

andré griffo

voarei com as asas que os urubus me deram

nara roesler são paulo

opening april 2

exhibition apr 2 – may 21, 2022



André Griffo. *The Seller of Miniature Characters 3*, 2021. Acrylic and oil on canvas. 69.7 x 88 x 1.5 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Nara Roesler.

Nara Roesler São Paulo is pleased to present *Voarei com as asas que os urubus me deram*, André Griffo's first solo show at the gallery, accompanied by a text by Agnaldo Farias. The show presents new works by the Rio de Janeiro artist, who is already known for his compositions that emphasize the representation of spaces in which are inserted elements that aim to question aspects inherent to Brazilian culture. Griffo is also presenting, for the first time, two installations specially conceived for the occasion. The show opens to the public on April 2nd, during SP-Arte Weekend, as part of the fair's official program, and will be on view through May 21st, 2022.

In recent years, André Griffo has established himself in the Brazilian art scene for the excellence of his pictorial work, in which architecturally or socially intriguing spaces are presented with the presence of images, figures, and miniature constructions. In fact, the artist has understood spaces as places where different temporalities can overlap in order to evoke the most different elements that comprise our reality. Griffo's spaces end up becoming true vehicles for a discourse that considers the juxtaposition of anachronistic objects as a strategy to talk about the permanence of power structures in Brazil's development.

Based on this singular process, Griffo presents a new body of work, which does not depend directly on architectural representation, and is also characterized by the use of golden leaves and by the interweaving of the present and the past, given the references to renowned artists in Art History, such as Michelangelo, Cranach, and Van Eyck. One example from this new series is Antonio battered by demons, which makes reference to Sant'Antonio battuto dai diavoli by the Renaissance artist Stefano di Giovanni (Siena, 1392-1450), also known as Sasseta. The artist's unusual use of gold in his paintings, applying it to the faces and private parts of the demons attacking the saint, caught Griffo's attention, and he then remade the composition, including, however, contemporary elements and characters, bringing together, once again, different times and leading us to reflect on the saints' trials and the adversities we go through nowadays.

In O vendedor de miniaturas series, Griffo creates compositions in subway stations, places of passage that, due to the great circulation of people, are chosen by many informal vendors to display their products. However, the miniatures sold by the character depicted are representative figures of the territorial power system in Rio de Janeiro, such as religious leaders, politicians, saints, members of the militia, and policemen, transformed into objects that evoke both the sacred and the ludic, and that can also be taken as action figures.

For the exhibition, Griffo has made three-dimensional miniatures of these characters that will be displayed in the gallery space, using structures and organization methods similar to those used by street vendors, such as the arrangement on canvas and the use of hooks.

The artist thus revisits an initial desire to create installation projects that would be a means of reflection and criticism of certain social and political aspects. In A materialização do canto da mãe da lua, another new installation presented in the exhibition, the artist occupies the tridimensional space with images and objects that offer a reflection on patriarchal mechanisms that continue to shape our society. In this sense, the observer himself, becoming a kind of actor in the scene created by the artist, is invited to reflect on how he acts in the maintenance of inherited customs and principles.

Voarei com as asas que os urubus me deram presents a synthesis of André Griffo's recent research, at the same time as it raises reflections on current political and social issues, making use of elements from other historical periods. When connected, through paintings and installations, the different temporalities can help us reflect on the socio-political mechanisms that shape contemporary existence.

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André Griffo's practice focuses on painting and its historical relationships with architectural representation. Rather than engaging in grand activist discourses, Griffo invites the viewer to pay attention to the minute details of his images, which depict the many violences that have given shape to the narratives relating to the history of Brazil and its ruins. In this sense, his canvases are complex visual archives in which the most diverse elements coexist, forming relationships that reframe and deepen the criticisms they present. Griffo's work deals with the critique of power structures, particularly the falsehoods they create to maintain control over individuals. Among these, the artist discusses the lingering effects of the economy of slavery on the historical formation of Brazil and the various mechanisms commonly used by religious institutions to subjugate their followers.

Griffo uses his background in architecture to create spaces where references to both historical and contemporary settings coexist. These spaces, usually deserted, are inhabited by traces, symbols, and signs, that highlight the permanence and influence of the past in current sociocultural issues. His production intertwines the factual and the fictional, exploring connections between the History of Art and Architecture and social issues, both Brazilian and international. By overlapping different temporalities and their complex realities, Griffo's work denounces constitutive elements of society, and testifies to the immutability of things.

nara roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and international artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practice while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

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são pauloavenida europa 655,
jardim europa, 01449-001
são paulo, sp, brasil
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

rio de janeirorua redentor 241,
ipanema, 22421-030
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

new york511 west 21st street
new york, 10011 ny
usa
t 1 (212) 794 5038

info@nararoesler.art**www.nararoesler.art**