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# Fledging Memories: A Review of “O Jardim” by Efrain Almeida at Museu Oscar Niemeyer

BY IVI BRASIL | AUGUST 23, 2024



Efrain Almeida, “O Jardim,” 2024, at Museu Oscar Niemeyer/Photo: Antônio More

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From the top, Efrain Almeida views his garden with few plants, but with lots of birds flying and walking around. To complete: native fruits, cactus, butterflies, a dog and a baby goat, his family's house, and a hummingbird kissing an orange lily (the unique unedited piece). A biographical garden that extends through the white room of the museum, through the white room of the artist's memories. Almeida's garden is in the semi-arid area of the State of Ceará's countryside, in the Northeast Brazilian region, and also in his remembrances. Currently living in Rio, the artist never forgets the place he came from and can always reach it to self-confirm and shows us that in a dry area there is a lot of life—human, animal and plant—and art. In this unedited retrospective exhibition “O Jardim” (The Garden), at the Museum Oscar Niemeyer, in Curitiba, Almeida presents forty artworks, including installations, paintings, sculptures and embroideries from different periods, with the garden emerging as a field of affectivity.

“O Jardim” scribes the new ways that Almeida has been moving, mainly the transaction from wood to bronze sculptures with hyperrealistic painting. The big installation with birds at the center of the room is one of the high moments in that garden. Surrounding that, there are many more birds, in the nests, eating fruits, or stuck by their beaks into the wall. Also, it is interesting to see how far the artist can go to represent his past, including himself in a self-portrait sculpture. It is impossible to go to an Efrain Almeida exhibition without seeing him somewhere, like here. He, or his figure, is in a higher place observing all scenes, remembering and giving us a look at his life and his art.

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*Efrain Almeida, "O Jardim," 2024, at Museu Oscar Niemeyer/Photo: Antônio More*

A series of watercolor and acrylic paintings mix geometrical backgrounds and figures (the artist is present again and again). The colorful paintings refer to popular traditions, but the backgrounds are more in tune with Brazilian concretism. Many religious invocations also stand out in the paintings and in some sculptures, after all, the religiosity of the Northeastern people is very strong and translates into various festivals. "The artworks discuss the body, the sacred and the territory from Canindé and Juazeiro do Norte (towns), important religious centers in the State of Ceará," explains the curator Bitu Cassundé. Those themes are always present in Efrain Almeida's art and become more evident here in this special assembly.

*"Efrain Almeida: O Jardim" (The Garden) is on view at Museum Oscar Niemeyer, Rua Marechal Hermes, 999, Centro Cívico, Curitiba, through October 20.*