

INHABITED

28.05.26 — 17.07.26

JAIDER ESBELL



L'APPARTEMENT

THEA MONTAUTI d'HARCOURT LYGINOS

Laís Amaral, Jaider Esbell, Sonia Gomes, Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato, Mestre Didi, Paulo Monteiro, Antonio Obá, Heitor dos Prazeres, Chico da Silva, Tadáskia, Rubem Valentim

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The group exhibition, INHABITED, at L'Appartement Gallery brings together the work of eleven Brazilian artists active across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, tracing a set of shared concerns that persist through time: the

relationship between form and belief, material and memory, abstraction and lived experience. The central idea of the exhibition is that form is never neutral in the Brazilian context. It is always inhabited by something invisible: a belief system, a memory, a lived experience. Across painting, sculpture, and assemblage, form in the Brazilian context operates as a carrier of meaning—shaped by Afro-Brazilian religions, Indigenous cosmologies, and everyday experience. It becomes a site where material and immaterial dimensions intersect, where the visible holds within it systems of belief, ritual, and memory.

Rather than tracing a linear trajectory from modern to contemporary, INHABITED reveals a set of ongoing conversations. Bringing into dialogue key representatives of modern Brazilian art with contemporary artists who draw from and reactivate this legacy, the exhibition considers how artistic practices in Brazil are deeply intertwined with spiritual, cosmological, and vernacular systems of knowledge.

In the works of Mestre Didi and Rubem Valentim, abstraction becomes a structured spiritual language. Drawing from

Candomblé and Yoruba symbolic systems, their practices transform geometry into a coded vocabulary, where repetition, rhythm, and sign articulate systems of belief. Valentim, in particular, took the free-flowing and syncretic universe of popular and spiritual traditions as a starting point to develop a precise and rigorous visual language. Integrating symbols such as the arrow, triangle, circle, and the double-edged axe associated with Candomblé deities, he translated sacred emblems into a refined geometric lexicon.

In his hands, these forms—removed from their ritual context—are reorganised into compositions of striking clarity, where colour and structure attain a sense of balance between the rational and the metaphysical. A deeply religious man who described himself as an “artist-priest,” Valentim understood his practice as a form of spiritual transmission. This lineage finds a contemporary resonance in the work of Antonio Obá, whose practice similarly engages with ritual, symbolism, and the body as sites of spiritual and cultural inscription, reactivating religious imagery within a critical and deeply personal framework.

This relationship between image and cosmology extends into the work of Jaider Esbell and Tadáskía. Engaging with Indigenous and Afro-diasporic perspectives, their practices collapse distinctions between figuration and abstraction, constructing images that operate simultaneously as narrative, map, and symbolic field. Their works propose other ways of seeing and understanding the world, grounded in relational and non-Western epistemologies, where the spiritual and the material are inseparable.

Alongside these practices, artists such as Chico da Silva, Heitor dos Prazeres, and Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato articulate forms of vernacular modernity. Developed outside dominant art historical

frameworks, their works draw from landscape, imagination, and daily life, yet are structured through pattern, repetition, and intuitive systems. In their hands, modernism becomes something lived rather than theorised—rooted in experience rather than ideology, and often shaped by an underlying symbolic and spiritual sensibility embedded in everyday life.

Material itself becomes a site of memory in the work of Sonia Gomes and Laís Amaral. Through processes of accumulation, layering, and transformation, their practices foreground tactility and making as forms of knowledge. Fabric, pigment, and surface retain traces of gesture and time, carrying histories that are both personal and collective, where material becomes a vessel for memory, affect, and spiritual resonance. In parallel, the work of Paulo Monteiro explores the tension between materiality and form through a more restrained and introspective language, where subtle shifts in surface, line, and colour evoke a contemplative engagement with painting as both object and process.

Across these diverse practices, recurring themes emerge: the persistence of symbolic systems, the inseparability of material and meaning, and the continuity of cultural knowledge across generations. What connects these artists is not a shared style, but a shared understanding of form as something inhabited—by memory, by spirituality, and by lived experience.

Macuxi artist, activist, and curator Jaider Esbell dedicated his practice to exploring the cosmovision of his people, the mythical narratives of the Amazon, and the social realities of indigenous communities. Born in what is now the Terra Indígena Raposa Serra do Sol in Roraima, Brazil, Esbell was a central figure in Brazil's Arte Indígena Contemporânea (Contemporary Indigenous Art) movement. He described his work as “artivism,” a pedagogical tool aimed at raising awareness about the environmental and social abuses affecting Macuxi land, which spans parts of Brazil, Guyana, and Venezuela.

Jaider ESBELL



Esbell's work was deeply inspired by Makunaimî, whom the Macuxi consider both a god and an ancestor. His understanding of cosmology was also guided by his close relationships with indigenous spiritual leaders - known as pajés or xamãs. Esbell channeled the wisdom of these masters to confront the destruction of the Amazon and the exploitation of indigenous land, often describing his paintings as a “download” of their visions. He asserted indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing) to challenge colonial perspectives and affirm his people's relationship with the land.

Ultimately, Esbell's artivism sought to build an indigenous art ecology that operated independently from mainstream colonial structures.

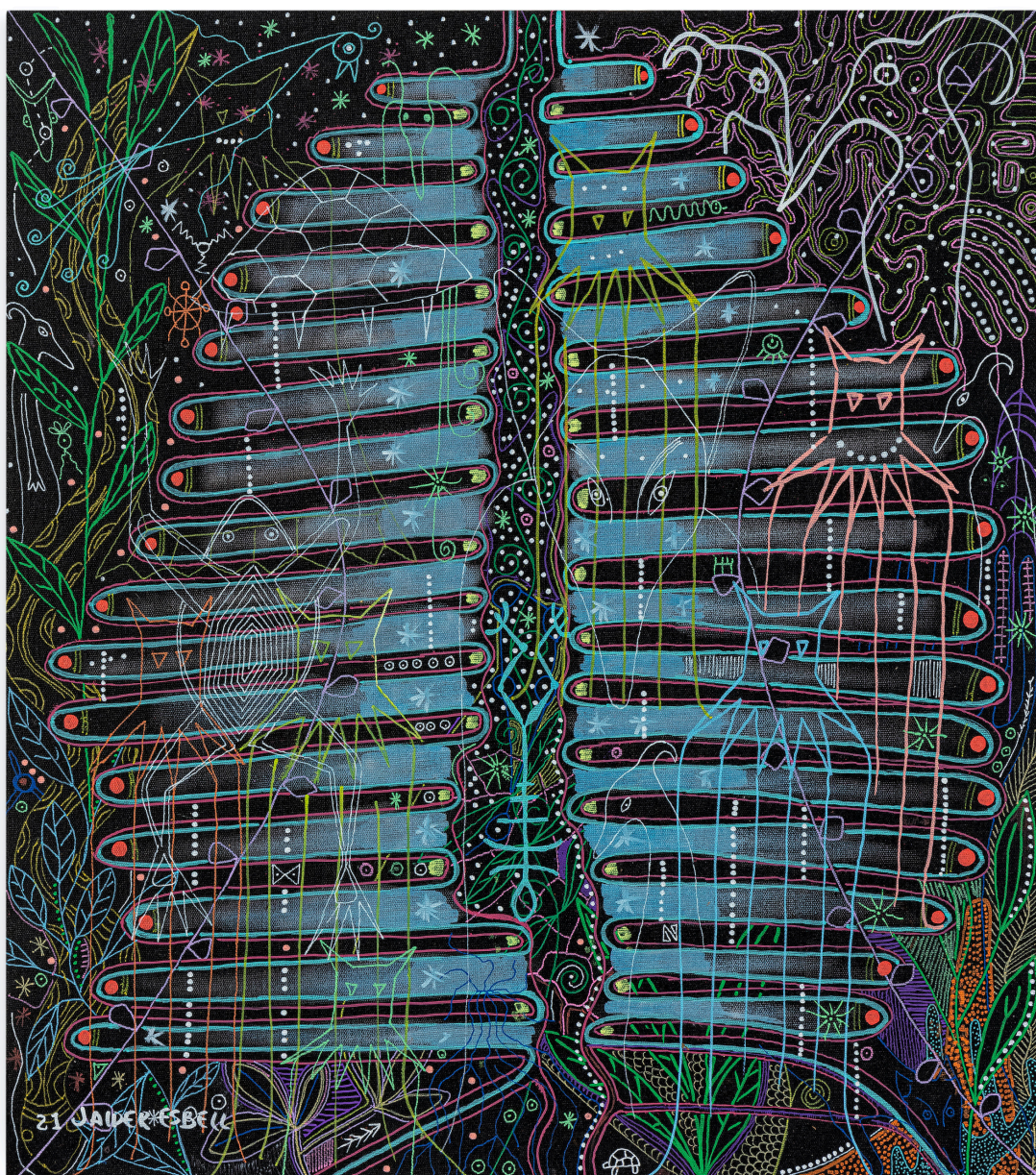
His vision, rooted in the Macuxi tradition of resistance, used ancient wisdom to forge a powerful response to the contemporary ecological and political crises facing the world.

“

I started to walk a lot in the world, I met many shamans – pajés, xamãs – from different peoples. And they begin to guide me, to expand my awareness to larger cosmogonic issues.

”

JAIDER ESBELL



MAPA DA GUERRA DOS KANAIMÉS [MAP
OF THE KANAIMÉ WAR], 2021

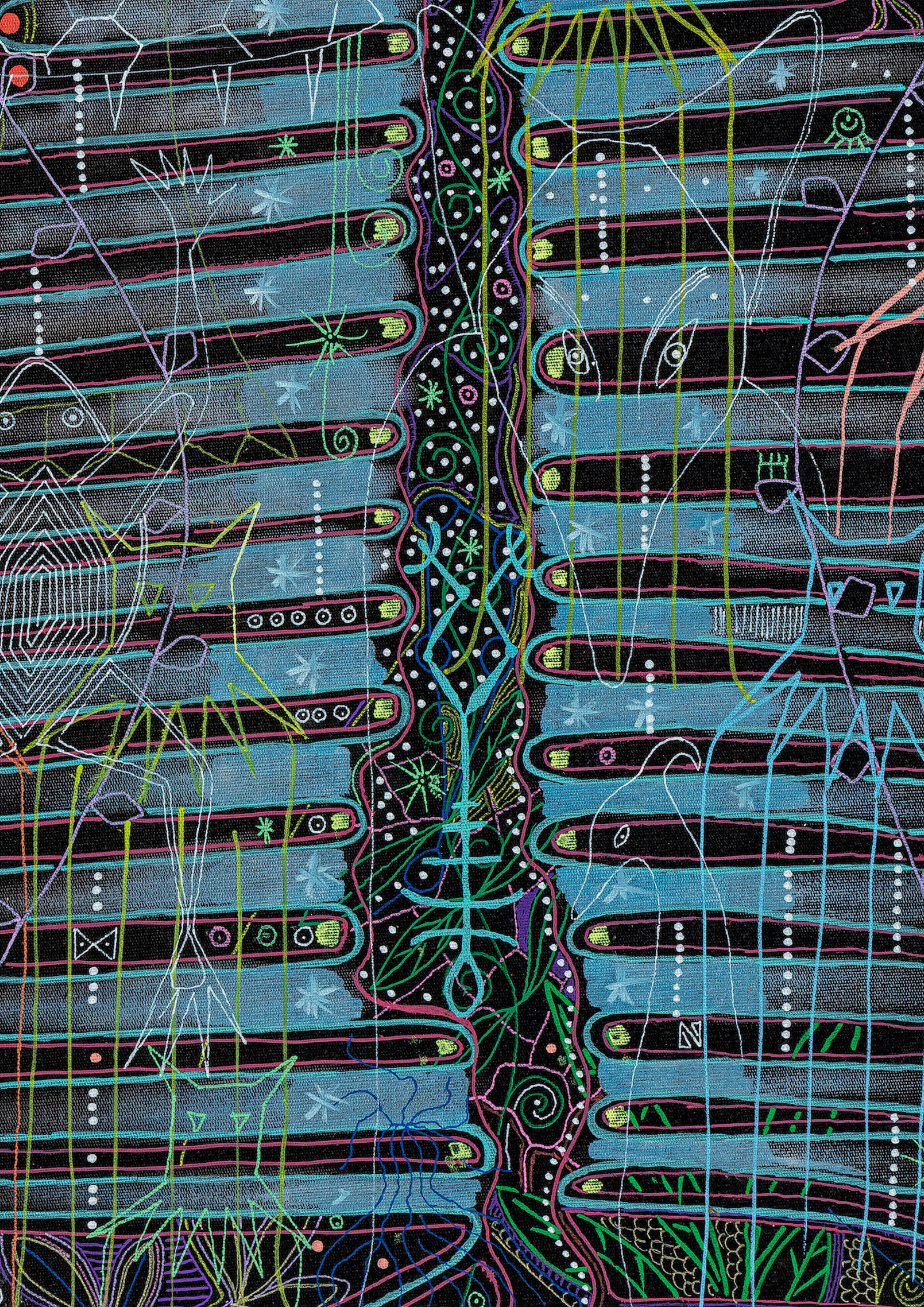
acrylic on canvas

58 x 51 cm

22 5/8 x 20 1/8 in

(JES-01)

Price (excl. VAT): 120'000 USD



Provenance

Galleria Millan, São Paulo

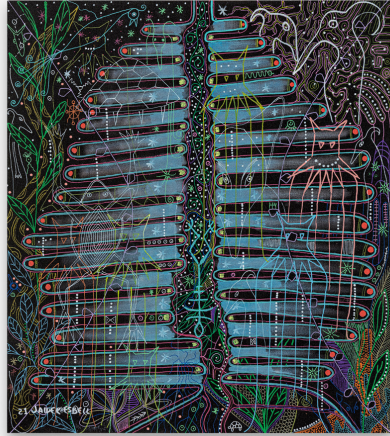
Private collection

Private collection



Mapa da guerra dos Kanaimés (Map of the Kanaimé War), painted in 2021, is one of the last and most powerful works Esbell created before his tragic passing. The painting depicts a dark, celestial background overlaid with a stark, skeleton-like structure. Recurring motifs from his visual language, such as serpents, birds, and other fantastical creatures, weave through the composition, suggesting a multitude of spiritual layers interacting with the physical world.

The “Kanaimé” are complex, powerful, and often dark shamanic forces within the cosmological systems of the region. The “war” of the title, therefore, functions as both a cultural signifier and a potent political metaphor. It maps a spiritual conflict that is inseparable from the terrestrial one: the violent, real-world struggle against exploitative extractivism and the colonial forces threatening the Amazon. The work is a vibrant interweaving of cosmology and activism, illustrating the integration of spiritual life into a physical world threatened by collapse.





SEM TÍTULO [UNTITLED], 2020

acrylic and permanent marker on canvas

60 x 90 cm

23 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

(JES-02)

Price (excl. VAT): 145'000 ^{EUR}



Provenance

Artist's Studio

Private Collection, Brazil

Private Collection, Brazil

Private Collection, Europe





SEM TÍTULO [UNTITLED], 2018

acrylic and permanent marker on canvas

47 x 77 cm

18 1/2 x 30 1/4 in

(JES-03)

Price (excl. VAT): 115'000 EUR

Jaider Esbell's work emerges from a deeply rooted Indigenous worldview, where art operates as a living system of knowledge rather than a purely aesthetic exercise. Belonging to the Macuxi people of northern Brazil, Esbell developed a visual language that intertwines cosmology, territory and spirituality. His paintings are not representations in the Western sense, but translations of ancestral narratives, where humans, animals and natural forces coexist within fluid, interconnected environments. Through dense compositions and intricate linework, he constructs visual fields that function as maps of thought.

In these works, Esbell employs acrylic and permanent marker to build highly detailed surfaces, layering patterns, symbols and vibrant color systems that evoke both microscopic and cosmic scales. The compositions often dissolve clear boundaries, allowing forms to merge and transform into one another: rivers become veins, constellations become eyes, and animals emerge from ornamental structures. This continuous metamorphosis reflects an Indigenous understanding of the world as relational and in constant movement, challenging linear or hierarchical ways of seeing.

The apparent visual intensity of his paintings is not decorative excess, but a deliberate strategy to convey complexity. Each mark contributes to a broader network of meaning, suggesting cycles of life and spiritual presence.

Beyond their formal richness, Esbell's works carry a strong political and cultural dimension. They assert the presence and resilience of Indigenous knowledge systems within contemporary art, resisting marginalization while proposing alternative ways of understanding the world. His paintings ultimately operate as both visual experiences and acts of transmission: layered, immersive environments that hold and communicate collective memory, identity and cosmology.



Provenance

Artist's Studio

Private Collection, Brazil

Private Collection, Brazil

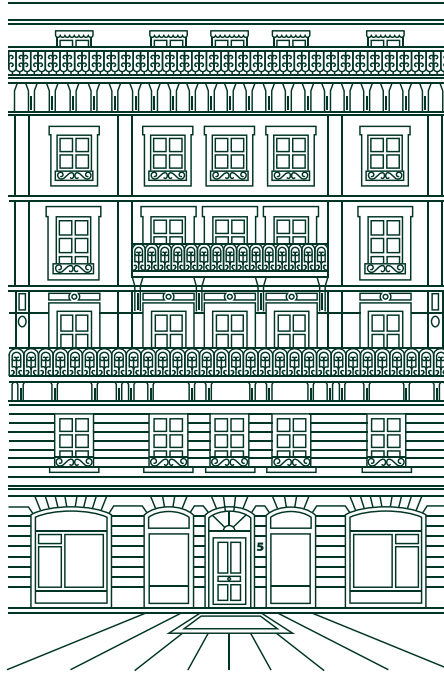
Private Collection, Europe



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L'APPARTEMENT

THEA MONTAUTI d'HARCOURT LYGINOS



Our overarching ambition is to cultivate a dynamic community that engages both seasoned collectors and younger generations, while revitalising the Geneva art scene.

Founded by Thea Montauti d'Harcourt Lyginos, L'Appartement is a space dedicated to hosting focused exhibitions that highlight specific artists projects and dialogues.

Through diverse exhibitions, collaborations and off-site projects, L'Appartement Gallery, Geneva aims to create a dynamic podium for emerging and established artists worldwide and to create a dialogue between modern, contemporary art and design. At the core of the gallery's vision is the nurturing of emerging talents alongside historically significant artists.

Embracing a modern, hybrid gallery model, L'Appartement seeks to build connections between the art industry and other sectors, thus expanding the influence of art on diverse audiences. Nestled on the second floor of a historic building in Geneva, the gallery offers an intimate setting for collaborative initiatives, involving artists, international galleries and independent curators. Complementing the gallery's presence in Geneva, in July 2026, the gallery will host an off-site exhibition in the cycladic island of Antiparos, curated by Craig Burnett.