

FULBRIGHT BRAZIL
SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM PROJECT
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The art history course “Art and the Environment” evolved from my original curriculum proposal for Fulbright Brazil. Although the course surveys a wide range of themes, artists and disciplines, a two-week unit will focus on Brazilian geography, ecology and environment. Sustainability through grass roots organizations, such as Novo de Novo, Precious Woods and Guitar Makers along with Greenpeace Brazil and associated political issues will be addressed. Additionally, a unit will be dedicated to landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx.

An important component of this course is a class project, which directly engages students with the ecology and geography of Brazil and with a working artist. The project outlined in my syllabus resulted from discussions with the artist Andrew Rogers about his *Rhythms of Life* series. His site-specific geoglyphs are located worldwide in countries such as Australia, Israel, Iceland, China and others (www.andrewrogers.org or <http://www.smh.com.au/news/arts/stone-age/2005/12/28/1135732632598.html>).

In South America, Rogers completed three projects in Chile, Peru and Bolivia. In asking why he has not created a work in Brazil, he in turn asked me to suggest a possible location. Instead, we decided to pose the question to Art and Environment students. The question students will have to answer is:

Where would your group locate a *Rhythms of Life* sculpture in Brazil and why?

To answer this question, it will be necessary to research the artist’s *Rhythms of Life* series, his creative process and Brazil. It may also be important to consider political dimensions in the area of interest. To undertake these monumental projects, Rogers has to be highly organized – consulting engineers, landscape architects and local officials. Logistical planning is crucial, since he has to move large groups of people and materials in a timely manner. Flexibility and collaboration are integral components of each work. Several class lectures will focus on Rogers and Brazil (see the course schedule). Through the course of the project it is hoped that students may better understand art’s transformative qualities – that it can and does transform people and places.

The artist has agreed to communicate with my students and evaluate their final project reports. The collaboration between students and the artist may possibly result in a future Brazilian *Rhythms of Life* sculpture.

Through on-going discussions with the artist about this course, I have been invited under project cost to Kenya, Africa (and Slovakia) to document the artist’s process. He is currently working on a *Rhythms of Life* series near Lake Turkana, Kenya. As the art historian on site, I will interview the artist, observe and photograph his process and be included in a book project. This experience will greatly enhance my unit on the artist, which will be followed by the unit on Brazil.