



Lucas Arruda at Daitoku-ji

Oct 30 – Nov 7, 2024

At Twilight

Any discussion of Lucas Arruda is certain to acknowledge his paintings' characteristic ambiguity – that is to say, their oscillation between the representational and the abstract. Indeed, at first glance, Arruda's works may appear to be cut back to just two elements, the sky and the sea, divided into upper and lower sections. An indeterminate surface composed of the minimum elements needed to allow a landscape to succeed as a landscape.

Arruda has said that he paints his seascapes from memory. This implies a deliberate detachment from observation and perception of a subject. Through a minimal assembly of visual components, the artist's methodology is guided by the medium of memory to create paintings which are at once seascapes and abstract works.

Such an approach conjures questions of representation that trace back to a sort of dawn of abstraction within painting that spans from William Turner and Claude Monet to Japanese artists like Takeji Fujishima and Takeuchi Tsurunosuke, painters who captured unstable subjects and phenomena in swaying motion.

Like these masters, Arruda captures the ceaseless movement of fluid, transient substances that shift in shape and constantly change. There is no attempt to confine light to a certain place. Rather, the sea and clouds reflect light across surfaces, envelop light, and are penetrated by it. Matter forms and collapses. Appearances and disappearances are not separate from each other; instead, they smoothly unfold in a single, interlocked sequence.

Arruda's depiction of fluid, transient substances is bound up with the problem of visualizing the unseen generative power of nature. Concerned with conflict between forms and formlessness, the artist proposes a *topos* that surpasses mere stylistic confrontation between concrete and abstract. Indeed, to produce a visual image of any type requires a spiritual layer; wavering between an acceptance of interference by what Caspar David Friedrich called "the spiritual eye" and "the physical eye," Arruda paints twilight scenes in which images slowly arise within vague, undifferentiated spaces. Interlocking human emotion and perception, Arruda's images resonate particularly well with 20th-century theorist Anton Ehrenzweig's linking of the sea as a subject to the appearance of visual images as "undifferentiated oceanic envelopment" and expressions of "multi-dimensional unity where inside and outside merge."¹

However, seascapes always depict a horizon, a crack dividing sea and land, and air and ground. In a seascape, expansive, amorphous things without outlines collide and bind with the geometry of the law of perspective. In this sense, the sea is intertwined with a multidimensional unity and division that can dissolve differentiation and undifferentiation. In this sense, through Arruda's blending and dividing, the artist, perhaps more than anything, proposes thresholds of consciousness through his paintings.

– Ryo Sawayama, translated by James Koetting

¹ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination* (1967)



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Located in the Kita ward of Kyoto, Daitoku-ji (大徳寺) is a Zen Buddhist temple, significant for its reverence and projection by warlords in the Sengoku-period. Consisting of nearly two dozen smaller temples, it is the seat for the Rinzai sect of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

The temple was established in 1315 by Zen master Shūhō Myōchō. It flourished during the Muromachi period with the support of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the shogun who also built Kinkaku-ji (sometimes known as ‘the Golden Pavilion’). Daitoku-ji played a significant role in historical tea culture through its association with famous tea masters such as Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591), renowned during the Sengoku period, who developed the notion of the tea ceremony, intertwining his tea aesthetics with the Zen spirit of the temple.

Lucas Arruda focuses on the landscape genre, using an approach that explores complex mental states and our experience of light and perception rather than specific locations – obstinately thinking and experimenting with our capacity of living through the mediation of light and the gaze. Arruda’s scenery exists at the point of tension between abstraction and figuration, between apparition and emptiness. With each gaze, experiences are delineated through a process of constructing and reconstructing memories, as if the arrangement of color fields has interacted with intangible landscapes and felt sensations. As viewers move above and below horizon lines, atmospheres laden with visual and metaphysical questions unfold. Between sky and earth, the ethereal and solid, imagination and reality, meditative contemplation finds its routine while following an endless cycle of sublimation and deposition of matter.

Lucas Arruda (b. 1983, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo.

Arruda has had solo exhibitions at **Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo**, Madrid (2023); **Instituto Tomie Ohtake**, São Paulo (2022); **Fundação Iberê Camargo**, Porto Alegre (2021); **Pond Society**, Shanghai (2020); **Fridericianum**, Kassel (2019); **Cahiers d’Art**, Paris (2018); **Indipendenza**, Rome (2016); **Lulu**, Mexico City (2015); **Pivô**, São Paulo (2015).

Additionally, his work has been included in institutional group exhibitions such as the **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2024); **Dhaka Art Summit**, Dhaka (2023); **Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection**, Paris (2023); **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2023); **Museu de Arte Assis Chateaubriand (MASP)**, São Paulo (2022); **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2022); **Pinault Collection | Le Fresnoy**, Tourcoing (2022); **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2021); **Dhaka Art Summit**, Dhaka (2020); **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2020); **Instituto Tomie Ohtake**, São Paulo (2019); **Punta della Dogana**, Venice (2019); **Fiorucci Art Trust**, Stromboli (2019); **Palais de Tokyo**, Paris (2019); **Fondation Beyeler**, Basel (2018); **Couvent des Jacobins and Musée des Beaux-Arts**, Rennes (2018); **Coimbra Biennial of Contemporary Art** (2017); **Kunsthall KAdE**, Amersfoort (2016); **1st Bienal Internacional de Asunción**, Asunción (2015); **La Réserve Paris**, Paris (2013); **Museo del Barrio**, New York (2013); **Pinacoteca de São Paulo**, São Paulo (2012).

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