

Almeida & Dale opens Leonilson. Political Body exhibition

Curated by Agustín Pérez Rubio, the exhibition brings together circa 70 works by the artist, continuing the activities in celebration of his memory 30 years after his death

Understanding fragility as a poetic form of strength and empowerment can be one of the keys to understanding the intimate and reflective work of one of the most internationally renowned Brazilian artists, Leonilson, born in Fortaleza, Ceará, in 1957. His production includes painting, drawing and embroidery, and carries an intimate and autobiographical approach, exploring themes such as love, sexuality, loneliness, illness and death.

In the year that marks the 30th anniversary of his death, a programming dedicated to honoring the artist and that began in May, at the Morumbi Chapel, continues from August 5 with the exhibition "Leonilson. Political Body" at Almeida & Dale Galeria de Arte, curated by Spanish historian Agustín Pérez-Rubio. The program's proposed theme aims to understand Leonilson's artistic practice from a political perspective, noting how he positioned himself in the face of the social issues he battled.

With around 70 works, distributed in rooms, the curator highlights some of the ones that make up the show: "Leo Can't Change the World" (1991), "The Modern Man" (1986), "[Ianomami; Iguaçú]" (1988), "North" (1988), "José" (1991), "Empty Man" (1991), "Dignity? Fragility; Desire" (1991), "[The Vital One]" (1992), "Sex Love Family Friends Money" (1991), "The Game is Over" (1991), "3 At the Same Time (sic)" (1990), "Poor Sebastião" (1993), "[Origins; Fantasy; Pleasure; Allegory]" (1990), "[Slave]" (1990); "[Bad Boy; Fragile Soul]" (1990).

The project contemplates both Leonilson's vision in relation to ecological issues and the preservation of the memory of certain territories, as well as his experience as a body that does not fit heteronormative norms. This is reflected in his fictional self-representation and free sexuality, his alliances to other minorities, his political values projected from everyday news; his politics of affection towards his family – both blood and chosen –, and in his empowerment as a fragile and sick body, where the politics of care are also part of his legacy.

On May 28, 1993, the artist passed away due to complications related to HIV/AIDS. His artistic legacy transcends his experiences and context, is currently essential to understanding some of the artistic drifts of the late 20th century. During his career, he developed a distinctive style, characterized by delicate lines, symbolic imagery and the use of words and letters in his compositions. He combined different techniques such as acrylic painting, collage and embroidery, creating works that were both visually captivating and loaded with meaning.

"I think Leonilson's legacy is essential, aesthetically as well as politically. His work is full of references for many other young artists who today see in his artistic practice poetic reflections of how he faced social and political issues by innovating in forms of representation and communication", says the curator.

Leonilson. Political Body Cycle

In May 2023, on the exact date of the 30th anniversary of Leonilson's death, the exhibition "Installation on two figures" was held at Morumbi Chapel, with the support of Almeida & Dale Galeria de Arte, as part of the programming in memory of the artist. The tributes to his legacy are made in collaboration with the Leonilson Project, responsible for managing the artist's estate, and the actions include exhibitions, lectures and a publication, and will be held throughout the year under the title Leonilson. Political Body.

Exhibition **Leonilson. Political Body**

Curated by Agustín Pérez Rubio

Visitation until October 7

Monday to Friday, from 10am to 6pm

Saturday, from 11am to 4pm

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About Almeida & Dale Galeria de Arte

Founded in 1998, Almeida & Dale Art Gallery has become, in more than two decades of existence, one of the most relevant in Brazil, inserting the work and legacy of Brazilian artists in important national and international collections and archives. Among them: Willys de Castro, Di Cavalcanti, Flávio de Carvalho, Mestre Didi, Alberto da Veiga Guignard, Alfredo Volpi, Jandira Waters and Roberto Burle Marx. In recent years, with Antônio Almeida and Carlos Dale as directors, the gallery's program has revisited the work of several exponents of Brazilian art, promoting retrospective exhibitions prepared by guest curators and produced with museological rigor. Publications widely recognized for their originality and notoriety of academic essays, as well as re-publishing of historical texts, accompany the exhibitions. Recently, Almeida & Dale has held solo shows of key artists in the historical and critical panorama of Brazilian art, such as Agnaldo Manuel dos Santos, Miriam Inez da Silva, Luiz Sacilotto and Sidney Amaral, with loans from collectors and institutions, and stimulating the interest of critics in Brazil and abroad. Along with the constant promotion of exhibitions and publications, Almeida & Dale supports projects to preserve works by Brazilian artists. An example of this is the representation of the estate of Luiz Sacilotto, a prominent artist of the Brazilian concrete art movement.

Press Information

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