

BERGGRUEN

GALLERY



Images: © Nathan Oliveira, *Blue Stage Figure*, 1975, Oil on canvas, 96" x 72", from The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Oliveira; and Nathan Oliveira in his studio, 1978.

Nathan Oliveira (1928-2010) was a member of the “Bridge Generation” of the San Francisco Bay Area Figurative Movement during the 1950s and onward into the 1960s joining “First Generation” artists that included David Park, Richard Diebenkorn, Elmer Bischoff, Wayne Thiebaud, and James Weeks. In this first and only museum exhibition since his death in 2010, *Nathan Oliveira: Rare Works From the Private Collections of His Children* is an original exhibition of the Fresno Art Museum.

This exhibition is a treasure trove of over fifty rare drawings, monumental and small paintings, assemblage, lithographs, and bronzes. The selected works have rarely, if ever, been seen before by the public in either museum exhibitions or gallery presentations during his lifetime.

It was Nathan Oliveira’s process to bequeath his artwork to his children on an annual basis as their inheritance. This exhibition shares and assembles for the very first time these gifts by Oliveira to his three children: Joe, Lisa, and Gina. The exhibited works were chosen during studio visits to the homes of Joe Oliveira and Lisa Oliveira Lamoure, where Michele Ellis Pracy, FAM Executive Director & Chief Curator, was given carte blanche to select (with their guidance) from pieces given to them by their father, an indescribable experience for any curator.

Oliveira came into prominence as a figurative painter in the late 1950s, counter to the then-dominant Abstract Expressionist trend. Yet Oliveira worked using a method much like certain Abstract Expressionist painters by beginning each of his works without a specific plan, applying pigment to the canvas almost at random until an image began to appear. Frequently, his works explored the relationships between people, animals, and nature, which are all well represented in this selection of rare works.

Nathan Oliveira was born in 1928 in Oakland, California to immigrant Portuguese parents. Since the late 1950s, Oliveira has been the subject of nearly one hundred solo exhibitions, in addition to having been included in hundreds of group exhibitions in important museums and galleries worldwide. Beginning in the early 1950s, he taught studio art for several decades at the California College of Arts and Crafts (now California College of the Arts) in Oakland. After serving as a visiting artist at several universities, he became a professor of studio art at Stanford University.

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His work is held in many major museum collections including the Tate Modern in London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Guggenheim Museum, all in New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Oakland Museum of California, and the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, to name but a few. He is represented by the Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco.

Exhibition Curator: Michele Ellis Pracy, FAM Executive Director & Chief Curator

Exhibition sponsor: Ellen Hirth