LISSON

DALTON PAULA
Frieze London 2026

PRESS RELEASE

FAIR DATES:
14–18 OCTOBER, 2026

BOOTH: D01

For Frieze London 2026, Lisson is pleased to present a solo booth by Dalton Paula, the acclaimed Brazilian artist, researcher and educator known for his powerful engagement with Afro-Brazilian traditions. Working across painting, photography, film, collage, ceramics and textiles, Paula brings visibility to individuals and communities that have been overlooked or excluded from official narratives, reclaiming and re-centring Black histories as spaces of joy, memory, resilience and cultural continuity. The presentation includes both portraiture – typically vivid, narrative-filled compositions that depict moments of play, ritual, celebration and communal life – as well as still lifes that honour ancestral ways of living and resisting. Education is at the core of Dalton's practice: in 2021, he founded Sertão Negro in Goiás, a multi-disciplinary centre for artistic education, residency programmes, environmental care and collective learning. This emancipatory project is modeled after the tradition of quilombos – communities formed by escaped enslaved peoples – and rooted in Afro-Brazilian knowledge systems, ecological stewardship and intergenerational learning. Alongside the 2026 Frieze presentation, the artist's work is also the subject of a major, ongoing solo exhibition at Inhotim, Brazil.

For Frieze London, Paula asks the question "Who nourishes freedom?". The booth comprises six paintings on canvas, alongside a new work from his *Retrato Silenciado (Silenced Portrait)* series, in which he paints directly onto the covers of books, encyclopedias and medical texts. At the centre of Paula's Frieze presentation is the Brazilian lawyer, writer and abolitionist Luiz Gonzaga Pinto da Gama (1830–1882), who used his legal expertise to challenge slavery and secure the freedom of approximately 500 enslaved people. Luis Gama's connection to Xangô, the *orisha* (spirit or deity) of divine justice in the Yoruba religion and Afro-diasporic traditions like Candomblé and Umbanda, inspired Paula to reconsider Luis Gama's legacy in relation to ritual, education and the continued efforts of emancipation. A central reference for the presentation is *amalá*, a dish dedicated to Xangô and offered during rituals; traditionally made with okra, shrimp and onions, this offering connects remembrance with collective responsibility, highlighting Luis Gama's fight for freedom as an unfinished process.

Throughout the canvases, Paula brings together objects associated with nourishment and spirituality. Chairs appear as both extensions of the body and makeshift altars: spaces where food, objects and gestures of care intersect. In one composition, okra is placed across the blades of a fan, the circulation of air suggesting the possibility of movement and renewed action, alongside water and stones as counterpoints of permanence and stability.

Other works consider the transmission of knowledge and responsibility through objects associated with communication and labour. A goat horn, traditionally used to guide, warn and gather, becomes an instrument of announcement and a call to collective action, with two chairs suggesting the shoulders of a body supporting it. Crochet invokes domesticity, family knowledge and traditions, while also recalling the complex history of cotton and its relationship to agriculture, forced labour and slavery. Elsewhere, bells summon community, while pencils placed inside the mouths of goat heads connect language, writing and education to the power of the word. Together, these works position knowledge and spirituality as intertwined forms of emancipation.

Also included is a work from Paula's ongoing *Retrato Silenciado (Silenced Portrait)* series, expanding the focus into questions of memory and representation. By painting directly onto book covers, Paula encourages a dialogue between the subjects he depicts and the

historical texts they have been omitted from. Despite the title, the images across the books are not traditional portraits; rather, they celebrate the presence of the individual through a still life or ritual. One volume features a portrait of Luis Gama's mother, Luiza Mahin, a figure rarely represented in historical accounts and an important political and symbolic influence on Luis Gama's formation. Other covers directly connect to the wider themes of welcome and care on display – the gentle washing of feet; a still life incorporating the ingredients of *amalá* – all weaving together essential concepts from ancestry and education to healing and belonging.

Across this new body of work, Paula approaches emancipation as both a social and spiritual progression, sustained through practices and the transmission of stories across generations. Bringing together historical figures with everyday objects and acts of care, Paula asks us to consider how the past can remain active in the present, as well as the need to continue to explore new ways of engaging with shared histories.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dalton Paula (born in Brasilia, Brazil, 1982) lives and works in Goiânia, Brazil, where he graduated from the Visual Arts programme at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG). He was awarded the Chanel Next Prize in 2024 and the Marcantonio Vilaça Award in 2019. His recent solo exhibitions include: Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP) and Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil (2022-23); Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Centro Cultural Oscar Niemeyer, Goiânia (2014); Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Sala Samuel Costa, Goiânia, Brazil (2010). Major group exhibitions include: 'Foreigners Everywhere', Venice Biennale, Italy (2024); 'Afro-Atlantic Histories', touring from Museu de Arte de São Paulo and the Instituto Tomie Ohtake in Brazil (2018) to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Dallas Museum of Art, USA (2021-24); 'Compositions for Insurgent Times', Museu de Arte Moderna do Río de Janeiro, Brazil (2021-22); 'Critical Fabulations', Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2021-23); 'Songs for Sabotage', New Museum Triennial, New York, USA (2018); 'O Triângulo do Atlântico', 11th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2018); 'The Atlantic Triangle', Goethe-Institut, Lagos, Nigeria (2018) and 'Incerteza Viva', 32nd Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2016).

ABOUT LISSON

Lisson is a global gallery dedicated to shaping the art of today. Creating meaningful dialogues and robust markets between artists and audiences across six venues in the UK, US and China, Lisson exhibits the most engaging and challenging work, adding value and narrative through decades of experience and innovation.

Building significance and reputation with our artists, Lisson nurtures and amplifies their vision at every turn, supporting opportunities to show beyond the gallery's walls in museums, the public realm and through international partnerships. The gallery's heritage and its foundational role in contemporary art since 1967, allows for a deeper perspective and more thoughtful relationships when furthering the career and voice of an artist.

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