technically advise the University's administration on matters pertaining to physical planning, in the month following its inauguration, the Planning Center (Ceplan) was created, being Oscar Niemeyer its first coordinator. This center assimilated the spirit of the time of its implementation, creating and bringing together relevant productions that can be characterized as different collections: the building itself is part of the architectural collection of UnB and has integrated works of art; the building's internal spaces house original furniture and models of relevant projects; and the documentation about planning and infrastructure projects in their various scales and specificities has a long history. This article presents the collections of the sixty-year-old Ceplan and places them, in some aspects, as a sample of other relevant collections of the University.

Key-Words: Art, Building, Collection, Documentation, Furniture, University.

Resumo

A nova capital do Brasil, Brasília, e a Universidade de Brasília (UnB), inauguradas em 1960 e 1962, respectivamente, são frutos da crença na capacidade cultural nacional e de vultoso investimento no desenvolvimento do país. Com o intuito de assessorar tecnicamente a administração da Universidade em relação aos assuntos atinentes ao planejamento físico, no mês seguinte à sua inauguração foi criado o Centro de Planejamento (Ceplan), tendo como primeiro coordenador Oscar Niemeyer. Esse centro assimilou o espírito da época da sua implantação, criando e reunindo relevantes produções que podem ser caracterizadas como diferentes acervos: seu edifício faz parte do acervo arquitetônico da UnB e conta com obras de arte integradas; os espaços internos do prédio abrigam mobiliário original e maquetes de projetos relevantes; e a documentação acerca dos planos e projetos de infraestrutura, em suas diversas escalas e especificidades, registra uma longa trajetória. Este artigo apresenta os acervos do sexagenário Ceplan e os situam, em alguns aspectos, enquanto amostra de outros relevantes acervos da Universidade.

Palavras-Chave: Acervo, Arte, Documentação, Edifício, Mobiliário, Universidade.

Resumen

La nueva capital de Brasil, Brasília, y la Universidad de Brasília (UnB), inauguradas en 1960 y 1962, respectivamente, son el resultado de la perdurabilidad de la capacidad cultural nacional y de la inversión agrícola en el desarrollo del país. Con el fin de asesorar técnicamente a la administración de la Universidad en asuntos relacionados con la planificación física, en el mes siguiente a su inauguración se creó el Centro de Planificación (Ceplan), con Oscar Niemeyer como primer coordinador. Este centro asimiló el espíritu de la época de su implementación, creando y reuniendo producciones relevantes que se pueden caracterizar como diferentes colecciones: su edificio forma parte del acervo arquitectónico de la UnB y ha integrado obras de arte; los espacios internos del edificio albergan mobiliario original y maquetas de proyectos relevantes; y los documentos sobre planes y proyectos de infraestructura en sus diversas escalas y especificidades registran una larga trayectoria. Este artículo presenta las colecciones del Ceplan de sesenta años y las sitúa, en algunos aspectos, como muestra de otras colecciones relevantes de la Universidad.

Palabras clave: Arte, Colección, Construcción, Documentación, Mobiliario, Universidad.



1. Introduction

In the 1950s, in a context of economic development and cultural changes, the then president of Brazil, Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, chose as a synthesis of his government the construction of a new capital for the country. With the spotlight on people such as Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, and having anonymous men and women underpinning its construction, with great effort, Brasília was inaugurated on April 21, 1960.

For the modern capital, which marked Brazilians' building capability, was envisioned a university in line with the bold and innovative spirit of the time. The inauguration of the University of Brasília (UnB) and its campus took place on April 21, 1962. UnB was conceived as a reference for other universities, as it would enable "(...) the adoption of structural reforms demanded for years, with the purpose of adapting them to the training needs of scientists and technologists to meet the imperatives of national development" (RIBEIRO, 1963, p. 4). The desire for academic renewal also instigated the search for new ways of approaching issues related to the physical planning of the University.

In May 1962, the Planning Center (Ceplan) was created with the aim of technically advising the administration of UnB in matters relating to physical planning. Its first coordinator was Oscar Niemeyer, who, leading a talented team, mobilized efforts to ensure that the university's urbanism and architecture were at the height of the innovative proposal of the new capital.

Brasília, UnB in general, and Ceplan in particular, are part of a unique moment in the country. They are interlinked in a context of belief in national cultural capacity and massive investment to improve national infrastructure. At the University, these aspects are embedded in institutional memory as well as in buildings, artifacts and documentation.

In an institution such as the University of Brasília, there are several collections, which are gathered, preserved and made available according to procedures within the scope of Archival Science, Librarianship and Museology. Concomitantly with all the documentation and artifacts – typical of a teaching, research and extension projects environment – with the potential to constitute collections, there is the university territory. As a support for academic life, the physical territory encompasses information related to architecture, urbanism, art, landscaping and furniture.

Society, following the spirit of its time, chooses what may constitute a relevant collection in relation to the city, society, the environment etc. "It is interesting to observe that things are not documents at birth. Things are things. In other words, objects are born objects, with certain and specific functions" (CHAGAS, 1994, pp. 34-35). Darcy Ribeiro University Campus, which houses UnB, can be seen as a document, a large architectural collection where, in about a hundred buildings and in several open spaces, part of the history and memory of the University hangs.

The building that houses Ceplan – named SG 10 (Fig. 1), acronym for General Services – is representative of the architectural collection of UnB. Resulting from a pioneering experience with the technology of precast concrete, it also has the differential of having integrated works of art. Another collection is the furniture present in the building, which shares the space with some relevant models of architectural proposals. Finally, there is the collection made up of documentation, in physical or digital format, about the infrastructure plans and projects developed by Ceplan in their various scales and specificities. "The teaching, as we know, does not emanate from and is not embedded in the document. It is there, springs up and emerges from the relationship that can be maintained with the document/testimony" (CHAGAS, 1994, p. 34). The first step in understanding something as teachable is to discover or to assign to it a value as reminiscence relevant to society.

Figure 1: Facade of SG 10, building that houses Ceplan.



Source: Eduardo Oliveira Soares (2015)

The importance of Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center in relation to the history of the University and the city can be seen in the diversified documentation that was generated throughout its existence and in the building that serves as its headquarters, as well. Consciously or unconsciously, “the archive and the documents are manufactured, as well as the narratives that use them” (ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR, 2013, p. 25). The relevance of Ceplan has already been highlighted in publications such as the pioneering “Architectural Record of the University of Brasília” (SCHLEE *et al*, 2013) and the thesis “CEPLAN: 50 years in 5 times” (CAVALCANTE, 2015). However, an approach highlighting its collections had not yet been carried out. This prompted the writing of this article.

In 2022, both the University of Brasília and Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center turned 60. It is a good opportunity to celebrate Ceplan, which assimilated the spirit of the time of its implementation, creating and bringing together relevant productions that can be characterized as different collections.

A document is constituted at the moment we cast our questioning gaze upon it; the moment we ask the name of the object, what raw material is it made of, when and where it was made, who is its author, what theme is it about, what is its function, in what social, political, economic and cultural context was it produced and used, what relationship it had with certain actors and historical conjunctures etc. (CHAGAS, 1994, p. 35).

The material base in which the documents are expressed are diverse, so we can treat them not only as a collection, but as collections related to more than one area of knowledge. This article is divided into topics: Trajectory; Building; Artifacts; and Documentation presenting the Ceplan collections, placing them, in some aspects, as samples of other relevant UnB’s collections. The analysis started with the research on documents and artifacts themselves, which, consequently, made it possible to know, evaluate and contextualize information both about their constitution and about the conditions of custody, conservation and modes of availability.

The building, the works of art incorporated into it, the furniture, the models and the documentation of the Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center constitute a whole that synthesizes part of the history of the University of Brasília.



2. Trajectory

The Planning Center, in its initial form, was responsible for (1) the physical planning and design of the buildings; (2) support for the political-pedagogical project; and (3) research and production of innovative technologies to be used inside and outside UnB (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 386). The professionals immersed themselves in these tasks that involved administrative issues as well as teaching, research and extension.

In the midst of actions against freedom of expression promoted during the period of the Military Dictatorship implemented in the country in 1964. On October 18 of the following year, 15 professors were fired from the University, accused of incompetence or subversion. Some were arrested. Oscar Niemeyer was on the list of names on an arrest warrant, but he was not in Brasília. The following day, 223 of the 305 teachers resigned (CAVALCANTE, 2015, pp. 153-154). The abrupt interference in the activities of a university still in the implementation phase, changed the team and Ceplan's activities. The construction works continued, however, "(...) little or nothing was produced at Ceplan between 1965 and 1968" (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 169).

In the 1970s, Ceplan was renamed Experimental Laboratory of Architecture and Urbanism (LEAU), linked to the Institute of Arts and Architecture (IAA). The documentation does not always converge to a single piece of information about past events. In this case, there are different dates for this new nomenclature: 1970 (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 389), 1973 (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 187) and 1978 (SCHLEE *et al*, 2013, p. 42).

In 1986, the acronym Ceplan was resumed, this time as the acronym for Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center (SCHLEE *et al*, 2013, p. 42). The building that houses it was named "SG 10 – Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center". Also in 1986, the Campus Management Office was implemented, which "implied an overlapping of functions" (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 390) between the planning, design, construction and maintenance of built spaces, a situation that lasted over time.

Since then, Ceplan is sometimes linked to the Rector's Office, to a Deanship or Secretariat. Between bright and dark moments, its production remains a reference in the institutional memory of the University (CAVALCANTE, 2015); in the planning of campuses and development of construction techniques (ALBERTO, 2008); and in the structuring of undergraduate and graduate courses in Architecture and Urbanism at UnB (ALIAGA FUENTES, 2017). After the collective dismissal, Ceplan's activities were restricted to physical planning and architectural projects.

In addition to the university's oldest Campus, three more were created in this century in Planaltina, Gama and Ceilândia. In these four campuses, the total built area is 637,712 m² (UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA, 2020).

3. Building

The location of the UnB Campus partially followed the proposal of Lucio Costa (1991, p. 24) in his *Plano Piloto de Brasília Report*. The changes introduced at the time of the Plan's implementation were the result of suggestions from the jury that analyzed the proposals for the new capital project, the complications of the political transfer process, and the post-occupancy evaluation (LEITÃO, 2003, pp. 152- 153). The Campus is located in the northeast quadrant of the city, with a small shift to the north in relation to the original proposal of Brasília.

One of the instruments for recognizing the relevance of places, buildings, artifacts etc. is their inclusion in a heritage list, which is carried out through the initiative of the local or national Executive Power. In the case of SG 10, this process is being evaluated by the *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (Iphan) through the Listing Process 2011-T-22. The delay in indicating and analyzing its heritage status may be due to the overshadowing caused by the significant presence of listed works,



mostly by Oscar Niemeyer, in the city. The architecture of the Campus, however, is on the same level as Brasília.

When walking through the Campus, one has contact with a rich and diversified architectural and landscape heritage that reveals layers of avant-garde, aesthetics and politics (FERREIRA *et al*, 2014, p. 14). The Campus is located in the Urbanistic Complex of Brasília, an urban site listed by the Federal Government and recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage Site.

The University of Brasília's art collection is also significant, consisting of works in different languages and media. Over decades, “the legacy of about a thousand works housed in different collections and unique circumstances offers the opportunity to bring us closer to part of UnB’s history and its importance in the constitution of the capital’s artistic scene” (FERREIRA *et al*, 2014, p. 9). In SG 10, which houses the Ceplan, there are three mural paintings by Oscar Niemeyer.

The urbanism and architecture of the University Campus were the responsibility of the same duo that defined the landscape of Brasília: Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer. The Plano Piloto of the University of Brasília was elaborated by Lucio Costa in 1960 (UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA, 1962, p. 22) and presents – evidently – a campus in line with the urbanism of the city: buildings immersed in a large green area. In the month following the inauguration of the University, “the Board of Directors of UnB established the Ceplan as a Technical Advisory body for the Rector, under the coordination of Oscar Niemeyer, with Lucio Costa and the engineer and poet Joaquim Cardoso as consultants.” (CAVALCANTE, 2015, pp. 69-70). Once the capital was inaugurated, part of those professionals responsible for its construction migrated to the University of Brasília in order to continue a journey of great challenges and achievements. In this initial period, Ceplan was subdivided into the Urban Planning Section, in which Lucio Costa, Jaime Zettel and Italo Campofiorito worked, and the Architecture Section, which brought together Oscar Niemeyer, João Filgueiras Lima, Sabino Barroso, Glauco Campelo, Virgílio Sosa Gomes, Evandro Pinto Silva, Carlos Bitencourt, Hilton Gerson Costa, Abel Accioly, Darcy S. Pinheiro and Oscar B. Kneipp (PESSINA, 1964, p. 30).

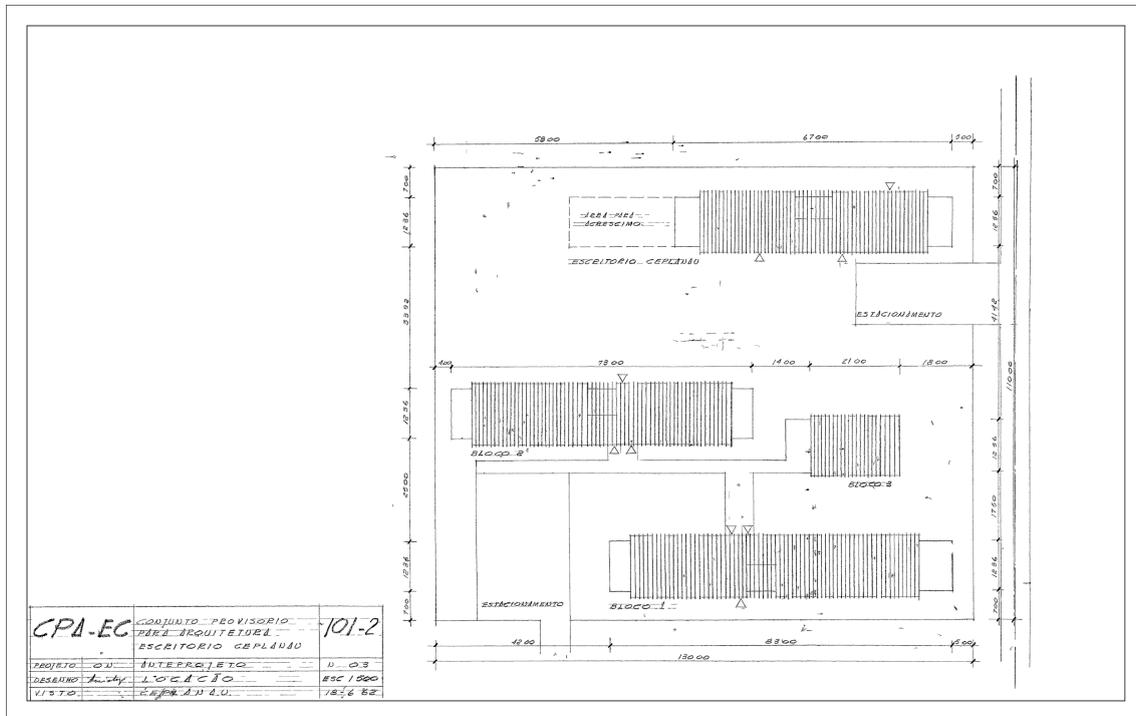
Ceplan was a pioneer in Brazil in design and construction, using prefabrication. Starting in 1962, four apartment buildings, seven “sheds” for General Services (including the building that houses Ceplan) and the monumental *Instituto Central de Ciências* (ICC) were designed and built on the Campus (PESSINA, 1964, p. 25). Projects were also prepared – not executed – for clients external to UnB (PESSINA, 1964, p. 30).

The Darcy Ribeiro University Campus’ typology of architecture, considering temporality, can be divided into five phases: the first is predominantly characterized by the experimentation of prefabricated systems; the second, by the use of concrete in a raw and expressive form; the third, by the heterogeneity of the proposals; the fourth, by the attempt to recover architectural features already established at UnB (SCHLEE *et al*, 2013, p. 19). From the 2010s onwards, a fifth phase of the Campus architecture can be identified: the predominance of the exhaustive and indiscriminate repetition of some model projects. The SG 10 building, which houses Ceplan, is part of the first phase of the Campus architecture.

The so-called SGs – five one-story buildings and three two-story buildings – are part of, among other spaces, the UnB Campus Historic Site “considering the historical, symbolic and affective values of the first living and studying area” (UNIVERSIDADE DE BRASÍLIA, 2009). The SG 10, designed in 1962 by Oscar Niemeyer, and built in 1963, has one floor. The buildings’ detailing was carried out by João Filgueiras Lima, nicknamed Lelé, and the original landscaping is by Alda Rabelo. Lelé recalls that, in that period, Niemeyer, in addition to his activities at UnB, was involved in carrying out projects abroad. On the eve of a trip, “he outlined a little project: how Ceplan space should be. (...) Then, Oscar came back and organized everything. Right there, Ceplan’s role was outlined” (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 470). In a plan of Ceplan's own collection, there is an indication of an expansion area (Fig. 2) next to the location of the “Ceplan Office”. The floor plan of the original proposal, without the “expansion”, is the one that appears on publications of the time, such as *Revista Modulo* (NIEMEYER, 1963, p. 28) and

Revista Acrópole (NIEMEYER, 1970, p. 33). The actual construction is a little bigger than originally thought (Fig. 3) and it houses, next to Ceplan, a space called “*Núcleo de Vivência*”, with independent access, commonly used for artistic activities.

Figure 2: Preliminary Project – Lease. The “Ceplan Office” is at the top of the drawing (1962).

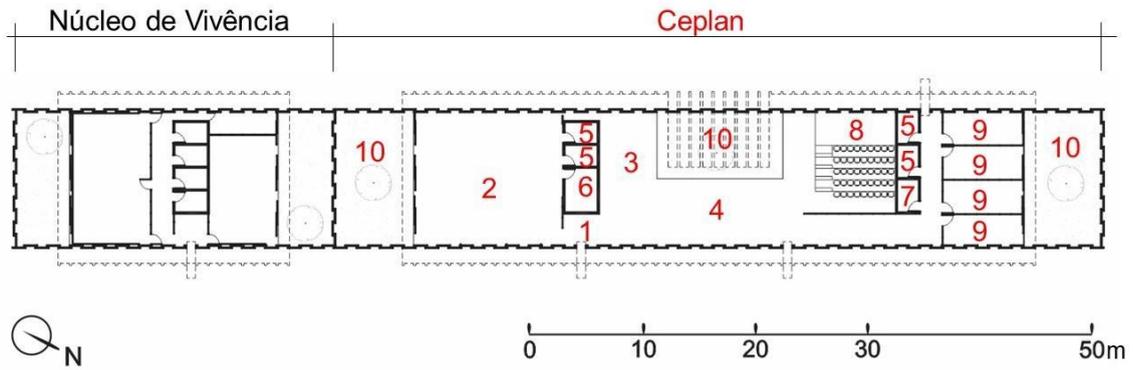


Source: UnB/Ceplan

Ceplan occupies most of the building, which “presents, at the same time, simplicity and sophistication in the solutions proposed, having a structural system based on the use of only two prefabricated reinforced concrete pieces” (SCHLEE et al, 2013, p. 42). These pieces were joined by simple materials, such as the flat aluminum sheet of the roof, the styrofoam lining and the granite floor. The ingenuity of the construction of SGs set of buildings, carried out over 45 days, was documented in the audiovisual record UnB: first experience in precast (FORTHMANN, 1970). The architectural design “aimed to create an environment of tranquility conducive to work. This explains the entire building closed to the outside and the small internal patios that guarantee the desired intimacy” (NIEMEYER, 1963, p. 26). Over the years, fortunately, the building has not changed its use or been de-characterized.

Decades after its construction, the experience in precast that took place at UnB is still a national reference and the SG 10 is one of its best examples. The building is characterized by being a closed and low volume on the outside (Fig. 1), white painted and accessed through red swinging doors. Internally, it has free space, integrated with gardens and an excavated auditorium. Marcel Gautherot recorded, in photographs, the diversity of tasks that took place in the early years of Ceplan (Figs. 4 and 5). One can imagine the photographer looking for the best angle to capture images between team meetings and classes that were taught in the Auditorium.

Figure 3: Floor Plan of SG 10.



Caption: 1 – Hall; 2 – Drawing room; 3 – Meetings; 4 – Exhibitions; 5 – Toilets; 6 – Deposit (originally, Copier); 7 – Cup; 8 – Auditorium; 9 – Direction; 10 - Garden.
Source: *Registro Arquitetônico* (SCHLEE *et al*, 2013, p. 42) adapted by the author (2022)

Figure 4: Interior of SG 10 – Meetings.



Source: Marcel Gautherot (circa 1963/1964), Instituto Moreira Sales (IMS)

In the SG 10, there are 10 works of art integrated into the architecture: three mural paintings by Oscar Niemeyer. In one of the accesses, there is a drawing of a dove with the word “peace” in six languages. In the Meetings space (Fig. 4), there are sketches of the proposals for the Rectory, Museum and Aula Magna buildings, which would integrate the Main Square (SCHLEE, 2018). None of Niemeyer's projects were carried out. The walls that receive these paintings in black strokes are white, reflecting the light of the environment. In the Auditorium, in white lines on a black base, consistent with the low light of a back wall, there is a sketch of the National Congress and the original columns used in the palaces of Brasília (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Interior of SG 10 - Auditorium.



Source: Marcel Gautherot (circa 1963/1964), Instituto Moreira Salles (IMS)

These paintings contribute to the uniqueness and relevance of the building, placing it in the circuit of works of art at the University of Brasília. Oscar Niemeyer's paintings evoke the time when Brasília was established and recall the timeless need for peace. Considering that they were made by the author of the project of the building in which they are inserted and that they are part of a space that served as a professional environment, they give rise to speculations about what this workplace would be like, where the celerity of the execution of the tasks was reconciled with that of the expression artistic.



Niemeyer's murals present themselves as works of art that are easily accessible to the public, unlike much of the rest of the University's art collection, located in "cabinets, halls, or stored in map libraries, within technical reserves or in the Rare Works section from the Central Library" (FERREIRA et al, 2014, p. 15). So far, there is no museum at UnB to house its artistic or historical collection.

In SG 10, Niemeyer brought together in a simple space striking features of his approach to architecture: the permeability of spaces; the presence of internal gardens; the integration of works of art. It is a sample of what can be seen in the monumental palaces and other public buildings in Brasília.

The dialogue between architecture and integrated works of art is recurrent in history, however, in the context of the avant-gardes of the first half of the 20th century and the discussions at the International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAMs), it was re-elaborated. SG 10 is an example of the concept of synthesis of the arts, emphasizing that "works of art must be present in the space of architecture and the city in a relationship of mutual interference" (GONSALES, 2012). In this synthetic approach, "all the elements are related, forming a harmonic unit, with a value greater than its simple juxtaposition" (MELO, 2003, p.122). The precision of the arrangement and the chromia of the Ceplan panels result in this characteristic. It is recorded that Brasília, even before its inauguration, hosted the International Congress of Art Critics, in 1959, whose theme was *The new city – synthesis of the arts*.

The building follows the guidelines that Niemeyer chose for projects at that stage of his career: "compact, simple and geometric solutions; the problems of hierarchy and architectural character; the conveniences of unity and harmony between the buildings and, also, that they are no longer expressed by their secondary elements, but by the structure itself, duly integrated in the original plastic conception" (NIEMEYER, 1958, pp. 4-5). Therefore, this small building documents, through architecture, part of Niemeyer's creative essence.

"When a document is created, the need to preserve it immediately arises from its constitution. Over time, this need requires permanent confirmation" (CHAGAS, 1994, p. 38). Registering the peculiarities of this building endorses the already recognized need to maintain its original characteristics and the strength of the nomenclature and the acronym Ceplan.

Regarding the architectural collection of UnB, the SG 10 is an example of the phase in which precast technology was used for the first time. However, there is also its uniqueness within the Campus, for being a building that evokes the synthesis of the arts. In addition, SG 10 records aspects that mark most of UnB's buildings. At the Darcy Ribeiro University Campus, "through the integration between internal and external spaces and the presence of vegetation, the sky, the sun and the shadow constituent elements of the architectural expression of several buildings" (SOARES, 2021, p. 246). The concrete, the gardens and the art are complemented, at Ceplan, by the furniture and models that decorate its main hall.

4. Artifacts

Commonly, works of art can be associated with conservation and musealization actions. However, everyday objects can move from an impression of banality to a recognition as an artifact whose design or history has relevance to society. In fact, this is an intrinsic characteristic of objects used in everyday life, such as furniture. The furniture "is an inseparable part of the history of the University of Brasília and of the entire context that involved the will of the architects-designers who participated in it" (COSTA JÚNIOR, 2014, p. 189). Because it was exposed to wear and tear, much of UnB's furniture was lost. As a result, the remaining pieces of furniture seem to concentrate even more the characteristic of a representative artifact of an era.

As well as the works of art, the furniture still awaits an exhibition space at the University of Brasília that does justice to a collection dispersed in administrative and academic environments. In them there is not always adequate conservation and visibility.

Figura 6: Furniture at Ceplan.



Source: Eduardo Oliveira Soares (2015)

Some of the UnB's original furniture can be found at Ceplan. In SG 10, there is furniture designed by University's pioneering architects. Regarding furniture, there are in Ceplan's own project collection "(...) furniture designs, such as work and meeting tables, shelves and sofas, among others, with the name or initials" (COSTA JÚNIOR, 2014, p. 146) by Sérgio Rodrigues and by Lelé. At that time, "both modern architecture and furniture ultimately obeyed the prerogatives of a world conception, that is, of a type of artistic, scientific, technical and social process that we could call, in its totality, a process of emancipatory modernization." (MARI, 2014, p. 161). Tables, chairs and sofas are still in use at Ceplan, which serve the building's staff and visitors and are reminiscent of the furniture used in the University's first decade (Fig. 6). The ironwood chair in braided leather, which is attributed to Luiz Marçal Neto (COSTA JÚNIOR, 2014, p. 143), and the sole leather chair, are part of the local collection. There is also a drawing board and exposed benches, as if in a tribute to the old way of designing.

The survival, at Ceplan, of this furniture of continuous use, is due to the recognition of its historical and design value. The University's collection of original furniture has a place of visibility in SG 10. However, just over a decade ago, it was possible to find original furniture from the University in a precarious state of conservation, piled up in the Central Warehouse of UnB.

There are also some models of building projects on Ceplan. They are traditionally accessible to SG 10 visitors in a space that, since its inception, has been called *Exhibitions* (Fig. 3). Of the approximately

two dozen models produced, some stand out due to the antiquity or quality with which they were executed.

There are mockups of unexecuted projects that, by themselves, generate curiosity. One of them is the Ecumenical Chapel (Fig. 7), proposed by Antônio Afonso Toledo, in the 1970s, which would be located between the Rectory and the Central Institute of Sciences (ICC). The fact that the model has a removable roof makes it even more interesting.

Figure 7: Model of the Ecumenical Chapel, proposed in the 1970s (not built).



Source: Eduardo Oliveira Soares (2015)

Perhaps the most esteemed model in the Ceplan collection is that of a building that is an icon of UnB: the *Instituto Central de Ciências*, designed in 1963. The model was authored (Fig. 8) by Oscar Niemeyer. It presents a proposal for the building that, due to its dimension – 700 meters in length –, use and location, guided the occupation of the University Campus.

The places in which an artifact circulates create and support its importance. This ICC model was shown at the exhibition *Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980* (Latin America in Construction: Architecture 1955–1980), organized by Barry Bergdoll, Carlos Eduardo Comas, Jorge Francisco Liernur and Patricio del Real (BERGDOLL *et al.*, 2015), which took place at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), in 2015. As a result of this exhibition, this artifact was given a new meaning, given a new value due to the place where it was presented. “Immersed in our contemporaneity, decorating environments, integrating collections or institutionalized in the museum, the antique object has all its previous meanings, uses and functions drained and is recycled, here and now, essentially, as an object-bearer-of-sense” (MENESES, 1992). This happens with objects in the personal and institutional context.

Figure 8: Model of the Central Institute of Sciences, designed in 1963.



Source: Eduardo Oliveira Soares (2015)

The models are three-dimensional documents – the other documents in the Ceplan collection will be discussed in the next topic –, and the “document has a history of its own constitution, as such, which interferes with the meanings it can offer” (ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR, 2013, p. 19). This ICC model was already relevant as a three-dimensional historical document signed by one of the country's leading architects. With the show in New York, its importance expanded.

What was perhaps just another model of a project, became, over time, an artifact that takes the observer to a time when the city and the University seemed to emerge from the conjunction of ambitious projects and hard work. An artifact that has already represented, abroad, the quality of architecture produced at Ceplan, at UnB, in Brasília, Brazil.

In SG 10, however, these tactile remnants of the University's past coexist with furniture and activities from the present time, which makes the environment even richer in the layers of temporalities. “The document is understood as an 'information support' that can only be preserved and rescued through questioning” (CHAGAS, 1994, p. 34). To know and question these temporalities, the community needs to be aware of the potential of information that these objects contain. The possibility of discarding artifacts, equipment or documents is great when there is no concern in identifying a value that transcends use. Perceiving something – the building, the works of art, the furniture, the models, as part of collections relevant to society, is a step towards promoting their preservation.

In the case of archival documentation, there is a whole regulation that supports its safekeeping. Documents from Ceplan's technical activities are, of course, another relevant collection to be highlighted.



5. Documentation

At UnB, in the 1980s initiatives on custody and access to documentation led to the creation of the Documentation and Archive Center (CEDAQ), in 1986, replaced by the Documentation Center (CEDOC), in 1988, and, finally, by the Central Archive (ACE), in 2014 (CENTRAL ARQUIVO da UnB, s.d.). At UnB, ACE follows, among other guidelines, Law n. 8,159, of 01/8/1991, and is responsible for advising the archival policy and managing its preservation and access. Part of its collection is available online through the AtoM platform – <https://www.atom.unb.br/>.

However, there are artifacts and documents that transcend this universe and it is “impossible to prejudge what one should remember” (NORA, 1993, p. 15). The evaluation of what may constitute a collection must be continuous, as the “archive document has the characteristic feature of being produced naturally and routinely, for practical imperatives, without any intention of becoming a source for history” (CAMARGO, 2003, p. 11). The perception of the importance of the collection, in fact, the very perception that the set of objects and documents form a collection, can only come after some time.

By having contact with the reminiscences of the past, which constitute the collections of society, researchers can innovate in readings, interpretations and correlations. The relationship with archives “is not just rational, documents move, stir the researcher’s sensitivity, documents become more or less relevant, they become worthy of election, choice, selection, collection, recording and citation for the emotion they cause in the researcher (...)” (ALBUQUERQUE JÚNIOR, 2013, p. 12). Within the scope of the cost center and the building that houses it, Ceplan awakens these sensations in some of its researchers and visitors.

The physical space planning activities developed over decades at Ceplan generated, and still does, abundant documentation. This institutionally created material demands archiving phases called: current, intermediate and permanent (RONCAGLIO, 2015, p. 72). The current phase is the one of documents created or changed very frequently. The intermediary is the one with occasional access. The documentation may be disposed of or kept permanently in the unit itself or in the institution's central archive. In the context of bidding and civil construction, for example, there is a requirement to keep the documentation for a minimum period.

“In permanent and historical archival literature, these are attributes that apply, almost indistinctly, to documents whose interest for posterity, and therefore, for retrospective research, recommends prolonged storage” (CAMARGO, 2003, p. 11). At UnB, the Central Archive houses thousands of documents, but few items from the Ceplan collection were sent to it.

In Ceplan's day-to-day activities, access to historical documentation is frequent, as it is the development of new products: plans, projects, buildings, opinions, memorials, budgets, etc. Commonly, there are several versions for each document, after all, plans and projects seek to follow the speed of science needs, normally held back by the limitations of financial or political availability. Between the initial idea and the finished product, years can pass, which entails the need to adjust plans and projects. Considering also the changes in legislation and University management, the *Definitive Plan* or *Final Project* always seems to be in the future.

Among thousands of documents, the *Use and Occupancy Plans* for each campus are included in the Ceplan collection. In relation to the oldest campus, the Darcy Ribeiro University Campus, it is observed that the documentation related to the use and occupation of the land presents some recurring aspects, such as: the lack of definition of the location of the front and back of the Campus (curiously something usual in lots and buildings in Brasília); the intention to build the Aula Magna (disregarding that the area defined for its location would interfere with one of the most pleasant spaces on the Campus); and the creation of a Technological Park (SOARES, 2018).



There are, in the Ceplan collection, documents related to moments of great investments in the University that propitiated the elaboration of studies on the building expansion and urban infrastructure. Of note are the Physical Development Plan for the Darcy Ribeiro University Campus, 1989; the UnB XXI Plan, from 2000; and the Plan related to the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI), 2007.

UnB has already mobilized the construction of more than a hundred buildings on its four campi and in the Dispersed Units, as the extra-campi spaces are called, such as Fazenda Água Limpa (FAL) and several existing buildings in the Federal District and Goiás. Each new building or urban proposal requires planning and design and, over time, reforms and/or expansions. A small work, depending on the complexity of the space, may require disproportionate documentation.

Large buildings, such as the Faculty of Medicine (FM) and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FS), which share the same building; the monumental ICC; or the Rectory, with its various administrative subdivisions, periodically request Reorganization Plans.

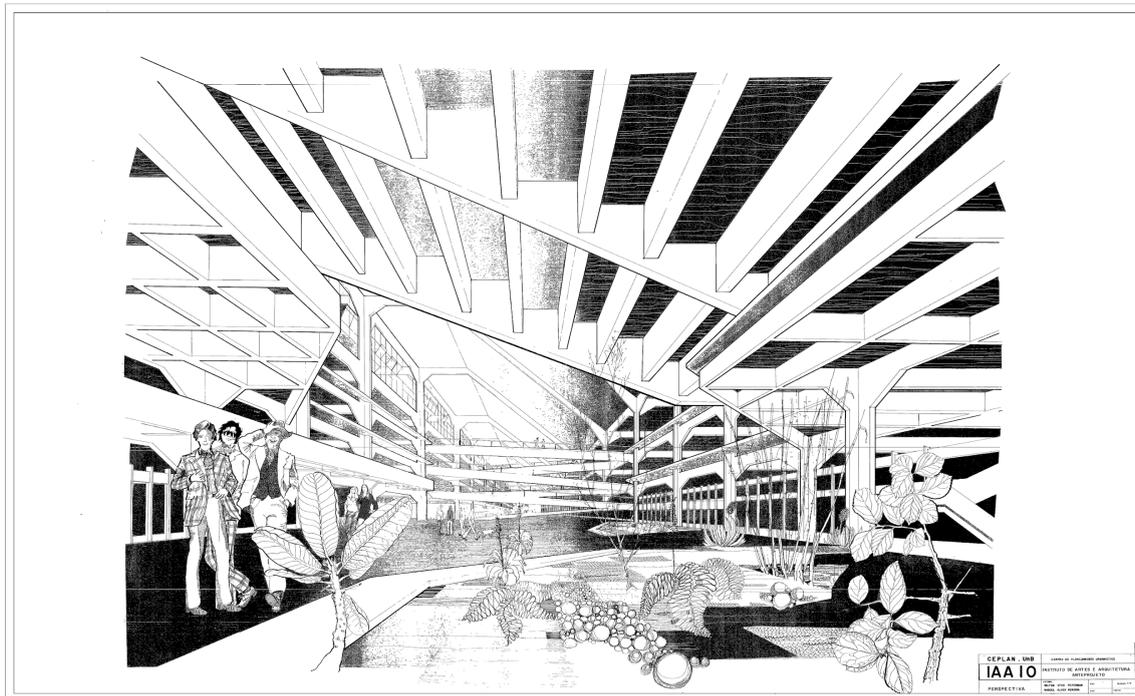
Texts, graphic pieces, budgets are in charge of about two dozen staff, a quantity that historically constitutes the team in the planning and design areas. The number of collaborators, including the construction team, at some point, as at the time of REUNI, exceeded a hundred. Considering how easy it is nowadays to create copies of digital documentation, it is a major challenge maintaining a standard of classification and naming it intelligibly to the entire team.

In the diversified documentation of the Ceplan collection, there are both paper documents and digital and born-digital documents. The interruption of the initial purposes arising from the actions of the Military Dictatorship, notably those in 1965, with the mass dismissal, had an impact on the custody of documentation. "With the abandonment of which it was a victim, due to the distance of its creators, much of Ceplan's brief history was left unrecorded: part of the material was removed from its premises, due to the threat of possible depredation, and another was damaged by time and bad treatments" (CAVALCANTE, 2015, p. 169). A relevant material found in the Central Archive of UnB is a set of drawings that the Panamanian architect Virgílio Sosa Gomes collected after the dissolution of the original team at the Center, in 1965. These documents were taken to the architect's country of origin and later returned – a procedure that involved the president of that country and the rector of UnB – in 2001 (SCHLEE, 2018, p. 166). Example of how documentation can literally circulate through multiple spaces.

On Ceplan's premises, some graphic pieces are from this initial phase that occupy more than twenty metallic map libraries. They are also stored in the traditional plastic tubes used to store drawing boards. This paper material has already been digitized, though not available via the Central Archive's AtoM system. The process of change of support is called data transmigration, because documents "that have to be preserved can no longer stand still, but, in order to be embodied, they have to be in permanent perambulation – like souls in reincarnation (...)" (ASSMANN, 2011, p. 380). Part of the paper documentation that integrated the internal processes – internally named UnBDOC – has already been digitized. In the 2010s, the processing of documents started to be done via the Electronic Information System (SEI), widely adopted by the public service.

In the digitized documents, there is, for example, the design of some unbuilt buildings, such as the headquarters of the Institute of Arts and Architecture (IAA), authored by Milton Vitis Fererman and Miguel Alves Pereira, in March 1973 (Fig. 9). There are also graphic pieces of some Occupancy Plans and a few drawings of the original furniture. Unfortunately, much of the material has been lost over the years, including most of the Central Science Institute project.

Figure 9: Perspective of the Institute of Arts and Architecture, designed in 1973 (not built).



Source: UnB/Ceplan

There was a time, before awareness of the importance of keeping documents in archives, when many original projects disappeared. At the time when the technical documentation circulated on paper, the physical space occupied instigated, from time to time, the disposal in favor of the liberation of the rooms where they were deposited. With that, part of the history of planning, architecture and urbanism at UnB went, literally, to the trash.

In 2022, there are more than 500,000 files in Ceplan's digital collection, with about 10,000 digitized boards from map libraries. Among them, there are duplicate files or files presenting several versions of the same document. The possibility of digital counting results in impactful numbers that include drafts, auxiliary information, multiple versions, duplications, backups etc.

In times of digital documentation, there is, on the one hand, the risk of losing information with just one click. On the other hand, there is the challenge of controlling the making of endless copies that make finding the final version difficult. The consultation of technical documentation – numerous and relevant – requires careful research in order to locate the desired version in the midst of an immensity of files.

For the external researcher, contact with this documentation generates great expectations. These documents are a source of information for various research on architecture, urbanism, infrastructure, art, landscaping, furniture, etc. that support relevant narratives. However, we should register the absence of a significant quantity of photographs in the Ceplan collection.

Figure 10: Interior of SG 10.



Source: Eduardo Oliveira Soares (2015)

Internally, however, with each request for documentation, especially for more recent material, there is a need to make an effort to identify what is an internal study and what is of interest to the external public. “It is not possible to separate what is historical from what is not historical within an archival set. Facts or documents acquire this status from a gesture of interpretation” (CAMARGO, 2003, p. 14). The preliminary study discarded today may constitute some important documentation in the future.

Research into the collections ends up, indirectly, reaffirming what the current team at the Center – it is hoped – already knows. The Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center constitutes and houses relevant collections that permanently awaken society's desire to research, narrate and disseminate (Fig. 10). Institutionally, establishing a collection management policy for the various academic and administrative units, through the dialogue of qualified representatives, would be a way of safeguarding this legacy. After all, it has relevance beyond the University.



6. Final considerations

Ceplan's peculiarities bring it closer to the experiences that took place at the Bauhaus. As much as the interdisciplinarity of the training of professionals through a pedagogy that sought to break with the established one, as well as in relation to the construction of a building that materialized the intended innovations - involving architecture, art, furniture. The avant-garde German school Bauhaus, created in 1919, was a reference in relation to the Modern Movement, architecture and design. In the case of the SG 10, it is imagined that the inspiration was not explicit, after all, the yearning for the new could not be based on something that happened decades ago. But there was a conviction, as in the Bauhaus, about the need to innovate in the way of doing and teaching architecture, art, and design. The evaluation of the trajectory of Ceplan and Bauhaus can lead to the elaboration of specific works.

Upon entering the building that houses the Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center, one can visualize the structure, Niemeyer's artistic murals – what other buildings have them? –, the space integrated into the garden that illuminates a hall with furniture designed especially for the University and also models of building projects created in different decades. Students and professionals in the field of architecture and design often visit, who circulate among the servers involved in matters relating to the physical infrastructure of the university. A workplace set in a space that evokes the concept of the synthesis of the arts. When there are many people in the building, the movement recalls the initial moments of Ceplan, when development, avant-garde and realization walked together. When empty, as in some periods during the Coronavirus pandemic, it recalls the periods of silencing due to the Military Dictatorship.

The documentation under Ceplan's custody presents decades of intense work in favor of the physical planning of the infrastructure of the University of Brasília. Relevant documentation considering the quality and quantity of buildings and open spaces of this one of the largest universities in the country.

By knowing the SG 10, the researcher is able to better contextualize the documentation produced since 1962. About the set formed by the documents, it is observed that “greater than the sum of the parts that integrate it, this organism is what lends them authenticity. Therefore, it can be said that documents necessarily carry with them the wedge of the institution that produced them” (CAMARGO, 2003, p. 12). Hopefully, the uniqueness of this set of collections will survive any institutional mishaps.

The refined simplicity of this work environment has been maintained over the decades (Fig. 10) and it is under these spaces that the collections are potentially ready for new approaches by researchers. Making a collection accessible is a way of informing society about its existence and relevance.

The importance of a collection can be reaffirmed with each research, noting that what is irrelevant to some may constitute the central theme of the research of others. The very approach of what constitutes a collection, as used in this text, establishes a moment of interpretation.

Administrative dynamics always face the challenge of reconciling the desire for management advances with the observance of the relevance of the past. But these collections, Ceplan and UnB, have already gone through many mishaps. The important thing to note is that in May 2022 the Oscar Niemeyer Planning Center turned 60, being a unique example among several UnB collections.

Ceplan is the result of the creation of Brasília and the University of Brasília. And its importance transcends the limits of the University and the current time.



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