

## nara roesler announces amelia toledo's inaugural US solo exhibition

with an iconic career marked by entwinements between art and nature, a selection of toledo's works will be exhibited for the first time in the united states at nara roesler new gallery in chelsea, new york

**exhibition** february 25 – april 17, 2021



Amelia Toledo. *from Color Fields series*, 2000's, acrylic paint on linen, Courtesy of Amelia Toledo and Nara Roesler.

**NEW YORK, USA** – Nara Roesler is pleased to announce 'Amelia Toledo: 1958-2007', the artist's inaugural solo exhibition in the United States, at the gallery's new location in New York's Chelsea neighborhood, from February 25 to April 17, 2021.

Amelia Toledo (1926–2017) is a leading figure of Brazilian art in the twentieth century, with a career spanning over five decades, marked by distinctive engagements with constructive sculptural experimentations, that subsequently unfolded into iconic entwinements between art and nature. Toledo was first introduced to the field of visual arts at the end of the 1930s as she began frequenting the studio of Brazilian modernist landmark artist Anita Malfatti (1889-1964), after which she studied under the guidance of Yoshiya Takaoka (1909-1978) and Waldemar da Costa (1904-1982).

Throughout her career, Toledo made use of several media and techniques, including painting, drawing, sculpture, print-making, installations, and metalsmith/jewelry design, always focusing on the use of materials and *faktura*. Her work was initially aligned with constructivist research, echoing notions of Neoconcretism and the characteristic preoccupations of the 1960s, with an interest for public participation, as well as for the entwinement of art and life. She developed her multifaceted oeuvre in permanent and mutually enriching interlocution with other artists of her generation including Mira Schendel,

Tomie Ohtake, Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Pape.

In the late 1950s, she undertook an investigation based on the transition from plan to volume, drawing inspiration from the works of Max Bill and Jorge Oteiza. *Plano Volume* (1959), the first foray into this investigation, starts from a simple procedure: circular cuts on a copper plate forming a helicoid, and then curved. Years later, she repeated the method in *Om* (1982). In this piece, a steel sheet was cut in a spiral with a sandpiper and hung from the ceiling, allowing it to move, while projecting a shadow against the wall in the shape of the symbol *Om*, which is a sacred sound and spiritual symbol in Indian spirituality.

Ultimately, Toledo's signature achievements are driven by her focus on nature, implying her investigations on the concept of landscape, engaging with stones and shells, among other natural elements, which she collected compulsively and included in her work. Challenged by these materials, Amelia Toledo pursued her career as both an artist and an engineer, envisaging the possibility of an ecological concretism.

In works like *Path of Colors from the Dark* (2001), for example, the artist uses stones to investigate color, brightness, transparency, and the various shapes of the Earth's "flesh". She was able to create compositions in which pieces collected from the dark depths of natural settings are placed in various arrangements, including dialogues with "modern" materials, such as stainless steel. The rocks were not subject to any treatment that would change their original form, but were merely polished to reveal their internal designs, the delicate veins, revealing their temporality. In the participatory piece titled *Singing Dragons* (2007) rock fragments that have been molded by the movement of the tides are highlighted by the sound that each of them make when the spectator interacts with their surface using a small piece of wood.

Another central pillar of Toledo's work is color, an interest that is notably manifest in her paintings, among other works. Paintings from the series *Horizons* (1990s - 2010s) will be on view at Nara Roesler | New York along with *Campos de Cor [Color Fields]*, a series which the artist began in the 1980s and continued until right before her death in 2017. Also on view will be an example of her striking and colorful *Penetrables*, highlighting Toledo's 'natural' approach to painting, using raw canvases and rough organic pigments on jute, creating a physically penetrable mass of color, revealing the malleable nature of the support, as well as a repertoire of transparency.

Also from her early works, the exhibition presents some of the collages that Amelia Toledo started in 1958, while she was living in London. An experiment with the transparency of silk and rice paper, some of these collages are impregnated with beeswax granting the pieces a special thickness, making them almost sculptural. This experimentation with the medium's materiality would lead the artist to create the *Fiapos [Wisps]* series in the 1980s, in which the paper seems to have returned to the condition of pulp, a formless and tenuous material that seems invaded by light and shaped by lightness.

Amelia Toledo allowed herself the freedom to never be part of a group, and to experiment according to her own moment. In the artist's words: "It's not even just a question of different processes; each material constructs itself, proposes itself in the form of certain consequences". Her production resonates today more than ever through her continuous articulation of aesthetics and nature, ecology and form, stressing both the sophistication of design and the roughness of matter/materials.

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## service

amelia toledo: 1958-2007

february 25 – april 17, 2021

nara roesler new york  
511 west 21st street  
new york, 10011 ny, usa

t 1 (212) 794 5038

## press inquires

### US:

Kim Donica | kd@kimdonica.com  
t 1 (917) 6075105

### Brazil:

Rafaela Ferreira | rafaela.ferreira@nararoesler.art  
t 55 (11) 2039 5454  
com.sp@nararoesler.art

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são paulo  
avenida europa 655,  
jardim europa, 01449-001  
são paulo, sp, brasil  
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

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rio de janeiro  
rua redentor 241,  
ipanema, 22421-030  
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil  
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

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new york  
511 west 21<sup>st</sup> street  
new york, 10011 ny  
usa  
t 1 (212) 794 5038

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info@nararoesler.art  
www.nararoesler.art