



Chico da Silva

Biography

Chico da Silva [Francisco Domingues da Silva]

1910/1922, Alto Tejo | AC - Brazil

1985, Fortaleza | CE – Brazil

Chico Silva was born in Acre, in the middle of the Amazon rainforest, son of Mervina Felis de Lima and the Peruvian Indian mestizo Domingos da Silva. He is perhaps the first popular artist, after Vitalino in the media to become known nationwide and even in specialized foreign markets. In an interview with me at his home in Pirambu, in 1974, Chico Silva spoke in fluent and correct Portuguese about his childhood, summing it up: “to the manager from the river, shooting pellets at birds”. He moved to Ceará State with his family when he was six years old. He then went to live on a farm in Quixadá. On the death of his mother, who had recommended him to farmer friends, “I was being brought up always among people. I didn’t need to go to school. I already had nature.” When He was 12 years old, He moved to Guaramiranga, where He stayed until early manhood. He began painting in Fortaleza, capital of the State of Ceará, his home since 1935, doing odd jobs in shoemaking, plumbing, welding, stonemasonry, and carpentry, and painting walls. What he most enjoyed doing, however, “was to draw on the walls of fishermen’s houses using fresh green grass and white and red bricks (because I didn’t have paint at the time)”. Heloisa Juaçaba added: “He would also use a piece of charcoal that he would call caon mortuário, to obtain black and gray effects.” And then his large Amazon birds, marine figures and dragons were seen for the first time by the Swiss critic and painter Jean Pierre Chabloz, during his first

stay in Ceará, between 1943 and 1944. “No one knew the name of those fishes”, Chico told me, “because each day I’d invent a different fish: my mind’s full of fishes.” One of the dragons could be “the Dadãodão, a prehistoric monster of the air, things of the past century. And Redemunho with its prehistoric hell, a life of persecution. Children pursue their parents because they want to be better than they are”, he concluded in Freudian fashion. Chabloz introduced him to gouache, a material that he continued to use his life through because of the affinity with his first way of painting, and he was invited to exhibitions in Fortaleza (1943), Geneva (1949), Neuchâtel (1956), and individual exhibitions in Rio de Janeiro (1945) and Lausanne (1950). Chabloz wrote the article for Cahiers d’Art on “A Brazilian Indian reinvents painting” in 1952, when Chico’s art was presented to André Malraux and Christian Zervos.

A color feature in the O Cruzeiro magazine projected him nationwide. In 1945, when he exhibited in Rio de Janeiro at the Askanasy Gallery, critic Ruben Navarra commented: “I must say that this indigenous artist’s gouaches are a very serious thing. In Brazilian art only Cícero Dias, ten years earlier, gave me such a powerful impression of lyrical naivety with respect to painting.” The first few absences of Chabloz from Brazil in the 1940s correspond to Chico’s giving up painting, to be then resumed when the Swiss painter returned to Fortaleza. On one of his return trips in 1959 Chabloz tried to encourage Chico again, giving him a job as servant with the rector of the Federal University of Ceará, which in fact meant making a place for him to be able to paint and reflect on his work. In the University Art Museum, Chico made the large group of gouaches that are still today in its collection. The 1960s were the start of Chico’s painful and spectacular circumnavigation, when he left the University, exposed to galloping merchandising of his art, with rare moments of exception, such as the exhibitions in Relevo Gallery (Rio de Janeiro, 1963), Galeria Jacques Massol (Paris, 1965) and Brazilian Primitive Artists (cities in Europe, including Moscow, 1966). He was given honorable mention in the 1966 Venice Biennial, when critic Clarival do Prado Valladares was curator, who on that occasion wrote: “He is the interpreter of a mythology diluted in the oral tradition of a vast region that only he fixed and reflected. (...). Another relevant aspect is his plastic quality, his well-ordered and constructed composition. (...). His style, the weave of the drawing, polychromy and enriching details are outstanding characteristics.” While on this brilliant circuit, a collective production network of

his works was set up in Fortaleza with the consent of the artist, who was now occasionally turning to drink. Hundreds of oil paintings canvases appeared, much easier to do than gouaches on cardboard. Chico's exposure to media and the market had been too much. In the 1970s he fell ill and his prestige declined and copies of his work were even found in souvenirs stores. On 1974 the State government offered him another home, but the now invalid artist was admitted to a clinic in 1977, which he was to leave only to participate in the 1st Latin American Biennial, organized by the São Paulo Biennial. Further relapses, more controversies about falsifications, the grant of the lifelong pension and offer of a home by the Ceará State government were highlights in the year when Chico da Silva died, father of nine living children and one of the greatest Brazilian artists.

Source: Little Dictionary of the Brazilian People's Art – 20th Century, by anthropologist and poet Lélia Coelho Frota



Untitled, 1968
Oil on canvas
50 x 66 cm | 19.68 x 25.98 in

Individual Exhibitions:

2023 Chico da Silva: A Boca do Mundo, Galeria Base, São Paulo – SP | Brazil

2022 Chico da Silva : Sacred connection, global vision, São Paulo Museum of Sacred Art, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2022 - Chico da Silva, Galeria Gomide & Co, São Paulo, SP, Brasil

2017 Chico da Silva, Centro Cultural Belchior, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil

2010 Chico da Silva – The Rebirth of 100 years, Correios Cultural Space, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

2005 Chico da Silva in Three Dimensions, Centro Cultural Banco do Nordeste, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil

2002 Holy Ingenuity, Unifieo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1989 Chico da Silva Retrospective: From Delirium to the Flood, Cultural Space at the Abolição Palace, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

1967 Francisco da Silva, A Galeria, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1967 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Gemini, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1967 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Dezon, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1966 Francisco da Silva, Petite Galerie, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
 1965 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Querino, Salvador, BA, Brazil
 1965 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Selearte, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
 1965 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Goeldi, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
 1963 Francisco da Silva, Galeria Relevo, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
 1961 Francisco da Silva, Headquarters of Diários Associados, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
 1965 Eight Brazilian Naive Painters, Galeria Jaques Massol, Paris, France
 1950 Francisco da Silva, Pour L'Art Gallery, Lausanne, Switzerland

Collective Exhibitions:

2023 Bienal das Amazônias, Belém – PA, Brazil
 2023 "Reverses and Transverses": Artists Outside the Mainstream (and Friends) at the Biennials, Galeria Estação, Sao Paulo – SP | Brazil
 2021-2022 Compositions for insurgent times, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
 2016 Between Look: poetics of the Brazilian soul, Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
 2013 Trajectories Brazilian Art in the Collection Fundação Edson Queiroz – Unifor 40 Anos, Fundação Edson Queiroz, Ceará, Fortaleza, Brazil
 2007 Encounter between the seas, Bienal de São Paulo, Valencia, Convento del Carmo, Valencia, Spain
 2006 MAM (at) OCA Brazilian Art from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo, OCA, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
 2006 - 2007 Live Culture Live the brazilian People, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
 2005 Brazil Brazilians, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

- 2005 Encounter and Reunions in Naïve Art: Brazil- Haiti, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (CCBB Brasília), Brasília, Brazil
- 2002 6th Naifs of Brazil Biennial, SESC, Piracicaba, SP, Brazil
- 2002 Pop Brazil: Popular Art and the Popular in the Art, CCBB, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 2000 Brazil + 500 Rediscovery Exhibition, Biennial Pavilion, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 2001 Instant Biographies, Casa das Rosas, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1996 FIEO Expo: Luiz Ernesto Kawall donation, Centro Universitário FIEO, Osasco, SP, Brazil
- 1990 Figurativism/ Abstractionism: Red in painting, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1988 The Fascinating World of Naïf Painters, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil
- 1985 Tradition and Rupture: synthesis of Brazilian art and culture, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1984 3rd National Salon of Fine Arts - special room, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
- 1980 People of the Earth, Paço das Arte, São Paulo, SP
- 1978 1st Latin American Biennial of São Paulo, Fundação Bienal, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1978 3rd Northeastern Fine Arts Salon, Penápolis Educational Foundation - Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages of Penápolis, Penápolis, SP, Brazil
- 1978 28th April Salon - special room, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
- 1977 27th April Salon, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
- 1972 Art / Brazil / Today: 50 Years Later, Collection Gallery, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1970 20th April Salon, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil
- 1967 9th São Paulo International Biennial, Fundação Bienal, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
- 1966 33rd Venice Biennale - Honorable Mention, Venice, Italy
- 1966 Brazilian Primitives, Hispanic Culture Institute, Madrid, Spain
- 1966 Unusual Brazil, Maison Janson, Paris, France

1966 Brazilian Primitive Artists - traveling exhibition, Europe

1956 Brazilian Exhibition of Folk and Popular Art, Ethnographic Museum, Neuchâtel, Switzerland

1945 Cearense painters Antonio Banderia, Inimá, Raimundo Feitos, Jean-Pierre Chabloz, Askanasy Gallery, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1944 3rd Cearense Painting Salon, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

1943 April Salon, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

Public Collections:

MAM / SP - Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo

Art Museum of the Federal University of Ceará, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil

Selected Publications:

2007 Encuentro entre dos Mares- Bienal de São Paulo- Valencia, Catalog, Valencia, Spain

2006 Viva Cultura Viva do Povo Brasileiro, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2005 Small Dictionary of the Art of the Brazilian People - 20th century, Lélia Coelho Frota, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2005 Brazil Brazilians, Ipsi Gráfica e Editora, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2000 Catalog, Museu do Homem do Nordeste, Graphic Circuit, Recife, PE, Brazil

2000 Rediscovery Exhibition - Brazil 500 years I Popular Art, Takano publisher, Brazil

1998 Naïve Art in Brazil, Jacques Ardies and Edson de Andrade Geraldo, Empresa das Artes, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1978 Aspects of Brazilian primitive painting, Flávio de Aquino, Spala, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1979 Art in Brazil, Pietro Maria Bardi, Abril Cultural, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1990 Chico da Silva: from delusion to the flood, Roberto Galvão, Cultural Space of the Abolition Palace, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

1988 The saga of the painter Francisco Domingos da Silva, Tukano, Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

1988 Critical Dictionary of Painting in Brazil, José Roberto Teixeira Leite, Artlivre, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Exhibitions



2021-2022 Compositions for insurgent times, Museu de Arte Moderna do
Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil





2016 Between Look: poetics of the Brazilian soul, Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, SP, Brazil



2017 Chico da Silva, Centro Cultural Belchior, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil

Artwork



Untitled, 1970
Oil on canvas
31 x 41 cm | 12.20 x 16.14 in





Untitled, 1968
Oil on eucatex
51 x 74 cm | 20.07 x 29.13 in



Untitled, 1974
Oil on canvas
48 x 66 cm | 18.90 x 25.99 in





Untitled, 1972
Oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm | 17.71 x 19.68 in



Untitled, 1968
Oil on canvas
50 x 70 cm | 19.68 x 27.55 in





Untitled,
Oil on eucatex
57 x 77 cm | 22.44 x 30.31 in



With a collection among the most important of the country, Galeria Estação, inaugurated at the end of 2004, devoted itself to revealing and promoting the production of Brazilian non-scholar art. The gallery was responsible for including this language in the contemporary art scene, while editing publications and holding individual and collective exhibitions inside and outside the country.

Galeria Estação works with well-known self-taught artists from various regions of Brazil, such as Agostinho Batista de Freitas, Alcides dos Santos, Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato, Artur Pereira, Aurelino dos Santos, Chico Tabibuia, Cícero Alves dos Santos-Véio, GTO, Gilvan Samico, Itamar Julião, João Cosmo Felix-Nino, José Antônio da Silva, José Bezerra, Manuel Graciano, Maria Auxiliadora, Mirian Inês da Silva, Neves Torres, among others.

Currently the gallery has been incorporating to its cast artists belonging to the contemporary artistic circuit whose works interact with non-scholar creation, such as André Ricardo, José Bernnô, Julio Villani, Germana Monte-Mór, Moisés Patrício e Santídio Pereira.

Starting from this rare competence, the space is able to offer a historical and current panorama of a production that went beyond the limits of self-thought art, at the same time as it investigates names that, independently of the formation, work with elements from the same source.

Galeria Estação

Rua Ferreira de Araújo, 625 – Pinheiros, São Paulo, SP , Brazil – phone: (+5511) 3813-7253

From Monday to Friday, from 11am to 7pm, Saturday from 11am to 3pm

www.galeriaestacao.com.br

contato@galeriaestacao.com.br