

## Stephen Friedman Gallery

### Luiz Zerbini: Fire

**Online:**

26 January– 1 April 2021

Preview: Monday 25 January



We are delighted to announce Brazilian artist Luiz Zerbini's second exhibition at Stephen Friedman Gallery. This follows his acclaimed solo show at South London Gallery in 2018 and his participation in 'Trees' at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, in 2019.

Zerbini's visual language mixes the organic and the geometric to explore the relationship between colour, light and movement. It is a language grounded in the surroundings of his hometown, Rio de Janeiro: the flora and fauna of the nearby rainforest and the dazzling South American sun. The exhibition comprises new paintings and works on paper. There are figurative works with palm fronds, coiled ferns and roughly textured tree trunks, and purely abstract works that are inspired by concretism and its strong emphasis on geometry, line and colour. The presentation is available to view from Monday 25 January at Stephen Friedman Gallery's Online Viewing Room and will open to the public as soon as government guidance allows.

Across his career, which spans over three decades, Zerbini has developed a complex visual vocabulary at the intersection of figuration and abstraction. He first emerged within the generational (and global) 'return to painting' of the 1980s, centred in Rio de Janeiro around the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts and subsequently defined by the landmark exhibition 'Como vai você Geração 80?' (How Are You Doing, 80s Generation?, 1984).

In the group show 'Trees' at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, in 2019, the artist transformed the main gallery into an urban jungle, combining a large-scale herbarium — complete with a living fig tree — with hyperreal paintings of the rainforest and symbols of Brazilian modernity.

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm  
and Saturday, 11am-5pm

## Social Media

Facebook:

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The grid — a formal leitmotif closely associated with modernism and in Zerbini's work a subtle nod to the mosaic pavements and façades of Brazilian tower blocks — is present in all of the paintings in the exhibition. Using it as a compositional structuring device, several pieces show geometric forms combined with lush, tropical flora. A cacophony of colour, these works convey the immersive and seductive quality of Brazil's natural environment. A six-metre-wide painting, 'Happiness Beyond Paradise', captures the kaleidoscopic nature of this combination to dizzying effect. Flooding the viewer's perception, Zerbini tries to provide the impression of "being in the painting as you could be in a forest", as he has stated. Plants and trees encroach upon the work's gridded structure. These forms merge with areas of abstract mark-making, demonstrating how the artist appropriates patterns found in nature and incorporates them into his own vernacular. The rhythmic structure of the painting captures the movement of trees swaying in the breeze, lending the work a striking dynamism.

The artist plays with the optical sensations of placing colours and forms alongside each other, emulating the intoxicating effect of the sights and sounds of the rainforest. Hard-edged lines intersect with sweeping curves, resulting in complex, curvilinear forms of vibrant colours and textures. A series of smaller works focus on singular techniques and patterns, providing a kind of index to the range of the artist's methods that mingle in the larger canvases.

Luiz Zerbini was born in São Paulo in 1959 and lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Zerbini had his first institutional solo exhibition in the UK at South London Gallery, London in 2018. Zerbini was the subject of major mid-career surveys at Casa Daros, Rio de Janeiro (2014); Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho (2013); and Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (2012).

He has exhibited in galleries and museums internationally and has represented Brazil at notable biennials including the São Paulo Biennial, (2010 and 1987); Bienal do Mercosul (2001); Bienal de La Habana (2000) and Bienal Internacional de Cuenca (1996). He is also part of the renowned Chelipa Ferro artist collective. In 1995, Zerbini won the grand prize of criticism in the Visual Arts category of Art Critics of São Paulo Association (APCA). His work is included in several notable collections, such as Instituto Inhotim, Brumadinho; Itaú Cultural Institute, São Paulo; Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro and Modern Art Museum of São Paulo.

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Online and at the gallery until 1 April 2021.