



Antonio Obá

*1983 in Ceilândia, Brazil
Lives and works in Brasília



Antonio Obá investigates the influence and contradictions within the cultural construction of Brazil, giving rise to an act of resistance and reflection on the idea of national identity. Obá utilizes icons present in Brazilian culture as allusions to racial and political identity, these iconic historical and sometimes religious subjects are explored within his sculpture, painting, installations, and performance. Obá's own body is central to his research, questioning the eroticization of the black male body and construction of his own identity.

Selected
EXHIBITIONS





2023

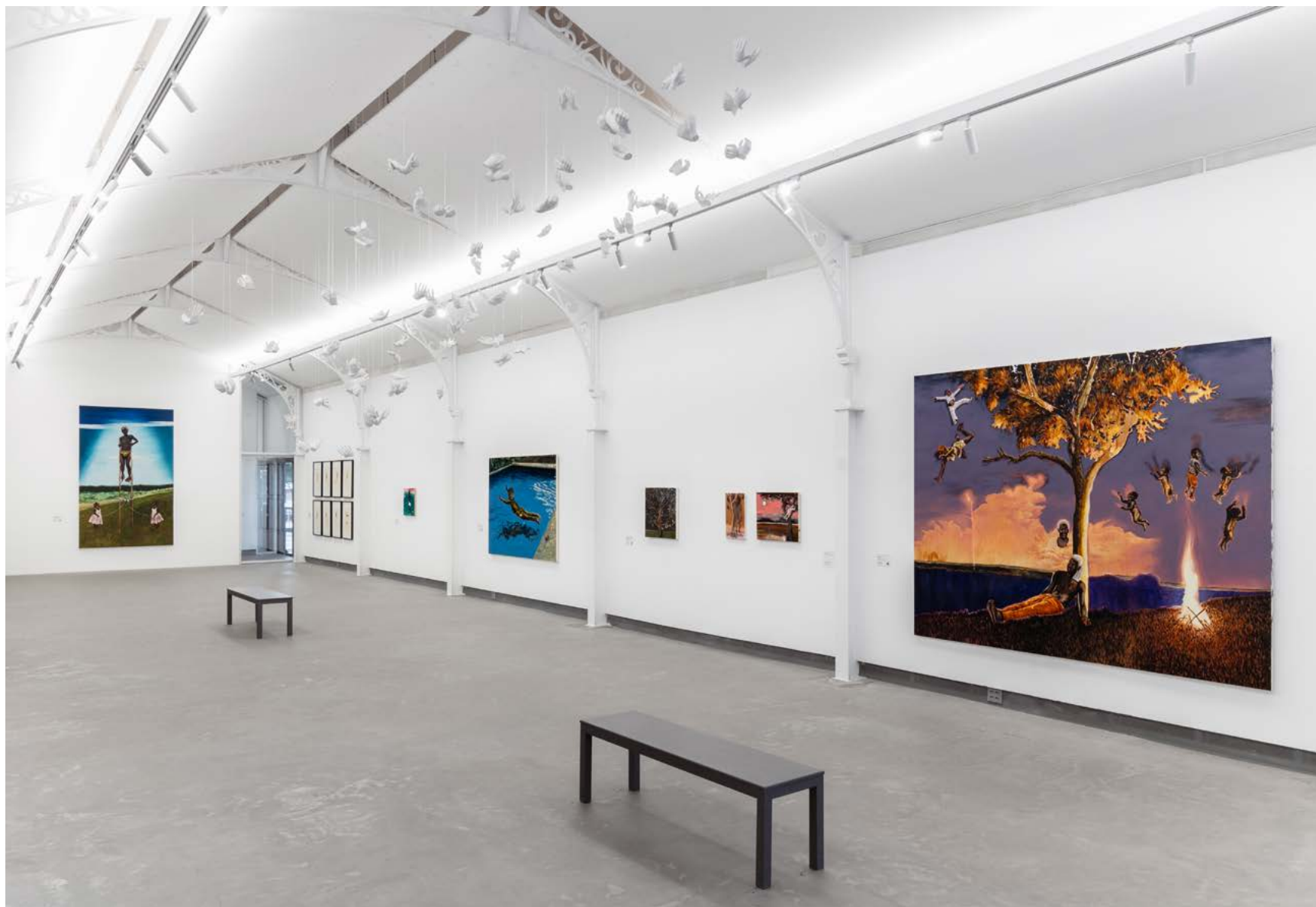
Pina Contemporânea, São Paulo

Antonio Obá: Revoada

Antonio Obá's work is based on three important pillars that drive the exhibition's narrative: the recollection of historical events – usually milestones of violence and the struggle for black rights in different countries – the ascription of new meanings to those episodes, and the process of education. Together, these three aspects constitute a means to handle time by coordinating actions of resignification, transformation, and emancipation.



Antonio Obá: Revoada, Pina Contemporânea, São Paulo, 2023



Antonio Obá: Revoada, Pina Contemporânea, São Paulo, 2023



By casting those hands, Obá taught children the casting procedure and at the same time interpreted their presence in space, taking into account each one's expressive mark. This gesture incorporates a belief in the collective dimension of memories and in education as a process that ensures autonomy and freedom. Subjects remember, know, and act.

– Yuri Quevedo.

Antonio Obá
Revoada, 2023



Antonio Obá: Revoada, Pina Contemporânea, São Paulo, 2023

2022

Mendes Wood DM, New York

Outras águas / Other waters

(...) The point of departure for *Outras águas / Other waters* is the seminal writing of the Brazilian author and diplomat João Guimarães Rosa, in particular his short story “The Third Bank of the River” (1962). The story tells of a man who secludes himself from his family, his friends, and society to live in a canoe, sailing up and down a river in solitude. Guimarães Rosa explores this notion of solitude as a return to the self, defending the principle that the real encounter between a person and themselves happens within silence, in observation of nature, and in search for the unknown. This search is the premise of Obá’s exhibition.



Antonio Obá

Káwó - personagem guardião (Káwó - guardian character), 2022



Outras águas / Other waters, Mendes Wood DM, New York, 2022



The works make references across time and place, from the Brazilian Baroque through late twentieth-century Black American painting, to recent Brazilian popular music. These references, however, are freed from their roots and rendered universal to any observer—rather it is from the point of the universal unknown that *Outras águas / Other waters* draws upon. Throughout the exhibition Obá revisits places and stories from his childhood, while also representing unknown figures and figments. His approach is both biographical and oneiric—dream and painting replace reality; memory acts as the central axis through which he re-designs his past.

Antonio Obá

Paisagem alucinada: genealogia (Hallucinated landscape: genealogy), 2022



Outras águas / Other waters, Mendes Wood DM, New York, 2022



Outras águas / Other waters, Mendes Wood DM, New York, 2022

2022

Oude Kerk, Amsterdam

Path

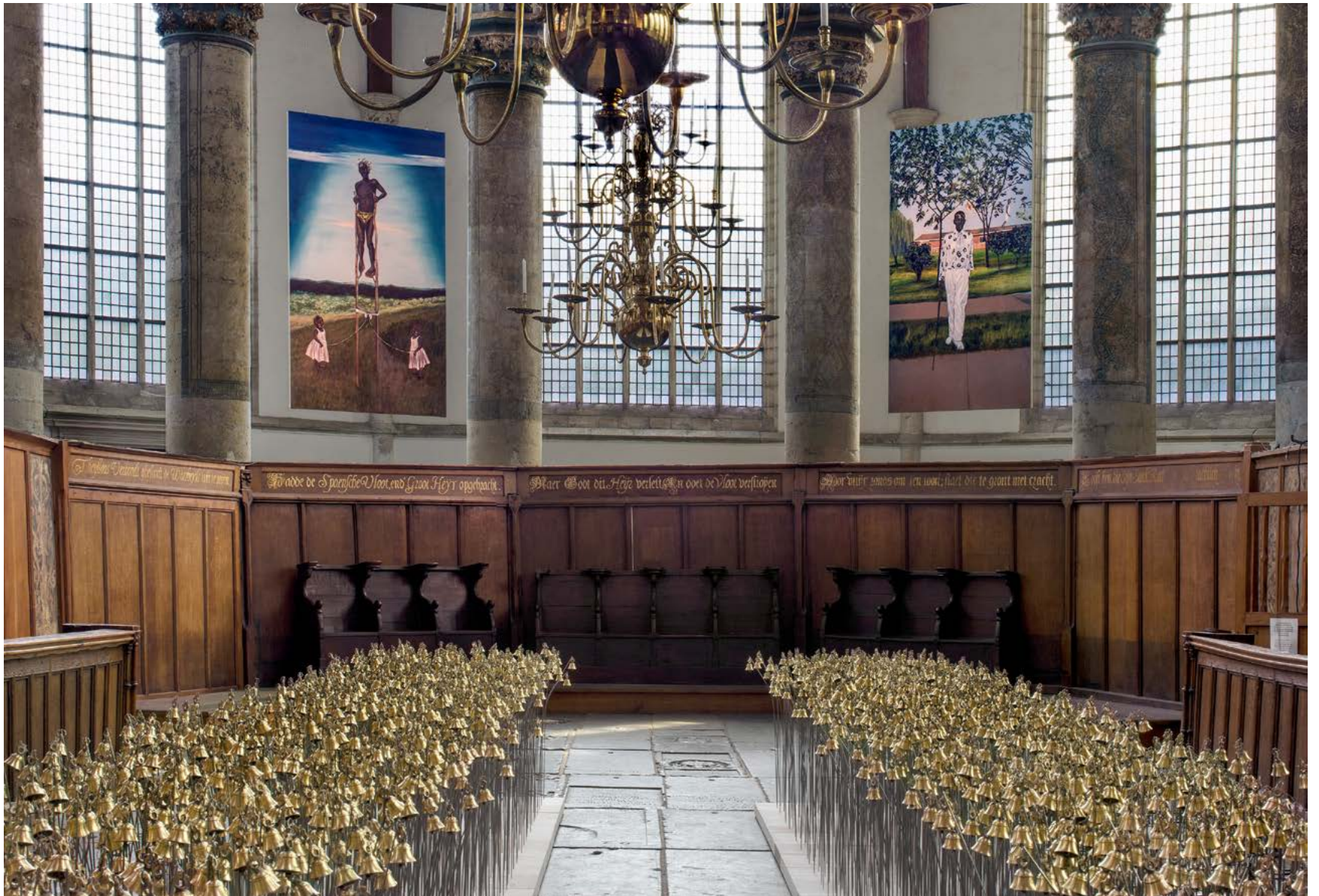
curated by Marianna van der Zwaag and Diane Lima

The installation includes sculptures and paintings. The works are located in symbolic places in the center of the church, including in the high choir and under the organ. In *Path*, Obá plays with the meaning of religious icons and rituals and reflects on the fusion of cultural traditions as a result of, among other things, colonial history. With his work Obá investigates the relationship between religion, power and social identity and he offers a new perspective on the history of the Oude Kerk and the world around us.

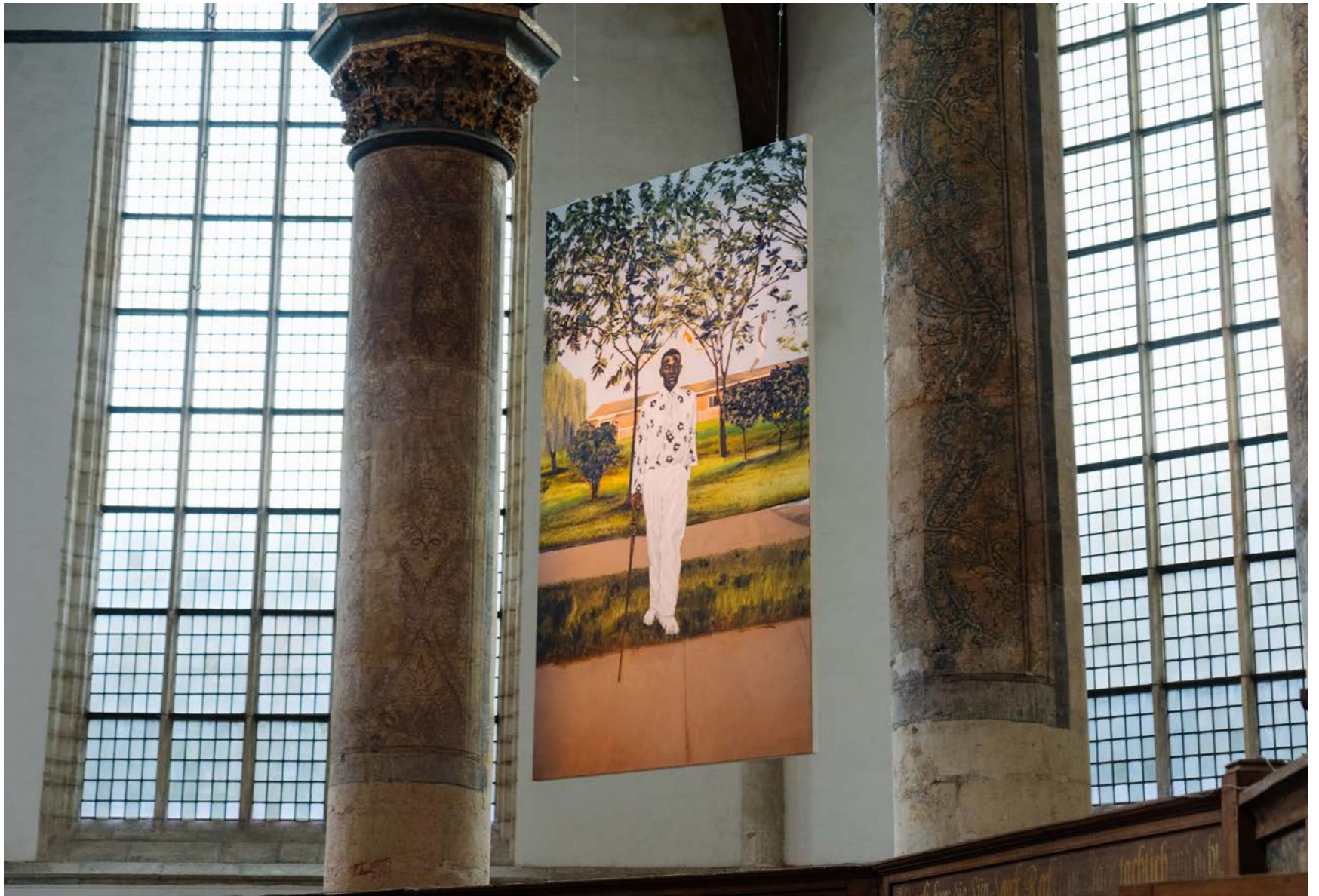
Antonio Obá

Malungo - rito para uma missa preta, 2016





Path, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2022



Patb, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2022



Path, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2022

2021

X-Museum, Beijing

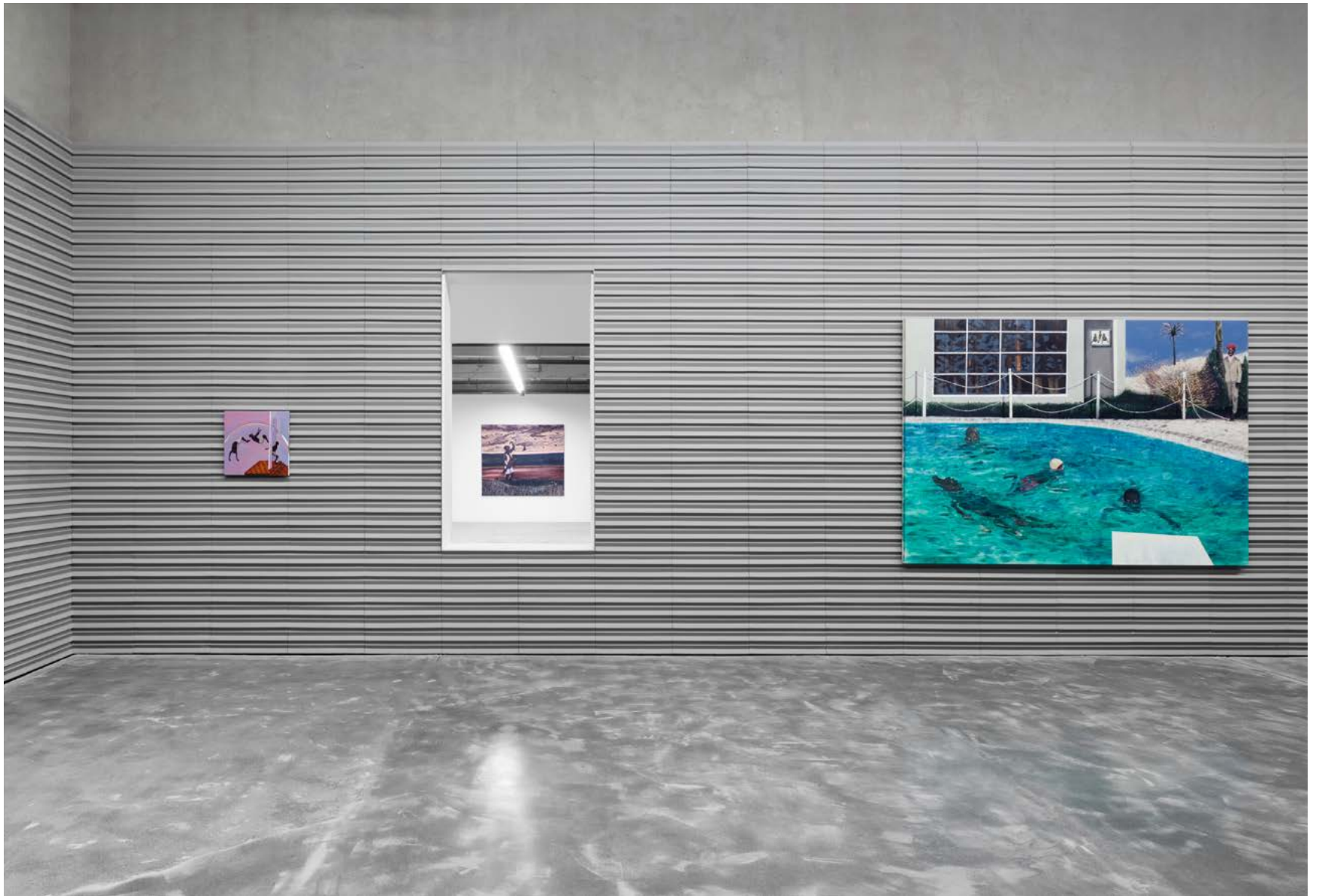
Fables

(...) The title of the exhibition, '*Fables*', expresses the artist's journey of self-referencing and writing: each work in '*Fables*' serves as a metaphor for a moral statement or reflection, in which history becomes an allegorical reality. Obá's spotlight on autoethnography as a counteraction to hegemony poetically unravels the contradictions of different subjectivities, connecting the past and the present, by initiating a dialogue and weaving a polyphonic narrative that responds to the essential understanding of inhabiting in a colonised body and inhabiting in a miscegenated, black body. The oeuvre of this exhibition recreates, directly or indirectly, individuals and incidents from the colonial past; like fables, they bring a transcendental, archetypal, symbolic moral perception and emotional resonance in the search for the origins of identity.

Antonio Obá

Desdobramentos sobre sankofa, 2021





Antonio Obá: Fables, X Museum, Beijing, China, 2022



In exploring the tensions between colonial history and personal identity, the body is the central subject for Antonio Obá's practice; the inquiries into the body pervades the multiple mediums of the artist's work. From oil on canvas to ink on paper, from installation to performance, Obá treats the body as a gesture of resistance that asserts its existence in the history; he exhibits the evidence of the body, either figurative or subliminal, in a narrative demarcated by rituals and prohibitions, histories and traditions. Obá focuses on the miscegenated, black body — the body that was exploited, abused and overlooked by colonialism.

Antonio Obá
Tigre, 2017



Antonio Obá: Fables, X Museum, Beijing, China, 2021

2023

Museum de Fundatie

Group Show: *Brave New World*
curated by Hans den Hartog Jager

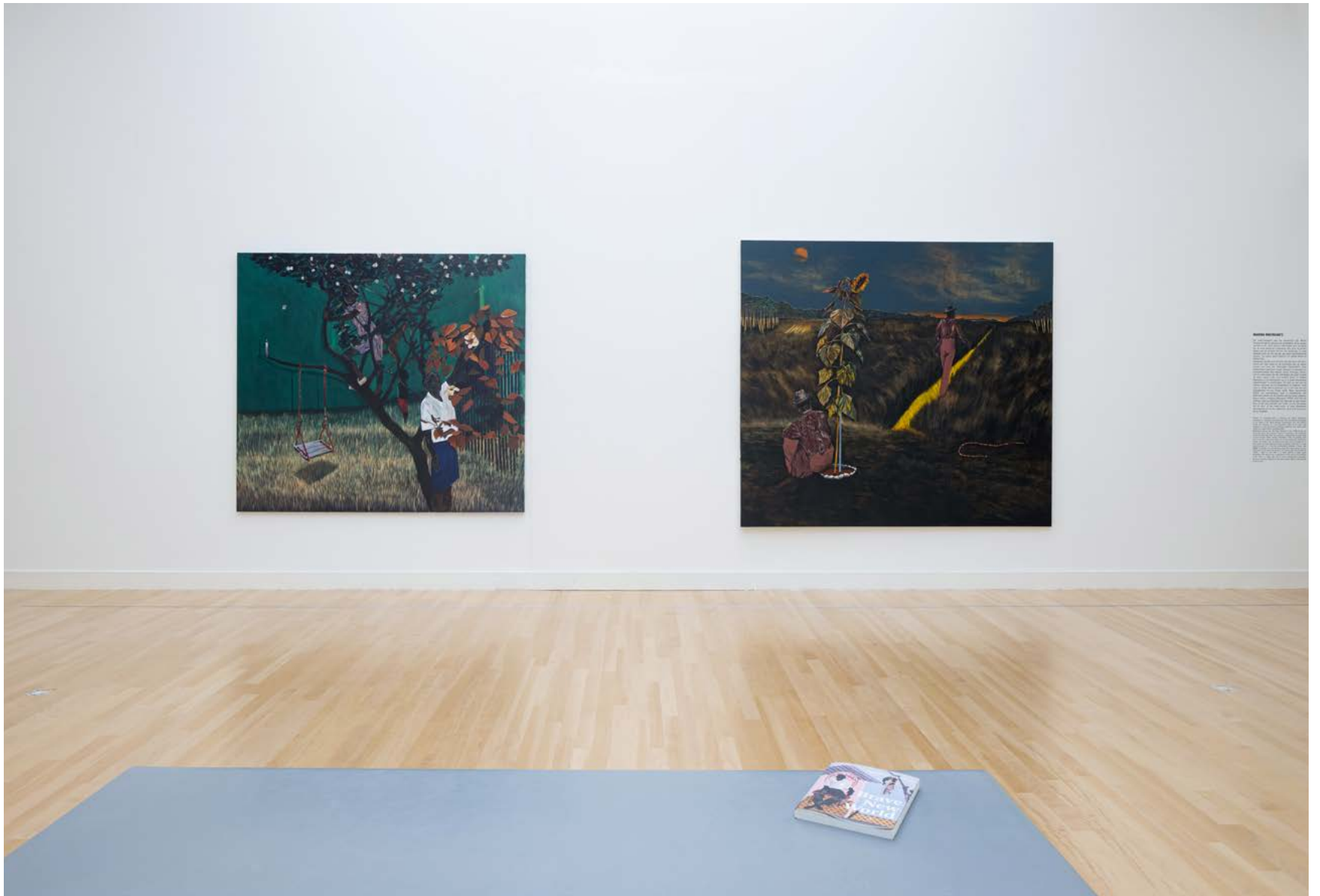
It may take a while to notice, but Brazilian painter Antonio Obá's (1983) canvases in *Brave New World* all feature at least one tree. And each of those trees has a different function. (...) This accumulation of associations, symbols and references occurs in all four *Brave New World* paintings - and, in fact, in all of Obá's work.

(...) Obá's oeuvre has something of a tree structure: from man follows his substitute in nature, the tree. From there, the meanings fan out into a wide range of themes, ranging from religion and faith to gender, symbolism and skin colour - it all comes together in Obá's work.



Antonio Obá

Desdobramentos sobre sankofa, 2021



Brave New World, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, 2023



The dot in the painting, jumping from one character to another, stands for transformation, the passing on of achievements through the generations, so that this dot also gives a whole new meaning to the painting *Jogo* (2020): through the subtle symbolism of the passed ball, the canvas becomes a symbol of connection, rather than a simple depiction of a game of football. This is typical of Antonio Obá's oeuvre: in his work, you enter a complex world that is rooted in a combination of cultures so rich that whole new perspectives and ideals appear before your eyes. Where you are free, like a child.

Antonio Obá
Jogo, 2020



Brave New World, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, 2023

2021

Bourse de Commerce

Group Show: *TUYMANS – CAHN – OBA*

An ensemble of seven works by Brazilian artist Antonio Obá is presented for the first time by the Pinault Collection. Antonio Obá's syncretic practice takes inspiration from the Brazilian religious and mystical universe: influenced by these beliefs, he explores the construction of identity. He adopts different artistic vocabularies, as evidenced by his ambitious painted compositions, with their complex and enigmatic iconography, imbued with symbolist undertones, and borrowing from the history of painting.

Antonio Obá also uses his own body, which he presses against the paper, directly affixing his imprint, imperfect, flayed but also eroticized, on his drawings.



Antonio Obá

corpo elétrico - Iraúna-grande / selacordo, 2020



TUJMANS – CAHN – OBA, Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris, 2021



TUYMANS - CAHN - OBA, Bourse de Commerce - Pinault Collection, Paris, 2021



TUYMANS – CAHN – OBA, Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris, 2021

A painting depicting a person from the waist down, standing in a turbulent, blue sea. The person is wearing a white, long-sleeved robe with a visible cross-like pattern on the back and light-colored, possibly yellowish, trousers. Their hands are dark, and they appear to be holding something. The sea is rendered with thick, expressive brushstrokes in various shades of blue and green, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall style is expressive and somewhat somber.

Selected
WORKS



Fabulação para paisagem crepuscular à entrada do Morro da força, 2023, oil on canvas, 180 x 300 cm



Exortação – Ya-te-veo: Bem-te-vi, 2023, oil on canvas, 200 x 290 cm





Avô - uma alegoria, 2023, oil on canvas, 200 × 290 cm



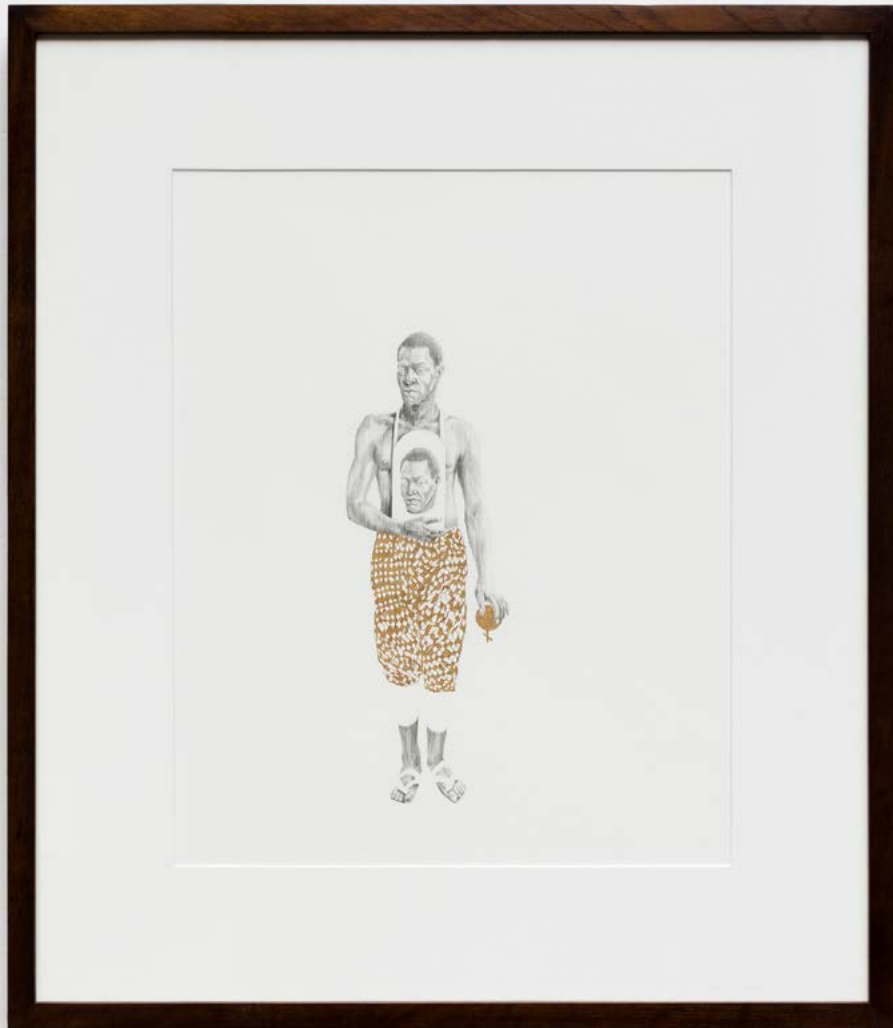
Fabulação - "Conversa Fiada", 2022, oil on canvas, 149.9 × 210.8 cm



Herói do fogo interior: pai da meia-noite
2023

oil on canvas

100 × 80 cm



*Breve comentário sobre fazer cabeças: Figura
com esmoler e orbe Exercícios de reparação
2023*

graphite and golden chinese ink on paper

41 × 33 cm



Esfinge, 2023, graphite and golden chinese ink on paper, 40 × 90 cm



Exercícios de reparação: figura no balanço
2023

graphite and golden chinese ink on paper

41 × 33 cm



Angelus, 2022, oil on canvas, 230 × 280 cm





Encantaria - Gorgone Macarea, 2022, oil on canvas, 110 × 140 cm



Fata Morgana n°1, 2022, oil on canvas, 150 × 200 cm



Sankofa: cavaleiro, 2022, oil on canvas, 80 × 100 cm





Variação sobre Sankofa
2021

oil on canvas

70 × 60 cm



Angelus
2022

antique bell, bronze sconces, candle, nails,
wooden bowl

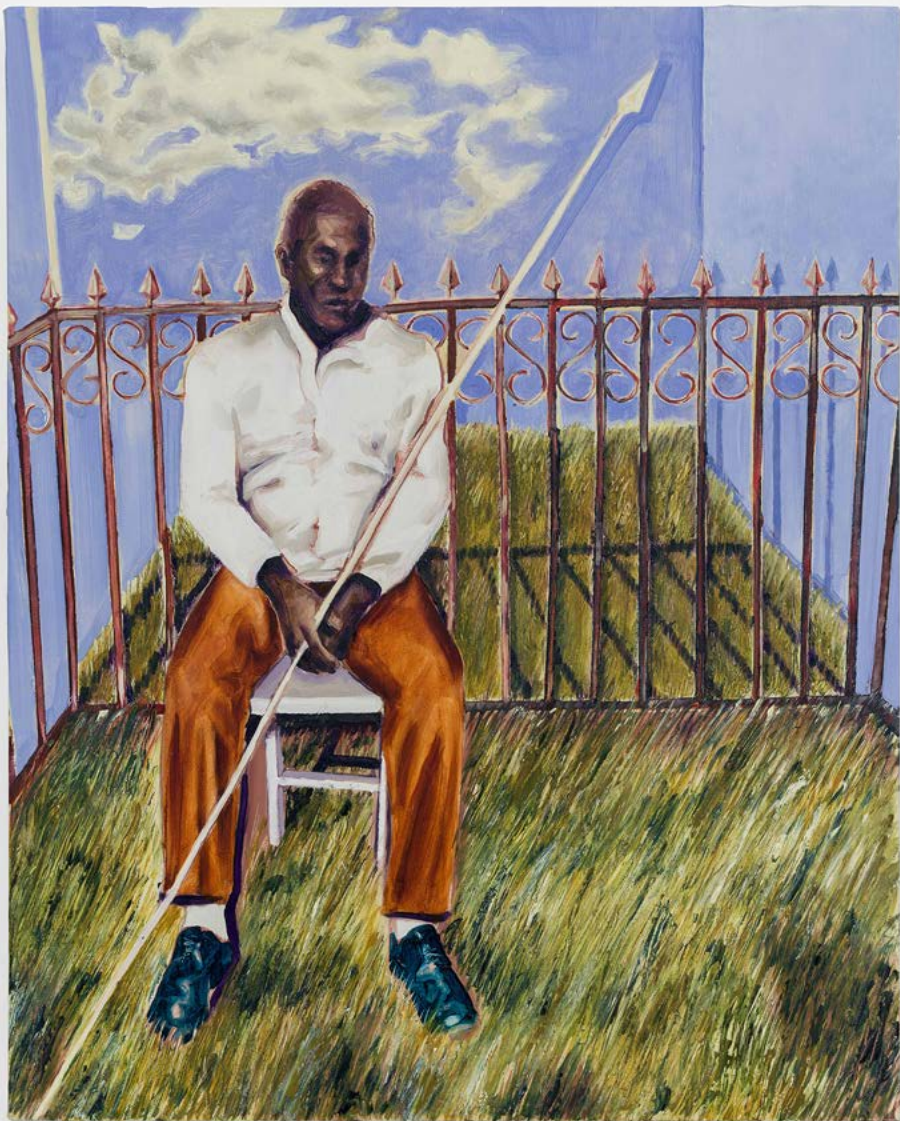


Paisagem alucinada: genealogia, 2022, oil on canvas, 185 × 230 cm





Orev - pouso, 2022, oil on canvas, 100 × 120 cm



Káwó - personagem guardião
2022

oil on canvas

51 × 41 cm



Obra em negro, 2022, bronze, variable dimensions



Duplo autorretrato - wade in the water II
2022

oil on canvas

210 × 125 cm





Figura peregrina - cego Obuluaê / eremita
2022

oil on canvas

300 × 170 cm



Figuras do Caminho "Criança suspensa"
2022

oil on canvas

300 × 180 cm



Os infantes - irreverência
2020

oil on canvas

105 x 130 cm





Desdobramentos sobre sankofa, 2021, oil on canvas, 50 × 50 cm





Alvorada – Música Incidenta Black Bird, 2020, oil on canvas, 178 × 205 cm



Alegoria sobre Ruby - Iniciações
2020

oil on canvas

70 × 60 cm



Fabulação I, 2021, oil on canvas, 193 × 200 cm





Sentinela - Kinda, 2021, oil on canvas, 90 × 90 cm





Sentinela N°2
2021

oil on canvas
150 × 100 cm



Banhistas no 3 – Espreita, 2020, oil on canvas, 189.5 × 266.5 cm





Carrossel, 2020, oil on canvas, 200 × 228 cm



Eucalipto - corpo elétrico
2020

oil on canvas

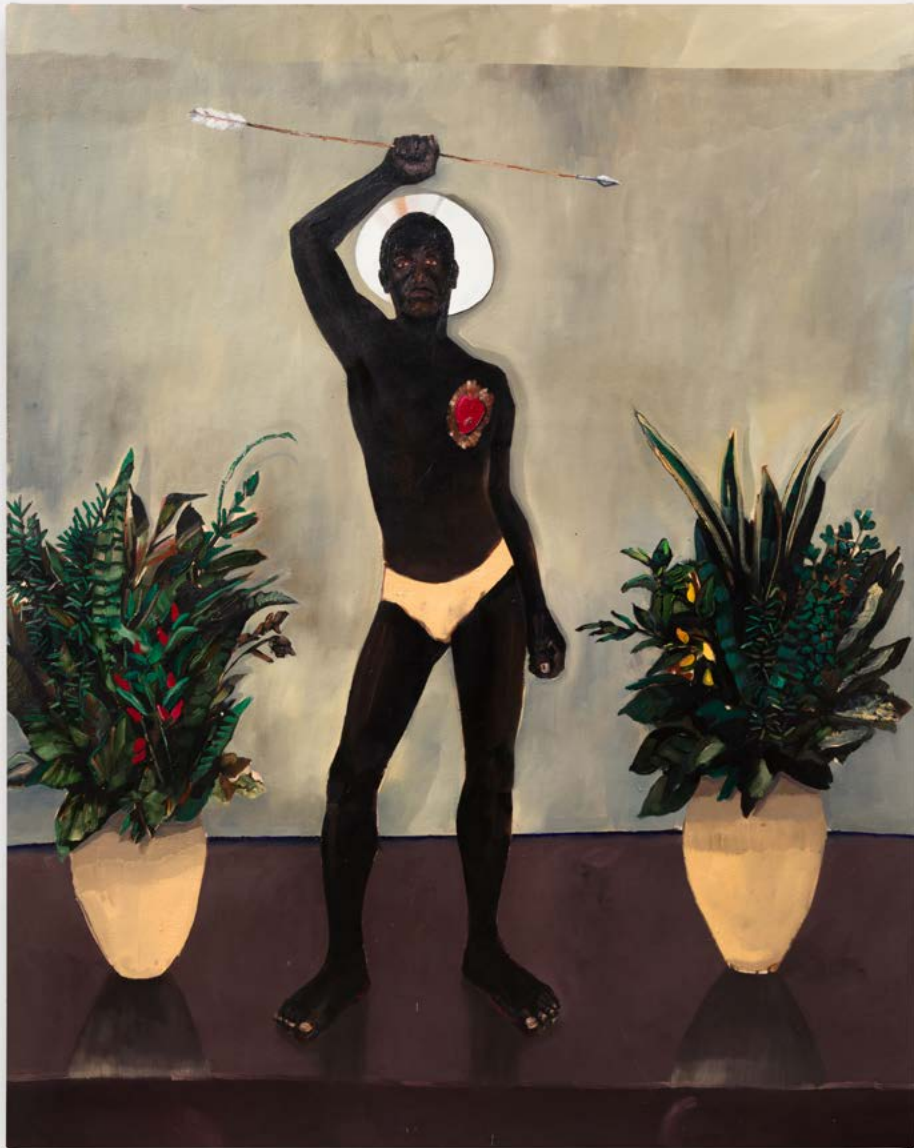
100 × 70 cm



At the gates of Paradise, 2020, oil on canvas, 200 × 289 cm



Wade in the water II, 2020, oil on canvas, 180 × 201 cm



Herói do fogo interior II - A façanha
2020

oil on canvas

174 × 138 cm



Figura campesina I
2020

oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm





Estripulia: pula-carniça
2020

oil on canvas

175 × 137 cm



Stanger fruits - genealogia, 2020, oil on canvas, 180 × 200 cm



Nostalgia

2020

oil on canvas

58 × 49 cm



Sesta, 2019, oil on canvas, 170 × 300 cm



Herói do fogo interior, 2019, oil on linen, 50 × 50 cm



"Quando dois ou mais...", 2019, oil on canvas, 90 × 90 cm





Sentinela,
2019

oil on canvas
190 × 110 cm



Fabula dos Erês, 2019, oil on canvas, 180 × 360 cm



Tocaia, 2019, oil on canvas, 60 × 60 cm



Yauaretê
2019

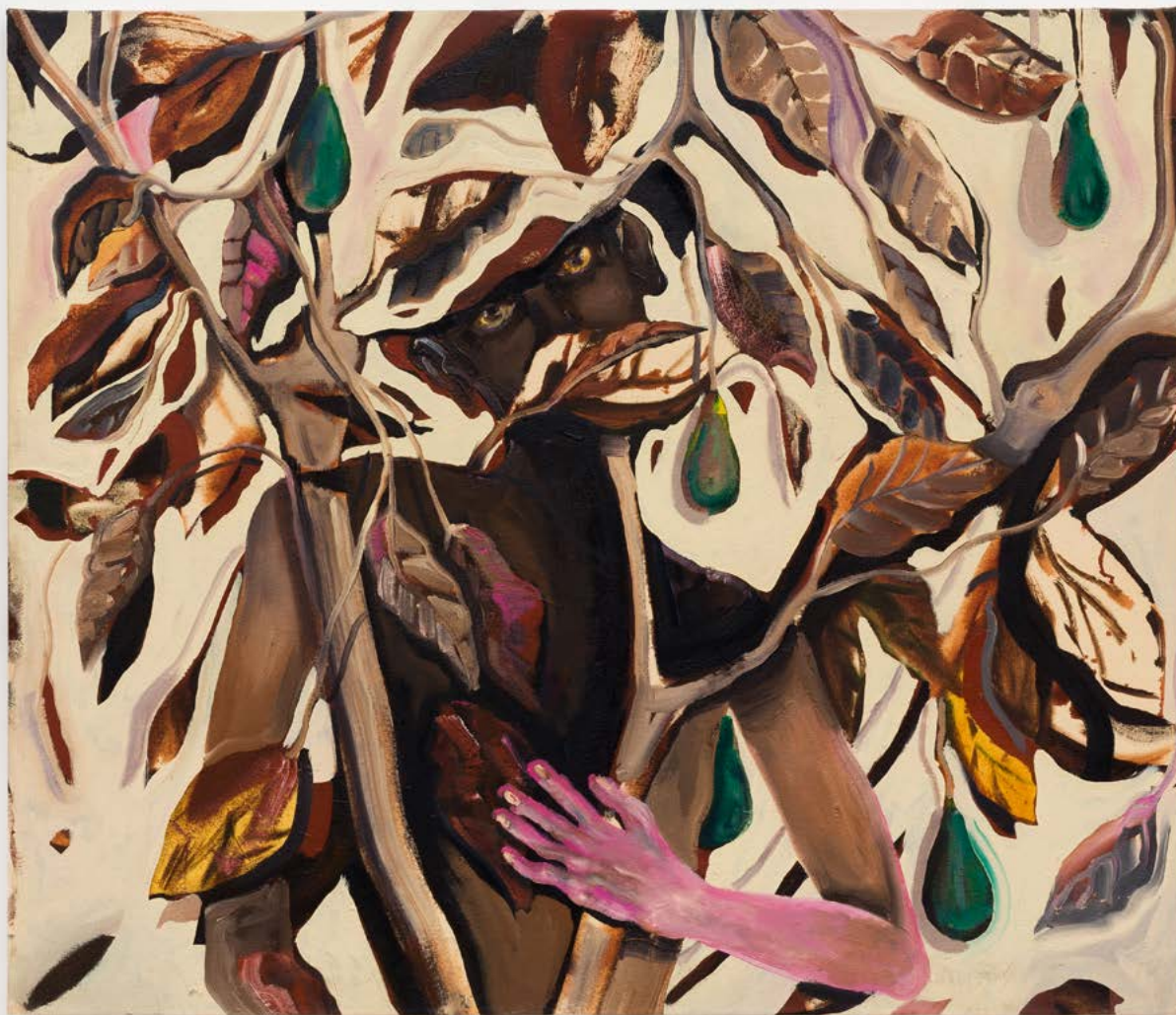
oil on canvas

185 × 145 cm





Paisagem interior, 2018, oil on canvas, 87 × 85 cm



Strange Fruit II – Abacateiro, 2018, oil on canvas, 84 × 100 cm



Sombra Ajoelhada
2018

mixed media on canvas

140 × 87 cm



Dois Espectros - Abacateiro
2018

oil on canvas

74 × 62 cm



Sem título

2018

watercolor on paper

132 × 22.5 cm



Sem título

2018

watercolor and gold paint on paper

40 × 30.5 cm (framed)



Sem título

2018

watercolor and gold paint on paper

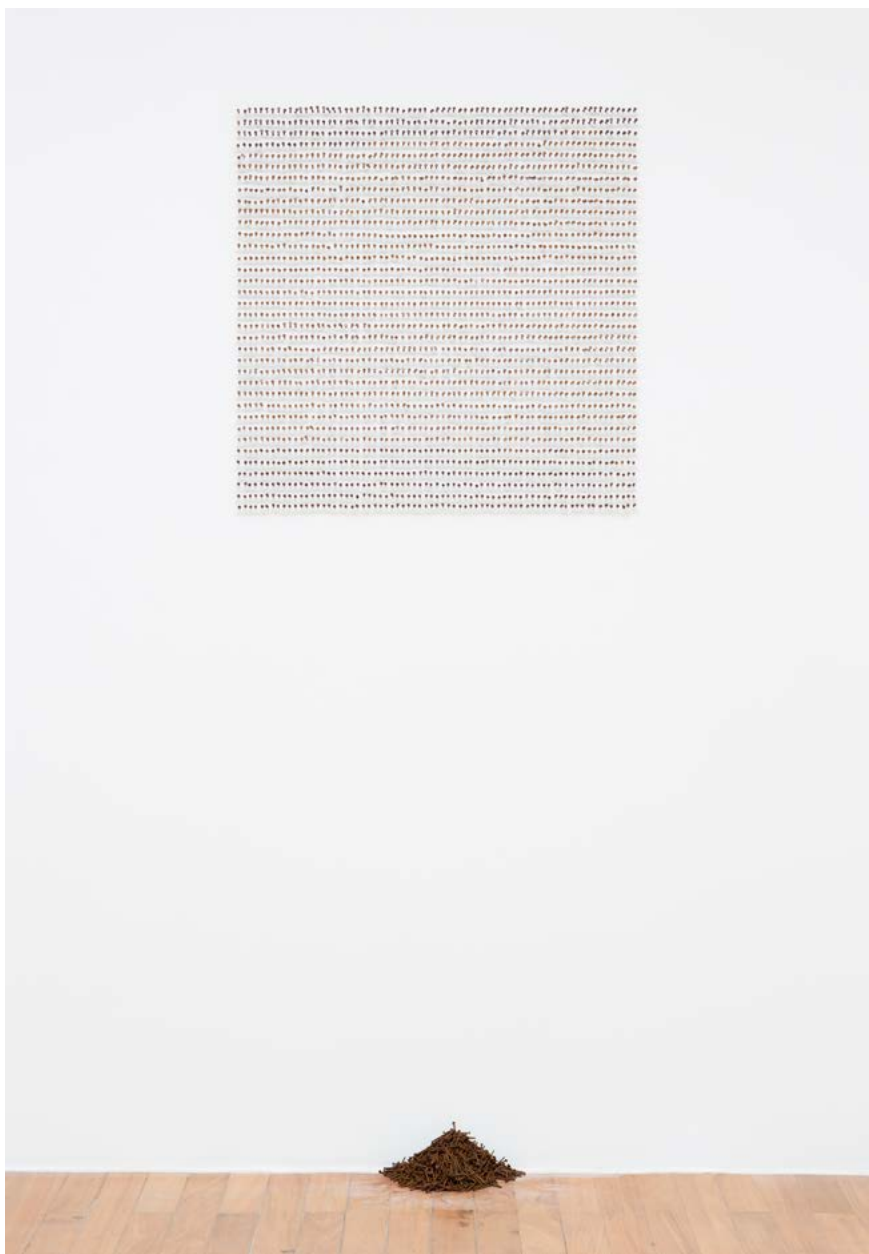
32 × 22,5 cm



Performance, Delfina Foundation, 2017



Votivo, 2017, parafin wax on paper, candles, dring and wooden pegs, variable dimentions



Pregação
2017
rusty nails
70 × 70 cm





Votivo, from *Ambiente com Espelbos* series, 2017, charcoal, pigment, golden sheet, iron powder on cotton canvas, antique wooden frame and brushed steel, 70 × 161 × 2 cm



Transfiguração II, Ambiente com Espelhos series, 2017, pigment, golden sheet and charcoal on cotton canvas, antique wooden frame and brushed steel, 47.5 × 80 × 5.5 cm



Iconografia

2017

charcoal and nankin on canvas

65 × 41.5 cm



Agnus Dei

2017

charcoal and nankin on canvas

60 × 55 cm



Mártir

2016

monotype on cotton canvas, charcoal powder

103 × 68 cm



Totem, 2016, wood and candles, 42 × 23 cm



Raised as a Catholic boy who played music in church and “almost became a priest,” he had been christened Antonio de Paula. He replaced the Christian surname with Obá, which means “king” in the Yoruba language of West Africa. “It was a self-baptism,” he said. “The enslaved people that came on ships, one of the first experiences they went through while being bought was to have their original names substituted by the name of a saint. For me, the taking of a new name became a critical position for resistance.”

Through Afro-Brazilian History, Antonio Obá Discovers His Own Story (2022)
by Arthur Lubow, W Magazine

Education

Visual Arts, FADM – Faculdade de Artes Dulcina de Moraes, Brasília, Brazil

Solo Shows

2023

Antonio Obá: Revoada, Pina Contemporânea, São Paulo, Brazil

Signo, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2022

Outras águas / Other waters, Mendes Wood DM, New York, USA

Path, Oude Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Antonio Obá: Fables, X Museum, Beijing, China

2021

Outros Ofícios, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, Belgium

2019

Sentinela, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2018

Pele de Dentro, Mendes Wood DM, New York, USA

2017

Antonio Obá, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2016

Carnagem, Galeria Arte XXX, Brasília, Brazil

(In)corporações, Galeria Candido Portinari, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Group Shows

2024

Atlântico Vermelho, ONU, Geneve, Switzerland

Leaps of Faith, Z33, Hasselt, Belgium

2023

1973 - 50 ANOS DEPOIS, Bacorejo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Linhas Tortas, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

X PINK 101, X Museum, Beijing, China

uMoya: The sacred Return of Lost Things, 12th Liverpool Biennial, United Kingdom

Antes que o céu desabe, deCurators, Brasília, Brazil

Esfíngico Frontal, Mendes Wood DM São Paulo, Brazil

Brave New World, Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle, The Netherlands

2022

When We See Us, Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town, South Africa

Quilombo: vida, problemas e aspirações do negro, Galeria do Lago, Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil

Fire Figure Fantasy, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, USA

Histórias Brasileiras, MASP, São Paulo, Brazil

Pequenas Pinturas, Auroras, São Paulo, Brazil

Social Fabric: Art and Activism in Contemporary Brazil, Visual Arts Center, Austin, USA

Body Languages, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, USA

Cartas ao mundo, Sesc Avenida Paulista, São Paulo, Brazil

2021

Enciclopédia Negra, Pinacoteca, São Paulo, Brazil

Carolina Maria de Jesus, um Brasil para os brasileiros, IMS Paulista, São Paulo, Brazil

TUYMANS – CAHN – OBA, Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris, France

Male Nudes: a salon from 1800 to 2021, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2020

Agglomeração - Antonio Henrique Amaral, Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

Antonio Obá at Montpellier Contemporain (MOCO) - Exhibition Possédé.e.s, Montpellier Contemporain, Montpellier, France

CONSTRUÇÃO, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil

2019

36º Panorama da Arte Brasileira, MAM, São Paulo, Brazil

2018

Imagens do Aleijadinho, MASP / Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

Histórias Afro-Atlânticas, MASP / Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

Arte Democracia Utopia - quem não luta tá morto, MAR, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Queer Museu, EAV Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2017

Pipa Prize 2017, MAM-Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Queer Museu, Santander Cultural, Porto Alegre, Brazil

2016

Não existo sem meu corpo, R3 Gabinete de Arte, Goiânia, Brazil

My body is a cage, Galeria Luciana Caravello, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ONÀ – CICLO X, deCurators Galeria de Arte, Brasília, Brazil

ENTRE, Casa da América Latina, Brasília, Brazil

Transitório/permanente II, Elefante Centro Cultural, Brasília, Brazil

2015

ONDEANDAAONDA, Museu Nacional, Brasília, Brazil

2014

OCUPAÇÃO, Elefante Centro Cultural, Brasília, Brazil

2013

Verônica, Elefante Centro Cultural, Brasília, Brazil

Imagem, Palavra, Vertigem, Galeria da UnB, Brasília, Brazil

Kohëdhekujtesë – gravura bashkëkohore braziliane, Muzeu historik Kombëtar, Tirana, Albania

BrasilArgentinaGráfica, Espaço Cultural Renato Russo, Brasília, Brazil

2012

É perdendo o medo de errar que matamos o monstro do meio-dia, Brasília Contemporânea, Brasília, Brazil

2010

Impermanências, Galeria de Arte Dulcina de Moraes, Brasília, Brazil

2009

Trans... Aparência, Galeria de Artes Dulcina de Moraes, Brasília, Brazil

2008

I Mostra Dulcina de Artes Visuais – Poéticas Contemporâneas, Galeria de arte Dulcina de Moraes, Brasília, Brazil

2004

Cultura Afro em Alta, Embassy of Mozambique, Brasília, Brazil

2003

Arte Social, Galeria Yara Amaral, Centro cultural do SESI, Brasília, Brazil

2002

Sob o signo de um novo olhar, Galeria Yara Amaral, Centro cultural do SESI, Brasília, Brazil

2001

Ponto de vista, Galeria Yara Amaral, Centro Cultural do SESI, Brasília, Brazil

Collections

MASP

Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo

Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo

Museo Reina Sofia

Pinault Collection

Stedelijk Museum

Tate Modern

Inhotim

Blenheim Art Foundation

Jumex Museo

Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro

Museu de Arte do Rio

Pérez Art Museum Miami

ICA Miami

Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo

X Museum

Speed Museum

Marciano Foundation

Samdani Art Foundation

S.M.A.K

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THE EKARD COLLECTION

Instituto Moreira Salles

Green Line Foundation

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