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antonio henrique amaral and thiago barbalho
organic fictions
curated by luis pérez-oramas

nara roesler new york
opening march 19, 6–8pm
exhibition march 19–may 2, 2026

Antonio Henrique Amaral, *Jungle*, 1998 [detail]

Thiago Barbalho, *Shoreline invasion*, 2025 [detail]

The work of two artists from different temporal contexts, Thiago Barbalho (1984) and Antonio Henrique Amaral (1935-2015), are shown together in this exhibition through a curatorial logic of figural counterpoints. Despite their distinct genealogical upbringings, Amaral and Barbalho have, as a common ground, their interest in hybrid figures, oneiric imaginary and a strong recurrence of the organic.

Barbalho stands-out amongst the most recent emerging artists in Brazil for his masterful approach of pictorial media (painting, wall painting, sculpture, drawing, installation), capable of featuring minute detail, labor intensive marking as well as ambitious, all-over, complex compositional fields.

Antonio Henrique Amaral, a landmark, referential Brazilian artist during the second half of the Twentieth Century is known for his cartoonish but fierce denunciation of the absurdity of life, notably during the Brazilian dark period of dictatorship, and for his political lucidity and masterful control of his figurative vocabulary. The present selection of landmark paintings and drawings by Antonio Henrique Amaral are almost all from the peak of his production, in the late 1960's-early 1970's, a period characterized by cruel political authoritarianism to which Amaral's satirical depictions were pointedly addressed.

The resonance, and even figural coincidences, between the works of Amaral and Barbalho are testimony of the granular kinship of forms,

the fact that art exists trough fields of figurability that overcome and transcend intentional programs and individual strategies.

window–thiago barbalho (march 20 through may 2)
WINDOW is a space dedicated to focused, site-responsive presentations. Located at 91 Walker Street in Tribeca, it consists of two street-facing vitrines conceived by Anton Kern Gallery in 2020. Since its inaugural exhibition featuring works by John Bock and David Shrigley, the program has hosted street-exposed yet intimate presentations by artists including Lothar Hempel, assume vivid astro focus, Chris Martin, Olaf Breuning, Erik van Lieshout, Keith Boadwee, and, most recently, Manfred Pernice. Open continuously to the public through its street-facing format, WINDOW operates as both exhibition space and urban threshold—bringing rigorous contemporary practices into direct dialogue with one of New York City's most vibrant cultural neighborhoods.

about antonio henrique amaral
Antonio Henrique Amaral (São Paulo, 1935–2015) began his artistic training in the mid-1950s, studying drawing under Roberto Sambonet at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP) School, and later printmaking with Lívio Abramo at the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM-SP). His first solo exhibition, dedicated to prints, was held at MAM-SP in 1958, followed by a show in Chile that same year.

In 1959, Amaral was invited by the Organization of American States to exhibit at the Pan American Union (Washington, USA), and soon after received an Ingram Merrill Foundation scholarship to study at the Pratt Graphic Art Center in New York, where he worked with Shiko Munakata and Walter Rogalski. Under mentorship of Abramo and Munakata, he developed the discipline and versatility that would mark his lifelong engagement with diverse materials and techniques.

Following Brazil's 1964 military coup, Amaral's work took on a sharply political and satirical edge, often drawing on elements from popular and mass culture. A key example from this period is his woodcut album *O meu e o seu* (Myself and Yours, 1967), exhibited at Mirante das Artes in São Paulo, a gallery co-directed by Pietro Maria Bardi. Around this time, Amaral also began painting, launching his celebrated Banana series (1968–1975), which questioned the fruit's status as a national symbol. In 1971, he won the Travel Abroad Prize at the Rio de Janeiro Modern Art Salon, moving to New York until 1981. Among his major later works is the large-scale panel *São Paulo – Brazil: Creation, Expansion and Development* (1989), installed in the main hall of the Palácio dos Bandeirantes, seat of the São Paulo State Government, following a public competition.

Over a career spanning more than six decades, Amaral exhibited widely in Brazil and internationally across Latin America, North America, Europe, and Asia. His work is represented in major public collections, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Art Museum of the Americas (Washington, USA), Casa de las Américas (Havana, Cuba), Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano (Santiago, Chile), Latin American Art Collection at Essex University (Essex, England), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, USA), Museo de Arte Americano de Maldonado (Uruguay), Museo de Arte Moderno de México (Mexico City), Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (Colombia), Museo Nacional de Arte (La Paz, Bolivia), Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP), Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MAM-SP), Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM-RJ), São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), Pinacoteca de São Paulo and the São Paulo State Art Gallery, among others.

His oeuvre has been extensively studied and written about by leading Brazilian and international critics, including Aracy Amaral, Jacqueline Barnitz, Damián Bayón, Sheila Leirner, Geraldo Ferraz, Vilém Flusser, Benjamin Forgey, Shifra Goldman, Ferreira Gullar, Casimiro Xavier de Mendonça, Maria Alice Milliet, Frederico Morais, Roberto Pontual, Bélgica Rodríguez, and Edward J. Sullivan.

about thiago barbalho
As a writer and visual artist, Thiago Barbalho (b. 1984, Natal, Brazil) found in drawing a means of expression that allowed him to overcome a writer's block. Working in different dimensions and with different materials (colored pencils, graphite, spray, oil, oil pastel, and marker on paper), his compositions propose intricate universes of form, where shapes, references and colors intertwine to form somewhat psychedelic narratives that challenge the relation between figure and background. Barbalho understands drawing as an ancestral technology, which spans ages and cultures. The artist's visual research seeks to understand drawing as the sign of a presence and the relationship between the mind—imagination—and the body—gesture—, between consciousness and reality.

According to critic and curator Kiki Mazzucchelli, 'working essentially in drawing, Barbalho produces extremely intricate, but unplanned compositions, where the multiplicity of images, symbols and color fields merge to create uninterrupted vibrant surfaces.' The apparent chaos of his images arises from his gestures, which resist any formal logic. In fact, we encounter in his work an array of fragments, of references from different spheres that intertwine popular culture from the Brazilian Northeast, characters and cartoons, as well as signs and symbols of the consumerism and mass culture. Together with Barbalho's research and interpretations within the fields of philosophy, anthropology and the mysticism underlying relations between matter and thought, his drawings establish a visual universe that is in constant revolution.

Thiago Barbalho lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Fominha*, at Nara Roesler (2025), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Chants*, at Elizabeth XI Bauer (2025), in London, UK; *Segredos e Feitiços*, at Nara Roesler (2024), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Depois que entra ninguém sai*, at Nara Roesler (2022), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2022); *Correspondência*, at Galeria Marília Razuk (2019), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Thiago Barbalho*, at Kupfer Project Space (2018), in London, United Kingdom (2018). Main group shows are: *Phantom Dance: Thiago Barbalho and Theodore Ereira Guyer*, at Elizabeth XI Bauer (2023), in London, UK; *Mapa da estrada: Novas obras no acervo da Pinacoteca de São Paulo*, at Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2022), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Electric Dreams*, at Nara Roesler (2021), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *AVAF*, at Casa Triângulo (2018), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Rocambole*, at Pivô (2018), in São Paulo, Brazil, and at Kunsthalle Lissabon (2019), in Lisbon, Portugal; Voyage, at Galeira Bergamin & Gomide (2017), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Shadows & Monsters*, at Gasworks (2017), in London, United Kingdom. His works are part of institutional collections such as Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil and Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

about nara roesler
Nara Roesler organized her first contemporary art exhibition in Recife in 1976 and moved to São Paulo in 1986, where she consolidated the gallery under her own name in 1989. Today, she is one of Brazil's leading gallerists, recognized for playing a key role in the promotion and internationalization of more than 50 artists. Based in São Paulo, the gallery expanded its program to Rio de Janeiro in 2014 and became the first Brazilian gallery to establish an international presence by opening a space in New York City in 2015, reinforcing its commitment to the global circulation of Brazilian art.

Consistently fostering curatorial practice and critical research, she created Roesler Hotel in 2002, a program that promoted exchanges between foreign and Brazilian curators and artists. In 2011, the gallery became the first contemporary art gallery in Brazil to establish a publishing house, Nara Roesler Books, which has published more than 30 titles to date.

Throughout its trajectory, the gallery has made a significant contribution to the development of its artists' careers, offering ongoing support and high-profile platforms for the presentation of their work, and facilitating their inclusion in major institutions as well as in important private collections in Brazil and abroad. Its program features established artists such as Abraham Palatnik, Amelia Toledo, Antonio Dias, Artur Lescher, Daniel Buren, Heinz Mack, Julio Le Parc, Lucia Koch, Tomie Ohtake, and Vik Muniz, as well as a new generation of established artists, including André Griffo, Bruno Dunley, Jaime Lauriano, Jonathas de Andrade, and JR.

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