

Press Release

Judith Lauand

Frieze Masters

11 - 15 October 2023



Judith Lauand, *Até a morte [Until Death]*, 1969

Cecilia Brunson Projects is delighted to present a selection of masterpieces by the pioneering Brazilian artist Judith Lauand (1922-2022), at her first solo presentation at Frieze Masters (Booth SO2). This Spotlight presentation includes works from 1950s-1970s, a period in which Lauand had a marked influence on the development of Brazilian art, from her important contributions to the Concrete movement to her deviations into Pop art. This comes at a moment of celebration and re-evaluation of this pivotal figure of geometric abstraction, following her major retrospective at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP) in Brazil in 2022-23.

Lauand is renowned as the 'Dama do Concretismo' or 'First Lady of Concretism,' being the sole female member of Grupo Ruptura, the avant-garde group who pioneered abstraction in Brazil. The paintings presented here reflect the group's rational and cerebral approach to painting, influenced by artists such as Josef Albers and Max Bill, though offset by the soft, earthy palette that marks Lauand's early work, and her embrace of material textures and brushstrokes that allow the calculated compositions to retain a human touch.

Amongst the key figures of Brazilian Neo-concretism, Lauand's work is often uniquely characterised by a sensibility towards contradiction and poetic deviation; in the exhibited drawings in

particular, forms are held in tension across the picture plane within linear structures, frequently destabilised and animated by decisive ruptures to her pattern.

The presentation includes an essential example of Lauand's 1960s experimentations into figurative art in a Pop style. *Até a morte [Until Death]* (1969) incorporates the wordplay of Concrete poetry; the suspended text can be reconfigured into multiple phrases around the words 'amor [love]' and 'morte [death].' In an image both sinister and passionate, the female figure is radiant, her hair like a flame, held by the strong grip of her male counterpart. This piece was first exhibited at the 10th São Paulo Biennial, boycotted by many countries opposed to Brazil's military dictatorship. In choosing to exhibit on this occasion, Lauand positioned herself amongst a younger generation of female artists encouraging conversations on censorship and on the social conditions of women in Latin America.

These works represent foundational examples and significant moments in a career that spanned six decades; Lauand worked into the 21st century, passing away in 2022 at the age of 100. Her prominence in the Brazilian art scene is reflected in her inaugural presence at the 3rd São Paulo Biennial in 1955 and the 1st Exposição Nacional de Arte Concreta in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (1956-57), and the 1960 group exhibition *Contribuição da Mulher às Artes Plásticas do País* at Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, celebrating women artists in Brazil. Meanwhile, her international importance as a Concrete artist is cemented by her inclusion in Max Bill's 1960 Zürich retrospective *Konkrete Kunst: 50 Years of Development*. Lauand's work is held in important public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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