ARTIST BIOGRAPHY


ACCOMPANYING EVENTS

Chelpa Ferro
Sat 9 June, 12–6pm, Main Gallery, Free
Alongside his own practice Zerbini is a founding member of Chepa Ferro, a band and artist collective established in the mid-1990s who represented Brazil at the 2005 Venice Biennale and participated in the 20th São Paulo Biennial.


Exhibition Tours
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Luiz Zerbini (b. 1959, São Paulo, Brazil) is one of South America’s pre-eminent artists, acclaimed for his distinctive coloured figurative and abstract paintings. His work was included in the landmark 1984 exhibition Como vai você Geração 80? (How Are You Doing, 80s Generation?), which aimed to revolutionise and challenge preconceptions around painting in modern Brazil.

This exhibition, Luiz Zerbini’s first major solo show in the UK, reveals his exploration over the past decade into the entanglement of nature with humanity in and around Rio de Janeiro, where he lives and works. His wide-ranging practice spans figuration, abstraction and the points of intersection between them.

**MAIN GALLERY**

Razo Intuitivo (Intuitive Ratio), 2018, is an eight-metre long sculptural installation which lends its title to the show. Described by the artist as a three-dimensional painting, six-metre lengths of bamboo emerge from an abstraction of a river bed constructed from layers of glass sheets painted to imply the passage of water. Underneath, shallow trays of an abstraction of a river bed constructed from layers of glass sheets were introduced to regulate the water levels of the streets of Rio. Graffiti adorned exposed pipes on the banks of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, introduced to regulate the water levels between the city and the sea, run diagonally through the canvas, as shadowed waves of foam break onto the banks of the lagoon in the background. The red and white painted wooden sign is both an observation of the city’s directional signage and a reference to a midsummer Festa Junina party at Chelpa Ferro band member Barrão’s countryside home and other rural landscapes in Brazil.

In Concrete Jungle and Ensaio human life is conspicuous by its absence. What remains is a narrative of man’s futile attempt to find quick solutions to problems and a can-do resourcefulness that is ultimately ineffectual: the pipes pictured in Ensaio were introduced by the Rio de Janeiro State Water and Sewage Company far too late, whilst nearby a water tap connected to a hose has sprung a leak.

Presented alongside are three smaller-scale painted abstract works, each part of an ongoing investigation into geometric formats. Taking inspiration from Concretism, an art movement with a strong emphasis on geometrical abstraction, and the architecture of Brazilian cities, the juxtapositions of colour, shape and texture also act as an informal index to painting techniques evidenced in the larger figurative canvases.

Three monoprints created during a short residency at Inhotim are on display. Printed in the grounds of the gardens, the contemporary art museum and botanical garden located in Brumadinho, are also on display. Printed in the grounds of the gardens, Zerbini drew upon the plant life around him, including the leaves of the Árvore-do-Viajante plant or “traveller’s palm” (so called as the sheaths of its stem hold rainwater, an emergency drinking supply for dehydrated travellers) and the sharp spikes of a Macaúba palm. Sheaths of its stem hold rainwater, an emergency drinking supply for dehydrated travellers and berries are set against grid-like architectures while tossed shoes, an electrical transformer turned pink by rust, a loudspeaker and a discarded packet of cigarettes nestle amongst the lush vegetation, suggesting a recently abandoned street party.

Ensaio, 2014 depicts the Atlantic Ocean’s encroachment on and erosion of the streets of Rio. Graffiti adorned exposed pipes on the banks of the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, introduced to regulate the water levels between the city and the sea, run diagonally through the canvas, as shadowed waves of foam break onto the banks of the lagoon in the background. The red and white painted wooden sign is both an observation of the city’s directional signage and a reference to a midsummer Festa Junina party at Chelpa Ferro band member Barrão’s countryside home and other rural landscapes in Brazil.

**FIRST FLOOR GALLERIES**

Photography is permitted in the galleries. Large print guides are available just outside the exhibition.