

nara roesler

sérgio sister
painting between
cracks and cavities
nara roesler são paulo

opening
august 19

exhibition
aug 19 – oct 7, 2023

painting between cracks and cavities

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In Sérgio Sister's art, there is a profound exploration of absence and completion, where the viewer's attentive observation plays a crucial role. Comprising of distinct parts, his artworks never fully reveal themselves. One can sense that the artwork is continuously on the lookout, being both seen and seeing, as it exists as a physical entity. Take, for instance, his *Caixas (Boxes)* series, where depending on the viewer's perspective, some wooden slats may remain unseen. One must approach these paintings turned into objects to discern their parts more incisively, perceive the interplay between figure and background, and understand how the artist gives meaning to a painting where the hollow is finally visible. Furthermore, what is exposed is the skeletal essence of the artwork, and this metaphor gains depth when the elongated and narrow appearance of the *Caixas* slats is associated with the popular concept of guts ('tripa') – wooden innards relating to a body (in space). It is an empty body, forever open to investigations. The encounter between two entities becomes apparent: the void within the painting and the curious gaze of the audience.

In examining the assembly of some of his diptychs, it is clear that they consist of joined canvases and canvases glued onto aluminum. This continuity reflects a plastic thought process inclined towards constructive languages, a thread that runs through his work. These pieces of pictorial engineering demand modular construction, yet they retain their autonomy. I am faced with the question: is a particular work by Sérgio a triptych or three distinct paintings brought together? Despite clear influences from abstract expressionism,

neoconcretism, concretism, and constructivism, Sérgio weaves a unique poetic path. For instance, the *Caixas*, beyond their formalistic discussion, remind us of their origin, even exuding scents reminiscent of fruits and the noises of a street market. There is an inherent noisiness in them that continues to echo.

Returning to the diptychs, their juxtaposition reinforces the notion of a fragile and agile space. This agility is not only present in the composition of the parts that come together but also in the process of painting itself. Sérgio deliberately invites the appearance of a 'dirty' or 'unfinished' painting. On the surface of his canvases, one can often discern traces of his gestures in the layers of paint that overlap and defy homogeneity. These brushstrokes seem brisk, as if the work is still in progress. The artist creates areas of imperfection in the expected uniformity of a monochrome. The result is a territory in a constant state of transitoriness – a painting that seeks continuous flow, both in its creation and its relationship with space and the viewer.

The theme of absence manifests in his work through the presence of cracks, gaps, and cavities. His diptychs and triptychs are structurally formed by intervals or modular divisions reminiscent of the *Caixas* slats. While the *Caixas* series aims to be translucent, in the diptychs and triptychs, absence becomes a constituent element of the work rather than a surplus. In some cases, the canvases that compose these pieces are affixed to an aluminum structure covered with fabric and painted monochromatically with oil. Thus, the interval

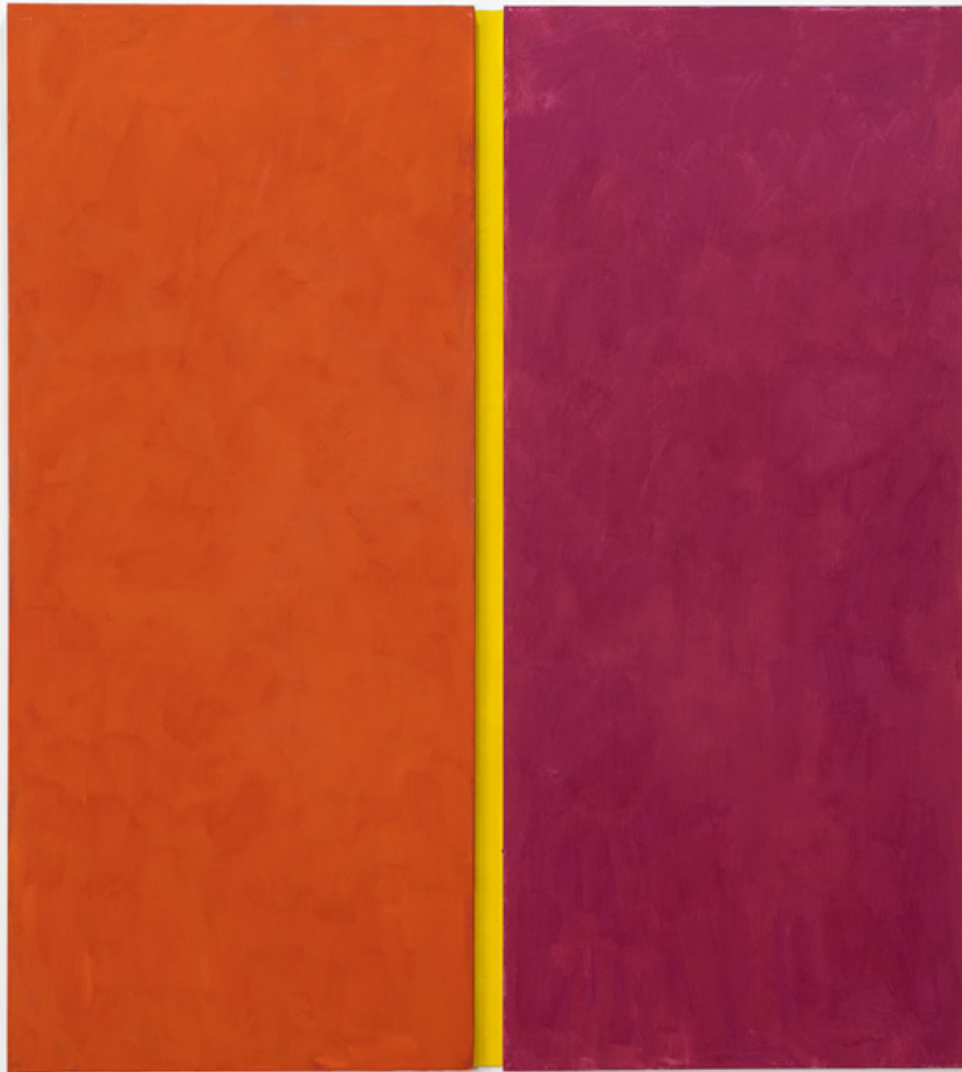
between these canvases, which could be perceived as empty space, becomes a constituting element that not only brings the canvases together but also becomes central in a debate about color in his work. At times, Sérgio uses vinyl paint applied to the side of the canvas. The effect of this paint is transformative, giving the surface a luminous quality akin to a distant beacon of light. Curiously, the vinyl paint is not always immediately noticeable, often hiding in somewhat 'concealed' areas of the painting, hence the allegory of the crack. One must 'open up' the painting, explore the gaps between the modules to discover this color-light.

Sérgio's work exudes a vibrant surface, not just in the luminosity of the vinyl but also in his use of oil and metals. Over time, his drawings manifest more intense layers of oily stains that spread across the paper, evoking both 'dirtiness' mentioned earlier and the potency of something organic, a pulsating life force. Moreover, the combination of metallic and matte colors generates an ambiguous effect of strength and fragility on the white paper. There is a concise and spontaneous energy that seems to make the paper tremble. This effect is reinforced by his customary gesture of producing highly luminous elements, giving his paintings a distinctive radiance. The painted aluminum bar, which is a constituent part of his paintings, serves as a conductor of energy. As it also serves as a connecting element between the canvases, it becomes a crack, a luminous tear beneath the surface. Through this line-cut, energy pulsates. What seems to be left behind – the crack – is its connection to the world: the space–line of the planes' interlocking that enlivens the surface.

The plane gains thickness, and the air that enters is the same air we breathe. Sérgio's poetics also reside in the transmission of a sense of dynamic completion, even in the fleeting moments, within the painting. Furthermore, in the constant relationship between figure and background in the *Caixas*, one can observe the following operation: the slats missing in the foreground are complemented by those occupying the background, establishing a visual game that never ceases and nourishes the flow of dynamic energy in his work.

The voids and openings are integral to the poetics of the *Pontaletes (Props)* series and enrich the discourse on painting. This absence is never truly void, as the slats create open areas and frame the wall. Besides being seen as installations, they make use of the wall's color as an element of their nature. The slats and their dialogue with space and architecture have a significant trajectory in Brazilian visual arts, with influences from Alfredo Volpi, Ione Saldanha, Willys de Castro, and, of course, Sérgio Sister. However, the *Pontaletes* series introduces a three-dimensional occupation of painting, occupying a realm between flatness and spatiality, following a collective and integrated rhythm of its parts. They are no longer paintings confined to the plane like Volpi's facades, nor are they autonomous slats like Saldanha's, which are often exhibited collectively. The *Pontaletes* serve as both paintings and installative objects, evoking elements of the city, such as doors, windows, and portals. The scale of the work and its placement on the ground suggest a beckoning presence, a desire to be filled.

In Sérgio Sister's work, the void assumes its role as an integral element of the artwork, and consequently, as a creator of spaces. As a work that embraces its state of rupture and interruption, with parts constituting a whole, it gives the illusion that spaces are constantly being constructed because they never have definitive forms, despite being meticulously conceived within the bounds of reason. This is the legacy that his artwork leaves for the world.



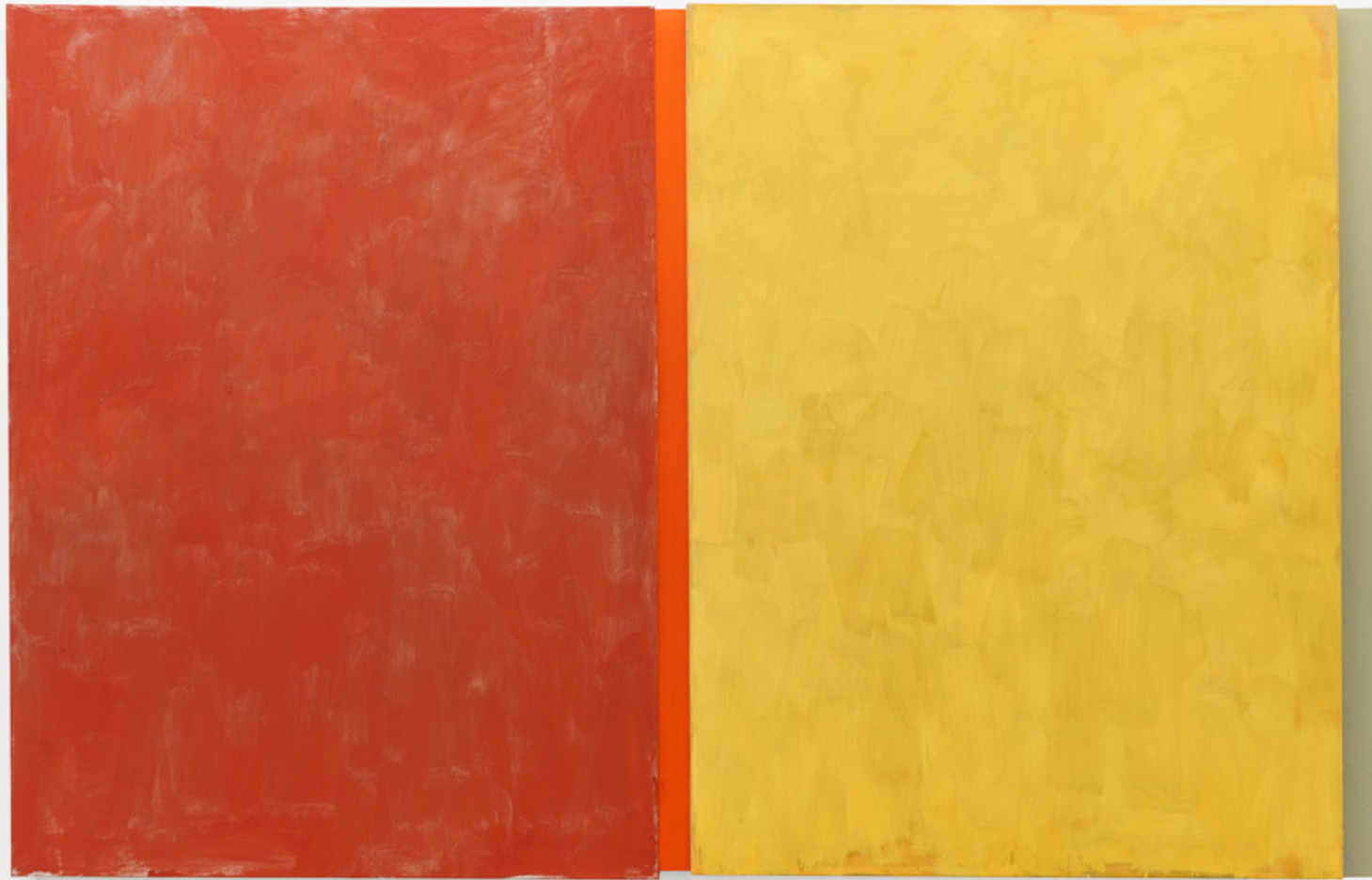
*Magenta e laranja com
ligação amarela, 2022*
oil paint on canvas
195 x 184 cm
76.8 x 72.4 in



Red and gold, 2022
oil paint on kozo paper
140 x 59 cm
55.1 x 23.2 in







*Red and yellow earth with orange
and green connections, 2022*
oil paint on canvas
140 x 216 cm
55.1 x 85 in







Dente de ouro, 2023
oil paint on canvas
65 x 184 cm
25.6 x 72.4 in





*Ouro e complexos
noturnos, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
35 x 112,5 cm
13.8 x 44.3 in





Quarentena 7, 2020
oil paint on wood
37 x 25 x 7 cm
14.6 x 9.8 x 2.8 in





*Pintura com ligações prata,
ocre e laranja, 2021*
oil paint on canvas and aluminum
24,5 x 73,3 x 2,5 cm
9.6 x 28.9 x 1 in



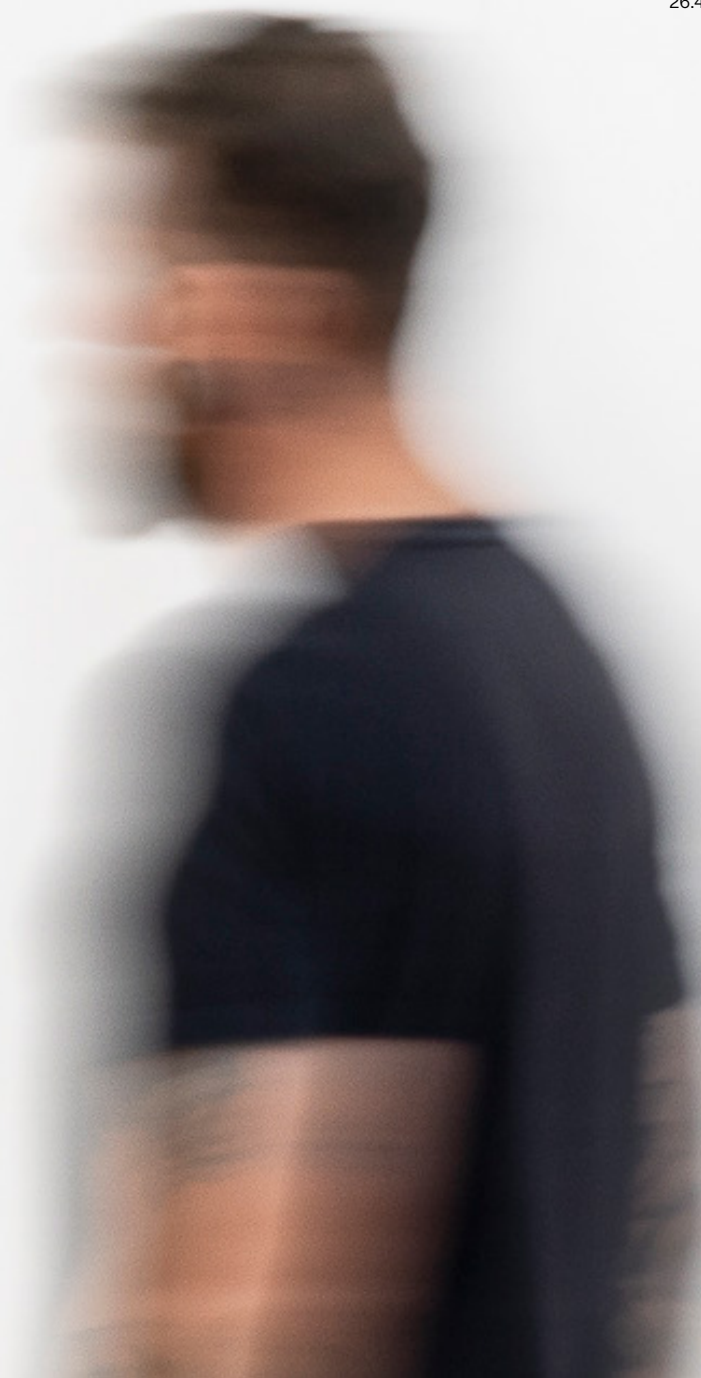


*Petróleo e prata com
ligação magenta, 2022*
oil paint on canvas
183 x 190 cm
72 x 74.8 in





33x33, 1990
oil paint on canvas
67 x 33 cm
26.4 x 13 in

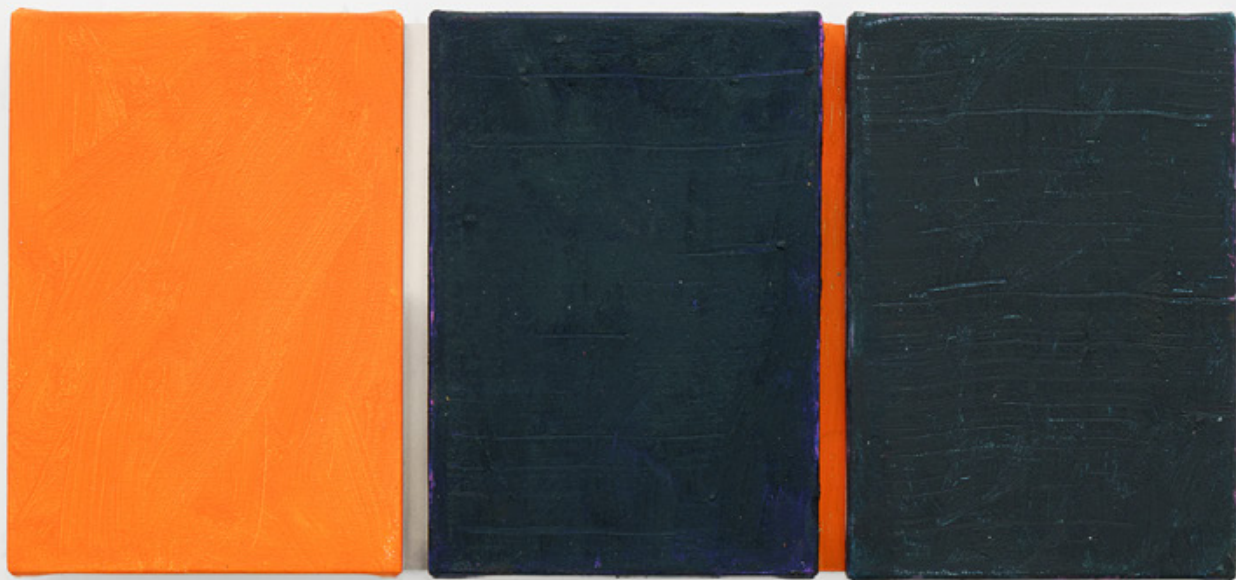




Edição extra, 2022
oil paint on kozo paper
199 x 100 cm
78.3 x 39.4 in







*Pintura com ligações
prata e laranja, 2021*
oil paint on canvas and aluminum
24,4 x 53,9 x 2,5 cm
9.6 x 21.2 x 1 in



Ripa vermelha, 2020
oil paint, vinyl paint, canvas,
aluminum and wood
65 x 7 cm
25.6 x 2.8 in







*Vermelhos com ligação
e lateral cinzas, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
35 x 57 cm
13.8 x 22.4 in



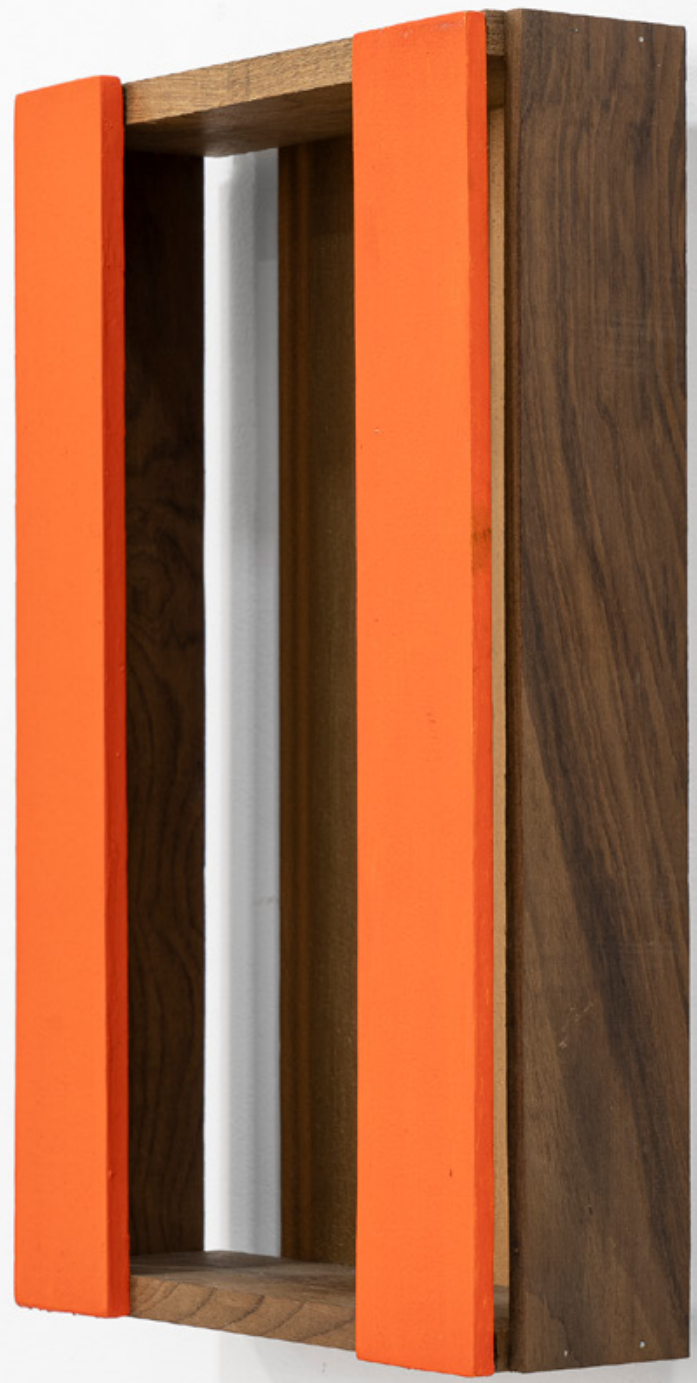


Terras, cobre e ouro, 2022
oil paint on canvas
24 x 72,5 cm
9.4 x 28.5 in





Laranja e metais, 2023
oil paint on wood
37 x 25 x 7 cm
14.6 x 9.8 x 2.8 in





Orange gold, 2022
oil paint on kozo paper
140 x 59 cm
55.1 x 23.2 in







Mundo amarelo com ligações
cobre e bronze, 2022
oil paint on canvas and aluminum
35 x 84 cm
13.8 x 33.1 in





Chardin 1, 2021
oil paint on canvas
24 x 35,5 x 2,5 cm
9.4 x 14 x 1 in

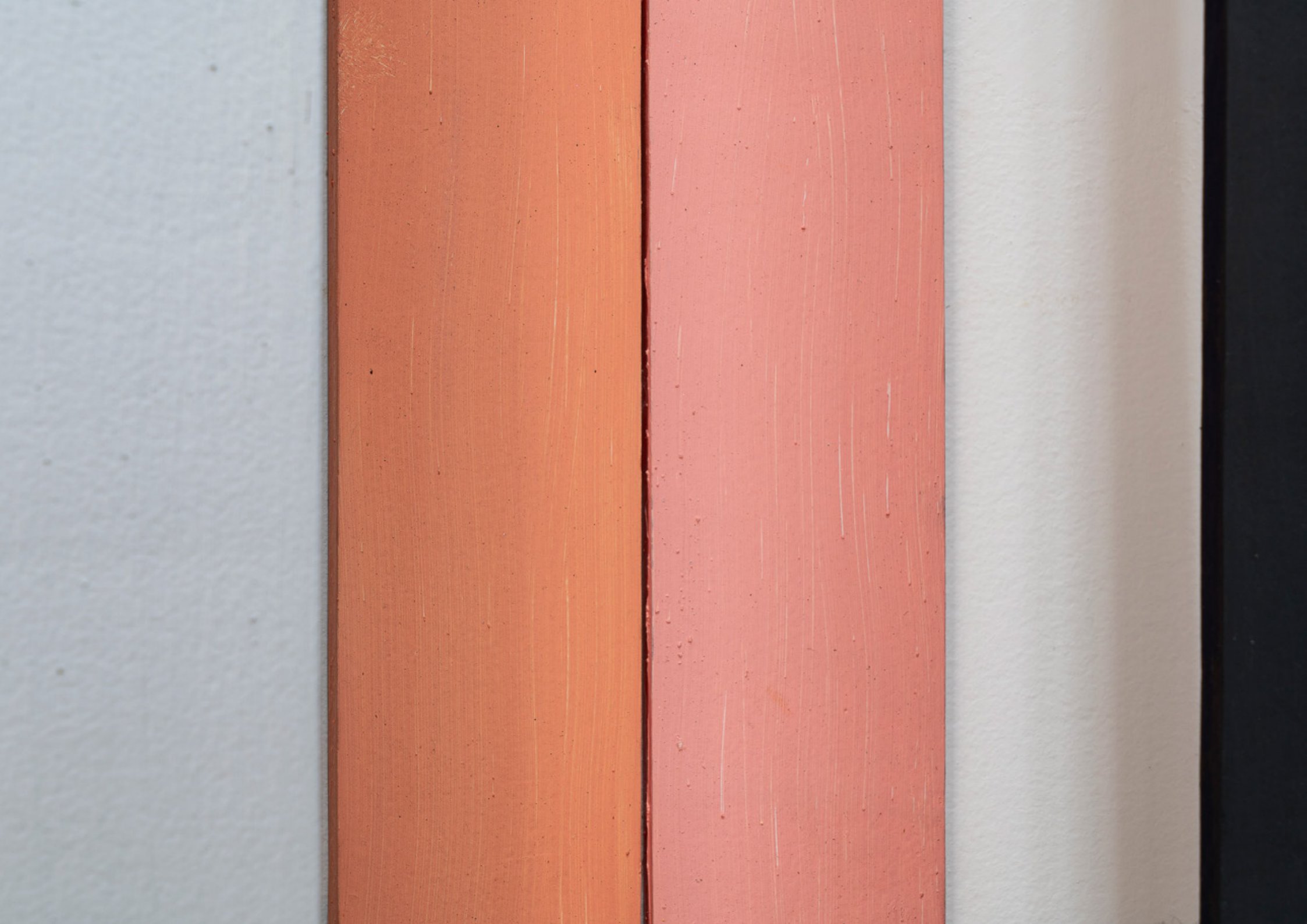




Chardin 2, 2022
oil paint on canvas
24 x 37 cm
9.4 x 14.6 in



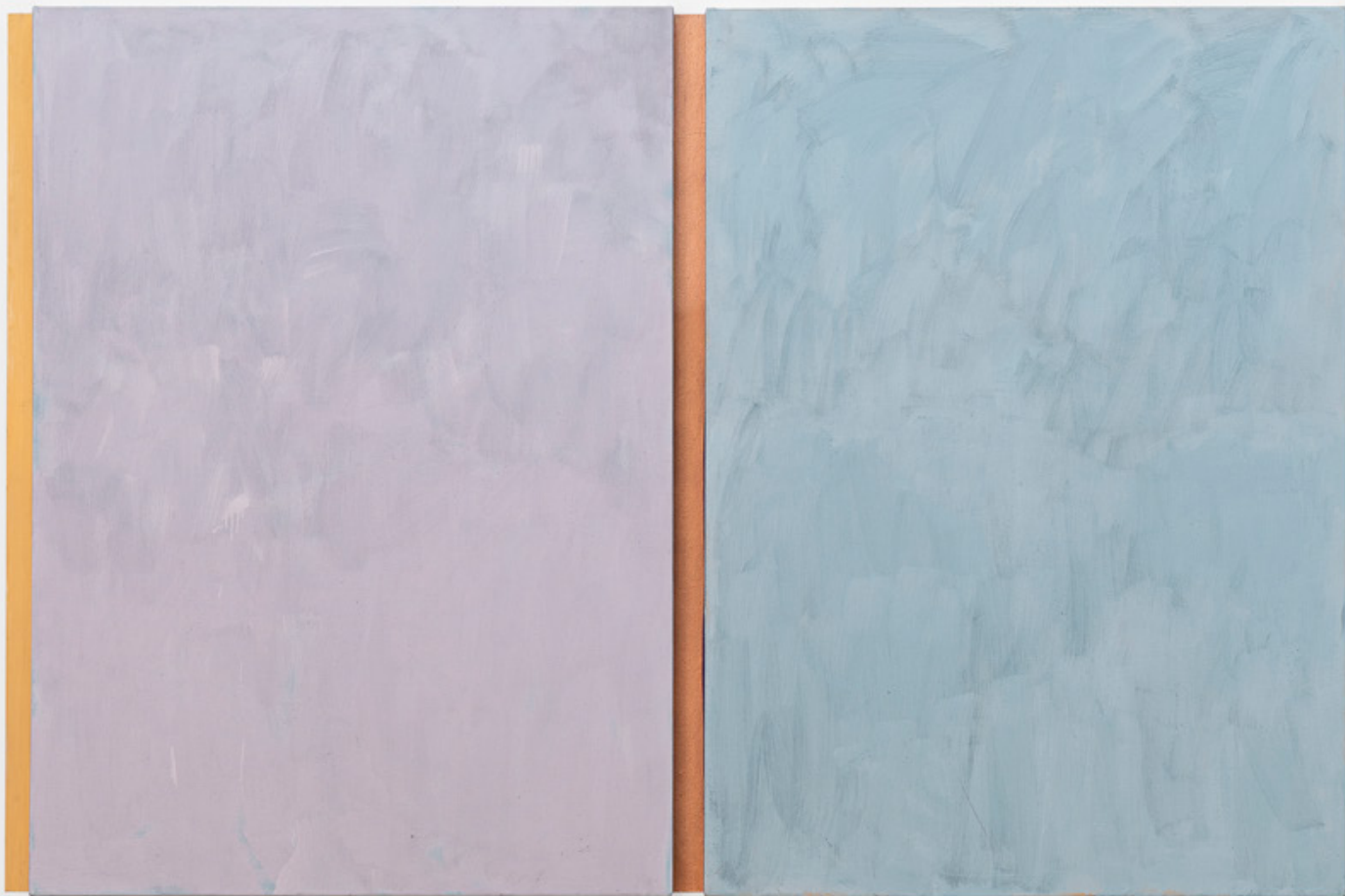
Pretos, cinza e rosas, 2020
oil paint on wood
37 x 25 x 7 cm
14.6 x 9.8 x 2.8 in





Pretos e rosa, 2022
oil paint on canvas
24 x 53 x 5 cm
9.4 x 20.9 x 2 in





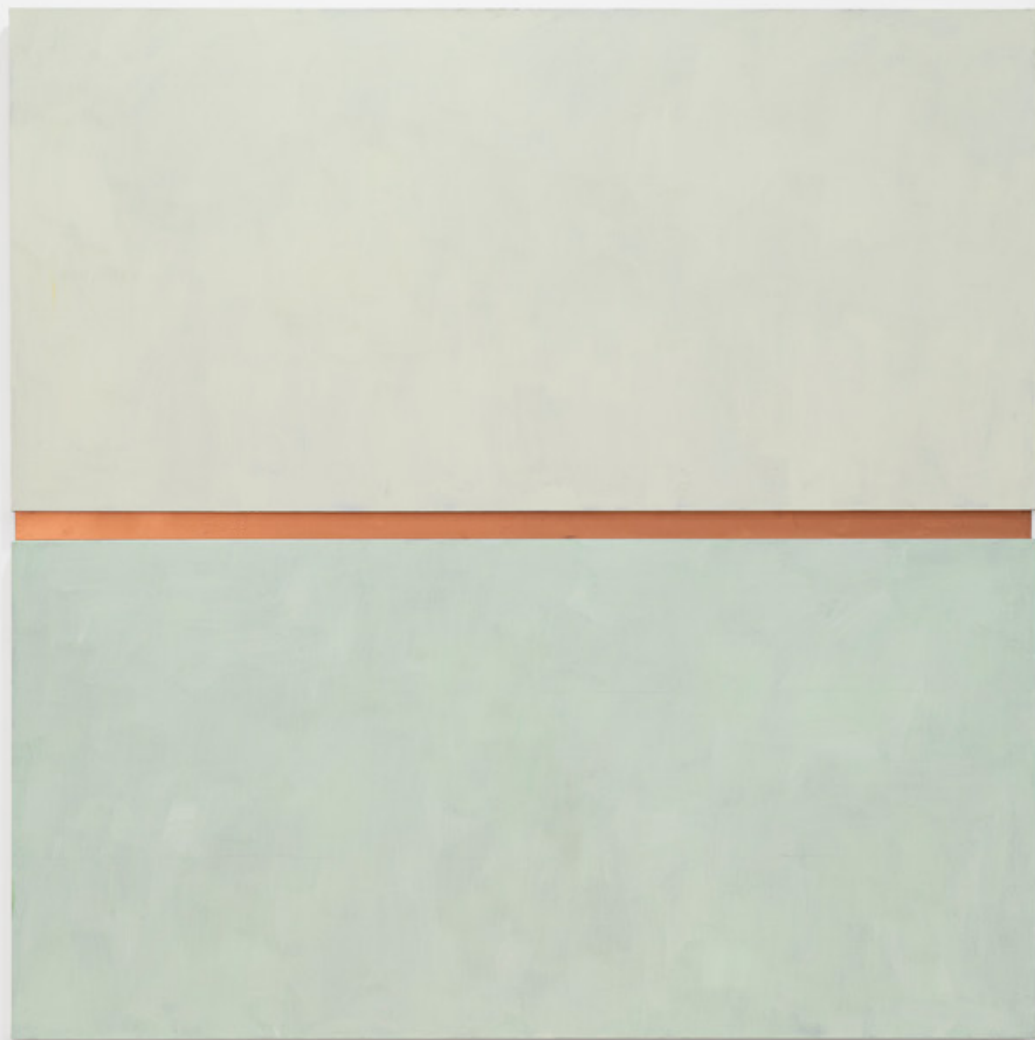
*Azul e verde
metalizados, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
145 x 220 cm
57.1 x 86.6 in





Pintura com ligações verdes fluo, 2021
oil paint on canvas and aluminum
24,4 x 53,2 x 2,2 cm
9.6 x 20.9 x 0.9 in





*Verdes claros ligados
por cobre, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
180 x 190 cm
70.9 x 74.8 in





Branços com ligação cobre, 2023
oil paint on canvas
24 x 35 cm
9.4 x 13.8 in





Pontalete 17 b, 2019–2023
oil paint, vinyl paint,
canvas, aluminum and wood
160 x 200 cm
63 x 78.7 in







*Branco e prata com
ligação amarela, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
24 x 54 cm
9.4 x 21.3 in



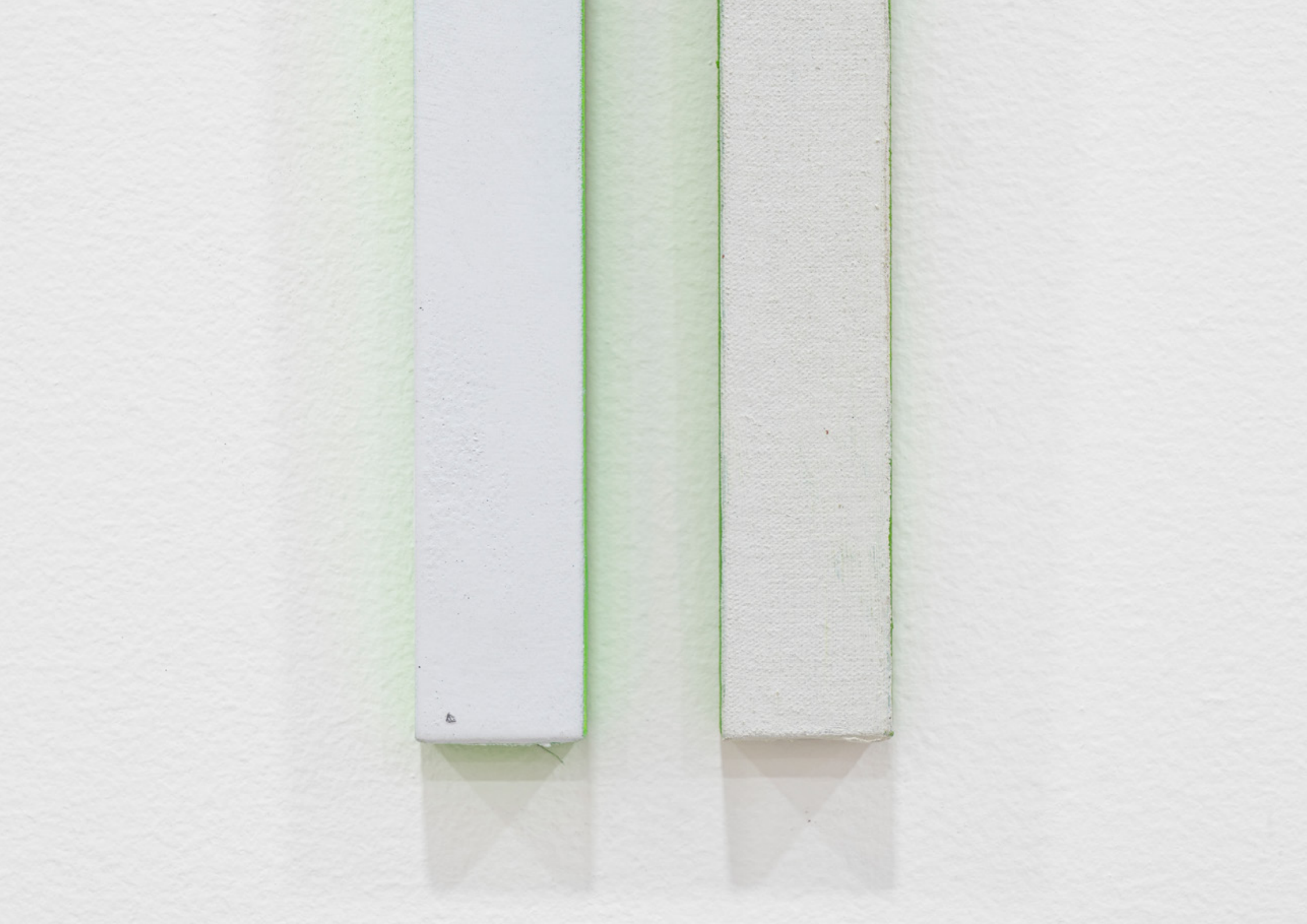
Caixa fluor, 2023
oil paint on wood
35 x 25 x 7 cm
14.6 x 9.8 x 2.8 in







Ripa Willys, 2020
oil paint, vinyl paint,
canvas, aluminum and wood
65 x 7 cm
25.6 x 2.8 in





*Pratas e verde com ligações
fluo e prata, 2023*
oil paint on canvas
24 x 53 x 2,5 cm
9.4 x 20.9 x 1 in



sérgio sister

b. 1948, São Paulo, Brazil, where he lives and works

Sérgio Sister started painting in the late 1960's, at the same time when he was working as a journalist and became engaged with political action. In 1970, Sister was arrested for his militancy. While detained for 19 months at the Tiradentes Prison, in São Paulo, Sister attended painting workshops held at the institution. As a part of Geração 80, Sister revisits an ancient theme in painting: the interplay between surface and three-dimensionality, in an attempt to liberate painting in space. What marked his production at that time was the superimposition of autonomous chromatic layers coexisting harmoniously side by side.

Today, his work combines painting and sculpture. He uses supports derived from found structures and from systems designed to serve our everyday needs, as we can see in the *Ripas* series, produced since the late 1990s (strips), and in *Caixas* series, produced since 2009, whose names are appropriate of the manufactured products from which they derive. These are sculptural paintings made from found wooden beams that resemble crates, porticos, or window frames. Sister paints the beams different colors and assembles them into configurations that allow various depths, shadows, and experiences of color to emerge.

selected solo exhibitions

- *Pintura e vínculo*, Nara Roesler, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2021)
- *Then and Now*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2019)
- *Sérgio Sister: o sorriso da cor e outros engenhos*, Instituto Ling, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2019)
- *Sérgio Sister*, Kupfer Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2017)
- *Sergio Sister: Malen Mit Raum, Schatten und Luft*, Galerie Lange + Pult, Zurich, Switzerland (2016)
- *Expanded Fields*, Nympe Projekte, Berlin, Germany (2016)
- *Ordem Desunida*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2015)

selected group exhibitions

- *Co/respondences: Brazil and abroad*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2023)
- *Entre tanto*, Casa de Cultura do Parque, São Paulo, Brazil (2020)
- *A linha como direção*, Pina Estação, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- *The Pencil is a Key: Art by Incarcerated Artists*, Drawing Center, New York, USA (2019)
- *Géométries Américaines*, du Mexique à la Terre de Feu, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, France (2018)
- *AI-5 50 anos – Ainda não terminou de acabar*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
- *MAC USP no século XXI – A era dos artistas*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 25th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2002)

selected collections

- François Pinault Collection, Venice, Italy
- Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

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