

nara roesler

são paulo

50



rodolpho parigi
CHOICES

nara roesler são paulo
opening march 31
exhibition march 31–may 9



the choices of rodolpho parigi

curated by krist gruijthuijsen

As I walked away from Rodolpho Parigi's studio, I was reminded of a passage I recently wrote for an essay:

At times, I stare at myself in the mirror until I become estranged from my own image. I move away from the identity I was born with and that I am judged by. I analyze my bone structure, my eyes, my hair, my posture. I objectify myself so thoroughly that life disappears, and death comes to the surface. When I told my mother I was gay, she replied, 'Please, don't get sick.'

The fragility of the body as a site of identity, meaning, and continual transformation is what constitutes and continuously inspires the work of Rodolpho Parigi. For him, painting functions less as a tradition inherited through lineage than as an ecosystem in which images, forms, and histories circulate, collide, and mutate. Within his canvases, fragments of art history sit alongside anatomical diagrams, botanical structures, graphic motifs, and traces of popular culture. These elements do not simply coexist but fuse and reconfigure therefore generating visual logics that resist an easy interpretation and are to be seen as extensive self-portraiture. Looking at Parigi's paintings is a like trying to hold on to a dream after waking – the image persists, but it keeps slipping away.

Parigi's studio itself feels like a diorama of his mind, reflected in hands, eyes, and mirrors. Everything shines, yet nothing is ever finished (as he declares the moment you enter). Confident in his mastery, informed by Renaissance and Baroque techniques, he nonetheless allows doubt and insecurity to surface in the imagery through fragments and states of transformation where the artist interrogates his own identity.

Looking down from a ladder, he nods at my outfit and says, "Choices."

We both laugh, recalling a moment from *RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars* (Season 2), when drag queen Tatianna, surveying a contestant's outfit, simply said "choices" in a tone of polite shade. Around the studio, references from Brazilian art history, gay and pop culture, fetish aesthetics, and personal artifacts such as Yves Saint Laurent shoes and a porcelain dog coexist. At first glance, one wonders what this world populated by fetish (sex) objects, Tarsila do Amaral, Constantin Brâncuși, Hans Arp, Albert Eckhout, Victor Brecheret and SOPHIE have to do with one and another. Well, one thing is for sure – they've all been invited to Rodolpho Parigi's ongoing orgy in which Brazilian modernism and colonial gazes are merged with radical abstraction of early twentieth-century sculpture and the glossy, synthetic universe of experimental pop and fetish objects. Everything in the universe of Parigi is about a state of becoming – a permanent orgasm, in which everything is fluid, and nothing is defined.

One could say that a body begins as something given, or so it seems. In Albert Eckhout's paintings, the colonized subject is posed for the European gaze and catalogued through skin, posture, ornament. It's a projection shaped by distance, desire, and control. The opposite is depicted in the paintings of Tarsila do Amaral, in which the body becomes something larger than itself. In works such as *Abaporu*, limbs expand and stretch across the canvas until anatomy begins to resemble a landscape. The figure is simplified and exaggerated, its contours shaped as much by color and rhythm as by physical structure. The body here is no longer a fixed entity but a symbolic terrain where myth and geography

intersect. Victor Brecheret's sculpture *Diana* draws on this myth of transformation, in which a human turns into tree as a way to capture a body in flux. Such movements are reduced in Constantin Brâncuși's sculptures to a single ascending curve where matter becomes polished and luminous, almost immaterial, while Hans Arp dissolves it altogether into soft, biomorphic forms that seem to grow rather than be made.

SOPHIE approached a similar question through sound. Her music transformed sonic texture into something tactile and hyper-material where elastic beats snap like rubber and melodies gleam like chrome. In her tracks the voice and the body become fluid constructs, capable of being shaped and reshaped at will. The depicted fetish objects materials such as latex, vinyl, and polished leather share the same fascination with surface and transformation. When stretched across the body, they alter its contours and reconfigure its identity, turning flesh into something sculptural and reflective. The body becomes an object, a costume. Across these references, the same urge emerges again, in which there is a desire to liberate the body from the limits of the natural. Whether through color, form, sound, or surface, the body becomes elastic, symbolic, and constructed.

And yet, across these shifts—from Eckhout's colonial subjects to SOPHIE's posthuman surfaces—the body remains a site of projection. It is where fantasies are placed, where power is exercised and where transformation is staged. Whether rendered as specimen, organism, or object, it is never simply "natural." It is always already mediated, shaped by the forces that seek to define it. What changes is not the body itself, but the terms through which it can be imagined. From something to be classified,

to something to be digested, to something to be transformed, to something to be designed. Parigi's exploration of the body has never been confined to the canvas alone. In the early 2010s he introduced an alter ego named *Fancy Violence*, a flamboyant and theatrical persona who appeared in performances, exhibitions, and public events across São Paulo and Berlin. Fancy Violence was, in many ways, a living extension of Parigi's paintings, a figure that embodied the instability of his imagery. In its flamboyant excess, Fancy Violence foregrounds sexuality, theatricality, and self-construction echoing the thinking of Judith Butler, who describes gender not as a predetermined fact but as an ongoing act of performance.

Unfolding between reality and fiction, Parigi's speculative universe is inhabited by hybrid, androgynous figures that seem to rise from the canvas like living organisms. Within this world, drawing and painting reshape ideas of body and gender while dissolving the boundary between material and artificial. References from classical art and popular culture accumulate across each image, producing what Parigi describes as a visual "virtual reality"—a space where bodies and forms that do not exist appear vividly, almost tangibly present.

Parigi recalls a formative moment to me when encountering the monumental paintings of Peter Paul Rubens at the Museo del Prado in Madrid. Standing before works such as *The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* and *The Triumph of the Eucharist*, he was confronted with figures whose bodies seem to glow from within, twisting in movements that defy containment. Through their fleshy exuberance,

Rubens's figures seem to breach the limits of their frames. The baroque intensity of Rubens echoes throughout Parigi's work—not as citation, but as an enduring attitude toward the expressive possibilities of the painted body. Parigi started to use the term *Volumes* in order to accentuate the fleshy physicality of the forms depicted within his compositions.

Color plays a similarly structural role. Parigi's palette like acid greens, deep cerulean blues, saturated reds, electric pinks but most of all black organizes the internal logic of his paintings. The colors bind together disparate fragments and generates a field of visual tension. In this sense, Parigi's sensibility refers back to the work of Tarsila do Amaral, whose bold use of color in paintings reshaped the visual language of Brazilian modernism. Color functions almost as connective tissue, negotiating the relationships between, for example, limbs, flora, anatomical diagrams, and ornamental pattern. The result is an orchestrated visual vibration.

This brings us to *Choices*.

In this exhibition, looking back is not indulgence but an active, unsettling process. The past is less a stable archive than a contested terrain, populated by images bearing histories of power, desire, ideology, and violence. Parigi's revisitations transform these images from fixed reference points into questions. To remember

is not to repeat but to dismantle and reanimate. Images are extracted from their original contexts, placed into the present, and allowed to contradict themselves, absorbing new layers of meaning. Authority dissolves and history becomes material.

The works in *Choices* suggest that time itself is not linear but folded. Images return altered, refusing the notion that history is complete or coherent. What once seemed fixed becomes fluid, open to reinterpretation and recirculation. Standing before Parigi's paintings, I am drawn back into the same flux where bodies emerge, dissolve, and return in unexpected configurations. What once appeared abstract becomes figurative. These paintings do not disclose themselves all at once but demand time, patience, repeated looking.

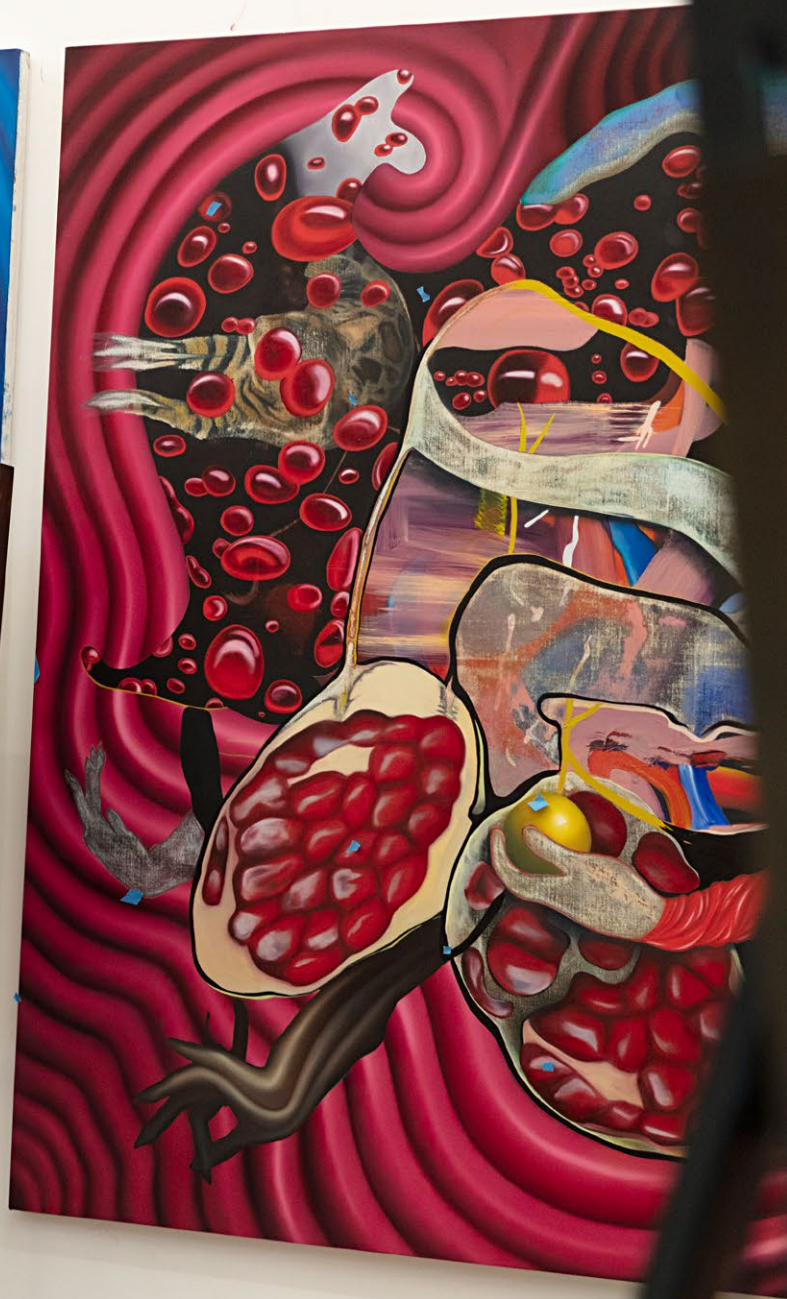
In a world saturated with disposable imagery—from algorithmic feeds to viral visuals—the slow, deliberate labor of painting interrupts. It unsettles. It asks the viewer to remain, to look again, to look longer. And perhaps it is precisely within those pauses that the real choice resides.

– Krist Gruijthuisen





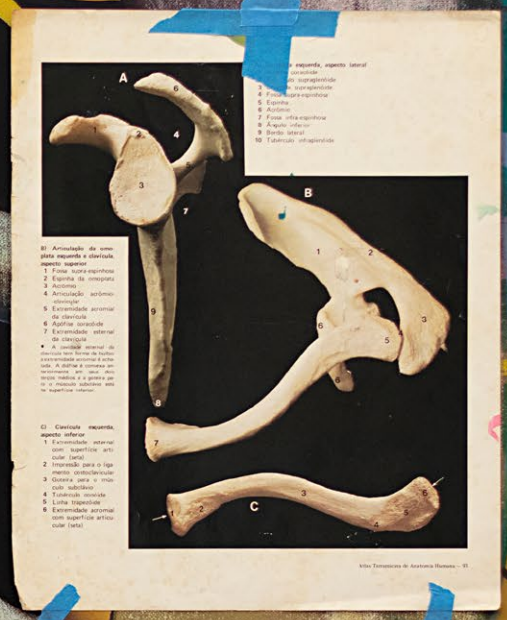




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Magenta harp volumen, 2024-2026
oil paint on linen
330 x 200 x 4 cm
129.9 x 78.7 x 1.6 in







Garden of latex pleasure, 2026
oil paint on linen
200 x 400 cm
78.7 x 157.5 in









Maja Tropical Volumen, 2026
oil paint on linen
201 x 281 cm
79.1 x 110.6 in











Red gloves ice, 2026
oil paint on linen
Ø 70 cm
Ø 27.6





Artemis, 2026
oil paint on linen
51.2 x 39.4 in









Untitled, 2026
oil paint on linen
140 x 100 cm
55.1 x 39.4 in



The hunter, 2026
oil paint on linen
140 x 100 cm
55.1 x 39.4 in







Fading mercury, 2026
oil paint on linen
100 x 130 cm
39.4 x 51.2 in





Brancusi volumen dick, 2025
oil paint on linen
70 x 50 cm
27.6 x 19.7 in



Gants latex noir #1, 2013
oil paint on linen
70,5 x 60,5 cm
27.8 x 23.8 in









Small informational label next to the painting of two women.



Small informational label next to the abstract painting.



Small informational label next to the head sculpture.



WOMAN



exhibition view *Histórias LGBTQIAP+*,
Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP),
São Paulo, Brazil (2024)



exhibition view *Latexguernica*,
Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO),
São Paulo, Brazil (2022)



exhibition view *Latexguernica*,
Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO),
São Paulo, Brazil (2022)

rodolpho parigi

b. 1977, São Paulo, Brazil, where he lives and works

Rodolpho Parigi is part of a new generation of Brazilian artists who emerged in the early 2000s. The artist's work lies in a liminal space between abstraction and figuration, entwining a series of references that range from the tradition of Art History, with particular emphasis on Rubens' baroque corporeality, to graphic design, advertising, scientific illustrations, pop culture, anatomical planes, and music. Together with dance, music is notably responsible for orchestrating the gestural dynamism that characterizes Parigi's figures, which emanates from formal and structural vigor, rather than from the nature of the brush stroke on the surface of the canvas.

Rodolpho Parigi operates with singular transfiguration anchored in a sense of excess, whereby he consolidates fragments of extremely diverse images and forms, through the use of saturated and luminous color palettes that construct a futurist retro. The minutely controlled process of execution and compositional organization amount to an ornamental strategy that resists traditional plays on perspective and forbids the gaze from resting, leading it to incessantly roam the canvas. In Parigi's paintings, the high tech present on the works' thematic meets oil painting's centenary virtuosity; while the organic merges with the artificial, creating an overall provocative sense of strangeness.

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selected solo exhibitions

- *Volumens*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2024)
- *Latexguernica*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2022)
- *Fancy Performance*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2017)
- *Levitação*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2015)
- *El Bestiario*, Sketch, Bogotá, Colombia (2014)
- *Casa Modernista*, São Paulo, Brazil (2013)
- *Febre*, Pivô, São Paulo, Brazil (2013)
- *AtraQue*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2011)

selected group exhibitions

- *Da humanidade: 100 artistas do acervo*, Museu de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (MAB-FAAP), São Paulo, Brazil (2020)
- *Da tradição à experimentação*, Fundação Iberê Camargo (FIC), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2019)
- *Histórias da sexualidade*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil (2017)
- *Unanimous Night*, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, Lituania (2017)
- *LOL Levels of Life 1-2*, Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (2014)
- *Works on Paper*, Rabbitthole Space, New York, USA (2011)

selected collections

- Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Brasileira da Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (MAB-FAAP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia (MAM-BA), Salvador, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

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