Cândido Portinari, one of Brazil’s most significant artists, was born on the Fazenda Santa Rosa coffee plantation in Brodowski in upstate São Paulo in 1903, the second of 12 children from Italian immigrants from the Veneto region of Italy. Because of his family’s poverty, he did not complete his primary education.

His skill and interest in painting and drawing, evident from an early age, led Portinari to begin his formal training in painting and composition at the National School of Art in Rio de Janeiro in 1919. At the age of 15, he was among the first Brazilian artists to incorporate Modernist elements into his painting, and these elements defined his subsequent works. In 1928, Portinari won a prize at the National Salon of Brazil, which provided funds that enabled him to spend 3 years in Europe, where he traveled extensively, studied European art, visited museums, and met other artists. He continued exploring Modernism and was particularly drawn to Cubism and Surrealism. While in Europe, Portinari also met a young Uruguayan women, Maria Martinelli, his future wife.

After Portinari returned to Brazil in 1931, the artist began, according to journalist Warren Hoge, depicting scenes and themes “covering the country’s earliest history, its slave trade, small-town life, gold prospectors, farming, construction, religious processions, circuses, jungle wild-life, urban slums, racial mixture and backlands bandits.” Early in his life, Portinari had witnessed and experienced poverty and inequity, which not only influenced his art but also spurred him to enter politics as well. Tellingly, as noted in a New York Times article announcing his death, Portinari once said, “I am a son of the red earth. I decided to paint the Brazilian reality, naked and crude as it is.”

Portinari’s impressive career was marked by his vast output of nearly 5,000 works of art and a lengthy list of...
development, social policies, and public health efforts have continued to routinely emerge. Other parasitic diseases, including Guinea worm disease, cysticercosis, and lymphatic filariasis—may be potentially controlled, eliminated, or eradicated through public health interventions. Other parasitic infections may not be eliminated, but their impact on health may be lessened through public health control and prevention efforts. With sufficient resources and resolve, stark human landscapes portrayed in works for art—such as the one illuminated in Portinari’s painting of the Hill—and parasitic diseases, may become more rare.

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Bibliography


Address for correspondence: Byron Breedlove, EID Journal, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd NE, Mailstop C19, Atlanta, GA 30329-4027, USA; email: wbb1@cdc.gov