

apexart

2021-22 NYC Proposal

submitted October 2020

Oh, I Love Brazilian Women **submitted by: Luiza Testa**

Oh, I Love Brazilian Women is an exhibition that aims to challenge the extenuated idea that Brazilian women conform to an eroticized beauty pattern, being often described by and for foreigners as the sexiest, most attractive ladies in the world. Sadly, our bodies are seen as pleasure tools for men both in Brazil - where 180 rapes are registered per day - and abroad, with countless international websites laying out Brazilian women as commodities ready to be acquired.

Origins of this sexualized stereotype might trace back to the brutal colonial period, when native and black enslaved women were raped and treated as men's properties. More recently, there's the Carnival and its misinterpreted imagery; absurd national tourism campaigns from the 1960s to the 1980s showing women in bikinis as an invitation to visit the country by all means have contributed to this idea of sexualized women to be found in an exotic land. The latter is especially not to be dismissed, since in 2019, Brazilian far-right president Jair Bolsonaro claimed that if men "want to come here and have sex with a woman, go for your life."

Oh, I Love Brazilian Women brings together artists whose works discuss, respond to or emerge from women's bodies and other issues that precede this question, but deeply relate to it: what is a woman? What's the link between femininity and sexuality? How's black women's suffering different from that faced by white women? And how has Covid-19's social isolation impacted domestic violence?

The title of the exhibition is inspired by Santarosa Barreto's work "Brazil", in which we read "Are you Brazilian? Oh, I love Brazilian women" in pink neon lettering. The phrase stems from Barreto's experience as a Brazilian woman living abroad. The title of the exhibition can be read as both an ironic attitude towards the subject and an invitation to another viewpoint on what is beauty and sexuality.

Brenda Nicole's self-portraits epitomize chaos by intertwining the existence in urban streets and in the interior of the individual. Her representation points to the overcome of the 'straight dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter 'I', referred by Virginia Woolf as something that lacked in women artists.

Lenora de Barros' "Procu-ro-me/Procu-ra-se" displays wanted-like posters showing the artist in different costumes. Posters were spread through the city during a performance, reflecting the obsessive search for our own identity. Benedita Arcoverde defines herself as a transartist. She uses her body as a living protest against how transsexual and black women are mistreated. Micaela Cyrino's moving performance "A Cura" throws light on the neglected advancing of AIDS among black population.

Vitória Cribb's work converges technology and tactile media while criticizing a society that levels off black bodies and digital bodies as manipulated and disposable objects.

Fernanda Sternieri's contemporary textiles (a historically feminine tradition) show that our raw material might be the same, but we're not relegated to the same old patterns and functions.

Milena Paulina depicts non-standard bodies and sexualities in unapologetic pictures that seek to break the incessant desire for conforming to a standard.

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