

Eternal Return

Two Shores, One Stream

Eternal Return is one of the paintings in the series *Duas Margens, Um Fluxo*, in which I explore the interaction between nature and memory as a universal means of promoting a sense of belonging. My paintings transcend geographical and emotional boundaries, creating a hybrid space where my memories of Brazil intertwine with the present I live in Hungary.

This series was inspired by personal reflections, by the sensitive literature of Fernando Pessoa, especially *The Book of Disquiet*, and by the philosopher Nietzsche in his most optimistic phase. The painting *Eternal Return* refers to a cosmological hypothesis created by him, which opens up space for provocative reflections on the nature of existence. This idea encourages me to live in a full and affirmative way, treating every choice as eternally significant and saying “yes” to life in its entirety, without regrets or denials.

Nature appears in my creative processes as a place I go to when the feeling of inadequacy as a foreigner and the memories of Brazil cross my thoughts, making it seem as if nothing else can flow and everything is stagnant. During my walks through Szmrecsányi Lajos Kert park, near my home in Eger, I realized that my present, good and bad, in Hungary evoked my happy and sad memories of Brazil. On one of the benches in this park, I read many chapters of Fernando Pessoa's sensitive literature, his words encouraging and reassuring me in my quest to understand myself. He suggested that understanding who we are is inevitably late, because the moment we reach that understanding, we have already become someone different: “to be is to linger.” Excerpts like this live alongside sketches of my favorite plants in the park and also the wild ducks that live in the river that runs through it. Nature and literature share space in my sketchbook: where shapes and colors don't fit, I write literary passages, reflections alongside trivial notes and reminders of what I can't forget.

I grew up in the northeast of Brazil, in a Protestant Pentecostal Christian home in the city of São Luís, a tropical island. In this region, all eyes are on tourism and cultural manifestations, such as festivals and rituals deeply linked to Catholicism, African religions and indigenous traditions. However, my Protestant religious upbringing distanced me from the culture of my city, which I only began to come into contact with in my late teens. At that time, I realized how vibrant my city's culture was. Despite this undeniable cultural richness, I felt an invisible distance. No matter how hard I tried to connect with my homeland, I was never able to intimately connect with my country's culture without feeling uncomfortable and also a fraud. It was in this context that I began to question myself about belonging and identity. I searched for

spaces where my concerns could be reflected on and alleviated, believing that a new place, with other dynamics, could contribute to my development as an artist and individual. This search led me to Hungary, where I began studying art. Arriving here brought new challenges and also awakened memories and questions linked to my identity, my family background and my relationship with the traditions that somehow formed me, even when I didn't feel connected to them.

At first, I thought I would research and talk about my annoyance at feeling like a foreigner in my own country. However, as I delved deeper into the topic, I discovered that the root of this feeling was more complex. At this stage of my research, I came across Bell Hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) for the first time. One of her reflections - "I came to theory because I was hurt" - was particularly revealing, exploring how personal experiences, especially those of oppression, can lead to the construction of new ideas and theories. This helped me understand how my personal, often painful experiences could lead me to my own perspective on the world, which would reveal itself in my art.

Hooks' thinking intrigued me deeply and gave me a hopeful north to delimit my purpose of courageously revisiting my history. One of my greatest discoveries was understanding that my feeling of foreignness in my own country was a symptom of a wound that had been open for many years, resulting from the cruel colonization of Brazil by Portugal. This estrangement was built up over the course of countless racist policies implemented by the Portuguese and replicated by many generations right up to the present day, with the aim of delegitimizing African and indigenous cultures.

Despite the fact that my ancestry is heavily influenced by both cultures, Christianity has created a mental distance in me that is difficult to break away from. My grandmother was the last one to have close contact with indigenous life, but for numerous reasons linked to the decimation of her culture, she was forced to migrate closer to the urban center. Likewise, my mother, who grew up in a quilombola community, also had to migrate to the city and joined the Protestant Christian Church, which offered emotional support to face Brazil's oppressive social reality with faith.

Indigenous and African cultures have never been at the forefront of my life, only absorbed and replicated at a secondary level, such as in times of illness. The preparation of home remedies in my house took place in a ritualistic way, with my mother reciting verses of healing and longevity, blessing each stage of the process. The choice and combination of herbs was orchestrated by the ancestral indigenous and quilombola knowledge she had learned in childhood. Apart from these moments, any direct contact with the culture or religion of my ancestors was kept away from me.

This ambiguous relationship of intimacy and distance with my Brazilian roots has shaped how I relate to my identity and to the world. Understanding this was important for me to accept and reconcile myself with this distance intrinsic to my existence, transforming it into poetics for my creations. I learned to appreciate this constant sensation of being in the world without feeling completely part of it, and to use this feeling of foreignness as a creative force.

Marked by the search for belonging and the reconciliation between identity and memory, my painting "The Eternal Returns" reflects the flow of continuous connection between past and present, inspired by the Nietzschean idea of living fully and affirmatively. Like Nietzsche's concept, which proposes embracing life in its entirety with no regrets, I seek to transform my feelings of estrangement and disconnection into creative force, finding in nature and memory a space for reflection and expression.

The series "Duas Margens, Um Fluxo" (Two Margins, One Flow) intertwines the nuances of my roots in Brazil with my experiences in Hungary and reveals my notion of belonging, or the lack of it, which has always accompanied me. My paintings engage with universal questions of displacement and identity, inviting reflection on each person's own particular margins and flows. By revisiting my history through art, I affirm the relevance of embracing the complexity of existence, honoring faults, wounds and the search for discoveries that shape my worldview and my art.