

INHABITED

28.05.26 — 17.07.26

LAÍS AMARAL



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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28.05 – 17.07.2026

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.

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I have been thinking mainly about developing a subjective language through non-figurative painting. My main way of doing this is to bring references from nature, [...] specially focusing on the racialized population that forms Brazil.

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LAÍS AMARAL

Laís Amaral (b. 1993, São Gonçalo, Brazil) is a self-trained Brazilian artist who lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. She began her practice in 2017 as a cofounder of Trovoa, a collective based in Niterói that focused on experimental, process-based approaches to artmaking. Through collaborative work, the group engaged with questions of race, gender and social experience, particularly from the perspective of racialized women in Brazilian society.

Amaral's practice is primarily centered on painting and reflects an ongoing interest in the relationship between art and craft. She identifies as an "artist-artisan," a term shaped by both her family background and her experience within collective practices. Her work is characterized by the use of unconventional tools, including manicure instruments and hair combs, which she employs to challenge established Western notions of abstraction and to develop textured, process-driven surfaces.

Laís AMARAL

Her work addresses themes related to environmental degradation, particularly desertification, alongside the phenomenon of "whitening" in Brazilian territories. Amaral connects these altered landscapes and the internal conditions of individuals shaped by social and economic pressures. Through layered compositions and techniques such as covering and scraping dark surfaces to reveal underlying color, her paintings function as visual structures that evoke processes of excavation and the uncovering of hidden narratives.

Amaral has presented solo exhibitions at Mendes Wood DM, New York (2024); Galeria 5 Bocas, Rio de Janeiro (2024); HOA Gallery, São Paulo (2023); M+B, Los Angeles (2022); and Anita Schwartz Galeria, Rio de Janeiro (2020). Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at institutions such as the 16th Gwangju Biennale (Brazil Pavilion, forthcoming); Goodwood Art Foundation, Chichester (2025); Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (2025); Casa da Cultura da Comporta (2025); Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (2024); Museu de Arte do Rio (2022); Instituto Tomie Ohtake (2021); and Solar dos Abacaxis (2019).





UNTITLED, 2022

acrylic on canvas

98 x 80 cm

38 5/8 x 31 1/2 in

(LAM-02)

Sold



Provenance

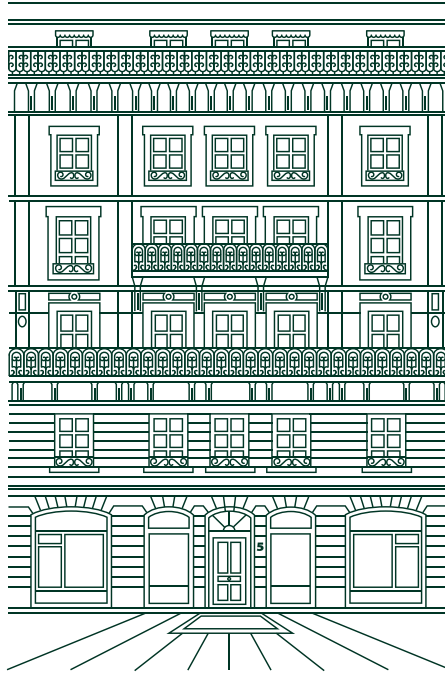
HOA Galeria, São Paulo

Private Collection



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.