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PRESS RELEASE

The Oude Kerk presents solo exhibition Antonio Obá

12 May - 13 September 2022, Amsterdam (NL)



From 12 May to 13 September 2022, 'Path', the first Dutch solo exhibition by Brazilian artist Antonio Obá (b. Ceilândia, 1983), will be on show at the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. Obá is currently developing a site-specific installation for Amsterdam's oldest building on the basis of his artistic research. For this installation, Obá is using various media, including sculpture, painting and performance.

Path

Obá uses Brazilian religious icons to investigate matters of racial and political identity. Having felt friction between his Catholic upbringing and his African origins from an early age, he now takes his personal experience as the starting point for his work. His

oeuvre questions the foundations of 'official' Brazilian culture and art history that, having deliberately ignored the histories of black and indigenous peoples for centuries, give rise to acts of resistance and to reflection on the idea of national identity. Obá's work not only includes performances, paintings and sculptures that focus on the relationship between phenomena such as liturgy and ritual, but also addresses emotionally charged political issues such as the legacies of colonialism and slavery in contemporary Brazil. Antonio Obá's installation in the Oude Kerk makes visitors aware of the often-neglected connection between traditional Christian ritual and the spread of Christianity in Brazil as a result of colonial oppression.

Background

Antonio Obá's installation touches on the history of Dutch Brazil or New Holland. The debate about the colonial past of the Netherlands pays less attention to this Dutch West India Company colony, which was established in the northeast of Brazil in 1630, than to the Dutch East India Company colony known as the Dutch East Indies. Yet the establishment of the Brazilian colony marked the beginning of the Dutch participation in the so-called transatlantic slave trade and in large-scale (involuntary) migration flows. In the seventeenth century, African and Afro-Brazilian people who worked as soldiers or sailors in the service of either the WIC or private traders as well as free and enslaved people from the Portuguese Atlantic (including Brazil, Angola and São Tomé) stood at the basis of the black communities of Amsterdam and New Amsterdam (present-day New York). The history of enrichment through colonial trade and exploitation is inextricably linked to the history of both Amsterdam and the Oude Kerk.

About Antonio Obá

Antonio Obá was born in Ceilândia in Brazil. He studied Fine Arts at the Faculdade de Artes Dulcina de Moraes in Brasília, where he graduated in 2010. Since then, his work has been widely exhibited in Brazil and North America. Obá was a finalist for the 2017 PIPA Prize. Solo exhibitions of his work have previously been held at the Mendes Wood DM gallery in Brussels (2021), the Mendes Wood DM gallery in New York (2018), the Mendes Wood DM gallery in São Paulo (2016), the Carnagem, Galeria de Arte XXX in Brasília (2016). More recently he participated in group exhibitions at the Pinault Collection in Paris (2021); the MO. CO in Montpellier (2020) and the MAM in São Paulo (2019).

Visitor Information

Oude Kerk

Oudekerksplein, Amsterdam

The Netherlands

www.oudekerk.nl

NOTE TO EDITORS

For more information, please contact Martine Willekens, PR advisor, +31(0)6 53 60 04 31, martine@peperoffice.nl.

Credits Images

Top: Mendes Wood, Antonio Obá, Malungo

Bottom: Antonio Obá photographed by Diego Bresani



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