

Expanding painting: chromatic matter of an everyday life

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The idea of a splendourous but precarious Brazil is no stranger to Marcelo Jácome's work. Even if it is not manifest. The young artist's research is governed by abstraction and he is primarily interested in examining the notion of autonomy of colour and in exploring the relationship between painting and space. At the very core of his investigation, however, and in the choice of some of his materials, two universes converge: one of aesthetic investigations and the other of everyday experience. It is precisely at this junction that splendour and precariousness are inscribed.

Even when his works fell into the traditional category of painting, Jácome already used the reference of pictorial representations free of the limits of the picture frame, in particular, graffiti and the informal placement of flyposters in the urban space, with their overlapping and disregard for norms. Drawing on his examination of the place of painting, he reappraised this art form in its relationship with the pictorial surface, the exhibition and urban spaces, as well as with life itself. To a great extent, the consequent repositioning of Jácome's work has been steered by his experience of the city, of the streets and street corners, of the walls, of the slums, of the Rio de Janeiro sky and also of the colours that transform them. This contributed equally to the stance he took in relation to the very notion of expanded painting.

Painting seen as a practice beyond the paint and canvas surface revitalised artists' research, even before Rosalind Krauss opened the path to discuss art in the expanded field. But, in the last decade, this notion has been reanimated and applied to diverse media, from painting to collage, from photography to cinema. More than hybridism and breaking artistic categories, the expansion of the field of painting would first and foremost be the opening of this to other means of representation, that nevertheless bear the logic of painting and the questions that guide it as the departure point of their conception.

This artistic research includes works that even abandon the canvas as well as the painter's gesture and the paint, radicalizing the problematization between plane and three-dimensional and colour as matter. The criteria for what painting would constitute are expanded to include other media and techniques through which painting as an idea can present itself and be perceived as such. More specifically, it is this line of research that Jácome's work has been drawing parallels to. The colours are materialized by day-to-day objects that have the potential to change our experience of space, which in turn is defined by the world around us. Painting is, effectively, reestablished as an elementary part of everyday experience.

Although at times he dyes certain elements, Jácome tends to resort to objects belonging to the everyday life of the city as chromatic matter, the original form of which may or may not be altered in the composition of the work. Some of these objects, like ribbons, candles and kites, are also symbolic appropriations. In strict relation to the public space, they refer, respectively, to the religious practices of African or syncretic root and the

playful – or criminal – activities of the Rio de Janeiro favelas. Jácome is informed, not only by art history, but also by a quotidian with which he is not directly involved, but that is inseparable from experiencing the city where he was born.

Transposed to his works, these objects, which in themselves are banal and given to universality, lend themselves, some more than others, to diluting their figurative characteristic in favour of their simple and shallow forms. Transformed into abstractions, they forge superimpositions, impregnations and criss-crossings, in which planes address one another and, as a unit, sometimes favour three-dimensionality. Their forms, mainly geometric, serve an intuitive constructivism that, as the Neoconcretists intended, emphasizes subjectivity, freedom and creative expression. As if guided by chance, by the spontaneity contained in the very instant of the constructive act, Jácome is steered, gesture by gesture, by the conjunction and spatialization of colours. In his intention to “paint” the void, more than form, it is the colours as corporality and spatiality that Jácome’s work explores.

Contradictions are vital to the dynamic of art. From the typical dialectic of aesthetic investigations of traditional painting, emerge those projected by the expansion of the field, which in turn generate new contradictions in each particular artistic manifestation. In the specific case of Jácome’s works made of ribbons, candles and kites, the contradiction is borne precisely from these choices. And it is not restricted to the fact that the condition of figurative objects is maintained in their individuality, but suppressed by the entirety of the work. While, on the one hand, the works intend to prioritise reflection on colour, abstraction and painting as an idea, on the other, the symbolic origins of the appropriations – known through the discourse that extrapolates the work or recognised through a similar experience of the city – inevitably propose an articulation between abstraction and life and, potentially, gain meaning.

Furthermore, these ribbons, candles and kites are composed of modest, ordinary materialities, yet they are not tied to the primary colours, on the contrary, these are multiple, luminous and vibrant shades. And it is precisely in this parity – or in these colours in their physical and material dimensions – that splendour and precariousness surface. Their association to the symbolic origin of the appropriations, and hence, to the socio-cultural context that influenced the work, leverage such an idea. Whereas the fragility of the matter evoke the precarious nature of the social structure, the sensuality and tactility of the explosion of colours, as well as their at times monumental spatialization, conform to the idea of a festive Brazil, of ebullient cultural manifestations. Splendour and precariousness are not found in opposing fields and, that is exactly why, they enclose a tension in the social body and in the body of the work.