

OPERA GALLERY



(L-R) *Attire for Exu*, 2024, oil on linen, 180 x 150 x 4 cm, 70 7/8 x 59 x 1 5/8 in; *Buffalo*, 2024, oil on linen, 150 x 120 x 4 cm | 59 x 47 1/4 x 1 5/8 in; © Erika Mayumi

MIAMI

Gustavo Nazareno *Afro-Latin Baroque & Bárá*

MARCH 6 - MARCH 29, 2025

January 22, 2025; Miami, Florida – Opera Gallery is pleased to unveil two solo exhibitions by Brazilian artist Gustavo Nazareno (b. 1994), marking his first solo presentations in the United States. ‘Afro-Latin Baroque,’ presented at the gallery’s Miami location will feature 16 new paintings, while ‘Bára,’ presented at the gallery’s Bal Harbour location will feature over 30 charcoal drawings. The exhibitions follow Nazareno’s participation in the group show ‘One Becomes Many’ at the Pérez Art Museum in Miami, which features work by ten prominent Black Brazilian artists (October 17 2024 - April 16 2026). Nazareno’s work will also feature in a group exhibition titled ‘Justice and the Inalienable Rights’ at the State University of New York at Oswego alongside artist Simone Leigh and many others (January 28 – February 27 2025). A solo exhibition of Nazareno’s work will also be held at the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center in Chicago.

‘Afro-Latin Baroque’ showcases Nazareno’s exploration of the intertwined legacies of faith, art, and resilience. Drawing from the vibrant Afro-Brazilian artistry and rich Catholic traditions that shaped the heritage of the Brazilian state Minas Gerais, Nazareno creates an aesthetic symphony that connects Brazil to Cuba — two lands bound by the rhythms and religious traditions of Santería and Candomblé. Rooted in the legacy of Brazilian Baroque masters such as Aleijadinho and Mestre Valentim, while also referencing the European tradition of Baroque art, this exhibition reimagines multicultural and generational expressions of faith and heritage through a contemporary lens.

In his practice, Nazareno honors the spiritual and cultural alchemy that defines the Latin and Afro-Brazilian Baroque, embracing duality — the sacred and the profane, movement and stillness, the seen and the unseen. His works pay homage to transcultural traditions, encouraging a dialogue between history, possibility, and art as a vehicle for resistance and cultural redefinition.

Originating in 17th-century Europe, the Baroque artistic movement placed an aesthetic emphasis on light, effects, and theatricality in an attempt to visually represent infinity and the divine. The use of chiaroscuro and tenebrism to create dramatic tension and emotional depth was a key component of Baroque art, as

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(Above, Below) *Bará 37*, 2023, charcoal on paper, 50 x 66 cm | 19 3/4 x 26 in; *Bará 17*, 2023, charcoal on paper, 50 x 66 cm | 19 3/4 x 26 in; © Anna Carolina Bueno

was a focus on contrast, real or implied movement, and depth to achieve a sense of awe and grandeur. Heavily encouraged by the Catholic Church, this movement brought images of religious worship back into the public realm, sitting in stark contrast with the Renaissance art that came before it. Over time, the Baroque movement disseminated throughout Europe and the Americas, transcending boundaries and significantly shaping the artistic and social landscape of colonial societies across Latin America, where indigenous communities created a new subset of Baroque art imbued with their unique visual language and traditions.

Nazareno creates tableau vivants which suggest synchronicity between the human and the divine. Often resisting fixed identities, the figures in his paintings transcend age and gender without adhering to binary categories. These ambiguous figures evoke the pageantry of fashion photography while embracing the chiaroscuro technique characteristic of Renaissance and Baroque artists. The visually striking drawings from his 'Bára' series, which resemble black and white photography, explore the traditional dance ceremony performed for Eshu, one of the deities known as Orixás worshipped in the Yoruba religion and its many derivatives. Using a drawing technique that involves applying charcoal dust with his fingertips on paper while in his candlelit studio, Nazareno's compositions evoke the stark duality central to Eshu's nature.

Jennifer Inacio, Curator at Pérez Art Museum Miami and author of the exhibition's critic text remarked, "Through his paintings and charcoal drawings, Gustavo Nazareno interweaves nuanced references—from his Brazilian heritage, his faith, and his ongoing engagement with art history—all while demonstrating his keen awareness of materiality and composition. In this dual presentation of paintings and drawings with 'Afro-Latin Baroque' and 'Bára' at Opera Gallery, presented within the context of South Florida, Nazareno's work pays homage to the dynamic ongoing cultural exchange between Brazil and Miami that contributes in no small part to the identity of this city."

"In 'Afro-Latin Baroque,' I weave the threads of Brazil and Cuba's shared legacies, exploring the convergence of Catholicism and Afro-Brazilian spiritual traditions. These works are a dialogue between the sacred and the ancestral, where the ornate grandeur of Baroque art meets the resilient vibrancy of Candomblé and Santería. Showing this series at Opera Gallery Miami feels especially meaningful—this city lives at the crossroads of these two cultures, making it the perfect place to spark an intimate and international conversation," said Gustavo Nazareno.

"We're thrilled to present 'Afro-Latin Baroque' at Opera Gallery in Miami, a city that is home to a significant Brazilian and Cuban community that has enriched the city's cultural fabric. Through his paintings and drawings, Gustavo explores illusory Baroque traditions across cultures while speaking eloquently about his Brazilian identity and the culture that has influenced him as well as Miami's dynamic heritage," said Dan Benchetrit, Director of Opera Gallery in Miami.

"Through the Bára series, Gustavo takes us on a compelling and prolific visual journey that celebrates his culture while referencing a diverse range of aesthetic influences, from the photography of Irving Penn to his own faith. We're thrilled to present these works in Bal Harbour, alongside his paintings on view at Opera Gallery in Miami," said Alexandre Sarfati, Director of Opera Gallery in Bal Harbour.

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Gustavo Nazareno, in his São Paulo, Brazil studio,
© Courtesy of GUSN Studio

About Gustavo Nazareno

Gustavo Nazareno was born in 1994 in Três Pontas, Brazil and currently lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. His solo exhibitions include 'Bará' at Museu de Arte Moderna Aloisio Magalhães (2024), 'Bará' at Museu Afro Brasil Emanuel Araújo (2023), 'Fables on Exu' at Gallery 1957/1:54 Art Fair (2021) and group exhibitions including Gallery 1957's 'Collective Reflections: Contemporary African & Diasporic Expressions of A New Vanguard' in Accra, Ghana (2020), Pérez Art Museum Miami's 'One Becomes Many' (2024-25) and El Espacio 23's 'Mirror of the Mind: Figuration in the Jorge M. Pérez Collection.' Nazareno will have a solo exhibition curated by Danny Dunson at the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

About Opera Gallery

Founded in Singapore in 1994, Opera Gallery has forged, over its 30 years, a network of galleries worldwide including London, Paris, New York, Geneva, Hong Kong, and Seoul, establishing itself as one of the leading global players within the international art market.

Headed by Gilles Dyan, Opera Gallery specialises in post-war, modern and contemporary art. In addition, the gallery represents international emerging artists such as Andy Denzler, Anthony James and Gustavo Nazareno, and more established contemporary artists such as Ron Arad, Manolo Valdés, and Anselm Reyle.

2024 marked Opera Gallery's 30th Anniversary and over the gallery's three decades, Opera Gallery's mission is to showcase the dynamic, innovative, and diverse expressions of modern and contemporary art through its ambitious yearly exhibition programming as well as to bring together institutions that shape the cultural landscape, often supporting private collections and leading public institutions.

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