

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LARISSA DE SOUZA  
PAREDES QUE CONTAM HISTÓRIAS  
FEB. 9 – MAR. 18, 2023  
ALBERTZ BENDA, NY



Portrait of the artist in her studio. Photo by Tamara dos Santos

**NEW YORK, NY:** albertz benda is pleased to present Brazilian artist Larissa de Souza's first solo exhibition in the United States, on view from February 9 – March 18, 2023. *Paredes Que Contam Histórias* (Walls That Tell Histories) will feature a suite of twelve acrylic paintings. In this exhibition, de Souza observes domestic scenes that, through allegory and symbolism, explore the dynamics of family life and their reflection within the fabric of society.

Based in Sao Paulo, de Souza engages with subjects that emerge from Brazil yet speak to universal and timeless themes of inequality, identity, and familial love. She often depicts the rituals of everyday life that evoke her own experiences, both real and imagined. Through these works, the artist preserves her memories on canvas, resisting the historical erasure of the Afro-Brazilian culture.

In *Paredes Que Contam Histórias*, de Souza invites us into some of her most complex narrative settings to date. The works are imbued with a pervasive sense of melancholy, while also celebrating moments of intimacy and humanity.

*Sessao da tarde*, 2022, depicts an archetypal mid-day moment: through a window, we view a woman watching her afternoon soap opera while two young girls play with their doll outside. This tranquility and

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simplicity is subverted by a conspicuous divide — the actress on TV and the doll both are white, while the figures are black. The artist explains, “This seems natural at first because difference is already ingrained in the culture. We don’t see ourselves portrayed in what we consume, and this takes root in our unconscious. My painting practice seeks the essence of its own beauty: a subtle but present feeling.”

Drawing inspiration from the vernacular architecture of Northeastern Brazil, colorful façades decorated by elaborate, geometric designs recur throughout these paintings. Patibandas, decorative architectural details that adorn the tops of buildings, are transformed into portals that provide glimpses into the future. In *Sessão da tarde*, the patibandas shows the woman, no longer absorbed by the TV, looking into a handheld mirror— a redemptive act of self-representation and a symbolic conclusion.

The depicted figures are informed by de Souza’s personal and intuitive spirituality. Working far outside a strictly religious narrative, the artist finds moments of truth within found everyday objects, including the small rocks and shells that adorn the surfaces of her canvases.

Altogether, the works in *Paredes Que Contam Histórias* present an overarching narrative of soulful resilience, grounded in quotidian beauty. Dichotomies between happiness and ambivalence, timelines and presence, individual and collective experience animate the works and deepen their open-ended resonance.

#### **ABOUT LARISSA DE SOUZA**

Larissa de Souza (b. 1995, Sao Paulo, BR) is a self-taught artist based in Sao Paulo, Brazil whose work investigates issues of ancestry, identity and memory. De Souza’s work often returns to her experiences growing up in a community of Black women, many of whom (including her mother and grandmother) were from Northeastern Brazil. Often resembling family portraits or clippings of photo albums, these works depict exchanges of affection, motherhood, and everyday domesticity that evoke the artist’s experiences, both real and imagined. Through these works, de Souza aims to preserve her memories on canvas, resisting the historical erasure of the Afro-Brazilian population while also crafting new narratives of what it means to be a Black woman in Brazil.

#### **ABOUT ALBERTZ BENDA**

Founded in 2015, albertz benda is a contemporary art gallery with an international program exploring material and textility as well as cultural and social dialogues. Our Chelsea space is host to rotating exhibitions with an emphasis on solo presentations of emerging artists, new research into historic figures, and thematic group exhibitions. In 2021, the gallery expanded to a second location in Los Angeles. Featuring an evolving identity separate from our New York program, the LA space is realized within the context of a domestic setting, advancing new connections between visual arts, craft, and design.

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