

nara roesler

fábio miguez



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## fabio miguez

b. 1962, São Paulo, Brazil, where he lives and works

Fabio Miguez began his artistic career in the 1980s when, alongside Carlito Carvalhosa, Nuno Ramos, Paulo Monteiro, and Rodrigo Andrade, he founded the artist's space Casa 7. Miguez initially worked with painting like the others group members. During the 1990s, he started to produce, parallel to his paintings, the series of photographs entitled *Derivas*, later published with the name *Paisagem Zero* in 2013. Those photos are closely related to the paintings as we can see in the tension between the indeterminacy of the process and the apparent construction of the final product and in the density of light and dark shades.

In the 2000s, Miguez started to develop three-dimensional works, such as the installations *Onde* (2006), *Valises* (2007), and *Ping-pong* (2008), which expanded his line of research and his medium of choice: painting. His degree in architecture brings to his work a constructivist influence that dialogues with concerns regarding scale, material, and figuration. The artist often deals with modular forms in relation to combinatory logic, employing repetitions and operations of inversion and mirroring. In his work, every painting is a fragment of the real in the way that each one reaffirms its material condition.

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### selected solo exhibitions

- *Alvenarias*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2022)
- *Fragmentos do real (atalhos)* – Fábio Miguez, Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz (IFF), Ribeirão Preto, Brazil (2018)
- *Horizonte, deserto, tecido, cimento*, Nara Roesler, Rio de Janeiro (2016); Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2015)
- *Paisagem zero*, Centro Universitário Maria Antonia (CeUMA), São Paulo, Brazil (2012)
- *Temas e variações*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2008)
- *Fábio Miguez*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2003)

### selected group exhibitions

- *Co/respondences: Brazil and abroad*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2023)
- *Alfredo Volpi & Fábio Miguez: Alvenarias*, Gladstone 64, New York, USA (2023)
- *Coleções no MuBE: Dulce e João Carlos de Figueiredo Ferraz – Construções e geometrias*, Museu de Ecologia e Escultura (MuBE), São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- *Oito décadas de abstração informal*, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
- *Casa 7, Pivô*, São Paulo, Brazil (2015)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, Brazil (2005)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> La Habana Biennial, Cuba (1986)
- 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (1985 and 1989)

### selected collections

- Centro Cultural São Paulo (CCSP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz (IFF), Ribeirão Preto, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 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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<b>4</b>	early works, 1980s and 1990s
<b>15</b>	paintings from the 2000
<b>23</b>	painting as an object and the object as painting
<b>32</b>	shortcuts
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## early works, 1980s and 1990s

Fábio Miguez's practice flourished in the 1980s, when the artist joined the group, Casa 7. The work of this group of painters was marked by the production of paintings with automotive ink on large sheets of Kraft paper, based on the exploration of motion. After the group's dissolution, each artist continued to autonomously develop their own language. Despite migrating to the oil on canvas technique, Miguez's works in the late 1980s and during the 1990s still retain the expressive characteristics of the time in which he shared a studio. However, little by little the works begin to move away from this first phase, which in turn, consolidated the visual characteristics for which their work is recognized.

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*Paisagem*, 1984  
oil on canvas  
130 x 110,5 cm  
51.2 x 43.5 in







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*Untitled*, 1985  
oil paint on canvas  
64,5 x 47 x 2,5 cm  
25.4 x 18.5 x 1 in











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*Untitled*, 1991  
oil and wax on canvas  
181 x 400 cm | 71.3 x 157.5 in





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One of the explorations during this time of consolidation revolved around the color white. “Since 1995, it has been involved in his paintings and would be, who knows, the basic visual aspect that would respond to the concerns that began to appear in his paintings that year. In his paintings in 1991, white was absent and Miguez was a colorist”, according to Alberto Tassinari. For the critic and curator, the “coloristic luminosity of that time was then transported to the white of paintings from 1995 onwards”. Tassinari, who wrote about this rich period of visual exploration, also states that “in 1995, motion dominated. In 1998, the vagueness of the contours dominated. In 2003, the composition of the forms is more noticeable than their distribution in the large paintings”.

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*Untitled*, 1996  
oil and wax on canvas  
20 x 25 cm | 7.9 x 9.8 in





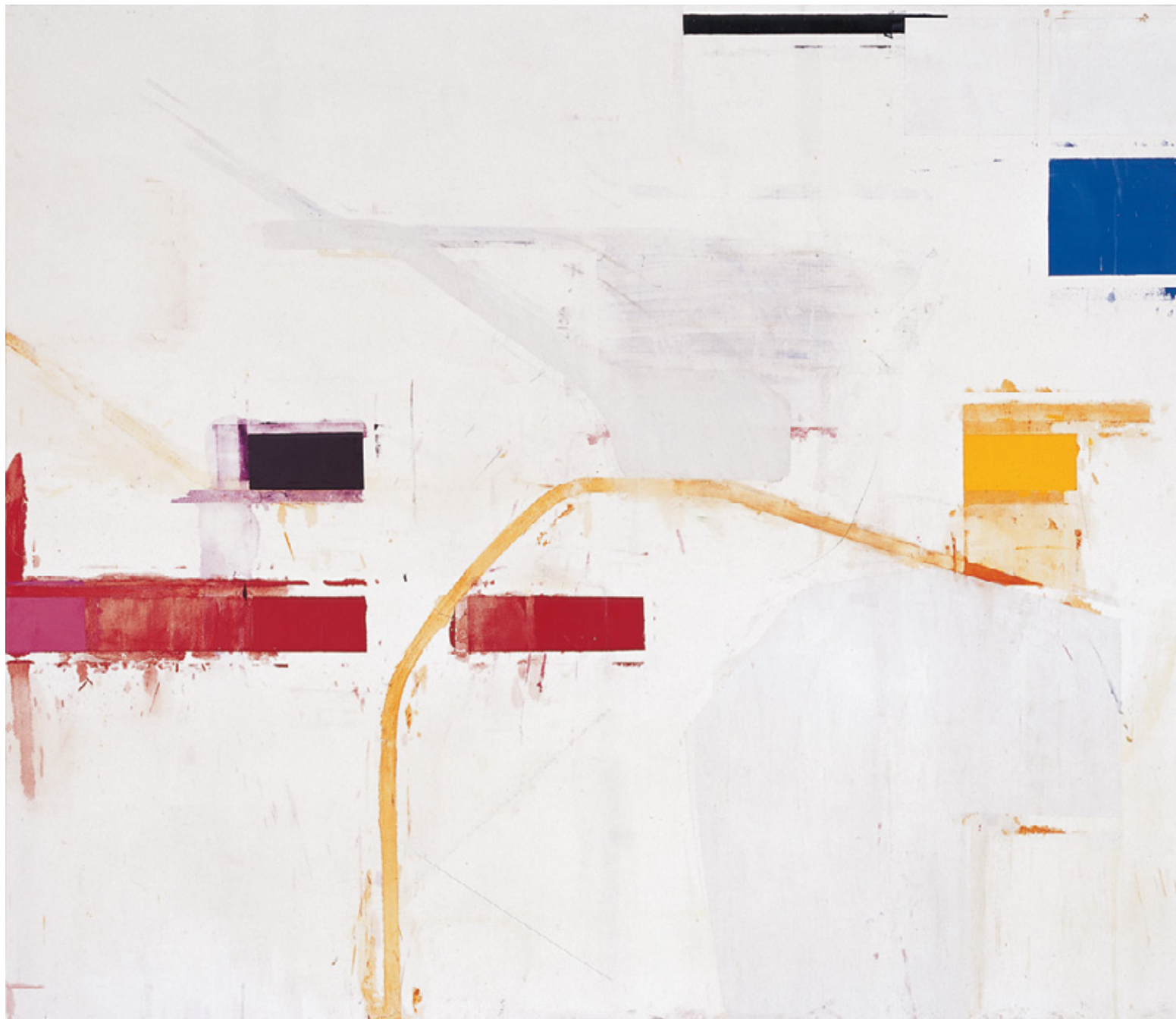
*Untitled*, 1996  
oil and wax on canvas  
50 x 50 cm | 19.7 x 19.7 in





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*Untitled*, 1998  
oil and wax on canvas  
170 x 175 cm | 67 x 69 in



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*Untitled*, 2002  
oil and wax on canvas  
200 x 230 cm | 78.7 x 90.5 in

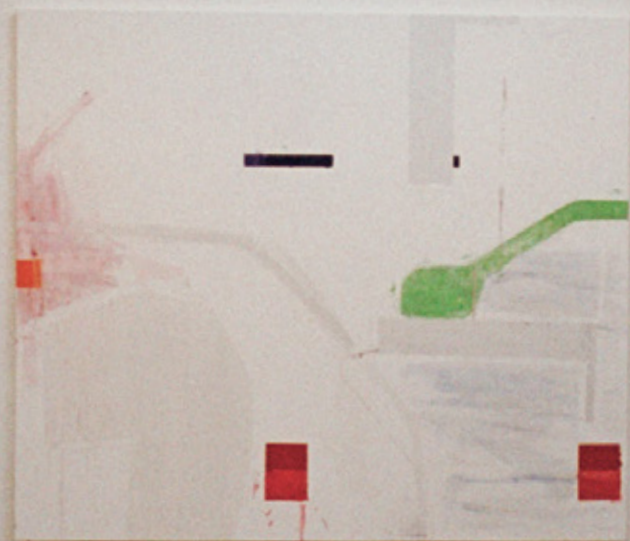
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→  
exhibition view  
Mariantonia, São Paulo, 2001

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→  
exhibition view  
Centro Cultural São Paulo  
São Paulo, 2002









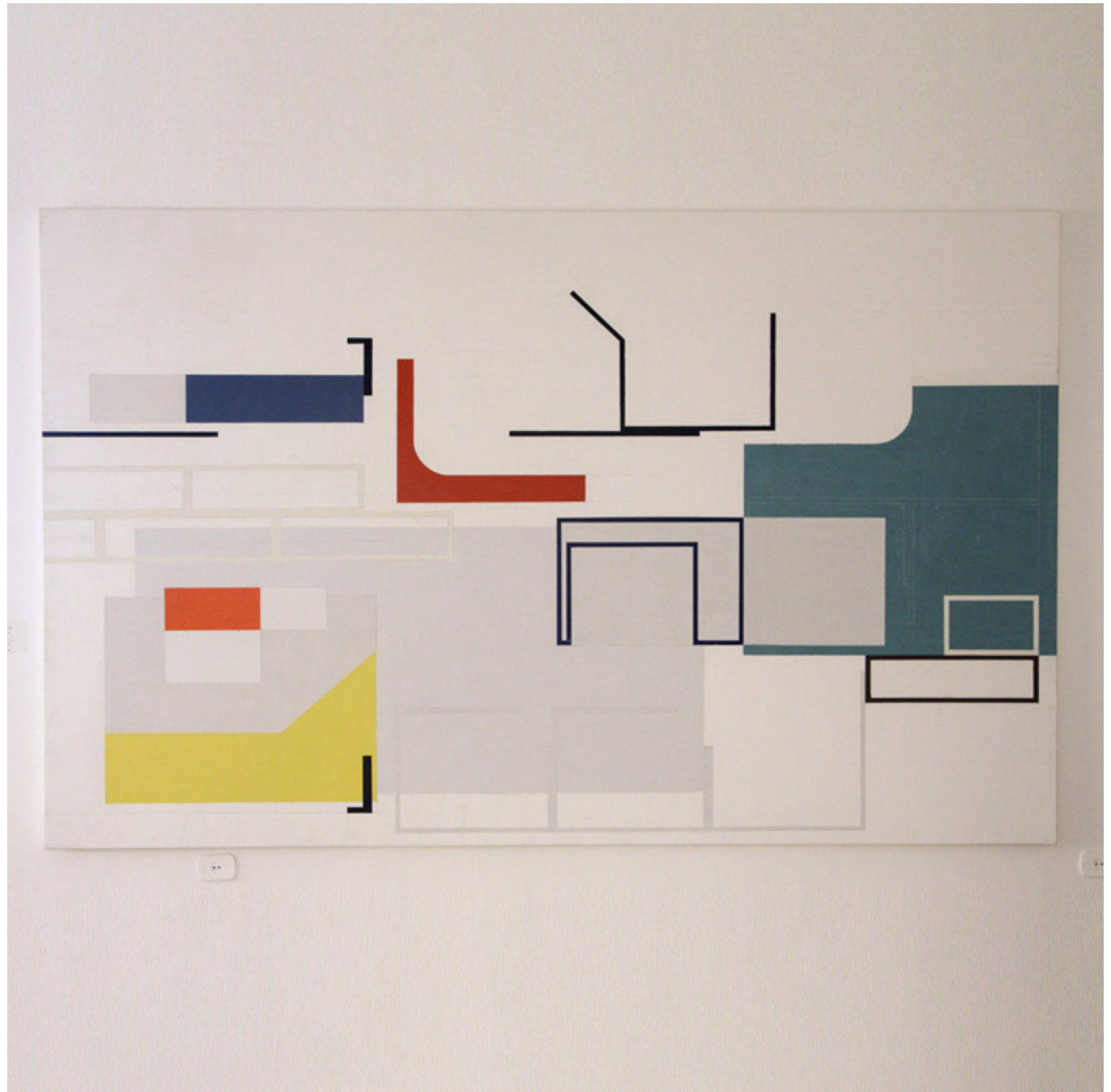
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## paintings from the 2000

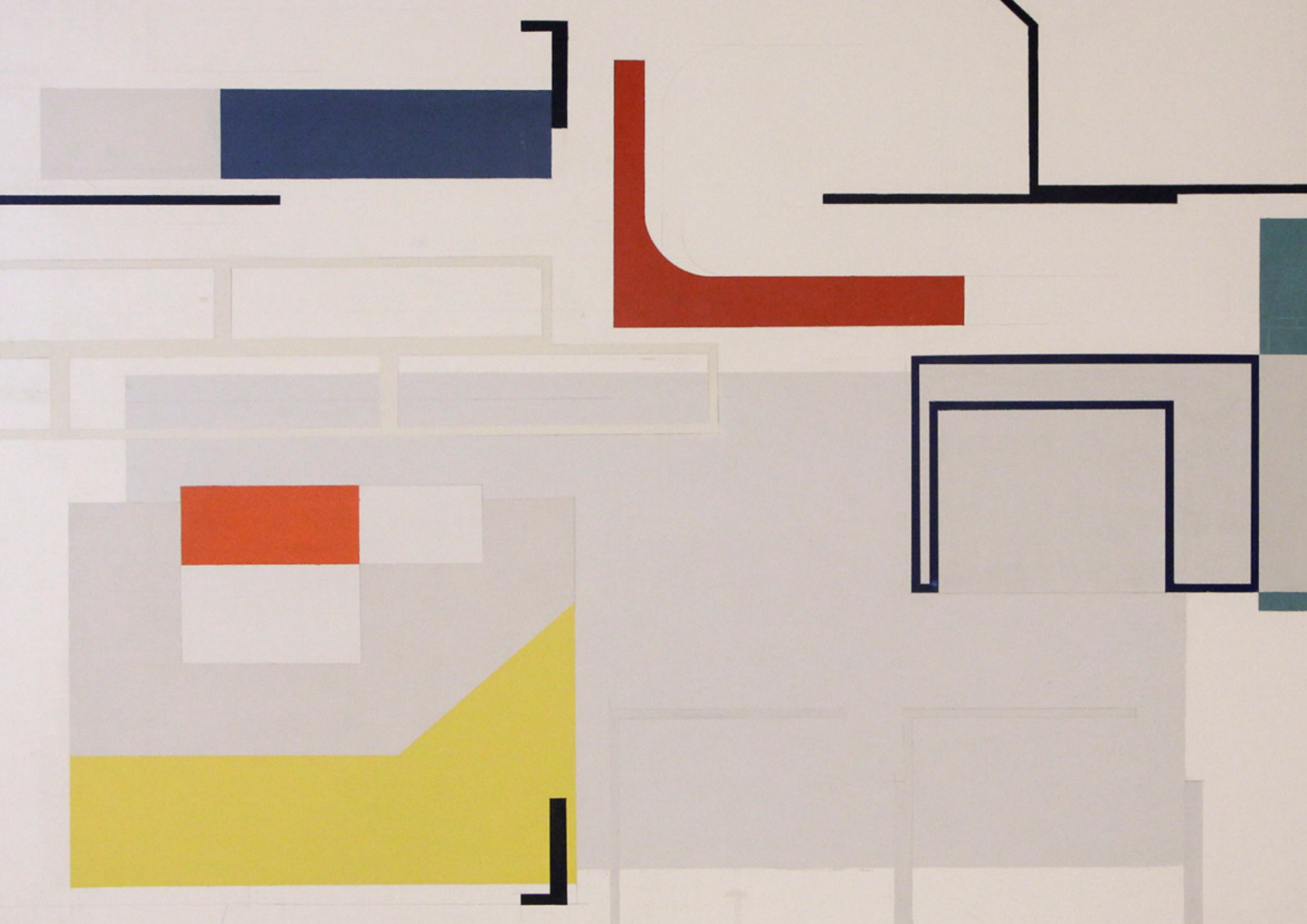
In the transition to the 2000s, we can see a turning point in his practice, now marked by borders and overlapping solid colors. These compositions have an accentuated character of spatial structuring that, many times, refer us to architectural projects and plans, or aerial views. At this time, his economical use of color appears in large-format works in which areas of white and gray are punctuated by zones of contrasting colors, such as greens, reds, blues and earth tones. According to Miguez, “when you work with gray, the colors are no longer fixed, everything becomes more nuanced, there is an equalization. The problem of light emerges, which becomes more present inside the painting.”

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*Untitled*, 2007  
oil and wax on canvas  
200 x 320 cm | 78.7 x 126 in











About his chromatic thinking, Miguez also comments that “color is very strong in my work, but it always works in a functional way. I don’t think much about color in isolation. I think the color has to have a reason to be there. But normally it always works with this quality of indicating space. The more recent works have this very strong feature of spatial signaling. And, I think that now, it even has a kind of autonomy, I look for a candor within the color. But it is always functional, always indicating something.”

*Untitled*, 2005  
oil and wax on canvas  
200 × 320 cm | 78.7 × 126 in

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Another element that Miguez also uses in his works is the written word. The artist uses excerpts from texts by João Cabral de Melo Neto, or Samuel Beckett, which help to create the allusive atmosphere of his images. As curator Tiago Mesquita noted: “many of these canvases are accompanied by subtitles: single words, which, when juxtaposed to the images, suggest symbolic connotations. No matter how abstract and simple the elements of the painting are, they describe something recognizable. It can be a place, an atmosphere, a fading memory. These are simple descriptions, like a list of nouns. The richness lies in the variety of relationships they can create.”



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*Sal*, 2014  
oil and wax on canvas  
190 × 240 cm | 74.8 × 94.5 in



*Horizonte partida*, 2015  
oil and wax on linen  
190 x 180 cm | 74.8 x 70.9 in

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*Partida*, 2015  
oil and wax on linen  
100 x 80 cm | 39.4 x 31.5 in

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→  
exhibition view  
*Horizonte deserto tecido cimento*  
Nara Roesler  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2015

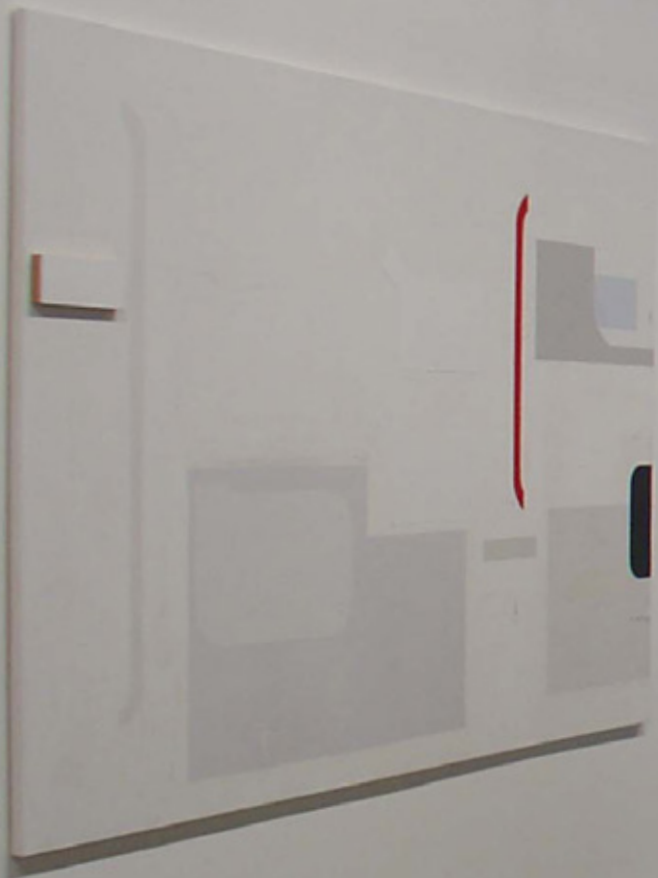
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→→  
exhibition view  
5ª Bienal do Mercosul  
Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2005











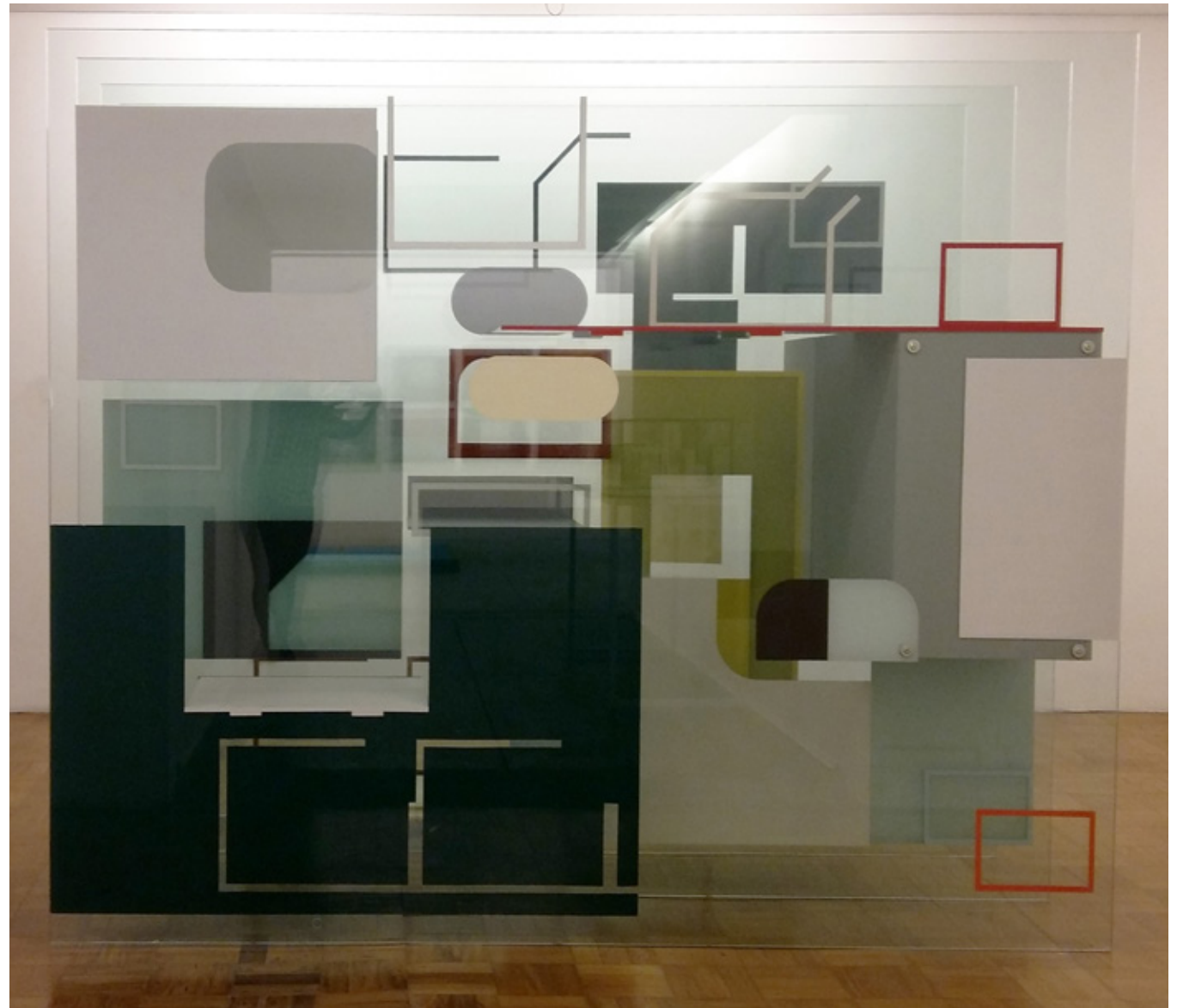
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## painting as an object and the object as painting

The year 2002 marks the expansion of Fábio Miguez's pictorial thinking into three dimensional territory. On display at the 10.20 x 3.60 gallery in São Paulo, he shows one of his first works made on glass. Large translucent panes were covered with colored shapes and arranged in the space.

According to the curator Rodrigo Moura: "The spectator could walk through the exhibition as if walking through a painting and the white of the paintings had become the space itself. This gesture had some implications for the following works. On one hand, the empty space of the paintings became denser, with the colored masses standing out more clearly and, therefore, giving the composition a more diagrammatic character." One can see how Miguez's practice, even when it goes beyond the traditional support of the canvas, is still about painting.

In the works on glass sheets, we perceive the intricate structure of overlapping planes present in his paintings. However, in these cases, they are not in the plane of a single surface, but suspended at intervals.



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2x2, 2009  
oil on glass, wood  
220 x 260 x 120 cm  
86.6 x 102.4 x 47.2 in







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←  
exhibition view  
2x2  
Mariantonia  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2009

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*Compensado vermelho*, 2004  
oil and wax on wood  
180 x 160 x ø 28 cm  
70.9 x 63 x ø 11 in



Through the combination of these elements: glass, wood and pigment; as well as from the languages of painting and sculpture, another set of works emerges, summoning public action. In this case, Miguez seems to create a dialogue with the Brazilian Neoconcrete tradition, not only because of its formal vocabulary, but because it makes the observer a participant in the work. These works behave like suitcases, which, when opened and manipulated, become real constructions or “architectural complexes with vertical and horizontal planes that reflect and complement each other, and can be reconfigured”, as curator Rodrigo Moura explains.

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*Valise dominó*, 2013  
oil and wax on wood and glass,  
stainless steel  
16 x 40 x 33 cm  
6.3 x 15.4 x 13 in (closed)  
37 x 88 x 88 cm  
14.6 x 34.6 x 34.6 in  
(max dimension)

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→  
*Memória*, 2016  
oil and wax on wood and  
glass, stainless steel  
16 x 40 x 33 cm  
6.3 x 15.4 x 13 in (closed)  
37 x 88 x 88 cm  
14.6 x 34.6 x 34.6 in  
(max dimension)





Miguez, once again draws on his knowledge of art history, evoking Marcel Duchamp's suitcases (La Boîte-en suitcase, 1935-41), with transportable exhibitions of miniature reproductions of his work, packed in suitcases.

The titles attributed to this work—*Memória*, *Retábulo*, *Valise domino* and *Ping Pong*—point to a double dimension of Miguez's practice, based on the influence and maintenance of tradition, from citations and appropriations, as is the nature of the game, present through the use of seriality and transformation.

←  
*Onde (valise)*, 2007  
 oil and wax on wood  
 and glass, stainless steel  
 16 x 58 x 38 cm  
 6.3 x 22.8 x 15 in (closed)

*Engenheiro valise*, 2013  
 óleo e cera sobre madeira e vidro,  
 elementos em aço inox  
 16 x 40 x 33 cm  
 6.3 x 15.7 x 13 in (closed)  
 37 x 88 x 88 cm  
 14.6 x 34.6 x 34.6 in  
 (max dimension)







For the curator Agnaldo Farias: "These objects are an invitation to the eye to peer into their interior, perceiving the subtle changes operated by the bounce of light, reaping the result of the refractions caused by the tilting glass plates, the unexpected juxtapositions and associations between shapes. In front of these boxes, the space of the room, already tensioned by the presence of the paintings and drawings fixed on the walls, opens a crack, making the painting the place of a singular experience, in which the eye, slowed down, carefully dives."



*Retábulo*, 2017  
oil and wax on wood and  
glass, stainless steel  
74,2 x 390 x 17,2 cm  
108,1 x 54,3 x 12,6 in (closed)  
274,6 x 137,8 x 32,1 cm  
29,2 x 153,5 x 6,8 in (open)

→  
exhibition view  
*Atalhos*  
Nara Roesler  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016







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## shortcuts

The series *Atalhos [Shortcuts]* (2011–present), appears in contrast and complements the artist’s large-scale work. These paintings, many of them collected in a book with the same title as the series, published by APC (Association for Contemporary Patronage), the editorial arm of Galeria Nara Roesler, in 2018, are reduced in size.

According to curator Rodrigo Moura, who also wrote the critical text that accompanies this edition: “The small dimensions account for an almost daily practice of painting, free from the time commitments of the large-format paintings that the artist continues to produce. Here he isolates certain elements of his work, creating small units of language that are unique in each painting—to later be repeated in subseries of form and color variations. In these comics, there is also a certain amount of experimentation with the surface, almost as if they are demonstrations of the techniques honed over the years and employed in his work.”

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Sasseta, 2018  
oil paint and wax on linen  
35 x 27 cm | 13.8 x 10.6 in











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*Untitled*, 2019  
oil paint and wax on linen  
16 pieces of 24 x 30 cm  
16 pieces of 9.4 x 11.8 in



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*Untitled*, 2018  
oil and wax on canvas  
40 x 30 cm | 15.7 x 11.8 in





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*R.D.*, 2018  
oil and wax on canvas  
40 x 30 cm | 15.7 x 11.8 in



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*Untitled*, 2017  
oil and wax on canvas  
40 x 30 cm | 15.7 x 11.8 in





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*Abóbada #3*, 2019  
oil and wax on linen  
30 x 24 cm | 11.8 x 9.4 in

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→  
exhibition view  
*Atalhos*  
Nara Roesler  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2016

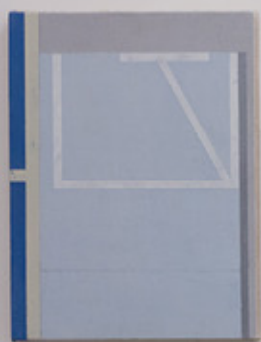














These investigations by Miguez make use of repetition, as he explores variations of the same composition, with differences in color and form, as well as the direction of the canvas, rotating between horizontal and vertical. When observing the world, using situations and images found in the architecture where they live, even in passing; as well as commentary on the history of art, by cutting out and representing fragments of paintings by masters such as Piero della Francesca, Alfredo Volpi and Henri Matisse. Even the Italian-Brazilian modernist master becomes the target of individual exploration. The *Volpi* series, which the artist has been making since 2018, even more decisively establishes the transit between images on a smaller canvas, leading to a close relationship with the viewer and the large-format paintings, that involve the body of those who are willing to look at them.

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*Untitled*, 2020  
oil paint and wax on linen  
30 x 30 x 2,5 cm  
11.8 x 11.8 x 1 in

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→  
*Untitled*, from *Volpi* series, 2020  
oil paint and wax on linen  
200 x 200 cm | 78.7 x 78.7 in





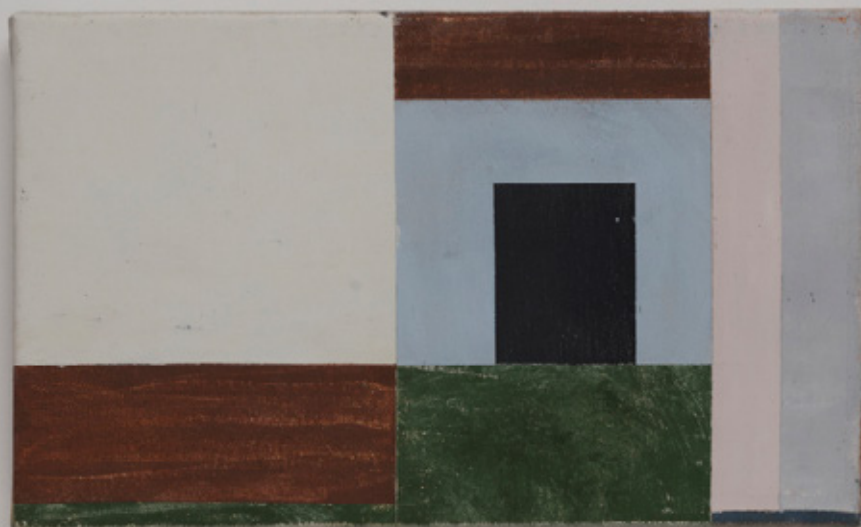


Sem título (Volpi) # 8, 2018  
tinta óleo e cera sobre linho  
31,5 x 30 cm





*Volpi 2*, 2019  
tinta óleo e cera sobre linho  
170 x 280 cm



*Sem título (Volpi) # 6, 2018*  
tinta óleo e cera sobre tela  
24,5 x 40 cm



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## paisagem zero

Fabio Miguez's experience with photography stems from a long and intimate relationship between himself and the landscape of the coast of São Paulo, especially Ubatuba, the city he lived in for part of his life. Started in the mid-1990s, this series of works has, at its core, images built from the bare minimum manipulation of an analog Rolleiflex camera. For this, the artist always uses the same lens and keeps the focus open.

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*Deriva II (serra)*, 1997–1999/2009  
photographic print on paper  
dimensions and print on request





This work is related to his research of painting and the possibilities of representing reality. So much so that what can be noticed are large masses of imprecise contours, always pointing to a partiality of the landscape, which becomes flat on the surface of the photographic print. It is in this work that the idea of “drift” is potently established in Miguez’s practice. The artist himself notes that the term is not only linked to the notion of wandering, of walking aimlessly, present in the very method of exploring the space on which the work is based, but which also includes the idea of dispersion. As Miguez himself explains: “One of the meanings of drift is the following: you have an instrument, a watch, for example. So, if your watch is delayed 5 minutes per month, that 5 minutes is the clock’s drift. I loved this idea. This idea of dispersion, this thing that appeared in this work, ended up in the painting and influenced me in an indirect way.”

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*Deriva II (serra)*, 1997-99/2009  
photographic print on paper  
dimensions and print on request



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In 2012, *Paisagem zero* appeared, a publication that brought together Miguez's photographic work up to that point. It has a text by the critic Lorenzo Mammi, who, in an essay, states: "Certainly, it can be said that Fabio Miguez's photographs are painter's photos. The density of blacks and grays, the presence of wide regions that we could call monochromatic, the predilection for atmospheric situations that blur the contours justifies this reading. But it remains, in my view, only symptomatic, without descending to the bottom of what constitutes the 'style' of these images."



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exhibition  
*Paisagem Zero*  
Centro Universitário Maria Antonia  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2012



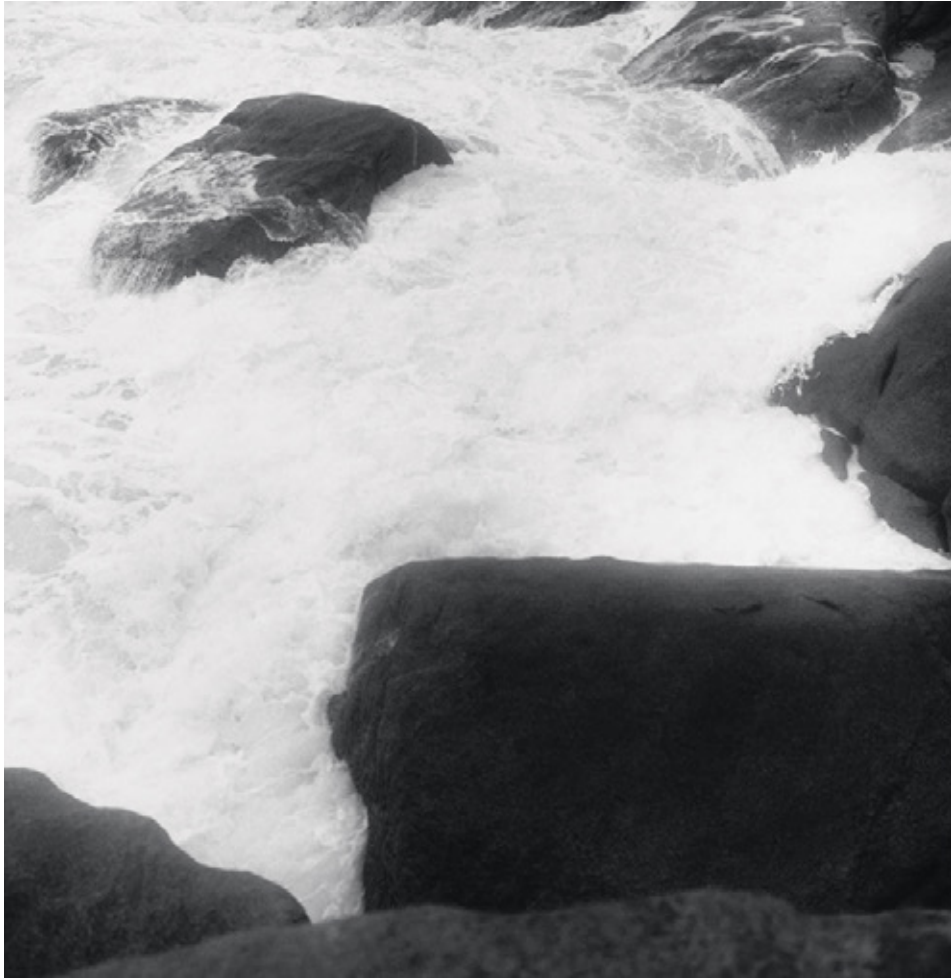
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Mammi is not the only critic to notice the relationship to painting within these images. The critic Tiago Mesquita points out that “in painting, Fábio Miguez was always enchanted by the ephemeral, the circumstantial. In the works from 1995 to 2001, the shapes tend to become white, fade and lose their distinctive marks. A progressive loss of sharpness is suggested in those images. In photographs, the artist revealed to us the enchantment of clouds that obstructed a landscape in the curve of a road or of the wave breaking on the stone”. Currently, Miguez continues to photograph and investigate the interconnections between this practice and painting.

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*Deriva II (serra)*, 1997-99/2009  
photographic print on paper  
dimensions and print on request





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*Deriva*, 1993–1994  
pairs of photos  
dimensions and print on request

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nara roesler

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