

A high-angle, top-down photograph of a person wearing a voluminous, draped red garment. The person's head is tilted back, and their arms are raised, with hands near their head. The entire scene is bathed in a deep red light, creating a monochromatic effect. The background is a solid, textured red. The person's shadow is cast onto the surface below them.

**REGINA PARRA**

**PAGAN**

**(For a Wisdom of The Flesh)**

## Regina Parra: Pagan

**Ana Maria Maia**  
curator

The only destiny with which we are born is the destiny of ritual  
(Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to GH*, 1964)

Barbarians, idolaters, profanes, laywomen, unfaithful, seers, or simply pagans. Since antiquity, Western imagination has found many ways to characterize women, their bodies, their attitudes, and their sexuality. In a men's world, the feminine has been and still is repeatedly posited as a source of deviations from the norm, and therefore as a danger to collective whenever possible. Confronting this ancient construct, which has long perpetuated patriarchal and sexist thought, Regina Parra has created a series of works establishing a critical feminist position. Now she has spent a whole year developing this transdisciplinary project for Pinacoteca de Sao Paulo, with a similar end in view.

*Pagan* is set out as a ritual celebration of the female body, pleasure, freedom, and vivid insubordination. As a character, an archetype, or a mirror, as one or as many, and of course as ourselves, the woman named in the work's title undertakes a journey that the public is invited to follow from the moment they enter the gallery dedicated to the show, on the second floor of Pina Estacao.

A combination of visual works and live or video/audio performances gives rise to a kind of play which is spread out in the exhibition space so as to intertwine drama and the experience of visiting the museum, fiction and the sensory reality of each person that goes by. In order to bring her creation to life, Regina has raged her many-sided work—paintings, drawings, videos, performances, installations, pieces in neon—alongside works by collaborators in other fields of creativity, such as dance, music, costume design, and cinema. What brings all those elements together is theater, the artist's first area of activity. Drama also brings in a logic that has recently become more and more obvious in her visual arts production.

*Pagan* is structured as a tragedy, the first genre of Greek theater, which tells the stories of mythical characters and whose staging whose staging often leads the members of the audience to see themselves reflected in the play and purges their anguish and sorrow. The central character in this case is a woman who was apparently "well", but renounced her

social position and embarked on a process of self-discovery and transformation.

The argument refers to the Greco-Roman initiation cult that appears in the frescos of the Villa of the Mysterues, built in the Italian city of Pompeii in the 2nd century B.C. Regina's interpretation of the story is of a young woman who crosses the gate of the satyrs and offers herself to Dionysus, the god of theater, wine, fertility, and nature. The young woman's path involves going down to the level of animals, literally falling to the ground, and deciding to stay there, crawling and unlearning the whole repertoire she had acquired until then. Only after this will she be able to resume her human form and reborn as a bacchante, a Dionysian priestess who realizes what is seen as divine through her own ecstasy.

Regina Parra presents this story in nine scenes, but intermixes it with other sagas and times. In this flow of approximations and free translations, the young woman from Pompeii gets mixed up with G.H., a woman who accesses a stream of consciousness that reveals her gender and social class condition after she comes across a cockroach while cleaning her apartment in Clarice Lispector's 1964 novel *The Passion According to G.H.* The cockroach, however, ends up being crushed by the closet door.

The "sleep-walker's language"<sup>1</sup> used by the central character of this paradigmatic work of 20<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian literature in her state of acute crisis reverberates in other oral traditions equally adept at propagating emotions without making them fit into words. Thus, it is also related to the mythology of Electra, with her screams and laments, and to the breathless singing of Joe Strummer (Ancara, 1952 - Broomfield, 2002), lead singer of The Clash, in the song *Straight to Hell* (1982).

In this labyrinth of references and experiences, the vital and erotic force ceases to be a problem and becomes a solution. Instead of acting according to and consenting as law what comes from abroad, this is a call to manifest that which is inherent. For Regina Parra, theater is a ritual of "in-staging, incorporating, in-carnating."<sup>2</sup>

1. Lispector, Clarice. *The Passion According to G.H.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p.13.

2. Excerpt from the project presented by the artist for Pinacoteca de Sao Paulo, in 2022.





## PRELUDE

] she was a woman who lived well,  
lived well, lived well.

it worked—at least nothing spoke and nobody  
spoke, nobody said no;  
so it worked.

**Prelude:**  
**The Bacchae Song, 2019-2023**

Regina Parra in collaboration with the  
composer Gustavo Riviera

Live guitar performance, 7 minutes



] ontem no entanto perdi  
durante horas e horas  
minha montagem humana.

] o que eu era antes  
não me era bom, mas e agora?

] estarei mais livre?



## SCENE 1: THE CALLING

yesterday, however, I lost my human setup  
for hours and hours.

]

]

] what I used to be, was no good for me

] but what are about now?

] am I more free?





## Regina Parra

### Satyr I, 2021

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
65 x 51 inches and 65 x 28 inches  
(166 x 129 e 166 x 71 cm)





] as if a calm woman had simply been called and calmly set aside her embroidery on a chair, stood up, and wordlessly—abandoning her life, renouncing embroidery, love and an already-made soul—wordlessly that woman composedly got down on all fours, started to crawl and drag herself along with calm and sparkling eyes.





**Regina Parra**

**The Calling, 2023**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
24.5 x 37.5 inches (62 x 95 cm)







**Regina Parra**

**The Daemon, 2022**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
24.5 x 37.5 inches (62 x 95 cm)



**Regina Parra**

**Props-Prosthesis, 2023**

Terracota and leather













## SCENE 2: HOURS OF PERDITION

was my will to want stronger than my will for  
salvation?

]

]

]

I was experiencing in that desert the fire of things.

]

]

]

now I know what happens in the dark of the  
mountains on the nights of orgies.

I know! I know with horror: things enjoy themselves.  
the thing of which things are made delights itself.



Small informational label on the white wall to the right of the artwork.





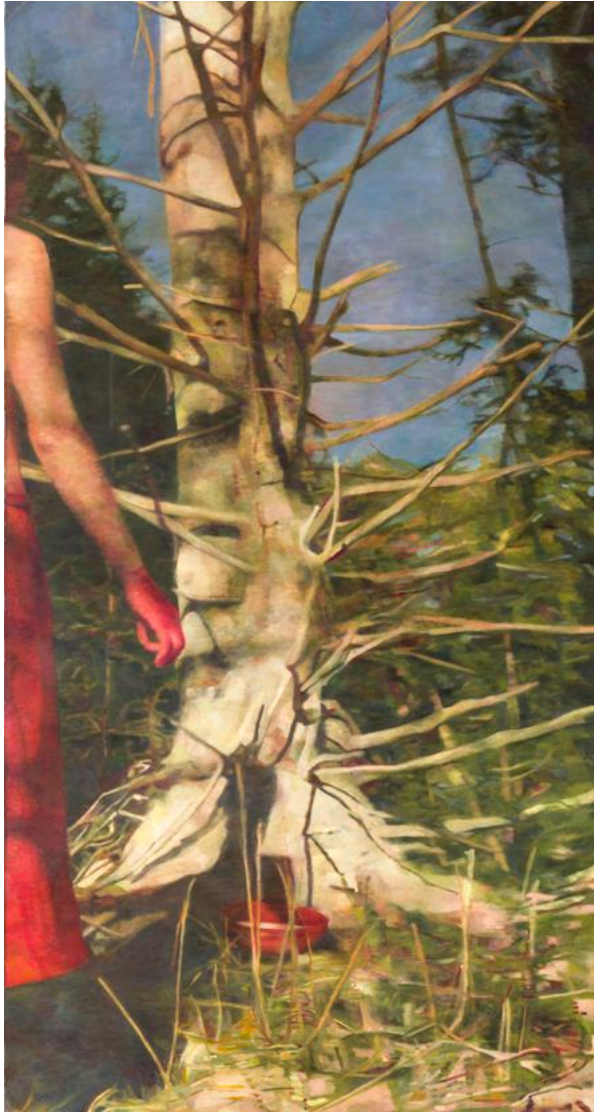


**Regina Parra**

**Pagan I, 2021**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
94 x 50 inches (238 x 125 cm)





**Regina Parra**

**Pagan II, 2022**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
94 x 50 inches (238 x 125 cm)





**Regina Parra**

**Pagan III, 2023**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
94 x 50 inches (238 x 125 cm)





### SCENE 3: THE SECRET

]

]

]

] we who keep yhe scream as an inviolable secret

] if I raise the alarm at being alive, voiceless and  
hard they would drag me away since they drag away  
those who depart the possible world, the exception-  
al being is dragged away, the screaming being.



## Electra

Electra is an original musical duet for two female performers. The work is a co-creation by Regina Parra with the American composer Ian Gottlieb.

The musical composition was created from the untranslatable expressions and laments of Electra, a character from the homonymous Greek tragedy by Sophocles.

In Greek mythology, there are several versions of Electra's story, but the best known would be the one in which she induces her brother to kill her own mother, eager to avenge her father's death. This story was imported by Jung into the sphere of psychoanalysis, going on to describe, in the expression 'Electra complex', the desire that the daughter has for her own father. However, in Regina Parra's creation, Electra is a metaphor for women who keep their screams as an inviolable secret.

If we analyze the construction of Electra's screams, we will see that none of them occur excessively. Her lamentations and her expressions of pain and anger are an integral part of the rhythmic and musical economy of her speech.

As units of sound, they employ the usual features of ritual lament (assonance, alliteration, internal rhyme, balance, symmetry, repetition) but in unusual ways. Electra creates, for example, certain unpronounceable concatenations of hiatuses like **EE AIAI** or **EE IO**—that keep the voice and mouth open for the entire length of a verse and are as painful to hear as they are to say.

According to essayist and translator Anne Carson, "the presence in Greek drama of bursts of sound expressing strong emotion (such as **OIMOI** or **O TALAINA** or **PHEU PHEU**) presents the translator with an insoluble problem. It has generally been assumed that they would represent a somewhat formulaic body of utterance best translated into English by some dead phrase like **Alas!** or **Woe is me!** The truth is, it's not easy to decide what gives power to Electra's scream. Sophocles invented a wailing language for her that works like listening to an X-ray. Electra's screams are bones of sound."

From the fact that the performance would be static and sung, with the performers facing each other, the artist chose to make the

mouth stand out: covering all the ends and leaving only the mouth showing, highlighting the vocal work. The two costumes, created by Marina Dalgarrondo, were inspired by Greek draperies that contour the bodies in such a way that no skin appears, leaving only the mouth on display. To give even more prominence to this part of the body, their entire faces were painted in white, with mouth and teeth in red, as if the lament came out of their mouths.

The choice of red is deliberate: it is the color that guides Regina's work, used in most of her works, and is also the tone of the carpet that covers the entire exhibition space. In this way, the red of the mouth makes the characters blend into the environment. Still, Marina chose to develop two costumes, so they weren't identical, echoing Electra's various interpretations. The eyebrows were also whitewashed and then redrawn to delude whining, angled starting at the center of the forehead and descending in a large arc.



## **Regina Parra**

### **Electra, 2023**

Performance, 12 minutes

Sound Composition: Ian Gottlieb

Costume design: Marina Dalgarrondo

Performers: Stephanie Lucchese &

Luisa Alcantara

# we who keep the scream as an inviolable secret

Ian Gottlieb

♩ = 60

Soprano 1  
A - i a - i a - i

Soprano 2  
A - i a - i a - i

Alto 1  
A - i a - i a - i

Alto 2  
A - i a - i a - i

Synth  
A - i a - i a - i

7  
I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

2

11  
A - i e - go ta - lain' e - go

A - i e - go ta - lain' e - go

A - i e - go ta - lain' e - go

A - i e - go ta - lain' e - go

A - i e - go ta - lain' e - go

19  
I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i

I - o mo - i mo - i









totototoi

## SCENE 4: FEMALE MINOTAUR

] the possessed are not possessed by what is coming but by what is coming back.

]

]

] a world fully alive has the power of a Hell.





## Female Minotaur

The dance piece "Female Minotaur" started from the desire to imagine what a female Minotaur would look like and act like. The stories that come to us about this mythological being are very much associated with the phallus and the idea that the Minotaur is a monstrous being that was locked in the labyrinth because it was a dangerous creature.

This performance wishes to investigate this vital savagery not as a monstrous aspect but as a force at the service of the triumph of life. And with that, imagine what this animal-woman hybrid would be like and all the erotic vitality that she would bring.

The piece was created in collaboration with the Brazilian choreographer Clarice Lima and three female dancers who perform a circular and vigorous dance that resembles of a labyrinth, and becomes more and more affirmative, almost aggressive, as it goes on and as the dancers get closer to the public.

The costumes were created in collaboration with the fashion designer, Marina Dalgarrondo, who developed shoes covered with animal hair that connected to knee pads through buckles and red straps. Knee pads and boots merge into a single piece, reminiscent of the animal-woman hybrid.



## **Regina Parra**

### **Female Minotaur, 2023**

Performance, 12 minutes

Coreography: Clarice Lima

Costume design: Marina Dalgarrondo

Dancers: Karen Marçal, Patricia Arabe &  
Sabrina Ferreira



## SCENE 5: THE GOAT'S SONG

] I was opening and closing my mouth to ask for help  
but I couldn't and didn't know how to articulate it.

]

]

]

the unsayable can only be given to me through the  
failure of my language.  
only when the construction fails,  
can I obtain what it could not achieve





## The Goat's Song

Many classicists suggest that 'tragedy' is derived from the Greek and composed of the words tragos (goat) and oidos (song).

Based on this binomial, the artist and choreographer Bruno Levorin create a performance sung by two female-goat-women.

The performers' posture on four supports, placed one in front of the other, who, at a given moment, hold hands, connecting and becoming a single body, perform the act of panting. Breathing heavily and hyperventilating, they create their own gota-song, made of air instead of voices.





## **Regina Parra**

### **The Goat's Song, 2023**

Performance, 12 minutes

Coreography: Bruno Levorin

Costume design: Marina Dalgarrondo

Dancers: Maytuti, Maitê Lacerda

## SCENE 6: THE DESERT

it was a desert that was calling me  
as a monotonous and remote canticle calls.  
I was being seduced. And I was going toward that  
promising madness.

] I'm going toward a hell of raw life.

]

]

]

] life, my love, is a great seduction in which all that  
exists seduces.



stata





**Regina Parra**

**Desert, 2023**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminium  
124 x 187 inches (314 x 475 cm)





**SCENE 7: IF I RAISED THE ALARM AT BEING  
ALIVE, VOICELESS AND HARD THEY WOULD  
DRAG ME AWAY**

] ]  
] no longer even fear  
] no longer even fright.

] now I was beginning to moisten myself.



otototei

otototei

ai ai aa

A neon sign in a hallway with the text "ai ai aa" in a stylized font. The sign is supported by a metal frame with curved legs. The background is a plain wall with a door visible on the left.

ai ai aa



## SCENE 8: MYSTERY

]

]

until that moment I hadn't wholly perceived my struggle, that's how buried I was in it.

] I am the roach, I am my leg.

] I am my hair, I am the section of whitest light on plaster of the wall -

] life in me is so demanding that if they hacked me up, like a lizard, the pieces would keep trembling and squirming.

] I am meek but my function in living is fierce.



**Regina Parra**

**Mystery I, 2022**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
33.5 x 24.8 inches (85 x 63 cm)







**Regina Parra**

**Mystery II, 2022**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
33.5 x 24.8 inches (85 x 63 cm)



**SCENE 9: THE TASTE OF THE LIVING  
OR THE VISION OF AN INFINITE FLESH**

] seduced, I was still fighting as best as I could against the  
quicksand that was swallowing me:

and each movement I was making toward "no, no!"  
each movement pushed me inevitably on

]  
] the time to live, my love, was being so right now that I leaned  
my mouth on the matter of life.

] finally, my love, I gave in. and it became a now. with disgust,  
with despair, with courage, I was giving in.  
and now I wanted.



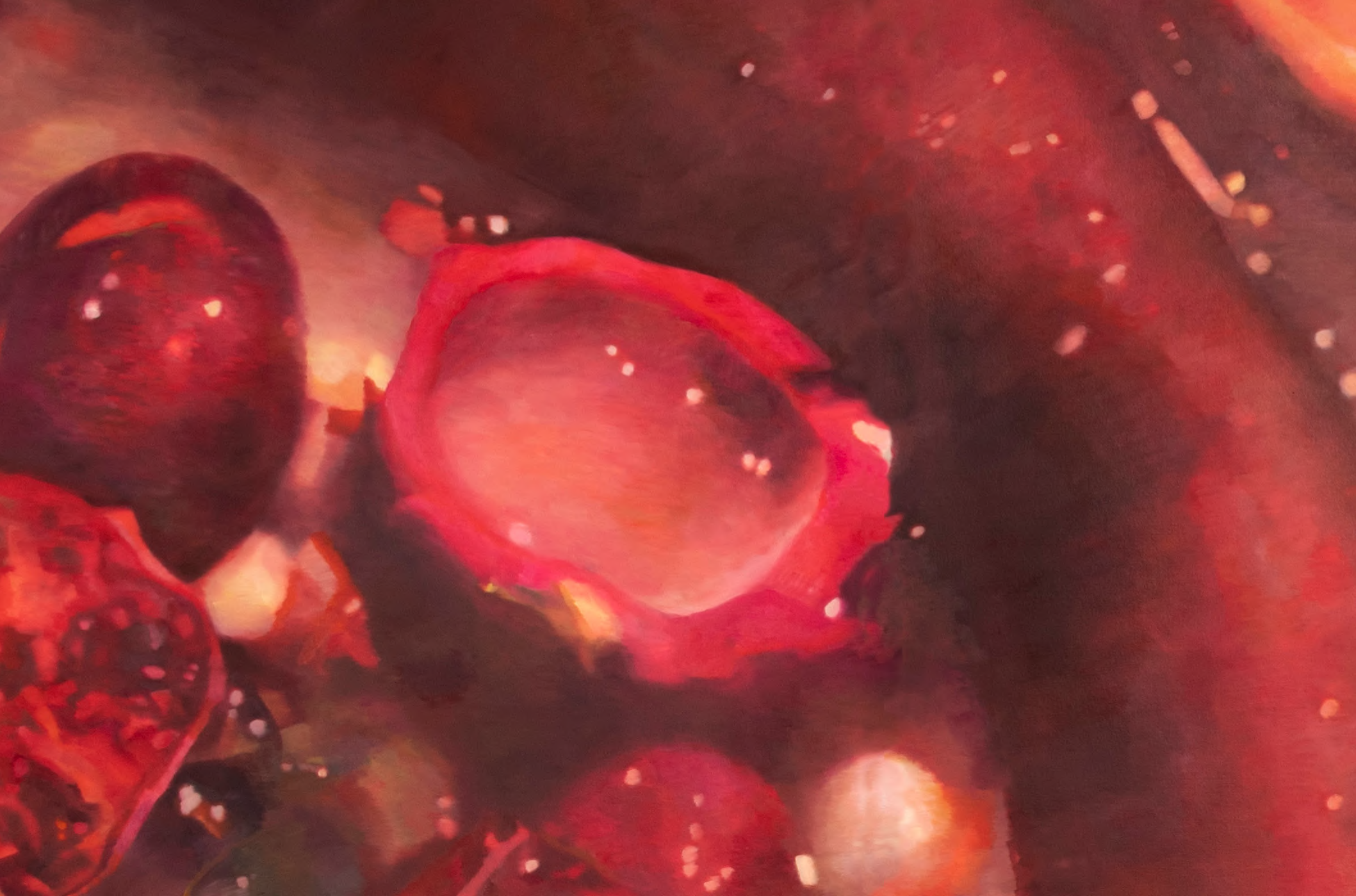


**Regina Parra**

**The Taste of The Living, 2023**

Oil on Arches paper on aluminum  
98.5 x 174 inches (250 x 440 cm)







otototo

## Regina Parra

Sao Paulo, 1984  
Lives and works in New York,  
USA

[Click here to visit the artist's website](#)

Regina Parra, through painting, performance, video, and installation, has explored the tension between oppression and rebellion. Her early research focused on colonialism and the lasting injustices of patriarchy and capitalism, producing works that ask the viewer to rethink official narratives by focusing on the marks left on those who have been forgotten, subjugated, enslaved, and exploited.

Parra holds a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and completed a Master's in Art History under the guidance of curator Lisette Lagnado. Initially, she graduated with a degree in theater and worked for renowned director Antunes Filho as his assistant director until 2003. A connection with the performing arts, especially with Greek tragedy, is present in her work as a visual artist.

Her focus centered on woman's social body, as a place of affirmation and potential power. Female bodies are perceived as vulnerable and fragile, but Parra seeks to turn this assumption around through a process of reconstructing and adapting bodily movement to limitation. Parra's work speaks of veiled, historical violence in relation to women.

She was awarded the 3M Public Art Award (2018), SP-Art Fair Prize (2017), Joaquim Nabuco Foundation's Video Award (2011) and Videobrasil Award (2011). Parra was also nominated for the Emerging Artists Award, Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami.

Her work is part of important museum collections such as Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA, Barcelona), Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP, São Paulo), Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (Pina\_), Fábrica de Arte Marcos Amaro (FAMA, Itu), Associação Cultural Videobrasil (São Paulo), Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (Recife), Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz (Ribeirão Preto), among others.





# Regina Parra

São Paulo, 1984  
Lives and works in New York, USA

## Next Exhibitions

2023 - April  
Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo

## Solo Shows

2022  
The Deviant, Galeria Jaqueline Martins - Brussels, BE

2021  
Forbidden Bird, Public Art - Miami Beach, USA

2020  
O possível no impossível, Public Art - São Paulo, Brazil

2019  
For a geography of proximity, Museum of Santa Catarina - Santa Catarina, Brazil

Still I Rise, Fundação Marcos Amaro - Itu, Brazil  
Bacchae, Galeria Millan - Sao Paulo, Brazil

2018  
Regina Parra Video Works, O Sitio - Florianópolis, Brazil

2016  
Why are you trembling, woman?, Galeria Millan - São Paulo, Brazil

2014  
It is possible, but not right now, Pivô - São Paulo, Brazil

2011  
Behind the Windows, Centro Cultural São Paulo - São Paulo, Brazil

2010  
Eldorado, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco - Recife, Brazil

2009  
Mise-en-scène, Paço das Artes - São Paulo, Brazil

## Awards

2018 3M Public Art Award, São Paulo

2017 SP\_Art Fair Prize, São Paulo

2011 Video Award, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife

2011 VideoBrasil Prize, São Paulo

2006 First Prize Visual Arts Annual FAAP, São Paulo

## Residencies

2021 Monira Foundation Residency Program, Mana Contemporary, New Jersey

2020 The Watermill Center Residency Program, Watermill

2019 Annex\_B, New York

2018 Residency Unlimited, New York

2014 Pivô Residency Program, Sao Paulo

2009 Red Bull House of Art, Sao Paulo

# Regina Parra

São Paulo, 1984  
Lives and works in New York, USA

## Group shows

2022

Forest: Ancestry and Dystopia, Fundacion Pablo Atchugarry - Miami, USA

2021

Tactics of Disappearance, Paço das Artes - São Paulo, Brazil

Longing for Something, Mana Contemporary - Jersey City, USA

Biblioteca Floresta, Sesc Belenzinho - São Paulo, Brazil

Boundaries, VillageOne - New York, USA

2020

Beyond Appearances - Women Looking at Women, Kunstraum - New York, USA

Conflitos, insurgências e resistências, SESC Santana - São Paulo, Brazil

É preciso continuar, FAMA Museum - Itu, Brasil

2019

Feminist Histories, MASP Museum of Sao Paulo - São Paulo, Brazil

Panorama da Arte Brasileira, MAM\_Museum of Modern Art - São Paulo, Brazil

What I really want to tell you..., Atchugarry Art Center - Miami, USA

Eco Shifters, Fondazione Fabricca del Cioccolato -Blenio Valley, Switzerland

Pinacoteca: recent acquisitions, Pinacoteca - São Paulo, Brazil

Arte Atual, Tomie Ohtake Institute - São Paulo, Brazil

2018

Brazil: Knife in the flesh, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea - Milan, Italy

Holes in Maps, 601 Artspace - New York, USA

Verzuimd Braziel, Prêmio Marcantonio Vilaça, National Museum - RJ, Brazil

Olho tentacular, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro - RJ, Brazil

Biblioteca: Floresta, MARP Museum of Ribeirão Preto - Ribeirão Preto, Brazil

Olho chamado realista, SESC MINAS, Tiradentes, Brazil

2017

FUSO – International Video Art Festival, National Museum of Art - Lisbon, Portugal

Say the Same Thing, OnCurating Project Space - Zurich, Switzerland

Travessias 5: Emergência, Galpão Bela Maré - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Retratos, Galeria Millan - São Paulo, Brazil

2016

Sights and Sounds, Jewish Museum - New York, USA

Arquitetura e paisagem urbana, Museu Brasileiro da Escultura - SP, Brazil

Estou cá, SESC Belenzinho - São Paulo, Brazil

Acervo Videobrasil no Cambridge, Ocupação Hotel Cambridge - SP, Brazil

CPR Film Festival Argentina - Buenos Aires, Argentina

Jogos de Forças, Paço das Artes - São Paulo, Brazil

Coisa Pública, Despina - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Porque somos elas e eles, Blau Projects - São Paulo, Brazil

## Permanent works in public space

Forbidden Bird, public art commissioned by The55Project - Miami Beach, USA

The impossible, commissioned by Sao Paulo municipality - São Paulo, Brazil

I will go on, commissioned by 3M Public Art Award - São Paulo, Brazil

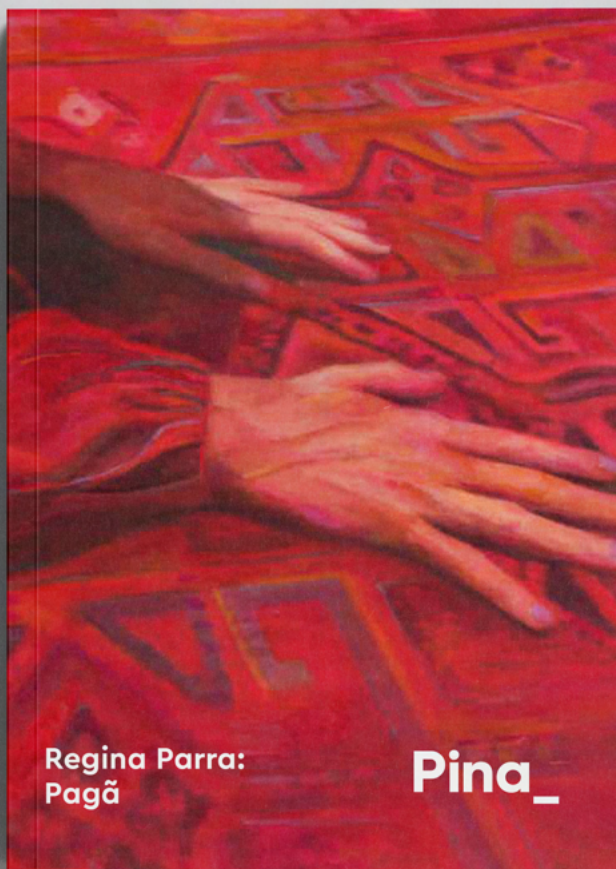
Chance, commissioned by Parque Lage - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

7536 Steps for a Geography of Proximity,

commissioned by The Joaquim Nabuco Foundation - Recife, Brazil

The Pearls, as I have written, commissioned by VídeoBrasil Prize - SP, Brazil

Behind the windows, commissioned by Centro Cultural São Paulo - SP, Brazil



**REGINA PARRA: PAGAN**  
is on view at Pinacoteca de Sao Paulo until August 13th.

[Click for more information](#)