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josé cláudio
a trajectory

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opening oct 8

exhibition oct 8 – nov 5, 2022



José Cláudio da Silva. *Untitled*, 2006. Oil paint on canvas. 47.2 x 118.1 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Nara Roesler.

Nara Roesler São Paulo is pleased to present *José Cláudio: a trajectory*, a retrospective exhibition curated by Aracy Amaral, that aims to honor one of the great names of Pernambucan art from the second half of the 20th century. Occupying the two spaces of the gallery's São Paulo headquarters, the exhibition presents over one hundred works by the artist, developed throughout the seventy years of his career. This is the first time such a comprehensive exhibition of José Cláudio's work has been held in São Paulo, displaying the magnitude of the work of the artist and intellectual who played a key role in establishing the trends of modern art in Pernambuco. *José Cláudio: a trajectory* opens to the public on October 8 and is on display until November 5, 2022.

“José Cláudio is a complete artist”, says Nara Roesler who, when opening her first gallery in Recife, in the mid-1970s, had José Cláudio as one of the first artists to be exhibited. Now, more than forty years later, the gallery presents the artist’s work again with a selection of pieces that comprise fundamental moments of José Cláudio’s artistic practice, including works from the collections of MAC USP, the Palácio do Governo and several private collections.

José Cláudio’s relationship to the city of São Paulo goes back a long way. In 1955, after joining the Atelier Coletivo, directed by Abelardo da Hora in Recife and after his visit to Salvador, where he met Mário Cravo Júnior (1923–2018) and Carybé (1911–1997), José Cláudio arrived in São Paulo, where he worked as an assistant to Di Cavalcanti and attended the Escola de Artesanato do MAM, under the guidance of Lívio Abramo. In the 1970s, the artist joined the team at the USP Museum of Zoology to undertake a trip to the Amazon for scientific research. Some of the works presented in the exhibition come from this experience, which were also gathered in the book, *100 telas, 60 dias e um diário de Viagem, Amazonas 1975* (2009).

The exhibition also includes works from the *Carimbos* series, developed in the 1960s, in which the artist uses stamps to create visual narratives. By making his own stamps, Cláudio freely expressed his creative vision, even developing several books that are now seen as true tokens of the ‘Process Art’ movement.

In addition to the portraits and the female nudes, a recurring theme in Cláudio’s practice, landscapes and scenes of popular festivities are also present. The variety in his practice is evident, as is his particular approach to recurrent themes and genres from the history of art, as he closes the gap between tradition and popular culture.

These relationships are present in the series of works developed from the beginning of the 1980s, in which the artist revisits the famous painting by Almeida Júnior (1850–1899), *O Repouso do Modelo*. The exhibition also contains publications and historical documents that allow the public a further glimpse into José Cláudio’s immense artistic and intellectual output.

“José Cláudio is a creator. Painter, sculptor, writer, researcher and most of all, a scholar. He is an art historian in Pernambuco with a delectable archive of stories and characters he met or events he participated in, which as an engaging storyteller, he narrates with real facts that we absorb from his books, or through listening and asking for details.”, says curator Aracy Amaral. “In truth, José Claudio goes beyond the limits of the planned spaces. For he is much more than an observer, chronicler, historian. His quality as an exceptional creator and restless speculator, makes us mark him as the great painter-creator of Recife and the light of the Amazon”.

josé cláudio

For over seventy-years long, José Cláudio (Ipojuca, 1932) developed a practice that came to be perceived as a legacy of Brazilian art of the 20th century. This multifaceted artist not only created works in painting, drawing, engraving, and sculpture but also engaged with critique and literature. José Claudio’s prolific work began when he joined the Ateliê Coletivo da Sociedade de Arte Moderna do Recife (SAMR) [Recife’s Modern Art Society’s Collective Studio] in 1952, alongside founder Abelardo da Hora (1924-2014), and Gilvan Samico (1928-2013), among others. The 1950s marked an intense period of learning, exchanging, and experimentation for the artist alongside with artists in Recife, as well as in other Brazilian cities, such as Mário Cravo Júnior (1923-2018) and Carybé (1923-2018) in Salvador, and Lívio Abramo (1903-1992) and Di Cavalcanti (1897-1976) in São Paulo. He also earned a scholarship from the Rotelini Foundation to study in Rome.

“José Cláudio has always been a figurative artist, and his art practice is based on the first glimpse of an emotion not allowing or admitting amendments or corrections”, wrote the critic and art historian José Roberto Teixeira Leite, also stating that: “[As an] expressionist, he combines a firm drawing with a wide and spontaneous brushstroke of deep colors, in terms of themes José Cláudio focused on regional scenes and types, on regional customs and landscape, birds, and fruits of his Northeast, stripping them, however, of any picturesque content to concentrate on its pictorial expression only.”

With his iconic series *Carimbos*, José Claudio was part of the movement Poema/processo [Poem/process] (1967-1972), where he created compositions using patterns engraved on erasers. In 1975, José Cláudio went on a trip to the Amazon organized by the Museum of Zoology at USP, where he produced a hundred works gathered in the book "100 screens, 60 days and a travel diary". In 1980, the artist focused on the painting *O Repouso do Modelo*, by Almeida Júnior (1850 - 1899), creating a series of paintings that reinterpreted the theme.

José Cláudio was born in Ipojuca, in 1932. He lives and works in Recife, Brazil. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Carimbos*, at Museu de Arte Moderna Aluísio Magalhães (MAMAM) (2017), in Recife, Brazil; *100 telas, 60 dias e um diário de Viagem, Amazonas 1975*, at Museu Afro Brasil (2009), in São Paulo, Brazil; and a retrospective at the Museu do Estado de Pernambuco (MEPE) (2009), in Recife, Brazil. His works were presented at 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 18th São Paulo Biennials (1957, 1959, 1961, 1963 and 1985), Brazil; and in the 1st, 3rd, 14th, and 23rd Panorama de Arte Brasileira, at Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM-SP) (1969, 1971, 1983 and 1993), in São Paulo, Brazil. Selected group exhibitions include: *A mão afro-brasileira*, at Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM-SP) (1988), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Almeida Júnior: Um artista revisitado*, at Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2000), in São Paulo, Brazil; and *Experimentando Pernambuco Experimental*, at Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) (2014), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. His works can be found in the permanent collections of Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP), São Paulo, Brazil; Palácio do Governo do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil.

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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