

Sacatar in and around PST: LA/LA exhibitions



Web Banner Reproduced Courtesy of Fowler Museum at UCLA

The Sacatar Foundation, historically linked to Pasadena and Los Angeles County, has – since 2001 - funded cross-cultural artist residencies for artists wanting to work in Latin America and specifically within Bahia, a significant center of the African Diaspora. We are proud to salute L.A.-based Sacatar Fellows --- Fran Siegel, Mark Steven Greenfield, J Michael Walker and Linda Yudin --- currently associated with shows and events linked officially or thematically to the city-wide Getty Foundation led series "**Pacific Standard Time: Los Angeles / Latin America**", known locally among arts enthusiasts and professionals as PST: LA/LA.

One of the first words that Sacatar artists learn during their residencies is Axé (pronounced ah-SHEH), a term that comes from the Yoruba peoples of West Africa. It is the name that the Yoruba gave to the life force. It is also used in Bahia as a greeting, as an acknowledgement of a powerful exchange of energy: Axé! Sacatar fellows also learn to quickly recognize Axé as the name for a particular style of popular music that also has its origins in Bahia.

First, we want to proudly acknowledge Sacatar amiga and board member Sabrina Gledhill. Axé! One of the four curators behind the "**Axé Bahia: The Power of Art in an Afro-Brazilian Metropolis**" exhibition opening this next weekend at UCLA's Fowler Museum, Sabrina has this to say about the development of the exhibition...

Curating "Axé Bahia: The Power of Art in an Afro-Brazilian Metropolis" involved the challenge of presenting an insider's perspective on Afro-Brazilian culture in Bahia to a largely foreign, unspecialised audience, and doing so through contemporary art and traditional culture. How to define Afro-Brazilian art was another conundrum. The solution that the curatorial team (Patrick Polk, Roberto Conduru, Randal Johnson and myself) devised was to include works by artists and photographers born in and/or based in Bahia, such as Mario Cravo Neto, Carybé and Pierre Verger, as well as "self-exiled"

Bahians, like Rubem Valentim and Lita Cerqueira. I could also mention Caetano Dias, Ayrson Heráclito, J Cunha, Goya Lopes, and many other amazing artists.

We also searched for today's generation of contemporary artists, and found Àlex Ìgbó, Tiago Sant'Anna, Eder Muniz and Pedro Marighella, among others. Many were considered, and some did not make the cut despite fervent support from one or more curators. Some did not make it by their own choice or out of sheer bad luck, such as being down with dengue fever when the team was in Salvador to make the final selection. The most memorable experiences included our encounters with the sculptor José Adário – the embodiment of axé. There have been many disappointments along the way, including the fact that we were not able to hold special residencies for the project at Sacatar, as originally planned, but the end result has come together in a powerful and exciting way. You could even say, with axé! I hope this exhibition will be the first of many, as it has not covered many aspects of Afro-Brazilian art – chiefly works by non-Bahians and non-residents, many of whom have passed through and made a lasting contribution through Sacatar. Finally, I would like to thank Mitch, Taylor and Augusto for their support throughout the process. "Axé Bahia" is all the richer for it.



From left to right: "Axé Bahia" curators Roberto Conduru, Sabrina Gledhill, Patrick Polk, and featured exhibition artist José Adário dos Santos. Photo by Adenor Gondim

Not to be missed, "Axé Bahia" explores the distinctive cultural role of the city of Salvador, the coastal capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia. After many years of living and working and studying in Salvador, Sabrina Gledhill is now based in England but continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the Instituto Sacatar, our international artist residency program in Itaparica across the bay from Salvador.

The **Instituto Sacatar** has hosted the following Sacatar Fellows whose work, inspired by their residencies, may be experienced here in Los Angeles County...



Fran Siegel

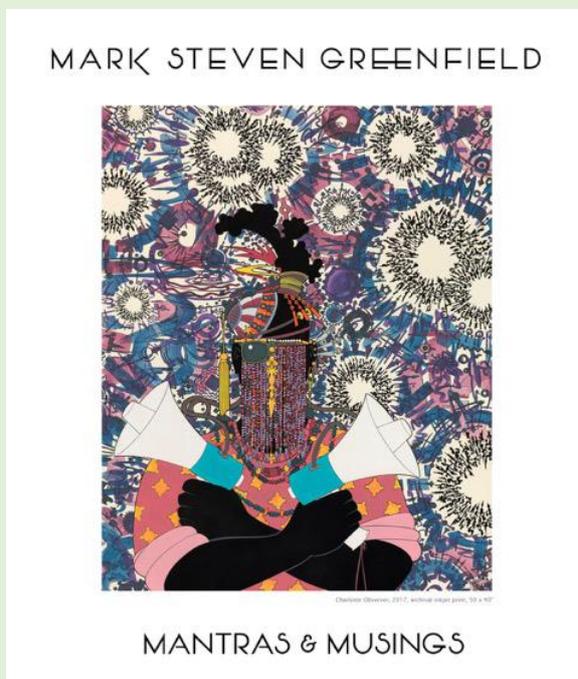
Long Beach-based visual artist **Fran Siegel**, like so many Sacatar Fellows, has returned to her home turf inspired by experiences that the Sacatar program can offer to creative souls seeking intense exploration and further immersion into Bahian culture. Bahia is widely known for its festivals and traditions associated with Candomblé, an Afro-American religious tradition practiced primarily in Brazil. Sacatar Fellows live and work on the island of Itaparica, one of the most significant locales on the planet for the practice of the Egun tradition as well. Fran Siegel says this about her current show concurrent with "Axé Bahia" at the Fowler Museum through December 10:



Fran Siegel, "Lineage through Landscape" 2016-2017, Mixed media, 144 inches x 300 inches. Courtesy Fowler Museum at UCLA. Photo: Don Cole

My exhibition "**Lineage Through Landscape**" is a thirty-six-foot-long elaborate woven drawing installation extending from three gallery walls. The piece is a layered and complex visual narrative about place and history, memory and heritage. "Lineage Through Landscape" took three years to complete. In 2014 I was initially invited by the Fowler Museum to construct a drawing project based on an item from their collection, and I was immediately struck by the Egun ensemble. In 2015 I was awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in Brazil in three locations: 1) Rio de Janeiro's archives for maps and historic documents 2) Museu Afro Brasil in São Paulo- contextual guidance from a

team of researchers and director Emanuel Araújo on the significance of specific materials used, about the role of Egun in the local community, and the role that landscape plays in defining a sacred link to the metaphysical world between the two continents 3) My fellowship at The Sacatar Foundation was critical for this project in multiple ways: Program Manager Augusto Albuquerque became a constant advisor; arranging access to ceremonies, and contact with people who shared their knowledge about Candomblé and sacred plants during walks in a preserve on the island. From books in the library I began to study their symbolic connections to ancestral African roots. Being on the island for an extended period of time enabled me to experience and photograph slight changes in the fiber of everyday life. Simultaneously I used the magically situated light-filled studio to begin the work; developing imagery and experimenting with the form the project might take.



Mark Steven Greenfield

Heading southwest from Westwood to Santa Monica, we next park at Bergamot Station before delivering an Axé to Sacatar Fellow **Mark Steven Greenfield** whose show **Mantras and Musings** is on view at the **Lora Schlesinger Gallery** through October 14.

His third exhibition featuring work inspired by his Sacatar residency, Mark Steven Greenfield continues to explore the complexity of the African Diaspora. **Mantras & Musings** features intensive, contemplative drawings intuitively constructed with shapes and marks, akin to automatic writing or a meditative scrawl and, like Fran Siegel's show, suggests how Egun experiences on the island of Itaparica can get under an artist's skin and find their way into new creative works.



Mark Steven Greenfield at the September 9 opening of "Mantras and Musings". Photo by Mitch Loch

Creating an interplay between positive and negative space, the work is a form of psychological mapping consciously manipulating and re-contextualizing imagery that promotes racist stereotypes. Lingering in the subconscious like shadows, Greenfield removes the stigma of the original source by introducing text and abstracted elements... The Egungun series addresses the duality of life. In Yoruba culture, the Egun are the spirits of the departed ancestors, who pass on knowledge to their progeny. While they are powerful, they can also have a strong negative energy, and they manifest themselves in the form of blessings and curses. Behind the Egungun, geometric and calligraphic lines are arranged in patterns subtly alluding to the thorns present among seemingly soft cotton fields. Greenfield's imagery combines opposing realities, creating a dichotomous world that accurately defines the complexity of life and the African American experience.



We want to thank Mark Steven Greenfield for the work above (40" X 48" unframed), which he recently donated to the permanent collection of the Sacatar Foundation. Inspired by the Egungun ceremonies he witnessed while at Sacatar, Mark synthesizes in this work the contradictory and mysterious nature of Bahia: the costumed figure may be offering you a cake with one hand...but he is brandishing a knife in the other. Sacatar is proud to display this terrific piece.

J Michael Walker "Pages from a Bahia Diary"



"From the moment I stepped outside the gates of my artist residency on the island of Itaparica, I felt I was wading through waves of Yoruba spirits, as palpable as the sea waves lapping the shore."

September 29 - October 29, 2017

Opening Reception -

Saturday, September 30, 7-10pm

Gallery 38 -

5376 W. Adams Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90016

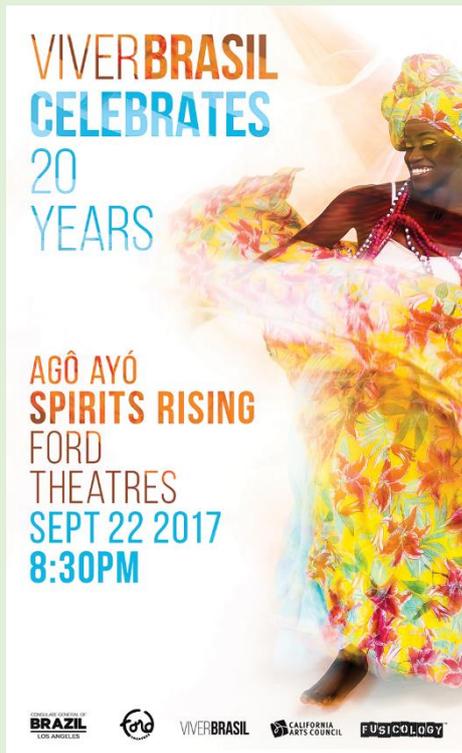


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Time: LA/LA
Latin American
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J. Michael Walker

Also coming up on our calendar is the September 30th opening for **J. Michael Walker's** show "**Pages from a Bahia Diary**" at Gallery 38, which is officially included in the Getty's PST: LA/LA celebration. Among Itaparican villagers, Sacatar Fellow J. Michael is known locally as the bearded gringo who painted a **mural** on the rear exterior wall of Santo Antonio dos Navegantes, a neighborhood church, a few years ago. Also during his residency, J. Michael collaborated on a series of drawings with a number of baianas, the name for women from Bahia. In J. Michael's own words:

From the moment I stepped outside the gates of Sacatar, I felt I was wading through waves of Yoruba spirits, as palpable as the sea waves lapping the shore. I am finally having a sizeable showing of the work I've been producing over the past six years, inspired by my Sacatar residency back in 2011. Everything is drawn directly over the text pages of a 1940 Sao Paulo republication of a 1757 Dutch original, a history of the Dutch colonial empire of Brasil, on beautiful folio-sized laid paper, albeit richly stained and torn, that I acquired at a used bookstore here in L.A. 20 years before going to Itaparica. And, no one in Bahia found it at all unusual that I would acquire the book scraps decades beforehand and take it to Bahia and create their portraits. 'Of course!', more than one person there told me, 'The book was waiting for you to come!' I've made Sacatar an important part of the narrative, as it remains an extraordinarily momentous opportunity to explore in depth another culture that was, in Bahia's own terms, waiting for me a long time.



Linda Yudin

Sacatar Fellow Linda Yudin, the co-founding Artistic Director of **Viver Brasil**, will be onstage in Hollywood at the **Ford Theatres** this coming Friday night, September 22. Viver Brasil will present a very special program to celebrate its twentieth anniversary, entitled "Agô Ayó - Spirits Rising - Viver Celebrates 20!"

Sacatar Fellows, the majority of them new to Bahia, have the opportunity in Itaparica to discover, by guided ritual, their inner orixá, a Yoruba religious term for a spirit that reflects a particular manifestation of the supreme divinity. Viver Brasil illuminates the Afro-Brazilian ancestral wisdom of orixá dance and music, while also exploring contemporary themes of race, gender, resistance and resilience. Arriving from Salvador to participate at the Ford Theatres in the "Viver Brasil" program as the distinguished, elder guest-of-honor will be Nancy de Souza, known as Dona Cici, who was in residence with Linda at the Instituto Sacatar in 2012. Dona Cici worked at Sacatar with Linda on an oral history project.

The following night, Friday, September 23, as well as on Saturday, September 24, Linda and Viver Brasil will participate in the **Axé Bahia** opening day festivities accompanying the exhibition at UCLA's Fowler Museum, the first event mentioned in this announcement. There, the dance company will present selected orixá dances with live music and samba. Dona Cici will offer blessings on both days, representing the grace and artistic inspiration of Salvador indeed.



Dona Edinha, Dona Cici, Linda Yudin and Dona Zelita during Linda's residency at the Instituto Sacatar in Itaparica, Bahia. Photo by Felipe Góes, 2012

Besides those artists spotlighted in this announcement, since 2001 twelve other artists based in Los Angeles County have received two-month Fellowships at the Instituto Sacatar. We remain grateful to the Department of Cultural Affairs in Los Angeles, which, between 2010 and 2015, under the inspired leadership of Olga Garay, co-sponsored seven LA County artists representing a broad spectrum of the arts: literature, dance, photography, video, painting and puppetry. Though Salvador and Los Angeles are designated "Sister Cities", the Sacatar Foundation does not promote residencies solely between Los Angeles County and Bahia, Brazil. To date, 350 creative individuals from 62 countries have received Sacatar Fellowships and have had experiences and have produced new works of art just as remarkable as those spotlighted this month here in Los Angeles. Just like Mark, Linda, Fran and Michael, they too have returned to their communities around the world to share their experiences – in novels, short stories, poems and essays, in films and videos, in theatrical, experimental and spoken-word performances, in newly choreographed works, in a variety of visual, sculptural and installation formats, and in highly recognized musical compositions such as **Derek Bermel's piece Canzonas Americanas**, 2010, which was commissioned for and performed by the LA Philharmonic, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel at Disney Hall in downtown Los Angeles. Axé, Sacatar Fellows! Continue to share yourselves and to spread the blessings.

P.S. The **next group of Sacatar Fellows** will arrive in L.A.'s "Sister City" on October 2, 2017.