

Panamericana School of Art and Design

Interview with RENATA PELEGRINI

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Former Panamericana student talks about career transition:
'Dreams are made to be followed.'



Visual artist, Renata Pelegrini left behind a 30-year career as an educator to invest in her expression through painting and began her path at the Panamericana School of Art and Design.

Before becoming an artist recognized around the world, an active member of MoMA in New York and part of the collection of Luciano Benetton's Imago Mundi project in Italy, Renata Pelegrini worked as an educator for thirty years. The transition from one career to another, according to her, happened naturally, as she had been working in the arts since 1995. However, it was only in 2010 that she graduated in Fine Arts from the Escola Panamericana de Arte e Design and began her journey in her new profession. Since then, she has participated in several group exhibitions and two solo exhibitions, the last in 2018 at Janaina Torres gallery.

In addition to believing that the two careers, as an educator and an artist, are not so far from each other, Renata says that the change happened smoothly also because of the choice of Panamericana for her training: "There was almost always a desire to look at the visual arts while I was still in the middle of education and the career transition was greatly favored by the flexibility of the school schedule. I managed to make a smooth transition, although I realize that the two professions are interrelated. Due to the way the courses are structured at school, it was possible to combine learning the arts without completely abandoning education. The training course with classes twice a week allowed me to continue working in the career I was in and little by little adding something to my training."

To the repertoire acquired in the Visual Arts training course, Renata added even more knowledge by taking other free Panamericana courses during her career transition. "In addition

to the training course, I was also able to fit free courses into my schedule that added more knowledge. I studied History of Art, History of Design and History of Photography, and when I graduated, I had an even more complete, full-bodied repertoire, acquired in a way that I was able to reconcile with my life”, she explains.

Before deciding on a career in fine arts, the then educator lived in New York and Milan and studied calligraphy in both cities. It was in Europe that Renata got closer to the world of arts and decided that she wanted to invest in that universe. “I was very close to artists who shared content with me that, for me, was very new. I understood expression, I understood content, but I still felt the need to appropriate that language,” she says.

Renata makes a point of highlighting the importance that the Panamericana teaching method, which stimulates creativity through practice, had on her career as an artist. “The best thing Panamericana gave me was practice, without a doubt. I came with a 'script' of wanting content that gave me the technical issues, the jargon, the theory, and when I arrived at school it was practical. I remember thinking: ‘wow, already?’. Later I realized that this was what helped me greatly, because my plan was fulfilled: I acquired the content I expected, but in a way that it flowed. I already had the desire for expression, and when someone puts you in front of a favorable environment, it just happens. There I found content that I wanted to express and didn't even know, because practice came as a starting path, and that was very good. I even use these techniques to this day.”

The processes experienced at school helped Renata create the tools to reinvent herself in this time of global crisis. “In this complicated moment, when it is difficult for me to express myself, difficult for me to synchronize with the needs of the world, I realized that I have already expressed a lot about support, about the precarious world and the possibility of things ending. I already expressed all of this when the intensity found its way, when I was at school. And I think that's what happened initially at the Panamericana. I already started expressing myself and then formalized the expression. It was in the process that I experienced at school that I found the type of expression that I wanted to carry in my work, which is this more visceral bias, this quick response. I arrived at this through the practice process, and I am formalizing it now. This came from my experiences at Panamericana.”

In addition to the tools and the possibility of finding her own form of authorial expression, the school also opened doors for Renata in the job market. The artist says that even when she was a student, she had the opportunity to participate in exhibitions and competitions within the school, which gave her good experiences and contacts. “I remember that while still at school I had my first collective exhibition experience which was incredible, which put me in contact with other artists, with a gallery... I experienced this little stress of the real market even as an art student. This brought me some contacts and, returning to the issue of creativity, as throughout the course students were exposed to situations of real participation and creation, I began to chart a path there. When I finished the course, people, because of these experiences, already knew that I painted, and invitations to groups, contacts with artists and other job possibilities began to appear immediately.”

After graduating from Panamericana, Renata participated in group exhibitions at institutions such as FUNARTE_SP, Biblioteca Mario de Andrade in São Paulo, Bienal das Artes do Sesc Distrito Federal, MAC de Campinas, Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto and SECULT de Santos. In 2017 she definitively left her role as an educator and in 2018 she was on an artistic residency at the Centro de Investigação Artística Hangar Lisboa, in Portugal.

“My trajectory has to do with the spaces I've been through, the places I've lived in the world, and where I've built relationships. In these places it was easier for me to return to show my work. I knew that I would take on a new career with very favorable points, but that I would have to fight for others that I didn't know about. People always add up. Calligraphy and my background as an educator are not dissociated from what I do today. People will say: 'but I come from a different area'. It doesn't matter, it's sum, repertoire. But to change, you have to be willing to learn. You are entering a new path so you will have to learn”, says Renata.

Asked about what she would say to people who want to start a path in the world of fine arts, the artist spoke about the importance of pursuing their dreams: “The important thing for anyone who wants to enter the world of arts is dedication, focus on what you have to express. Because, no matter how much I know or don't know about the market, and even though we are facing a new panorama and we don't know how the future will be shaped, if I don't have this internal work of moving forward with what concerns me, I won't be able to live up to what it was like or what it will be like, and I'm going to wait for someone on the outside to tell me what to do. Dreams are made to be followed. If there's one thing I learned at Panamericana, it's that artists can't be willing, they have to get their hands dirty and do it. The union of practice and expression is the way to give you security”, concludes Renata.

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