*Saudade**
Ulises Beisso,
Feliciano Centurion,
José Leonilson

*Organized in collaboration with
Almeida & Dale

Some need to invent a world in order to inhabit it. A world made of images, words, memories, and desires. An intimate territory where what we feel finds a form through which to exist.
For Ulises Beisso, Feliciano Centurión, and José Leonilson, art was precisely this: the possibility of constructing a language of their own and, through creation, finding a singular way of being in the world.

Working in Montevideo, Buenos Aires, and different cities across Brazil, the three artists developed, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, distinct universes in which personal experience acquired artistic and symbolic dimensions. Their trajectories unfolded at a time of profound transformations in the ways the body, identity, and desire were represented. Shaped by experiences of sexual dissidence, they found in art a space of freedom in which to imagine alternative identities and ways of relating to the world. Although they did not belong to the same movement or share a common aesthetic program, their works reveal a fundamental affinity: the transformation of intimate experience into the very foundation of their artistic language.

In Ulises Beisso's work, imagination unfolds as a territory without borders. From the fantastical figures of his *Mujeres Aladas* to the anatomical representations of the mid-1990s, his practice constructs a personal mythology in which identities are transformed and desire finds new possibilities of expression. Hearts, genitals, and organs acquire an intimate and symbolic dimension that transcends their physical nature. The body ceases to be a fixed form and becomes a sensitive landscape where pleasure, imagination, and the freedom to be different coexist. His work celebrates the strange, the marvelous, and the possibility of reinventing oneself.

Born in Paraguay, Feliciano Centurión developed his artistic practice in Argentina, particularly in Buenos Aires during the 1990s, in dialogue with an artistic scene that was transforming the relationships between art, everyday life, and intimacy. His work finds its distinctive language in domestic objects: blankets, fabrics, and embroideries become surfaces upon which memories and emotions acquire a tangible presence. By incorporating



embroidery, traditionally associated with the domestic sphere, he transforms an everyday gesture into a form of personal expression. His embroidered words, animals, flowers, and small symbols construct an affective vocabulary that turns familiar materials into spaces of protection and tenderness. In works such as *Soy una flor silvestre que brota por medio del asfalto*, *Florece*, *Descansa tu cabeza en mis brazos*, and *Escucha el latido de tu corazón*, each stitch seems to hold a story, a gesture of care, a way of preserving what is loved. The ordinary becomes extraordinary, and delicacy acquires an unexpected strength.

For José Leonilson, artistic creation was a way of recording the movements of his inner life. His drawings, paintings, and embroideries bring together words, names, figures, and signs that compose a deeply personal emotional cartography. Love, longing, solitude, and encounters emerge as fragments of an intimate narrative. In works such as *Elegância e continência*, *Os pensamentos do coração – miniatura*, *[Truth; fiction]*, and *Fonte, o vazio*, words, images, and materials come together to express what seems impossible to articulate fully. His works often take on the character of a personal diary, composed of confessions, memories, and messages addressed to someone. Within them, fragility becomes a way of approaching the world with radical sensitivity.

The relationship between these three artists lies not only in the subjects they explored, but also in the ways they transformed lived experience into a form of knowledge and expression. Challenging conventional representations of the body and identity, Beisso imagined anatomies and creatures that exceed established categories; Centurión transformed domestic materials into vehicles for expressions of affection; and Leonilson made words, drawing, and embroidery into a record of his relationships and emotions. Their works open up a space in which different ways of feeling, loving, and desiring can exist.

The body and the heart make this connection particularly evident. In Beisso's work, the heart appears as an organ, part of a reinvented anatomy in which the physical and the imaginary merge. In Centurión's, it manifests through the heartbeat, the embroidered word, and gestures of care directed toward another. For Leonilson, it is the place of thoughts and of what needs to be spoken. A single motif thus takes on three dimensions: the body that desires, the affection that is offered, and the intimacy that is confessed.

Nature also permeates their imaginative worlds. Beisso's creatures and organic forms, Centurión's animals and flowers, and Leonilson's symbolic landscapes propose different ways of relating to the natural world. In their works, nature ceases to be an external landscape and becomes part of a personal geography in which reality and imagination meet.

The three artists also share an extraordinary ability to find intensity in the smallest gestures. An embroidered word, an imaginary figure, or a drawn heart can contain an entire universe. In their works, delicacy and vulnerability acquire a force that challenges the hierarchies between the intimate and the public, the domestic and the artistic.

For the first time, works by Ulises Beisso, Feliciano Centurión, and José Leonilson are brought together in a single exhibition. Jointly presented by Walden Naturae and the Brazilian gallery Almeida & Dale, this unprecedented encounter establishes a dialogue between three Latin American artists who, from different contexts and through distinct artistic languages, made intimacy a space of freedom and personal affirmation. In Pueblo Garzón, their fantastical images, embroidered words, and visual confessions come into proximity without losing their differences, revealing how profoundly personal experiences can resonate with the sensibilities of others.

*Saudade* is a Portuguese word that names a feeling difficult to translate: the presence of an absence, the longing for what is loved, and the desire to keep it close, even when it is no longer there. It holds within it memory, tenderness, and a form of love that does not fade with the passage of time. The works of Beisso, Centurión, and Leonilson seem to inhabit this territory, where memories remain alive and affections find new ways of existing. For there are words still waiting to be heard, images that preserve the intensity of an encounter, and gestures of love that continue to resonate beyond absence. In these works, tenderness becomes a form of resistance, and love, a luminous way of celebrating life.



ULISES BEISSO
(Montevideo, Uruguay 1958–1996)

He began his artistic studies at the age of thirteen. The grandson of Carlos Quijano, founder of the weekly newspaper *Marcha*, he trained in the workshops of José Luis Montes, Jorge Damiani and Guillermo Fernández. Between 1973 and 1979, he lived in Mexico, where he attended the La Esmeralda Academy. Alongside his artistic practice, he earned a degree in psychology and worked as an illustrator and graphic designer for *Cuadernos de Marcha*. His deeply personal and autobiographical work brings together references from classical art, mythology and illustration, addressing identity, dissent, love and sexuality within the cultural context of Montevideo in the 1980s and early 1990s.

FELICIANO CENTURION
(San Ignacio, Paraguay 1962–
Buenos Aires, Argentina 1996)

His work is characterized by the use of textiles and embroidery, practices traditionally associated with the feminine creative realm and deeply rooted in Paraguayan culture. Through embroidery, crochet and sewing, he created images and texts as part of an intimate diary, expressing desires, thoughts and personal experiences. After being diagnosed with HIV, he began incorporating reflections on illness and his fears into his work. Exiled in Argentina during Alfredo Stroessner's dictatorship, he became a key figure in the artistic renewal of the 1990s surrounding the Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas. His work has been the subject of exhibitions at ISLAA and Americas Society in New York, and at the Centro Cultural de España Juan de Salazar in Asunción.

JOSÉ LEONILSON
(Fortaleza, Brasil 1957–São Paulo, Brasil 1993)

His artistic production encompasses painting, drawing, illustration, embroidery, objects, printmaking, installation and sculpture. Through an increasingly distilled and personal visual language, he developed a universe of signs in which love, eroticism and intimacy also acquired a political dimension.
Born in Ceará, he developed his career in São Paulo and became a central figure of the Generación del 80 (Generation of the 1980s), a movement associated with the return to painting and the exploration of expressive and Pop-inspired languages. His early works, produced between 1983 and 1988, are characterized by vigorous gestures, intense colors and large formats. In the late 1980s, his work began to incorporate words, cartographies of the body and recurring symbols such as the heart, the tower, the mountain and the spiral.