



MURIEL PARABONI
VISUAL ARTIST

The poetic strength of repetition: Muriel Paraboni's Work

By Vera Beatriz Siqueira*

In the text written by the artist for the first edition of his solo exhibition 'Land', Muriel Paraboni used as epigraph a phrase by Robert Smithson (1), an artist for whom land is, at the same time, the destination and matter of his works. Muriel chooses an excerpt from his writings that establishes a direct relationship between the most material (land, rock, stone, crystallizations, sand) and the most abstract (mind, thought, concept, reason). Thus, he warns us at the outset of one of the central problems of his work: the question of representation or, to put it another way, the relationship between what we see in his works and external reality.

The paintings, photographs, collages and videos we see in the exhibition require, each in its own way, a remission to something external. The logic, however, is not that of figuration, because the temptation of recognition is constantly denied. Even in his videos, which feature fragments of recognizable reality, the treatment of the subject is abstract. A flickering fire, the fluttering smoke, a fish that swims in the aquarium into which the television screen turned, the pieces of waterfall that drip from screen to screen, the pianist who lulls to the sound of his touch are images that refuse to fix. They speak of repetitive, cyclic movements whose recurrence and fragmentation turn the image into rhythm, reverberation.

Cut out of broader contexts that could construct some narrative, these fragments of moving images demand a concrete attention to their basic elements: the changing color and shape of fire, the meandering and ephemeral design traced by the smoke in the air, the rippling and twisting of the fish, the direction of its swim, the sound and whirl of river water, the verticality of the waterfall, the pianist's body fold, the frantic drumming of his fingers. The artistic interventions in these videos - bands of color, poem, image manipulation - help reinforce this abstract meaning, bringing us back to the concreteness of what we see.

Likewise, the canvas 'Disenchantment' and 'Aurora', for their materiality and abstraction, do not release our fantasy to imagine desert or night landscapes. They force our perception to focus on the textures, transparencies and overlaps of the pictorial mass. This reveals a deliberate displacement of expectations, since the scale of these paintings, their rectangular shape and the hint of a horizontal line immediately make us suppose a landscape that soon crumbles in front of us in patches of color that refuse formalization. The same is true on photographs whose record of the horizon sometimes turns into colored bands, sometimes unfolds into other planes, sometimes reflects upon itself, sometimes contracts in line. An image that does not allow itself to remain, remaining as an unrealized expectation, a frustration.

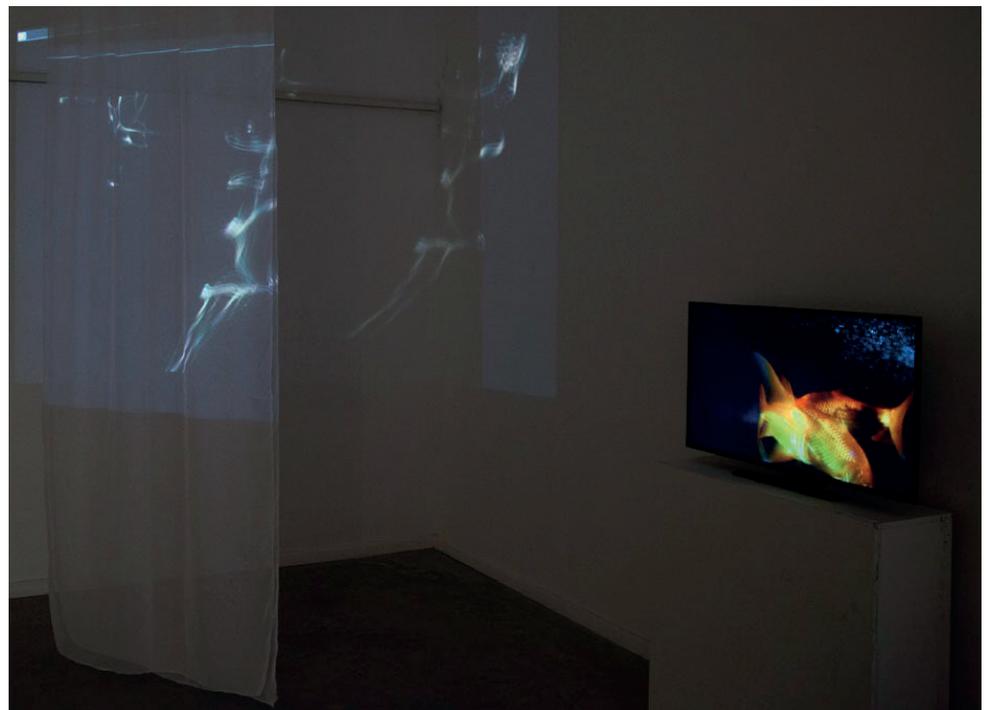
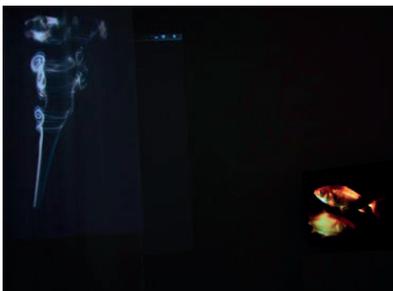
Another form of reversal of expectation we feel in front of works like 'Stella's Promise'. This digital panel reproduces, on a continuous cycle, the sentence "What you see is what you see", motto of anti-illusionism by artists such as painter Frank Stella linked to American minimalism. The size of the panel makes us begin to read the sentence awaiting some revelation, until it closes itself, resuming the beginning: the promise is fulfilled as a return to itself, to the basic, which leads us to perceive each new letter that arises, each word that forms from the circular message.

But maybe it's the video 'There are more important things than happiness' the key to understanding what a promise Muriel makes and denies us at the same time. It features an excerpt from Andrei Tarkovsky's film 'Nostalgia', in which a man unsuccessfully tries to keep a small candle on while passing through an open space of some sort of ruin. The uselessness of the action, the disconsolation with the failure and the desolation of the environment are highlighted by the continuous repetition. A translucent orange rectangle highlights the center of the action and brings the boundary of the scene into itself, preventing our gaze from escaping the enactment of frustration. The thin horizontal band of a stronger orange shade cuts the space at the height of the horizon, expanding the direction of man's walking from side to side outside the boundaries. In this game of reverberations, cuts, and expansion, the promise of an outcome is perpetually denied, even if we get caught up in the ever-undone expectation that the candle will stay lit.

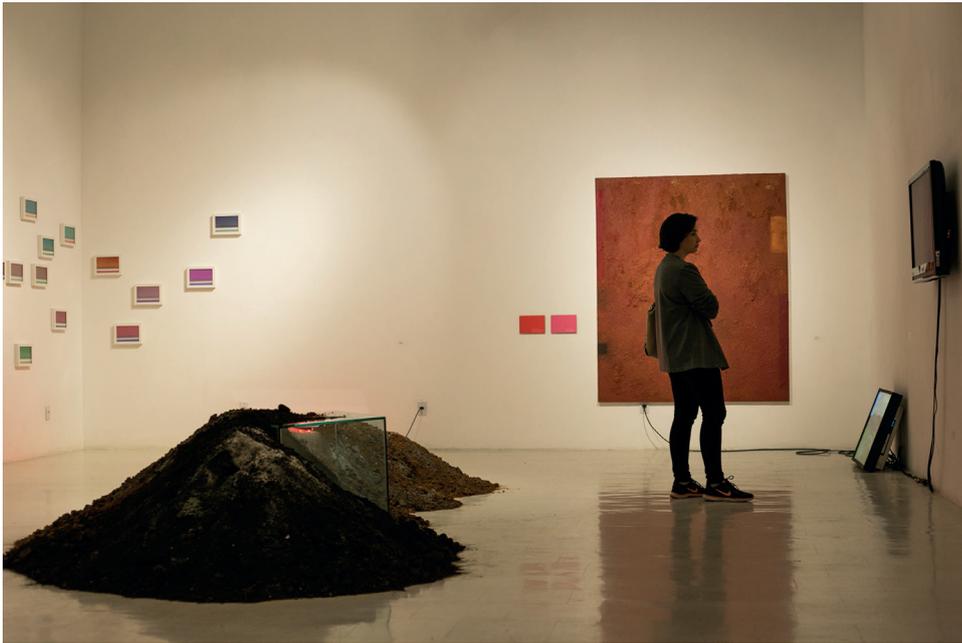
But, as the title suggests, there are more important things than this fleeting happiness. Frustration is not, in Muriel Paraboni's work, the opposite of desire, nor the trigger for the experience of anguish. On the contrary, when his works prevent us from remaining in the most intellectual sphere of the image, when he demands us to perceive his material data, his basic elements, he is warning us, as Albert Camus had already done, that "happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same land." The writer makes this claim by analyzing the myth of Sisyphus, that relative of Tarkovsky's character, who repeats an action marked in its origin by failure. The exhibition 'Land', in many ways, frustrates our expectations of happiness to return to us the absurdity of the cyclical movement, the acceptance of which, according to Camus, results in revolt, freedom and passion. And wouldn't these be more important than happiness?

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1) "Mind and land are in a constant process of erosion: mental rivers break down abstract slopes, brainwaves erode rocks of thought, ideas break down into stones of ignorance, and conceptual crystallizations crumble into sandy debris of reason." Robert Smithson, 1968.



1. **Delicate Flame:** Videoart projected on glass cube - 3 min (2016)
2. **Dissolution #1:** Videoart - 7:00 min (2016)
3. **Ether:** Videoart - 4:46 min (2016)
4. **Oceans:** Videoart projected on veil - 5:30 min (2016)

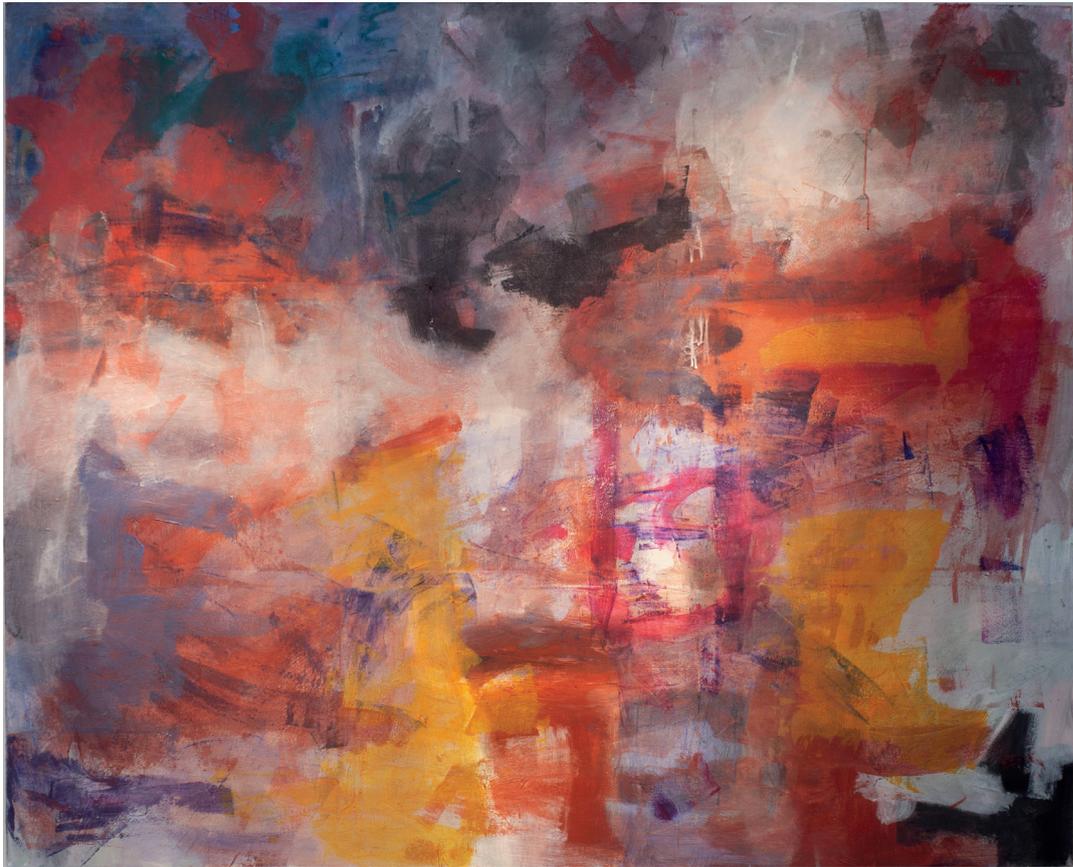


1. **Edges of Earth:** Acrylic on Canvas - 150 x 180 cm (2016)
2. **Country Side:** Digital Photography on Box Light - 70 x 50 cm (2019)
3. **Oceans #2:** Videoart - 5:30 min (2019)

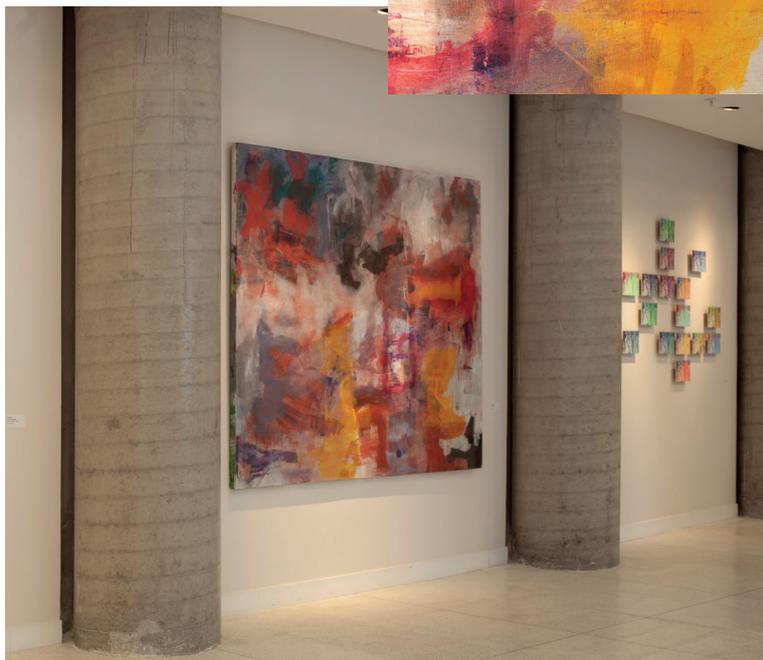


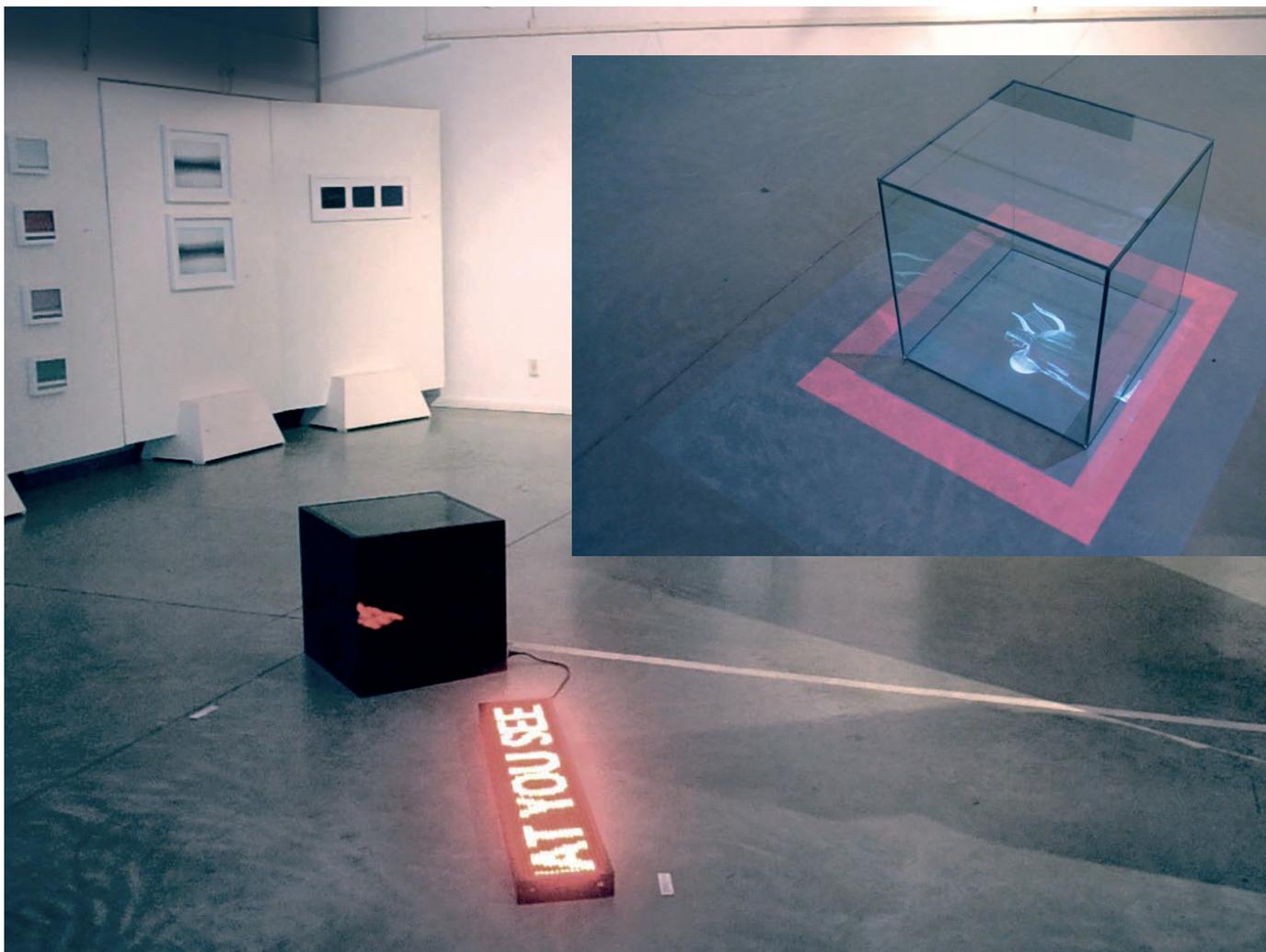
1. **Richter's Blues:** Acrylic on Canvas - 100 x 120 cm (2013)
2. **Disenchantment:** Acrylic On Canvas - 156 x 158 cm (2016)
3. **Aurora:** Acrylic on Canvas - 146 x 153 cm (2016)



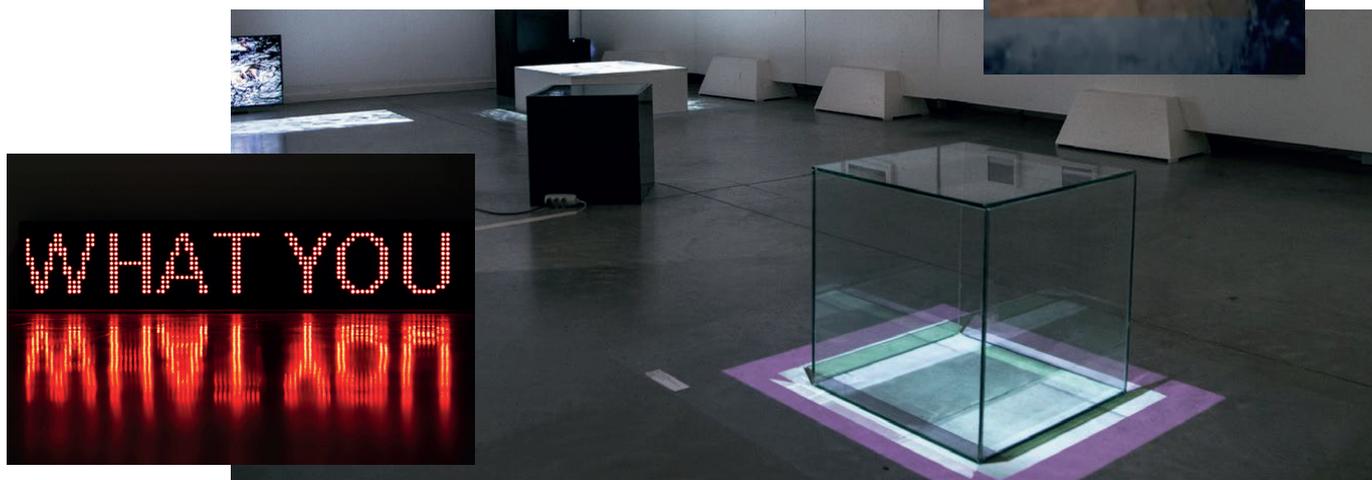


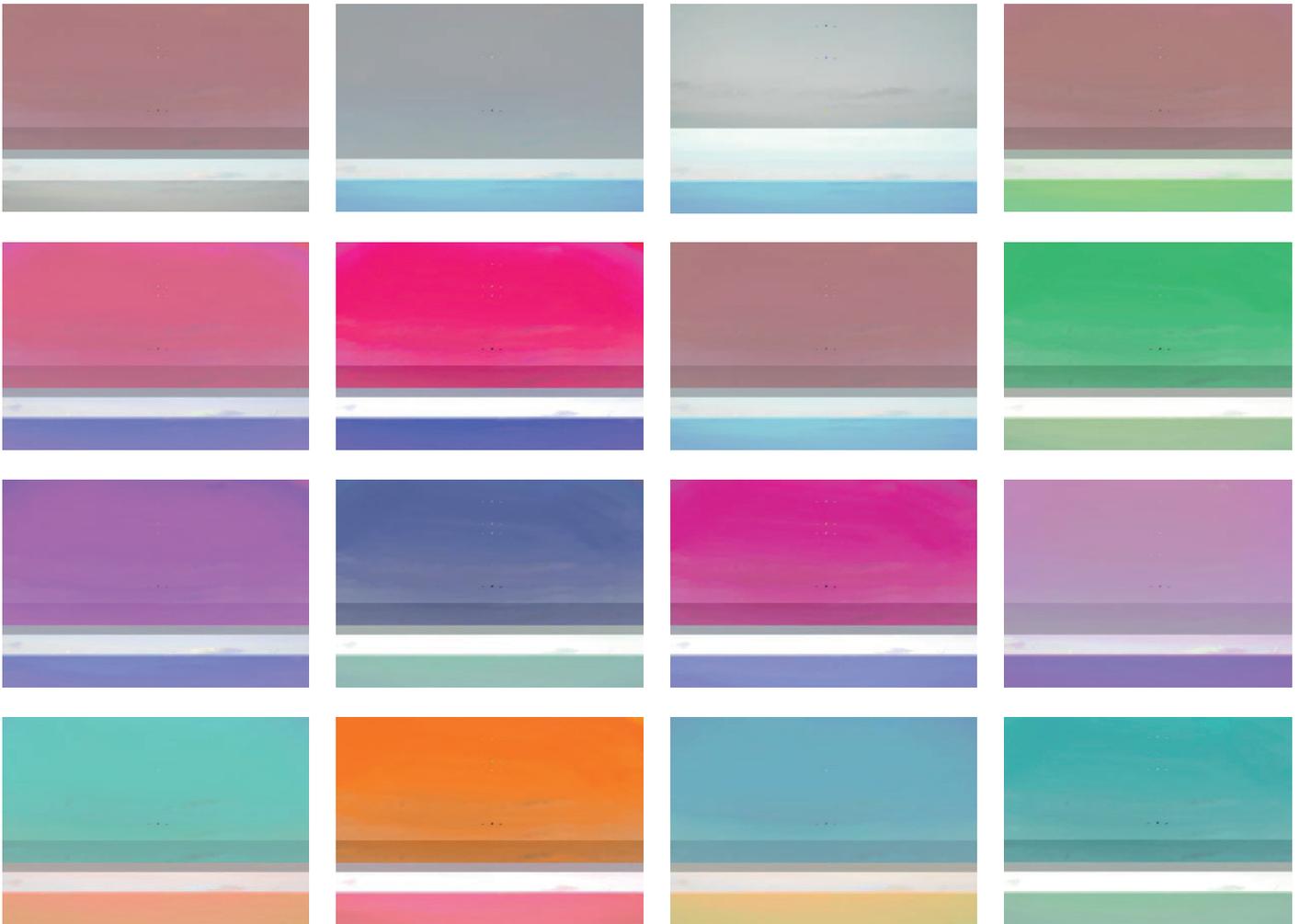
Trying to Say: Acrylic on Canvas - 170 x 260 (2019)





1. **Blood of a Poet:** Videoart projected on glass cube - 8:10 min (2016)
2. **Little Death:** Objetc - 50 x 50 x 50 cm (2016)
3. **Stella's Promise:** Digital Panel - 100 x 20 x 5 cm (2016)
4. **There are more important things than happiness:** Videoart - 9:16 min (2016)





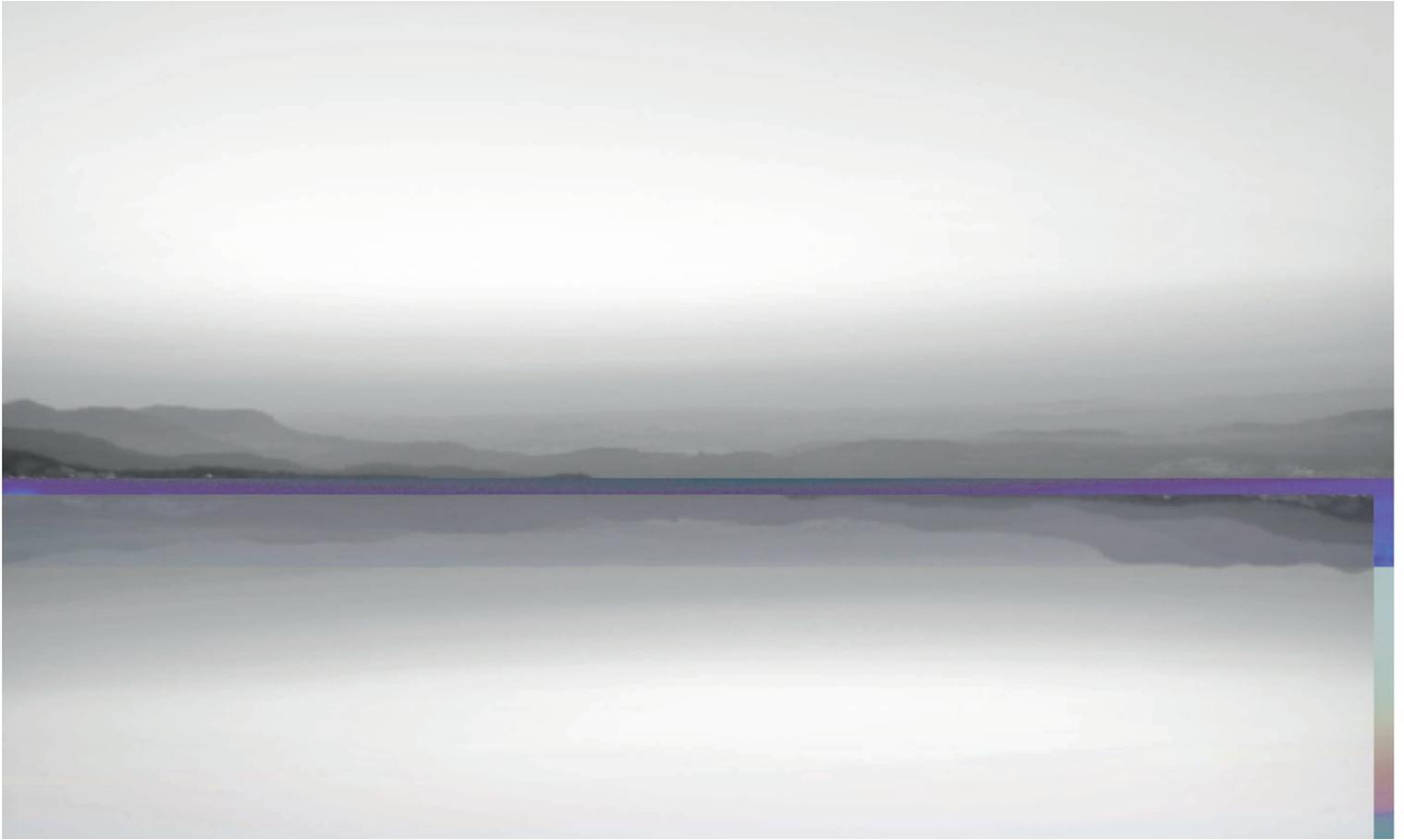
Freewill: Digital Photography Series - 25 x 18 cm - 16 phtos (2014)



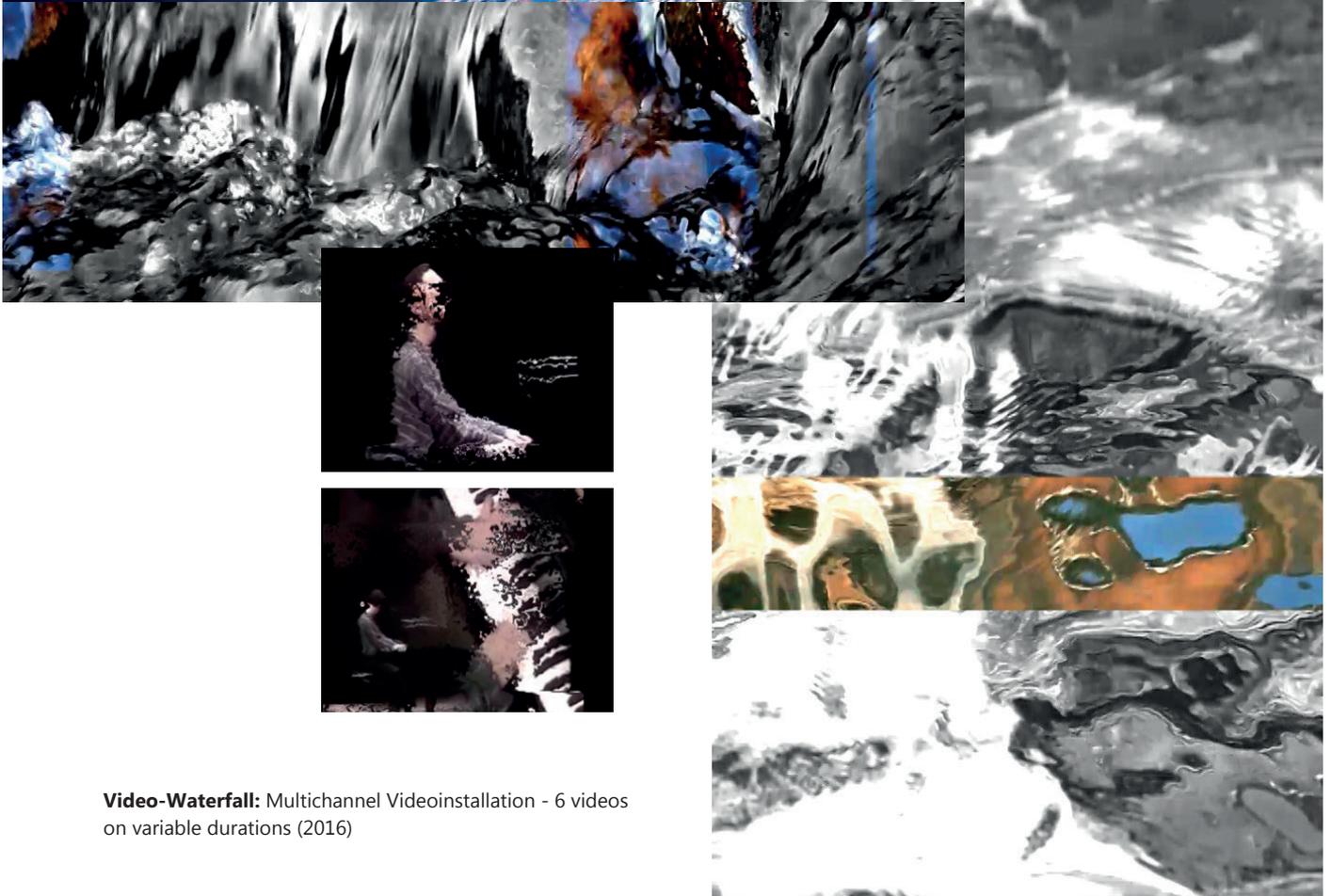


1. Submarine: Digital Photography Series - 15 x 22,5 cm - 23 photos (2019)
2. Fractals: Digital Photography Series - 15 x 22,5 cm - 18 photos - (2019)





1. **Horizon #1:** Digital Photography - 53 x 39 cm (2014)
2. **Horizon #2:** Digital Photography - 53 x 39 cm (2014)
3. **Promise Land:** Digital Photography - 53 x 39 cm (2014)
4. **Elevation:** Digital Photography - 53 x 39 cm (2014)



Video-Waterfall: Multichannel Videoinstallation - 6 videos on variable durations (2016)



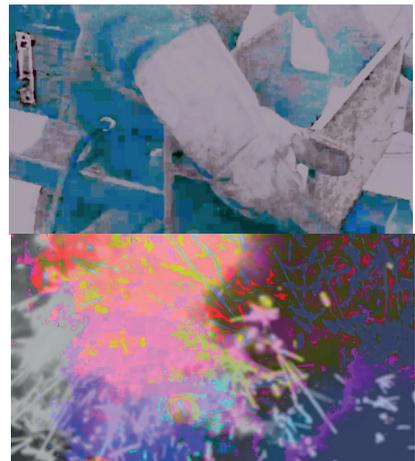
Through the Mirror: Installation on acrylic, neon and steel tube structure - 110 x 2,14 x 0,25 cm (2013)



Indoor-Outdoor: Instalação em acrílico, led lamps, galvanized sheet and steel tube structure - 110 x 2,14 x 0,25 cm (2019)



1. **Foundation:** Installation on oxidized steel beam, cement, wire, screws and automotive acrylic - 72 x 72 x 60 cm (2019)
2. **Foundry:** Videart - 3:20 min (2019)

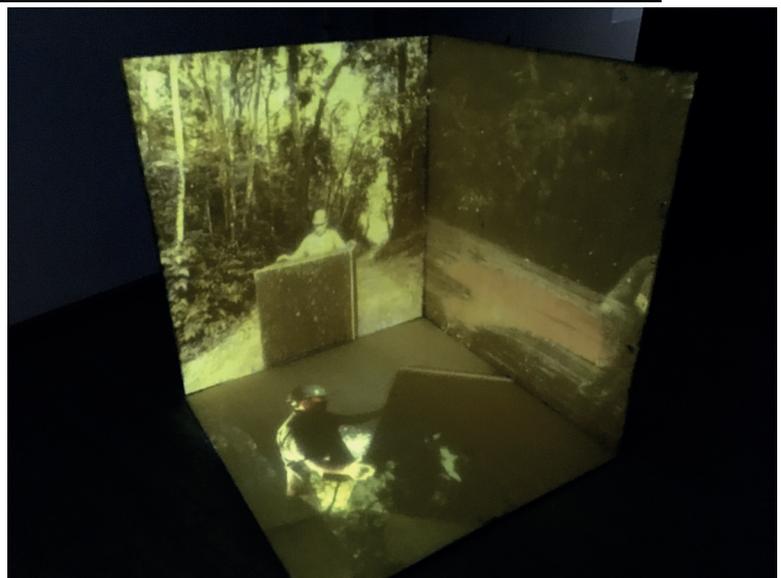
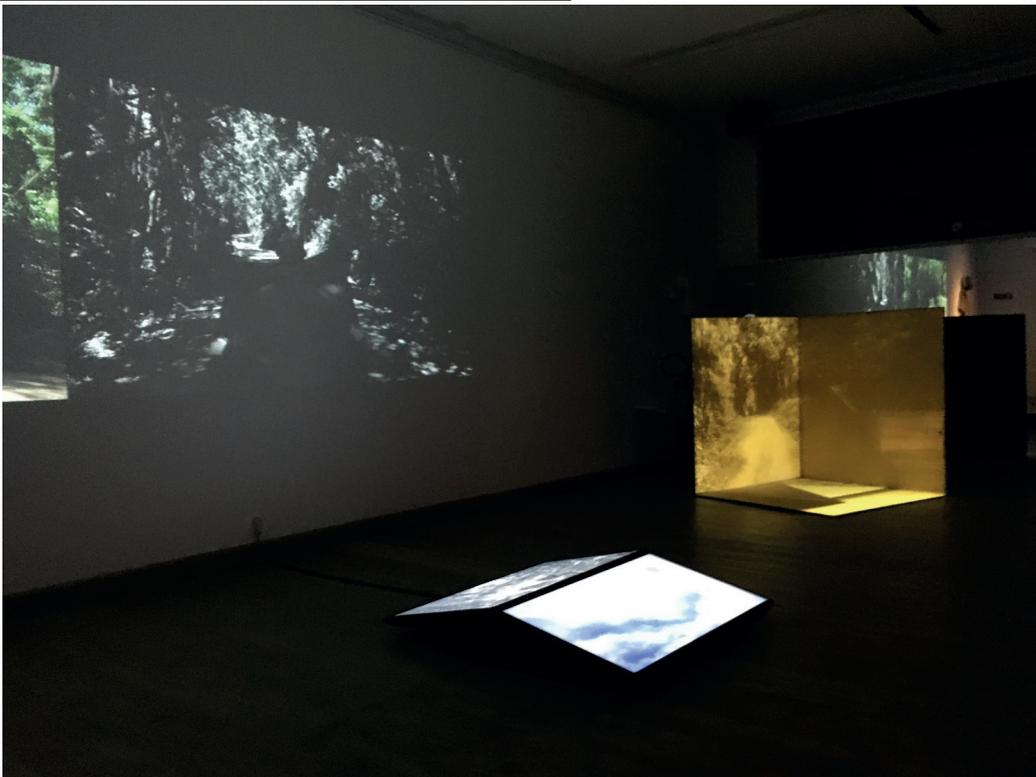




Sisyphus Works: Video Installation - 8 Videos/ Various Durations | 2019



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8 Videos/ Various Durations | 2019





Sisyphus Works: Video Installation - 8 Videos/ Various Durations | 2019

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*The images in this portfolio refer to works and catalogs
on the following exhibitions:*

Land | Solo | 2016

Arts and Letters Center - CAL / UFSM - Santa Maria, Brazil

Photos by Cássio F. Lemos

Pgs 3, 5, 7 and 11

Land 2nd Edition | Solo | 2019

Henrique Ordovas Culture Center - Caxias do Sul, Brazil

Photos by Leticia Busatto

Pgs 4, 8 and 10

Sediments, Erosions and Other Digital Accidents | Solo | 2019

Santa Casa Historical and Cultural Center - Porto Alegre, Brazil

Photos by Marcus Jung

Pgs 6, 9, 13 and 14

Actually, it wasn't that! | Collective Exhibition | 2013

Platform Creative Space - Porto Alegre, Brazil

Photos by Muriel Paraboni

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Sisyphus Works | Solo | 2019

O Sítio Art and Technology - Florianopolis, Brazil

Photos by Muriel Paraboni

Pgs 15, 16 e 17

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