

A poem is made of many dialogues, in a web that is woven by different voices, at varying speeds and times. Like the morning, in “Tecendo a Manhã” [Weaving the Morning], (...) by João Cabral de Melo Neto, woven and lifted by many roosters that together are singing: one takes the scream that another has launched and, like that, goes from one to the next, little by little, writing the poem. The author is a reader, and writes with and starting from, cutting, rethinking, dislocating. Poets in different places and languages search for a common chant, the infinite conversation of poetry.

– Marília Garcia in “Pensar com as Mãos” [To Think with Hands], 2025

The River that Covers Me features works by **José Leonilson** (Fortaleza, Brazil, 1957-1993), **Feliciano Centurión** (San Ignacio, Paraguay, 1962-1996) and **Matheus Chiaratti** (São Paulo, Brazil, b. 1988). Their dialogue is not only poetic but visual. When putting the exhibition together, I couldn’t help but wonder what Leonilson and Centurión would think about it, and pictured a conversation between Chiaratti and the two artists — an imaginary friendship.

Leonilson and Centurión represent the essence of the personal being political, blurring lines between private and public. Their groundbreaking works explore themes from loneliness, sickness and mortality to desire, queerness and love — hinting at the spiritual. They use similar media, including paintings on canvas (which we see in the exhibition) and embroidered work on ready-made textiles, all tied by the very frequent use of written words as *almost-laments*. The bittersweet messages may intersect truth and fiction, vulnerability and courage, grief and humor, affection and fear. The two counterparts had brutally short careers – both artists died in their 30s from HIV-related complications.

Susan Breyer refers to Feliciano’s practice in the Brooklyn Rail magazine as “proffering both courageous perspective and tender wisdom” — which I believe applies to all three artists.

The works presented by Chiaratti function as an emotional cartography — trying to digest the world through genuine curiosity. He tends to his subjects with the passionate dedication of a gardener, while also using poetry as a fundamental part of this visual diary.

The River that Covers Me tends to the mysterious flow that connects Leonilson, Centurión and Chiaratti beyond time. It is all part of the same chant, the same fabric, the same river... a river that is constantly passing, constantly changing. *Never-ending*.

– Gisela Gueiros