



Júlio Martins

# Biography

Júlio Martins [Júlio Martins da Silva]

1893, Icaraí, RJ, Brazil - 1978, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

He was born in Icaraí, Niterói, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He began life on the rural area. Since child, after learning to read and write, he looked for schools and even a private tutor to learn grammar, since he very much enjoyed poetry and which he would compose jointly with a number of his paintings. His father, João Martins da Silva, lived in the rural area and worked in the city as a cook. When his father died, the family could no longer pay rent to the farmer so moved to Rio de Janeiro, and went to different family households as domestic servants. Taught literacy in the job of his mother's orders, when he was eight Júlio was sent to take messages, do shopping. After comings and goings to stay with his mother and worked in various jobs, always buying and reading books, he eventually moved to the city of Rio de Janeiro. There he lived a kind of bohemian life: he would work some months, stop because of carnival, go to the theatre a lot, and cafés with musical entertainment. He then found a lowly job in the Hotel Avenida, being promoted to cook until he retired.

He began painting with crayons when he was 29 years old. When he was 47 years old he used coloring pencils for the very first time. After retiring as a cook, and going to live on União Hill in Coelho da Rocha, a Rio de Janeiro suburb, until his death, Júlio

spent all his time painting, now using oil paints, a technique which he began when he lived downtown. His painting consists essentially on landscapes, predominantly with his favorite color green. He imagined them, adding details, however, of careful and realistic studies of leaves, trees, birds, flowers, gestures, clothes and animals. Human figures merge harmoniously in the green halo of the landscape, gathering flowers, holding hands in circles. Idyllic couples offer each other roses. The enamored gazes at his beloved brushing her hair at the window, another with open arms declares his love to his chosen one. In short, everything is delicate, idyllic, and euphoric, sometimes with a touch of humor. And all this Lilliputian population immersed in glorious flora emerges from Júlio's diaphanous, filigree brushstrokes. He told me in 1974: "The painter must like all colors for variation. I use pink and red because it is obligatory. But what I really like is green. My paintings is always based on green. But not always to be the same, I do like colors, mix them, to make a different color. I learned to do it all by myself. My master was that on high". These statements confirm what the paintings mean visually: the search for a spiritualization of nature, which contains the human in his picture, similar to the Zen art in China, where the macrocosm encompasses the microcosm. This one painting that concentrates in the symbols of the garden, fountain and home, a content of intense spirituality and harmony. The individual has overcome the obstacles of his particular human adventure of a poor black man, without family most of his life, transcending them, and was able to then create in the resemblance of his purified ego a perfect image of the world, transubstantiated in the figuration of the landscape. The garden is the emblem of ordered nature, the concluded vegetable garden of the conscious, in contrast to the disorder attributed to the unconscious, the forest. There is only one work in all his production where the forest theme appears with the leopard to confront us, solitary, from the mystery of the shadowy woods, in a far-distant analogy with the tropical fantasies of Douanier Rousseau. The fountain, figure of purity, is a usual complement of the gardens. Another constant in Júlio's work is the figure of the house, to which he often attributes the meaning of temple. Identified by Cirlot to the idea of Center, the temple enables the passage between the terrestrial and celestial levels, in this painting of clear metaphysical meaning. The house is also the central place for the encounter between male and female, the waiting place and of the roads traveled. In Praia, however, while we can contemplate the infinite sea with the onlooker, his solitude of an individual with his back to us, entirely dressed for

city life, is already a sign of man's break with the paradisiacal landscape that we see on this side, on the edge of industrial civilization. Eduardo Subirats, in *Paisagens da solidão* (1986), comments on the figures with their back to us, before landscapes, which populate the pictures of Caspar David Friedrich. Their reflecting distance would point to "an account on the modern condition of human existence: torn from his interior and exterior nature by their own civilizing artifacts, and exposed to an overwhelming historic horizon, where vast concurrent forces agitate under the signs of decline". Júlio was born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and died when 85 years old. He fully experienced in his urban life the social and technological changes over this long period. Despite the discreet metaphysics imbued in his work, he did not escape the exposure to historic anguish of his time, expressing it with equal subtlety.

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



Untitled,  
Oil on eucatex  
49 x 68 cm | 19.29 x 26.77 in

**Individual Exhibitions:**

2012 A gift-wrapped world Júlio Martins da Silva | paintings, Galeria Estação, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1973 Solo, Intercontinental Gallery, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1973 Solo, National Museum of Fine Arts (MNBA), Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1969 Solo, Escada Gallery, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

**Collective Exhibitions:**

2019 Our Brazilian Naifs, Evandro Carneiro Arte, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

2016 Between looks: poetics of the Brazilian soul, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2010 Art Naif – With sugar and love, Centro Cultural Professor Daud Jorge Simão, São José do Rio Preto, SP, Brazil

2010 Brazilian Cultures Pavilion: Pure blends, Brazilian Cultures Pavilion, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2006 Live Culture Livre the Brazilian People, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2002 Pop Brazil: folk art and the popular in art, CCBB, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2000 Brazil + 500 Rediscovery Exhibition. Popular Art, Biennial Foundation, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1988 The Fascinating World of Naïf Painters, in Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1982 Football: interpretations, Banerj Art Gallery, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

### **Public Collections:**

Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

### **Selected Publications:**

2018 Brazilian popular art: contemporary views, WMF Martins Fontes publisher, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2012 A gift-wrapped world Júlio Martins da Silva | Paintings, Paulo Pasta and Vilma Eid, Lis Gráfica, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2007 Live the Living Culture of the Brazilian People, Afro Brasil Museum, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2002 Pop Brazil: folk art and the popular in art, CCBB, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2000 Brazil + 500 Rediscovery Exhibition | Popular Art, Takano publisher, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1988 The Afro-Brazilian hand: Meaning of Artistic and Historical Contribution, Emílio Odebrecht Foundation, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

1978 Mitopoéticas de 9 artistas brasileiros, author Leila Coelho Frota, publisher Funarte, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

# Exhibitions



2012 A gift-wrapped world Júlio Martins da Silva | paintings, Galeria Estação, São Paulo, SP, Brazil





# Artworks



Untitled,  
Oil on cardboard  
42 x 50 cm | 16.53 x 19.68 in





Casarão no campo,  
Oil on cardboard  
44 x 53 cm | 17.32 x 20.86 in



Untitled,  
Oil on cardboard  
42 x 60 cm | 16.53 x 23.62 in





Passeio Público,  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 60 cm | 15.74 x 23.62 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 Martins, 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](http://www.galeriaestacao.com.br)

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