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Delicately Carved Flora and Fauna by Efrain Almeida Recreate a Contemplative Brazilian Garden

JULY 17, 2024

GRACE EBERT



Photo by Antônio More. All images courtesy of Oscar Niemeyer Museum, shared with permission

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In *O Jardim*, [Efrain Almeida](#) cultivates the memories of his parents' home in the backlands of Ceará, Brazil. Carved wooden creatures populate the gallery at [Oscar Niemeyer Museum](#), appearing as if they could buzz and flutter across the space. Comprising about 40 sculptures, paintings, and embroideries, the exhibition reinterprets the intimate, contemplative garden Almeida enjoyed as a child.

Employing various mediums and materials, the artist first began working in wood while in his father's studio. "I drew and made the silhouette, and he cut it on a bandsaw. Then I made the sculpture itself," the artist says. The two had a difficult relationship, and Almeida found that this shared process was a fruitful point of connection. He adds:

This manufacturing brings the knowledge of the hand—even the way of holding the piece—and the heat that the hand transfers to the materials you work with. This hand can bring back a kind of ancestral memory. All of this, for me, has a relationship of ancestry and the transmission of knowledge through this type of slow and silent ritual that is manual work. Much of the communication that I begin to establish with my father is a silent kind of exchange.

Almeida frequently returns to the hummingbird as a motif in his work, and in this exhibition, the diminutive creature appears with its beak piercing a lush orange flower. Painted in purples, greens, and oranges, the iridescent bird symbolizes a connection to "rainbow(s), water, and the spirit of the forest," the artist says, and is an ideal motif for the ways something so small can reveal a broader connection to place, nature, and belonging. "These moments," he adds, "are very dear and important, in the sense of realizing that it is something bigger, that it is a vibration, that it is a connection with my history."

O Jardim is on view through October 20, in Curitiba, Brazil.

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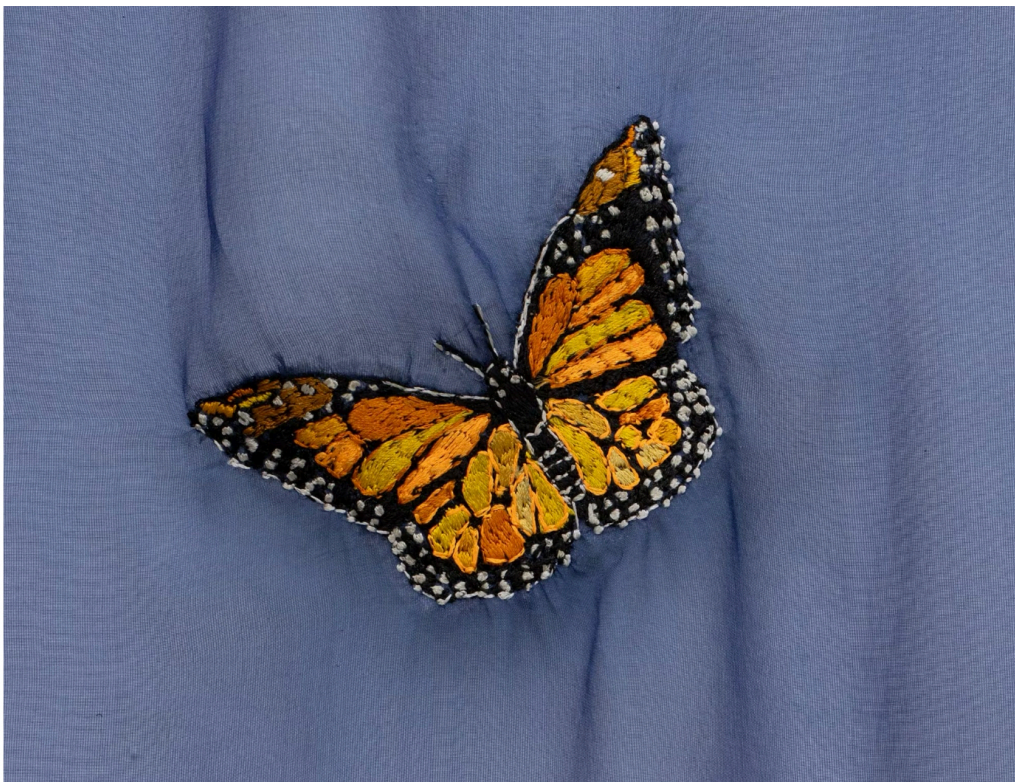


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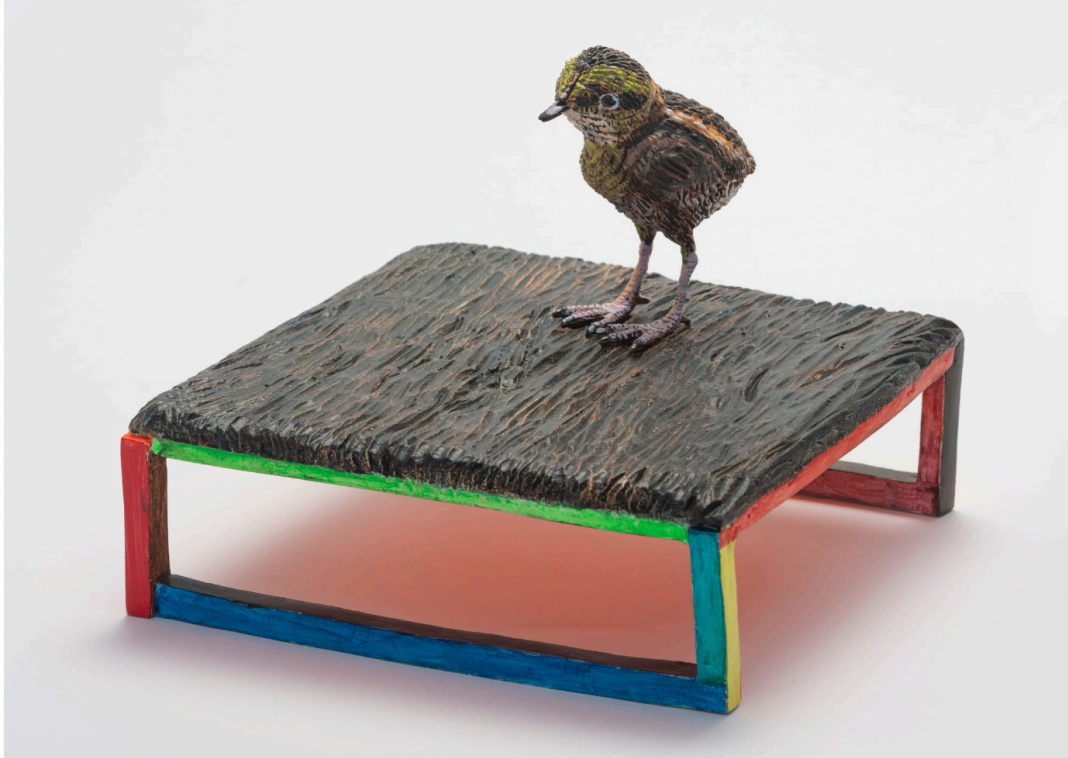


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