GALLERY ISABELLE
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Press Release

TATIANA CHALHOUB

The Trees Now Stand Unpruned and Wild

16 November, 2026 – 12 January, 2027

Gallery Isabelle presents *The Trees Now Stand Unpruned and Wild**, the first exhibition in the UAE by Brazilian artist Tatiana Chalhoub (b. 1987, Rio de Janeiro). Bringing together new paintings, glazed ceramics and ceramic collages, the exhibition explores the relationship between nature, memory and material transformation. Trees, foliage and flowers emerge alongside birds, gazelles, reptiles and scorpions, creating a visual dialogue between the lush vegetation of the artist's native Rio de Janeiro and the desert landscapes of the UAE.

Rooted in the language of painting, Chalhoub's practice moves freely between two-dimensional surfaces and sculptural relief. Working with oil and acrylic paint, refractory clay, ceramic fragments and high-temperature glazes, she builds her compositions through an intuitive process of layering, cutting, breaking and reassembling. Chance plays an essential role: the firing process introduces unpredictable variations in colour and texture, while fractures and irregularities become constructive elements rather than imperfections.

The tree emerges as a predominant motif throughout the paintings, glazed ceramics and ceramic collages. Often occupying the foreground, its outlined, crooked or striated trunks frame the composition or establish a rhythm of vertical forms against blurry, indistinct backgrounds, while crowns of foliage seem to float, expand or burst beyond their boundaries. In *Purple Trunks* (2026), elongated purple trunks cut through broad fields of colour; in *Tree with Orange Trunk* (2026), a vivid orange trunk supports a mass of green foliage assembled from ceramic fragments, extending beyond the surface into space, while *Two Trees in a Lake* (2026) reduces the landscape to two dark trunks beneath a bright green canopy. From the monumental canvases of *Green Tree* (2026) and *Rock Tree* (2026) to the intimate ceramic compositions of *Two Crowns* (2026) and *Windy Forest* (2026), Chalhoub draws on elements of nature and their suggested forms, combining formal experimentation, narrative associations and compositional intuition.

Beyond its recurring presence in the works, the tree also holds a deeply personal significance for Chalhoub. In 2014, during her student years, she used portable swimming pools to make large sheets of handmade recycled paper. While the paper was the intended outcome, the chlorine added to the water left unexpected marks on the pools' surfaces, traces of the process that developed their own visual language. She later exhibited one of these pools standing on its side, alongside the handmade paper. At the exhibition, her grandmother Therezinha stood for a long time before its bleached surface, where the worn plastic fibres had formed irregular, vein-like patterns. Accustomed to reading images in the residue of coffee cups, Therezinha recognised an enormous tree with foliage and many branches, which she described to her gandchild as "the tree of your life." Chalhoub, looking through her grandmother's eyes, could suddenly see it too, a memory that would later inform *Green Tree* (2026).

The daughter of Lebanese immigrants, Therezinha ran a Lebanese restaurant in Rio de Janeiro with Tatiana's father, a family business that continues today. Her passing coincided with Chalhoub receiving the invitation to exhibit in Dubai. Shortly afterwards, while going through her grandmother's belongings, the artist unexpectedly came across a souvenir T-shirt bearing the name Dubai, an occurrence she understood as a message from her grandmother, whose intuitive and spiritual outlook had always fascinated her.

This connection finds a particularly moving expression in the desert animals, whose blue glass eyes are made from melted fragments of glassware that once belonged to Therezinha. The grandmother who stood gazing at the accidental tree in Tatiana's first exhibition now seems to return that gaze through the eyes of these creatures. The gesture brings together memory and material transformation, allowing something of her presence to endure within the works.

In *The Trees Now Stand Unpruned and Wild*, nature becomes a space where material experimentation and personal histories converge. Chalhoub's works suggest that growth is inseparable from rupture, and that fragments, whether physical or remembered, can give rise to new forms.

*Title extracted from the poem *Grandmothers Land* by William Oandasan

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Artist's biography

Tatiana Chalhoub (b. 1987, Rio de Janeiro) is a Brazilian artist currently living and working in São Paulo, Brazil.

Chalhoub studied Graphic Design at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and worked in the studio of renowned contemporary Brazilian painter, Lúcia Laguna, between 2012 and 2014. This experience significantly shaped her artistic development, particularly her exploration of material transformation and the processes of accumulation and erasure of successive layers of paint. As such, fragments, fractures, loose elements and cracks have become fundamental motifs in her practice, acting as a conduit for unpredictable and serendipitous creation.

In 2015, she started incorporating ceramics into her creative process, a medium she often works on and exhibits alongside bronzes and as of recently, oil paintings. These materials allow her to merge image and matter, resulting in artworks with tactile surfaces. While at first glance her works appear minimal in both form and gesture, Chalhoub engages with the notion of condensation and how entire ecosystems can be represented in simple forms. She often oscillates between themes of nature and art history, creating atmospheric landscapes that inhabit the space between observation and imagination.

Her works vary in sizes, going from micro to macro, demanding the viewer to move throughout the exhibition to fully experience them. For the artist, making is a way of thinking through life itself. Her practice unfolds in close relation to lived experiences and surrounding conditions, especially the dense urban fabric of São Paulo.

Chalhoub's works are frequently exhibited in Brazil with some being permanently housed at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo.

Some of her latest solo exhibitions include Noite Quente (2026) and Romper o dia, crack of dawn (2024) at Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Mais uma casa at Espaço Cama, São Paulo, Brazil (2022) and On the grass at Project Space, Budapest, Hungary (2019)