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<https://centralperiferica.eca.usp.br/estevao-silva-o-cacador-de-reliquias/>

Estevão Silva, the relic hunter

Discover the creative process behind the "Brazilian Gaudí" and his intriguing house made of stone, porcelain, and cement

By Ana Santos, Guilherme Bianchi e Regina Lemmi



[Photo: Regina Lemmi/Central Periférica]

Estevão Silva, known worldwide as the "Brazilian Gaudí," owns a small stone castle in Paraisópolis, in the southern part of São Paulo. The artist began its construction 39 years ago and continues to expand it.

The “Casa de Pedra” (translated as Stone House), located at Rua Herbert Spencer, 38, is open for visits from Thursday to Sunday, from 10 am to 5 pm. The visit costs 30 reais for visitors, and 15 reais for residents of Paraisópolis.

The dream of a rose bush

In an interview with the **Central Periférica** portal, Estevão Silva explains that it all started with the desire to have a rose bush. The space that is now the "little castle" was a large garden that cultivated various plants. Intending to create supports for the roses, Silva used his creativity and various items to care for his garden.

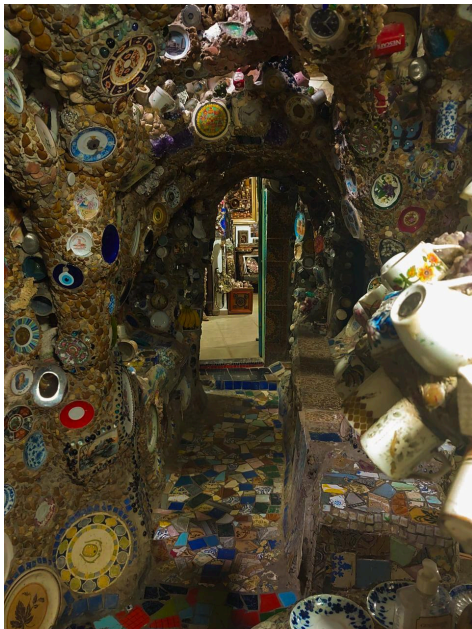
The space also serves as a great foundation for the growth of the plants he cultivates, such as jaboticaba, pomegranate, and pitaya.

The walls of the vertical garden are made of cement, metal, and curious objects. Estevão says he buys his materials at bazaars around the metropolis, whether they are cameras, cups, toys, or bicycles.

The artist explains that he didn't intend to convey any particular meaning through his art. He emphasizes that his main goal was to create his own little corner of the world and follow his destiny.

"What I want is to take care of nature, to have my own garden"
Estevão Silva

Brazilian art through the eyes of foreigners



'Casa de Pedra' has over 5000 pieces hanging items. [Photo: Guilherme Bianchi]

Estevão Silva was first called the "Brazilian Gaudí" when a student from the Barcelona Educational Foundation contacted the artist intending to conduct an interview. In 2001, Estevão was invited to visit Barcelona and see the work of someone he had never heard of: Antoni Gaudí.

Antoni Gaudí i Cornet (1852 - 1926) was a famous Spanish architect and artist, a pioneer of Catalan modernism; his works combine architecture, religion, and nature.

The “Brazilian Gaudí” says that many foreigners value his work more than Brazilians do. “In the beginning, I was heavily criticized; people [from the community] would pass by and call it a witch's house, others would say it was macumba,” he added.

Cut diamond in stones and cement

Over the years, Estevão has modified and expanded the structure of the house through the use of repurposed objects.

“At the beginning of my career, if I had thought it would become a work of art to be recognized worldwide, I would have made it taller. Since I only did it for myself, taking care of nature, taking care of the garden, everything remained small.”

Estevão Silva

The rose bush itself, which served as the starting point for his project, was removed for the expansion of the building. “I couldn’t keep the rose bush because it grew too much. I had to pull it out and bring the garden up here with other types of plants,” Estevão comments.

The top floor of the house is the current stage for the artist's transformations. Estevão intends to keep the space open and form an arch with the structures contained there. The columns are formed by ceramic faces, assembled in the shape of a mask.

At the top of the house, there is the figure of a man, which is noticed as soon as you arrive in front of the place. Estevão comments that the piece was the most complicated to hang, but that "it's not ready the way it was supposed to be."

During the visit, Estevão also showed photos of the old rooms of the place: the floor tiles were not colored, and the house was made up of rooms furnished with beds. Although some items have been lost, others have been transformed into works that complete the environment. The highlight is a table on the first floor that has been altered over many years.



Behind the stones



The relics hunters are glued with jewelry and clocks. [Photo: Regina Lemmi]

In the back of his little castle, Estevão built a room decorated with his own works. Paintings, sculptures, and assemblages made from repurposed materials are for sale to visitors starting at 50 reais.

A common object in Estevão's works is the clock. The artist comments that he uses old clocks to remember his childhood in Bahia, when he needed the sun's help to tell the time.

During his shopping trips to bazaars in the city of São Paulo, Estevão became known as a "relic hunter" and was inspired to name two human-shaped sculptures that open the hall. "Relic Hunter No. 1" and "Relic Hunter No. 2" were produced more than 10 years ago and are for sale to interested visitors.