

LAURENT DELAYE

Fabio Almeida

In Plain Sight

29 April – 5 June 2022

Private View Friday 29 April – 6-8 pm

In Plain Sight brings together a new group of works by Brazilian-born, London-based artist Fabio Almeida for his first solo exhibition at the Laurent Delaye gallery.

The title seeks to illustrate both the historical influences and the personal motivations that mark his creative journey. *In Plain Sight* is a statement for an artist who is at the same time looking at the raw urban reality of our present world and at the legacy of the modernist movement, so prevalent in his native South America since the immediate post-war period.

The materials and textures of the surfaces of his collages remind us of the mundane aspects of urban life - rough walls, pavements, digital glitches, even pollution - and yet, when asked about the subject matter in his work, the artist often refers to personal memory - the colours, forms and textures that have stayed with him from growing up in Brazil. While inspiration is drawn from his appreciation of the inherent qualities of Brazilian Modernism, this legacy for the artist is also personal and rooted in the present. Almeida's large-scale abstract collages - created using hand painted papers, varnish and markers, offering playful compositions and referencing design and architecture - are no return to the past. They are laced with a layer of realism and many current preoccupations.

Almeida addresses in his works all the facets of this contradictory heritage. Collage is a means to express the multiple layers of its complexity. In his work one can perceive at once the concrete horizons of the cityscape, the abstract sun blurring its lines and graffiti taking over its surfaces. The insertion of random scribbling and use of Letraset highlight the language and signage found in cities. By treating the papers through aging, sanding edges, painting and rubbing, Almeida patches old and new, allowing things to happen not only between landscape and architecture but also in the spaces between past, present and future.

There is a clear intention to elevate the work to a non-narrative state. Lines and curves, structures and rhythms are given the power to speak for themselves. It is also a reflection on society, the labyrinth of the human habitat, the space where culture and life merge. Abstraction is for the artist a tool to say many different things at the same time - all connected, but different - a metaphor for the contradictions of living in a single, shared space.

Concrete Brazilian abstraction was always about dealing with opposites: on one hand geometry in its pure and playful form, on the other the involvement of the public participating in and even modifying what they could see. Almeida belongs to this self-regenerating tradition and uses the concrete realities of today's world in his own universal language.

Laurent Delaye Gallery

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