

CASA
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PRESS



TransLatin Diagonals

with **Gabriel Catren**, **Amy Ireland**, **Maya B. Kronik**, and **Thomas Murphy**

Casa São Roque – Centro de Arte
R. São Roque da Lameira 2092, Porto

Sunday, June 18, 2023, 5–7pm

Guests are invited to gather from 3–5pm for a guided tour of the Emily Wardill exhibition by curator Barbara Piwowarska, and to visit the park and gardens.

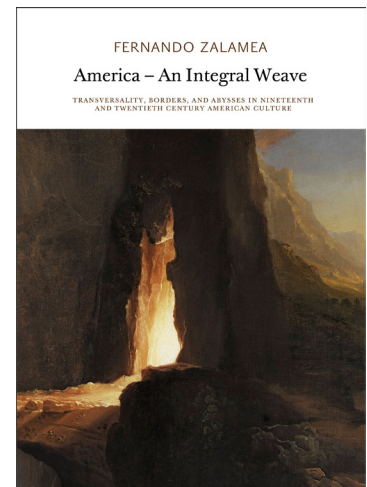
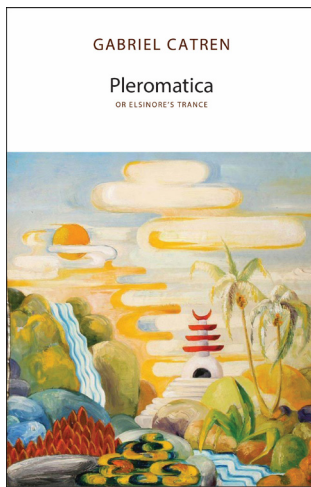


In the as yet untranslated (and perhaps untranslatable) novel *Catatau*, **Paulo Leminski** (Brazil, 1944–1989) adopts the persona of an alternative-history Descartes who, having arrived with the fleet of Maurício de Nassau during the Dutch Invasion of Brazil, tries and fails to ‘Euclidise’ the rainforest, and is flung into a hallucinatory fever by the intractability of the new continent to reason and subjective interiority.

A number of extraordinary Latin American works express and reflect upon the unanticipated impact of indigenous cultures and the flora and fauna of the ‘new’ continent upon its colonisers, the force of this high-tension encounter placing their relation to language, representation, environment and subject at an oblique angle to the recognised canon of European modernism.

An outstanding early example is *Verdant Inferno* (1908) by the civil engineer **Alberto Rangel** (Brazil, 1871–1945), who was sent into the Amazonian interior by colonial authorities to observe, map, and report back, but whose experiences are recorded in tales that shimmer between documentary, visionary limit experience, and sheer mental breakdown.

The moment when colonialist rationality met its limits in the ‘magnificent disorder’ of the Amazon seemingly unleashed a process of autocritique that can be traced in various Brazilian aesthetic movements, most notably anthropophagy, tropicalism, and concretism. A similar tribunal of reason can be found in the so-called ‘neobaroque’ schools elsewhere across Latin



America, particularly in Cuba and the Rio de la Plata region. These characteristically Latin American modernist tendencies, while certainly looking back over their shoulder at European art movements, projected their dynamic into a new soil where they could not take in any 'natural' way, and where they instead mutated into unprecedented new forms.

Leminski's transplantation of European philosophy into the rainforest is reiterated by **Jean-Christophe Goddard** (France, b. 1959) in *A Scabby Black Brazilian* (paired with Rangel's *Verdant Inferno* in Urbanomic's SWITCH series). Setting out from the Portuguese Bento de Espinosa's report of a fearful dream about a Brazilian 'native', and his subsequent reinvention of himself as Benedict de Spinoza, a purified thinker distanced from the darkneses of the Portuguese colonial adventure, Goddard asks: What if Bento were instead flung into the depths of the jungle—wouldn't that *truly* be the philosopher's nightmare...?

In *America: An Integral Weave*, **Fernando Zalamea** (Colombia, b. 1959) draws upon the concept of *transmodernity*, coined by **Rosa María Rodríguez Magda** (Spain, b. 1957), to paint a panorama of a twentieth-century Latin American thought that was never trapped in the alternative between 'modern' reason and 'postmodern' unreason. With Latin America conceived as a borderzone 'naturally prone to mixture and hybridization', a 'privileged site of gnoseological oscillations and creative transits', Zalamea emphasises the Latin American intellectual's peculiar capacity to construct syntheses, to find new mediations between opposites that invent and intersperse exchange, osmosis, and transformation to reflect the metamorphic complexity of the universe, with reference to a panoply of artists and intellectuals including **Alfonso Reyes** (Mexico, 1889–1959), **Pedro Henríquez Ureña** (Dominican Republic, 1884–1946), **Jorge Luis Borges** (Argentina, 1899–1986), **José Lezama Lima** (Cuba, 1910–1976), and **Ángel Rama** (Uruguay, 1926–1983).

In *Pleromatica*, **Gabriel Catren** (Argentina, b. 1975) confronts the most fundamental challenges of modernity as dramatised by canonical figures including Mallarmé, Joyce, Hegel and Fichte, in a major philosophical work that kicks against postmodern nihilism in a style that digests the ventriloquizing transpoetics of Leminski, the neobaroque queerness of **Néstor Perlongher** (Argentina, 1949–1992), the cannibalism of **Oswald De Andrade** (Brazil, 1890–1954) and the startling imagery of Lezama Lima. In this post-Grothendieckian reconfiguration of transcendental philosophy, a 'phenomenodelic' trip to the far side of 'speculative realism' yields not so much a treatise as a Babelian 'lanjaguar' infused with the perspectivist Amazonian anthropology of Eduardo Viveiros De Castro and the *vivência* and *razonabilidad* of Latin American thought.

Gabriel Catren is a philosopher and a physicist working at the Institut SPHERE—Science, Philosophie, Histoire (Université Paris Diderot–CNRS, Paris). He is the author of *Pleromatica, or Elsinore’s Trance* (Urbanomic/Sequence Press 2023).

Amy Ireland is a writer and theorist best known for her work with the technomaterialist transfeminist collective, Laboria Cuboniks, whose *Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation* (Verso, 2018) has been translated into 17 languages. She is an editor and translator for Urbanomic.

Maya B. Kronic is a philosopher and translator, and director of Urbanomic.

Thomas Murphy is writer, translator and software engineer interested in the epistemology of mathematics and experimental fiction. He is the translator of *Pleromatica, or Elsinore’s Trance* (Urbanomic/Sequence Press, 2023) and *Verdant Inferno / A Scabby Black Brazilian* (Urbanomic, 2023).