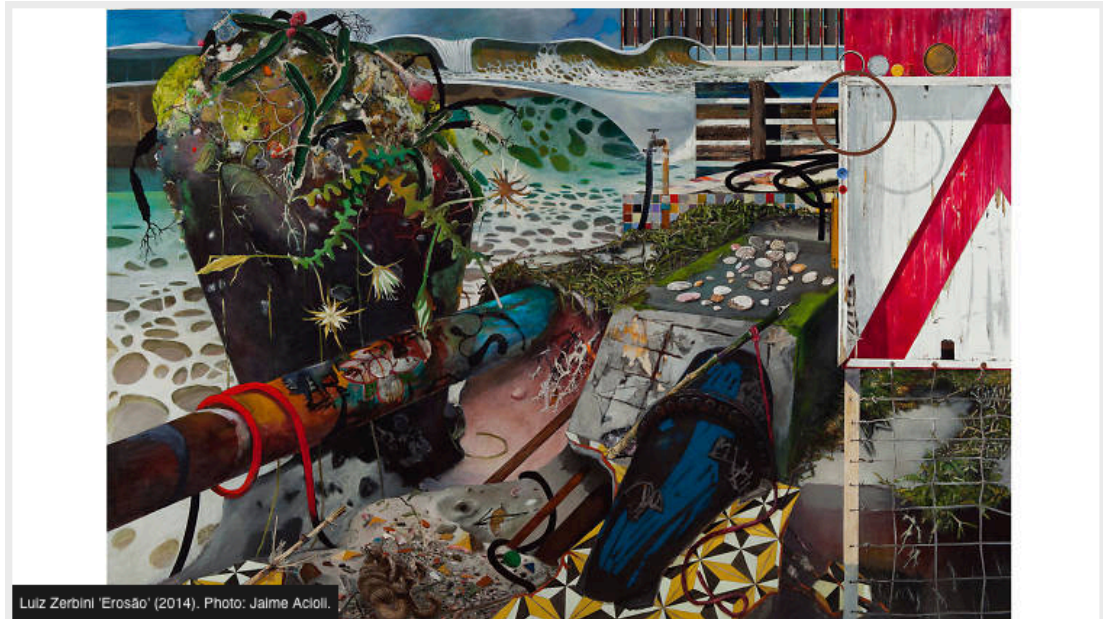


Stephen Friedman Gallery

Time Out
Luiz Zerbini: Intuitive Ratio review
Katie McCabe
2018



Luiz Zerbini: Intuitive Ratio review



If you're still haunted by memories of maths class, the paintings of Luiz Zerbini might make you break into a cold sweat. The Brazilian artist paints colourful, bombastic landscapes – but nothing here is an accident. Everything looks as though it's placed according to a precise geometry, like he's trying to segment the wildness of Rio de Janeiro around a Fibonacci spiral.

Four large figurative works fill the main gallery space, each exploring the same question: how can nature coexist with urban environments? The answer – as always – is complicated, but beautifully illustrated by Zerbini's painterly sleight of hand. In 'Concrete Jungle', he uses the gridded structure of Rio's Oscar Niemeyer Copan building as an optical backdrop. In the foreground, cheeky marmosets climb electric wires above a mess of discarded flip flops, speakers and tangled plant life. It's a manic Rio mise-en-scène. Uniting the room is an eight-metre long sculpture, 'Razao Intuitiva' (intuitive reason) which uses a mix of coconut shells, bamboo, a flip flop and glass sheets to represent the river bed. It starts to feel a little one note – but maybe that's all the artist wants for this particular song.

Zerbini's abstract works offer relief from the landscapes, and, though the styles are radically different, there are light threads holding the works together. Look closely and you'll find the vibrant Tetris squares of 'Color Bugs' hiding in almost every painting. The squares are reminiscent of old TV test cards that would interrupt your screen in the 1990s. And in his upstairs video installation 'Sertão', they do exactly that. As you sit watching gentle, quiet scenes of grassland and clouds reflected on

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the water's surface, the footage is frazzled by those damn coloured squares and discordant static. You can escape to nature all you want, but technology is always there, waiting to fry your fantasy.

The artist moves nonchalantly between genres but the messaging rarely changes, which makes for a visually exciting, but frustrating show. You can stare at it for hours – but it doesn't always add up.