

Title	Rodrigo Cass	Author	Adriano Pedrosa
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1983, São Paulo.
Lives in São Paulo.

RODRIGO CASS



1. *Civiltà americana* (video still), 2012
video with sound
8'53" in loop

Adriano Pedrosa What was your training in the arts?

Rodrigo Cass In 2006, I completed a BA in visual arts at Faculdade Santa Marcelina in São Paulo, and I studied two years of philosophy and theology at Faculdade Jesuíta in Belo Horizonte.

And your religious life?

I was a Carmelite monk for nine years. I entered the Carmelite Order in 2000 at the age of 16. I lived in the Carmelite monasteries of Itu, Mogi das Cruzes, Barretos, São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. I had a life of prayer, silence and contemplation, a situation that also brought me closer to art. In 2001, I took a course in the painting of Byzantine icons in Mogi das Cruzes; I started to paint interiors of churches and icons in the traditional Byzantine style until 2008, when I left religious life. It was the Carmelites themselves who asked me to study visual arts to develop the paintings that I was making, but the course revealed another world, up to then unknown to me.

Who were your professors?

Leda Catunda, Regina Teixeira de Barros, Marcos Moraes, Artur Lescher, and Raquel Garbelotti.

And the Bolsa Pampulha?

It was another period of training, critical accompaniment and exhibition at the Museu de Arte da Pampulha in Belo Horizonte in 2010–11. I already knew every corner of the museum very well and, with the grant, this was intensified. All of that became very intimate and familiar. Today, when I go back there, it seems like all of that is mine. It was the first time that I received professional treatment as an artist, with the grant, the exhibition, the publication and the discussion with artists and curators.

One of the concepts that we developed when I was curator there was the intimate, small museum, with little resources, that allowed for greater intimacy with the interlocutors, including in the grant program.

The first time that I visited, I was shocked; that space did not contain the idea of a museum, it was itself an artwork. **Was it this intimacy that gave rise to the site-specific works that you made in the exhibition at the conclusion of the program: *Copo americano*, *Arma branca*, *Reserva própria* and *Continente econômico* (all from 2011)?** *Copo americano* was the first work that I made in that

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grant, considering that situation of the museum's low wall. The idea of this video seems very simple to me; it consisted of spilling the water contained in a green bottle alongside a transparent and empty glass.

But later you saw a complexity.

My interest was to intensify the emptiness of the glass, something that would reach the limit, the absurd, as though it were the beginning of a revolution or the possibility of a mistake. I used the cup that is ubiquitous and entirely ordinary in Brazil, called the *copo americano* [American glass], an icon of Brazilian design, which interested me for being the simplest and easiest to find. The colors used as a background and base are green and pink, the catalog shade of green – faded, subdued, found ready-mixed in paint stores, which reminds me of my grandparents' house in the interior of Pará, and of houses in the city's outskirts. Previously, my videos had an infinite background, but now I wanted something that would evidence the space by way of a pictorial composition.

And the pink?

The pink is the contrast. I sought a worn-out pink, the

result of the devouring of other colors in low contrast.

It is related with Volpi and his famous "cor caipira" [countrified color].

Yes, I like Volpi a lot, I looked at his paintings.

Is there a political element in your work?

Beginning with the titles, they seek to evidence this relation. In *Formal social* (2012), crystal wine glasses were broken at the parts that are clinked together when making a toast, and restored with concrete. There is a clashing between these two materials. The identity is constructed by the difference. The transparent wineglass, a noble object of privilege, in a fabricated and polished form, is contrasted with the rough and opaque concrete, an element of the street, of architecture, of the city, which manifests the fragile pattern of the broken part of the transparent glass.

How do you see this context of the booming art market today, with a demand for new artists?

I think it's strange, I feel a fragility in all of that.

Do you think it's dangerous?

It's a new thing, a challenge for the work.

2. **Copo americano**, 2011
 video projection with sound
 2'30" in loop
 installation view at Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte