



MAM presents a retrospective of the work of Alberto da Veiga Guignard

Curated by Paulo Sérgio Duarte, the exhibition features some 80 works by one of the most highly-valued painters in Brazilian modernism.

In Opaque Landscape, held in the Paulo Figueiredo Room, MAM curator Felipe Chaimovich presents a selection of works from the museum's collection that dialogues with Guignard and his concepts.

Portraits, landscapes and still-lives are three of the genres represented in **Guignard – The Visual Memory of Modern Brazil**, an exhibition of the work of *Alberto da Veiga Guignard*, one of Brazil's leading 20th-century painters, to be held in the Great Room of the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM) between July 7 and September 11. Curated by Paulo Sérgio Duarte, the exhibition aims to give the general public a didactic introduction to this painter and draftsman, best-known for his landscape paintings, and to underscore his legacy and contribution to Brazilian modern art. In addition to the 80 or so works by Guignard himself, also presented are some paintings by his contemporaries Ismael Nery, Emiliano Di Cavalcanti and José Pancetti.

Recognized as an artistic all-rounder who painted in all the main genres (portraiture, self-portraiture, landscapes, still-life, religious art), sometimes even mixing two or more in the same composition, Guignard was widely acclaimed for his landscapes of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, where he lived from the 1940s on. The curator Paulo Sérgio Duarte identifies originality as the hallmark of the artist's work, which took a decorative approach to the range of supports that included canvas, ceilings, panels, furniture and other objects.

Guignard is a collector's favorite, and his art commands high prices on a par with such prestigious fellows as Alfredo Volpi and Di Cavalcanti. One valuable work rarely seen by the general public but on display in the MAM exhibition is the 1959 panel *Paisagem Imaginante* (160 x 186 cm, oil on wood), which belongs to a private collection. "Guignard's portraits and landscapes are chapters apart in the artist's oeuvre, possessed of a lyricism that is unique in our modernism", says the curator.

In order to strike a dialogue with Guignard's art, MAM curator Felipe Chaimovich selected 26 paintings by different artists from the museum's collection and put together the complementary exhibition ***Opaque Landscape***, on show in the Paulo Figueiredo Room during the same period.

Guignard

The artist was born in Nova Friburgo (Rio de Janeiro) in 1896. Guignard had a cleft lip, a birth defect that was a constant torment to him throughout his life. Having lost his father at the age of ten, he and his mother, now remarried to Baron Friedrich von Schilgen, moved to Germany, which enabled him to study at the Fine Art academies in Munich (Germany) and Florence (Italy), where he shook off academic rigidity and took a vital step towards modernism.

With his studies complete, Guignard returned to Brazil in 1929 and began a series of works on the Botanical Gardens in Rio, where he set up a studio. He thus became a leading name of the decade, alongside Candido Portinari, Ismael Nery and Cícero Dias. In addition to mentoring a group that included Iberê Camargo, Vera Mindlin and Alcides da Rocha Miranda, in 1944 Juscelino Kubitschek, then mayor of Belo Horizonte, invited him to set up a drawing and painting course at the city's recently-inaugurated Fine Art Institute. Guignard fell in love with the city and moved to Minas definitively, where he helped form many important artists who would break with academic language and embrace modernism in the visual arts. He remained in Minas Gerais until his death, in 1962.

Exhibition

For the curator Paulo Sérgio Duarte, the MAM exhibition is the result of extensive research that culminated in a carefully-selected retrospective of Guignard's paintings, drawings and portraits in a range of mediums and supports, including oil on canvas, wood and cardboard; dry-point; quill; charcoal on paper or wood; bistre wash on paper; India ink and watercolor on cardboard; and three photomontages. Contextualizing Guignard's art are two pieces by Ismael Nery (*Antonelli*, 1929, and *Autorretrato com Adalgisa*, u.d.), one by Di Cavalcanti (*Mulatas em Paquetá*, 1920s-1930s) and one by José Pancetti (*Marina - Série Bahia*, 1952).

The **portraits**, which many critics consider to be the artist's most fertile ground, account for the majority of the works on show and stand out for their simplified physiognomies, as he did not subscribe to photographic realism. His sitters included family, friends, intellectuals, fellow artists and Guignard himself, captured in self-portraits that clearly illustrate the cleft lip, a defect he also projected onto depictions of Jesus Christ. Another core feature of his portraits are the invented backgrounds. "There are many paintings of the genre which we could look at, but the self-portraits, of which there are many, all feature the cleft lip that apparently had such a decisive impact on his life, especially his love life", explains the curator.

Representing the **Landscapes**, perhaps the artist's best-known body of work, the exhibition features his famous paintings of the gas balloons floated on Saint John's Day (June 24), a reference to the artist's childhood (his father was born on Saint John's Day). Enchanted by the historical towns of Minas Gerais, such as Ouro Preto, Sabará and Mariana, the artist produced many landscapes depicting the region. "In this work we can clearly see the contribution of Oriental painting. Though the artist himself never acknowledged the influence of Chinese painting, it is pretty clear from the absence of ground in these canvases, as the earth always slips away, leaving the churches, buildings and landscapes floating like balloons in thin air", says Paulo Sérgio.

In the **still-lives**, the smallest set in the exhibition, and imbued with a touch of fantasy, the artist achieved renown by producing allegories that gave realism the short shrift and employed a far cleaner palate than usual. In addition to canvases, this section includes photomontages and works in graphite, dry-point and bistre on paper. Guignard's trademark backdrops, a genre within a genre, are a standout here: the various flower pots in the foreground are always set against mountains, valleys, rivers and other natural features that blend landscape painting with still-life.

"They say that Guignard's work is decorative, but Matisse was also a major decorative revolutionary. When a work is a pleasure to behold, it also encourages reflection. In the exhibition, Guignard is presented alongside some of his contemporaries so that the enchantment of the visit can also invite contemplation", says Duarte.

Service:***Guignard – The Visual Memory of Modern Brazil***

Curator: Paulo Sergio Duarte

Venue: Great Room

Opening: July 7 (Tuesday), at 8pm

Visitation: through September 11

Admission: R\$ 6.00 – free on Sundays

Opaque Landscape

Curator: Felipe Chaimovich

Venue: Paulo Figueiredo Hall

Opening: July 7 (Tuesday), at 8pm

Visitation: through September 11

Admission: R\$ 6.00 – free on Sundays

Venue: Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo

Address: Parque do Ibirapuera (av. Pedro Álvares Cabral, s/nº - Portão 3)

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6pm (last admittance at 5:30)

Tel.: (55 11) 5085-1300

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Parking at the Museum (Zona Azul: R\$ 3 for 2 hours)

Access for the disabled

Restaurant/café

Air-conditioned environment

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