

An abstract painting featuring a large, dark grey, textured circular shape in the center. To the left, there are vertical bands of yellow and light green, with some white and pinkish tones. To the right, there are sections of bright yellow, green, and purple. The overall style is expressive and layered.

nara roesler

**cristina canale**  
**memento vivere**  
nara roesler são paulo

**opening**  
august 19

**exhibition**  
aug 19 – oct 7, 2023



**memento vivere**  
marcelo campos

We are alive. This is a declaration that we need to celebrate, repeat, become conscious of, and thereby act responsibly. To declare life is also to be mindful of ensuring life, our own and that of others, a central matter in discussions about biopower and biopolitics. The politics of life today has now become central in philosophy, sociocultural discourse, and even art. Cristina Canale declares life, echoing the sentiment of Carlos Drummond de Andrade who, affected by the curtailment of freedom during Brazil's military dictatorship, encouraged us to say, 'the days are beautiful!' Drummond, who trailed the crooked angels and the obstacles along his path in his poetry, positioned himself astounded by his very state of bewilderment in the face of the world.

*Memento vivere*, the title chosen by Cristina Canale for this exhibition, takes us back to the history of art, as the term *memento mori* was often used to remind us of our finite nature, depicted in still-life paintings, through the depiction of skulls (*vanitas*) which symbolized death. On the other hand, for a painter to declare life today redefines interests and perspectives that diverge from the hedonistic tendencies that are associated with artistic creation, often steeped in a sense of alienation. What can art do in the face of the world's sorrows, in the face of life?

To contemplate painting and still remain attentive to the world is, in a way, to solve perplexities, much like Drummond proposed. And with that, to react,

experiment, take risks alongside the life of forms and materials, pay heed to metamorphoses, threats, and changes.

In Canale's current series, the presence of portraiture is prominent. In a world full of self-portraits (selfies), the artist does not highlight the portrait that identifies specific individuals, but rather the construction, framing, and representation of the human figure that transforms, dissolves, and gradually divides into shoulders and necks, culminating in the oval shape of a face. By not identifying specific figures, we inevitably grasp the allegorical relationship these images provoke us to associate with. These could be seen as allegorical paintings, constructed by the artist who further magnifies this interest by incorporating elements external to the noble canvas of painting. Within the works, landscapes, nature, and plant elements coexist with the spreading of paints, forming fields of color that both distance themselves from and approach the mechanisms of representation. These gestures grant Canale's work a broad range of experiments with abstract interests that now influence a part of contemporary art.

Perhaps the term 'image' is frowned upon the narratives of Brazilian painting history. With 40 years of artistic practice, Cristina Canale experienced the disputes over the relationship between painting and representation in Brazil,

from the inclination towards abstract forms, led by Constructivist perspectives, to the use of less noble materials, then termed as 'popular'. Today, the artist challenges us with the question: 'What truly matters in an image?' The world continued to popularize them, forging connections between the *avant-garde* and *kitsch*, between identity constructions, celebrations, carnivals and the salons of the elite. Yet, Brazil's vitality never remained silent.

In Canale's work, a broader perspective reinforces the sharing of common interests within an art moment where art materials cease to belong to the components of conventional techniques, such as painting and drawing, and begin to border on a complete freedom of appropriating fabrics and inexpensive objects, like those sold in the popular markets of various cities.

Upon listening to the artist's current interests, the friction between painting and gesture becomes evident. We perceive, in a different light, an attraction to the notion of harnessing the attained freedom, experimenting with collages, fostering a certain mismatch in reactions and encounters among materials layered onto the painting canvases. And thus, this draws attention to the friction, the irritations. By creating such disturbances, Canale embraces 'a slight ambition for three-dimensionality', in the artist's words,

creating certain reliefs on the flatness of the painting surface. Consequently, the pursuit of materials intertwines with the routines of life. Methods that have become historical in her production, like the use of torn silk stockings, glued cardboard and tapestries, continue to evolve. Today, Cristina shows interest in emphasizing the fabric itself, with striped areas, spheres, textures, and patterns, without the intervention of painting.

Rather than encountering obstacles on the path, she forges them, and produces them, questioning the very primacy of the canvas, the nobility of categories. 'Which fabric will be there in the background?' the artist asks herself as she begins the provocation for the primordial gesture.

A myth traverses Cristina Canale's recent series. Danae, a princess who shared the love of Zeus and was impregnated by him through a shower of gold. In the paintings of this exhibition, the presence of blue and gold aligns with both the myth and Danae's pleasure. The pleasure that, rather than a small death, becomes a declaration of life and freedom.

'Your shoulders bear the world, and it weighs no more than a child's hand', thus, Drummond proves to us that life will go on.



*Thetys*, 2022/2023  
acrylic paint, oil paint, acrylic spray  
and collage of fabric on canvas  
160 x 140 cm  
63 x 55.1 in









Quimera, 2022  
oil paint on linen  
110 x 100 x 4 cm  
43.3 x 39.4 x 1.6 in









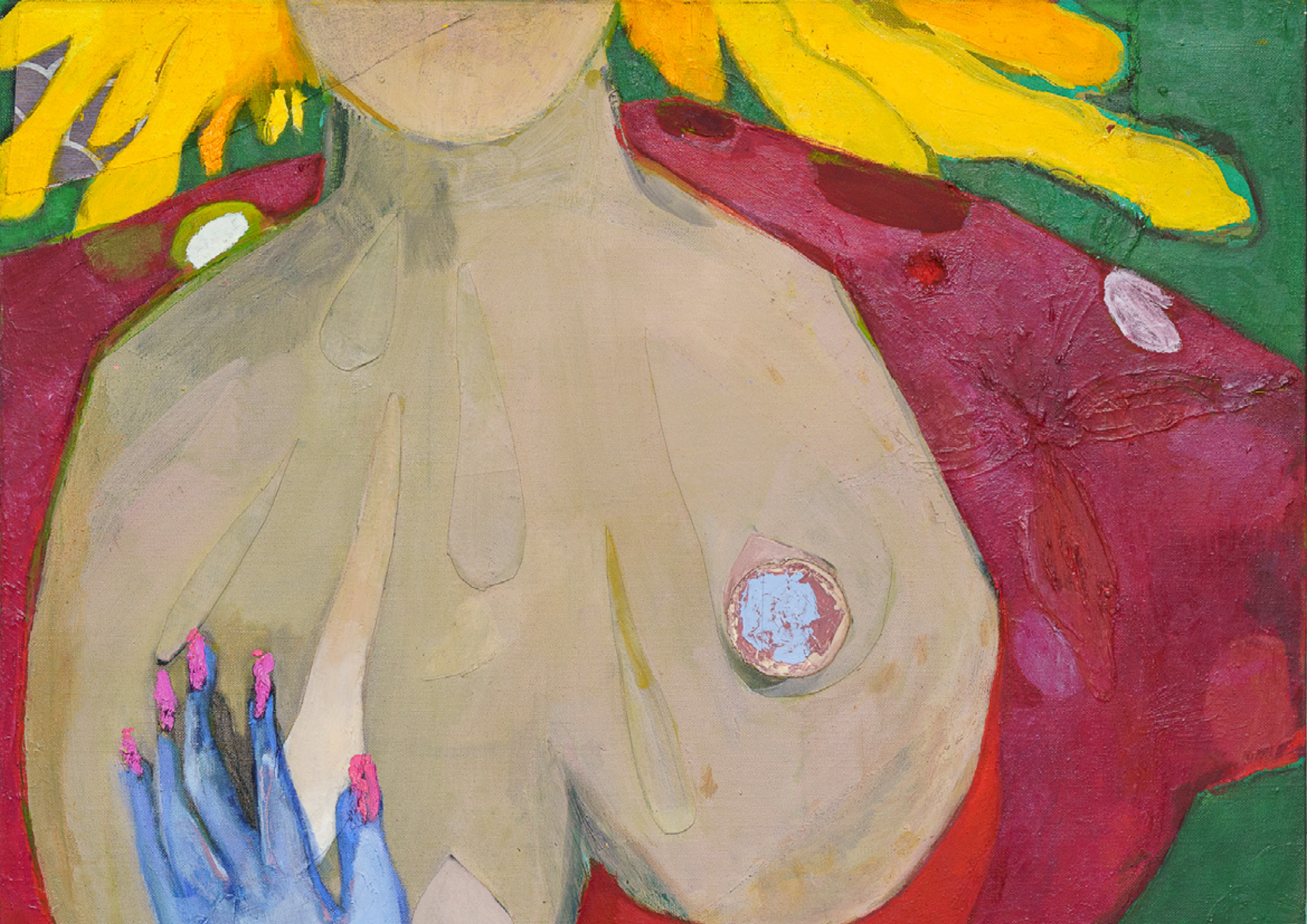


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*Passion*, 2023  
acrylic paint, oil paint, acrylic modeling clay  
and collage of fabric on linen  
110 x 100 cm  
43.3 x 39.4 in











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*Curls*, 2022  
acrylic paint, oil paint and  
collage of fabric on linen  
110 x 100 cm  
43.3 x 39.4 in









Tstst, 2022  
acrylic paint, oil paint, acrylic spray,  
acrylic modeling clay  
and collage of fabric on linen  
100 x 100 cm  
39.4 x 39.4 in









*Danae*, 2023  
acrylic paint, oil paint,  
acrylic modeling clay and  
collage of fabric on linen  
170 x 200 cm  
66.9 x 78.7 in









*Reflexos [tríptico], 2023*  
oil paint on canvas  
1. 78,7 x 66,9 in,  
2. 43,3 x 55,1 in,  
3. 23,6 x 43,3 in













Clouds and portrait, 2023  
acrylic paint, oil paint,  
acrylic modeling clay and  
collage of fabric on linen  
200 x 175 cm  
78.7 x 68.9 in











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*Mother and daughter II*, 2023  
acrylic paint and  
oil paint on canvas  
190 x 230 cm  
74.8 x 90.6 in











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*Lilac flower*, 2022  
acrylic paint, oil paint, acrylic spray  
and fabric collage on canvas  
100 x 80 cm  
39.4 x 31.5 in











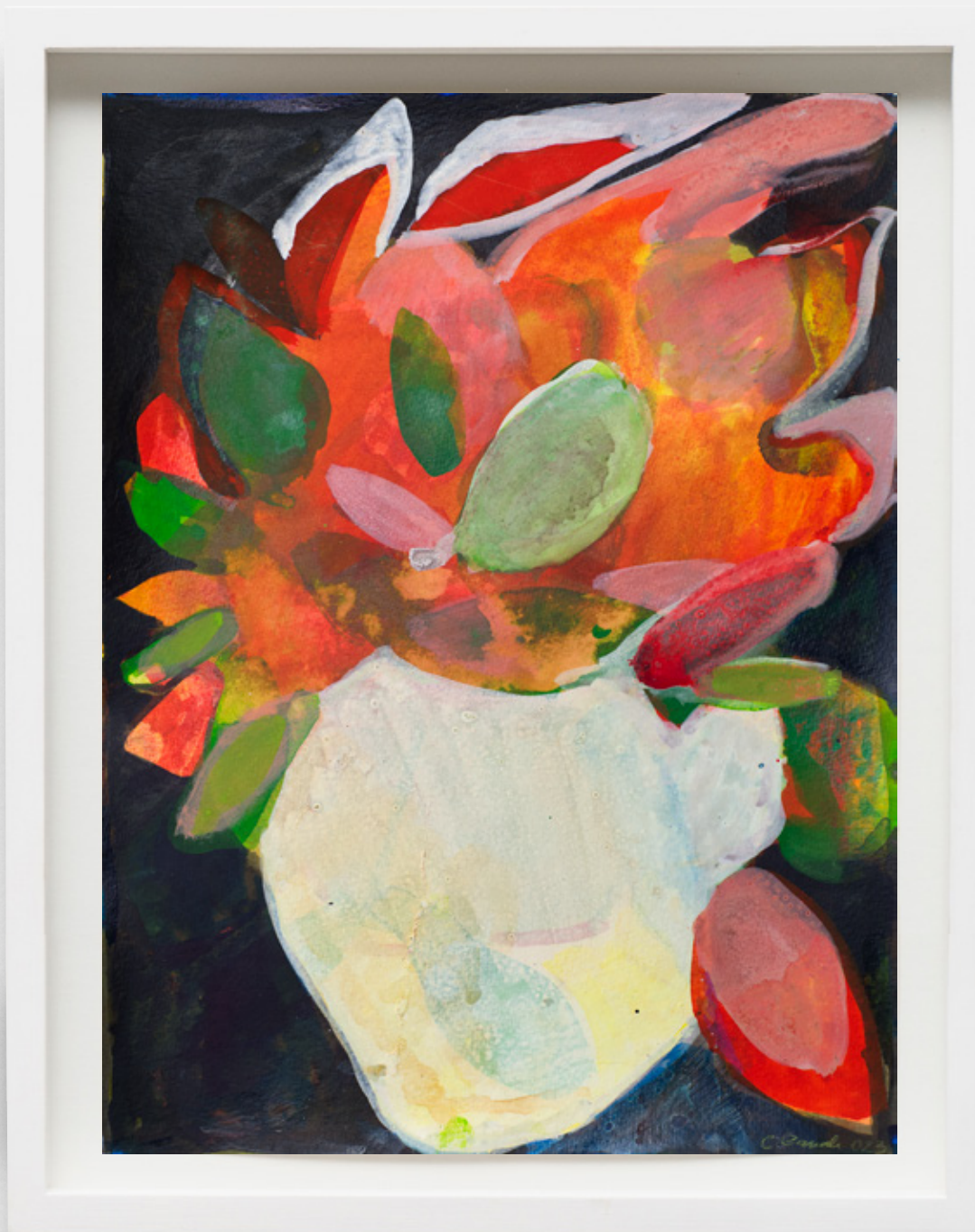
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*Spring, 2022*  
acrylic paint, oil paint and  
collage of fabric on linen  
50 x 50 cm  
19.7 x 19.7 in









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*Mercúrio*, 2023  
India ink on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in









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Vaso, 2023  
India ink, colored pencil,  
watercolor and paper collage  
on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in







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A casa do sonhador, 2023  
India ink, watercolor, paper collage  
on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in

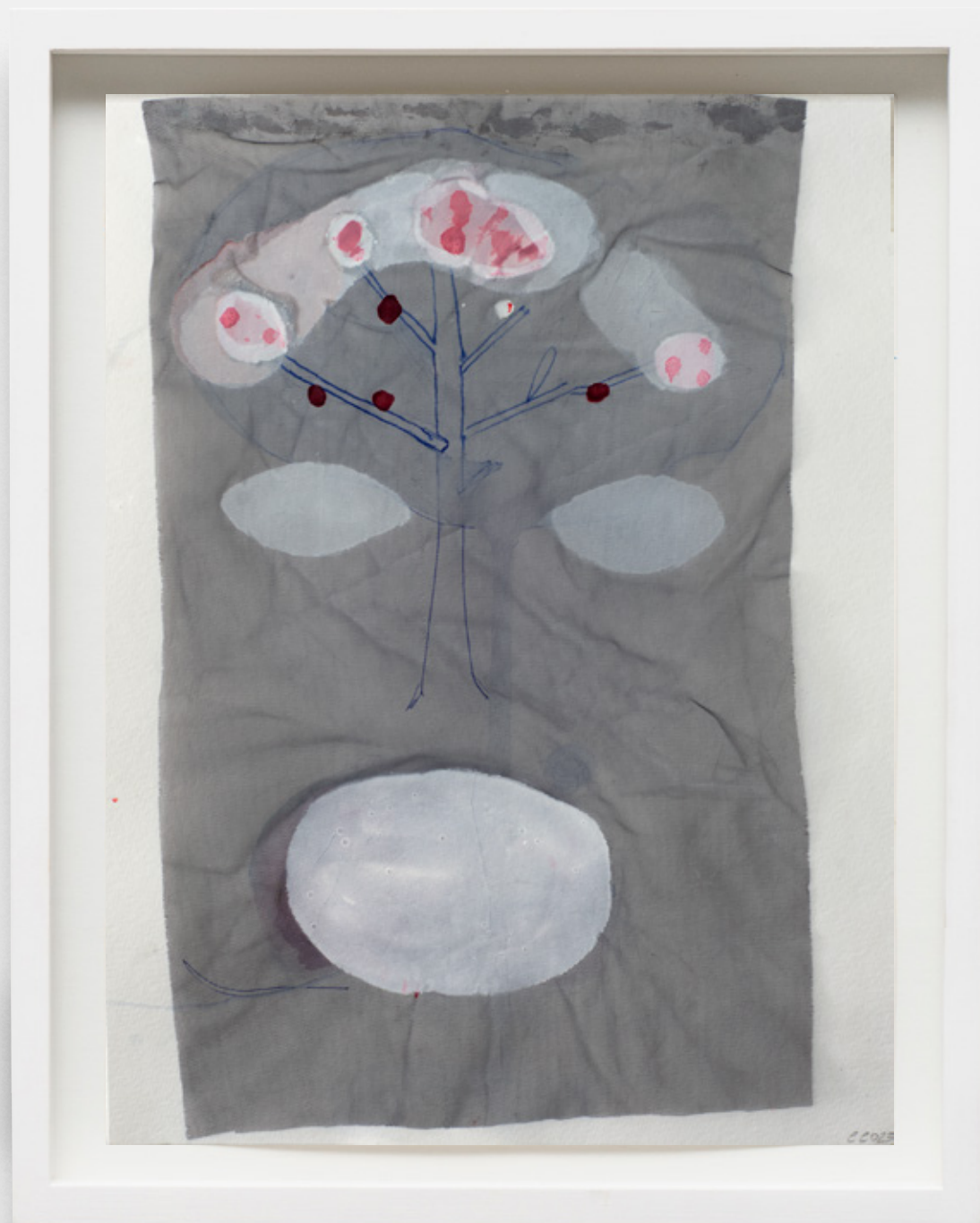




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*Carinho*, 2023  
India ink, graffiti, paper collage  
on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in





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Árvore e rosto, 2023  
India ink and fabric collage  
on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in





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*Medusa penteada*, 2023  
India ink, oil pastel  
on Hahnemuehle paper  
40 x 30 cm  
15.7 x 11.8 in







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Laura Mars, 2021/2022  
acrylic paint and oil paint on canvas  
100 x 120 x 4 cm  
39.4 x 47.2 x 1.6 in







*Sincronías*, 2022  
acrylic paint, oil paint  
and acrylic spray on linen  
170 x 190 cm  
66.9 x 74.8 in









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## **cristina canale**

b. 1961, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Cristina Canale rose to prominence following her participation in the iconic group exhibition *Como vai você, Geração 80?*, at Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage (EAV Parque Lage) in Rio de Janeiro in 1984. Like many of her colleagues from the so-called 'Generation 80', her early works reveal the influence of the international context as painting resurfaced, especially with that of German Neo-expressionism. Loaded with visual elements and thick paint, her early paintings have a material or textural characteristic that is reinforced by her use of contrasting and vivid colors. In the early 1990s, Canale moved to Germany to study in Düsseldorf under the guidance of the Dutch conceptual artist Jan Dibbets. Her compositions soon acquired a sense of spatiality, as she began to incorporate the use of planes and depth, while also adding greater fluidity to her use of colors.

Cristina Canale's work is often based on prosaic everyday scenes, which she extracts from advertising photography. Her paintings result in elaborate compositions that intertwine the figurative and the abstract, often blurring one with the other. According to the curator Tiago Mesquita, Canale's production opposes the quest for constituting structures of the image, which artists such as Gerhard Richter and Robert Ryman engage with, tackling instead 'the image and established genres of painting in a subjective manner following the belief in a singular experience.'

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## **selected solo exhibitions**

- *The Encounter*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2021)
- *Cabeças/Falantes*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
- *Cristina Canale: Zwischen den Welten*, Kunstforum Markert Gruppe, Hamburg, Germany (2015)
- *Entremundos*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2014)
- *Espelho e Memória – Spiegel und Erinnerung*, Galerie Atelier III, Barmstedt, Germany (2014)
- *Arredores e rastros*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2010)

## **selected group exhibitions**

- *Co/respondences: Brazil and abroad*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2023)
- *Ateliê de Gravura: da tradição à experimentação*, Fundação Iberê Camargo (FIC), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2019)
- *Mulheres na Coleção MAR*, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2018)
- *MACS Fora de Casa – Poéticas do feminino*, Sesc Sorocaba, Sorocaba, Brazil (2018)
- *Alucinações à beira mar*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2017)
- *Land der Zukunft, Lichthof – Auswärtiges Amt*, Berlin, Germany (2013)

## **selected collections**

- Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói (MAC-Niterói), Niteroi, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil



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