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Brazil's 'New Shamans' Cast Their Spell on Miami

Andrew Nunes — Dec 5 2016



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New Shamans/Novos Xamãs Installation View, 2016. Images courtesy of the artists and the Rubell Family Collection

Brazil's complex cultural climate and the country's intimate indigenous roots come to life in the group show *New Shamans/Novos Xamãs: Brazilian Artists*, currently on view at the Rubell Family Collection (<https://rfc.museum/>) in Miami. The 12 artists included in the show, ranging from young artists with emerging careers like Paulo Nimer Pjota (<http://paulopjota.com/>) and Marina Rheingantz (<http://www.fortesvilaca.com.br/artistas/marina-rheingantz>) to established, veteran figures of the Brazilian art scene like Sonia Gomes (<http://soniagomes.com.br/>), occupy the entire ground floor of the Rubell's giant space with often larger-than-life paintings, photographs, and sculptural installations.



New Shamans/Novos Xamãs Installation View, 2016

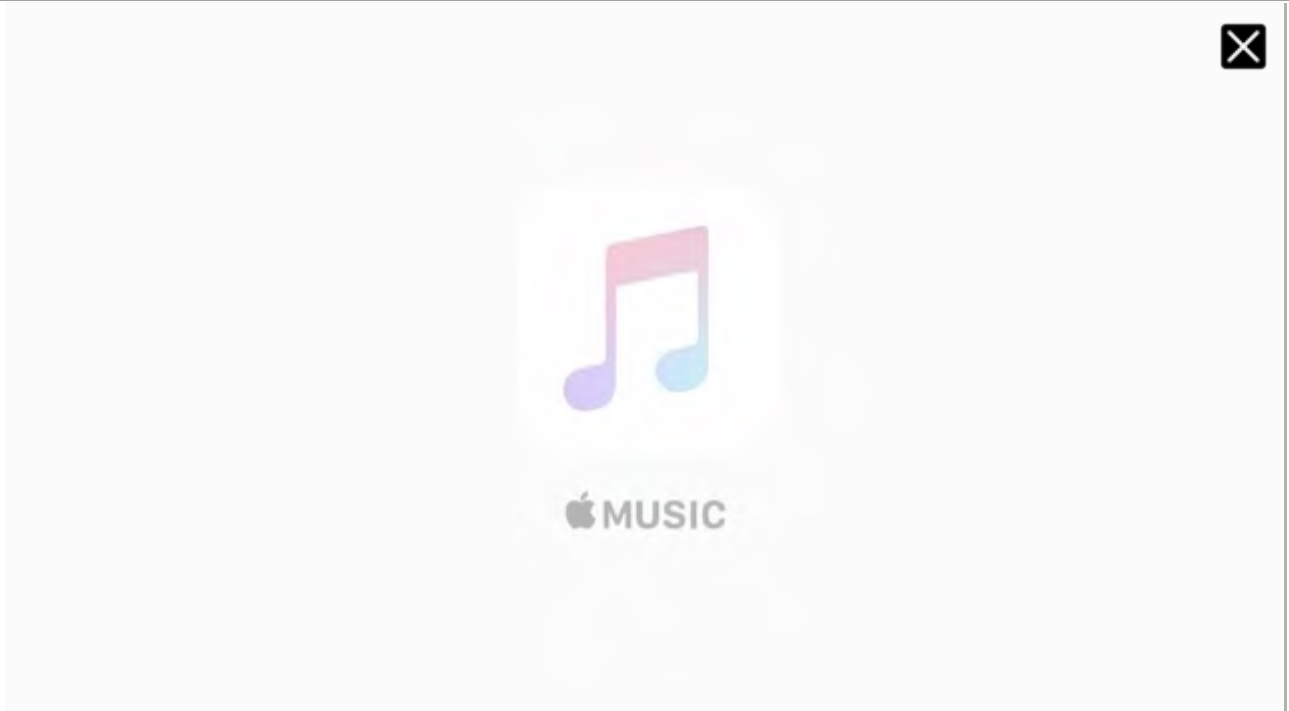
The works on view hover strangely between a unifying synchronicity and an eclectic individuality, perhaps a result of how the country's recent political turmoil (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impeachment_of_Dilma_Rousseff) is universal, but undoubtedly affects each artist differently. assume vivid astro focus' (<http://www.assumevividastrofocus.com/>) street art, vaguely trompe l'oeil panel is a far cry stylistically from Thiago Martins de Melo (<http://www.mendeswooddm.com/en/artist/thiago+martins+de+melo>)'s ambitious installation of mounted, severed heads and sculptures of indigenous figures, but both share a vibrant energy and explosiveness.



assume vivid astro focus, Untitled (Garden #6)

Curated by Juan Roselione-Valadez as well as Mera and Don Rubell, the exhibition is the result of repeated visits by the Rubell family to Brazil, where they have been building and fostering relationships with the artists on view over time: “Going to Brazil, meeting artists, and experiencing their work, we were particularly intrigued by certain artists who engaged a more intuitive and spiritual approach to their practice,” tell Mera and Don Rubell.

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Sonia Gomes, Untitled from the Twisting Series

“For us, their works connected to traditions of shamanism in European art, like Joseph Beuys, early performance work, and Hermann Nitsch. Each artist in the show has a personal and unique style, but is profoundly influenced by the rich history and vastness of Brazil.”



Paulo Nazareth, Untitled from the For Sale Series

Despite any shamanistic influence and cultural overlap that may be found among the works, the Rubells' travels to Brazil were done without any deliberate or predetermined thematic focus in mind; the results are in some ways merely a reflection of a Brazilian and worldwide cultural climate: "We didn't go to Brazil with a theme in mind; we went to discover artists. And what we found were overarching concerns like racism and gender issues that were universal, but the means of artistic manifestation were individual," the Rubells explain. "As with our encounters in other countries, artists in Brazil gave us a deeper understanding of the world we live in."



New Shamans/Novos Xamãs Installation View, 2016

If you're still around Miami, make sure to stop by the [Rubell Family Collection \(https://rfc.museum/\)](https://rfc.museum/) for *New Shamans/Novos Xamãs: Brazilian Artists*. Otherwise, the exhibition will be on view until August 25th, 2017, alongside an exhibition of [Brazilian video art \(https://rfc.museum/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/video-art-in-latin-america\)](https://rfc.museum/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/video-art-in-latin-america).

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