

Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato

10 January–9 February 2019
24 Grafton Street, London

Private view: Wednesday 9 January, 6–8 PM



Sem título, n.d. Oil on hardboard, 16 1/2 × 12 1/2 inches
(41.9 × 31.8 cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Brazilian-born artist Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato (1900–1995). Spanning two floors of the gallery's London location, this exhibition will mark the first time Lorenzato's work is being shown in the United Kingdom and the first solo presentation of his work outside of Brazil.

Among the foremost Brazilian artists of his generation, Lorenzato developed a singular body of paintings centred on his fastidious observations of the everyday subjects he encountered in his hometown of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, including land- and townscapes, favelas, and the people he came across in his meandering walks through town. Using a rich palette of self-made pigments to describe his surroundings, Lorenzato's distinct compositions are characterised by reduced geometric forms and richly textured surfaces that he achieved through the use of brushes, combs, and forks.

Despite studying for a brief period at the Reale Accademia delle Arti in Vicenza, Italy, in 1925, Lorenzato was mostly self-taught, developing his technical proficiency in painting through various jobs he held as a mural painter in Brazil, and later, restoring frescoes in Rome. With an avid curiosity and natural propensity for the arts, Lorenzato educated himself on movements across art history, favouring in particular Cimabue and the Italian Renaissance painters Masaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. He was also aware of contemporary artists in Europe—including Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse—as well as the prevalent Brazilian Concrete Art movement that emerged out of his hometown in the 1950s. Even while he was informally aware of such practices, Lorenzato never ascribed to any one particular school or movement. Instead, his paintings derive from a pure dedication to painting the world in front of him. As he once noted, 'I leave home, pick up a piece of paper and draw on it, then I note down the colours more or less and then, when I have the scale models, I paint. I have to see the landscape and the things thereon. If I do not see it, then I am unable to paint.'¹

Lorenzato spent the majority of his life in Brazil, but also travelled extensively throughout Europe from 1920 to 1948. It was during this time, in 1927, that Lorenzato met the Dutch painter Cornelius Keesman, with whom he went on a yearlong cycling trip across Eastern Europe, creating small gouache works on cardstock that he sold to local residents. For the next two decades, Lorenzato held a number of occupations in Italy,

¹ Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato cited in *Lorenzato. Circuito Atelier* (Belo Horizonte: Editora C/Arte, 2004), pp. 30–31.

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where his parents were born, and in other countries in Europe, before finally settling back in Belo Horizonte where he lived and worked until his death in 1995.

The works on view span the last three decades of the artist's career in Brazil and highlight the essential motifs and methods that occupied him throughout his life. A colourful arrangement of fabric is suspended from a clothesline in an untitled work from 1978, illustrating Lorenzato's characteristic use of geometric shapes to suggest objects in real space. This painting shows a visual parallel to the work of Brazilian modernist painter Alfredo Volpi (1896–1988), who painted the everyday subjects of São Paulo, emphasising, like Lorenzato, a deep rootedness in their shared Brazilian culture. In *Pôr do Sol* (1989), a row of flower-patterned fabric hangs at the entrance to a neighbourhood; stacked houses rendered in earthy tones of brown and orange are set against a vibrant pink-hued sun setting just beyond a mountainscape. Sunsets such as these recur throughout the artist's oeuvre, often in the form of a plainly rendered circle painted in a uniform shade. In all of his works, Lorenzato imbues his compositions with a freedom of expression, masterfully using colour to delineate space and distilling objects down to their essential forms.

Appreciated during his lifetime by artists including the leading Brazilian sculptor Amílcar de Castro (1920–2002), with whom he was included in a group exhibition at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo in 2018, Lorenzato was nevertheless relatively unknown outside of his hometown of Belo Horizonte, and his work has only recently begun to be considered within the broader context of Brazilian modernism. In 2014, the artist's work was the subject of two solo exhibitions, one at Galeria Estação and the other at Bergamin & Gomide, both in São Paulo, which were organised by the artists Alexandre da Cunha and Rivane Neuenschwander, testifying to Lorenzato's continued relevance today.

Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato was born in 1900 to Italian parents who immigrated to Brazil in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1920, the artist moved with his parents to Italy, where he worked various construction and painting jobs on and off throughout Europe before permanently returning to Belo Horizonte in 1948. After sustaining an injury to his leg in 1956, Lorenzato committed himself to painting full time. In 1965, he had his first two group exhibitions in Belo Horizonte, followed by his first solo presentation there in 1967 at the Minas Tênis Clube at the age of 67. Since then, his work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Brazil, including a 1995 retrospective exhibition at the Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte. In 1971, the artist represented Brazil in the 3rd Triennale of Bratislava.

His work is represented in public collections internationally, including Fundação Clóvis Salgado, Belo Horizonte; Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP); Nouveau Musée National de Monaco; Pinacoteca de São Paulo; and Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Brazil.

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