

Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel

Galpão

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Rodrigo Cass
libera abstrahere

By Ana Paula Cohen

libera abstrahere is a group of 12 new videos created by Rodrigo Cass (São Paulo, 1983). Each video is related to one of the 12 paintings in *manifest material*, a work from 2021. *libera abstrahere* is also the title of the artist's monograph, released in tandem with this exhibition, in which both bodies of work – *manifest material* and *libera abstrahere* – are placed in dialog. The 12 videos and the 12 paintings share the same sequence of colors: gray, lemon yellow, ultramarine purple, cobalt blue, red, cadmium orange, rose pink, raw linen, Prussian blue, cobalt green, pink, and ultramarine blue. The colors are as much in the linen wrapped around the three-dimensional supports on which the videos are projected as in the recorded elements, transforming the projections into paintings of color and light. The artist made a new piece in concrete and gouache on paper for each video in *libera abstrahere*; they function as notes, notations punctuating the exhibition's landscape of moving colors.

There is a sound experience proposed for the space: in each video's audio track, in addition to the sound of the action recorded, is a background frequency called pink noise, filtered so that each work emits the frequency of one of the 12 notes in the western musical scale. When walking through the exhibition, we are faced with acoustic consonances and dissonances, experiencing zones of comfort and/or discomfort in the body's relationship with the different areas of sound.

Rodrigo Cass' works depart from constitutive elements of the two-dimensional field, such as rectangular grids, frames, mats, or colored surfaces. There is continuous construction and dismantling of such structures. Overflows, falls, and explosions dismantle rectangular structures, without ever failing to sustain the plane of the video screen or the painting's canvas. It is as if we were witnessing the moment of the spill, the fall, the paradigm shift. As if the works were *In permanent revolution*, as if their undoing were never finished.

The rectangle, the square, the frame, the framework, and the right angles that structure and imprison Western/Westernized subjectivities are present in each element of our architecture (corners, windows, floors), demarcate all the forms of two-dimensional representation (photographs, paintings), and outline all images viewed on computer screens, cell phones, cinema. We frequently forget that our bodies and the Earth's body are comprised of organic shapes, without right angles, and that life flows in movements closer to the course of rivers, without following the harsh stiffness of Western architecture or linear chronological time.

In this sense, organicity, overflowing, rising and falling are part of the search for the essence of living that is in all bodies. The work displays a continuous friction between the given structures and a movement of life that seeks out singular flows beyond the structure. This friction is given through experimentation with matter. Daily practice leads the artist from an exhaustively repeating procedure to a minimal opening in the system, ushering in the new. Continuous repetition creates difference.

Cass operates through technical restrictions defined in advance, almost like higher-order rules executed with precision. In the paintings, the wood cut at specific angles, the linen stretched tight on the wood, the strokes of concrete and pigment on the linen, the tempera colors on the edges. In the videos, a still camera and well-defined rectangular framing, intense colored scene, and actions carried out by the artist's hands repeated thirty or forty times. The hands bear instruments that operate the continuous cuts and overflows of matter, testing the (organic and inorganic) bodies' capacity to contain or spill over a liquid, dust or object.

It is possible to think that the physical, material world acts through the artist's hands and the object-instruments we recognize (the book, concrete, the lemon, the brick, the rose), while color appears as a divine manifestation, a body of light that emanates from the videos and paintings. Through each work, it is as if we could access the artist-monk's daily practice, in which he operates manifestations of matter, generating shapes, colors and lights that might connect us to elevated experiences grounded in material support. The work of art suggested as key to spiritual elevation, both for the artist and for those experiencing it.