

Antivision of the Creature World

Perhaps we can start this conversation backwards, through shapes that perceive the world in different lights. The vision of reptiles, for example, operates in other frequencies. Many lizards have retinas with four types of cones, sensitive even to ultraviolet, perceiving variations in light that escape us. Their gaze does not seek form, it seeks difference. Among snakes, there are species with two main cone types — ultraviolet and long-wave — and others that combine vision with thermal and chemical sensors to create a perceptual system that reads the environment through vibration, heat, and smell. Turtles, between water and earth, still retain pigments adapted to the instability of light, a remnant from prehistoric lineages.

This is perhaps the source of our discomfort when faced with these bodies: that which escapes our perceptual grammar. The figure of the reptile, often taken as a sign of the primitive, the diabolical, or the abject, marks a threshold in knowledge. This boundary — at which the human gaze no longer recognizes itself — is where thoughts about the monster take shape. Not as an aberration, but as an index of a different sensory logic, one that reorganizes the hierarchy of the visible and gives matter back its ability to perceive. A perception that does not seek sharpness, but temperature. Within this realm of camouflage, I would like to start considering a body of work, Cristiano Lenhardt's.

Through geometric shapes, we can see the starting point where a field of combinations is built and refuses to become a system. His figures are disobedient. They bend, they deviate, they contaminate. Each shape appears to contain the instant in which it is lost and then recreates itself, a vanishing point where drawing stops being a calculation and becomes a body. It is as though the figures had been born out of a drive that precedes geometry, a gesture created through motion, not seeking stability. These compositions seem born of the deflections of things themselves, a face that projects beyond the surface, a reflection of the light we cannot see.

There is something metaphysical about his work, not in the sense of abstract mysticism, but in the affirmation of an intensified presence, a silent communication between matter, energy, and breathing. Lenhardt creates a way of seeing that deviates from the direct gaze, an oblique, almost mineral vision that cuts through space and time. At times, one gets the sense of a dialog with other dimensions, distant planets, invisible organisms, but also with what exists here, in earth, around us, although we seldom notice it. This ambiguity between the cosmic and the earthly manifests itself in series such as *EUiEEE* (2025) and *Módulo Inexato* (Inexact Module, 2025), where aluminum and ceramic become frequency conductors, almost like antennas that cut through matter and time. There is a sense of broadcasting and listening in these surfaces, as if they were capturing signs from worlds at once internal and

distant. As such, the artwork leans towards things that escape attention, the gap between form and what causes it to vibrate.

Vision is approached as an imperative in the contemporary world, where images occupy and organize our ways of existing. Lenhardt proposes a different path, an *antivision*. He invites us to perceive what moves outside the hypnotic state, what we see all the time but do not notice. In his works is an invitation to vertigo. One must turn upside down, alter one's vantage point, let one's body destabilize in order for the forms to reveal their other logic.

This displacement operation, which is also one of thought, appears in every language he adopts: drawing, painting, video, ceramics, engraving, installation. Each medium is approached as a realm of experimentation that involves repetition, like an exercise in alphabetical creation. Fire, pigment, the hole, and the fold are ways of uttering. In *Brotocartas* (Lettersprouts, a series initiated in 2017), this approach grows denser. The word created by the artist carries the drive to reestablish — or perhaps just play around with—the alphabet, as though the Greco-Roman system, the foundation of our Western writing, were no longer able to contain what vibrates between sound and shape. It is also a gesture of desacralization, an attempt at returning writing to its bodily state. In his proposal, there is a desire to relink writing and drawing, evoking the early human gestures, back when the line still retained the murmur of the body and of the environment that produced it.

Here, vowels and consonants cease to be fixed signs. *AEIOU* and the echo of the word *OLHO* (EYE) become plastic forces, graphic breaths that migrate to paper, fabric, aluminum, and ceramic. The writing folds and unfolds like a shaker that makes the world ring out. By turning noises, winds, chants, and murmurs into visual structures, the artist composes a syntax of his own, fueled by listening. *Brotocartas* reveals a thought that runs across sound, image, and matter, drawing correspondences between the orders of the sensible. The piece resonates with a lineage of artists who touched the alphabet and its edges — from experiments in calligraphy and phonetics to the inscription-drawings which, even now, continue to inquire what a line is capable of.

Lenhardt works with the patience of those who know gesture becomes knowledge only when repeated until an error is made. His works do not stem from scientific, rational, or mathematical obsession. The technique is founded on continual erasure, on the spontaneous invention of a proprietary method. It is as though, in an algebra class, one had been asked to solve a numerical expression, and the artist had invented the result of the equation in his own way, without fixating on reaching the solution. The equation, for him, is a question towards a detour path.

As such, the drawings are made through respiration, and their form expands over surfaces and volumes to become fields. And like impure air, they carry contamination. Each line has the density of a breath, of a pause between the body and the world. As he himself writes:

“I have managed to punch a hole, a contaminating duct, a perforation, a threat.
I have managed to destabilize myself, and this is what I am now, dangerous,
loose, unsafe.”

The notion of destabilization infuses his entire output, and it is precisely where the potency of his gesture resides. The artist creates through vertigo, through instability as a state of invention. His geometries are bodies in transformation. Error, impurity, the accident all become matters of language. As such, Lenhardt develops a vocabulary of his own where the line does not demarcate, it reveals the layers of differences between worlds.

At his Mundo Bicho (Creature World) studio, set in the middle of the Atlantic Forest in the Recife metropolitan area, this contamination takes on yet another layer. The space is an extension of the work itself, a living organism where nature and craft coexist. The humidity, the leaves, the fungi, the insects, and the breathing of the forest infiltrate the supports, while the glow from television sets and smartphones cuts through the room. It is a place where the natural and the technological mix, where artisanal gesture coexists with the intermittent luminosity of the screens. Lenhardt creates in this interplace, at the point where matter turns to signal and signal returns to matter.

From a formal perspective, his works lean toward a symbolical language reminiscent of old coding systems and contemporary information circuits. As is the case with past works of his, such as *TV Fiapos* (2014) and *video curvas* (2023), these movements reappear in the exhibition on the TV screens in *Desenho Encampado* (2025). They contain a desire to organize chaos and, at the same time, sabotage it. His shapes are like electrical circuits which, at some point, bend and get lost, building a grammar of deviation. He turns calculation into intuition, geometry into body, repetition into respiration.

This tension between organic and geometric, craft and technology, rational and oneiric infuses his entire practice. It is an attempt at wordless communication — with silent matter, with subterranean frequencies, with nonvisual forces. His work carries an ethics of the encounter, a listening that manifests itself as creative gesture. In *Desfazer Para Ser* (2025) — paintings made with oil, oil pastel, crayon, and ceramic glaze on linen —, even as he deals with seemingly abstract structures, the artist conjures an affective dimension, an earthy warmth, as though each line held traces of an intimacy. These paintings encapsulate the most sensitive aspects of his perception: the white acts as a layer of breathing and embrace, enwrapping the pastel and the crayon, while the ceramic, laid out in the center, introduces a

tactile, almost pulsating presence that harks back to the *brotoctas* — as if the pictorial surface were opening up in correspondence between matter and gesture.

Cristiano Lenhardt does not paint or draw what he sees, but what he senses to circulate in between things. In his work, form is always movement. Pattern is always variation. His works approach nature not through mimicry, but through the way the natural world thinks, through accumulation, contamination, and transmutation. They carry a pedagogy of instability, a learning through error, a surrender to contamination.

This may be why his works elicit a paradoxical sense of proximity and quirkiness in spectators. The familiarity of shapes — circles, straight lines, folds, meshes — is interrupted by something that eludes, a deviation that keeps the gaze from resting. In this oscillation, the artist reinscribes geometry into a living, nonlinear temporality. The drawing is not fixed, but is in constant flux, as though it were able to grow, sprout up, or decompose.

His works invite a state of expanded attention. What organizes the world is not vision, but rather the body. The eye, accustomed to take the lead, is called upon to relearn to listen. In Lenhardt's work, vision is voyage, seeing the landscape through *EUIEEE* (2025), being relaunched from the sculpture and vice versa, perhaps the vision closest to that of a reptile. The image offers a juggling act, which exists outside the time of the fall yet exalts the suspension that takes place with each spin.

As the artist himself writes:

“Remember, time is ours, it is human, leave it aside for a while, enter the hole. Infuriate, come apart, mix with the earth and await the next watering, the next junction.”

Ultimately, his art seems to inhabit the instant before form, the moment in which gesture is still respiration, and the body and the world are yet unseparated. This unstable space, between calculation and error, between the ground and the hole, is where Cristiano Lenhardt turns art into a way of existing. His artworks are seeds that sprout up in the void, drawings that breathe, living geometries that challenge the gaze to unlearn.

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