

**MASP CELEBRATES THE WORK OF ABEL RODRÍGUEZ
IN HIS FIRST POSTHUMOUS SOLO EXHIBITION**

The exhibition analyzes Rodríguez's work, presenting his drawings as records of the knowledge of the Nonuya and Muinane indigenous peoples about the Colombian Amazon



Abel Rodríguez, *A árvore da vida e da abundância* [The Tree of Life and Abundance], 2022. MASP collection

October 10, 2025 to April 5, 2026

Starting October 10, the **Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP)** will present the exhibition **Abel Rodríguez — Mogaje Guihu: The tree of life and abundance**. This will be the first solo exhibition by the Colombian artist since his passing. The exhibition provides a comprehensive overview of the work of Abel Rodríguez (Cahuinari, Colombia, 1941–2025), a figure widely acknowledged for his pioneering contributions to the

representation and organization of ancestral knowledge concerning the flora and fauna of the Colombian Amazon.

The title of the exhibition combines the artist's two names: Mogaje Guihu, as he is known among the Muinane and Nonuya peoples, and Abel Rodríguez, the Spanish name he adopted after being forced to leave the forest. As a child, he received training from his Muinane family to become a *sabedor*. This training involved learning to identify and understand the practical and symbolic uses of plants, as well as their relationships with other beings. His experience in the Colombian Amazon resulted in intricate drawings of plants, their cycles, and forest seasons developed since the 1990s. Encouraged by researchers from the Tropenbos Foundation, he began drawing then. Over time, his work gained recognition in the Colombian and international art scenes. For his contributions to the art and nature debate, the artist won the Prince Claus Award. This increased the visibility of his work, leading him to participate in important biennials around the world, such as those in São Paulo, Venice, Toronto, Gwangju, Sydney, and Kassel's documenta.

Curated by MASP's artistic director, **Adriano Pedrosa**, and assistant curator, **Leandro Muniz**, the exhibition offers an analytical look at the artist's work. His approach breaks with traditional botanical drawing by recording the region's fauna and flora from the perspective of his ancestral knowledge, which is based on an integrated view of nature. While traditional botany decontextualizes and dissects plants, Rodríguez presents an interrelational view of the ecosystem. "My knowledge is not biological. It is materially, spiritually, and emotionally connected to the forest and its energy," Abel Rodríguez said in 2024. This principle guides the structure of the exhibition, which is divided into four sections: *Mythological Trees*, *Botanical Drawings*, *Cycles*, and *Integrated Nature*.

The ***Mythological Trees*** section features Rodríguez's drawings inspired by the Nonuya-Muinane creation narratives. The trees of life and abundance are references to the first tree that gave rise to the Amazon, as well as to the time when animals and humans tested and disputed its fruits until achieving social harmony. However, this harmony is destroyed by the greed of humans who cut down the tree with axes.

Small watercolors draw parallels between Western botanical drawings, which spread with colonial expansion beginning in the 18th century, and indigenous classification systems. Works such as *Plantas cultivadas de la gente del centro* (Plants Cultivated by the People of the Center) (2013) reveal the integration of plants and animals with their social functions while recording ecosystems, territories, and cultures. These works are brought together in the ***Botanical Drawings*** section.

The **Cycles** section presents visual sequences that map the forest's seasonal transformations. These works document cycles such as those of the floodplain forest, which changes according to the ebb and flow of rivers. They also illustrate how these cycles influence crop rotation in family farming and the construction of *malocas*, which are collective dwellings that structure indigenous social life in the region.

Abel Rodríguez's latest works, including pieces from 2024 and 2025, present a vision of a connected territory. His densely populated drawings reveal indigenous communities, plants, and animals, as well as their habits and coexistence. These drawings form the final section of the exhibition, **Integrated Nature**.

Abel Rodríguez — Mogaje Guihu: The tree of life and abundance is part of MASP's annual program dedicated to the *Histories of Ecology*. This year's program also includes exhibitions by Mulheres Atingidas por Barragens (Women Affected by Dams), Claude Monet, Frans Krajcberg, Clarissa Tossin, Hulda Guzmán, Minerva Cuevas, and the large collective exhibition *Histories of Ecology*.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Abel Rodríguez (Cahuinarí, Colombia, 1941–2025), whose indigenous name is Mogaje Guihu, was born on the banks of the Cahuinarí River in the Colombian Amazon and is originally from the Nonuya and Muinane communities. His exact date of birth is uncertain—the most likely is 1941, but the years 1940 and 1944 appear in publications and exhibitions—because, like other peoples in the central Amazon rainforest, the Nonuya and Muinane measure time differently. Since childhood, he has been trained to be a *sabedor*, a repository of knowledge about the forest's botanical species and their practical and symbolic uses. In the 1990s, fleeing armed conflict in his native region, he moved to Bogotá, where, in contact with the Dutch foundation Tropenbos, he was encouraged to draw in order to record and share his memories. Rodríguez has participated in several exhibitions, including Documenta in Kassel (2017), the São Paulo Biennial (2021), the Sydney Biennial (2022), and the Venice Biennale (2024).

ACCESSIBILITY

All temporary exhibitions at MASP are accessible, offering free admission to people with disabilities and their companions. Descriptive tours and visits in Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) are offered, as well as large-print texts and captions and easy-to-understand audiovisual productions with narration, subtitles, and Libras interpretation that describe and comment on the spaces and works. This content is available on the museum's website and YouTube channel and can be used by people with disabilities, school groups, teachers, illiterate individuals, and anyone else who is interested.

CATALOG

A bilingual catalog will be published in English and Portuguese, bringing together images and texts about the exhibition and the artist's work more broadly. The book is edited by Adriano Pedrosa and Leandro Muniz, and includes texts by Catalina Vargas Tovar, Denilson Baniwa, José Roca, Leandro Muniz, and Oscar Roldan Alzate. The catalog also features a glossary, organized by Muniz and David Queiroz, research assistant, which highlights terms from the Nonuya-Muinane worldview and fundamental concepts of Abel Rodríguez's work.

MASP STORE

In dialogue with the exhibition, the MASP Store presents special products by *Abel Rodríguez (Mogaje Guihu): The Tree of Life and Abundance*, including bags, magnetic postcards, posters, bookmarks, bottles, T-shirts, notebooks, and notepads.

PRODUCTION

Abel Rodríguez — Mogaje Guihu: The tree of life and abundance is produced under the Federal Culture Incentive Law and sponsored by Vivo.

SERVICE

Abel Rodríguez — Mogaje Guihu: The tree of life and abundance

Curated by Adriano Pedrosa, Artistic Director, MASP, and Leandro Muniz, Assistant Curator, MASP

10.10.25 — 4.5.26

-1 Floor, Lina Bo Bardi Building

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Hours: Tuesdays free, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (admission until 7 p.m.); Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (last admission at 5 p.m.); Friday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. (free admission from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.); Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (last admission at 5 p.m.); closed on Mondays.

Online booking required at masp.org.br/ingressos

Tickets: R\$ 75 (full price); R\$ 37 (students with ID)

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