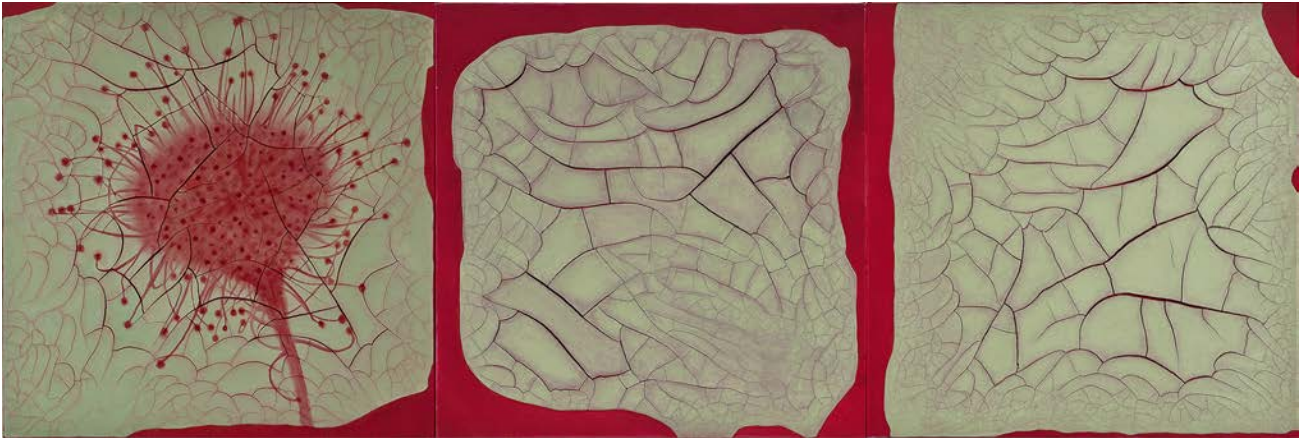


## Adriana Varejão | Carnivorous

6 June – 2 August 2014

Victoria Miro Mayfair, 14 St George Street, London W1S 1FE



Victoria Miro Mayfair is delighted to present *Carnivorous*, Adriana Varejão's fifth solo presentation with Victoria Miro and her first in the Mayfair gallery. One of the most original voices in contemporary Brazilian art, Varejão's diverse practice comprises painting, sculpture, photography and installation. Her sources encompass the baroque, history, ceramics, botany and art history.

This presentation conceived especially for Victoria Miro Mayfair features single- and multiple-panel paintings of carnivorous plants depicted in a deep red on a cracked surface that recalls old tiles. The cracked tile has been a recurring motif in Varejão's work since early in her career, and in these works she draws particularly on the history of Portuguese Azulejo tilework and of Chinese celadon ceramics dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century Song dynasty.

Varejão depicts carnivorous plants from various origins, drawing her inspiration from a scientific Botany encyclopedia. These unusual flora combine an exotic, often suggestive beauty with an air of implicit menace. The sense of threat is heightened by the work's blood-red colouration. Varejão has explained that one of the reference points for this series was Louise Bourgeois' late red gouaches, some of which also feature botanical motifs. Like Bourgeois, Varejão has long explored the territory where desire and danger meet.

Varejão first depicted carnivorous plants in red on a white background in a series of paintings made for the ceiling of a corridor of her artist's pavilion at the Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim in her native Brazil. The pavilion features a large installation of blue-on-white cracked tile paintings featuring baroque motifs that suggest aquatic themes, with the red corridor providing a contrast in colour and mood.

Varejão extended her investigation of the red plants in a series of works, including the paintings in this exhibition, that were first shown in 2012 as part of a 57-painting installation produced for her retrospective exhibition *Histories at the Margins* curated by Adriano Pedrosa at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo.

The plants are painted in oil on canvases covered with underlays of plaster, the surfaces of which are explicitly designed to fissure and fracture. This technique produces surfaces that, in addition to their resonances with chinese Song ceramic, suggests the passage of time and instability.

Born in 1964, Adriana Varejão currently lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 2012 her retrospective exhibition *Histories at the Margins* was presented at Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo. This exhibition subsequently toured to the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro and to Malba - Fundación Costantini, Buenos Aires in early 2013. In recent years she has also had solo exhibitions at Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte (2008); Hara Museum, Tokyo (2007); Fondation Cartier Pour L'Art Contemporain, Paris (2005); and Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon (2005). Varejão has exhibited extensively internationally including MoMA QNS, New York; ARS06 Kiasma, Helsinki; Site Santa Fe, New Mexico; Liverpool Biennial; the Istanbul Biennial; the Biennale of Sydney; Mercosul Biennial and the São Paulo Biennial. A permanent pavilion devoted to Varejão's work opened in 2008 at Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim in Brazil. Her work is also present in important international institutions' collections, among them Tate, Fondation Cartier, Hara Museum, Stedelijk Museum and the Guggenheim. She has received the Order of Cultural Merit from the Cultural Ministry of Brazil and the Medal of Chevalier des Arts et Lettres from the French government.

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