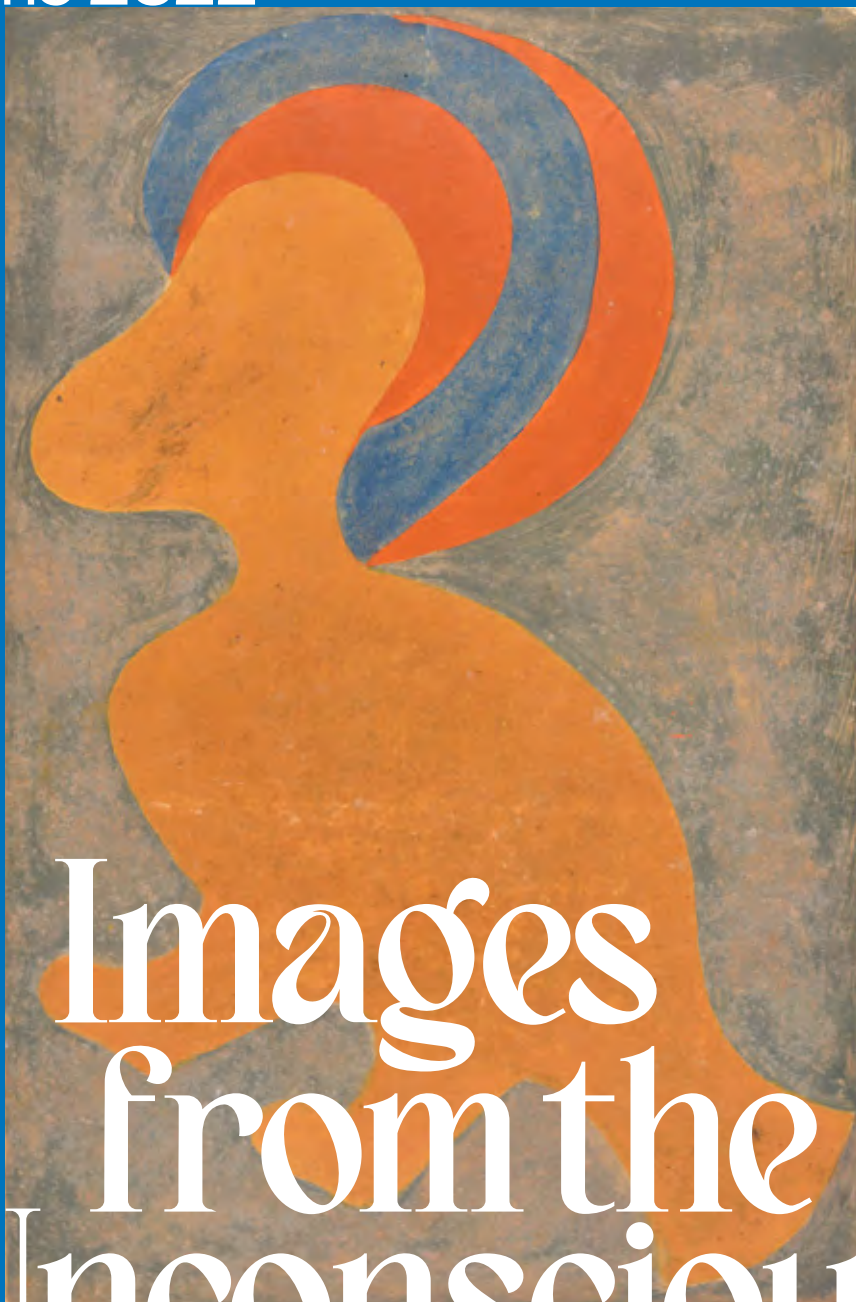


22 March —
6 June 2022



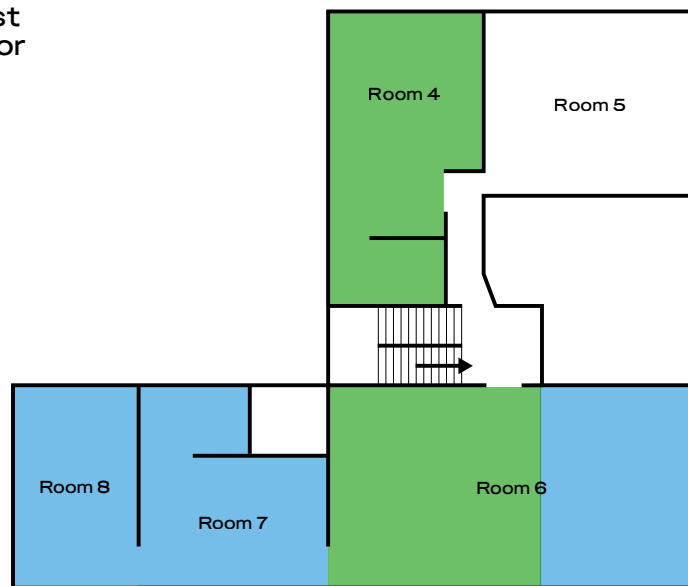
Images from the Unconscious

FLOOR PLAN

Ground Floor



First Floor



Artists

Carlos
Pertuis

Adelina
Gomes

Fernando
Diniz

History of the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente

NISE DA SILVEIRA

In 1946, Brazilian psychiatrist and health humanities pioneer Nise da Silveira created, for the study and care of psychiatric patients, the Occupational Therapy Ward at the Centro Psiquiátrico Nacional in Rio de Janeiro. The psychiatrist started this ward out of indignation with conventional psychiatric treatment methods used in her time, including electroshock, lobotomy, and insulin coma. She believed that to help patients, they should be allowed to express their grief, not be numbed. Among the many activities she organized for the schizophrenics, creative work proved to be a powerful means both to calm the patients and access their inner worlds. Da Silveira believed that through their artwork, patients would be able to find a way to restructure their inner self.

CAREER

Before she came to the hospital, Da Silveira had had a remarkable upbringing and career. Born in the impoverished northeastern region of Brazil in 1905, she was the first woman to graduate from her medical school (among 157 men). In Rio de Janeiro, she began to work as a psychiatrist at the Hospital da Praia Vermelha. In 1936, she was arrested during the Vargas dictatorship for belonging to the União Feminina Brasileira, the Brazilian women's union that was founded in 1935 and declared illegal

in the same year. She received amnesty in 1944 and went to work at the Centro Psiquiátrico Nacional.

OCCUPATIONAL WARD

The patients that were brought into the hospital were diagnosed with schizophrenia. Their intake reports read like a list of attacks on the mind and soul: experience of traumatic events, lack of love, abject poverty, miserable living conditions, abuse and repeated humiliations. Patients suffered from a split of psychic functions: they felt constantly watched and threatened, had delusions (many were hearing voices) and were unable to organize their thoughts. Many were withdrawn and suffered from speech impediments.

The hospital kept most patients locked away in the infirmary. Da Silveira started the occupational ward to take them out of their isolation. She wished to observe the schizophrenics at work in an open

environment. The therapists would pick up patients from the infirmary in the morning and return at lunch. Each therapist accompanied one or two patients. Artists coached the patients on the materials they chose to work with: acrylic and oil paints, crayons, colored pencils, pens and markers.

INNER WORLDS

Although she started the ward originally to give the patients a measure of freedom and agency, Da Silveira soon turned her attention not only to the patients but also to the artworks they produced, which she came to see as pathways to their inner worlds. She was especially struck by recurrent themes in the drawings. She found many fragmented forms, including bodies without heads, arms or legs, and trees cut into pieces. In her view, these drawings illustrated the patients' psychic dissociation and inner splits.

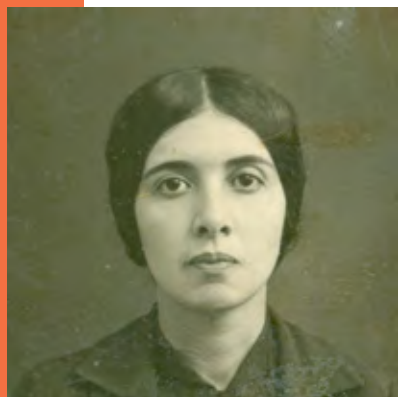
CARL JUNG

Da Silveira was further intrigued by the many drawings of circular forms — some irregular, others complex and harmonious. To make sense of these drawings, she consulted mythological and anthropological studies that guided her to the sacred configuration of symbols called mandalas. The famous psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung had published a study on mandalas a few years earlier. Da Silveira

send him samples of the drawings made in her ward and asked for his opinion. Were these images really mandalas? And if so, how should they be interpreted in the paintings by schizophrenics? Jung had found variants of these drawings all over the world, and argued that they were manifestations of the collective unconscious that expressed itself through universal images and symbols in the mythologies, art, and dreams of many cultures. These circular images, Jung wrote to Da Silveira, expressed the brain's rough sketches and plans for restoring psychic order.

ART CRITICS

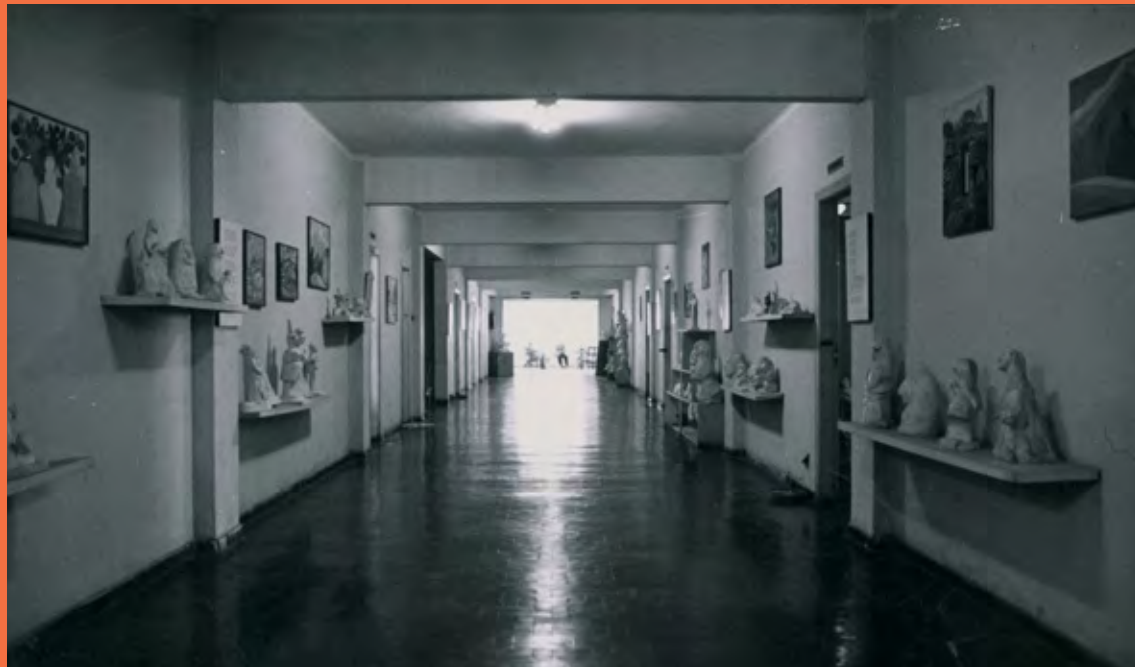
Following years of strife with her professional association and peers who despised her revolutionary ideas, Da Silveira gradually gained notoriety with her methods and insights. In addition to attracting the attention of international psychiatrists, her practices were also noted by the art world. The prominent Brazilian critic Mário Pedrosa took interest in a number of the artists she worked with. "One of the most powerful functions of art — as discovered by modern psychology — is the revelation of the unconscious,



Nise da Silveira, 29 years old.



During the filming of the documentary *Images from the Unconscious*, in the hospital garden, 1984. In the foreground, Fernando Diniz; on the right, Leon Hirszman and the cameraman Luis Carlos Saldanha; in the background, Adelina Gomes,



Corridor of the building occupied by the Museum of Images from the Unconscious from 1956 to 1981.

and this is just as mysterious in the normal as in the so-called abnormal. The images from the unconscious are a symbolic language, the decoding of which is the challenge and duty of psychiatry. But no one can deny that these images and signs are, beyond all else, harmonious, seductive, dramatic, alive and beautiful; in short, they are in and of themselves real works of art."

Da Silveira was mainly interested in the scientific questions raised by the art works and not prone to think in terms of art. Yet, Pedrosa's praise for the art produced in her ward helped to expose the brutal and ineffective practices of treating schizophrenia that she combated within her own institution.

MUSEU DE IMAGENS DO INCONSCIENTE

In 1952, just six years after she started the ward, the art production became so voluminous that she could open a gallery. She named the gallery the Museum of Images from the Unconscious (the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente). The art critic Marcio Doctors viewed the enormous artistic offspring of the clinic as a unique renaissance of the Brazilian visual arts.

In the 1980s, new ideas about mental health started to effect change. Gradually, the residential wards were being dismantled. Newly admitted patients were day patients who attended occupational therapy

for a few hours during the day. Only those who had been out of contact with the outside world for a long time and had no family (including Adelina Gomes, Carlos Pertuis and Fernando Diniz) continued to live in the hospital.

Today, the museum is still part of the hospital on the outskirts of Rio. It is a living center of study and research devoted to the artwork that is produced by the patients and has a markedly interdisciplinary character, which allows for constant exchange between the art studios, clinical experience and theoretical knowledge in psychology and psychiatry. The museum's work relies on the partnership of the Caps (psychosocial care centers) that maintain contact with the families, take care of the patients' transport, food and living circumstances. Therapists continue to follow Da Silveira's method to provide patients with materials to create and freely express themselves.

COLLECTION

Over time, Da Silveira's studios have produced many artists that became known in the art world. Today, participants still create artwork and share their experiences with staff members, students, researchers, and visitors. The collection currently holds more than 400,000 works. Since the institution views it primarily as a scientific collection for the study of mental illness, the works cannot be sold. The collection is officially recognized as artistic heritage

by the Institute of National Artistic and Historical Heritage-IPHAN (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional).

The Artists

CARLOS PERTUIS
ADELINA GOMES
FERNANDO DINIZ

This exhibition zooms in on the work of three artists who attended the workshops of the Museum of Images from the Unconscious: Carlos Pertuis, Adelina Gomes and Fernando Diniz. They were treated by the psychiatrist Da Silveira and her team and produced their works between 1946 and 1998. The artists' oeuvres provided the psychiatric team with leitmotifs to gain insight into their grief and struggles: the metamorphosis, the vision and the search for unity. The psychiatrist and her team linked these motives to ancient mythologies which, following Jung, they believed to be part of the collective unconscious.



Untitled, 1950, oil on paper, 66.4 x 51.2 cm

Carlos Pertuis
1910–1977



Adelina Gomes
1916–1984



Fernando Diniz
1918–1999



CARLOS PERTUIS

1910–1977

The Epiphany

The only boy in his family, Carlos Pertuis was forced to leave school to work in a shoe factory when his father died. One morning, he was struck by the extraordinary brilliance of the sun reflecting in a small mirror in his bedroom. It provided him with a cosmic vision that he called "God's Planetarium." He shouted for the rest of his family to come and see the marvel he was beholding. The same day he was admitted to the Hospital da Praia Vermelha. It was September 1939; he was 29 years old. When Da Silveira met him, Carlos was practically incomprehensible due to many electroshock treatments. He kept shoeboxes full of drawings.

Room 1

GOD'S PLANETARIUM

Nine years after his internment and as soon as he had the opportunity to paint, Pertuis depicted the experience of his vision of God's Planetarium (*Planetário de Deus*). The piece showed a mandala with a golden flower surrounded by two black snakes. Da Silveira believed the work emphasized the duality

of life, the sun divinity surrounded by the forces of darkness and evil: "The mandala is an expression of the forces of order that are mobilized when the psyche is in danger of disintegrating. It also appears as a marker of stages in evolution toward individuation. But, if we go deeper into the symbolism of the mandala and look for parallels in ancient philosophy and religions, we

will find that the mandala represents God and the unity of the cosmos underlying the multiplicity of things that can be apprehended by the senses."



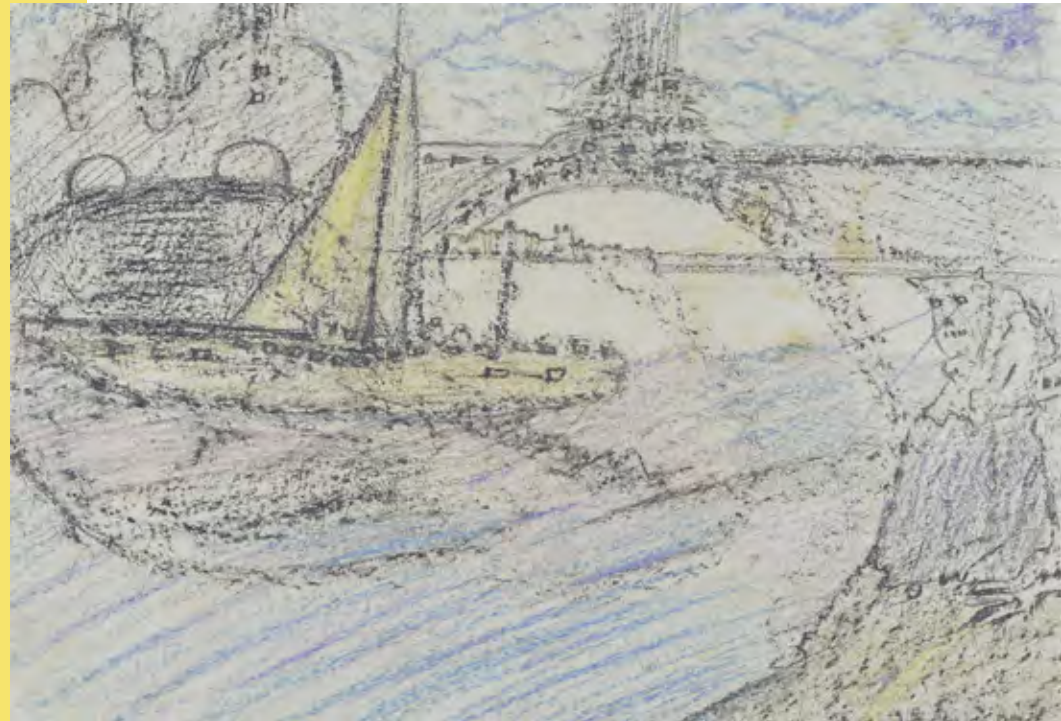
Untitled, 1968, oil on paper, 50.9 x 35cm

THE LONG JOURNEY

God's Planetarium marked the beginning of a lifelong fascination with the sun. With great intensity, Pertuis produced about 21,500 works – drawings, paintings, modellings, woodcuts, and writings in thirty years. The peak of his creativity was a large series of drawings in which he exchanged oil paint and brushes for crayon to depict a march of characters in various attitudes and clothing. He produced four to five pieces a day, always standing as he worked on the pieces, with great intensity, as if he was engaged in a lively conversation with the images surging up from his unconscious. The works were characterized by

a profusion of symbols. The critic Mário Pedrosa would later title the series "The Long Journey." This is the first time works belonging to this series are shown outside the institution.

Da Silveira was especially interested in the recurrent theme of the hero and his journey in search of the light of the sun. The story of the hero who has to overcome enormous challenges (monsters, the deep sea, enemies) that confront him on his epic journey to be reborn is an archetypical figure. At its root, according to Jungian psychology, this figure represents the emergence of the individual conscious mind.



Untitled, 1975, wax crayon on paper, 48.2 x 37.2 cm



Solar Barque, 1976, wax pencil on paper, 33.2 x 48.5 cm



Untitled, 1975, wax crayon on paper, 55.1 x 36.7 cm

MITHRA

Pertuis made a series depicting masculine figures of huge proportions possessing crowns and other divine attributes. The series constituted a rich ground for interpretation by Da Silveira and her team who recognized the sun god Mithra in the figures. The theme of Mithra represented to the psychiatrist the emergence of the individual conscious mind. She stressed many times how even the most dissociated minds had the psychic urge to emerge from the darkness of the unconscious. She saw the vitality of this urge confirmed in his lasting interest in this theme ending with the mythical and serene Solar Barque, painted just a few months before his death on 21 March 1977.

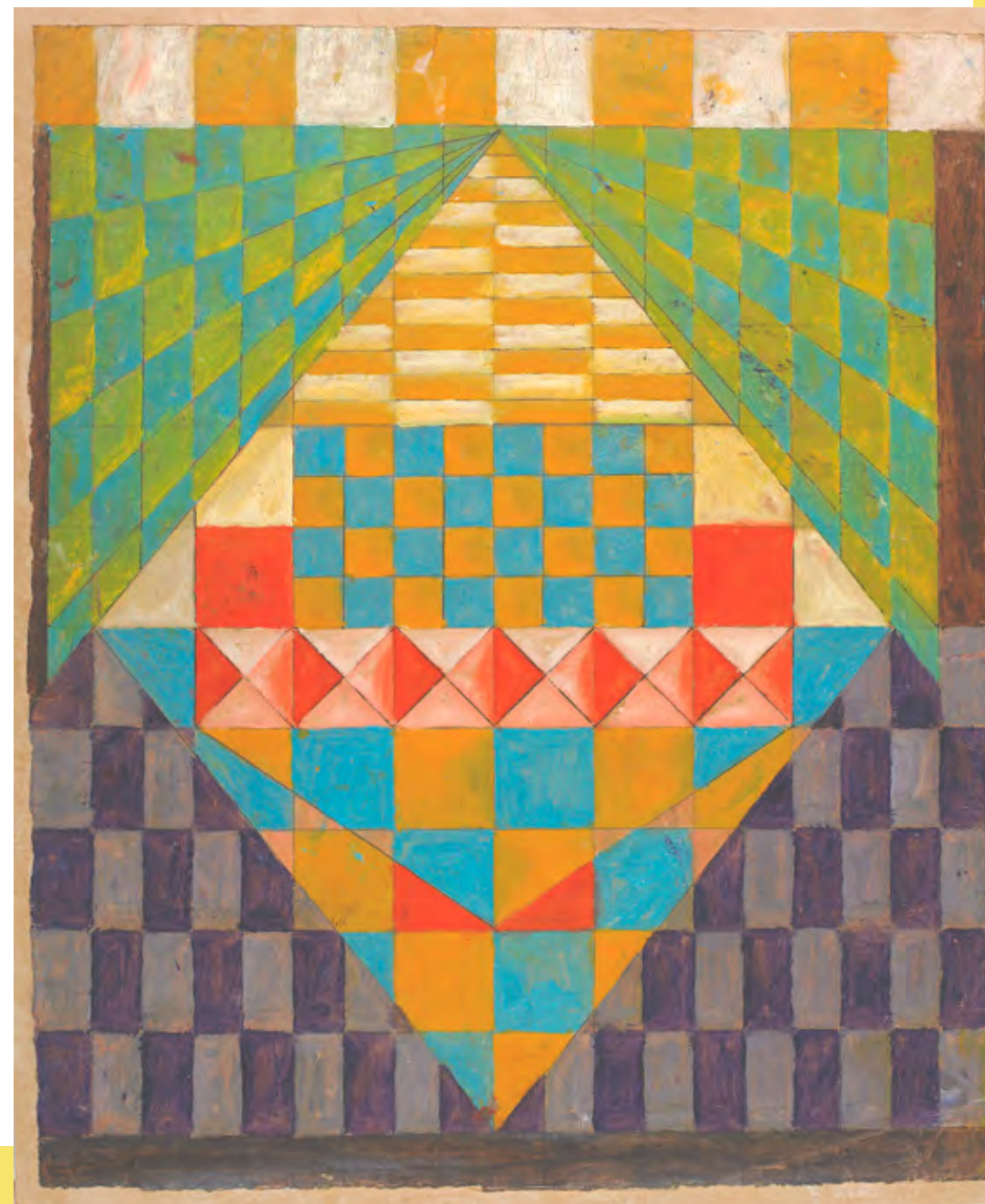


Untitled, no date, oil on paper, 40.3 x 47 cm

Room 2
COSMIC GEOMETRY

Pertuis's geometrical constructions began with studies drawn in pencil or graphite in small notebooks. After finishing these, his creativity went into overdrive and he launched into a large series of paintings that depicted a mixture of symbolic figures, stars, suns, and other heavenly bodies. Da Silveira believed these geometrical

structures communicated his sense of the interconnectedness of the cosmos. The art critic Roberto Pontual noted the striking similarity of these works to the geometric abstraction painting embraced by Latin American artists as a way to distance themselves from the colonial past. As far as we can ascertain, Pertuis was not familiar with contemporary artistic trends.



Untitled, no date, oil on paper, 48.4 x 40.3 cm



All works on this double-page spread: *Untitled*, from Fantastic beings series, no date, oil and gouache on paper, 48.7x33.3 cm / 47.3x32.2 cm / 48x33.2 cm / 42.5x31.7 cm / 42.1x32.6 cm / 37.7 x 28 cm / 42.3x32.5 cm



Room 3
FANTASTIC BEINGS

In the series of paintings presented here, the lower bodies of human figures merge with various forms, giving rise to extraordinary beings. Carl Gustav Jung pointed out that fantastic beings come to life as archetypes in the imagination of all human beings (independent of background or culture) and serve as the source of a universal mythology. Often incapable to communicate with words, many patients resorted to communicate with images that came from a deeper source of the patients' sensory lives.



ADELINA GOMES

1916–1984

The Metamorphosis

Considered a violent person, Adelina Gomes was locked in the infirmary. Her family had brought and abandoned her at the hospital nine years earlier. The trigger for her ailment seemed to have been that she fell in love with a man who was not accepted by her mother. She cut off the relationship and became withdrawn and gloomy. One day, she strangled the much beloved household cat and was taken over by violent psychomotor excitement. Da Silveira was warned against Gomes who was deemed "aggressive and dangerous." When she met her, the psychiatrist wrote, she found a broken woman. The artist Almir Mavignier who worked in Nise's studio noted that Gomes made beautiful dolls at the hospital. He invited Gomes to the painting studio.

Room 4
DAPHNE

Gomes made a colorful series of paintings that depict people, houses, and trains transforming into flowers, birds, and plants. Da Silveira found in the plant world metamorphoses an illuminating parallel to the Greek myth of Daphne. To elude the advances of Apollo, Daphne was helped by Mother Earth to transform into a plant. Da Silveira's analysis was that Gomes identified so closely with her mother that she forbade herself to grow up. Her strangling of the cat, she believed, represented the killing of the female instinct.

Nise da Silveira: "the classical psychiatrist argues that in schizophrenia the ego breaks down; its cohesion becomes disassociated and the individual loses the sense of his or her boundaries ... Gomes's metamorphosis into a form of plant life might not, therefore, be especially unusual. It would be akin to identification with any other kind of thing, living or inanimate ... Evolutionary psychopathologists argue, however, that metamorphoses indicate regression to a primitive world of myth. In that world, unlike our world of clearly defined objects with clearly differentiated borders, there are no fixed boundaries separating things, even those that belong to different levels of being. Jung, finally, would say that each metamorphosis carries specific meaning and seeks to discover whether, at the heart of these ostensibly bizarre

phenomena, there exists some way of imagining that we have inherited from our ancestors, a reactivation of situations rich in meaning that have already been experienced by extraordinary human beings over

the millennia. It is in myths that the imaginings of the psyche undergoing typical situations highly charged with emotion are condensed and polished into exemplary narratives."



Untitled, 1964, oil on paper, 48.5x33.7 cm

DOCUMENTARY

Images from the Unconscious (1986)
205 minutes

Da Silveira was much admired by her contemporaries, and she organized many meetings with artists, writers, performers, and thinkers. In 1969, the filmmaker Leon Hirszman went to see a reading of the *Bacchantes* at her center, and he was impressed with the museum. The psychiatrist invited him to make a film about her work. Years later, he made the film *Images from the Unconscious* (*Imagens do Inconsciente*), telling the life stories of Adelina Gomes, Carlos Pertuis, and Fernando Diniz. The shooting took place at Da Silveira's Psychiatric Center where she also collaborated on the script. The documentary is divided into three episodes: Fernando Diniz: In Search of Everyday Space; Adelina Gomes: In the Kingdom of Mothers; Carlos Pertuis: The Solar Barque. Hirszman died a year before the film's opening at the Museum of Image and Sound in São Paulo in May 1988. The Brazilian Association of Film Critics hailed it as one of the best documentaries in the history of Brazilian cinema.

Hirszman's words about the film: "I looked for a cinematographic language that would allow me to narrate the films from the artists' own painted works. The works, which express the inner world of the artist, reveal the comings and goings of consciousness. When a person's consciousness is weakened (de-potentialized), the inner ghosts are released and lose their threatening power. The paintings show this process and the ways in which the self-healing forces manifest themselves."

KALI

Between 1948 and 1950, Gomes molded clay figures that resembled Stone Age carvings of mother goddesses. There was a remarkable development in her works. At first, the figures seemed quite menacing matriarchs, but over time they lost their strictness and possessiveness. Da Silveira believed that the intimate contact required to sculpt an image with her own hands, helped Gomes to discover a more loving and compassionate mother image. This discovery gave rise to the production of a series of mother goddesses that seem to be opening up their breasts with their hands and subsequently a series of mothers whose hearts appear outside of their chest cavity. Da Silveira noted that this artistic development accompanied a remarkable improvement in her condition. She became more confident and upbeat, communicated with the team and participated in various occupational therapy activities. Da Silveira linked this progress to the two-sided nature of the mother archetype: the devouring and the loving aspects of motherhood, which Hindu culture has reconciled in the figure of the goddess Kali.



Untitled, 1950's, modeling clay transposed to plaster, 43x52x38 cm



Untitled, 1950's, modeling clay transposed to plaster, 47x37x23.5 cm

FERNANDO DINIZ

1918–1999

Longing for Unity

Diniz's life seemed to be one of unfulfilled dreams. As a child, he accompanied his mother when she went to work as a seamstress in houses of wealthy families. He wanted to become an engineer, an ambition that ended when he dropped out of high school. He also fell in love with the daughter of one of his mother's employers. Her resolution to marry someone else triggered his collapse. In July 1944, he violently resisted arrest for swimming nude at Copacabana beach. He was brought to the psychiatric hospital. About his early visits to Da Silveira's studio, the psychiatrist noted that Diniz never lifted his head, and his low voice could barely be heard.

Diniz later described his first steps into art as a recrafting of his soul. "The first drawing that I learned was a drop of water, then a pear, then a leaf ... and I thought: one day I am going to learn this from the inside ... I move to the world of images. I change my soul into another thing. The images take over my soul." The critic Marcio Doctors wrote: "Diniz's universe is jam-packed with figures, because it is divided into a thousand different facets. (...) It is a fantastic inventory of forms. (...) Fairylike and opulent, it is also encyclopedic." The artist's production in the museum is estimated at around 30,000 artworks: canvases, drawings, carpets, and modelings.



Untitled, 1957, oil on paper, 33.4 x 49.6 cm

Room 6

MANDALA

Da Silveira and her team viewed Fernando Diniz's painting process as an incessant struggle to restructure his internal disorder. According to them, his early chaotic works were characterized by the turmoil of thoughts and emotions that led to a psychic schism. Starting out from these chaotic forms, Diniz traced out a path little by little, as if he was

consciously designing a method of self-cure, which brought him to draw the circular forms that Da Silveira recognized as mandalas.

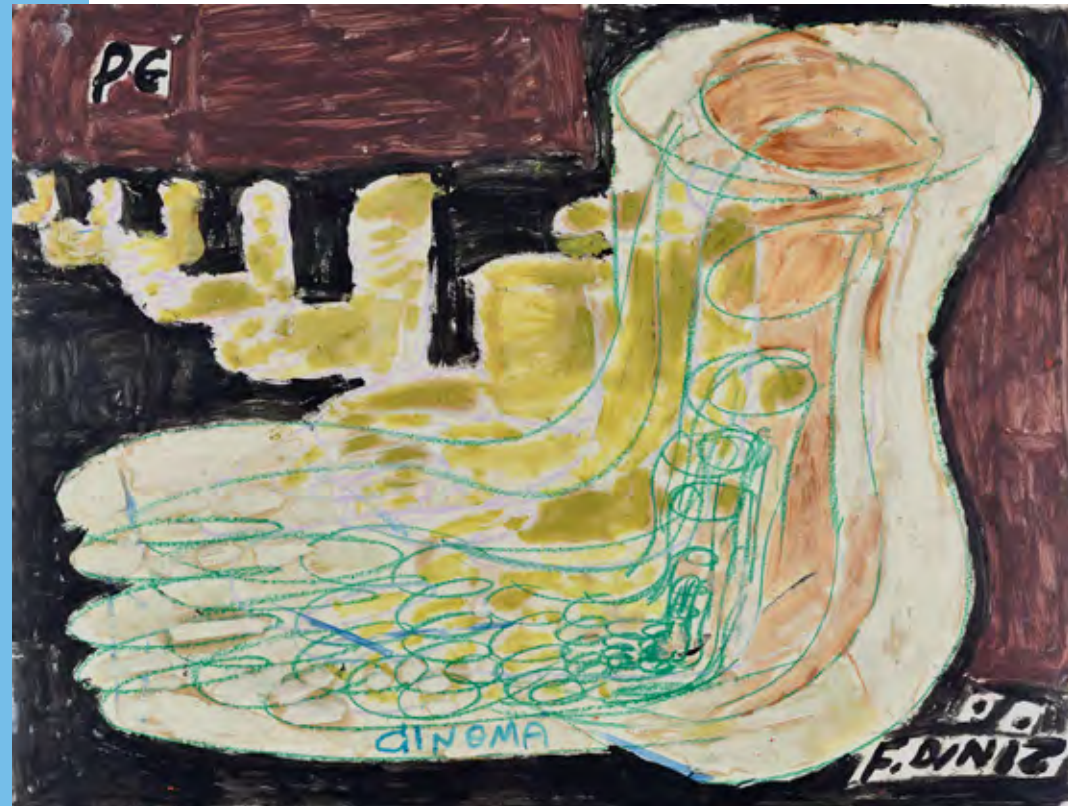
A mandala is a circular form containing a geometric configuration of symbols. Characterized by a center divided into four parts or multiples of four, they are employed in various spiritual traditions as a meditative guidance tool. A mandala generally

represents a spiritual journey to the inside of the self. The psychiatrist Carl Jung viewed them as primordial shapes stemming from the collective unconscious that symbolized the psyche working to restore balance and spiritual health in times of great chaos and disruption. For this reason, he named them magic circles.

Room 7

CINEMA

His participation in the film *Images from the Unconscious* by Hirszman sparked Diniz's interest in the moving image. He constructed from clay various sundials – enormous machines of intermeshing moons and stars. He was also fascinated by the way the images flashed by, frame after frame, and the possibilities that the film camera provided. He created a series of paintings that he entitled *Cinema*, reflecting his experience of being involved in the making of a film.



Untitled, 1987, gouache and wax crayon on cardboard, 55.2x72.9 cm

Room 8

EIGHT-POINTED STAR

The filmmaker Marco Magalhães saw an exhibition with works from Diniz's *Cinema* series and invited the artist to make an animated film with him. Over the course of six years, the director taught Diniz various animation techniques and together they produced a film titled *Eight-Pointed Star (Estrela de Oito Pontas)*. The film sheds light on the artist's creative process and the main themes of his work. Magalhães: "the main aim of the project was to offer Diniz the opportunity to tell

stories by using animated films. Time is a subject that fascinates him, along with quantum physics, anti-matter, black holes, and everything that has to do with the mysteries of form and space. The eight-pointed star is represented by a cross and two diagonal lines, as in the British Union Jack. Diniz almost always starts his drawing with these basic lines. These help him to keep things in proportion and to register the movements and forms that spring from his animation."



Untitled, 1987, gouache and wax crayon on cardboard, 55.2x72.8 cm



Untitled, 1951, oil on paper, 75.5 x 56.6 cm

NISE DA SILVEIRA

1905–1999



Nise da Silveira was born in Maceió, in 1905. She earned her medical degree at the Faculdade de Medicina da Bahia, where she was the only woman in her class. In Rio de Janeiro, she began to work as a psychiatrist at the Hospital da Praia Vermelha and was arrested in 1936, during the Vargas dictatorship, for belonging to the União Feminina Brasileira. She received amnesty in 1944 and returned to work at the Centro Psiquiátrico Nacional, currently the Instituto Municipal Nise da Silveira. She was opposed to confinement and electroshock therapy, and proposed radical new treatments. She founded the Occupational Therapy Ward, whose artistic activities

resulted in the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente, which today holds a collection of 400,000 works. She introduced the thoughts of Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung, whom she met several times, to Latin America. She was also a pioneer in the use of animals in therapy. She also created the Casa das Palmeiras, a rehabilitation clinic for people who have been discharged from psychiatric institutions to be treated on an outpatient basis — the first in Brazil.

Her research and studies have given rise to exhibitions, courses, symposia, publications, and other intellectual productions, receiving countless prizes, homages, and titles in various areas of knowledge. The profoundly humanist spirit of her character and actions has exercised a strong influence on Brazilian culture as a whole. The work she carried out predated the movements for the renovation of psychiatry as seen in England (1960s), Italy (1970s), and Brazil (1980s). After her death in 1999, her personal archive was recognized as a Heritage of Humankind in UNESCO's Memory of the World Program.

Outsider Art

Images from the Unconscious features the works of artists that are routinely labeled as outsider artists. The term is somewhat loosely applied to artists that lack academic training, have no relationship with the mainstream art world, and whose work is characterized by unconventional methods and ideas, and elaborate fantasies. The work can be the result of extreme mental states that can be, depending on the viewpoint, perceived as psychotic, visionary, or both. Since the twentieth-century modernists, most famously the Blaue Reiter group, artists and critics were attracted to the expressive power that came with a lack of schooling, and unconventional methods. They were looking outside European traditions and training to find new inspiration in the art of non-Western cultures, but also with people that were somehow outside society. To them, both groups seemed to have a fresh and uninhibited imagination.

Da Silveira's work seems to confirm the idea that these artists were special in other than artistic ways, and that perhaps their mental states created their works. To Da Silveira, however, these works seem to point

to visionary horizons and partake (in Jungian terms) of a universal spirit that, as the term already suggests, includes all — insiders and outsiders. This universal spirit, they believed, can be detected in the expressions of all cultures and all times.

The term outsider art, both for their work as for these artists, is grossly misleading. It lumps together diverse groups of people, assumes a vague collective identity and then narrows the scope and meaning of a large and diverse body of works to this identity. Adelina Gomes, Carlos Pertuis and Fernando Diniz found themselves in unfortunate circumstances (as many people do) and suffered from grief (as many people have). The fact that therapy in Da Silveira's ward relieved their suffering by way of art does not make their art the product of their misfortune. Rather, we might say that their art shone through their misery.



Untitled, 1987, gouache on cardboard, 48.1x66 cm



Untitled, 1987, gouache on cardboard, 48.2x66 cm



Untitled, no date, oil on paper, 51,0 x 68,9 cm

THANKS TO:

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Gladys Zeevaarders

BIOS OF EXHIBITION CURATORS

LUIZ PERTUIS MELLO began to work in collaboration with Nise da Silveira in 1974. Since that time, he has been developing, organizing, and raising awareness about the collection of the Museu de Imagens do Inconsciente and the research carried out there. As its director and curator, he has organized publications and various exhibitions in Brazil and abroad. He has directed fifteen film documentaries that summarize some of the main research studies carried out by the museum. These documentaries are presented in universities and cultural institutions in the context of conferences and debates devoted to the scientific study of psychosis.

LUIZA MELLO is a producer, publisher, and curator based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 2005 she launched Automatica, a production company and publishing house focused on cultural projects. Since 2000, she has been an executive producer of contemporary art exhibitions. In 2011 she established Automatica Editions with Marisa Mello and works as an editor of art books. In 2018 she curated the exhibitions *Dreaming Awake* at Marres, House for Contemporary Culture, in Maastricht, the Netherlands; *Mufa Caos*, by artist Barrão, in Jacarandá, Rio de Janeiro; *Perspectives on Contemporary Brazilian Art*, at Art Berlin, Germany. In 2020 she curated the exhibition *Travessias 6*, in Galpão Bela Maré, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Marres
House for Contemporary Culture

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COLOPHON
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Carlos Pertuis
Curators: Luiz Carlos Mello, Luiza Mello
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Marres

