

# Camila Oliveira Fairclough

## *Live, Love, Laugh*

11.1 – 1.3.2025

The work of Camila Oliveira Fairclough (Rio de Janeiro, 1979) playfully navigates the contours of figuration and abstraction within the imagery and language of popular culture. She borrows from everyday mundanity and translates it into a painterly practice that likes to toy with what canonically is and what is not considered painting. Arguably, her work reflects on the idea of painting in a tongue-in-cheek manner, yet behind the humorous facade there lies an interest in the linguistic process that occurs when painting words and symbols. Captured in painting, the meaning of a word or a symbol starts fading away whilst the image emerges, becoming something else.

Camila Oliveira Fairclough is interested in the ambiguity between what is visible and what is readable, or, in other words, images as words and words as images. In a similar vein to the ready-made, she thinks of her work as an unexpected encounter with an object in which what is represented is at odds with its medium. Despite the apparent obviousness of the subjects in her work, painting imbues them with a certain degree of ambiguity, complicating their seeming simplicity.

The artistic vocabulary in Oliveira Fairclough's work conforms an idiosyncratic language that keeps on expanding. For her first solo exhibition in the gallery, she frames recurrent motifs like the Milka chocolate logo, and homages to other artists with painterly translations of Jean Arp lithographies, with a pair of Dutch clogs—a cultural wink to where the exhibition is taking place. Opposite, a group of Greek vases are interspersed between stylised letters and Greek key motifs. Star-shaped flowers—or are they flower-shaped stars?—follow in different colour combinations. Her paintings do not have titles, but they are given names. This gesture gives a sense of personhood and evocation to the works, which is in line with Fairclough's argument that a painting is capable of eliciting feelings, memories, and ideas out of the representation of something familiar in a simple and direct language. What is banal and nondescript in day-to-day life becomes suggestive once it is depicted in painting, creating an effect of *déjà vu* in the viewer.

Oliveira Fairclough's work follows a genealogy of artists who circumvented the solemnity of conceptual and minimal art and reflected on painting through laconism and directness: Merlin Carpenter, Jessica Diamond, René Daniëls, Walter Swennen, Rochelle Feinstein... they are all of influence to how she approaches painting. Distinctively, however, in her work we find a great balance between irony and candidness without becoming one or the other entirely; this allows her work to inhabit the space between picture and object without a need for formalities. She achieves it with a forthrightness that is joyful, for everything can be painted. Away from solemn re-takes on painting, Oliveira Fairclough brings the everyday as an invitation to talk about painting through a grin. There is no cynicism behind her work; on the contrary, there is a sincerity in the desire to paint. It is precisely the candour in her practice that may make the sharpest reflection on painting possible, foregrounding joy as a necessity in art-making all the same.

**Camila Oliveira Fairclough** is an artist and curator born in 1979 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and living and working in Paris. She holds three nationalities: Brazilian, French, and British. She graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2005. Selected solo and group exhibitions include Papai Contemporary, Oslo; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and Metz; BPS22, Charleroi; Coimbra Biennial, Coimbra; Le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine; La Salle de Bains, Lyon; Frac Pays de la Loire, Nantes; MuCEM, Marseille; Frac Lorraine, Metz; Frac Aquitaine, Bordeaux; CAN, Neuchâtel; Villa Médicis, Rome; MUDAM, Luxembourg Coty. Selected curatorial projects include *Aoulioulé*, with Sylvie Fanchon, MRAC, Sérignan (2022); *Everybody's looking for something*, La Salle de Bains, Lyon (2019).

Her work is the collections of Centre Pompidou, CNAP, FRAC Ice de France, FNAC, FRAC Alsace, FRAC des Pays de la Loire, FRAC Bretagne, FRAC Normandy, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest, Musée Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Le BPS22, and Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut, among others.