**MARIA ANDRADE IN CERRADO**

***Tiago Mesquita***

Maria Andrade’s landscapes are as dry as the boards she paints on. The artist creates horizontal, arid, wide views made of twisted brushstrokes, strong colour contrasts, and blinding lights. The sun is sometimes so intense that no shadow or wind can be seen—only the still air, shimmering with heat.

Since the first layer of paint is smooth, it exposes the wood’s veins, much like the rays of light that tint the atmosphere as they hit the dehydrated soil. The appearance is that of an empty place, where no one passes by, sparsely occupied by scant vegetation, which was once part of an environment and now residually survives.

These landscapes are imaginary. The open spaces invented by Maria Andrade vaguely resemble the low vegetation found in the fields of the municipality of Morro da Garça in Minas Gerais. However, they do not aim to resemble the real world or to be naturalistic in style. Perhaps that is why they work so well as an allegory for forgotten pieces of land. This appearance is evident in the brightly coloured dry branches that sprout in the paintings on an asymmetrical lawn, made with quick, irregular strokes. The colours of the figures contrast greatly with the background. The transition from space to figure is not uniform. Thus, the plants seem isolated, as if they were not part of that land. They are what remains in the middle of that nowhere.

For Maria Andrade, painting is made of these flashes—perhaps a faint promise, amid the strong sun of the backlands, that rain will soon come.