

"In this land, whatever is planted will grow", by Germano Dushá

Dated May 1, 1500, the letter by the secretary of Álvares Cabral's fleet, Pero Vaz de Caminha, addressed to the king of Portugal, Dom Manuel, described a land where there was no gold or silver, or anything made of metal or iron. Yet he observed that if one wanted to take advantage of this land, it would yield everything. And moreover: that the greatest fruit that could be achieved here was to save the inhabitants.

Although they had previously plundered with abandon, here they seemed to have found a divine (and always mercantilist) calling, which guided their intense efforts of exploration, plantation and catechizing. Armed, and with their flag held high, they went into the land, murdering, enslaving and laying claim. They paved the way for a host of things that came from abroad: everything from agricultural products to the Portuguese court's control systems and the rites of Catholicism. And what was already here, they exploited to exhaustion.

The phrase that provides the title for this exhibition by Jaime Lauriano – *Nesta terra, em se plantando, tudo dá* [In This Land, Whatever Is Planted Will Grow] – despite being attributed to Caminha's letter, is not found in its lines. But it is nonetheless popularly believed to be there, due to a widespread error of citation. Perhaps precisely for this reason it has become an icon of Brazil's founding myth.

Through operations that involve possible relations between the colonial period and the social problems that beset Brazil today, the artist deals with open wounds that unrelentingly mark the day-to-day life of a country that maintains itself on atrocious inequalities. We can therefore, fortunately, think critically in regard to what has been done in this country and, especially, how its histories have been told. What was planted, and what grew.