

cecilia brunson projects

Katie van Scherpenberg (b. 1940, São Paulo, Brazil, d. 2025, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

Born in São Paulo to European parents (her father, Pieter, was a naturalised Dutch citizen from Germany and her mother, Mildred, was Norwegian) in 1940, Katie van Scherpenberg soon moved to the US, then Canada, finally settling in London, where she lived until 1945. Van Scherpenberg's formative years were spent between Brazil and Europe, completing her studies in England, and a two-year scholarship granted by the German government in 1961-63 that allowed her to study painting in Munich with Georg Brenninger (1909-1988) and in Salzburg with Oskar Kokoshcka (1886-1980). Van Scherpenberg returned to Rio de Janeiro in 1964, one week after the military coup that installed a dictatorial regime that would remain in power for the next two decades.

In 1968 she took the radical decision to move and settle in the remote Amazonian island of Ilha de Santana. Here on an island by one of the world's most important rivers, she spent most of the next 17 years. The absolute lack of professional art materials drove her to research ways to make natural pigments from soil. Speaking about this period her life, the artist recounted: 'You could say that the river was, among other things, so much paint, for it contained a large quantity of pigments (ferrous oxides) from faraway places, and together with this paint it brought me a whole lot of information. In this sense, the river is somewhat like a painting...A river is like life, it is never stable, by its very nature - particularly the Amazon'.

The 1980s marked the expansion of van Scherpenberg's paintings into outdoor spaces. These ephemeral interventions on the landscape - or 'landscape paintings', as the artist calls them - consisted of the use of different types of pigments on beaches, gardens, and rivers. Works like *Esperando Papai* [Waiting for Daddy] (2004), *Jardim Vermelho* [Red Garden] (1986) and *Furo* (2001) meditate on geography, ancestry and memory across the artist's life.

In the early 1980s, alongside her practice, van Scherpenberg worked on a project commissioned by the National Foundation for the Arts (FUNARTE) with the aim of developing good quality art materials for the Brazilian market which involved the analysis of mineral pigments from Brazilian soil that could be used to produce paints. At the time, artists could not access high quality paints due to extortionate tax import duties and a lack of interest from Brazilian industries to develop products for this niche market. This not only provided the artist with the opportunity to expand her research on local materials initiated in the Amazon territory, but also opened up new possibilities to explore materiality in her own work.

cecilia brunson projects

During the 1970s, van Scherpenberg started to exhibit widely and won the prestigious Modern Art National Salon prize in 1976. In the 1980s she participated in two São Paulo Biennials, presenting Kronos at the XVI São Paulo Bienal in 1981 and The Via Sacra at the XX São Paulo Bienal in 1989. More recent exhibitions include Olamapá at Centro Cultural Oi Futuro, Rio de Janeiro in 2019, Sin título at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin in 2006 and Feuerbach and I at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói in 2000. The artist's work is held in a number of significant collections in Brazil such as the Gilberto Chateaubriand collection; the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro; the Museum of Contemporary Art of Brasília; and the National Museum of Fine arts, Rio de Janeiro, as well as in collections internationally such as Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; the Royal Collection of Sweden, Stockholm; and the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art, UK.

Since August 2019, Katie van Scherpenberg has been exclusively represented by Cecilia Brunson Projects.

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Katie van Scherpenberg

Born in 1940 in São Paulo, Brazil

Died in 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Education

1957 Studied painting in Rio de Janeiro (Caterina Baratelli)

1961 Sculpture, Academie der Bildende Kunst (George Brenninger)

1963 Schule der Sehens, Salzburg, Austria (Oscar Kokoschka)

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2025 *Katie van Scherpenberg: The Body of the Work*, Galatea, Padre João Manuel, São Paulo, Brazil

2023 *Traces: 1968 – 2007*, Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK

2022 *Yakecan*, Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2021 *Overlooking the Amazon*, Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK

2019 *Olamapá*, Centro Cultural Oi Futuro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2016 *Santana*, Grande Campo, Oi Futuro Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2014 *Pororoca, Amazônia no Mar*, Museu de Arte no Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2010 *Distante - Far Away*, Paco Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2006 *Sin titulo*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US

2005 *Esperando Papai (Waiting for Daddy)*, Mercedes Viegas Arte Contemporânea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

2005 Galeria Anna Maria Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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- 2004 *Sintese*, Mercedes Viegas Arte Contemporânea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *Occupied Spaces*, intervention, University of Texas campus, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US
- 2003 *In Between*, Anna Maria Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2001 *Obra Passante*, intervention on Diabo Beach, Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2001 *Furo*, intervention at Boa Viagem beach, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2000 *Feuerbach e eu na Paisagem*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói, Brazil
- 2000 *Desenhando o Tempo (Drawing Time)*, Museu do Telefone, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1999 *Mamá Prometo Ser Feliz*, Casa de América, Madrid, Spain
- 1999 *Pinturas Recentes*, Galeria Anna Maria Niemeyer Arte Contemporânea, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1996 *Incidentes*, Anna Maria Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1995 Galerie Debret, Paris, France
- 1995 Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1995 Anna Maria Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1992 *Katie van Scherpenberg e Enrico Bentivoglio*, Sala I, Centro Internazionale d'arte Contemporanea, Roma, Italy
- 1989 *The Via Sacra*, XX São Paulo Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1989 *Desenhos*, Artespaco Escritório de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1989 Anna Maria Niemeyer, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1988 Espaço Capital Arte Contemporânea, Brazil

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- 1987 *Tentativa*, Galeria de Arte do Centro Empresarial do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1986 Galeria Espaço Capital, Arte Contemporânea, Brazil
- 1985 Galeria Arco, Arte Contemporânea, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1985 *Spectrum, semana da cor*, Pontifícia Universidade Católica, PUC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1984 *Caveat*, Galeria MP2, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1983 *Rio Vermelho*, Centro Cultural Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1981 *Kronos*, XVI São Paulo Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1981 Galeria de Arte e Pesquisa de Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, UFES, Vitória, Spain
- 1981 Centro Cultural Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2018 *Feito poeira ao vento - Coleção MAR*, Museo de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2016 *Ephemera*, diálogos e entre-vistas, MAC Niterói (Niterói Contemporary Art Museum), Brazil
- 2016 *A Cor do Brasil*, Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2012 *Amazônia, Ciclos de Modernidade*, Centro Cultur Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2010 *Amazônia a arte*, Museu Vale, Fundação Clóvis Salgado, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- 2010 *sp-arte*, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil
- 2009 *Bienal do Fim do Mundo*, Ushuaia, Patagonia, Argentina

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- 2008 ARCO Madrid, Spain
- 2007 VI Bienal de Artes Visuais do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil
- 2007 *A imagem do som do samba*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2006 *New, Now, Next*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US
- 2006 *Manobras Radicais*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2006 *Arte Contemporânea*, Mercedes Viegas Escritório de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2005 *24° Salão Arte Pará*, Fundação Romulo Maiorana, Belém, Brazil
- 2005 *10 Indicam IO*, Centro Cultural Cândido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2005 *Coletiva 2005*, Mercedes Viegas Escritório de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2004 *Fishing in International Waters*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US
- 2003 *Arte em Diálogo*, MAM RJ (Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *Zona Oculta — entre o público e o privado*, Centro da Mulher (CEDIM), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *Arte contemporânea nas Coleções Cariocas*, MAM-RJ, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *30 Artistas*, Mercedes Viegas Escritório de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *Projeto Brazilian Art*, Almacén Galeria de Arte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2003 *Vinte e cinco Anos Centro Cultural Cândido*, Galeria de Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1996 *The UECLAA Collection (University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art)*, Bolivar Hall, London, UK

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- 1996 *Dialog — Experiências Alemãs*, Goethe Institut e Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1996 *Impressões Itinerantes*, Fundação Clóvis Salgado, Palácio das Artes, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- 1996 *Mulheres Artistas no Acervo do MAC*, MAC-USP, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1996 *15° Salã o Arte Pará*, Museu de Arte de Belém, Brazil
- 1995 *Papel do Brasil*, Working People's Cultural Palace, Beijing, China
- 1995 *Rio, Mystêres et Frontiêres*, Musée de Pully, Lausanne, Switzerland
- 1995 *Impressões*, EAV Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1994 *Cidad e Imaginada (Imagined City)*, Museu de Arte de Brasília, III Fórum Brasília de Artes Visuais, Brasília, Brazil
- 1993 *Brazilian Contemporary Art*, MAC-USP, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1991 *Pintura*, Galeria Sergio Milliet e Galeria Rodrigo Mello Franco, Instituto Brasileiro de Arte e Cultura IBAC/Funarte, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1991 *O clássico no contemporâneo*, Paço das Artes, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1991 *Viva Brasil Viva*, Museu Liljevalchs Honsthall, Stockholm, Sweden
- 1991 *Aquisições Recentes*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil
- 1990 *Figurativismo/Abstracionismo: o vermelho na pintura Brasileira*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, SP; Itaú galeria, Brasília, Brazil
- 1989 *Panorama de Arte Atual Brasileira*, MAM São Paulo, Brazil
- 1989 *Rio Hoje*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1986 *Território Ocupado*, EAV Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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1987 *Colecionador: homenagem a Gilberto Chateaubriand*, São Paulo Museum of Modern Art, Brazil

1984 *Arte Brasileira do Século XX*, Museu Nacional de Belas Artes (MNBA), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

1984 VI Graphic Biennial, Fredrikstad, Norway

1982 5th Salão Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Museu de Arte, São Paulo, Brazil

1982 *Brazil: 60 years of modern art*, Coleção Gilberto Chateaubriand, Barbican, London, UK

1982 Perdigão, Lisboa, Portugal

1978 Salão Nacional de Artes Plásticas, Museu MNBA (Museu Nacional de Belas Artes), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Selected Bibliography

Amaral, Aracy. *Apresentação do catálogo da exposição 6 artistas*. São Paulo: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo, 1985.

Ayala, Walmir. *Salão Nacional de Arte Moderna*, catalogue. Rio de Janeiro, 1976.

Tadeu Charelli, 'Lançamento e Pouso,' *Revista Guia das Artes*, no. 16, 1989.

Herkenhoff, Paulo. 'Kronos,' *XVI Bienal de São Paulo*, catalogue. São Paulo, 1981.

Herkenhoff, Paulo. 'Rio Vermelho.' 1983.

Herkenhoff, Paulo. 'Caveat/Katie,' exhibition text. Rio de Janeiro: Galeria MP2, 1984.

Herkenhoff, Paulo. 'Katie e Pintura Letal,' 1995.

Herkenhoff, Paulo & Luís Camillo Osório. *Katie em Boa Viagem – Feuerbach e eu, na paisagem*, exhibition catalogue. Rio de Janeiro: MAC de Niterói, 2000.

cecilia brunson projects

Iriarte, Maria Elvira. *XX Bienal de São Paulo*, catalogue. São Paulo: 1990.

Katie van Scherpenberg: Overlooking the Amazon, exhibition booklet. London: Cecilia Brunson Projects, 2019.

Locke, Adrian. 'Tránsitos,' exhibition text. Madrid: Casa de América, 1999.

Olamapá, exhibition catalogue. Rio de Janeiro: Oi Futuro, 2020.

Pérez-Barriero, Gabriel. *Katie van Scherpenberg –!Esperando Papai*. 2005.

Pérez-Barriero, Gabriel. *Katie van Scherpenberg*, exhibition catalogue. Austin, Texas: Blanton Museum of Art, 2006.

Pérez Barreiro, Gabriel. 'Katie van Scherpenberg, Duna-1992,' *UECLAA Report 1995*. Essex: University of Essex, 1995.

Zanini, Walter. *XVI Bienal de São Paulo*, catalogue. São Paulo, 1981.

Selected Public Collections

Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US

Cândido Mendes collection, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Collection Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, New York, US

Gilberto Chateaubriand collection, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Itaú S.A. collection, São Paulo, Brazil

Moreira Saltes collection, São Paulo, Brazil

Unibanco S.A. collection, São Paulo, Brazil

The Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Museum of Contemporary Art of Brasília, Brazil

National Museum of Fine arts, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo, Brazil

Niterói Contemporary Art Museum, Brazil

The Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Royal collection of Sweden, Stockholm

University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art (ESCALA), Essex, UK