



ART REVIEW
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CAETANO DE ALMEIDA
A Brazilian painter spins intricate abstractions from simple parameters.
***3 out of 5 stars

Eleven Rivington, through November 15

For a canvas made by using “ambient pollution,” Caetano de Almeida’s *Rara estampa—excêntrico* is a remarkably gentle affair. Only the occasional translucent bug wing adhered to the work’s surface bears out the unsettling nature of a composition that is otherwise a quiltlike arrangement of tessellating triangles in varying shades of gray. The five other pictures in the Brazilian painter’s New York solo debut—all dated this year or last—are the results of more conventional processes but exhibit a comparable reticence when it comes to real-world concerns.

An unabashed formalist, De Almeida takes picture making as his primary subject, spinning sometimes-intricate abstractions from simple initial parameters. *3825 Cores* (3825 colors) is typical. A wobbly acrylic grid built, one assumes, from the titular spectrum, it tempers a quasi-mechanical system with a seemingly improvised touch.

Even such elementary ideas are not, however, entirely unconnected to De Almeida’s immediate urban environs. The overlapping lines of color in *Ocaso* (sunset) and *Tabela* (color pencil) create a woven effect perhaps inspired by the woven plastic shopping bags to be found in his local markets, while the carnivalesque mayhem of *Fenda* could be a stylized map of São Paulo’s bustling heart entire. *Sete planetas* (Seven Planets), however, sees the artist zoom considerably further out. A cluster of perforated white discs that intersect like competing searchlights over a night-dark ground, it embodies the pros and cons of De Almeida’s methodology. Sympathetic viewers will judge concept and craft to be in perfect balance; others will hear an artist speaking a little too softly.
—Michael Wilson