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## Francisco Pedro do Amaral (c. 1780-1830)

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**Amaral, Francisco Pedro do** (c. 1780–1830), Afro-Brazilian painter, stage designer, and decorative artist. Born around 1780 in Rio de Janeiro, Amaral was best known as an artist employed by the Luso-Brazilian Court in Rio. Details of Amaral's early life and training are scant, including his parentage, but he lived and worked in Rio, where he studied under the artist José Leandro de Carvalho (c. 1770–1834). Amaral continued his studies at the officially sanctioned course of painting and drawing in Rio created by the Marquis of Aguiar (Fernando José de Portugal e Castro, viceroy between 1801 and 1806). The school was administered by the painter Manuel da Costa de Oliveira, with whom Amaral studied stage design. He also worked as the assistant of José Leandro at the São João Theater. Amaral's talents were quickly recognized, and he was summoned to do decorative work for the court, leaving the theater behind. Amaral's oeuvre is especially noteworthy in that it bridged the period between the end of Rio's Fluminense School of painting, which included a number of artists and artisans of African descent, and the beginning of the French-influenced artistic culture of the nineteenth-century Brazilian Empire.

In late 1807, Napoleon's invading army forced the Portuguese Court to flee from Lisbon to Rio. French art and culture, ironically, intertwined with Portuguese-Brazilian courtly taste and imperial ambition, constituting the model for fine arts education. Courses taught during this period embraced Neoclassicism and Romanticism prevalent in Europe at the time. In 1815, Brazil's status was elevated to a co-equal of Portugal in the new United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves, a prelude to Brazil's official independence in 1822. In the interim, however, the court remained in control of all the official administrative institutions in the city and enacted institutional changes to strengthen Rio's cultural place in the new Lusophone Empire. Artists and craftsmen were called from Europe to establish the new *Aula Régia de Desenho e Figura* (Royal School of Sciences, Crafts and Arts). The school was led by the so-called French Artistic Mission, a group of artists responsible for establishing academic art training at the school, later renamed the *Academia Imperial de Belas Artes* (Imperial Academy of Fine Arts), which began in Brazil in 1816.

In 1823, Amaral enrolled as one of the five students in the history painting course taught by Jean-Baptiste Debret (1768–1848), a student of Jacques-Louis David who had assumed the post of court

history painter. Amaral took part in the founding of the Society of St. Luke (established 1827) and thus helped play an important role in the professionalization of painting in Brazil. By the late 1820s, Amaral was appointed as chief and director of decorations for the court of Pedro I (1798–1834). Additionally, he produced decorative paintings for the royal palaces of Quinta da Boa Vista and the City Square, as well as the public library. He also decorated private residences in Rio, such as the palace of the Marchioness of Santos (Domitila de Castro do Canto e Melo, 1797–1867), the emperor's mistress. In 1829, Amaral restored and decorated old royal carriages for the second marriage of Dom Pedro. In the same year, he published an iconographic account of this work in the pamphlet *Allegorical Explanation of the Decoration of the State Carriages of his Imperial Majesty, Dom Pedro I*. Few of Amaral's works have survived, with the notable exceptions of the *Portrait of the Marquesa dos Santos* (c. 1827) and the *Allegories of the Four Continents* (c. 1805), both housed at the Museu Histórico Nacional (National Historical Museum) in Rio, as well as a few drawings and painted carriages at the Museu do Primeiro Reinado (Museum of the First Reign).

Francisco Pedro do Amaral died of lung problems on 10 November 1830 in Rio. He was interred in the Igreja do Hospício (Chapel of the Asylum) with ecclesiastical honors. Amaral, an Afro-Brazilian artist, was a significant cultural figure in the Joanine period and the First Reign and later an integral figure in the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts.

[See also Oliveira, Manoel Dias de "O Brasilense."]

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