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YOUNG ARTISTS 2024 PULLED FROM PRINT ART

# Ana Cláudia Almeida, a Preacher's Daughter, Makes Art About Resisting Control

The Brazil-born artist liberates her canvases from their stretchers, allowing them to freely take up space.



Photography by Bruno Leão and courtesy of Quadra.

**AGE: 30**

**BASED IN: New Haven**

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It wasn't until adulthood that Ana Cláudia Almeida, who grew up in Rio de Janeiro, realized how close she lived to a national park. "Rio is famous for its nature and beauty, but I lived in an area of the city that had the dirtiest rivers. My relationship with nature was very ambiguous," she tells me from her studio in New Haven, where she will complete her MFA at Yale next spring.

Living in a country revered for its natural beauty while being isolated from it created a sense of duality that is now the focal point of Almeida's work, which includes painting and installation. Currently, the artist is presenting in a two-person exhibition with her friend Tadáskía at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. The pair met back in Rio, when Almeida was a member of Trovoa, a collective of artists of color formed in 2017 as a forum to share ideas and provide mutual support. "Community was a big part of my education as an artist," explains Almeida.

Trovoa not only gave Almeida the chance to better understand her practice, but it also set the stage for her to contextualize her upbringing as the daughter of a pastor in contemporary Brazil. "I started to think about how growing up in that way affected my relationship with sexuality," she remembers. She also began to wonder how those same forces are imposed onto nature and the landscape. "It feels like the attempts to control the body are actually a rehearsal for controlling a space," she adds.

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Almeida approaches the material with a fluidity that comes through in broad swaths of color on canvas, which she often liberates from its traditional support structure in the spirit of Sam Gilliam. Her smaller works are dense abstractions that verge, bracingly, on representation without succumbing to it. “I like to work the surface so that you can trace the movement that I made there,” Almeida says. “I want to create this idea of the passage of time.”

Almeida’s deconstructed canvases make her point loud and clear: Lay bare the forces holding things up, and what remains will be just as powerful.

WORDS

**Sara Roffino**

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