

Estate of Feliciano Centurión (Paraguay, 1962-1996)

Feliciano Centurión is a Paraguayan artist who died in 1996 at the age of 34, one of the countless victims of the HIV/AIDS epidemic that decimated an entire generation.

Centurión was born in San Ignacio, in the southern region of Paraguay, close to the Argentine border. He was raised by his mother and grandmother in an ultra-conservative and catholic society. In 1980 Centurión moved to Buenos Aires to study at the national art schools. More important than the training was the vibrant cultural milieu in which he now found himself. By the mid 1980s, Argentina was emerging from a brutal dictatorship, and artists and intellectuals were enjoying new freedoms and expressive possibilities. Centurión felt liberated not only by this new artistic spirit, but also by the ability to be open in his sexuality. These issues were closely related: as the expression of individual subjectivity, sexuality itself became a contested site, as evidenced by the phrase, The personal is the political.

In the late 1980s a small and unassuming university cultural center, the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas (El Rojas), became the epicenter of an unexpected revolution in the visual arts. Under the directorship of the artist Jorge Gumier Maier, El Rojas championed a new generation of artists (Arte Light movement) whose shared concerns included the everyday, self-expression, an interest in kitsch aesthetics, and an exuberant, almost Baroque, aesthetic. Centurión became a core member of this group of artists, showing several times at El Rojas, and in many ways exemplifying the aesthetic choices of that generation.

In the early 1990s Centurión started painting exotic animals on the large, cheap synthetic blankets used for household packing and for shelter by the homeless. The contrast between the poverty of the material and the exuberance of the bold and expressive animals shows a remarkable confidence and originality for such a young artist. Some of the animals depicted relate directly to Centurión's subtropical origins: yacares (small crocodiles), lizards, and surubí (large river fish native to the region). Others are more clearly fantastical, such as a series of octopuses, jellyfish, and anemones.

After his HIV diagnosis, Centurión worked in increasingly small and intricate formats. He liked to embroider animals and mythical beings, in keeping with Paraguay's Guaraní weaving traditions, and used his own text, too, often in reference to his ill-health. In common with Félix González-Torres, ACT UP, José Leonilson, and General Idea, the use of sentiment and traditionally feminine visual languages puts Centurión at the centre of this generation of artists who began to explore gender and sexuality in the 1990s. Although his career was tragically short, he remains a central but little-recognized figure of recent contemporary art history.

Cecilia Brunson Projects represents the artist's estate and works closely with Feliciano's family.

This document was updated on February 9, 2024. For reference only and not for purposes of publication.
For more information, please contact the gallery

Feliciano Centurión

Born in San Ignacio, Paraguay, 1962-1996

Education

Prilidiano Pueyrredon School of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires

School of Fine Arts of the Nation, Ernesto de la Corcova, Buenos Aires

Selected Solo Exhibitions

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| 2023 | <i>Feliciano Centurión, 'Telas y Textos,'</i> Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, New York, US |
| 2022 | <i>Feliciano Centurión,</i> Galeria Millan, São Paulo SP, Brazil |
| 2020 | <i>Feliciano Centurión: Abrigo,</i> Americas Society, New York, US |
| 2019 | <i>Feliciano Centurión: I am Awake,</i> Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK |
| 2018 | <i>Affective Affinities,</i> 33rd Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil |

Selected Group Exhibitions

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| 2024 | <i>Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art,</i> Barbican, London, UK; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands |
| 2022 | <i>Theme: AIDS (1993),</i> Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo, Norway |
| 2021 | <i>Bodies of Water,</i> 13th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China |
| 2011 | <i>Recovering Beauty. The 1990s in Buenos Aires,</i> Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas, US |
| 2007 | <i>Arte contemporáneo,</i> MALBA—Fundación Costantini, Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| 1994 | The 5th Havana Biennial, Cuba |

Selected Awards and Honours

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| 1989 | Award from the Manliba Foundation, Centro Cultural de Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| 1990 | Third place at the Martel Biennial of Painting, Visual Arts Centre, Asunción, Paraguay |
| 1992 | New World Foundation Award, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| 1996 | Buenos Aires City Bank Foundation Award, Hugo Del Carril Hall, Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina |

Selected Public Collections

- Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
- Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin
- Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA)
- Museo Castagnino + Macro, Rosario, Argentina