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Talking about Victor Meirelles de Lima is referring to one of the greatest art creators of the country. Son of Portuguese immigrants was born at Açougue street (later renamed Victor Meirelles street after him), at that time Nossa Senhora do Desterro Village (currently Florianópolis). The house where he was born has been transformed into the Victor Meirelles Museum, which is celebrating its 50th year of existence in 2002. In January 1950, the building was historically protected by the National Historic and Artistic Patrimony Institute, in order to the collection of the Museum be installed in it.

Who was this native of Santa Catarina after all, who at a certain point of his existence could not step out on the streets without being greeted and what does he represent to the Brazilian art scenario? Victor Meirelles was a poor boy and his real world was Desterro. Born in 1832, he used to amuse himself in school creating puppets and landscapes, escaping from the boredom of things that did not interest him.

However, twenty one years later, after having studied at the Fine Arts Imperial Academy, where he started at 15, he triumphantly disembarked in Rome. In 1861, he was in Paris, exhibiting at the esteemed Salon of the art capital of the world his painting First Mass in Brazil, which was much complimented.

Back to his home country, he painted, among many other pieces, The Riachuelo Naval Combat, Humaitá Passage, Guararapes Battle and Moema.

Between 1861 and 1872, he worked with tenacity and dedicated himself to teaching in the same Imperial Academy that he had attended.

He met success and carelessness. He lived great moments of glory and also days of pain and angst that in fact were no privilege to him, but fruit of the own human condition.

Happiness did not shine when he died in 1903. As poor as when he left his hometown, he, who had enriched the nation with his commended art. And, by these ironies of destiny, on a Carnival Sunday... Glory from his small town will never be too repeated: Victor, in fact, is one of the greatest national artists. His merits and values have not always been recognized or proclaimed. Although, it is restorative to know that his hometown has not forgotten him, as much as he always remembered his calm and beautiful land. Because of his career and artistic life impositions he had to live long time far from it, but he always loved it even not having registered it much in his work, which was indirectly displayed in most of his compositions.

He always brought the memory of his home town, and only those who were born or are familiar with the island can notice a remembrance that emerges nearly in all his pictorial work, recreating it in other scenarios with its beautiful aspects. They are angles of beauty never seen in other places, beaches slightly touched by the sea or pieces of sky where small birds fly.

Victor Meirelles may be the most popularized Brazilian painter, thanks mainly to the painting First Mass in Brazil which, through modern processes of reproduction, has made his name familiar to all our people. However, such vulgarization does not draw the actual pictorial virtues from his work, present in every work from the artist. If it is true that none of them has fulfilled the concept of absolute space, as we see in Rafael at The Resurrection of Jesus and School of Athens, and the imponderable light revealed by Rembrandt in Pilgrims in Emau and Night Watch, or even the mass organization achieved by Poussin in The Triumph of Neptune and Bacchanals, all of them conquests of the highest level paintings. Truth is that Victor, incontestably, had the gifts of a great painter: careful drawing, vigorous daubs, color intuition and the science of composition, and with them produced the vibrant notes of lyricism in First Mass in Brazil and dynamic movement as in Guararapes Battle.

The eclectic academic education of Victor did not halt his romantic and sentimental vein, however his great historical compositions reveal clear affinities with the Delacroix's conception of dealing with his own matters. Tuned to the same conception are the so-called genre paintings, and it is in them that Victor widens his romantic sentimentalism. Moema is a perfect example for this statement, since there are no differences between the pictorial treatment of this work and his landscape studies. In Moema, the artist masterly uses the painting technical skills, so the elements of the work rouse the poetic non-real climate evoked by the Santa Rita Durão poem. In the landscapes, and above all in the studies for the panoramas, one hypothesis cannot be discarded: although only the studies are left, everything make us believe that at the end of his life, forgotten and deprived of what he deserved after all he had done for the country's culture, he started what could be called 'the last sprint' trying with it to supersede the growing sophistication of the photographic art. Therefore his cautious preparation, uncountable studies, the severe naturalistic technique on gathering visual data, the high doses of emotion and poetry, among his undoubted academic competence. Enchanted for what he sees, and faithful to what he feels.

When Victor Meirelles performs the panoramas, his already highlighted place in the national artistic scenario allows him some freedom. Although he is not lax in the neo-classical drawings he, however, expresses all the tropical light, and reveals the lyricism of the most simple things. Aware to what surrounds him, with a certain ironic sweetness he denounces the contradictions of human life, as in the study for Villegaignon. He poetically works with the trivial, transforming it into the extraordinary. The elaborated scenes as short stories are neither banal nor fussy and develop themselves in a constant tender climate as a result of his deep and dedicated love.

In the panoramas, Victor gives the impression of showing more life's swiftness than serenity of sadness.

No other form of human's activity is so important as the visual arts. They have been the most eloquent source of history for milleniums. It is through the artwork that we get to know mankind evolution, its happiness and its pain.

It is regretable that the civil power of that time did not have a remote sensibility nor consciousness concerning such a great work, allowing it to be destroyed. Victor Meirelles' panoramas would show afterwards a period of life in Rio de Janeiro as the Human Comedy still depicts the French society from that time. An authentic *res gesta*, as Pausanias' *Itinerary* or as the texts from Herodotus or Carlyle, the panoramas intended to motivate the public for the plastic creation expression, that in a way, would place the author as a forerunner of art educators like Augusto Rodrigues and Abelardo Zaluar among others, who postulated for educational directions aiming the awakening of the creative potentialities inherent in all human beings.

Like other artists from other eras, Victor Meirelles always believed that man is not apart from nature, on which heindeed is inserted and related to.

Even though the absence of boundaries between the inner world and the outer world had made him oscillate as a pendulum between being or not being.