

BORTOLAMI

Leda Catunda

Geography

November 4 – December 23, 2022

Since the 1980s, celebrated Brazilian artist Leda Catunda has generated paintings which are at once deeply personal and entrenched in popular culture. Over the past four decades, her artworks have continued to challenge the conventions of genre and medium, enmeshing mass-produced fabrics and craft techniques, as well abstract painting and sculpture. Readily available textiles, appropriated from their original use as curtains, clothing material, and sheets, are painted, cut, layered, and arranged into complex haptic surfaces. Catunda's recurring vocabulary of serial forms, from tongues, tears, and insect shells, posit a connection between the seemingly infinite reduplication found in nature and the commercial realm.

Geography

Geography is the branch of science that helps us understand the world through its physical form, through denominations such as "an island is a piece of land surrounded by water on all sides," and also definitions of what are peninsulas, mountain ranges, rivers, lakes, tectonic plates and everything in between. Furthermore, geography also encompasses socio-political organizations that describe how we self-identify and relate to one another, subdivided into countries and multiple beliefs and customs.

The World Map, in this exhibition, is a representation of our planet, where we are always surrounded by water. Within it, there are basic elements related to life itself and to everyone, such as: water, animals (chicken), minerals (stones), fire, a soccer team, a house on a mountain, and abstract elements representing subjectivities as well as the unknown. A great river divides the work into two parts and everything on one side is also present on the other. The World Map synthesizes everything that exists, including what has always existed and what we were able to invent.

This group of works presents a subjective geography and reveals a natural world structured by the artificial, by the synthetic and hyperbolic universe of images in which we are so deeply immersed. In these object-paintings, the artificial is evoked not only by the use of materials such as plastic and various fabrics generated by the fashion and decoration industry, but also by a simplified vision of a life focused on material consumption and the fulfillment of standardized desires. The symbols of these values, such as famous brands and images of cars, nature, and celebrities, are often appropriated from t-shirts. At first, the appropriation of images highlights the choices as well as the esthetic of the society that created them. The images are then organized as collage, in a loving way that, in part, celebrates the legitimacy of everyone's search for identification, comfort and happiness.

-Leda Catunda, 2022
Translated by Lilian Tone

Leda Catunda was born and currently lives in São Paulo, Brazil. Her inclusion in *Como Vai Você?, Geração 80*, a watershed group show at Parque Lage Visual Art School in Rio de Janeiro in 1984, cemented Catunda's pivotal position in Brazilian contemporary art and ushered in a revitalization in painting. She has participated in four São Paulo Biennials (1983, 1985, 1994 and 2018). Retrospectives and surveys of her work have been held at Pinoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2009); Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, and Museo de Arte Moderna (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro (2014); Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo (2016); São Paulo Museum of Modern Art (MAM), São Paulo (2019), and the Museu de Arte Latino Americano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), Buenos Aires (2021).