



Almeida & Dale

ART RIO²³

Victor Arruda

Victor Arruda

Cuiabá, Brazil, 1947. Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro

Victor Arruda has long been known for his rough, crude, uncompromising painting, the longtime presence of gender issues and explicit sex scenes, and a fierce criticism of hypocrisy and abuse of power. Arruda condenses multiple influences that refer to different moments in the history of art, always amalgamated effectively, in the construction of a unique and unmistakable style.

A queer pioneer in the 1970s when Brazil was still heavily influenced by the Catholic church and in the midst of a brutal military dictatorship, Arruda says that a critical moment in his career came in the 1970s when, barely in his 20s, he decided to face the societal finger pointed at him for being a gay man. He began questioning conservative attitudes that considered "normal" class and racial prejudices that lead to discrimination, sexual harassment and rape. Arruda decided that his painting was to be a reaction

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against such “normalcy” and has since pointed his finger back at “normal” people and at the hypocritical society that creates them.

Of his painting, Arruda says that when he first began “Modern art couldn’t be textual, it couldn’t have a narrative, it couldn’t have a front and a back, it couldn’t be autobiographical, it couldn’t have sex, it couldn’t do anything! Do you know what I decided to do? I decided to do it all at the same time!”.

A 2021 retrospective at Rio de Janeiro’s Imperial Palace curated by Adolfo Montejo Navas revisited nearly 50 years of Arruda’s work, displaying grisailles reminiscent of Picasso’s, as well as forms that could easily belong to the latter’s surreal period. Kirchner, Magritte, Holbein, Klee, Robert Crumb, constructivism and Haring were also all somehow present, sometimes subtly but always effectively. Rather than the mess one could expect, the result highlighted a strong, consistent oeuvre that is not staid and has stood the test of time.

Highlights of Arruda’s work include paintings such as *Boogie-Woogie de Engenho de Dentro* (1985), which synthesizes Arruda’s interest in graffiti and comic strips, urban signs and symbols, and the fragmenta-

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tion of the body. Eroticism, a theme that runs through much of his work, shows the impact on Arruda of the work of Carlos Zéfiro, the author of pornographic comic strips that circulated in newsstands in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s. This influence of popular culture, especially linked to the creation of a collective erotic imaginary, is also visible in more recent works, such as *Namoro* and *No Espelho* (2020).

Arruda has taken part in several group exhibitions and held solo shows at the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage, 1986; Studio d'Arte Giuliana de Crescenzo, in Rome, 1988; Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio, 1993, among others. In 1989, he painted the foyer panel of the theater located in the Memorial da América Latina, invited by Oscar Niemeyer. He has participated in several exhibitions abroad, such as the Cuenca International Biennial (Ecuador, 1989), the Valparaíso International Art Biennial (Chile, 1994), and Arco, International Contemporary Art Fair of Madrid (Spain, 2000).

For **Art Rio 2023**, Almeida & Dale presents a selection of works produced between 2017 and 2023, many previously unseen. Highlights include *Grande tríptico* [Great Triptych] (2021), which epitomizes Ar-

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ruda's interest in the association between text and image, in an aesthetic that brings him closer to the language of comic books, and *Figuras vegetais sobre a cidade ainda adormecida* [Vegetable Figures Over the Still Sleeping City], which synthesizes the representation of urban signs and symbols, associated with anthropomorphic figures. Sexuality and eroticism, a theme that runs throughout Arruda's work, appear in paintings such as *Namoro* (Dating) (2020) and *Sem título* [Untitled] (2018). And finally, the explicit reference to art history is also present in this selection, in works such as *Homenagem a Lichtenstein* [Homage to Lichtenstein] (2021).

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Victor Arruda

Namoro [Dating], 2020

acrylic on canvas

40 3/4 x 50 1/4 in (103,5 x 127,5 cm)

(12677)



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Victor Arruda

Caleidoscópico [Caleidoscope], 2018

acrylic on canvas

39 3/8 x 27 1/2 in (100 x 70 cm)

(12694)

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Victor Arruda

Acima da cidade [Above the city], 2017

acrylic on canvas

31 1/2 x 27 1/2 in (80 x 70 cm)

(12702)

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Victor Arruda

Untitled, 2019

acrylic on canvas

23 5/8 x 20 1/2 in (60 x 52 cm)

(14467)



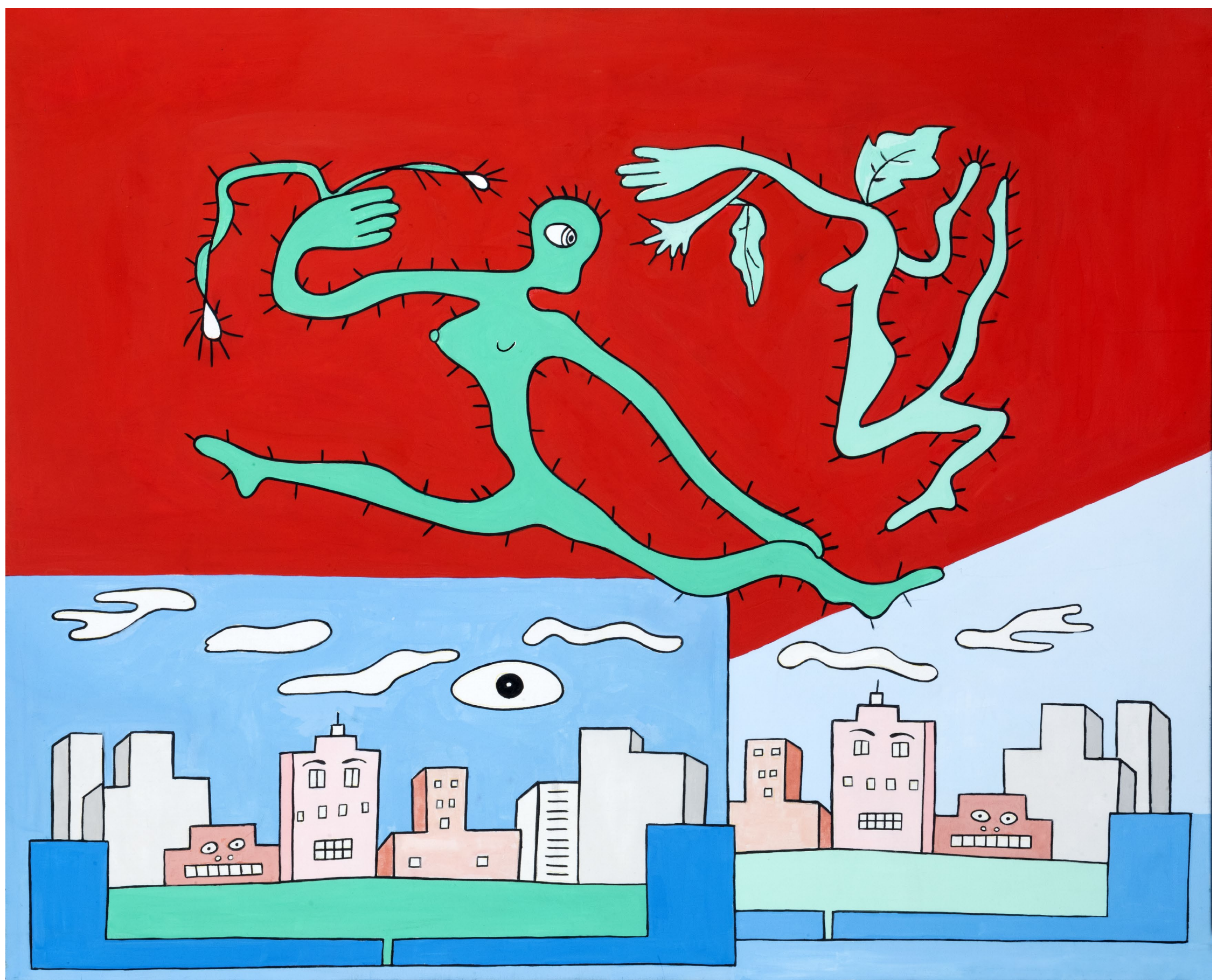
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Victor Arruda

No cinema [At the Movies], 2018
acrylic on canvas
39 3/8 x 37 5/8 in (100 x 95,5 cm)
(14468)

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Victor Arruda

Figuras vegetais sobre a cidade ainda adormecida
[Vegetables figures over the still sleeping city], 2022
acrylic on canvas

32 5/8 x 39 3/8 in (83 x 100 cm)
(14755)

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Victor Arruda

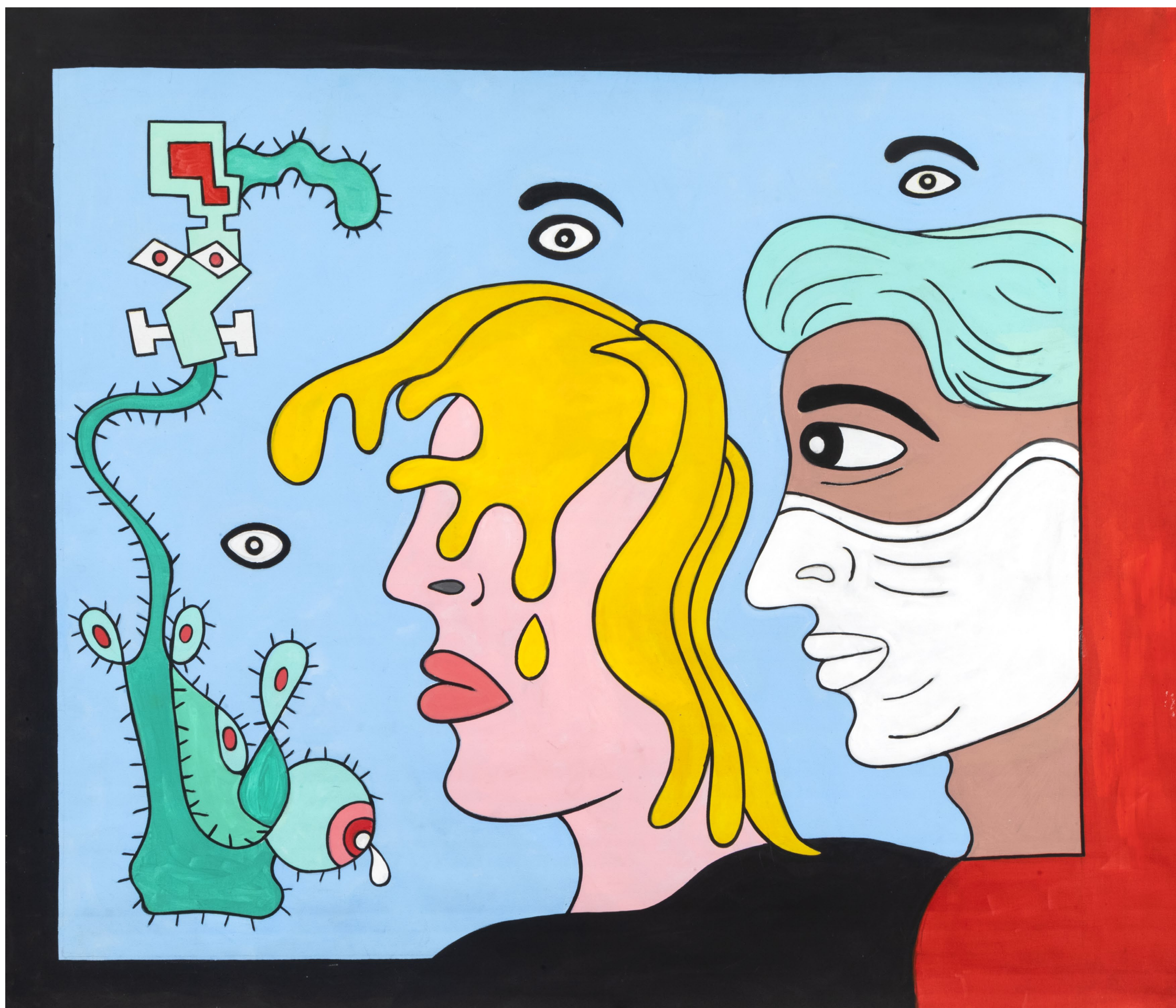
Grande tríptico [Large triptych], 2021

acrylic on canvas

74 3/4 x 131 7/8 in (190 x 335 cm)

(14756)

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Victor Arruda

Homenagem a Lichtenstein [Homage to Lichtenstein],
2021

acrylic on canvas

29 7/8 x 32 1/4 in (76 x 82 cm)

(14757)

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Victor Arruda

Pequenas incertezas [Small uncertainties], 2023

acrylic on canvas

27 1/2 x 19 3/4 in (70 x 50 cm)

(14758)



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Victor Arruda

No meio da estória [In the middle of the story], 2023
acrylic on canvas

27 1/2 x 19 3/4 in (70 x 50 cm)

(14759)

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