

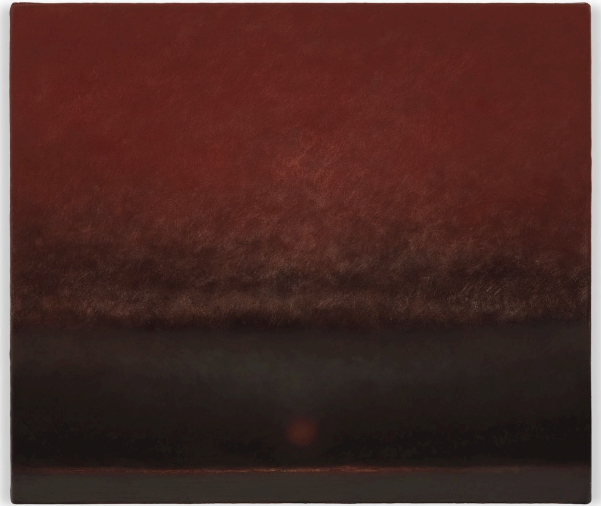
Lucas Arruda

Assum Preto

9 April–22 May 2022

108, rue Vieille du Temple

75003 Paris



Lucas Arruda, *Untitled (from the Deserto-Modelo series)*, 2021

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Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to present *Assum Preto*, an exhibition of new and recent works by Brazilian artist Lucas Arruda, on view at the gallery's Paris location. This marks the artist's third solo presentation with the gallery.

Arruda's paintings are intricate, meditative compositions that blur the boundaries between mnemonic and imaginative registers, while bringing into form a complex rendition of landscapes that is more a product of a state of mind than a depiction of reality. The exhibition is titled after a species of blackbird native to eastern Brazil—whose mundane birdsong, according to local tradition, is said to transform into a beautiful melody if the bird's eyesight has been shaded—*Assum Preto* continues Arruda's investigations into light and darkness, and their metaphysical effects. As the artist observes, blindness makes the birds look internally and sing in an organized harmony.

The exhibition features a number of seascapes, jungles, and monochromes, and a new large, abstract composition—all part of the artist's ongoing *Deserto-Modelo series*—as well as a light installation. In these works, Arruda's textured brushwork foregrounds the materiality and physicality of paint. For the monochromes, he adds layer upon layer of paint to pre-dyed raw canvas, methodically returning to each work for weeks or even months on end until the composition is transformed into an ethereal wall of light that unfolds slowly. The landscapes, on the other hand, are made on prepared surfaces using a reductive process whereby the impression of light is attained through the subtraction of pigment.

Devoid of specific reference points, the semi-abstract seascapes are all grounded only by their thin horizon lines. Above and below this border, charged atmospheric conditions engage further dichotomies between sky and earth, the ethereal and the solid, the psychic and the visual. The jungles, by contrast,

dwell in verticality and form allusive associations with the rainforests that populate the artist's native Brazil. Flat and impenetrable, their quasi-mythical scenery revolves around a tension between imagination and reality.

Rather than recalling a particular locale, both the seascapes and the jungles are instead painted from memory, encouraging meditative solitary contemplation. As curator Chris Sharp suggests, "Their composition [is the] byproduct of an act of decomposition.... One does not get the impression that the artist is trying to recall something so much as trying to conjure it into being."¹

The largest work on view in *Assum Preto* marks a new departure in Arruda's practice. Measuring close to two meters in height and rendered almost entirely in tones of soft beige, the painting features symmetrical and overlapping arrangements of circles, lines, and arcs. Arruda approaches abstraction through a visual language that is as geometric as it is atmospheric; he synthesizes pictorial impulses from the monochromes, jungles, and seascapes, abstracting his own oeuvre into a symbolic and spiritual ideogram that draws its compositional solutions from Brazil's rich and varied artistic tradition of popular painters and additionally recalls the visionary tableaux of Swedish artist Hilma af Klint. Yet even here, Arruda's fascination with the realm of nature as a sensory phenomenon still holds. His planar forms drift and dissolve into one another, creating enigmatic and poetic images of sun, moon, storm, and sea.

Arruda will additionally present a light installation that furthers his investigations into symbolism, illusion, and perception. The site-specific installation—a version of which was first exhibited in the artist's 2019 solo exhibition at the Fridericianum in Kassel, Germany—comprises a series of paired rectangles rendered directly on the gallery wall, the top one created through a light projection and the bottom one physically applied in paint. Together, these constructions crystallize the genre of landscape into its most elemental form.

Born in 1983 in São Paulo, Brazil, Lucas Arruda received his BFA from Faculdade Santa Marcelina, São Paulo, in 2009. His work is on view in the solo exhibition *Lugar sem Lugar* at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, until April 17, 2022. This presentation traveled from the Fundação Iberê Camargo, Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2021. In 2019, Arruda presented the solo exhibition *Deserto-Modelo* at the Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany. He has also received various solo presentations, at Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2021, 2018, 2016, 2014, 2012, 2010, and 2009); New Century Art Foundation | Pond Society, Shanghai (2020); Éditions Cahiers d'Art, Paris (2018); Pivô, São Paulo (2015); Lulu, Mexico City (2015); Frederic Snitzer, Miami (2012); Centro Cultural São Paulo (2011); i-20 Gallery, New York (2011); and 713 Arte Contemporâneo, Buenos Aires (2010). Work by the artist is included in the exhibition *Jusque-là (Thus Far)* at Le Fresnoy – Studio national des arts contemporains in Tourcoing, France, through April 30, 2022.

The artist's first monograph was published in 2018 by Éditions Cahiers d'Art, Paris, with texts by Fernanda Brenner, Chris Sharp, and Hans Ulrich Obrist. In 2020, David Zwirner Books published a volume on Arruda's work, featuring contributions by Barry Schwabsky and Will Chancellor.

Arruda has participated in numerous international group exhibitions, including *Particularities*, X Museum, Beijing (2021); *Luogo e Segni*, Punta della Dogana, Venice (2019); *Nature + Abstraction*, Fondation Beyeler, Basel (2018); *New Shamans/Novos Xamãs: Brazilian Artists*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2016); *Kiti Ka'aeté*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2015); and *Os Primeiros 10 Anos*, Instituto Tomie

Ohtake, São Paulo (2012), among others. The artist's work was featured in *Secret Wing, Art Encounters Biennial 2021*, Timișoara, Romania; the 1st *International Biennial of Asunción, Cry of Liberty*, Asunción, Paraguay (2015); and *La Bienal 2013, Here Is Where We Jump!*, Museo del Barrio, New York.

Arruda has been represented by David Zwirner since 2018. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo; Pinault Collection, Paris; Rubell Museum, Miami; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Tate Modern, London. Arruda lives and works in São Paulo.

¹ Chris Sharp, "Lucas Arruda: The Creation of Silence," in *Lucas Arruda* (Paris: Éditions Cahiers d'Art, 2018), p. 12.

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