

Chão de giz

first exhibition of the commemorative cycle of the 45th anniversary of Galeria Luisa Strina

August 24 — November 23 2019
Anexo (rua Padre João Manuel 974a)

Press Release

Chão de Giz celebrates the 45th anniversary of Galeria Luisa Strina, the anniversary that is celebrated, more precisely, on December 17, when the second exhibition of the commemorative cycle will be inaugurated. In this first stage, a group show revisits iconic works originally exhibited in the gallery in a period of little more than 20 years, from 1974 to the mid-1990s. To the historical works, there are additions of other ones, by artists who joined the gallery's cast in the 2000s, setting up a diachronic dialogue around the curatorial theme: chalk floor.

A chalk floor – which could also be a charcoal floor – constitutes an unstable ground, on which one moves with some hesitation initially. The show's title, of course, alludes to the work of Cildo Meireles, Cinza (1984/1986), an artist whose career goes hand in hand with that of the gallery, and vice versa, during the last four decades. But it also refers to the political and cultural context of the 1970s in Brazil. It was on unstable ground from the point of view of freedom of expression that the Luisa Strina Gallery opened its doors in December 1974.

Antonio Dias, Caetano de Almeida, Carlos Fajardo, Cildo Meireles, Dora Longo Bahia, Edgard de Souza, Fernanda Gomes, Ivens Machado, Jorge Guinle, Leonilson, Luiz Paulo Baravelli, Marina Saleme, Milton Machado, Mira Schendel, Muntadas, Nelson Felix, Nelson Leirner, Regina Silveira, Tunga, Waltercio Caldas and Wesley Duke Lee are some of the artists who actively participated in the first 20 or so years of this journey, which merges with the recent history of Brazilian art, and whose works are gathered in the exhibition.

An alternative reading of the “chalk floor”, however, is that of the wobbly path of the new languages that were at the height of experimentation at the time Luisa Strina founded the gallery, which until then lived and reproduced “deliberately in shadow”. Even with redemocratization, the “opening rhetoric” did not encourage “opening languages” – to use expressions from the early 1980s debate of ideas. The condition of the new that experimental art proposed did not please the dominant culture of the time, that kept “the old-new commitment.”

The entire program this year celebrates the anniversary, beginning with its two inaugural shows, by Anna Maria Maiolino and Beto Shwafaty, which symbolize Strina's core vision since opening its doors in late 1974: unrestricted freedom of expression for artists, to experience and dare always, whether in the language or in the content of their works. The values of freedom and experimentation gave shape and fame to an unconventional space that fostered and diffused conceptual art – against the “old-new” mentality – in the heat of the moment it was being invented, reinvented, and deconstructed.

In the 2019 edition of SP-Arte, the gallery included include in its booth, for the first time, works of the forerunner of American pop, Robert Rauschenberg. Other highlights of the GLS stand this

year were works by Mona Hatoum, Alfredo Jaar, Cildo Meireles, Muntadas and Leonor Antunes, to mark the 45th anniversary.

In the first semester, the gallery also held solo shows by Carlos Garaicoa, Miguel Rio Branco and Magdalena Jitrik, as well as a group show that brought together works by three great names of conceptualism in the art world: Jimmie Durham, Cildo Meireles and Pedro Cabrita Reis. In this second semester, the commemorative shows continue with solo exhibitions by other longtime partners: Caetano de Almeida and Brian Griffiths [both shows from August to September]; Laura Lima and Matias Duville [both from late September to early November]. And the gallery closes the year by living up to the tradition of innovating, with an exhibition by a young British artist, Caragh Thuring, starting November 19.

The first Brazilian gallery dedicated exclusively to contemporary art, Galeria Luisa Strina has its history linked to the internationalization of Brazilian art, as well as to the history of the internationalization of Brazilian art collections. The pioneering presence in Art | Basel is one of the reasons that explain this indisputable fact. Another is the posture that Luisa Strina has adopted, since the creation of the gallery, to present solo shows by foreign artists in São Paulo.

It was also during this first period that exhibitions celebrated nowadays were held, such as Cildo Meireles's *Cinza*, in 1986, that occupied the main exhibition room of the gallery with an installation that challenged the visual and physical perception of the visitor, invited to enter two rooms in the form of cube, consisting of five canvas panels painted with acrylic paint. Inside the five panels of a room, the black-painted canvases are scribbled with white chalk, leaving only a black image in the center of the panels, the projection of a chalk stick. The floor is completely covered in chalk. In the five panels of the adjoining room, charcoal is applied to the white painted canvas. In the center of each panel appears a white image that is the projection on the four walls and the ceiling of a piece of coal. The floor is covered with pieces of charcoal. White and black were mixed by the action of the participating spectators.

Chão de Giz, to address this historic milestone, includes two paintings by Meireles that were exhibited at the 1986 solo show. The installation *Cinza [Gray] (1984/1986)* is among the works that were selected by curators Julia Rebouças and Diego Matos for the retrospective of Cildo Meireles, entitled *Entrevendo*, which opens at the end of September at Sesc Pompeia.

In the early 2000s, GLS incorporated two other floors of the Oscar Freire Street building to expand its exhibition program to two or even three concurrent exhibitions in the space. The experimentalism that has always been a hallmark of the gallery and its artists stretched to the ground floor and the terrace – which hosted memorable site-specific projects. Even before having more physical space, there was already the promotion of the public character of contemporary art by Galeria Luisa Strina, a facet that gained notoriety with the intervention of Félix González-Torres on the billboard on the facade of the building. In 2004, Renata Lucas performed the historic *Crossing* at the meeting of the Padre João Manuel and Oscar Freire streets.

[Link](#)

www.galerialuisastrina.com.br/exposicoes/chao-de-giz

+ Info

Galeria Luisa Strina
Rua Padre João Manuel 755
Cerqueira César 01411-001
São Paulo SP Brazil

Phone: +55 11 3088-2471
info@galerialuisastrina.com.br
www.galerialuisastrina.com.br