

jaime lauriano

why don't you know about western remains?

nara roesler new york

opening january 18

exhibition january 18 – march 2, 2024



Jaime Lauriano, *Invasão de Pedro Álvares Cabral em Porto Seguro em 1500*, 2023. Photo: Flávio Freire.

Nara Roesler New York is pleased to present *Why don't you know about Western remains?*, Jaime Lauriano's first solo show in the United States, curated by Igor Simões. The show brings together around ten works, including paintings, sculptures, and a video, which are recent developments in the artist's research and developed mainly over the last year.

With its title taken from the first verse of the song *For Lennon and McCartney* by Milton Nascimento, the exhibition focuses on works that examine the formation of the imaginary of Brazilian society. From a decolonial perspective, Lauriano addresses current issues, always taking into account the past of Brazilian and Latin American societies, founded on colonial exploitation and slavery, exposing a deeply violent and unequal contemporary reality. In order to poetically understand this historical conjuncture, the artist revisits visual elements that have helped create this situation, ranging from great Brazilian art paintings to widely circulated everyday images, many of which are seemingly 'harmless', like toys and stickers, but implicitly carry a huge burden of historical violence.

In his pictorial works, the artist inserts various elements from popular visuality onto the canvas, ranging from colonial images to those associated with Afro-Brazilian religions. Through these works, Jaime Lauriano operates a kind of re-signification, with elements such as the word 'Axé'¹, or sacred figures like the Preto Velho², acting against colonial violence and bringing spiritual protection.

Also featured are some recent works of a cartographic nature. Maps are a widely used element in the process of invading and scrutinizing subordinate territories. In these works, however, the artist makes these maps using pomba, a chalk used in Afro-Brazilian religious territories. He inserts territories and names associated with historical cartography into his maps, and at the same time, includes objects and visual signs associated with colonialism, racism, and contemporary violence.

Invasão de Pedro Álvares Cabral em Porto Seguro em 1500 is also an offshoot of research that Jaime Lauriano has carried out since 2022. In this series, the artist reinterprets academic paintings produced between the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, which idealize facts from Brazilian history and place colonizers in heroic poses. The work in question is a painting by Oscar Pereira da Silva from 1900, which depicts the arrival of the first Portuguese settlers in what would become known as Brazilian territory today. Jaime empties the scene of people and characters, keeping only the scenery, and he inserts a profusion of stickers, which sometimes allude to colonial violence and sometimes to elements of resistance. Above, along the frame of the canvas, are miniatures of soldiers and popular figures linked to Afro-Brazilian religions, such as Zé Pilintra³, which are arranged in such a way as to simulate combat.

Padrão dos Descobrimentos discusses Portuguese colonization more broadly, revisiting the monument of the same name, located in the city of Lisbon and designed in the 1940s to pay homage to those involved in Portuguese maritime expansion and the construction of the country's colonial empire. Here, however, the imposing landmark is reduced to a cast brass miniature, whose material was extracted from ammunition cartridges collected from conflict areas in Brazil. This military accomplishment, while celebrated in Portugal, was responsible for creating conflicts that still exist today.

The exhibition also includes the artist's first work in cinematographic language, *Cantando na Chuva* (Singing in the Rain), from 2023. Made in partnership with the Legitimate Defense Collective, this film reinterprets the classic by the same name, starring Gene Kelly. As a starting point, the artist uses an episode of racial violence that took place in Rio de Janeiro in 2018, in which the police murder a black man after mistaking an umbrella he was carrying for a rifle.

In the words of Igor Simões, the exhibition's curator: 'This exhibition exists precisely because you don't want to know about the remains that was both the trace and the ballast of the experience of a continent founded on colonization.'

¹ Axé: a word in the Yoruba language (an African language originating in the region of Nigeria) that means 'energy', 'power' or 'strength'.

² Preto Velho: entity present in Umbanda (an African origin religion originated in Brazil) that consists of a spirit that manifests itself under the archetype of an elderly African. Associated with wisdom, tenderness and patience, they bring love and hope to those they protect.

³ An entity present in Afro-Brazilian religions, considered the patron spirit of bars, gambling places and gutters, sometimes associated with naughtiness.

about jaime lauriano

Through videos, installations, objects and texts, Jaime Lauriano explores symbols, images and myths that shape the imagination of Brazilian society, placing them in dialogue critical statements that reveal how the colonial structures of the past reverberate in contemporary necropolitics. Drawing from his own experience as a black man, Lauriano addresses the forms of everyday violence that have permeated Brazilian history since its invasion by the Portuguese and has focused, most unjustly, on non-white individuals. In this sense, the artist focuses on the historical traumas of Brazilian culture, understanding their complexities through the agency of images and discourses from the most diverse sources, whether from those considered official, such as communication vehicles and State propaganda; or unofficial ones, like videos of lynchings shared over the internet.

His criticism extends from the macropolitics of the spheres of official power, to micropolitics. Lauriano thinks about trauma not only in terms of temporality, but also spatially, using cartography to question colonial territorial disputes and constructions. Another dimension of his work is the connection with ancestral religions of African origin. The artist uses signs and symbols of the rituals of these religions, such as the white pomba, used in the making of his maps. Lauriano understands how the religious sphere was fundamental for the resistance of those that were enslaved and served as a space for maintaining their connection with their ancestral territory.

Jaime Lauriano was born in 1985 in São Paulo, where he lives and works. His solo exhibitions include: *Aqui é o fim do mundo*, at the Museu de Arte do Rio, in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (2023); *Paraíso da miragem*, in collaboration with collective silence, at the Kubik Gallery (2022), in Porto, Portugal; *Marcas*, at Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (Fundaj) (2018), in Recife, Brazil; *Brinquedo de furar moletom*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói (MAC-Niterói) (2018), in Niterói, Brazil; *Nessa terra, em se plantando, tudo dá*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (CCBB-RJ) (2015), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and *Impedimento*, at Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP) (2014), in São Paulo, Brazil. Lauriano presented works at *El Dorado: Myths of Gold*, in Americas Society, New York, USA (2023); In the 37th Panorama of Brazilian Art, São Paulo, Brazil (2022); and at the 11th Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2018). He has also participated in various group exhibitions, such as: *Histórias brasileiras*, at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) (2022), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Social Fabric: Art and Activism in Contemporary Brazil*, in Visual Arts Center of University of Texas, Austin, USA (2022) *Afro-Atlantic Histories*, at the National Gallery of Art (2022), in Washington DC, USA and at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFAH) (2022), in Houston, USA; *Quem não luta tá morto – arte democracia utopia*, at the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) (2018), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *Levantes*, at SESC Pinheiros (2017), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Territórios: Artistas afrodescendentes no acervo da Pinacoteca* at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2015), in São Paulo, Brazil. His works can be found in institutional collections, such as: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (Fundaj), Recife, Brazil; Rio Art Museum (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; and Schoepflin Stiftung, Lörrach, Germany.

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Nara Roesler is one of Brazil's leading contemporary art galleries, representing influential Brazilian and Latin American artists from the 1950s, as well as important established and emerging artists who engage with the trends initiated by these historical figures. Founded in 1989 by Nara Roesler, the gallery consistently fosters curatorial innovation while maintaining the highest standards of quality in its artistic productions. It has developed a selective and rigorous exhibition program in close collaboration with its artists, established and maintained the Roesler Hotel program, a platform for curatorial projects, and continuously supports its artists beyond the gallery space, collaborating with institutions and curators for external exhibitions. The gallery expanded its exhibition space in São Paulo in 2012 and inaugurated new spaces in Rio de Janeiro in 2014 and New York in 2015, continuing its mission to provide the best possible platform for its artists to showcase their works.

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511 west 21st street

opening

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exhibition

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