



Galeria **Francisco Fino**

Panmela Castro
Do Jardim, um Oceano

Curated by Igor Simões
27.06.2024 – 14.09.2024

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Panmela Castro: from the garden, an ocean.

Arriving at the foyer of Galeria Francisco Fino, in Lisbon, we immediately see a self-portrait of Rio de Janeiro-born artist Panmela Castro in which some of the main elements of her work are apparent: the trickling that results from quick brushstrokes that attempt to capture the instant (a tradition of modern impressionist painting); the ability to capture the air surrounding the portrayed person; the plants, the lighting, the atmosphere of a garden – in and of itself a type of space carrying a series of historical layers that also include 18th century European artistic tradition, with its conflicted vision of nature either as controllable by human action or as the place of in-submission. But this is not just any garden. The brushes, the palette, everything reminds us that this garden is the artist's place of process and creation. In her self-portrait, Panmela is at once relaxed and absorbed. Her eyes are on the pages of a book. But not any book! In her hands is a copy of Gayatri Spivak's seminal work, whose title consists of a rhetorical question which has oriented most

thinkers who are keen on founding a different way of understanding the world: Can the subaltern speak?

There is another clue that can guide us across the exhibition. The garden does not occupy a neutral place. Neutrality does not exist. Therefore, it is impossible to disregard the fact that the series of paintings featured at the gallery were made in a garden in Lisbon, in a Portuguese garden. The fact that the artist is holding Spivak's book in Portugal changes everything: What is at stake when black Brazilian artist Panmela Castro crosses the Atlantic and decides to encounter black, white, Afro-Asian, cisgender, trans, non-binary, Portuguese, African, migrant people in Portugal? That is precisely the moment when an ocean starts to appear among the architectures of the garden.

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We all know that the Portuguese colonial enterprise translated into the removal of people from their homelands and their forcible displacement to other crown-controlled territories; African lands were taken from their original owners and turned into places of dominion, extraction of wealth and labour to serve the Portuguese empire. The ocean was the road used by Portugal to submit a whole part of the world. But we should also remember that any attempt at submission must deal with the in-submissive, with that which does not bend.

Gradually, the Atlantic Ocean also became a space that no longer submitted to the notion of national borders established by Europeans who saw themselves as the discoverers of that which had always been there. A series of traditions was created both above and below the water. And that was how a world of practices, languages and cultures was woven in murmurs, exchanges, survival strategies. In the course

of this flow Panmela Castro's country, Brazil, gradually ceased to be the main Portuguese colony to become the main destination of black men and women, who endured the largest forced displacement process ever witnessed by humankind: the African diaspora.

Unavoidably, these detoured lives did not merely occupy the territory under domination. They also countered the dominators, threatening their supremacy at the very core of their ancient cities, streets, houses, gardens. Portugal and the city of Lisbon saw the appearance of people that evaded their European models and, along with them, came voices and knowledges that were relegated to a place of subalternity. However, the subalterns who arrived (and keep arriving) can speak. And not only can they speak. They create and recreate artistic languages, modes of existing, ways of redrawing life.

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Panmela Castro operates the transformation of the garden into an ocean. By deploying her processes of affective drift, she gathers a choir of voices and existences that result from the world invented by the Atlantic's salty water. As they arrive at the garden, the people she now encounters, and with whom she creates, bring in the oceanic part of their stories. They bring with them displacements made by the story of their bodies and the bodies of those who came before them. Their lives are the concrete proof that subalternity was but an attempt.

Her encounters, which can last for different lengths of times, are the material for her portraits. These paintings bring the opposite of a notion of immobility. Of someone who 'poses' for another who represents them. While canonically the portrait is seen as the instant in which someone is paralysed and becomes the subject to be captured by the

painter, this notion does not apply to the poetic operation that turns a garden into an ocean.

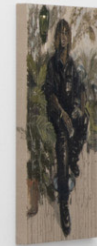
The paintings featured here are the record of a performance carried out to activate encounters. Each represented person was also the creative agent of their own image. These portraits are not the single, exclusive narrative of the painter about the bodies that submit to her. Nor are they the absolute truths of the portrayed. The outcome is the result of an act of full trust in the power of being together; of being with; of launching a proposition and use it to let randomness in. Panmela is a performer. A performer who is also a great painter. An artist with a sophisticated artistic ability and repertoire.

During one of our talks, the artist showed me another dimension of her process, which somehow had escaped me. She told me that the people in the paintings are also part of a network. A vast network of affects that starts with encounters and expands into the dimensions of everyday life. She told me stories shared with some of the people that appear in the portraits on show. She also told me how each of those lives connected to others that came to her encounters and how for her that process takes us to another act: the exhibition itself and its celebrations: An opening morning, afternoon or evening when those people, as they see the multitude of voices rising amid the conversations, the dribbling brushstrokes and the affects, in fact look beyond the portraits towards the enormous network they express. And at that moment, those who were the subalterns celebrate and remember that, resorting to the power of what we do together, it is possible to turn a garden in Lisbon into the Atlantic itself. To turn a garden into an infinite ocean.

Igor Simões, Curator



Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro
Pode o subalterno falar, 2024
Affective Drift Lisbon Series
Oil on linen
170 x 200 x 8 cm





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Dennis Correia, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 150 x 8 cm

Dennis Correia is a Cape Verdean queer artist, transforming Portuguese society with his art in singing, dancing, acting and as a Drag Queen. A close friend considered him the perfect figure for Panmela to portray, and so the meeting took place on a quiet afternoon in the garden, full of conversation.





Detail of *Dennis Correia, Pamela Castro*, 2024

Panmela Castro

Yen Sung, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

170 x 110 x 8 cm

Yen Sung, with origins in Portugal, China and Mozambique, is one of the city's oldest DJs, a pioneer in paving the way for other women in the profession. Passionate about music, Yen Sung is also a devoted mother, taking loving care of her teenage daughter. In the midst of the emotional and political debates that permeated the afternoon of her meeting with Panmela, her portrait emerged. With a deep gaze and wearing a blue shirt with puffed sleeves, Yen Sung captures us in a moment of strength.





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Anastácia Costa e Deolinda Cardoso Costa, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

170 x 110 x 8 cm

Dona Deolinda, from Cape Verde, came to Portugal in search of better living conditions. Here she met her husband, a fellow countryman from her hometown, with whom she had her daughter Anastácia. In Panmela's painting, mother and daughter are seen hugging. Anastácia, who had already posed for the artist, brought her mother so that their love could be registered and eternalized.



Panmela Castro

Alexandre Santos (Xando), 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

170 x 110 x 8 cm

Xando, a music producer who calls himself a “blasian”, swimming in urban influences from Luanda, São Paulo, and Lisbon. He was recommended to Panmela by a friend of a friend who knew him from the streets, and thought of him as the perfect character for one of Panmela Castro’s paintings. In turn, Xando told the artist that he still lacked the experience of being portrayed in a classic oil on canvas painting, and therefore came to meet her at the studio in Lisbon.





Detail of Alexandre Santos (Xando), Pamela Castro, 2024



Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Telmo Galeano (Tekilla), 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 150 x 8 cm

The Portuguese rapper of Angolan descent, a long-standing figure on the Lisbon hip hop scene, is known for his irreverence and unique character. It was through the articulation of ideas on the most diverse subjects that Tekilla - as Telmo Galeano is known - became one of Panmela Castro's paintings.





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Kemberling Martinez, 2024
Affective Drift Lisbon Series
Oil on linen
120 x 90 x 8 cm

Kemberling Martinez, a Venezuelan therapist specializing in emotional management and body awareness, shares with Panmela Castro an interest in the use of the arts for curative processes. Following Panmela's work, she found out that the artist was in Lisbon looking for people to be portrayed in her garden-studio in the Lapa neighborhood and volunteered.



Panmela Castro

Pati Nakamura, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on canvas

90 x 120 x 8 cm

Pati, a Brazilian of East Asian origin, is a visual artist and poet, irreverent and very talkative. She came into Panmela's life via the internet, offering to be painted, an invitation that Panmela readily accepted. Pati is from the third generation of Japanese descendants in Brazil and, at the time of this meeting, had been living in Porto, Portugal, for seven years. On a sunny afternoon in the Lisbon studio, the two, like old pals, spent joyful moments until the work was finished.





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Amina Bawa, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 90 x 8 cm

Amina is one of those articulate people who knows everyone and therefore connects people. She played an essential role in Panmela's journey through Lisbon, offering both emotional and practical support in the search for connections and solutions to everyday issues. A journalist and cultural professional, Amina met Panmela through Instagram, but the two already had mutual friends in Brazil, where Amina came from as an immigrant.





Detail of *Amina Bawa*, Pamela Castro, 2024

Panmela Castro

Namalimba Coelho, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

150 x 110 x 8 cm

Born in Angola, where she spent her childhood during the civil war, Namalimba is a master of international law and human rights, specializing in the field of communication and arts, which makes her a perfect partner for Panmela Castro on their journey to discover Lisbon. As a close friend who shares similar ideals such as love and care for others, Namalimba is the first subject portrayed in the “Affective Drift” painting series of the city, paving the way for new affections to enter the studio space.





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Oseias Baltazar, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

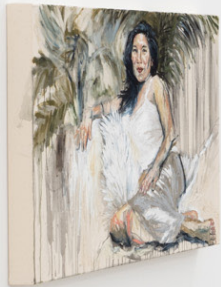
90 x 120 x 8 cm

Oséias is a Portuguese music producer who grew up surrounded by artists, nurturing his love for music. At first, Oséias came to accompany Xando on his painting night. Always quiet, but smiling when it suited him, the slender figure, lined up in a black suit and tie, soon became the focus of Panmela's interest, who invited him to be painted next, on a sunny day, when he was wearing jeans and a brightly colored leather vest and was getting emotional about the fight that was breaking out between Kendrick and Drake.





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Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Panmela Castro

Anastácia Costa, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 170 x 8 cm

Anastácia is Portuguese of Cape Verdean descent, works in a hospital, and is about the same age as Panmela. The two met at an exhibition, where Anastácia, with her big eyes and constant smile, stood out from the crowd in the museum. As fate would have it, the two were there, united by friends, talking and getting to know each other.



Panmela Castro

Felicia Hunter, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

90 x 170 x 8 cm

Felicia Hunter, born in Angola, lives in Lisbon, where she was crowned Miss Drag in 2022. One of the pioneers of the ballroom scene in Portugal, Felicia is an emblematic figure who uses performance to create a deep connection with her audience. Mastering the art of Vogue, she delivers performances that are acclaimed by her spectators. Felicia was suggested to pose for Panmela by Amina, another participant in the Lisbon paintings, who pointed out that this portrait would be one of the key pieces in the series.





Detail of *Felicia Hunter*, Pamela Castro, 2024



Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pamela Castro

Auto-retrato com Francisco Fino, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

170 x 200 x 8 cm

Panmela Castro

Juca da Cruz, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 170 x 8 cm

Juca is a very high-spirited Brazilian who for some time has owned a salon where he works as a hairdresser in Lisbon. A friend of a friend of a friend of Panmela's, he was contacted with the idea of being the perfect model for her series on Portugal. He arrived at the studio dressed in a blue gown, similar to Yemanjá, and laid down on the studio's recliner, like a goddess of the waters, where he was portrayed as one of the artist's muses.



Panmela Castro

Lola Bahjan, 2024

Affective Drift Lisbon Series

Oil on linen

110 x 150 x 8 cm

Argentinian travesti Lola Bahjan was in the city on an artistic residency when she came across Panmela Castro's work on the internet. As a poet and singer, she decided to build her image painted with a box (her musical instrument), a draped black skirt and a scarf in her hair. The afternoon together was meditative; she spent most of the time still, eyes closed, with a harmonious, delicate and serene countenance, reflecting the peaceful aura of the garden.





Installation view of *Do Jardim, um Oceano*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



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Panmela Castro

Panmela Castro is a visual artist whose artistic practice is driven by relationships of affection and otherness. Based on the idea of “affective drift”, she proposes chance as the subject of an incessant search for a sense of belonging. Based on the thought of performance, her artistic production converges in works that permeate painting, sculpture, installation, video and photography. She has a degree in painting from the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2007), a master’s degree in Contemporary Artistic Processes from the State University of Rio de Janeiro (2011), and is a postgraduate student on the Human Rights, Responsibility and Global Citizenship course at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (2023).

Her work is part of international collections, including the Stedelijk Museum and ICA Miami, as well as major collections in Brazil such as Instituto Inhotim, MASP, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes and Museu de Arte do Rio. Among her most recent and noteworthy exhibitions, she is currently taking part in the long-term show at the Stedelijk Museum entitled “Tomorrow is a Different Day - 1980 to now”; she took part in the Bienal das Amazônias (Belém, 2023); “Dos Brasis: Arte e Pensamento Negro” at Sesc Belenzinho (São Paulo, 2023); “Ana Mendieta: Terra Abre Caminhos” at Sesc Pompeia (São Paulo, 2023); “Funk” at MAR (Rio de Janeiro, 2023); “Histórias Brasileiras”

at MASP (São Paulo, 2022); “Quilombo: vida, problemas e aspirações do negro” at the Inhotim Institute (Brumadinho, 2022); Mercosur Biennial (Porto Alegre, 2022); “Um Defeito de Cor” at MAR (Rio de Janeiro, 2022); “Negros Na Piscina” at the Pinacoteca do Estado do Ceará (2022); “Brasil Futuro: as formas da democracia” at the National Museum of the Republic; “Enciclopédia Negra” at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo (2022) and MAR (2021); “Escrito no Corpo” at Tanya Bonakdar in New York (2022) and Carpintaria (2021); as well as the solo exhibitions “Deriva Afetiva Dakar”, Instituto Inclusartiz (2023); “Retratos Relatos” at Sesc Paraty (2023) and “Ostentar é Estar Viva” at Galeria Luisa Strina (2021).

Social activist and protagonist of the fourth feminist wave, according to Heloisa Buarque de Holanda in her book “Feminist Explosion”, Panmela Castro is the founder of the non-profit organisation Rede NAMI. She is active in collective work to promote women’s rights and combat domestic violence, having reached more than 200,000 people in the last decade. For her efforts in this area of human rights, she has received numerous honours, including being named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, the DVF Awards, and being listed by the prestigious US magazine Newsweek as one of the 150 courageous women who are changing the world.

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