

VALLOIS

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9
September
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9
October
2011

OPENING

Thursday 8 September
2011

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION

13-18 September
Docks Art Fair, Lyon
Solo Show:
Julien Berthier

17 October - 26 November
Alain Bublex
Contributions



For Henrique Oliveira's first solo exhibition at Galerie Georges-Philippe and Nathalie Vallois – his first solo exhibition in Europe – the Brazilian artist (born 1973) transfers the dynamic decay he finds at the borders of his native São Paulo to the very heart of Paris. Working with painting, sculpture and installation, Oliveira unleashes a vibrant series of organic (almost parasitic) forms, textures and colors. He combines the very flesh of his native city (through the use of found wood scraps) with a wide spectrum of art historical and scientific references. Winner of the 2010 *Premio Marcantonio Vilaça* (a prestigious award for young Brazilian artists), and currently exhibiting at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC, Oliveira's writhing forms are fast becoming inescapable.

In the project room, Oliveira's torquing column springs from the floor and plunges from the ceiling; the fusion of a stalagmite and a stalactite transforms the gallery into a living cavern. Developed specifically for the space, Oliveira's installation is also legible as an archi-Rococo architectural element or a fairy-tale tree. Oliveira suggests that the work "gives the plywood its way back to nature." Likewise, Oliveira sees his free-standing sculpture *Boxoplasmosse*, also made expressly for this exhibition, as "related to an idea of organic growth." Coming alive like Lygia Clark's hinged *Bichos*, a bulging anthropomorphic form appears to ooze from Oliveira's roughly cubical base structure.

Meanwhile, *Xilempasto 3*, a wall-mounted work made of wood laminates applied to the effect of impasto painting, is the kind of work, according to Oliveira "that happens in the fissure between the genres of sculpture and painting." The swollen and undulating surface of *Xilempasto 3* maintains the energy of his coiling column in the Project Room, while preparing the eye for the explosive compositions of his two-dimensional works on canvas.

Here, Oliveira presents four paintings, works that the artist sees following the "logic of collages." "They are made from a combination of different procedures like pouring, dripping, splashing, and brushing paint, but made in a way that the viewer can separate them." Critic Juliana Monachesi has described Oliveira's appropriation of the gestures and techniques of modern abstract painting as "borrow and refurbish." And Oliveira has compared his way of working, especially with painting, to that of a DJ – "sampling the different processes taken from informal abstraction in the 20th century and 'synthesizing' them to create 'figures of abstraction'."

Of course Oliveira's practice of sampling recalls Nicolas Bourriaud's observation in *Postproduction*: "This new cultural landscape [is] marked by the twin figures of the DJ and the programmer, both of whom have the task of selecting cultural objects and inserting them into new contexts." But what is interesting is the depth and nuance of each artist's tracklist; and the 20th century Brazilian avant-gardists Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica are surely on Oliveira's. The *Penetrables* that Oiticica exhibited at London's Whitechapel Gallery in 1969, at once a snapshot of Brazilian favelas and a cohesive development of Color Field Painting, were vivid environments in microcosm. In much the same way, in Oliveira's work, "gestures become landscapes," he says, or "fluid environments, little universes inside other universes."

Lillian Davies

A catalogue with a text by Brazilian Art Historian Aracy Amaral, one of the curators of the 2011 Mercosul Biennial, will be published on the occasion of this exhibition.