MASP
MUSEU DE ARTE
DE SÃO PAULO
ASSIS CHATEAUBRIAND

MASP PRESENTS PABLO DELANO'S FIRST EXHIBITION IN BRAZIL

The installation The Museum of the Old Colony *brings together around 300 photographs and objects that invite reflection on the history of Puerto Rico, considered the world's oldest colony*



Pablo Delano, *Two Flags*, 2020, *The Museum of the Old Colony*

October 30, 2026, to January 31, 2027

The **MASP — Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand** presents ***Pablo Delano: The Museum of the Old Colony*** from October 30, 2026, to January 31, 2027. The exhibition is the first solo show in Brazil by the Puerto Rican artist. A visual artist and photographer known for his work with archives and the memory of Latin American and Caribbean peoples, **Pablo Delano** (Puerto Rico, 1954) offers, in this exhibition, a reflection on the political and social status of his homeland, considered the oldest colony in the world.

Curated by **Adriano Pedrosa**, artistic director, MASP, and **Fernando Oliva**, curator, MASP, the exhibition centers on the project *The Museum of the Old Colony*, which brings together images, objects, and documents related to Puerto Rico's colonial history, from Spanish rule to the island's current status as an unincorporated territory of the United States. The installation functions as "a museum within a museum," reproducing and, at the same time, questioning traditional ways of organizing, classifying, and presenting objects and images.

Historical photographs are enlarged and mounted directly on the walls, without frames, alongside everyday objects—such as bottles of *Old Colony* soda, a product created in the United States and now sold almost exclusively in Puerto Rico, which gives the exhibition its title.

“Pablo Delano offers a different way of looking at the history of Puerto Rico and its colonization by the United States. It is certainly more critical, but also imbued with a certain wit and irony, as if to remind us that even denunciation and resistance can use humor as a viral and disruptive strategy,” says Fernando Oliva.

Puerto Rico’s history shares many points of connection with Brazil’s, including a colonial and slaveholding past imposed on Indigenous and Black populations, which has left deep marks on the societies, economies, and cultures of both countries. “The main question we can ask ourselves when faced with Pablo Delano’s proposal for MASP is: what resonance can the term ‘anticolonial’ have in Brazil today? This exhibition offers an opportunity to confront this dilemma,” says the curator. “In the context of a geopolitical situation in which Latin America is systematically threatened by the warmongering rhetoric of a new US colonialism, Delano’s work takes on an even greater sense of urgency.”

Claimed by Spain in 1493 and transferred to US control in 1898 following the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico is today defined as an “unincorporated territory” that belongs to the United States but is not part of it. Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917; however, those who live on the island cannot vote in US presidential elections, among other restrictions. This kind of ambiguity permeates Delano’s museum, which explores how photography, advertising, and everyday objects are used to construct stereotypes and promote an image of a “tropical paradise” that seeks to conceal exploitation and violence.

The Museum of the Old Colony directly engages with the anti-colonial project developed by MASP since its founding in the late 1940s, drawing on the ideas of Lina Bo Bardi and Pietro Maria Bardi. “From its very beginnings, the museum embraced a non-Eurocentric vision, conceiving of the museum as an institution that would bring together multiple forms of knowledge, originating not only from artists in the canonical Western sense, but from anyone able to make a contribution,” Oliva explains. In 1968, MASP introduced the glass easels designed by Lina to display its collection, placing works from the European canon and those by Brazilian artists, including self-taught creators, on the same material, symbolic, and visual plane. “Like Lina Bo Bardi in the 1960s, Delano’s work also seems to ask what an art exhibition in a museum means today—a place created in the context of colonization that, for centuries, served to reaffirm the structures and representations of that very colonialism,” says Fernando Oliva.

The Museum of the Old Colony was part of the 2024 Venice Biennale, curated by Adriano Pedrosa, and has previously been exhibited at institutions in Puerto Rico, the United States, Argentina, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Pablo Delano: The Museum of the Old Colony is part of MASP's annual program dedicated to Latin American Histories. The year's program also includes exhibitions of works by Jesús Soto, Rosa Elena Curruchich, Manuel Herreros and Mateo Manaure, Carolina Caycedo, Sol Calero, Damián Ortega, Colectivo Acciones de Arte, Claudia Alarcón & Silät, La Chola Poblete, Santiago Yahuarcani, and Sandra Gamarra Heshiki.

MASP CONVERSATIONS

On the day the exhibition opens to the public, October 30, at 7 pm, artist Pablo Delano and curator Fernando Oliva will discuss the project with the audience. The event is free and will take place in person, with simultaneous Portuguese–Spanish interpretation (headsets can be collected upon presentation of a photo ID) and Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) interpretation. A recording will subsequently be made available on MASP's YouTube channel.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pablo Delano was born in 1954 and grew up in Puerto Rico. He moved to the US East Coast in the early 1970s to study art, settling in New York in 1979. He initially worked as a painter but soon turned to photography, a skill he inherited from his father, photographer Jack Delano. In 1996, Delano accepted a teaching position at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, which gave him the opportunity to travel to Trinidad and Tobago, in the southern Caribbean. He returned to the country many times over the following ten years and, in 2008, published a book of black-and-white photographs titled *In Trinidad*, exploring the process of postcolonial nation-building. In the late 1990s, Delano began collecting archival images of Puerto Rico to address the island's colonial status. This initiative gave rise to his installation *The Museum of the Old Colony*, which has been exhibited at museums around the world since 2016. In 2025, Delano presented the exhibition *cuestiones caribeñas / caribbean matters* at the Chazen Museum of Art in the United States, exploring Caribbean history and the realities shared by Caribbean territories.

ACCESSIBILITY

All MASP temporary exhibitions offer accessibility resources, with free admission for people with disabilities and one companion. Visits in Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) or with audio description are available upon request via email at acessibilidade@masp.org.br. Additional resources include texts and captions in large print, as well as audiovisual content with audio description, subtitles, and Libras interpretation. All materials are available on the museum's website and YouTube channel and may be used by people with or without disabilities, school groups, teachers, non-literate visitors, and the general public, during spontaneous visits or visits accompanied by MASP staff.

CATALOG

In December, a bilingual catalogue in English and Portuguese will be published to accompany the exhibition, featuring images and texts by Ángel Antonio Ruiz Laboy, Fernando Oliva, Laura Bravo López, and Marta Aponte Alsina. The book is edited by Adriano Pedrosa and Fernando Oliva.

MASP STORE

In dialogue with the exhibition, the MASP Store presents a selection of special products, including postcards and tote bags.

SUPPORT

Pablo Delano: The Museum of the Old Colony is presented with support from Brazil's Federal Culture Incentive Law and PROAC-ICMS.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Pablo Delano: The Museum of the Old Colony

Curators: Adriano Pedrosa, artistic director, MASP, and Fernando Oliva, curator, MASP

October 30, 2026 – January 31, 2027
Lina Bo Bardi Building, 1st floor

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Opening hours: Tuesdays, free admission, 10 am–8 pm (last entry at 7 pm), sponsored by Nubank; Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 am–6 pm (last entry at 5 pm); Fridays, 10 am–9 pm (free admission from 6 pm to 8:30 pm, sponsored by B3); Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm (last entry at 5 pm). Closed on Mondays.
Online booking is required at masp.org.br/ingressos.
Tickets: R$85 (full price); R$42 (half price).
Nubank Ultravioleta customers receive 50% off full-price admission and selected products at the MASP Store; Nubank customers receive 25% off.

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