
Rodrigo Matheus*City of stars*

April 5 - June 1st, 2019

**Press release**

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is pleased to present *City of Stars*, the first solo exhibition of Rodrigo Matheus (born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1974) at the Paris gallery. Following a successful collaboration with the Brussels gallery in 2016, this new exhibition confirms the importance of the Brazilian artist on the European scene.

The exhibition *City of Stars* marks a major turning point in the artistic and conceptual practice of Rodrigo Matheus, who has been based in France for the last four years. The title comes from a brutalist architectonic complex called "La cité des Etoiles," realized between 1976 and 1982 by Jean Renaudie (1925-1981), within the scope of revitalizing the city of Givors. Drawing inspiration from the French architect's work, Rodrigo Matheus presents us with an immersive exhibition.

Rodrigo Matheus, imbued by Brazilian brutalist architecture, wished to create works that would fluctuate between an homage to and an interrogation on this architecture in France. In this exhibition, he reflects on the suburb as a space of social construction and creativity, dear to Jean Renaudie.

The formal aspects of his works underline not only the radical aesthetic experience of these projects, but also the social and political responses they offer society. The sculptures' forms adhere to the technical drawings of Jean Renaudie's buildings. They underline the diagonals and the lack of symmetry, while also responding to the strategy of spacial organization. Inside, the subdivisions reveal niches, living spaces that welcome a range of materials and objects from daily life. Rodrigo Matheus appropriates Renaudie's architecture and lives inside it in real life: his studio is located inside the Ivry-sur-Seine development.

Rodrigo Matheus's imposing and subtle sculptures overturn the transition from horizontal to vertical, from blueprint to realization, from idea to materiality. By inverting and distorting the orientations, Rodrigo Matheus reveals a new perception and understanding of these architectures that are devoid of right angles. Rough, protruding, but also clever and harmonious, these sculptures give tangibility to this vast, concrete architecture, which is impossible to grasp in its entirety. With a critical gaze, Rodrigo Matheus explores the social and political narratives that are intrinsic to these places. The pedestals, also made of concrete, confirm the brutalist character of these creations and establish an ambiguous dialogue between the different scales.

Presented in the atrium where light filters in, a sculptural installation magnifies these materials in all their simplicity. This sky, studded with black ropes and dusted with delicately suspended tulle, brings a lightness and softness to the large-scale installation. Contrary to the concrete, the tulle and ropes soften the rough, frontal reality.

The walls are hung with works on paper that confirm the delicacy and subtlety that Rodrigo Matheus masters. These collages of geometric envelopes—for the first time, anthropomorphic—play on our perception with their chromatic nuances, which confer two dimensions: one is flat, induced by the frontality of the color brown; and the other subtle and deep, cream-colored.

In addition, the delicate paper compositions titled "push pins" seem to tell stories suspended in time. They are assemblages of documents, dating from the early 20th century, showing commercial transactions. Rodrigo Matheus appropriates these papers by hanging them to delicate threads. Pinned to the back of the frame, they are juxtaposed in a variety of compositions.

Rodrigo Matheus's oeuvre is resolutely ambivalent: by giving poetic intimacy to the coarsest of materials, the artist strikes a perilous balance that whisks us up on a vaporous canopy.

Born in São Paulo (Brazil), in 1974, Rodrigo Matheus lives and works in Paris (France).

With a degree in Fine Arts from the University of São Paulo in 2001, and a master's in sculpture from the Royal College of Art in London in 2011, Rodrigo Matheus is part of the young, emerging Brazilian and European art scene. Since moving to France four years ago, Rodrigo Matheus has garnered increasing attention in Europe. Currently, the Fondazione Ghisla Art Collection in Locarno (Switzerland) is offering him an important solo exhibition, Blow Through the Gap, held on three floors (until August 25, 2019). He has also exhibited his works in prestigious international institutions, including, in France, Museum ON/OFF in 2016 at the Centre Pompidou and Le Parfait Flâneur in 2015 at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Imagine Brazil in 2014 at the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Lyon, and at the 13th Lyon Biennale in 2015; in the United States, Fade In: Int. Art Gallery – Day in 2016 at the Swiss Institute, and Constructing Views: Experimental Film and Video from Brazil in 2010 at the New Museum in New York; in Canada, Imagine Brazil in 2015 at the DHC/Art Foundation in Montreal, and Images Festival in 2008 at the Art Gallery of York University in Toronto; in Norway, Imagine Brazil in 2013 at the Astrup Fearnley Museet in Oslo; in Sweden, The Spiral and the Square in 2011 at the Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm; in Portugal, Dreams About Reality in a Single Universe in 2013 at the Fundação Manuel Antonio da Mota in Porto; and in the United Kingdom, What Separates Us in 2016 at the Embassy of Brazil in London.

In Brazil, Rodrigo Matheus has had exhibitions at numerous internationally renowned institutions, in particular Sob Constante Ameaça in 2012 at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro; in São Paulo, Mitologias por Procuração (Mythologies by Proxy) in 2013 at the Museum of Modern Art, Uma Coleção Particular - Arte Contemporânea no Acervo da Pinacoteca in 2015 at the Pinacoteca do Estado, Imagine Brazil in 2015 at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, and Southern Panoramas in 2015 at the SESC Pompeia; Centurium in 2004 at the Museu de Arte da Pampulha in Belo Horizonte; the Inhotim Institute in Brumadinho; Mensagem de Uma Nova América in 2015 at the Bienal do Mercosul in Porto Alegre; and in 2014 at the 3rd Bahia Biennale.

His works are held by important public collections, such as, in the United States, the Lea Weingarten Collection in Houston; in Brazil, the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, the Museu de Arte Moderna of São Paulo, the Pinacoteca do Estado in São Paulo, the Museu de Arte da Pampulha in Belo Horizonte, the Inhotim Centro de Arte Contemporânea in Brumadinho, the Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz, in São Paulo; in the United Kingdom, at the Tiroche DeLeon Collection, in Gibraltar; and in France, at the RAJA Art Collection.

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