



nara roesler

daniel senise
I live comfortably
in the museum

nara roesler rio de janeiro
opening august 21
exhibition aug 21 – oct 11, 2025

daniel senise

recent captures

In one of Daniel Senise's new works, an image confronts us with a surface darkened by layer upon layer of matter and time. Here, the artist seems to have taken to the extreme his usual method of capturing chance – the same process of printing residues, dust, rust, pigments, and glues that he has employed since the 1990s as a system of pictorial palimpsests. Yet this time, the stain does not merely erupt on the canvas: it blends into the very wall where the work is installed, as if it were the residual echo of an absent painting, sunken into its own support. It is as though we are facing the negative of an ancient image – an obliterated fresco, a wall marked by absences, by the slow erosion of history – and, at the same time, a forewarning of the future. If one can glimpse in it the specter of other images – a disfigured silhouette that might recall Goya, an oblong shape like a Picassian skeleton, or even Polke's experimental roughness – what this work really throws back at us is not the past of painting, but the time after its obliteration. Senise presents us with an image that behaves like an anticipated ruin: not the nostalgic evocation of what art once was, but the silent projection of what it will become. It is the future of art as a trace, as camouflage, or as the memory of something that has not yet happened – and which, perhaps, when finally seen, will have already been there all along.

Other recent works, such as *Untitled (Bourse de Commerce)*, reaffirm Senise's approach to painting as an absent inscription, or rather, as an image in a state of disappearance. They present surfaces that seek neither to depict a recognizable object nor to create an illusion of space, but instead exist as material testimonies of places that once were, or that might have been, bearers of images. By pressing his supports against walls, floors, ceilings, or images of architectural fragments, the artist collects not the direct index of a figure, but what remains of a contact, what survives from the clash between matter and time. There is something topographic about them, as if they were worn maps, pictorial regions swept by weather, remnants of frescoes, peeled wallpaper, archaeological gaps, corroded zones of inscription. It is no coincidence that some of these works evoke inverted cartographies, as in *Untitled (MAM Rio)*, which seems to depict a corner of space in ruin — like a geological beach of art history where the sea has already erased the names of images.

The muted palette, composed of tones of mortar, stone gray, rusty stains, and the occasional faded whites, sustains this gesture of withdrawal and bareness. Yet this is not an ascetic or silent painting. On the contrary, there is a visual density that seems to operate in a low register, awaiting the moment when the eye adjusts to the penumbra of the surface, to the opaque noise of the vestiges – until figures emerge as if rising from an interrupted dream. Such is the case in works where almost humanoid silhouettes and undone drawings appear like negatives or mineral transpositions of the pictorial gesture. These are images that do not scream – they simply persist.

Images that, like certain landscapes by Claude Lorrain or ruins by Hubert Robert, anticipate what will remain after all is gone: not total devastation, but that which endures even when it can no longer be seen.

In *Untitled 8*, for example, one can perceive the spectral reminiscence of a wooded landscape, almost a pastiche of Ruysdael or Hobbema, but as if seen through soot after a fire. The frame does not protect it – on the contrary, it demarcates the field of its dissolution.

In other cases, such as *Untitled 7*, what remains is only a dark, crepuscular field, from which nothing has yet fully emerged – the threshold of the image, where representation is not abandoned, but postponed.

These paintings do not offer us a vision – only a field of expectation, like a curtain about to open and reveal something that may never arrive. It is at this point that Senise's recent work engages with an almost prophetic dimension of the image: it presents itself to the present as an archaeology of the future.

His canvases function like panels of a museum of the future, in which we will no longer see the canonical images, but their absences – what remains of them after time, neglect, and the collapse of the gaze. And yet, this absence is inhabited. What appears on these surfaces – prepared like a stage for disappearance – is not emptiness, but the memory of the image as a form of survival.

As if art, even after being erased, still left a dusting of meaning suspended in the air.

In *Untitled 1*, at first glance, we see a painting within a painting: a dark rectangle superimposed on a worn wall, cold in texture and gray in tone, speckled with decorative vestiges at the top, like the faded lace of an old frieze. The central stain – which curves into a darkened arch – recalls both the shadow of an absent figure and the blurred image, perhaps, of a destroyed portrait. There is something unsettling in this negative apparition: what we see is the silhouette of what is no longer there. It is as if the gaze were passing through a film of soot, trying to recompose an image that refuses to return. More than contemplating, the viewer is forced to conjecture – not about what is, but about what was or could have been.

In *Untitled 2*, the support seems to mimic the wall of an old Italian mansion, with faux boiseries and parquet flooring that evokes a hollowed-out architectural solemnity. At the center, a dark painting made of dirty matter reveals diagonal fragments and ocher-toned patches, as if Goya or a shadowy Degas had been distilled into some formless abstraction. Here, Senise proposes a commentary on the residual permanence of the image – not as a living link to tradition, but as fossilized memory. What remains of the history of painting in this work is its indistinct murmur, its drowned cry, its twisted weave. More than a palimpsest, it is a structural lament of art in the face of its future condition: a survivor outside of time.

In *Untitled 6*, the painting inscribes itself like a walled-up window. The trompe-l'oeil architectural frame, with columns and a ledge, recalls the frames of chapels, niches, or altarpieces – now empty. The central field, blank and raw, without a visible image, becomes a space of suspension: what remains when the image can no longer be inscribed. The work directly evokes painting as a window – not onto the world, but onto oblivion. The white clearing, marked by small stains and accumulations of matter, does not present itself as an icon, but as an interval between inscription and renunciation.

In *Untitled 9*, a black frame delimits the space where an image made of ash and chalky whites struggles to recombine. In the background, a green wall with faded floral wallpaper patterns lends the work a domestic, almost banal atmosphere. The central image, however, contains something like a silhouette or a crumpled object: it seems like a fish, a package, or a fold of fabric. This ambiguity is reinforced by the granular texture on the left side, which seems to corrode the image like a virus. The beauty of the work resides in this suspension between the nostalgia of ornament and the radicality of ruin.

Senise's recent works do not present themselves as enigmas to be deciphered, but as zones of indeterminacy – where the image no longer appears as full presence, but as interval, noise, or residue. There is no closed discourse here about the end of painting; rather, there is the poetic sustenance of its latency. What we see is what has not yet fully come to be, but which insists on remaining. In times of image saturation, perhaps this is the most radical gesture: to return to painting the power to be a gap, a silence, and a pause.

Daniel Senise titled his exhibition at Nara Roesler Rio de Janeiro *I Live Comfortably in the Museum*, a line from a character in the novel *The Invention of Morel* by Bioy Casares (1914–1999) – a man condemned to life imprisonment who arrives on an island and calls the abandoned building where he lives a museum.

– **Luiz Armando Bagolin**

Untitled (Bourse de Commerce -
Pinault Collection), 2024
wall monotype on fabric
and acrylic medium
100 x 280 cm
39.4 x 110.2 in





Untitled (Raoul Dufy), 2025
wall monotype on canvas
and acrylic medium
125 x 230 cm
49.2 x 90.6 in





exhibition view
Biógrafo, 2023
MAC USP



Untitled 09, 2025
acrylic and metallic
paint on canvas
sobre tecido
145 x 126 cm
57.1 x 49.8 in





Untitled 02, 2024
acrylic paint on canvas
115 x 95 cm
45.3 x 37.4 in





Untitled 04, 2025
acrylic paint on canvas
123 x 78 cm
48.4 x 30.7 in





exhibition view
Biógrafo, 2023
MAC USP





Untitled 01, 2024
wall monotype in fabric,
acrylic medium, charcoal
and iron powder
200 x 150 cm
78.7 x 59.1 in





exhibition view
Todos os Santos, 2019
Instituto Tomie Ohtake

—
Untitled (MAM), 2025
acrylic and metallic
paint on canvas
200 x 238 cm
78.7 x 93.7 in





exhibition view
Biógrafo, 2023
MAC USP



Untitled 06, 2025
wall and floor monotype on
canvas and acrylic medium
200 x 113 cm
78.7 x 52.4 in







Untitled 07, 2025
wall monotype on canvas
and acrylic medium
240 x 150 cm
94.5 x 59.1 in





exhibition view
biógrafo
fundação Iberê
Camargo, Porto Alegre

—
Untitled 11, 2025
acrylic and metallic
paint on canvas
121 x 113 cm
47.6 x 44.6 in





Untitled 08, 2025
acrylic and metallic
paint on canvas
136 x 200 cm
51.2 x 71.7 in





exhibition view
Bienal de Coimbra, 2019
Coimbra, Portugal



Untitled 10, 2025
acrylic and metallic
paint on canvas
125 x 180 cm
49.2 x 70.9 in





Daniel Senise
in his studio, 2025



daniel senise

b. 1955, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he lives and works

Daniel Senise is one of the leading representatives of Brazil's so-called Generation 80s, whose main endeavour consisted of a desire to return to, and reinsert painting into the Brazilian artistic scene. Since the end of the 1990s, Senise's practice can be described as a 'construction of images.' His process begins with imprinting the textures of surfaces—such as wooden floors or concrete walls—from carefully chosen locations unto textiles, similar to the monotype technique. Once ready, this material becomes the base or skeleton of his work, either as a canvas to be worked on, as parts used in a collage to create another image, or alternatively, as fragments added on to printed photographs.

Senise's investigations often relate to the memory of places and spaces. Not only will his works figuratively represent specific locations, but he also uses objects found in those specific places, such as broken ceramics, pieces of wood, dust or wall chippings. He therefore intertwines the representation of a site, with its debris, or in other words, its history—he juxtaposes time, memory and the physical presence which stems from them.

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selected solo exhibitions

- *Biógrafo: Daniel Senise*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da USP (MAC-USP), São Paulo, Brazil (2023)
- *Verônica*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2022)
- *Antes da palavra*, Fundação Iberê Camargo (FIC), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2019)
- *Printed Matter*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2017)
- *Quase aqui*, Oi Futuro Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2015)
- *2892*, Casa França-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2011)
- *Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brazil (2009)
- *Vai que nós levamos as partes que te faltam*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2008)
- *The Piano Factory*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2002)
- *Museo de Arte Contemporáneo*, Monterrey, Mexico (1994)
- *Museum of Contemporary Art*, Chicago, USA (1991)

selected group exhibitions

- 18th, 20th, 24th and 29th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (1985, 1989, 1998, 2010)
- 11th Bienal de Cuenca, Ecuador (2011)
- 44th Venice Biennale, Italy (1990)
- 2nd Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba (1986)

selected collections

- Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, USA
- Ludwig Museum, Köln, Germany
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói (MAC-Niterói), Niterói, Brazil
- Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil

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