



INTO THE WILD

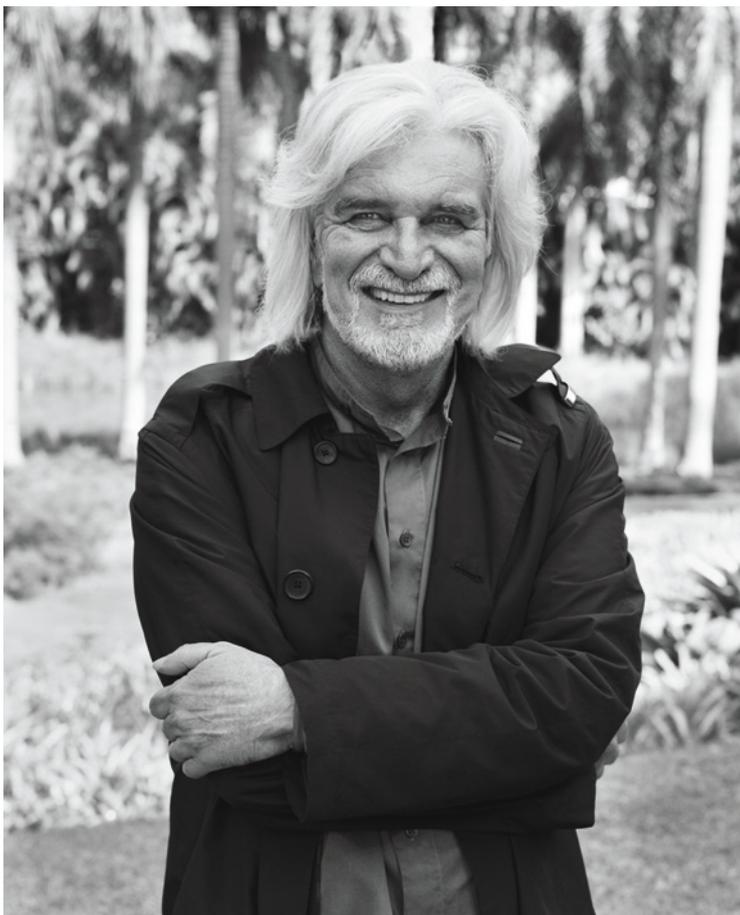
A fox-fur cocoon jacket and tailored lace trousers stand out against the stark lines of Inhotim's Adriana Varejão gallery, designed by architect Rodrigo Lopez Cerviño. Balenciaga fur jacket and guipure lace trousers.



LUSH LIFE

In the remote wilds of southeastern Brazil, a reclusive art collector has created a sprawling, fantastical outdoor museum. Welcome to Inhotim, part botanical garden, part contemporary art installation, part futuristic spiritual retreat—and an altogether glorious setting for this season's dramatic looks, modeled by Drake Burnette.

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TRAVELING TO MEET THE RECLUSIVE BRAZILIAN ART COLLECTOR BERNARDO PAZ HAS THE AIR OF A WILDERNESS SURVIVAL COURSE.

The wealthy 63-year-old mining magnate has carved a sprawling empire of art in the lush Atlantic Forest in Brazil's southeast, a two-hour drive southwest of the city of Belo Horizonte—which feels, quite literally, in the middle of nowhere. To make matters worse, on my recent visit, a tropical downpour has enveloped my remote rural *pousada*, or inn, turning the dirt roads of the surrounding countryside into oceans of red mud. Minas Gerais, a plateau isolated by a ring of mountains, has been Brazil's mining heartland since the colonial age, and on the treacherous routes, trucks loaded down with iron ore careen around tight corners, threatening to overturn. The sense of being in an outtake of *Jurassic Park* only gets stronger in the

area's only township, Brumadinho, a raw provincial outpost whose bars catering to miners are encrusted in ferrous grime.

But as I finally approach the entrance to Senhor Paz's gated oasis, Inhotim (pronounced In-yo-*cheem*), this rustic backwater is instantly transformed into an enclave of cosmopolitan taste. This 5,000-acre cultural Eden—created over the last decade with Paz's profits from selling iron ore to China—has emerged as one of the world's largest, strangest and most thrilling adventures in contemporary art. Although it is often referred to as an "outdoor museum," the term is not even close to defining Inhotim's ambitious repertoire. It's also a botanical garden, spiritual retreat, scientific research station, cultural center and a futuristic Brazilian answer to the bucolic artistic follies of 18th-century Europe.

As if at a Bond villain's secret lair, armed guards wave me down a smooth curving driveway to an elegant open-air entrance vestibule, which overlooks a serene lake cruised by white swans. Inside, young Brazilian staff members in color-coded T-shirts bustle back and forth. (Red shirts are for gardeners, dark green for art handlers, light green for "monitors of the environment," gray for ticket staff.) To meet Paz, a trio of light-green shirts holding Inhotim umbrellas escort me along a sodden pathway crafted from local quartzite. Through gaps in the foliage—walls of flowering bromeliads, rare species of fern and delicate orchids—I can glimpse snippets of mysterious artworks. There are monolithic solids in tutti-frutti colors, contorted bronze figures, a boat hanging upside down in the vines. The scale of Inhotim becomes bewildering. There are 21 art pavilions installed within the landscape, each one its own striking site-specific sculpture. The lush green backdrop provides the ideal contrast to man-made materials and forms—sensuous concrete curves, glass panels and rusted iron walls that loom over the forest like the prow of a ship. One artist, Doug Aitken, has sunk a hole 633 feet into the earth and placed microphones at the base; the sound, conveyed into a circular sonic pavilion of frosted glass, resembles growling and groaning, as if the earth is alive. In another gallery, visitors must walk across a floor covered with broken glass. There are video installations, mirrors, strobe lights and acoustic effects. A pavilion devoted to works by Adriana Varejão, Paz's fifth wife, is a monolithic block of concrete hovering over a reflective blue pool. A catwalk takes you inside, where sculptures of broken walls seem to ooze human entrails.

Some 110 grandiose works are on display, by artists from 30 nations, including Matthew Barney, Steve McQueen and Chris Burden; an additional 500 or so pieces form the rest of the ever-expanding permanent collection. And art aside, the infrastructure certainly qualifies as Disney-scale. Drivers in electric golf carts are poised to shuttle visitors along the steeper orange brick roads. Color-coded recycling bins sit at every turn. Five ornamental lakes are each tinted with a different natural pigment of algae to rich shades of turquoise and emerald. Giant benches are carved from fallen tree trunks. There are restaurants, cafes, coffee bars and a pizzeria at strategic points, Wi-Fi-enabled. All this, despite the obscure location, has helped propel the mining magnate Paz from obscurity to *Art Review's* list of the 100 most influential figures in the international art world today.

The man himself awaits me in what was his former farmhouse, now converted into an elegant restaurant. He's seated at a far table on the patio, surrounded by a wall of greenery. Torrents of rainwater pour down the branches and spray gently off the giant leaves. Thunder rolls in the distance. It reminds me of how one Brazilian artist I'd met in Rio de Janeiro had described Paz: "Think of Marlon Brando in *Apocalypse Now*."

Paz is in much better shape than the late Brando, at least. He's tall and trim, wearing light cotton trousers suited to the heat, and a loose purple shirt. With a halo of shoulder-length silver hair and a full white beard, he seems to cultivate a messianic appearance. His weather-worn face is lined and bronzed from decades spent managing the mines that made his fortune, while his pale blue eyes burn like gas jets. A bodyguard hovers in the background, part of the site's tight security. But despite the dramatic build-up, Paz is disarmingly friendly, even a little shy. "The rain is beautiful," he declares over the din of cascading water. "The garden needs the water."

Paz has brought a translator, although his English is reasonable, and he waves her away whenever he is excited. And he is excited about many things. For a start, he has just learned that the state government has approved a commercial airport to be built nearby, which, combined with improved highways, will cut travel time for visitors from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo down to 45 minutes. Art lovers will also be able to stay in a luxury hotel now being built on the site, he explains, due to open in December; within five years, Paz expects 1,600 rooms in the Brumadinho

area to cater to visitors. His grand plan for Inhotim is transforming this neglected region of rural Brazil.

"I don't want to use my money to buy things for myself," he says. "The healthy part of any person's life only lasts 50 years. Why die rich or give your money to your children, so they fight? I am building Inhotim for people who have never had access to art and culture. You have to open their minds. That's the future."

"Inhotim is not just going to last for my lifetime," Paz assures me. "It's going to last forever, for 1,000 years!"

For the next 90 minutes, his conversation alternates between minute personal detail (his father used to sing the Brazilian national anthem to him at bedtime, and read him stories from *Reader's Digest*) and oracular pronouncements about technology in our new "post-contemporary society," where (one day) all citizens will abandon life in the cities and will communicate via the Internet. At times, he holds out his arms and orates like a rapturous preacher before a crowd, hitting each point emphatically. Inhotim received 293,000 visitors last year despite its isolation, he explains. This year the number will reach 400,000, and it will soon increase, he predicts, to a million a year. "There will be a new theater at Inhotim, a convention center, technology companies, research stations, greenhouses, scientists, teachers, educators. Our curators come from Brazil, Germany, South Korea, the United States, Portugal. We have the best team in the world today!"

The translator and communications officers sit by with placid smiles. It's hard to tell whether Paz is a new Maecenas or a latter-day Fitzcarraldo.

"I used to think he was crazy," one of his employees later confesses. "But look at what he's achieved at Inhotim. Now I believe whatever he says!"

IT SOUNDS LIKE the premise of a surrealist novel: a Brazilian mining magnate sets up a vast garden of art in a remote forest in South America; its sheer strangeness is a public-relations dream. A visit to the Inhotim Institute, as it is now officially called, is not your typical cultural pilgrimage. Nowhere else is the interplay of art and nature so provocative—an experience that seems particularly appropriate in Brazil, which has often been regarded as the last paradise.

But if Inhotim feels like a return to a prelapsarian world, it can also be viewed as an icon of the new Brazil, whose decade-long economic boom has made it flush with wealth. Because of its isolation, Inhotim might sound like the art world equivalent of Brasília, the artificial capital conjured in the '60s, but its celebrity is surging. The other guests at my rural inn include a European film crew, from Arte TV. (The presenter is the French actress Amira Casar, a Cannes regular, whose presence causes quite a stir at the inn. The chef enthusiastically shows me sultry portraits and confides that he has downloaded one of Casar's early films, which involved "un-simulated sex"—using, he regrets to learn, a body double.) Our conversation hinges less on the artworks than the character of Inhotim's creator. Solitary and enigmatic, Paz is shrouded by legend. Locals love to trade stories of his vast wealth and caprices, how he never finished high school and the details of his six marriages and seven children, who range in age from 37 to a 1-year-old and are scattered from São Paulo to Hawaii. I was warned he can be moody and cantankerous or distracted and terse, chain-smoking Dunhills between abstruse pronouncements and walking out of interviews at a moment's notice.

But he is also idolized by the populace around Brumadinho, who see him as a savior for creating so many jobs. (There are some 1,200 employees at Inhotim.) When I asked a woman if she had ever seen Paz in the village, she smiled beatifically: "He has created a paradise for himself. Why would God leave his heaven?" Even his staff seem in awe of his passionate devotion to his enclave. "Senhor Paz's whole life is devoted to Inhotim," says the former communication officer, Ronald Sclavi. "He drives around the gardens at eight every morning, calling me immediately if something isn't perfect."

And Paz has become a figure of fascination far beyond his home state. "In Brazil, Paz is a unique figure," says Sclavi. "Our superrich spend their money on cars, trips and houses. They don't understand why Bernardo is doing this." "It's a paradigm shift for Brazil," agrees the Rio-based artist Tunga, who has worked with Paz for 15 years. "It shows the elite that they can use their money so the whole population can participate. Living with art is a great pleasure, but if you can share it, even better."

The story of how Paz, a high school dropout from a middle-class family in Belo Horizonte, became so wildly successful in two radically divergent fields—mining and art collecting—should be a comfort to every parent of a wayward child. By his own account, his twin passions stem from his father, a stern and practical

engineer, and his mother, a poet and artist. While he was a teenager, the contradiction seemed to paralyze him, he recalls now: "I simply couldn't imagine what I would do with my life. I became very depressed about my future." At age 13, he became a part-time gas station attendant, then left school altogether to work in a clothing boutique. ("I was a handsome guy, women came to the store just to see me. But I was not happy just being popular; I wanted to build something.") He tried his hand as a stockbroker, before joining a failing iron ore mine in 1973—which, to everyone's surprise but his own, he transformed into a viable business. Paz's progressive management style was shocking in Brazil: He reduced the number of hours in the workday. He hired a doctor, a dentist, chefs and a nutritionist and even set up a social club with a swimming pool.

"When I bought the company, the workers were miserable," he recalls. "I thought, I have to treat these people better." (He may have been influenced by his parents' leftist sympathies; one of his grandparents, a pro-Communist general, spent six years in prison under a dictatorship in the '40s.) Productivity tripled. Meanwhile, Paz fed his poetic side by arriving at the mining site every morning at five to watch the sunrise. "I wanted to see the world begin, to see the horizon light up every day. It was very emotional."

In the early '80s, now the head of the successful Itaminas mining group, Paz became one of the first businessmen to travel to China, winning a contract to build steel plants. It was a time of economic turmoil in Brazil, with annual inflation soon hitting 1,000 percent (in 1990, it topped 30,000 percent), and his companies fell into debt. Then, as China's need for raw materials exploded, Paz decided to close the plants and concentrate on providing iron ore, reaping enormous profits and becoming one of South America's wealthiest men. ("Mining is easier. You just dig the ore up and put it on a train.") But the years of working 18-hour days took its toll on his health. In 1995, he suffered a stroke in Paris. "I realized this was no kind of life," he says. He decided to let others manage his companies and moved full-time to the small holiday farmhouse he had purchased a decade earlier, Inhotim. (The farm had been named by locals after a former owner, a British engineer known as Senhor Tim—*Nhó Tim* in Minas Gerais's dialect.) By then, about 37 acres had been landscaped with the advice of Paz's friend Roberto Burle Marx, Brazil's most illustrious landscape designer, who had left his mark on Brasília and the famous Copacabana boardwalk in Rio, with its swirling black-and-white tiles.

And Paz began collecting. "I loved art," he says, "but it was an intuitive thing, not because I understood it." Redirecting his tumultuous energy, he cultivated friendships with artists and curators to expand his knowledge. ("All my life, I have tried to spend time with people more intelligent than myself.") The most influential was the artist Tunga. "In 1998, Bernardo invited me to Inhotim to see his collection," Tunga recalls when I meet him in his sprawling studio in Rio de Janeiro. "I was surprised to find he owned mostly Brazilian Modernist art: classic, conservative pieces from the '20s to '50s. So I started talking to him about contemporary art, which address the concerns of his own generation. I could feel his enthusiasm growing and growing."

With typical bravura, Paz decided to sell his whole art collection and start afresh. "I just got rid of it," he recalls. "I sold it all off." His first contemporary purchase was Tunga's *True Rouge*, a baroque conglomerate of glass beakers, sticks and fishing nets, with a pavilion built to display it to best effect. Paz traveled to New York and Europe to visit contemporary galleries, and he bought more land around Inhotim to protect it from encroaching development. He began to imagine a vast garden of art.

Tunga recalls that he was skeptical of Paz's grand plans, until Paz took him to visit one of his operational mines elsewhere in Minas Gerais. Gazing into the enormous hole, Tunga saw how Paz reshaped the landscape like a deity. "Bernardo said to me: 'You see that mountain there? It's going to be gone tomorrow. You see that expanse of green? It wasn't green five years ago.' I thought, This is the sort of guy who can get this project done." He adds: "Of course, I had no idea then of the dimensions Inhotim would take."

By 2002, Paz's collection was spilling out of its home, and he realized the need for a more disciplined and coherent approach. He invited the New York-based art expert Allan Schwartzman, one of the first curators of the New Museum and advisor to some of the world's top collectors, from Manhattan to his rural abode. Schwartzman remembers that he had barely arrived when Paz bombarded him with visionary ideas and requests for advice. "Bernardo was driving me around the farm, saying, 'We need this here. We need this there.'" Schwartzman says. "I'd just gotten off the plane, I was tired, all I wanted was a bite to eat and to go to bed. But he

had such enthusiasm; I began to see the potential. It was an amazing opportunity to articulate something truly unique.”

Schwartzman advised Paz to commission site-specific pieces, and purchase works that suited the remote and verdant setting. “It made no sense to obtain art you could see in any other museum in the world,” Schwartzman says. “We had to do something that made it worthy of the journey.” There was no shortage of takers. “Of course, a lot of artists had fantasies of what they could do if they had the funds and space.”

Very few world institutions can devote their resources to such vast permanent installations. “The biggest limitation to an art collection isn’t the price of the art, it’s the price of *housing* the art,” says Schwartzman. “Most museums are the most expensive buildings in the most expensive real estate in the most expensive cities in the world, designed by the most expensive architects. What we had in Brazil was a lot of land, and relatively low construction costs.” And the garden setting could not be further from the white cube aesthetic of most art institutions. “Museums are supposed to be ideal places for viewing art. But about an hour and a half into a visit, you get museum fatigue. They’re like sensory-deprivation tanks! Inhotim incorporates art into a nourishing environment.”

The long voyage to Inhotim adds a level of intensity. “At most museums, you’re in the middle of a big city, you step off the busy street and then you return to your normal life,” says Eungie Joo, who left the New Museum in New York to join the curatorial team here last year. “At Inhotim, you have to remove yourself from your routine, just by getting here. It’s a physical, cultural, artistic and maybe even emotional experience.”

“It’s like listening to a symphony compared to a quartet,” agrees Tunga.

As word of this art-filled refuge filtered out of Brazil, museum insiders began to arrive from around the world for private appointments. “When I saw how people’s eyes shone at Inhotim, I knew I was on the right path,” Paz says. “I thought, This can’t be just for me and my friends.” He opened the site to the public in 2006 and has expanded his plans rapidly. Today, a five-person team of international curators works closely with Paz on acquiring new pieces. “It’s such a complex process,” says Joo. “There are meetings four or five times a year in Brazil, New York and Europe. We think about the pacing and timing of new exhibits, the balance between isolated and more communal work.” Paz is by no means dictatorial, she says. “He’s a very adventurous thinker. Sometimes he’ll say he doesn’t like something, but he doesn’t veto our decisions.”

OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, as the tropical sun burst forth between the clouds, I immersed myself in the succulent world of Inhotim, exploring nature and art playing off one another to startling effect. On the trails between pavilions, visitors might hear wild-life rustling in the bushes or exotic birdcalls that sound vaguely like pterodactyls. Butterflies flutter by. Then you might catch the distant strains of a Renaissance chorus or wistful bossa nova.

“We’ve lost the ability to be surprised by life,” says Paz. “We have to regain the sense of being a child again.” At Inhotim, the senses are constantly heightened. Doors open onto pitch-dark corridors, where you have to wait for your eyes to adjust to the sepulchral gloom. There are tables covered with dozens of wax candles molded into monuments like the Eiffel Tower, all slowly melting away. Floors of chain mail resemble the surface of the moon. One corridor leads to a sink that appears to flow with blood. Another leads to videos of ballet dancers. Audio experiments are everywhere. In one cavernous warehouse filled with speakers, the Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller recount nightmares in poetic phrases accompanied by the sounds of wind, waves and squawking birds, called *The Murder of Crows*. In another hall, each of 50 speakers projects the voice of a single child in a choir, to hypnotic effect. One artwork is also, practically, an outdoor swimming pool, complete with changing rooms and lifeguards. (On my visit, there were no Brazilian art lovers lounging in thongs, although it’s only a matter of time.)

The garden is central to the experience, and requires constant attention from an army of attendants. “Senhor Paz loves art, but he’s passionate about the garden,” says Inhotim’s chief agronomist, Juliano Borin. In 2011, Inhotim joined the Brazilian government’s official botanical garden association, and the staff has begun an inventory of its 4,500 plant species, including 1,300 types of palm alone. On a casual stroll, Borin points out extravagant flowers, Brazilian *jequitibá* trees, rippled “crocodile wood” and pink bananas, and pauses to pluck a tart *pitanga* berry. (“In a caipirinha, it’s very good.”) There are greenhouses for unusually rare plants such as the Sumatran *titan arum*, known as the “corpse flower” because of its gruesome odor. Much of the land beyond the garden has been left wild. (So far, less than the 10 percent of the roughly 5,000 acres has been landscaped for the art garden). Located in the ecologically rich transitional zone between the savannah and Atlantic coast, it has attracted scientists from around the world for its diversity, and a ring of



OUTER LIMITS

The artist Doug Aitken’s *Sonic Pavilion*, where microphones lowered into a 633-foot-deep hole convey sounds to a glass room with sweeping views of the surrounding landscape.



UP FROM THE SKY
From left: Dan Graham's *Bisected Triangle, Interior Curve*, 2002; *Invenção da cor, Penetrável Magic Square #5, De Luxe*, 1977, by Hélio Oiticica; Olafur Eliasson's *By Means of a Sudden Intuitive Realization*, 1996.

rugged surrounding hills adds a raw beauty to every view.

"The garden is an important step between the galleries," says Borin. "It gives you time to reflect and refresh before the next experience."

It's not surprising that many of the artworks have an environmental theme. *Vegetation Room*, by Cristina Iglesias, is a cube of polished stainless steel reflecting the surrounding forest. Visitors slip into crevices where the walls are sculpted foliage, entering a labyrinth within the labyrinth; at the cube's heart, torrents of water periodically rush. For an installation entitled *Beam Drop*, dozens of iron girders were dropped by Chris Burden from 150-foot-high cranes into a pit of wet cement, creating a forest of rusting iron. The bluntest statement is by Matthew Barney, who offers a mud-encrusted tractor ripping up a white plastic tree. Education is part of Inhotim's message. "Brazil has the highest biodiversity in the world, and people don't realize it," Borin laments.

And yet, from many of the hilltops within the site, visitors are startled to see distant hills carved open by mines. The patchwork of green forest and red dirt is a jarring reminder that the basis for much of Brazil's current prosperity comes from exploiting its natural resources. "The environment has really been hammered in Minas Gerais," says Rio-based ecologist Tim Moulton. "From mining, farming, overgrazing and burning of the forests." Just outside of Inhotim an iron ore mine is in full swing, and the sound of dynamiting is sometimes carried on the wind. Paz has turned down many offers for his land. "You go into the mountains, and it's like walking on pure iron," marvels Borin.

First World visitors might assume that Inhotim reflects a twinge of guilt on the part of Paz, who, after all, made his fortune in mining. ("It appears he was carrying quite a burden," one American artist remarks.) But few residents of Minas Gerais ponder any contradiction; mining has gone on for the last 300 years here and is simply a fact of life. (The state's very name means, roughly, "general mines.") "There's not too much suffering about it," says Paz's friend Tunga. "Inhotim is a positive response to the mining."

"This all comes from something primal within Bernardo," says Schwartzman. "First, he's a dreamer. He likes to build things. And second, he really cares about people. By opening Inhotim to the public, and having such an active education program, he's trying to do something positive in Brazil, which is a nation beset by inequality."

Even those who refer to Inhotim as a fantastical vanity project admit that it is having a huge influence on Brumadinho and its surrounds, where some 34,000 people are scattered in impoverished colonial-style villages. Inhotim's Citizenship and Social Inclusion Program, despite the Big Brotherish name, has succeeded in involving local communities in educational visits to the site, oral history projects, training courses for artisans and music classes for school children. But the most revolutionary change has been the opportunity to work in a cultural sphere. "Once, the only dream of young men growing up in Brumadinho was to be a truck driver or miner," says Sclavi. "Now they can work in art restoration or mounting exhibitions, or in the restaurant, or as a tour guide. It's a major change of perspective on the world." Inhotim is now the area's second biggest employer, after the Vale mining company. "In my 15 years of going to Brumadinho, I have seen how life has changed completely for young people," says Tunga. "Inhotim is a platform for them to go to other places." Last year, Inhotim even sent nine teenage interns to participate in an education conference at the Tate Modern in

London. "It was a very big deal," says curator Joo. "Their parents and teachers had never traveled outside Brazil."

I had a sense of this ripple effect when I followed a road through rolling farmland to the Afro-Brazilian village of Marinhos. The elderly community leader, Senhor Cambão, wearing a large wooden crucifix over his yellow polo shirt, explained that the villagers had received training from Inhotim on topics as diverse as organic farming and homeopathic medicine, as well as assistance in repairing houses that were on the verge of collapse. "For us, Inhotim is like the rain," he said. "It brings new life to everything."

In the church were gathered members of the local handicraft cooperative—10 housewives who had banded together and, with assistance from Inhotim, were now selling their hand-woven dolls. But the most important thing was how Inhotim had transformed life for the village children, explained one of the women, Rosely Irouina. "Our young men used to all leave to find work. They would go to São Paulo or Belo Horizonte, and end up in bars and turn to crime." We sat for a moment pondering this. "Bernardo Paz is like God," she suddenly declared. "Because what he has done is eternal. He's given our children a future."

She burst into tears. My translator burst into tears. Even Senhor Cambão started to well up. "He will be with us forever," Senhora Irouina said.

THIS SIDE OF ETERNITY, the goal is to make Inhotim financially self-supporting and, in theory, independent of Paz. In 2008, Inhotim's status was changed from a private museum to a public institute, with an annual budget and a board of directors. Technically, the artworks are now owned by Paz and loaned to Inhotim, although Paz still provides about \$60 million a year in funds for operation, according to aides. "Inhotim is no longer owned by one person," says Joo. "But one person contributes a lot to its operation."

Commissioning of new artworks will continue apace. "There's plenty of land, and a lot of amazing artists who want to be involved," says Schwartzman.

And the future seems even more prodigious when chatting with Paz. "People can see that Inhotim is beautiful, but they don't realize it represents the beginning of a new world," he tells me at the end of our conversation, before launching into another rapid-fire explanation of the coming post-contemporary society. "Communication is the atom bomb of the future," he asserts. "The 20th century moved at the speed of sound, now we're moving at the speed of light. Why live in the big cities? Two hours to commute to work in a big building? Why? So you can come back home and fight with your wife and children? You can work at home! There will be no need for skyscrapers, or railways."

The need to experience art directly is one thing that technology can't change, Paz believes. "People will still have to travel to Inhotim, because it's impossible to understand it on TV or a computer. It's all to do with the senses and emotion. Nobody can live without emotion. Teach children to see beauty. Beauty is the first step. People need to organize their needs and desires, that will lead to the new world government."

Our meeting is suddenly cut short. A team of businessmen is waiting for him. As he shakes my hand, before disappearing to another meeting, Paz confides that he doesn't own a computer himself. "No email. No Facebook. But I still know what will happen! The process will take 100 years." ●