

you so much for being a guest of the Art Talk Magazine. We had seen your work two years ago, and we are thrilled that we finally get to speak with you!

We always start by asking our guests what career they would have chosen had they not pursued a path into art.

myself doing something different than being an artist. Maybe I would be a philosopher. Or a gardener. Maybe a gardener-philosopher. When I was a child I used to wake up early, very excited just to take care of the garden of my house. I used to walk around in my neighborhood just to get plant seedlings back to my home, to plant them and to see them develop and bloom.

ATM: Your artworks will be shown at and painting, my intuition guided me to Art Dubai with Galeria Baró. Is this your first show in the Middle East? Your inspiration comes from the tropical, from the lush vegetation of forests and rainforests. How would you paint the desert? What Middle Eastern mythological creature would you paint? Or would you intersect the tropical and the desert, the balanced by soft colors thus creating a mythologies of SouthAmerica, and of the Middle East?

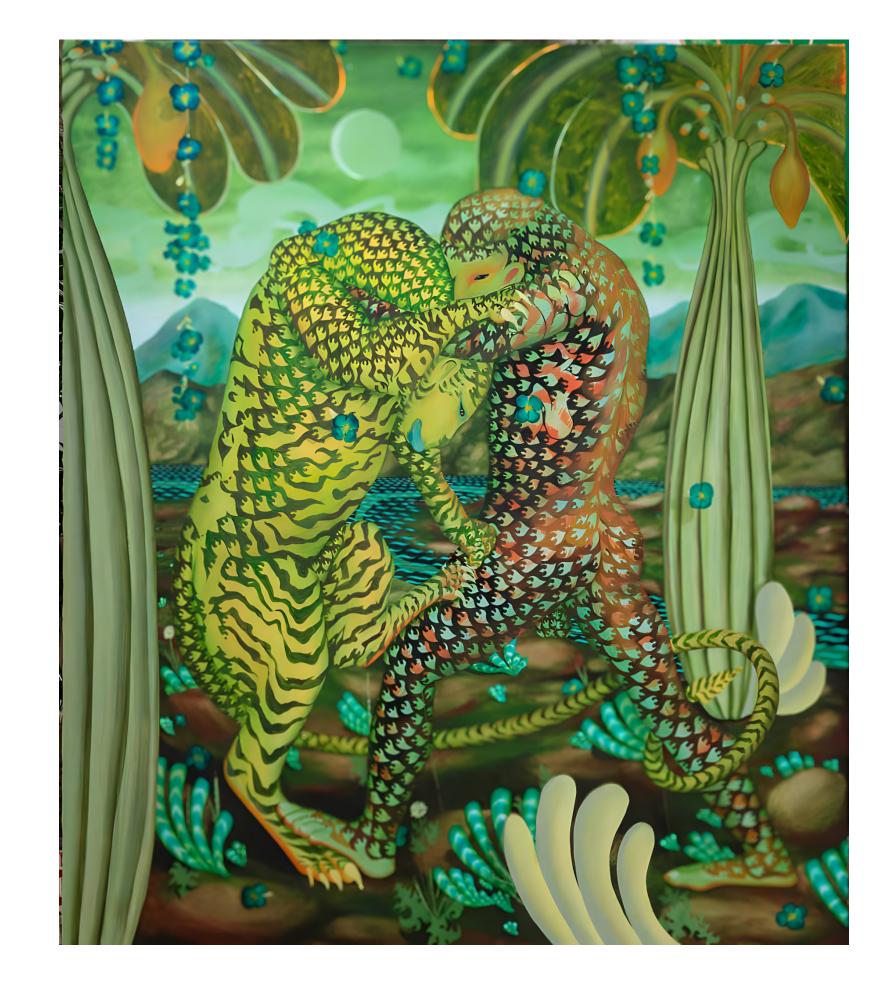
**BN:** Yes, that will be the first time my paintings will be seen in the Middle East. It fascinates me just because I have a deep curiosity about the region, its vast, rich and old culture. I have a deep curiosity about the mythology of the first civilizations like registers found in stone those connections.

Art Talk Magazine: Dear Bruno. Thank ATM: Much has been written about your art, about your inspiration. We read a line which stated, and we paraphrase. that animals are authentic, even the beasts are themselves. Is this why you choose animals, mostly in your artworks, because they behave authentically and are fundamentally incapable Bruno Novelli: I sincerely can't imagine of lying, cheating and hypocrisy; even the beasts who, mythologically, behave "badly" do not do so maliciously, but rather because it is in their nature, not an artifice?

> **BN:** I'm very impressed by the natural and living world as I'm very impacted by mythology too. So, to mix mythology and animal forms is fascinating to me. Animals are present in many different mythologies. Since my beginning, once I focused on pictorial works, drawing draw animals. I like to think of the animals I create in my paintings as entities, so they bring an essence.

ATM: There seems to be a dichotomy in your artworks, an opposition of parallels, where "brutality", the primeval are softness to the "hardness". Are your artworks also illustrations of the best and the worst in humans? The balance between good and bad, the essence of our very souls?

**BN:** I'm impulsed by contrasts. My mind searches for interesting contrasts. When we see contrast we differentiate, we distinguish things, and create new visions. relieves in the Middle East. The desert by contrast. Recently I did a painting seems so different for me, once I live in that started with a reference from a form a very tropical environment. I love the found in a stone relief in Iraq; it depictcontrast between the mysteries of the ed a fight between a man and a lion. Just desert and the overwhelming lushness the idea of a man fighting a lion brings of the forests. Yes, I would intersect my- to my mind a strong tension. But instead thologies from the tropical and the de- of bringing a furious or violent sensasert, that's how my mind works, creating tion, the painting brings a soft and good sensation, like both, human and lion the



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would be hugging each other, or even in the fighting situation, they become one. So, to bring a balance between different things seems to be an important part of my work.

brates, grimaces, stones, flowers, fruits and Buddhas that coexist among themselves. Signs of allegorical exuberance that do not obey a linear narrative. We do not have a scene here but rather an

ATM: You often make references to the divine. Most vividly when speaking about nature, and your fascination for your environment? A flower that blooms, the change in colors, you observe, you draw, you paint. When speaking of nature and your observation of it, one cannot help and wonder if the watching is not also a meditation, nature a cathedral, and if painting is perhaps an act of God. How important is spirituality in your work? In your life?

**BN:** I think that when I'm deeply connected to myself and aware of my life, of the meaning of being alive in this world, I'm already living the spiritual life. I look at a big waterfall as a huge cathedral, or mosque. I have a deep idea that natural phenomena comes directly from God, from the Creator, so it's sacred for me. The first deep and more epiphanic moment I had in adult life was when during an amazonian ritual I looked to a tree. What was behind that tree? Why does it grow and develop this way? Who impulses it to grow? I was experiencing a deep spiritual moment just by looking at a simple tree, that is so fascinating.

ATM: In the text to your 2019 exhibition "Star, Shooting Star, Meteor", the following lines: "Although the works in this exhibition are framed within painting as a language, it is important to understand them by directing our attention to where the paintings point, through the paths of thought they follow from a cultural-natural perspective. A certain vision that multiplies. Sex would reestablish, to some extent, the admirable complexity of leaves, trees and inverte-

selves. Signs of allegorical exuberance do not have a scene here but rather an experience of the senses." We love this paragraph, and specifically "we do not have here a scene but rather an experience of the senses". The scale of vour paintings, humanely sized, make for a complete immersion into the worlds vou create, but looking at the hanging of your paintings in situ, the artwork doesn't just pull inwardly, it also affects the space outwardly, immersing the room into its magic, which in turn immerses the viewer. Do you project yourself into the canvas as you paint? Do you immerse yourself in the worlds you create? We can see a parallel between the inspiration which is born of an observation or a moment you remember onto the canvas which then pulls you back in. An inward process projected into an external support which pulls you back in. Parallel universes born of the same spark, a creative Big Bang?

**BN:** Somehow there are a lot of subjective aspects of myself in my painting, for sure. My obsessive personality is present in the great number of details and patterns, as my impulse for the divine, mythic and mysterious is in the fantastic animal forms. In my painting process, first I need to be impacted by a strong image or experience that will push me to paint, like a spark that starts the fire. It can be a visual experience in a forest's ritual, a strong mythological figure, that somehow catches my mind. I think a good painting synthesizes a deep personal mental state related to a singular psychomotor action with color and forms.

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ATM: Another series which resonated with us is "Night in the Tropics" described as: "Night in the tropics" is a series of drawings started in an

immersive experience in Amazonia with the art indigenous collective MAHKU / Movimento dos Artistas Huni Kuin (Huni Kuin art movement). Night in the Tropics consists of very detailed, intense and sharp line drawings made of black ink on paper. I think that ink drawings have this direct connection between a state of mind and its process. It's direct, that's why I decided to dedicate myself to that language just to give the drawings as fresh substance as I could. For this series of works I have renounced color as a philosophical act, just to propose a mode in which I could experiment reality considering the simplicity of black and white." This made us wonder if it was a deeper experiment into the world of authenticity, black and white being absolute truths, without the artifice of shades whether gray or colored? Is the philosophical act, the act of imagining a world so simple that what you see is the reality, with no hidden meanings or agendas? A world where truths are spoken, where transparency is the norm? Would this world be a better world, or a world so harsh that many would find it hard to exist?

BN: When I started those black and white works on paper from Night in the Tropics, I had just got back from my first trip to Amazonia in 2017, when I visited my friends from the collective MAHKU. I was deeply impacted by the simplicity of life that I experienced there. The Huni Kuin people live in the heart of the forest and they have a very simple but deeply meaningful life. People sleep in hammocks, there is no mobilia in their wooden houses, only a small number of very necessary tools like knives. The sky is their roof, the forest their house, the



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drink, animals bring the mysteries and the myths. Once renouncing manufactured objects, like lots of clothing, cars, electronic objects, they have a lot more than those who spend a good part of life with non living objects. So the black and white drawings would reflect, somehow, this sense of simplicity I experienced in the forest.

ATM: Can you tell us about your collaboration with the Fondation Cartier in 2022, "Les Vivants"? How was this collaboration born? What did it mean to work with such a prestigious foundation?

**BN:** Les Vivants was an amazing exhibition project. It was a huge collective show that happened at Le Tripostal in Lille, a big house for exhibitions in France. In my case I shared a big room with paintings from MAHKU. The idea of the exhibition was to bring together contemporary artists that dialogue with the living world, a beautiful mix of artists from Amazonia as well as artists that live in the more intense urban environment of big cities. It was a great project idealized by Hervé Chandès and the anthropologist Bruce Albert with the accurate curatorial eye of Juliette Lecorne.

ATM; With technologies available today, from VR/AR to projection mapping, have you used any of them to bring your worlds alive? We could so easily see, in the way William Kentridge created multiple layers and depths by painting several elements on small rectangles of glass which he then placed behind each other to create a multi-dimensional view, a work of art where you would project images, films, onto a mural for example to bring an entire environment alive. Have you thought of creating such works?

river brings clean water for shower and I have focused my work in a very pictorial way, from paintings on canvas, drawings on paper, mural paintings to graphic projects like prints. Using simple materials like paint in different surfaces gives me the chance to develop a slow process of creation where I get deeply involved. I think it is amazing to use mapping projections or any video animation, but sincerely, it's not only about bringing different sensations to the audience; it's about a deep and mental process of creation where, on a day by day basis, layers over other layers of painting are arranged in a very personal way. My work is not done aiming to create sensations in people only, but a deep personal process where the sum of layers brings a kind of visual pictorial symphony that I can share with others.

> ATM: When addressing creation, it has become near impossible to not mention AI, and both the promise of its benefits for art, or the threats to creations and individuality because of AIs source material. What is your position towards AI? Have you used it, or have you considered using it? Do you think some, even well defined, prompts could ever "create" the way you do from just a thought. And on a personal note, do you think AI will be the salvation of humanity, or the beginning of the end - Singularity?

> **BN:** I think that as any other tool we develop as humans, AI is just another tool. But a very significant tool, that can bring many other potentials for many areas of activity. But sincerely I don't aim to use AI to create anything on my paintings. I think my very personal synthesis when I mix references and experiences through the slow process of painting is my main focus. I can use a computer to study different steps for my painting process, for example, but it doesn't mean that any of my compositions are generated by AI.

qualities of culture. You have done several projects with large scale murals on buildings across the world. How do you approach painting such a monumenhow do you hope to affect those that will walk past the murals? Do you ever just

ATM: Art is often referred to as a lan- observe people's reaction to your creaguage, a bridge between cultures and tions, the same way you observe nature? races. However that impact remains as BN: In my very beginning as an artist, I limited as the space it is shown in, a used the most simple materials like ink gallery or a museum and fails to reach a and paper. At that time I was starting to critical mass that could benefit from the develop my work. I was developing my lines, patterns and themes in a personal synthesis. During this beginning, I started to use the walls on streets to show my works, once that was the most direct tal "surface"? What is your vision, and form to show up. Once on the streets, big walls were where I found myself, in my biggest potential. To paint directly on





walls was familiar to me. So, after years ATM: If you could manifest your dream of processing my work, I decided to exhibition, what artists would be on be more focused on studio works, like the walls next to your creations? Where paintings on canvas, so I could have would the exhibition be? What would be more time and a calm environment to the theme? express my ideas, differently from the **BN:** I would love to show my work in the frenetic streets. Now my work is start- Middle East besides my friends from the ing to be part of great public collections, forest like MAHKU, and also with the hisso more people can access my work. São torical artists such the Brazilian Chico Paulo, where I live, has a strong culture da Silva. The theme would be the mysof visual works on streets and I think it's teries of nature and deep visions of the amazing.

living world we are in.

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