

Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel

Galeria

Rua Fradique Coutinho 1500 | 05416-001 São Paulo Brasil

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## Rivane Neuenschwander

### O Alienista

1 April – 18 May 2019

Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel is pleased to announce *O Alienista*, an exhibition of new work by Rivane Neuenschwander. The artist shows sculptures, paintings and videos permeated by themes such as fear, sexuality, politics and violence. Drawing on various references from literature and popular culture, the works suggest fragmented narratives, "fictions within fictions", which summon the audience to reflect on the current daftness that seems to have taken control of the country and the rest the world.

Since 2013, Neuenschwander has developed a broad research on children's fears through projects held in London, Dresden, Bogotá, among other cities. Her interest in the theme is twofold. On the one hand there are the psychoanalytic investigations on fear and its variants (phobia, angst and panic). On the other hand, there is fear as an instrumental affection to be manipulated in the political arena, leading to the rise of authoritarian regimes throughout the world. *Assombrados* series (2019) are large-scale paintings on fabric that employ traditional patchwork quilting techniques and represent the most recent development in the artist's research. The starting point for this particular body of work were the workshops held at Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage that took place prior to Neuenschwander's exhibition at Museu de Arte do Rio (*O Nome do Medo*, 2017). The large-scale paintings combine specific fears ranked by the children (such as stray bullets, hunger, rape) with drawings created by them to picture other terrors commonly associated with early childhood (cockroach, snake, ghost). The artist reinterprets the illustrations as silhouettes in order to fragment text and images in the making of these quilts that also represent comfort and shelter.

A dreamlike quality resonates in the installation *O Alienista* (2019). Inspired by the 1882 eponymous book by Brazilian writer Machado de Assis, the work is comprised of twenty dolls made out of fabric, papier mâché, glass bottles, among other materials. In the novel, a doctor opens the insane asylum Casa Verde [Green House], and systematically checks in all the town residents. In the end, questioning once and for all the limits between madness and sanity, he realizes that he too should be admitted to the mental institution. Transposing the characters to Brazil's current context, the exhibition presents the lunatics through allegories of animals or plants, over pedestals of various sizes. The artist assigns a nickname to each one of them, for instance, "The Outsider Judge", "The Flat Earther", "The Barber", and "The Widow" further blurring the line between fiction and reality.

In *Trópicos Malditos, Gozosos e Devotos* (2018–2019) – inspired by Brazilian poet Hilda Hilst's *Poemas Malditos, Gozosos e Devotos*, 1984 – Neuenschwander paints on wood, merging *shungas* and elements from Cordel Literature. The former are Japanese erotic woodcuts, popular in 17th and 18th centuries, and the latter is a folk literary expression popular in street markets of the Brazilian Northeast region. In a similar way to *O Alienista*, these pieces draw on stories to unravel a perverse narrative, permeated by violence. Anthropomorphic creatures with phalluses and vulvas emerge from within a bloody red, referencing rape as a founding practice in Brazil's racial miscegenation.

*Enredo* (2016) – a video made with neuroscientist Sergio Neuenschwander – is displayed on the second floor of the gallery. Screened in loop and 10m01s long, the very structure of the film references the infamous collection of Middle Eastern popular tales *One Thousand and One Nights*, whose origin dates back to the ninth century. Confetti

made from pages of the book is sprinkled over numerous spider webs, developing an abstract narrative as the fragile structure of the web begins to collapse under the weight of the paper. The spider slowly appears rummaging around the set and dealing with the invasion of words. The soundtrack, composed by musician Domenico Lancellotti, uses a *tamburello* to activate the suspenseful mood, while simultaneously attaching new layers of meaning to the piece. This typical Italian instrument is a kind of tambourine used to play the "Tarantella", which is historically associated to *tarantulism*, that is, the development of fever and delirium caused by spider poison.

Rivane Neuenschwander was born in Belo Horizonte, 1967, and currently lives and works in São Paulo. One of the most acclaimed Brazilian artists of her generation, she has participated in: Bienal de São Paulo (2008, 2006 e 1998), Istanbul Biennial (2011), Venice Biennale (2005 e 2003), SITE Santa Fe (1999), among others important group shows. Neuenschwander has had numerous international solo exhibitions, such as: *Alegoria del Miedo*, NC-Arte (Bogotá, 2018); *O Nome do Medo*, MAR (Rio de Janeiro, 2017); *The Name of Fear*, Whitechapel Gallery (London, 2015); *mal-entendidos*, MAM-SP (São Paulo, 2014); *A Day Like Any Other*, New Museum (New York, 2010) – a touring exhibition that traveled to the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum (Saint Louis), the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (Scottsdale) and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (Dublin); and *At a Certain Distance*, Malmö Konsthall (Malmo, 2010). Her work is present in the following collections: Tate Modern (London), Guggenheim (New York), MoMA (New York), TBA21 (Vienna), MACBA (Barcelona), Fundación Jumex (Mexico City), Inhotim (Brumadinho), MAM-SP (São Paulo), MAM Rio (Rio de Janeiro), among others.

#### About

**Exhibition:** Rivane Neuenschwander | O Alienista

**Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel | Galeria:** Rua Fradique Coutinho, 1500 | Vila Madalena | 05416-001 | São Paulo, Brasil | T +55 11 3032 7066

**Opening:** Monday, 1 April, 7–10pm

**Duration:** 1 April – 18 May 2019

**Hours:** Tuesday – Friday: 10am – 7pm | Saturdays: 10am – 6pm

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