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Ministério da Cultura, Fundação Bienal and Itaú present the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo – *Affective Affinities*

## **33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo – *Affective Affinities***

From 7 September to 9 December 2018

Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion, Ibirapuera Park

[www.bienal.org.br](http://www.bienal.org.br)

**Press preview:** 4 September 2018

**Preview days for press, professionals and guests:** 5 and 6 September 2018

### ***Affective Affinities* offers an alternative to thematic exhibitions by focusing the artists' gaze on their own creative contexts**

**The 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo features 7 group shows organised by invited artist-curators as well as 12 individual projects selected by curator Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro**

With an ambitious and unprecedented format, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo - ***Affective Affinities*** hopes to encourage an individual appreciation of art by avoiding an overarching theme that could prompt pre-established understandings.

The title for the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Bienal de São Paulo was selected by its curator Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro, director and chief curator of the Cisneros Collection, to resonate with ideas presented in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* (1809), as well as Mário Pedrosa's important thesis *On the Affective Nature of Form in the Work of Art* (1949).

However, the title is not intended to provide the exhibition with a thematic direction. Rather, it reflects the show's organisation, which draws on artistic and cultural links, as well as affinities between participating artists. As in Pedrosa's text, it proposes an investigation into the ways that art creates an environment of relationships and communication, which begins with the artist and moves through the object to the viewer.

Presence, attention and the way that the environment influences our experience, are the premises that guide Pérez-Barreiro's curatorial proposal, which functions as a response to a world of ready-made truths, in which the fragmentation of information and inability to focus attention can lead to alienation and passivity.

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With a strong belief in the positive impact of a radical change in the operating systems of the Bienal de São Paulo, for this edition, Pérez-Barreiro has invited seven different artists to freely organise exhibitions that dialogue with their practices. **Mamma Andersson** (Sweden), **Sofia Borges** (Brazil), **Waltercio Caldas** (Brazil), **Alejandro Cesarco** (Uruguay), **Claudia Fontes** (Argentina), **Antonio Ballester Moreno** (Spain) and **Wura-Natasha Ogunji** (USA) have, with complete autonomy, chosen their participating artists and artworks. The only criteria is that they must also include their own work in their exhibitions.

In addition, Pérez-Barreiro has also curated 12 solo projects featuring work by **Feliciano Centurion** (Paraguay), **Alejandro Corujeira** (Argentina), **Luiza Crosman** (Brazil), **Nelson Felix** (Brazil), **Siron Franco** (Brazil), **Tamar Guimarães** (Brazil), **Aníbal López** (Guatemala), **Maria Laet** (Brazil), **Vânia Mignone** (Brazil), **Denise Milan** (Brazil), **Bruno Moreschi** (Brazil) and **Lucia Nogueira** (Brazil).

## Seven curatorial propositions designed by artist-curators:

### **Mamma Andersson** | *Stargazer II*

Invited artists include (partial artist list): *Dick Bengtsson* (Sweden, 1936-1989), *Henry Darger* (USA, 1892-1973), *Åke Hodell* (Sweden, 1919-2000), *Gunvor Nelson* (Sweden, 1931) and *Russian Icons* (Sweden-based collection)

For her exhibition, *Stargazer II*, **Mamma Andersson** (Luleå, Sweden, 1962) brings together a group of artists that have been inspiring and fuelling her own production as a painter. The selection includes a wide range of references, such as 15<sup>th</sup>-century Russian icons; outsiders Henry Darger (USA, 1892–1973) and Dick Bengtsson (Sweden, 1936–1989); and contemporary artists, such as filmmaker Guvnor Nelson (Sweden, 1931), and fighter pilot and sound artist Åke Hodell (Sweden, 1919–2000). The participants share a common interest in expressive figuration and the human body. The exhibition also features a large number of Andersson's paintings, presenting a vibrant dialogue between her practice and her artistic inspiration.

### **Antonio Ballester Moreno** | *sentido/comum*

Invited artists include (partial artist list): *Andrea Büttner* (Germany, 1972), *Mark Dion* (USA, 1961), *Friedrich Fröbel* (Germany, 1782-1852) and *Rafael Sánchez-Mateos Paniagua* (Spain, 1979)

**Antonio Ballester Moreno** (Madrid, Spain, 1977) approaches his curatorial project for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo as a way of contextualising a universe based on the close

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relationship between biology and culture, with references to the history of abstraction and its interplay with nature, pedagogy and spirituality. For this purpose, he brings together the work of philosophers, scientists and artists: “We are all creators of our own world, but I understand that such a variety of languages have separated us from a sense of the common, so this proposal focuses on the study of our origins, whether in relation to natural, social or subjective aspects—the three axis that organise the exhibition”, notes Moreno. Titled *sentido/comum* [common/sense], the exhibition encompasses educational toys from historical avant-gardes, artworks from Escuela de Vallecas and works by contemporary artists. Amongst the participants, the exhibition features the philosopher and educator Friedrich Fröbel (Germany, 1782–1852); Andrea Büttner (Germany, 1972); Mark Dion (USA, 1961) and Rafael Sánchez-Mateos Paniagua (Spain, 1979), who also contributed to the educational publication *Convite à atenção* [Invitation to Attention].

**Sofia Borges** | *A infinita história das coisas ou o fim da tragédia do um*

Invited artists include (partial artist list): *Leda Catunda* (Brazil, 1961), *Tal Isaac Hadad* (France, 1976), *Sarah Lucas* (UK, 1962) and *Jennifer Tee* (Netherlands, 1973)

**Sofia Borges**’ (Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, 1984) curatorial project, titled *A infinita história das coisas ou o fim da tragédia do um* [The Infinite History of Things or the End of the Tragedy of One], explores a collage of mythological references based on philosophical interpretations of Greek tragedy. Her proposal is to investigate the limits of representation and language’s inability to mediate the real. “I have spent years attempting to use images to reveal the state of the representation of things, until I understood there is no solution to this because, in fact, it is a question of meaning. Language is tragic *per se*, as it is ambiguous. One material cannot be used to talk about another”, notes Borges. The exhibition project draws on a mixed curatorial model in which the selection of specific artworks is accompanied by commissioned works. One of the singularities of Borges’ proposal—which includes works by Jennifer Tee (Netherlands, 1973), Leda Catunda (Brazil, 1961), Sarah Lucas (UK, 1962) and Tal Isaac Hadad (France, 1976), amongst others—is its activation within a programme of experimentations that take place throughout the duration of the Bienal.

**Waltercio Caldas**

Invited artists include (partial artist list): *Victor Hugo* (France, 1802-1885), *Jorge Oteiza* (Spain, 1908-2003) and *Vicente do Rego Monteiro* (Brazil, 1899-1970)

**Waltercio Caldas** (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1946), whose production has always drawn on history of art, proposes an exhibition room where artworks from different artists are confronted with his own works. “Given that an artist’s practice deals with numerous issues

that vary throughout time, I have chosen artworks that deviate from their most well-known aspects and that stand out for their quality and specificity. The outcomes from the relationships between the selected pieces became the main interest of my selection”, Caldas notes. He proposes a reflection on poetics, as well as the nature of forms and ideas and their implication on the production of art since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “In looking at the tension between these very diverse artworks, I have searched for the illuminating surprises that surface from their friction”, he says. Challenging his own work and highlighting often-unexpected interactions—such as between the work of Victor Hugo (France, 1802-1885), Jorge Oteiza (Spain, 1908-2003) and Vicente do Rego Monteiro (Brazil, 1899-1970)—we see the emergence of new possibilities for reading art.

#### **Alejandro Cesarco** | *Aos nossos pais*

Invited artists include (partial artist list): *Louise Lawler (USA, 1947)*, *Cameron Rowland (USA, 1988)* and *Sturtevant (USA, 1924 – France, 2014)*

Drawing on his interests in issues such as repetition, narrative and translation, **Alejandro Cesarco** (Montevideo, Uruguay, 1975) realises a curatorship of artworks from artists that share his conceptual and aesthetic concerns. Titled *Aos nossos pais* [To Our Parents], “the show questions how the past (history) simultaneously enables and frustrates potentialities, how we rewrite the past with our work, and how difference is produced in repetition”, Cesarco explains. As well as works by the artist-curator, the show presents artists from three different generations, including Sturtevant (USA, 1924 – France, 2014), Louise Lawler (USA, 1947) and Cameron Rowland (USA, 1988). “To dedicate the show to a primary relation (biological or adopted, literal or metaphorical) is a way of constructing a genealogy and trying to get close to the core source of our understandings, methods, inhibitions, possibilities, and expectations”.

#### **Claudia Fontes** | *O pássaro lento*

Invited artists: *Daniel Bozhkov (Bulgaria, 1959)*, *Elba Bairon (Bolivia, 1947)*, *Sebastián Castagna (Argentina, 1965)*, *Roderick Hietbrink (Holland, 1975)*, *Žilvinas Landzbergas (Lithuania, 1979)*, *Ben Rivers (UK, 1972)*, *Pablo Martín Ruiz (Argentina, 1964)*, *Paola Sferco (Argentina, 1974)* and *Katrín Sigurdardóttir (Iceland/USA, 1967)*

For her exhibition titled *O pássaro lento* [The Slow Bird], **Claudia Fontes** (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1964) draws on a metanarrative: a fictional book of the same title whose content is unknown, except for some fragments and a few material remains. Both Fontes and her invited artists present artworks that activate links between the visual arts, literature and translation, through experiences that propose an expanded temporality. “The experience of speed and slowness are political experiences rooted in the body. They both

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influence understandings of space, distance and possibility”, Fontes states. In a horizontal and collaborative curatorial project, each participant, with the exception of Roderick Hietbrink (Netherlands, 1975), produced commissioned works for the occasion: Ben Rivers (UK, 1972), Daniel Bozhkov (Bulgaria, 1959), Elba Bairon (Bolivia, 1947), Katrín Sigurdardóttir (Iceland/USA, 1967), Pablo Martín Ruiz (Argentina, 1964), Paola Sferco (Argentina, 1974), Sebastián Castagna (Argentina, 1965) and Žilvinas Landzbergas (Lithuania, 1979).

## **Wura-Natasha Ogunji** | *sempre, nunca*

Invited artists: *ruby onyinyechi amanze (Nigeria, 1982), Lhola Amira (South Africa, 1984), Youmna Chlala (Lebanon, 1974), Mame-Diarra Niang (France, 1982) and Nicole Vlado (USA, 1980)*

For her exhibition project titled *sempre, nunca* [always, never], composed exclusively of commissioned artworks, **Wura-Natasha Ogunji** (St. Louis, USA, 1970) invited artists Lhola Amira (South Africa, 1984), Mame-Diarra Niang (France, 1982), Nicole Vlado (USA, 1980), ruby onyinyechi amanze (Nigeria, 1982) and Youmna Chlala (Lebanon, 1974) to create—like herself—new artworks in a collaborative and horizontal curatorial project. The work of these six artists “range from the intimate (body, memory, gesture) to the epic (architecture, history, nation)”, explains Ogunji. “In an open and ongoing dialogue, our individual projects encompass different practices and languages, intersecting at ideas and questions crucial to experimentation, freedom and the creative process”. Each artist’s practice is impacted by their individual histories and by the complex relationship they have with their lands, nations and territories. “Their work subverts hegemonic narratives and embraces interruptions as necessary openings”.

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## Twelve solo projects curated by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro

Invited artists: *Feliciano Centurion (Paraguay), Alejandro Corujeira (Argentina), Luiza Crosman (Brazil), Nelson Felix (Brazil), Siron Franco (Brazil), Tamar Guimares (Brazil), Anibal Lopez (Guatemala), Maria Laet (Brazil), Vânia Mignone (Brazil), Denise Milan (Brazil), Bruno Moreschi (Brazil) and Lucia Nogueira (Brazil)*

“I wanted to show artists that were historical, but not necessarily famous; I didn’t want these exhibition sections to simply reiterate names that we already knew. The artists honoured are little known in Latin America, despite being among the most relevant names of their generation. Bringing them to the Bienal is a way of ensuring they do not disappear from the canon of the history of art, while introducing them to new generations.”

Amongst the twelve solo projects selected by Pérez-Barreiro, three are posthumous tributes to **Anibal López** (Guatemala City, Guatemala, 1964–2014), **Feliciano Centurión** (San Ignacio, Paraguay, 1962 – Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1996) and **Lucia Nogueira** (Goiania, Brazil, 1950 – London, UK, 1998).

**Anibal López**, aka A-153167 (his ID number), was one of the precursors of performance art in Guatemala. His practice, which includes video, performance, live acts and urban interventions, amongst other forms of expression, is strongly political and focused on disputes regarding national borders, indigenous cultures, military abuses and even the art market. Videos and photographs of ephemeral actions, conducted as a form of protest to the objectification and fetishising of art, compose the exhibition.

The *queer* universe is sensitively explored by **Feliciano Centurión**, who left his home country Paraguay to settle in Argentina, where he became an exponent of the so-called “Rojas” generation (the first artists to exhibit at the gallery of Centro Cultural Rector Ricardo Rojas, at Universidad de Buenos Aires), until he fell victim to AIDS-related complications, aged 34. Centurión worked primarily with fabrics and embroideries, incorporating items such as handkerchiefs and crocheted pieces bought in street markets in Buenos Aires. Descended from a family of embroiderers, he appropriated craft as an artistic language to express elements of his personal history based on a family tradition common in Paraguayan culture.

Still relatively unknown in Brazil, **Lucia Nogueira**—an artist from the city of Goiania, in central Brazil—is an essential figure to understand Brazilian art of the period, and achieved international recognition in her short life. Her sculptures and installations, which are the focus of her solo show at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal, subvert the utilitarianism of objects with subtle

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humour, both through their unexpected association of elements and the wordplays constantly present in their titles, which create an atmosphere of strangeness and poetry.

Completing Pérez-Barreiro's selection, there are solo projects by nine artists, of which eight were specifically commissioned for the Bienal. The development of artworks that do not fit a thematic framework connects these eight artists. As Pérez-Barreiro explains: "They are complex works that function individually and do not need an additional context for the viewer to relate to them".

With his painting series *Césio/Rua 57* [Caesium/Street 57], **Siron Franco** (Goiás Velho, Brazil, 1950) is the only artist exhibiting a historical artwork. With his work, Franco makes eternal the feeling of horror and isolation triggered by a radiation accident that took place in 1987, when a neighbourhood of Goiania called Bairro Popular was contaminated with Caesium 137. Born and bred in the neighbourhood, the artist—counter to the flow of the local population—left the region of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro shortly after the accident, returning to his birthplace for good. His record of this environmental catastrophe represent a turning point in his career, when he leaves behind ironic themes to adopt the use of allegories with highly symbolic elements.

**Alejandro Corujeira** (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1961) has a light and fluid formal perception, which appears to want to capture the movement of nature. He is presenting sculptures and paintings at the exhibition. **Denise Milan** (São Paulo, Brazil, 1954) creates sculptures and installations with large stones and crystals. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal will feature brand-new artworks in this format.

The everyday is the inspiration behind the artworks produced by **Maria Laet** (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1982), who is exhibiting a new video, and by **Vânia Mignone** (Campinas, Brazil, 1967), who is showing new paintings. **Nelson Felix** (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1954)—whose "formal work appears to materialise a planetary awareness"—is bringing a new sculptural installation.

The practices of **Bruno Moreschi** (Maringá, Brazil, 1982) and **Luiza Crosman** (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1987) are linked to the current of institutional critique and move away from traditional art mediums. "With these artists we will have, within the exhibition, a critical perspective on how art functions, is exhibited and explained", notes Pérez-Barreiro.

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Taking a personal and poetic approach, **Tamar Guimarães** (Viçosa, Brazil, 1967), who merges a critical institutional approach with poetic and narrative concerns, is presenting a new video.

## **Professional and press accreditation**

The accreditation of professionals and press is open and can be accessed via the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo website.

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**Bienal de São Paulo dates:** 7 September to 9 December 2018

**Press accreditation and images:** [bienal.org.br/press33](http://bienal.org.br/press33)

**Professional accreditation:** [bienal.org.br/accreditation](http://bienal.org.br/accreditation)

## **Fundação Bienal de São Paulo: The foundation behind the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo**

The proposal presented by Gabriel Pérez-Barreiro and selected by the Fundação Bienal for its 33<sup>rd</sup> edition resonates not only with the institution's own vocation but also with the challenges it faces to remain contemporary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By questioning mainstream models and rethinking large-scale art exhibitions, the project is aligned with the Foundation's everyday operations, which consist of always looking for the new without losing sight of more than six decades of history.

## **33<sup>rd</sup> Bienal de São Paulo – *Affective Affinities***

from September 7 to December 9, 2018

Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion, Ibirapuera Park

[www.bienal.org.br](http://www.bienal.org.br)

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