



nara roesler

FRIEZE LONDON 2025

curated sector
booth S01

preview
wednesday
october 15
11am–5pm

open to the public
oct 16–19

the regent's park,
marylebone green
london

FRIEZE LONDON 2025

At Frieze London 2025, Alberto Pitta participates in *Echoes in the Present*. This section, curated by Jareh Das, explores the connections between artists from Brazil, Africa, and their diasporas. Rooted in shared histories, their ties are marked by the forced displacement of African peoples across the Atlantic and sustained through ongoing cultural exchange.

Pitta's presentation features new works from the *Mariwô* series, developed especially for the occasion. *Màriwó* (*Elaeis guineensis*) is the leaf of the oil palm, a sacred tree in Candomblé, the religion in which Pitta was raised. Each branch of the plant is carefully shredded and hung on the doors and windows of *terreiros* and *casas de santo*, to ward off evil and protect the energy of these Afro-Brazilian religious ritual spaces. Pitta's visual trajectory is characterized by a distinctive interest in Afro-Brazilian cultures, spirituality, and graphic experimentation. With a practice that spans over four decades, his work is still inextricably tied to his personal history. As the son of Ialorixá Mãe Santinha de Oyá, he was introduced at an early age to his mother's religion and its rich textile traditions. Initially,

this heritage is present in the artists' intricate richelieu embroideries. Since the 1980s, he has also developed patterned serigraphs for Carnival, bringing spiritual and ceremonial significance to the festivities.

Evoked in his prints are traditional African and Afro-diasporic elements, particularly those from Yoruba mythology. In the words of curator Renato Menezes: *“Indeed, signs, forms, and traces that evoke traditional African graphic languages have found, upon his fabrics, a privileged place for the education of the masses and the telling of stories that only make sense collectively. If writing, in Pitta’s work, is established through patterns and colors that reinterpret the Yoruba worldview, reading, on the other hand, arises from the relationships established through the contact of moving bodies, when the city streets become a terreiro. Across the folds of the fabrics that clothe the revelers runs an alphabet of letters and affections, activated by music and dance: it is on the body of the other that one reads the text that completes us.”*

In addition to his presentation at Nara Roesler’s booth in Echoes in the Present, Pitta presents a selection of more than a dozen historical Carnival textiles, suspended throughout the corridors of Jareh Das’ curated section.



exhibition view
Joie Collective – Apprendre a flamboyer,
Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2025)



exhibition view
24th Biental Sidney, Sidney, Australia (2024)

Casa de Oxumarê is one of the central works presented by Alberto Pitta at Frieze London. Measuring two and a half meters in length, this silkscreen painting revisits an earlier collage by the artist, created here at a monumental scale.

Oxumarê—the serpent *orixá*, often manifested as a rainbow—is the divinity that connects heaven and earth through rainwater. In the work, the serpent appears subtly through the silkscreen, while the intensity of the vibrant colors and geometric forms embodies its presence, evoking the rainbow as a sacred body.

Alberto Pitta

House of Oxumarê, 2025

painting and silkscreen on canvas

164 x 240,5 x 3,5 cm

64.6 x 94.7 x 1.4 in







The canvas is then populated with stars and a moon, elements that expand the cosmic dimension of the visual narrative. Among them appear cowrie shells—recurring elements in Pitta’s iconography—that here may also be read as serpent scales, reinforcing the symbolism of the *orixá* and creating layers of meaning between the sacred, the natural, and the mythical.

At the center of the composition rises the house—the *ilê*, the *terreiro*, a space of worship, gathering, and ancestry. This particular *terreiro* is dedicated to *Oxumarê*. Before it appears the image of a tiger, a mythical being drawn from the artist’s symbolic repertoire, which, together with the paintings’ colors, geometric elements, and cowrie shells, composes a scene that may be read both as personal fabulation and as collective memory of Afro-Brazilian cosmologies.



Festa de Oxum recreates the celebratory atmosphere in the *terreiros*, especially adorned in honor of the *orixá* being celebrated on each given night. The work pays homage to *Oxum*, *orixá* of freshwater, fertility, and beauty, guardian of cowrie shells and of the divinatory system, *erindilogun*. She is depicted as a large bird, carrying within her an *opon Ifá*, the power of the oracle and of invocation.



Ritual of Oxum, 2025
painting and silkscreen on canvas
195 x 164,5 x 3,5 cm
76.8 x 64.8 x 1.4 in



Fish, *abebés* (metallic circular mirrors associated with *Oxum*), gourds, pennants, and lace textiles populate the canvas—symbols that evoke abundance as much as festive ornamentation. The *mariwô*, the palm leaf that protects homes and people, appears here as a central element—leaf, fabric, garment—articulating spirituality and aesthetics, ritual and visual invention.





At the center of the composition, the *ialorixá*'s chair asserts the dimension of matriarchy and spiritual leadership in the terreiro. More than a collective symbol, it refers to Alberto Pitta's mother, an *lalorixá* who, although not a daughter of *Oxum*, also worshipped the divinity.

Through the layered techniques of silkscreen, the work moves along a fine line between the earthly and spiritual worlds. In this fusion of planes, painting and print intertwine, turning celebration into image and image into ritual.

Festa de Ogum celebrates the ritual energy of the *terreiro*, drawing the viewer closer to the festive dimension of divinity. This celebration honors the deity of war and iron, *Ogum*, represented here through a blue African mask, evoking Afro-Brazilian cosmologies and the ancestry of his worship.

Various *mariwôs* appear in shades that oscillate between the old and the new, creating visual layers that articulate tradition and innovation. The presence of the chair, now in white, produces a white-on-white superimposition, reinforcing the ritual and symbolic dimension of spiritual leadership.

Ritual of Ogum, 2025
painting and silkscreen on canvas
195 x 164 x 3,5 cm
76.8 x 64.6 x 1.4 in



The space is adorned with garlands, evoking the festivity and ornamentation of the *terreiro*, highlighting the vitality of *Ogum*'s worship. The work transforms colors, forms, and symbols into a visual narrative that dialogues with tradition and with the collective experience of celebration. The layered techniques of painting and silkscreen further emphasize the tension between the earthly and the spiritual.



Alberto Pitta

Mariwô, 2025

corten steel

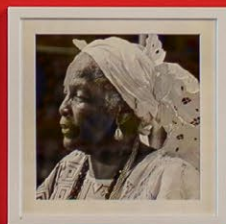
edition of 3 + 1 AP

40 x 96,5 x 3,5 cm

15.7 x 38 x 1.4 in







36th Bienal de São Paulo:
*Not All Travellers Walk
Roads—Of Humanity as Practice*

The presentation also features *Ave com búzios* [Bird with cowries], a historical drawing dated from 1987, through which one can grasp the artist's graphic thought process, later translated by him into prints.



Bird with cowries, 1987
felt tip pen and collage on paper
31,5 x 44 cm
12.4 x 17.3 in

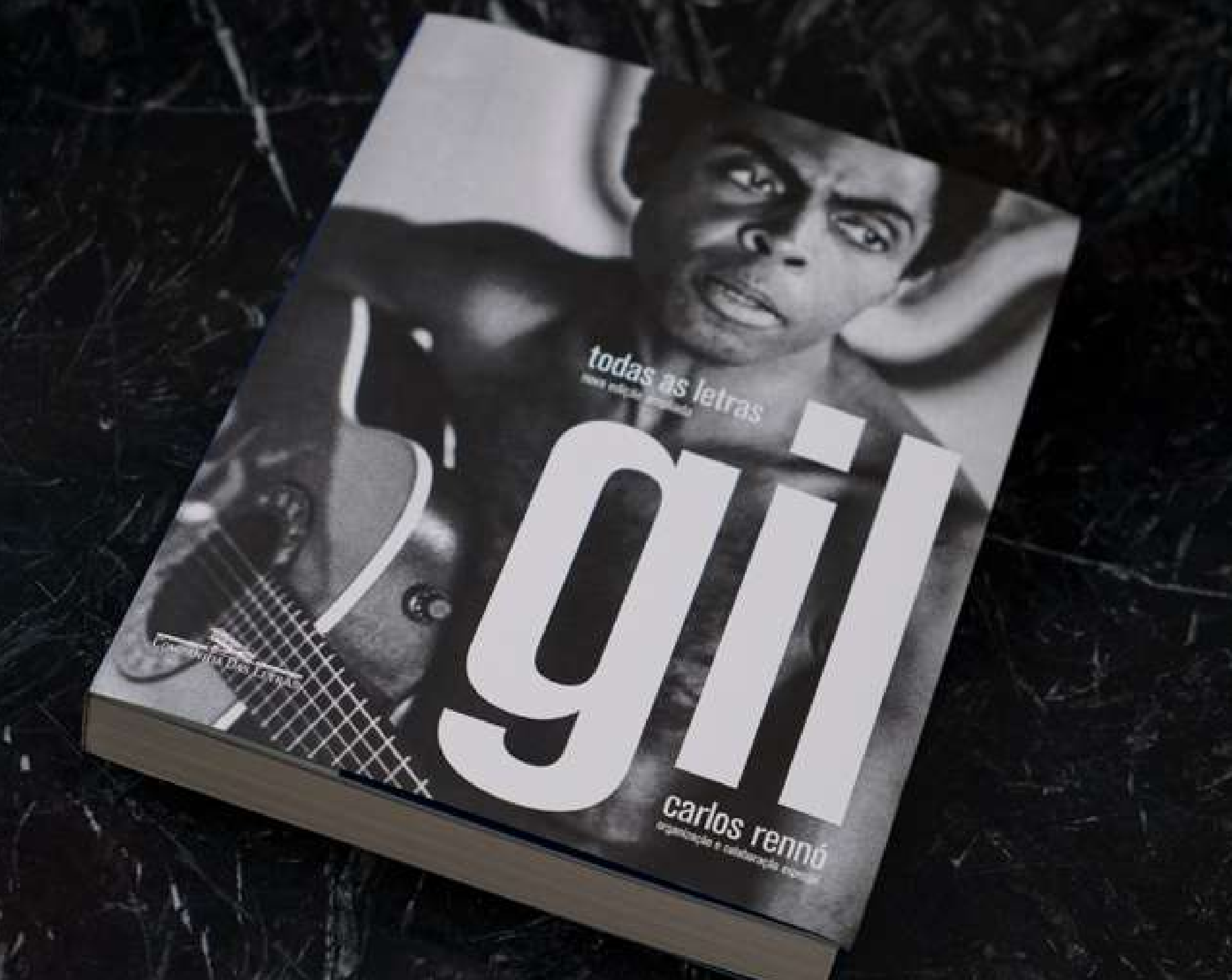


Another work that integrates the presentation is *Futurível* (2021), which is part of a series that consists of original illustrations made especially for the book *Todas as Letras – Gil*, which focuses entirely on the musician's work. With organization by Carlos Rennó, unpublished illustrations by Alberto Pitta, and texts by Arnaldo Antunes and José Miguel Wisnik, the third edition of the publication brings together all the songs composed by Gilberto Gil.



Futurível, 2021
printing on paper
40,5 x 29,7 cm
15.9 x 11.7 in





Book *Todas as Letras* – Gil

Alberto Pitta



Alberto Pitta is best known for the prints he has designed and produced for Salvador's Carnival for over 40 years. As the founder of the Cortejo Afro group, he has remained deeply committed—both socially and artistically—to Afro-diasporic traditions. Yet only in recent years has he begun to establish a more consistent presence within the wider visual arts circuit. No single book could fully capture the breadth of his long and rich career; this volume serves as a starting point, bringing together recent works and historical pieces alongside texts by Vik Muniz and Galciani Neves, as well as an interview with the artist conducted by Jareh Das.

Alberto Pitta é conhecido pelas estampas concebidas e realizadas para blocos afro do Carnaval de Salvador há mais de quarenta anos. Fundou o bloco Cortejo Afro e tem um forte engajamento social e artístico em torno das tradições afro-diaspóricas. Mas foi nos últimos anos que sistematizou sua inserção no circuito das artes visuais. Um pequeno livro jamais daria conta de sua longa trajetória. Por isso, este volume é apenas um ponto de partida que reúne sua produção recente e algumas obras históricas, além de textos de Vik Muniz e Galciani Neves e uma entrevista com o artista por Jareh Das.



nara roesler | books



alberto pitta
b. 1961, Salvador, Brazil
lives and works in Salvador, Brazil

The artist Alberto Pitta has textile printing and serigraphy as a central element of his work, although he has also dedicated himself to painting and sculpture in recent years. With a career spanning more than four decades, Pitta’s production is closely linked to popular festivities and in dialogue with other languages, such as clothing, his work has a strong public dimension, having created prints for Afro Carnival groups such as Olodum, Filhos de Gandhy and his own, Cortejo Afro. His print production began in the 1980s. They feature signs, shapes, and strokes that evoke traditional African and Afro-diasporic elements, especially those from Yoruba mythology, which is very present in Salvador and the Bahian recôncavo. In the words of curator Renato Menezes: “In fact, signs, shapes, and lines that evoke traditional African graphics have found, on their fabrics, a privileged place for educating the masses and telling stories that only make sense collectively. If the writing in Pitta’s work is organized in the set of patterns and colors that reinterpret the Yoruba worldview, the reading, on the other hand, concerns the relationship established in the contact between bodies in movement, when the city streets become a terreiro¹. Through the folds of the fabrics that cover the revelers runs an alphabet of letters and affections, mobilized by music and dance: it is in the body of the other that the text that completes us is read.”

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- selected individual exhibitions**
- *Àkùko, Eiyéle and Ekodidé – A Flock by Alberto Pitta*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2025)
 - *Outros Carnavais*, Nara Roesler, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2024)
 - *Outros Carnavais*, Nara Roesler, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2024)
 - *Mariwó*, Paulo Darzé Galeria, Salvador, Brazil (2023)
 - *Homens de Ferro*, Galeria Solar do Ferrão, Salvador, Brazil (2013)

- selected coletive exhibitions**
- 36th Bienal de São Paulo (2025)
 - *Joie Collective – Apprendre a flamboyer*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2025)
 - *Artistas do Vestir: Uma Costura dos Afetos*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil (2024)
 - *24th Bienal de Sidney*, Sidney, Austrália (2024)
 - *O Quilombismo*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlim, Alemanha (2023)
 - *Encruzilhada*, Museu de Arte Moderna de Salvador, Salvador, Brasil (2022)
 - *Um Defeito de Cor*, Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil (2022)

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- selected collections**
- Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Miami, EUA
 - Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brasil
 - Museu de Arte Moderna de Salvador, Salvador, Brasil
 - Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil

back to the artist’s works ↑

nara roesler

são paulo

av europa, 655

jardim europa, 01449-001

são paulo, sp, brasil

t 55 (11) 2039 5454

rio de janeiro

rua redentor 241

ippanema, 22421-030

rio de janeiro, rj, brasil

t 55 (21) 3591 0052

new york

511 west 21st street

new york, 10011 ny

usa

t 1 (212) 794 5038

info@nararoesler.art

www.nararoesler.art