MASP
MUSEU DE ARTE
DE SÃO PAULO
ASSIS CHATEAUBRIAND

MASP PRESENTS A NEW WORK BY EDGAR CALEL ON THE SHARING OF ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

Commissioned by the museum and developed in partnership with Brazilian filmmaker Fernando Pereira dos Santos, the video reflects on creation and the ancestral knowledge of the Indigenous Kaqchikel Maya people



Edgar Calel and Fernando Pereira dos Santos, *Ru Q'an Ramaj – Escalera del tiempo* [Ru Q'an Ramaj – Stairway of Time], 2026

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October 30, 2026–January 31, 2027

MASP — Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand presents the exhibition ***Video Room: Edgar Calel***, opening October 30. Curated by **Isabela Ferreira Loures**, curatorial assistant, MASP, the show brings together videos that address memory, ancestry, and territory from the perspective of the Kaqchikel Maya, the community of **Edgar Calel** (San Juan de Comalapa [Chi Xot], Guatemala, 1987).

At the heart of the exhibition is the work commissioned by the museum, *Ru Q'an Ramaj – Escalera del tiempo* [Ru Q'an Ramaj – Stairway of Time] (2026). The seven-minute video is the result of the visual artist's partnership with filmmaker and producer Fernando Pereira dos Santos (São Paulo, Brazil, 1984) and draws on an archive of images the two built over years of friendship. The work also documents Calel's personal and emotional journeys between Guatemala and Brazil.

In Calel's work, fire is a keeper of memory that accompanies the everyday and spiritual life of the Kaqchikel people from birth to death. The ability to "read the fire" is a way of sharing knowledge passed down through generations. "In this exhibition, we gather around a fire that holds knowledge to be handed down from one generation to the next," says Isabela Ferreira Loures. "Calel's work invites us to recognize this ancestral force that remains alive in us, turning the museum into a place of listening and collective sharing."

Two other videos complete the show, exploring the respectful relationship between body, spirit, and land. In *Rajawal juyu – Espírito dueño y protector de los cerros* [Rajawal juyu – Spirit Owner and Protector of the Mountains] (2025), the artist and his siblings walk through a forest left to them by Calel's grandmother, guided and protected by a jaguar. As Calel points out, what we receive from our ancestors comes with a commitment that calls for dedication and responsibility. Gathered around the fire, they give thanks for the gift and renew their commitment to care for it.

In *Ab'ej taj ch'ab'el – Palavras de pedra* [Ab'ej taj ch'ab'el – Words of Stone] (2025), Calel, dressed in a jaguar skin, stands before a fire. On the other side of it, the jaguar skin appears empty, folded over the stones. The video alludes to life's capacity for transformation and to the spirit's openness to different planes of existence.

Video Room: Edgar Calel is part of MASP's yearlong program dedicated to *Latin American Histories*. This year's program also includes exhibitions by Carolina Caycedo, Colectivo Acciones de Arte, Claudia Alarcón & Silät, Damián Ortega, Jesús Soto, La Chola Poblete, Manuel Herreros and Mateo Manaure, Pablo Delano, Rosa Elena Curruchich, Sandra Gamarra Heshiki, Santiago Yahuarcani, and Sol Calero, as well as video exhibitions by Clara Ianni, Claudia Martínez Garay, and Oscar Muñoz.

PERFORMANCE IN THE FREE SPAN – ***At Nu jukukempe Bik'in – Te traigo arrastrando conmigo*** **[At Nu jukukempe Bik'in – I Carry You Along with Me]**
On October 31, at 4 p.m., Edgar Calel will present a new performance in MASP's Free Span (Vão Livre). Grounded in the Kaqchikel Maya worldview, the performance will be an action shared with the public, in which offerings, gestures, and words give form to memory, creating a connection between the visible and what came before us. The action thus becomes a way of giving thanks and renewing our responsibilities toward life.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Edgar Calel is a visual artist whose work spans painting, drawing, performance, poetry, installation, and video art. It stands out for its sensitive poetics, shaped by spiritual and ritual dimensions rooted in the Kaqchikel Maya worldview. Calel's work also offers a critical reflection on the historical and political marginalization of Indigenous communities in Latin America and questions hegemonic modes of producing, exhibiting, and circulating art.

Calel's practice also reveals a strong sense of community and collaboration: many of his works are conceived and made together with his family, reinforcing the idea of creation as a shared act.

Calel has exhibited at institutions around the world and has participated in the 58th Carnegie International, the 11th Berlin Biennale, the 35th Bienal de São Paulo, the 12th Liverpool Biennial, and the 14th Gwangju Biennale, among other major exhibitions. His work is held in prominent collections, including those of Tate Modern, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design in Costa Rica.

Fernando Pereira dos Santos (São Paulo, Brazil, 1984) is a director, documentary filmmaker, and film producer. His work moves between documentary, fiction, and the visual arts, exploring the relationships between territory, memory, identity, and fabulation. His directing credits include *Mapuche: Gente da Terra* (2012) and, codirected with Edgar Calel, the short films *XAR: Sueño de Obsidiana* (2022), commissioned by the 11th Berlin Biennale, and *Ru Q'an Ramaj – Escalera del tiempo* (2026), commissioned by MASP. As producer and executive producer, his credits include the feature-length documentaries *Fabiana* (2018), winner of the Audience Award at the Olhar de Cinema festival, and *Samuel e a Luz* (2023), a Brazil–France coproduction with France Télévisions that has screened at festivals in Brazil and abroad and received several awards. He also produced *A Vez de Espera* (dir. Chico Bahia), a feature-length documentary coproduced with France and scheduled for release in 2027. He is currently developing his first feature film as director, *Rocha-Måe*.

ACCESSIBILITY

All of MASP's temporary exhibitions offer accessibility resources, with free admission for people with disabilities and one companion. Tours in Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) and audio-described tours are available upon request at acessibilidade@masp.org.br. Large-print texts and labels are also provided, as well as audiovisual content with audio description, captions, and Libras interpretation. All materials are available on the museum's website and YouTube channel and can be used by people with or without disabilities, school groups, teachers, people who cannot read, and anyone interested, whether visiting on their own or with the MASP team.

SUPPORT

Video Room: Edgar Calel is made possible through Brazil's Federal Culture Incentive Law. MASP's year of Latin American Histories is sponsored by Nubank.

SERVICE

Video Room: Edgar Calel

October 30, 2026 – January 31, 2027
Curator: Isabela Ferreira Loures, curatorial assistant, MASP
Lina Bo Bardi Building, 2nd basement level
MASP – Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand
Avenida Paulista, 1578 – Bela Vista, São Paulo, SP, Brazil
Phone: +55 11 3149-5959

Hours: Tuesdays, free admission, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. (last entry at 7 p.m.), sponsored by Nubank; Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (last entry at 5 p.m.); Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m. (free admission 6–8:30 p.m., sponsored by B3); Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (last entry at 5 p.m.); closed on Mondays.

Online booking required at: masp.org.br/ingressos

Tickets: R$ 85 (full price); R$ 42 (students with ID)

Nubank Ultravioleta customers get 50% off full-price tickets and selected products at the MASP Store; Nubank customers get 25% off.

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PRESS OFFICE
imprensa@masp.org.br