Oscar Niemeyer’s Work Spans the 20th Century
By Brad Geer

In 2007, the world-renowned Brazilian architect [Oscar Niemeyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Niemeyer) turned 100 years old. Niemeyer, the last major living exponent of the modern movement in 20th-century architecture, is known for his light, flowing forms that make use of the multiple possibilities he discovered in reinforced concrete. Critics have remarked on the ability of his buildings to emerge naturally from their individual environments, and on the fact that the airy curves of his structures often resemble the arcs made by bouncing balls.

Among Niemeyer’s celebrated works is the official residence of the President of Brazil, the Palácio da Alvorada, or Palace of the Dawn, in the nation’s capital city of Brasilia. Situated beyond a moat and surrounded by hummingbirds, the building reflects Niemeyer’s signature light touch.

Oscar Niemeyer graduated in the 1930s from Brazil’s National School of Fine Arts. He and his mentor, Lucio Costa, worked together to plan and design Brasilia, a carefully thought-out modern city carved from Brazil’s interior during the 1950s and 1960s. Niemeyer’s Ministry of Health and Education building, influenced by the Swiss-French master Le Corbusier, was among the earliest modern constructions in the new capital. Niemeyer developed designs for Brazil’s pavilion at the 1939-40 World’s Fair in New York and represented Brazil during the planning stages for the United Nations buildings in 1947.

About the author: A Managing Director with investment banking firm, Houlihan Lokey, in Minneapolis, Bradley Geer has an abiding interest in world architecture. Brad Geer and his wife recently spent more than a year conducting research in preparation to build their new home as an extension of its natural environment.