

Roberto Segre 1934–2013

A Life of Adventure that Ends with a Banal Tragedy

By Abilio Guerra

Born in 1934 in Milan, Roberto Segre migrated to Argentina with his family in 1939, fleeing the anti-Semitism of Benito Mussolini's fascist government. He graduated as an architect at the University of Buenos Aires in 1960 and soon after, in 1963, settled in La Havana, Cuba, where he taught history of architecture for three decades. In 1994, he began his career as a Brazilian researcher and professor on graduate courses in urban planning at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), where he served until March 2013. During these decades of professional activity, he came to be respected as a critic and historian, publishing many books and articles of the utmost importance on Latin American architecture.

In the last fifteen years, Roberto Segre devoted himself to in-depth research on the history of the *Palácio Capanema*, the current seat of the Ministry of Education and Health, opened in Rio de Janeiro in 1945. In 2009, Luiz Fernando de Almeida, then Iphan's national chairman, learnt of his work and subsequently invited Roberto Segre to coordinate the preparation of the document claiming the building's inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

This research project also became a publishing project, developed over the past five years by Romano Guerra Editora. During the proof-reading process, the author was impatient to share glimpses of the publication with his friends and colleagues on his iPad. "This is the great book of my life", he would say to friends he crossed in the corridors of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the UFRJ.

On the morning of March 10, 2013, two days before the layout process began, Roberto Segre sent the last corrections to the editor: "Finally I found a mistake. In the references, the book *América Latina fim do milênio!* appears twice. Check it". He then left for his Sunday walk on the beach. Soon after, the magnificent adventure of his life was interrupted by a motorcycle traveling at high speed.



Original publication: Guerra, Abilio, *Roberto Segre. Uma vida de aventura que se encerra com uma tragédia banal*. Drops, São Paulo, n.13.067.01, Vitruvius, abr. 2013. <http://vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/drops/13.067/4704>.

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