

Reviving Figurative Painting in Contemporary Art

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CplZnWp8qiLZftKEIB-w9p10cMqDA2DWW9ViX9E0WXA/edit?pli=1>

Maria Teresa Crawford Cabral, a name resonating in Portuguese and German art scenes, draws inspiration from her diverse upbringing and multidisciplinary education to craft narrative-driven paintings. Born 1959 in Lisbon and raised in Angola amid her father's zoological research, Cabral's canvases echo her fond childhood memories of the animal kingdom, interwoven with philosophical underpinnings.

Her artistic journey began at the independent art school Ar.Co in Lisbon during the 1970s, under the tutelage of painter João Hogan. Despite figuration being shunned in contemporary art during that era, Cabral remained steadfast in her devotion to this form, facing hurdles in gaining recognition within the art establishment.

After obtaining a degree in philosophy from the University of Lisbon in 1984, Cabral embarked on a transformative journey. Relocating to Germany in the late 1980s, she delved into graphic design at the Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, broadening her creative horizons.

Cabral's dedication to fine arts took center stage from 2001 onwards, marking a pivotal shift in her career. Her distinctive narrative paintings caught the eye of collector Joe Berardo in 2008, leading to the acquisition of most of her works, now proudly displayed in the Berardo Collection in Lisbon.

Her artist's oeuvre is characterized by figuration—a choice that initially marginalized her within the art world. Undeterred, Cabral persisted, carving out an independent and solitary artistic trajectory. This isolation granted her unparalleled freedom and autonomy, nurturing her distinct artistic voice.

Her accolades include the prestigious "Art In Transition" grand prize from See|Me in New York in 2020 and a finalist position for the St. Leopold Friedenspreis in 2023. Notably, her solo exhibitions, such as "A Mãe das Mães" and "CABRAL Resumee," have left indelible marks in renowned galleries and cultural centers worldwide.

Cabral's upcoming exhibition, "Diásporas," slated for 2024 at the Cultural Centre of Quinta Magnólia in Madeira, promises to delve deeper into her thematic explorations.

Her published works, including "La Joie de Vivre" and "Cabral – Assoziieren und konkretisieren," alongside her teaching tenure at the Ruhrakademie since 2008, underscore her multifaceted contributions to the art world.

Reflecting on her approach, Cabral eloquently articulates, "Since figurative painting is associated with a centuries-old mode of representation, we often locate it outside contemporary art. However, to grasp and name its topicality, art history requires more historical distance."

Through her thought-provoking canvases, Maria Teresa Crawford Cabral transcends temporal boundaries, infusing contemporary relevance into the age-old tradition of figurative art—a testament to her unwavering commitment to her craft.

Discover more about Maria Teresa Crawford Cabral's captivating narrative at Crawford-Cabral.com and her Squarespace page.

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