



AMIA

AMIA STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE JULY 29, 2021 FIRE AT THE CINEMATECA BRASILEIRA VILA LEOPOLDINA SITE IN SÃO PAULO

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) Board and its 950 members stand in solidarity with our global community of audiovisual archives professionals in expressing strong concern for the collections and workers of the Cinemateca Brasileira, originally founded in 1940.

A fire raged through the warehouses of the Cinemateca Brasileira in São Paulo on July 29, 2021. It is a terrible tragedy, and one that could have been averted. The former workers of the Cinemateca Brasileira issued a statement in both [Portuguese](#) and [English](#) on July 30, 2021.

These displaced workers have been advocating tirelessly for Brazil's archival heritage for over a year, since floods damaged collections in February of 2020. In August 2020 the workers had warned of the potential for fires to break out at the Cinemateca's Vila Clementino site due to the lack of any supervision at the shuttered facilities and vaults. This, fortunately, did not come to pass in 2020, but with the Brazilian government's dismissal of all of the Cinemateca's employees by September 2020, the most dire of their predictions has now occurred.

According to their statement, the following collections housed in Vila Leopoldina are affected:

- A large part of the paper archives of Embrafilme - Empresa Brasileira de Filmes S.A. (1969 - 1990), part of the Archive of the Instituto Nacional do Cinema - INC (1966 - 1975) and Concine - Conselho Nacional de Cinema (1976 - 1990)
- 35mm films from the distribution company Pandora Filmes, containing copies of Brazilian and foreign films. Matrices and copies of single newsreels, trailers, advertisements, documentary films, fiction films, domestic films, all potentially the only extant copies of their respective titles.
- 16mm and 35mm materials from the collection of the ECA/USP - School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo from their student productions; and the video collection of journalist Goulart de Andrade.
- Cinema, photography and laboratory processing equipment and furniture. In addition to their museological value, many of these objects were fundamental for repairing equipment in current use since; to exhibit or even duplicate film or video materials, obsolete machinery without replacement in the market is needed.

The future of the Cinemateca Brasileira is at stake. AMIA calls on the government of Brazil to do their part to ensure the safety of this irreplaceable cultural patrimony. AMIA calls for the reopening of the institution and the reinstatement of the workers. Their expertise and commitment to the collections is urgently needed in order to prevent further damage to the institution and Brazil's cultural heritage.

JULY 30, 2021