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Pablo Lafuente and Keyna Eleison with Fabio Szwarcwald (Courtesy Mam)

RESEARCH

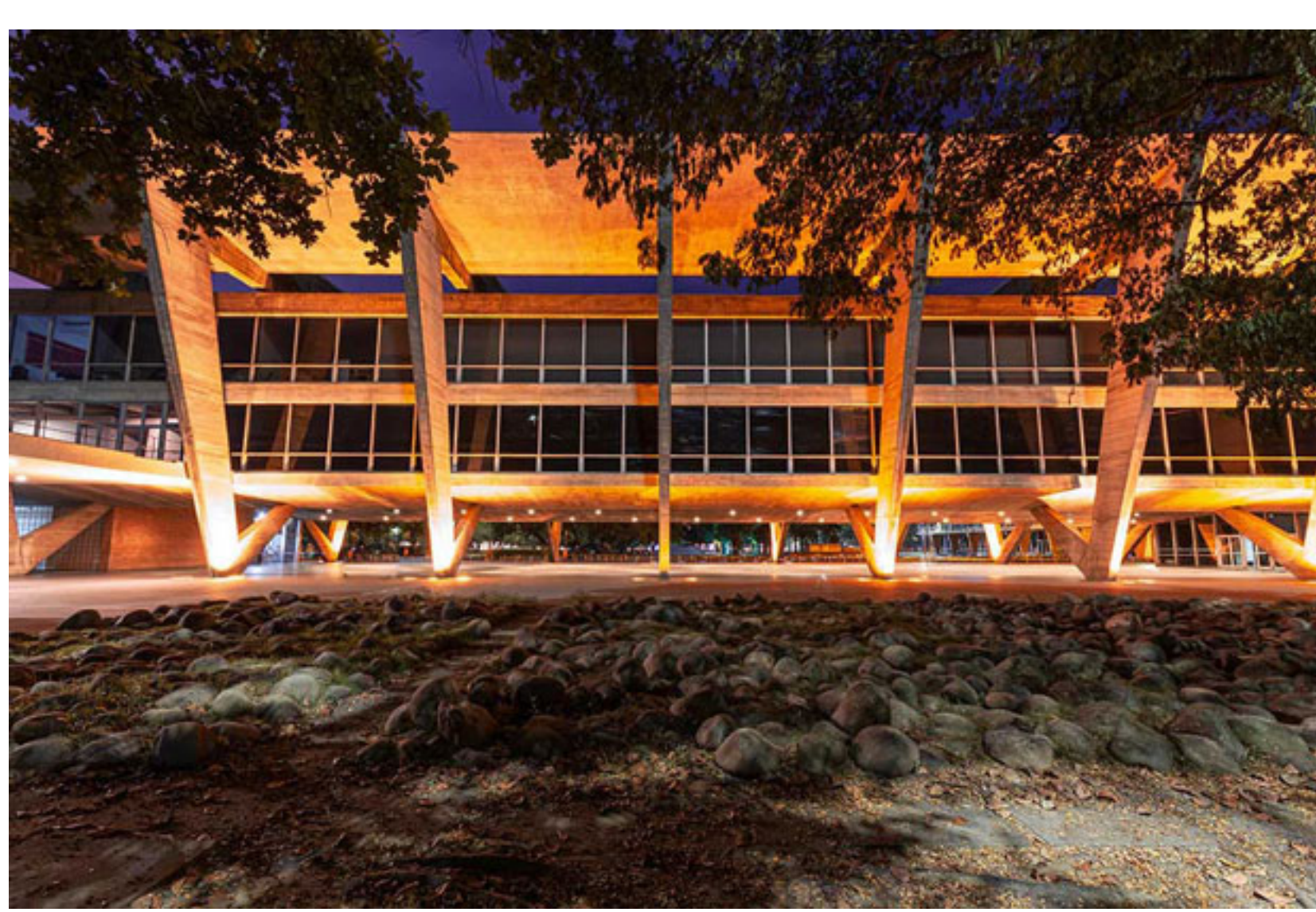
28 October 2020

There's a new wind at the MAM in Rio

Giacomo Pirazzoli

At the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro Keyna Eleison and Pablo Lafuente were named artistic directors. Two prominent and independent figures who hint at an interesting future for this important institution

Embracing diversity and fuelling expectations of future de-colonialist practices, the MAM (the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro) has identified in Keyna Eleison and Pablo Lafuente its new artistic direction – the result of an open call championed by the executive director Fabio Szwarcwald and by the museum's own board – which saw the participation of 116 candidates of whom 21 were international, with 66 women and 50 men, gathered into 103 groups.



The Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, designed by Affonso Reidy. (ph. Fabio Souza)

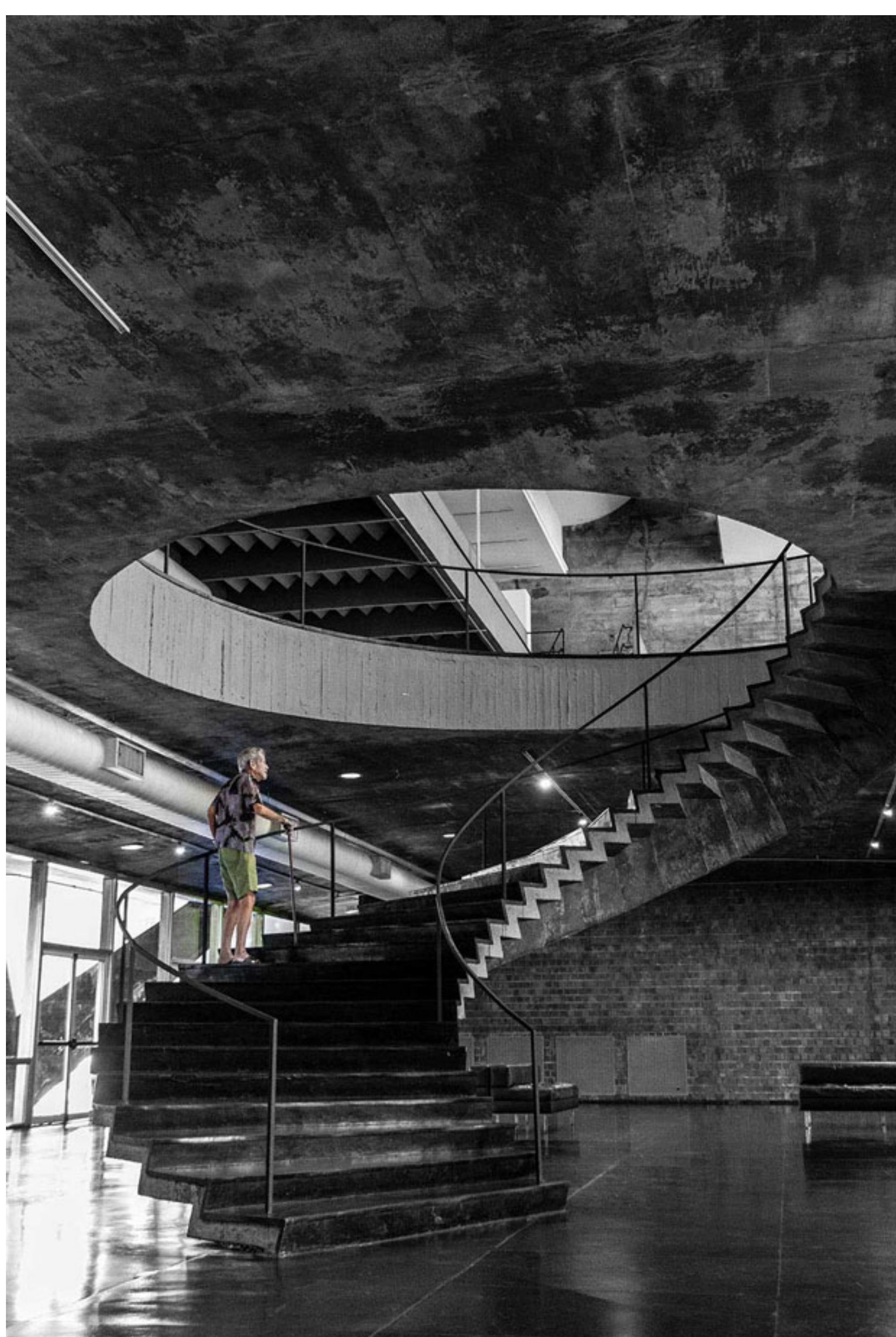
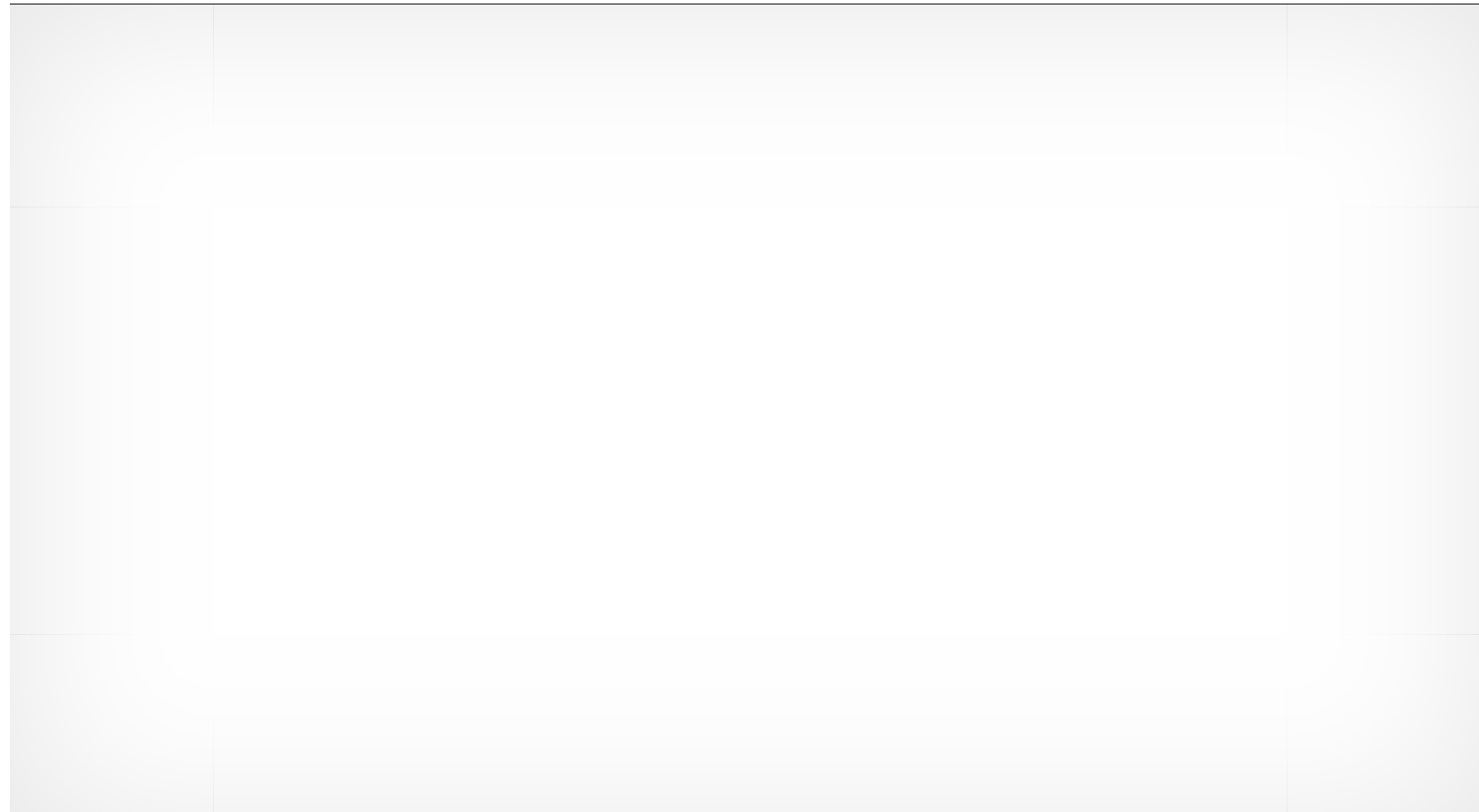
Eleison, a (feminist) Carioca of African descendant, and Lafuente, a naturalised Carioca of Basque origin, presented a joint programme where, among other things, they highlight that "the dynamics of group work are not new in artistic contexts, but promoting them as an integral part of the structure of the institution, combining our experiences, visions, skills and national and international networks to build the artistic project, will demonstrate that the MAM, in its process of renewal, remains faithful to this history, showing the clear desire to be a global benchmark museum".



The Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, designed by Affonso Reidy, is immersed in Roberto Burle Marx's landscape architecture. (ph. Fabio Souza)

The museum – which is housed in the cult building designed by Affonso Reidy and built under the never quite sufficiently appreciated direction of Carmen Portinho, immersed in Roberto Burle Marx's landscape architecture – was a key place for the development of (western) art in Brazil, at least as much as the MASP championed by "Chatô" (Assis Chateaubriand) and the Bardis (Pietro Maria and Lina Bo) and "Ciccillo" (Francisco Matarazzo) and Oscar Niemeyer's MAM-SP, both in São Paulo. With the MASP in particular, there was another significant symmetry initially by virtue of the importance attributed to the educational-museum format, which for a period overlapped with the legacy of the Bauhaus as channelled by the Ulm School of Design.

ADVERTISING



The concrete spiral staircase of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, designed by Affonso Reidy. (ph. Fabio Souza)

The MAM in Rio de Janeiro, which lost its collection to a fire in 1978 and which last year sold (apparently for \$13 million) a nice n. 16 from the 1950s by Jackson Pollock to settle its debts and pay management costs, today houses, among other things, 3,500 works on loan by Gilberto Chateaubriand, great tutelary deity of art in these latitudes.

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