

FOSTER/WHITE GALLERY

GUY LARAMÉE

13 Views on a Stay in Brasil and Quebrada

2022

This exhibition is composed of two projects: a set of 15 paintings started in 2021, 13 of which form a story; and a set of nine book sculptures, done during my latest trip to Brasil.

Over 15 years, I accumulated about three years in Brasil. My last stay lasted six months. This painting project is an opportunity to encapsulate the feelings that draws one to quit one's culture, the inner experiences triggered by living in a foreign country. The paintings have a light narrative structure around my last trip (2022). Each painting has a title that situates it within that narrative. From the first one, *Entering the Dream*, to the last one, *Traveling Between Two Dreams*, one questions if one ever comes back from those trips. In traveling between cultures – and countries – something is abandoned, perhaps definitely. What is it? Is it the adhesion to one's sets of beliefs? Is it the dream of finding a “perfect world”?

In Portuguese as in Spanish, the word *Quebrada* has a double meaning. Literally, it means 'broken'. But it is also used to designate a ravine, where the landscape gives the impression of being sunken down. Unlike my previous book work, I started each piece by breaking the spine of the book – apparently its most sturdy part. So I formed the book into a curved or broken shape before carving it. I was quite aware of the metaphor while working in this new way: breaking a book is obviously damaging the knowledge it contains. What does this say about our world? After two years of pandemic, we may have started to feel that our civilization is fragile. How long will it last? Some of the book titles evoke that: *Paraiso Perdido / Paradise Lost*, for example. In a way, our civilization is broken. Can it heal itself or is it bound to make room to a new one?

But often time, from stark perspectives stem hope and the will to continue. Thus, using the other meaning of the word *Quebrada*, I carved those ravines into luxurious landscapes, suggesting that in this sinking down, something of life will go on.

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