

nara roesler

bruno dunley



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## bruno dunley

b. 1984, Petrópolis, Brazil

lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil

In Bruno Dunley's pictorial universe, promises are constantly being made and broken, expanding the limits of the visual field. His practice explores painting not only as a method of expressive figuration, but also as a means of reflecting on the inherent specificity of the medium, in terms of its materiality and role within representation in artistic tradition. Dunley is part of a new and prominent generation of Brazilian painters —he is one of eight founders of the Grupo 2000e8 from São Paulo, a collective of young artists sharing an interest in painting and a desire to develop critical approaches to the method within the contemporary art scene.

Dunley's process of making departs from carefully constructed compositions, which he gradually begins to correct and alter, revealing the lacunae in the apparent continuity of visual perception. Often, a single color dominates the surfaces, allowing for viewers to take on a meditative posture before the works. Recently, the artist's increasingly frequent use of vibrant colors has revealed a growing interest in achieving more aggressive, expressive and contrasting compositions. The common themes in Dunley's practice are two-fold: the artist paints compositions derived from both, everyday images and his minute study of the pictorial field. The imagery converges in a dramatic representation of the visual language. Gestures, planes and color combinations allow for the figuration to emerge as an alphabet, sharing common grounds, while the process of making is simultaneously foregrounded

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### selected solo exhibitions

*Clouds*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2023)

*Virá*, Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil (2020)

*The Mirror*, Nara Roesler New York, USA (2018)

*Dilúvio*, SIM Galeria, Curitiba, Brazil (2018)

*Ruído*, Nara Roesler Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2015)

*e*, Centro Universitário Maria Antonia, São Paulo, Brazil (2013)

11bis Project Space, Paris, France (2011)

### selected group exhibitions

*Entre tanto*, Casa de Cultura do Parque (CCP), São Paulo, Brazil (2020)

*Triangular: Arte deste século*, Casa Niemeyer, Brasília, Brazil (2019)

*AI-5 50 ANOS – Ainda não terminou de acabar*, Instituto Tomie

Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2018)

*139 X NOTHING BUT GOOD*, Park – platform for visual arts, Tilburg, The Netherlands (2018)

*Visões da arte no acervo do MAC USP 1900-2000*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP), São Paulo, Brazil (2016)

*Deserto-modelo*, 713 Arte Contemporâneo, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2010)

### selected collections

Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil

Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP), São Paulo, Brazil

Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil

Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

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<b>4</b>	clouds
<b>12</b>	virá
<b>18</b>	no meio
<b>23</b>	dilúvio
<b>32</b>	the mirror
<b>38</b>	ruído
<b>43</b>	drawings
<b>48</b>	no lugar em que já estamos
<b>54</b>	e
<b>59</b>	bruno dunley, 2012
<b>61</b>	os nomes
<b>64</b>	bruno dunley, 2007

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## clouds 2023

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler New York, USA

*Clouds*, Dunley's second solo exhibition in New York, presents a body of paintings and works on paper developed between 2021 and 2022. In these works, Dunley continues to explore painting's constitutive tensions, namely between image and structural thickness, matter and scheme, always determined by an emphatic use of color. Initiated during the pandemic, and thus produced in a more isolated environment, *Clouds* includes a series of paintings that appear to have internalized the artist's surroundings at the time, suggesting bewildered and labyrinthine fields, and stressing an oneiric, subjective tone where color manifests in its excess, through undetermined spaces. Beginning in 2020, the artist has furthered his experimentation with color, notably fueled by his undertaking of the brand *Joules & Joules*, which he founded alongside artist Rafael Carneiro. With stalling imports, the now-growing business began during Covid-19 as a result of scarce prime oil paint and offers Brazil's first high-quality and accessible national product to artists throughout the country.

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exhibition view

*Clouds*, 2023

Nara Roesler New York, USA

courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler





exhibition view  
*Clouds*, 2023  
Nara Roesler New York, USA  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler



The endeavor launched the artist into a meticulous and highly experimental relationship with pigments, which is reflected in Dunley's recent production. Motivated by a search for luminosity in the use of oil itself, he proceeds through layers of paint, left to cover or scraped, unfolding a material narrative for his paintings. Dunley's works on paper are produced with chalk and charcoal, proposing a more succinct formal and chromatic repertoire. Many of the works on paper included in the exhibition engage with the idea of the cloud, with the artist repeatedly drawing its shape, not as a means of achieving compositional rigor but instead as a way of letting himself be guided by the investigative possibilities of draftmaking as a structural foundation for his paintings.

*The night, 2022*  
oil paint on canvas  
225 x 280,5 x 4 cm  
88.6 x 110.4 x 1.6 in





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exhibition view  
*Clouds*, 2023  
Nara Roesler New York, USA  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler



*Clouds* have always been limit-figures against the backdrop of geometry and perspective, fragments of reality that challenge measurement and graphic control, and, as in Dunley's recent work, potentially, symbolic forms for abstraction, conveying lightness and ludic oneirism.

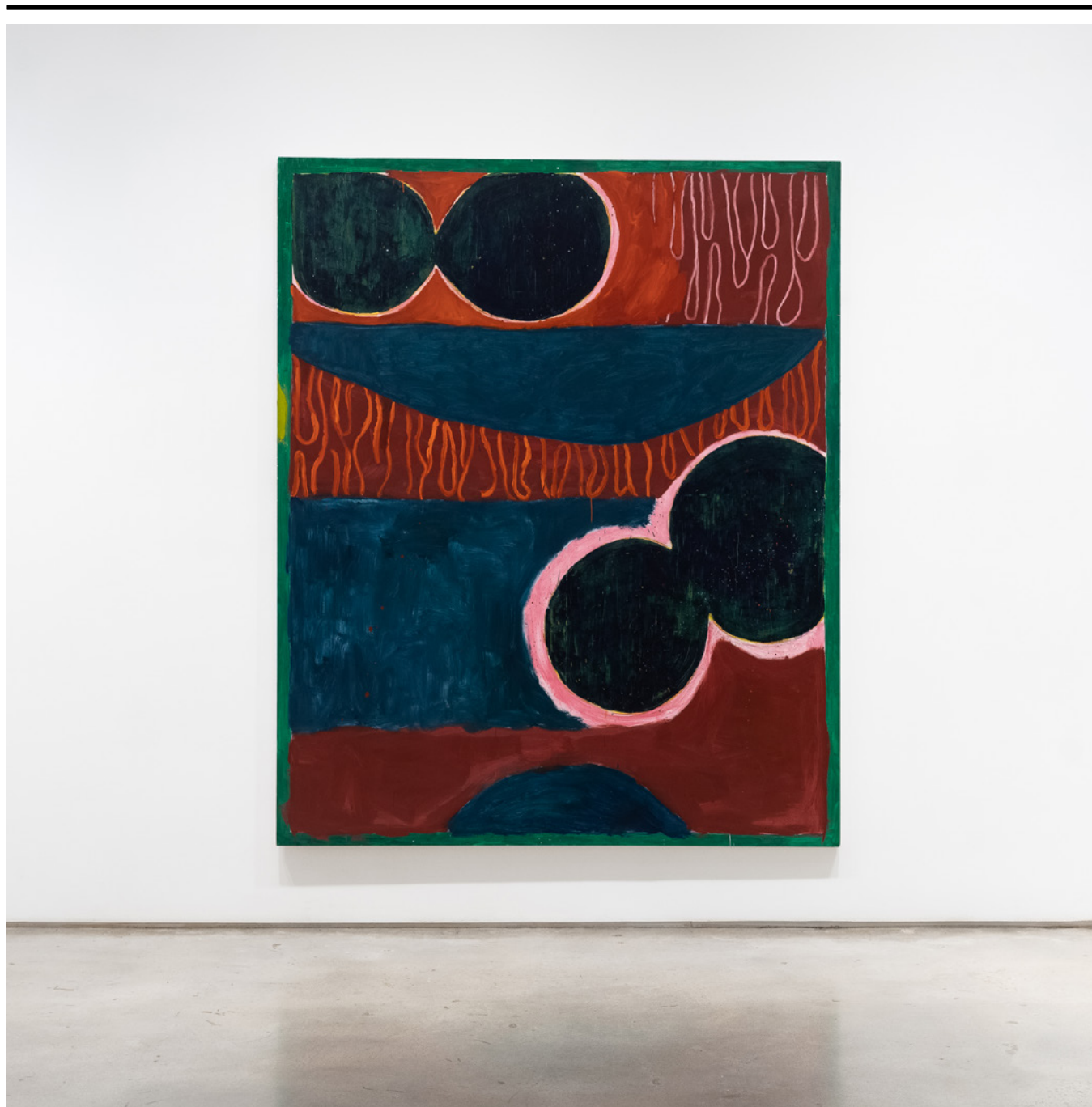
*The cloud*, 2022  
oil paint on canvas  
200 x 250,5 x 4 cm  
78.7 x 98.6 x 1.6 in

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*Gasconha*, 2022  
oil paint on canvas  
220 x 180,5 x 4 cm  
86.6 x 71.1 x 1.6 in

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→  
*Liébana*, 2022  
oil paint on canvas  
221 x 180 x 4 cm  
87 x 70.9 x 1.6 in





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## virá 2020

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil

*Virá* showcased a selection of recent drawings and paintings inspired by the idea of displacement, conflict, and expansion. In the words of curator Luis Pérez-Oramas, who notably wrote an essay for the presentation, Bruno Dunley's 'oeuvre contains a fascinating repertoire of diagrams, wisely filtered through the thickness of pictorial imagery, sometimes as if the matter, which in painting makes the image, suspended in a limbo—in other words: un / worked (des/obrada)—everything that the image's schematic backbone can achieve in painting. Thus, in the fortune of newfound neutrality—in fact a state of imminence—schema and painting are presented with the extraordinary drama of their own poetic, generating tensions.'

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*Virá*, 2020

oil paint on canvas

226 x 281 cm | 89 x 110.6 in

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exhibition view

*Virá*, 2020

Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil

courtesy of the artist

and Nara Roesler





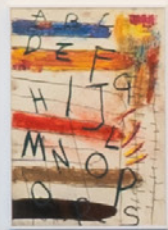
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*Agenda*, 2017  
pencils, graphite  
and charcoal on paper  
29,7 x 21 cm | 11.7 x 8.3 in

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→  
exhibition view  
*Virá*, 2020  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler







On the occasion of this exhibition, the artist and Nara Roesler also launched an accompanying website with images of the works, along with new critical material about the artist's oeuvre. The platform includes an introduction by Luis Pérez-Oramas and the transcription of two conversations between Dunley and José Augusto Ribeiro, curator at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, and with artist Alexandre Wagner. Dunley also created a playlist in collaboration with DJ Bia Sankofa, in an effort to convey and share a sense of his process of creation through music.

[watch a video on the exhibition](#)

[access Virá's website](#)

[access Virá's playlist](#)

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*Fuzileiro*, 2019  
oil paint on canvas  
200 x 250 cm | 78.7 x 98.4 in



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**no meio** 2018

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil

Bruno Dunley's solo exhibition at Nara Roesler in Sao Paulo, showcased many of the artist's most recurrent investigations. The question of the mirror, was perhaps the most prominent matter throughout the show. The presentation included a group of works composed of a large, irregularly shaped oval in the middle of the canvas, which the artist has explored as a reflection on the making of the pictorial. In curator Tadeu Chiarelli's words, 'The mirror, be it as a physical or a metaphorically-charged object, has been tapped into by some Brazilian artists to negate the notion of painting as idealized reflection of the world, as the ideal duplicate of reality.' Bruno Dunley's mirrors do not reflect what is in front of them, but rather, work as a reflection into the very painting they are part of. The large, monochromatic areas of the canvas occasionally contain words, shapes or symbols, creating an idea of coexistence between minimalism and expressionism embedded within a distinctive vibrant palette.

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*Espeelho IV*, 2017  
oil paint on canvas  
40 x 30 cm | 15.7 x 11.8 in





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*Espelho VI*, 2018  
oil and aluminum paste on canvas  
200 x 150 cm | 78.7 x 59.1 in





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←  
exhibition view  
*no meio*, 2018  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler

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*The Mirror*, 2016  
oil paint on canvas  
183 x 140 cm | 72 x 55.1 in



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## dilúvio 2018

solo exhibition

Sim Galeria, Curitiba, Brazil



This exhibition particularly focused on the artist's series *Bestiário*, which presents an engagement with humanoid figures, characterized by monster like features that simultaneously instill a sense of eroticism and stupefaction. In this series, Dunley also explores his technique turning to more childish or naive delineations. With this, the very making of the pieces evoke a certain sense of bestiality with rather coarse forms, histrionic colors, violent compositions and an unequal use of paint on the canvas. Curator Paulo Miyada notes that 'It is important to remember that a contemporary catalogue of monsters and beasts could begin before we even appeal to the fantastic imagination of our artists. It would be enough opening the newspapers, choosing some faces among the many grotesque public figures who speak on our behalf and if it is necessary increasing the nausea, juxtaposing them with the many comments left by spiteful users on news websites.'

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*Diluvio III*, from the series *Bestiário*,  
2018  
oil and aluminum paste on canvas  
240 x 320 cm | 94.5 x 126 in



That is, the current ethical obscenity makes satire an accessible and effective tool. However, for Bruno Dunley it is important to deviate from satire and look for something that, as an abject object, disorients and hinders any immediate recognition for avoiding identification.' Though the works resiliently defy an easy identification of its figuration, guiding the viewer towards a reflection on the painting's materiality, Dunley's work does not abandon its anchor in the world.

*Grande Pacto*, from the series  
*Bestiário*, 2017  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 130 cm | 63 x 51.2 in





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exhibition view  
*Dilúvio*, from the  
series *Bestiário*, 2018  
oil and aluminum paste on canvas  
250 x 200 cm | 98.4 x 78.7 in

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→  
*Grande Pacto*, from the series  
*Bestiário*, 2017  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 130 cm | 63 x 51.2 in









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←  
*Dilúvio II*, 2018  
oil and aluminum paste on canvas  
200 x 250 cm | 78.7 x 98.4 in

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*Formiga II*, 2018  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 120 cm | 63 x 47.2 in

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→  
*A negociação*, from the  
series *Bestiário*, 2017  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 130 cm | 63 x 51.2 in



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## the mirror 2018

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil

The works exhibited on the occasion of Bruno Dunley's first show in New York, were produced during his stay at the residency *Further on Air*, in East Hampton in 2016. The East End region has played an important role in North American Art history, having inspired iconic figures of the twentieth century including Pollock, Kline and de Kooning. The paintings are titled in reference to the exuberance of the region's landscape: with names such as *The Lake*, *The landscape*, and *The rains and the sea*; to the region's day-to-day: *The Bankers Handbook* and *The Lady*; and to mythologies abundantly represented in Western art: *Danae*, *Sisyphus* and *Daphne*.



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Édipo, 2017

oil paint on canvas

26 x 20 cm | 10.2 x 7.9 in





The paintings from this series are characterized by vibrant colors and vigorous brush strokes, while one of the pieces (*Untitled*, 2017) presents a new process of making in the artist's practice as he comes to place and glue coins unto his canvas. Painter Leda Catunda notably addresses Dunley's rich procedural and visual repertoire, acclaiming his dedication to researching the pictorial field, 'created with blunt and direct gestures, through the uninhibited use of strong hues, [the paintings] deny any involvement with traditional artistic themes and procedures, reflecting the artist's legitimate yearning for discovering new possibilities of displacement in the field of creation.'

*In the middle*, 2016  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 120 cm | 63 x 47.2 in




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*Sísifo IV*, 2016  
oil on canvas on wood  
4 parts of 26 x 21 cm | 10.2 x 8.3 in  
(each)

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→  
exhibition view  
*The Mirror*, 2018  
Nara Roesler New York, USA  
Photo © Will Wang  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler





*The Rain and the Sea*, 2016  
oil paint on canvas  
2 parts of 26 x 21 cm  
10,2 x 8,3 in

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**ruído** 2015

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

*Ruído* brought together a group of works that resulted from a consolidation of Dunley's pictorial research, which he had undertaken and continuously developed since 2013. The canvas inherently reveals the procedural nature of the work as one is able to detect traces of a process of deletion and reconstruction of compositions, entwined with chromatic narratives built with violent gestures that evoke the tradition of expressionist painting. As suggested by curator Felipe Scovino, connections with the history of painting are very frequent in these works —one denotes the grid, the glaze, the light-and-shadow play, the trompe l'oeil, the sfumato. The superimposition of layers and textures helps reveal these meshes, while endowing the pieces with an air of mystery, or of melancholy.

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*Drive in*, 2015  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 120 cm | 63 x 47.2 in







exhibition view

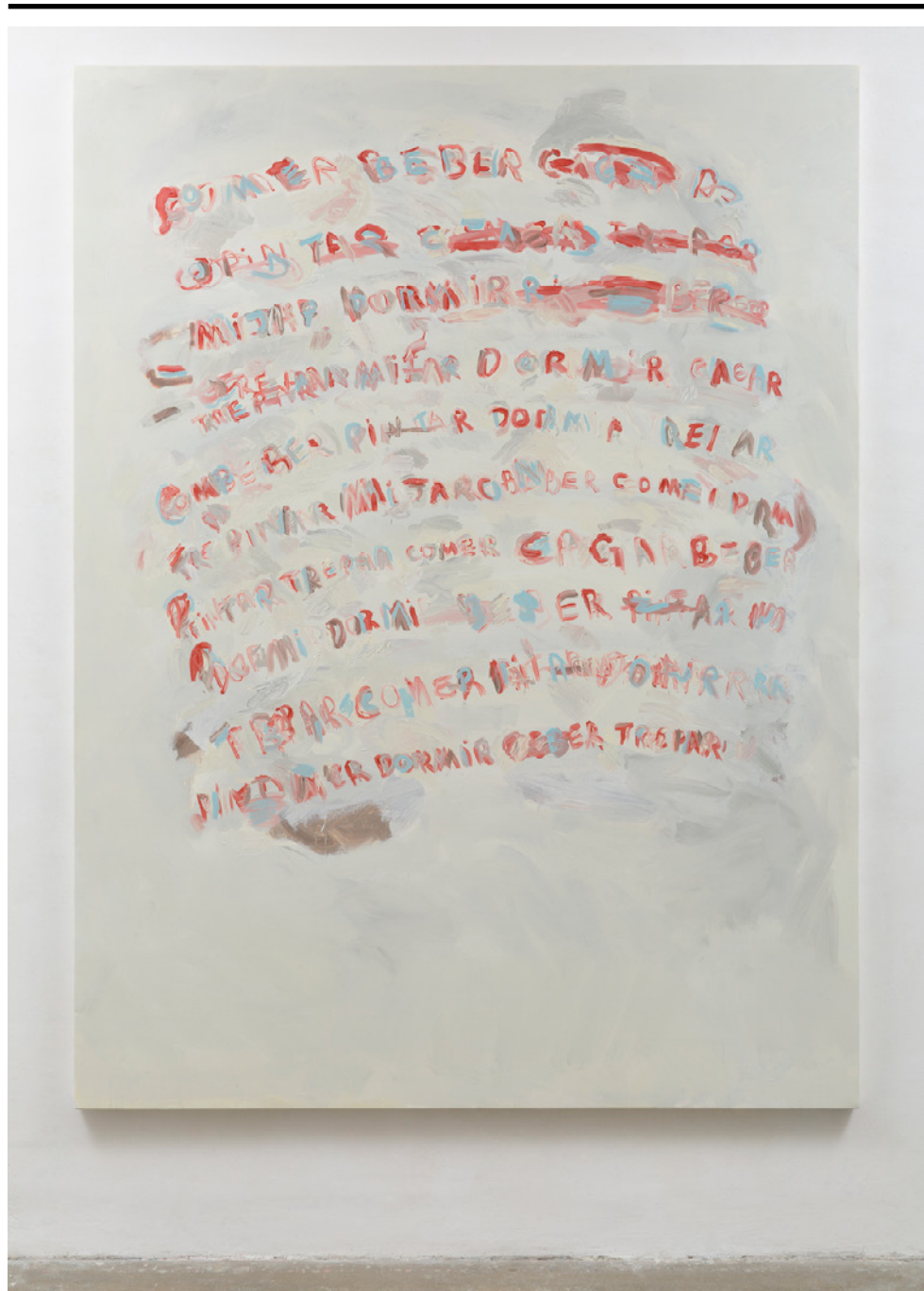
*Ruído*, 2015

Nara Roesler Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

photo © Pat Kilgore

courtesy of the artist

and Nara Roesler



*Eat, drink, shit, paint, piss,  
fuck, sleep, 2015*  
acrylic paint on canvas  
200 x 150 cm | 78.7 x 59.1 in



*Danaë I*, 2015  
oil paint on canvas  
160 x 120 cm | 63 x 47.2 in

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## drawings

In the eighteenth century, the French Academy underwent an intellectual dispute between painters who favored drawing and form in their work, and those who prioritized color. To this day, remnants of these quarrels persist in the field of contemporary art, with oppositions between rationalism (or conceptualism) versus expressivity (or subjectivity), precision versus the formless, or even form versus matter. Bruno Dunley's drawings offer an encounter. As is the case in his paintings, his compositions demonstrate an intertwinement between form and color, a sense of interdependence rather than a hierarchy. Though form guides certain aspects of his compositions, the process is counterbalanced by his choice of materials (charcoal, pastels and oil), which demonstrate a preoccupation with the freedom of gesture and its progressive construction through layers. Drawing has traditionally been understood as a means of visual thought, and in line with Dunley's practice, his drawings have come to serve as pictorial reflections that share his paintings' unpredictable and potent nature.

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*Untitled*, 2016  
pastel color pencil on paper  
29,7 x 21 cm | 11.7 x 8.3 in






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*Sisifo VI*, 2016  
 marker pen, dry pastel and linseed  
 oil on paper  
 4 parts of 66,5 x 48 cm |  
 26,2 x 18,9 in (each)

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→  
 exhibition view  
*Projeto Piauí*, 2016  
 Pivô, São Paulo, Brazil  
 courtesy of the artist  
 and Nara Roesler





*Lambisque*, 2017  
charcoal and dry pastel on paper  
29,7 x 21 cm | 11.7 x 8.3 in



*Untitled*, from the  
series *Piauí*, 2015  
pigment and linseed oil on paper  
107 x 79 cm | 42.1 x 31.1 in



*Untitled*, from the  
series *Piauí I*, 2016 carbon, copper,  
iron oxide and linseed on paper  
107 x 79 cm | 42.1 x 31.1 in



*Untitled*, from the  
series *Piauí III*, 2016  
carbon, copper, iron oxide and  
linseed on paper  
107 x 79 cm | 42.1 x 31.1 in

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## no lugar em que já estamos 2014

solo exhibition

Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil

On the occasion of his first solo exhibition at Nara Roesler in São Paulo, Bruno Dunley produced paintings that engaged with contradictions between reality and appearance in terms of the works' temporality. Though the gestural quality of the paintings evoke a sense of rapidity, the pieces are in fact constructed through numerous layers of work —painted and covered—; they are the result of a long process of compositional rationalization rather than that of immediate emotional gestures. The artist also returned to using vivid colors guided by his elaborate study of color palettes and creation of color notebooks, which served as his reference. Notably, *Chroma key*, is made up of a long process of layering of several different colors—as the exhibition curator, author and art critic João Bandeira noted, 'The irony of the title also stems from the fact that his monochrome, unlike said technique, exposes imperfections which are layers of other operations and colors underneath the radiant green. Thus, it gains increased presence and weight, which underpin it as a painting from the inside.'

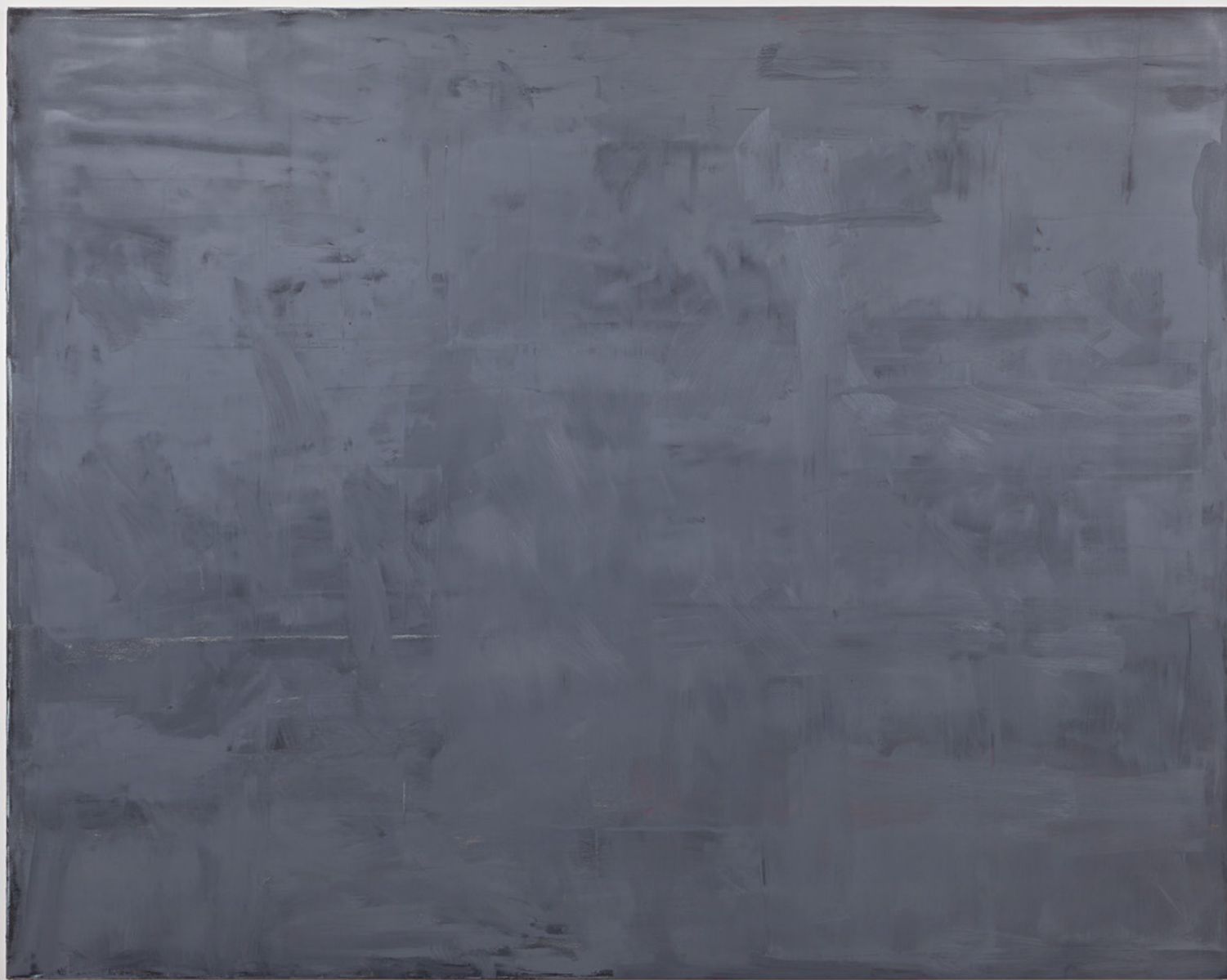
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*Vitrine*, 2013

oil paint on canvas

250 x 200 cm | 98.4 x 78.7 in







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←

*The place we already are*, 2014  
oil paint on canvas  
200 x 251,4 cm | 78.7 x 99 in

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*Untitled*, 2014  
pigment and linseed oil on paper  
200 x 150 cm | 78.7 x 59.1 in

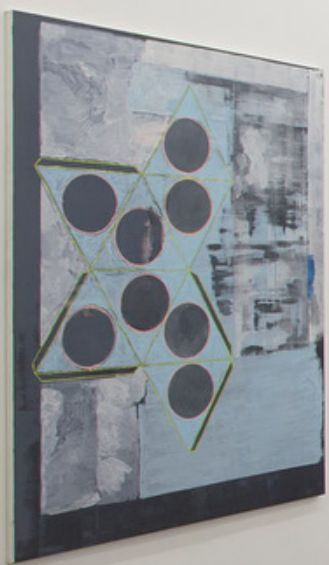
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*Portrait*, 2013  
oil paint on canvas  
200 x 150 cm | 78.7 x 59.1 in

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→  
exhibition view  
*No lugar em que já estamos*, 2014  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler

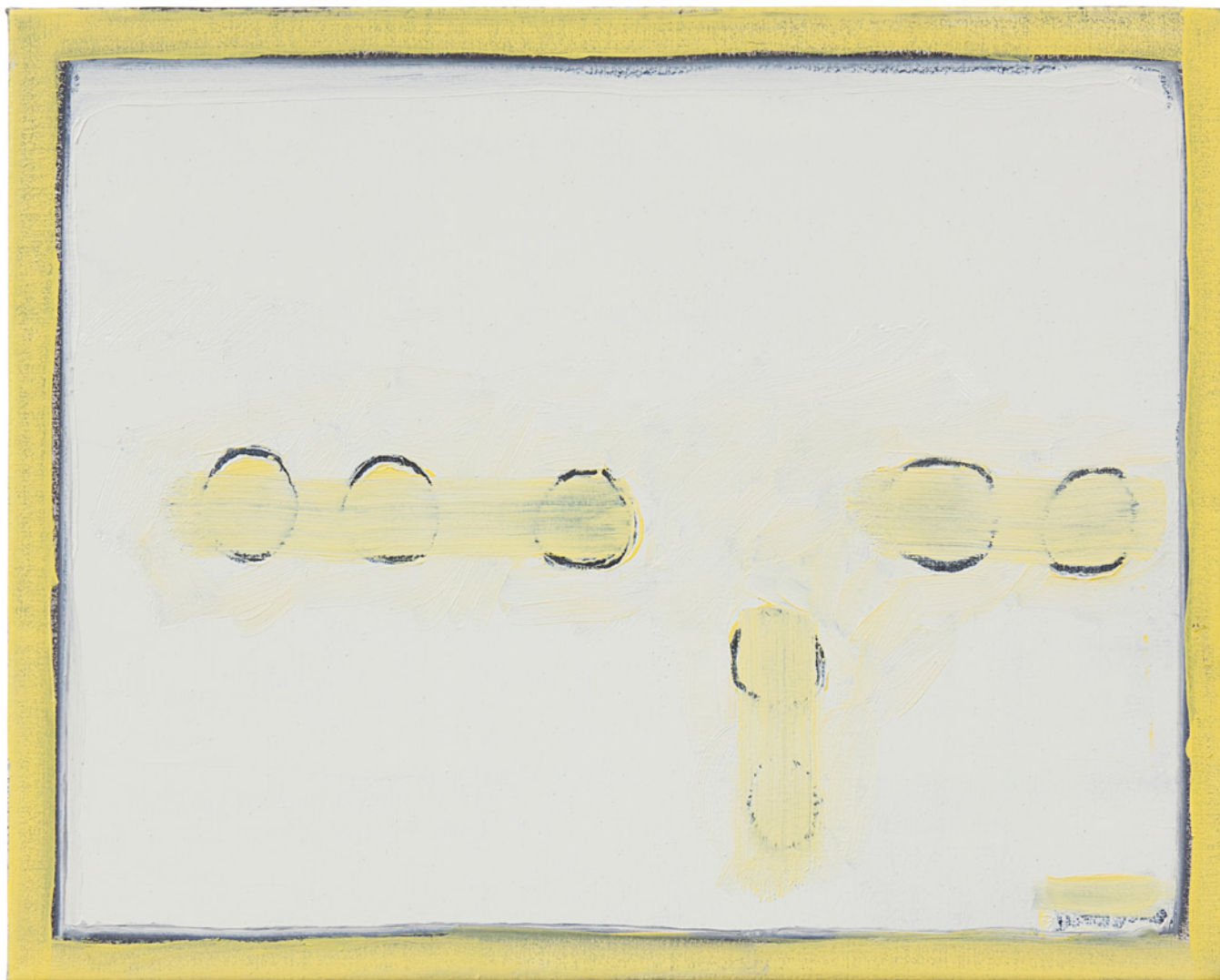






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exhibition view  
*No lugar em que já estamos*, 2014  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil  
courtesy of the artist  
and Nara Roesler



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e 2013

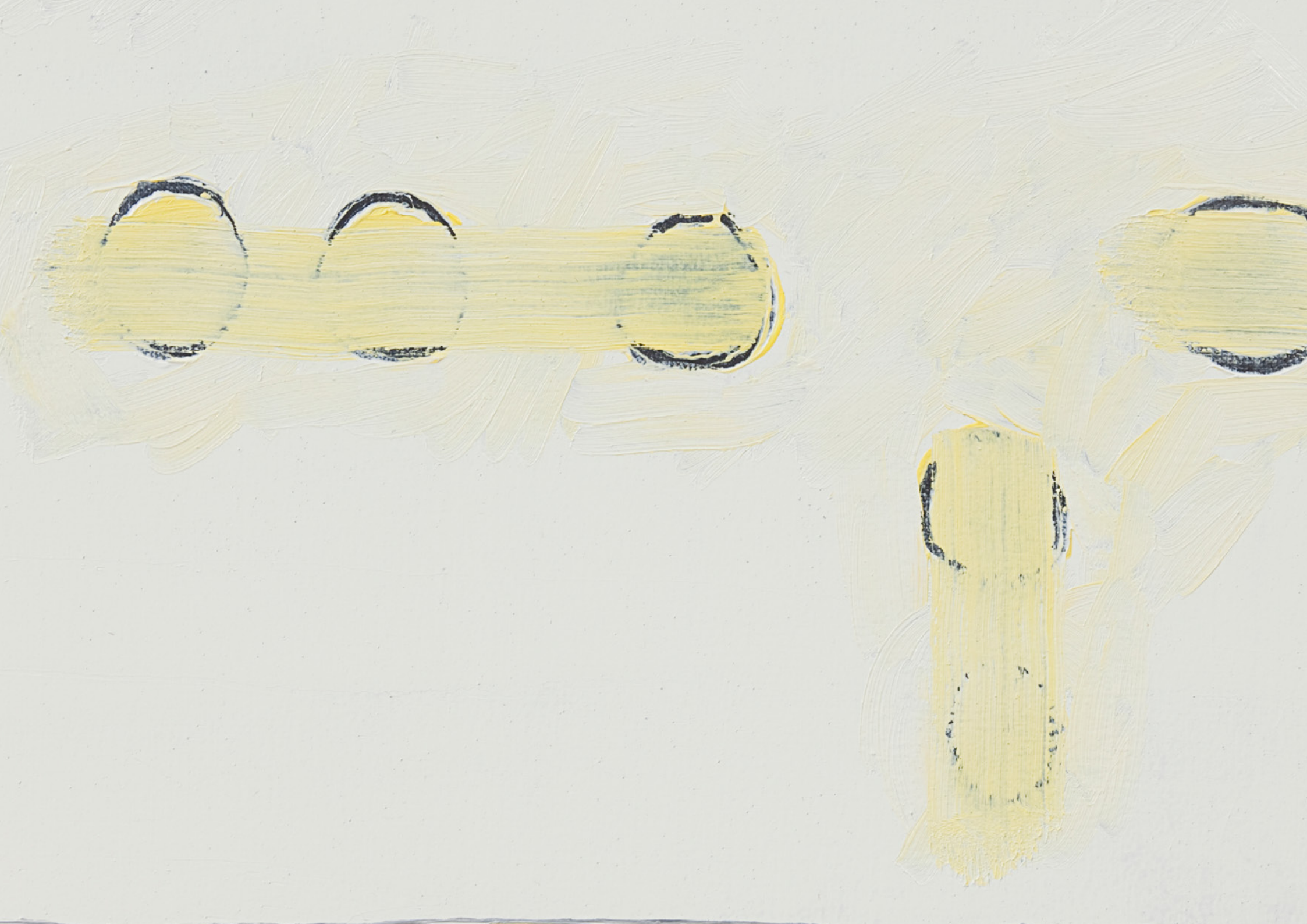
solo exhibition

Centro Universitário Maria Antonia (CEUMA),  
São Paulo, Brazil

According to artist Ana Prata, who was also a member of the collective 2000e8, Bruno Dunley's work 'employs schemes, structures, codes: efforts to organize the world, and re-signifies them in his paintings. They are images that evoke the visible and dividable world.' At this point in time, schematics, grids and diagrams took on a determining role in the artist's practice, emerging as commentaries on painting, through the creation of rectangles that delineate a canvas within a canvas, as well as other organizing codes present throughout the world. Dunley also began to engage with the matter of size, turning to life-size representations and scales. With this, the artist established a new relationship with the painter's own body and that of the audience, creating pieces that seemingly engulf and integrate our own space.

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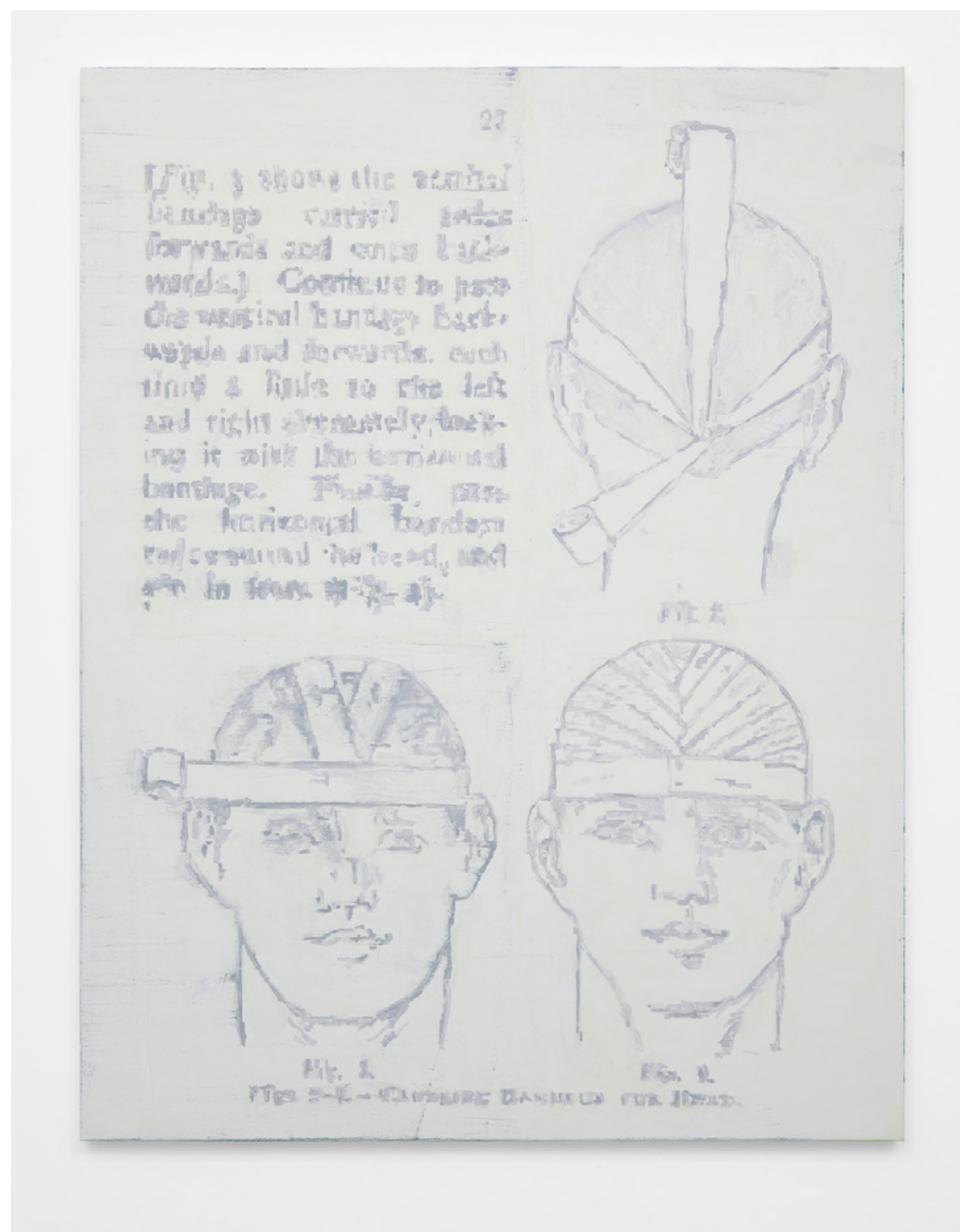
*Braille III*, 2013  
oil paint on canvas  
24 x 30 cm | 78.7 x 59.1 in



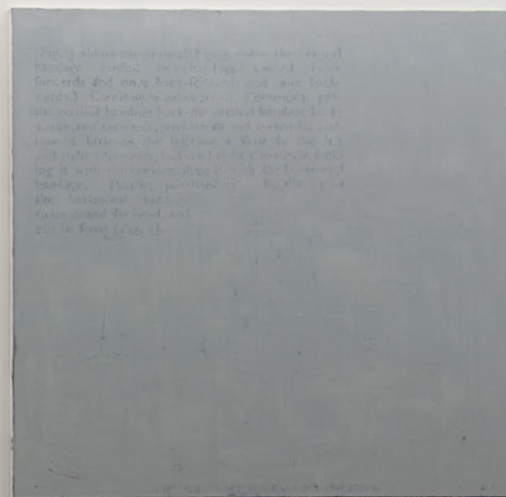
Machine, 2012  
oil paint on canvas  
130 x 100 cm | 51.2 x 39.4 in

→  
exhibition view  
e, 2013  
Centro Universitário Maria Antonia,  
São Paulo, Brazil

→→  
exhibition view  
e, 2013  
Centro Universitário Maria Antonia,  
São Paulo, Brazil







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**bruno dunley** 2012

solo exhibition

11 Bis Project Space, Paris, France

Between 2010 and 2013, Bruno Dunley's work is characterized by a predominant use of white, black and grayscale, inserting a taciturn aspect to his paintings. Part of this body of work was exhibited on the occasion of the artist's first solo exhibition in Paris. The figurative aspect of his work is kept uncertain and unclear, focusing the gaze onto the process of making the image rather than the image itself—thus, the artist creates a sense of silence, with blanks in his use of signification for the observer to fill in as they come close, entwining an ambiguity in the painting's figurative meaning.

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*Untitled (tribute to E. J. Marey), 2012*

oil paint on canvas

66 x 52 cm | 26 x 20.5 in

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exhibition view

*Bruno Dunley, 2012*

11 Bis Project Space, Paris France







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**os nomes** 2010

solo exhibition

Galeria Marília Razuk, São Paulo, Brazil

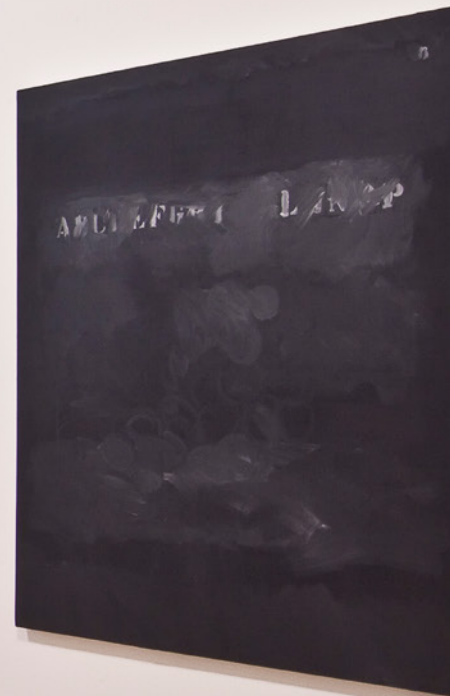
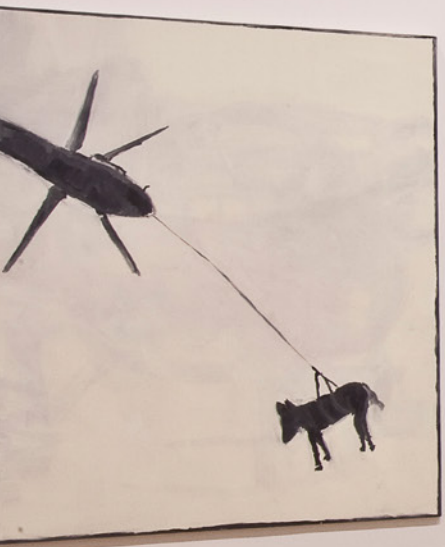
Around this time, Dunley abandons his fainter use of color and turns to a technique that foregrounds the process of adding matter to a canvas. The artist gives way to more space in his compositions, incorporating only fragments of images or surroundings, and thus creating a sense of intimacy through his focus on detail while engaging with ideas of partial visualizations. The series *Quer morar em todas as casas que vê e imagina* [Wants to live in every house he sees and imagine], produced in 2008, perfectly exemplifies the artist's new investigations. The body of work presents fragments of interior sceneries and is characterized by a vivid line that delineates the top of the painting. With this, Dunley notably explored the idea of perception; in his own words, 'One of the conditions of art, of painting, today, is that a big part of it is constructed with the perception of the viewer, in the eyes of those who are seeing.'

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*Roller coaster VII*, 2010

oil paint on canvas

180 x 151 cm | 70.9 x 59.4 in





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There is no right way to make a painting; the perception of a work builds the work, as if perception gave it a sense of meaning, or finalized it, as if the work were always incomplete without perception.' Dunley continued elaborating on the matter, eventually producing the body of work shown on the occasion of his first solo show at Galeria Marzuk, titled *os nomes* in 2010.

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←  
exhibition view  
*Os nomes*, 2010  
Galeria Marilia Razuk,  
São Paulo, Brazil

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exhibition view  
*Os nomes*, 2010  
Galeria Marilia Razuk,  
São Paulo, Brazil

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**bruno dunley** 2007

solo exhibition

Ateliê 397, São Paulo, Brazil

This exhibition was Bruno Dunley's first solo show—it took place while he was still a visual arts student at the University of Santa Marcelina and presented a selection of works which already showed distinctive elements of his practice that would later define him as a one of the leading painters of his generation. His first experimentations with the pictorial field originated from an interest in memory. His paintings were characterized by large chromatic surfaces with shapes that evoked imperfect geometric designs, inspired both by observed objects as well as by the work of other artists including Giorgio Morandi, Paulo Pasta and Sérgio Sister. In 2007, Dunley's work already focused on materiality - the artist explored the potential of oil as a body, spreading it across the surface of the canvas so as to create opaque layers of color, as if leaning one against the other in space, rather than one on top of the other.



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*Untitled*, 2006

oil paint on canvas

40 x 50 cm | 15.7 x 19.7 in



*Untitled*, 2006  
oil paint on canvas  
40 x 50 cm | 15.7 x 19.7 in



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*Untitled*, 2007  
oil paint on canvas  
30 x 40 cm | 11.8 x 15.7 in

nara roesler

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