



Mestre Galdino

Biography

Mestre Galdino [Manoel Galdino de Freitas]

1924, São Caetano, PE, Brazil - 1996, Alto do Moura, PE, Brazil

Galdino, who ordered letter paper for himself in Caruaru, in 1986, as a ceramist and poet, is one of the most important active ceramists working in 20th century Brazil. When I visited him that year, I discovered that he would fix in the hands of his clay figures, or in niches in sculptures, little paper scrolls with verses about them. He hung other framed poems on the wall of his home, in which he defies the acceptance of his work, provocateur par excellence: *Tem carranca com recorte / criada por minha mão / com bichinhos diferente / que faz a circulação. / Mesmo as peças de Galdino / é uma adivinhação.* [There's figureheads with carving / by myself created / with creatures like no other. / Even pieces by Galdino / it's a riddle.] In 1940 Galdino was by now in Caruaru, where he married Maria Marciolina, lace maker and ceramist, had three children and worked in a brick factory

making tiles and bricks. He was a local government employee working as stonemason. That was when he began to model in clay. During Easter week he would make a Judas figure beating. When the town hall ordered him to plaster the Alto do Moura ambulatory in 1974, he finally had the chance to see, as he said, “such wealth and beauty in the art of a people”. He was referring to ceramists Zé Rodrigues, and Zé Caboclo, in short, the whole authentic school that had been formed around master Vitalino. In his enraptured moments that characterized his personality, he left his public service within 30 days and moved with his family to Alto do Moura. He always lived in poverty and was sometimes forced to do other kinds of work to survive and continue with his art. Completely different from the other local artists, his prolific original production in the 1970s called special attention of art and media specialists, and he went beyond the boundaries of Alto do Moura to be known by the Brazilian elite. Galdino’s sculpture was divided in two large series of works. That of hieratic, elongated and courageous outlaws, such as Lampião and Corisco, and their female companions Maria Bonita, or characters from *Sonho realizado* (a dream come true) where the human and animal symbioses take shape and became very common to his work.

The very surface of the sculptures is also provocative, bristly, in the almost cactus-like spikes of the clothes. This is clearly seen in the poet Galdino with his guitar. In anthological sculptures of almost on meter high, with inscriptions in clay, as, for example, *Discovery of Brazil*, in the 1970s, the aspect of ferocity of the human, wearing a feather headdress, bristly clothes, is underscored by the long daggers in his belt. At the back of the sculpture, Galdino made an incision in the clay with words describing the battles of Jaraguá, *de armas em punho, no túmulo do rei morto por um tabajara em uma aldeia Africana, em 1413* [Jaraguá, with weapons in hand, on the tomb of the king killed by a tabajara in an African village in 1413]. Mythological times, created by him to demonstrate his view of Brazilian history. This collection of defiant figures, with the surface of the material really exfoliate, develops with tireless invention during the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s the artist created another large series of monstrous dreamlike figures, such as *Calango*, *Carranca corte de Vênus*, *Guariba Milena*, *Jaraguá*, where the human features are very tenuous. In *Jaraguá*, a man with a simian face gallop on a large dragon lizard, whose body shows the remains of a car wheel. The anthropomorphization of the car and the airplane, first appearing in the 1980s, is now to change the machine into something

organic, overlapping it, not without suffering for the man, its driver. This is how he exposes, in a very modern style, the question of violence imposed by technology on the individual. Like a master moving the various segments in which his figures will develop into legs, arms, and heads, he scarifies, cuts and incises them. These creatures are threatening sphinxes, sometimes anthropophagic, or hybrids, as Lampião-sereia for example. His work was highlighted in the Brésil, Arts Populaires exhibition (Grand Palais, Paris, 1987) and some pieces belong to important collections and museums of popular art in Brazil.

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



Individual Exhibitions:

2021 Poetics of Creation, Museu do Pontal, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

2019 Frontiers of Art: Naif Creators, Espaço Cultural BNDES, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

2019 It is Created Like This, Galeria de Artes Mestre Galdino no Sesc Caruaru, Petropolis, PE, Brazil

2013 Imaginary Creatures, Museu de Arte Pontal, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

2012 Janete Costa “A Look”, Museu Janete Costa de Arte Popular, Niterói, RJ, Brazil

2012 The stubbornness of the Imagination - ten Brazilian artists, Tomie Ohtake Institute, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2011 Brazil in Popular Art, Museu CAasa do Pontal Collection, Brasília, DF, Brazil

2010 Pavilion of Brazilian Cultures: Puras Misturas, Pavilion of Brazilian Cultures, Ibirapuera Park, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Public Collections:

Memorial Mestre Galdino, Carau, PE, Brazil

Museu do Pontal, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Selected Publications:

2013 Mestre Galdino: o ceramista poeta de Caruaru, author Rosângela Ferreira de Oliveira Vitorino, São Paulo, Brazil

2012 Stubbornness of the Imagination: ten Brazilian artists, Maria Lucia Montes, Martins Fontes publisher, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

2012 Janete Costa “A look”, Museu Janete Costa de Arte Popular, Niterói, RJ, Brazil

2005 Little Dictionary of the Brazilian People’s Art – 20th Century, by anthropologist and poet Lélia Coelho Frota, publisher Aeroplano, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

1980 O Reinado da lua – escultores populares do Nordeste, editora Salamandra, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Exhibitions



2019 Frontiers of Art: Naif Creators, Espaço Cultural BNDES, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Artworks



João Marambá,
Ceramic
39 x 22 x 23 cm | 15.35 x 8.66 x 9.06 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

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