

bbb-arb

Brazilian-Angolan-Russian-British art presents recent works by five artists.

Alexandre Canonico, Gabriela Giroletti, João Villas, Januario Jano, and Nikolai Ishchuk



Gabriela Giroletti, *Plumbers*, 2021

Curated by Ana Teles and Luis Sandes

13 & 14 December 2022 from 11am-5pm
Opening reception 12 December 5-8pm

Triangle Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts
16 John Islip Street, London, SW1P 4JU

The eclectic group of works in this exhibition share a preoccupation with the way that the material from which they have been made acts both as a signal and a disguise. In each case there is a moment of self-disclosure, but as with all attempts at transparency, so too new forms of ambiguity and occlusion are introduced.

The exhibition includes three fabric works by **Januario Jano**, each of which propose a contrast between the austerity of the geometric forms and restricted colour range with the delicateness of the materials. Jano's work draws on his memories of his experience of displacement and colonial appropriation. *Fukama* (2022) combines textiles from his archive with kimono fabric donated by a friend. Jano cuts, sews, and joins the strips of fabric together to create a panel of harmonies, drawing on Japanese traditions of simple forms. The making processes remain perceptible, and the artist ensures they are visible to the attentive viewer. Despite dealing with themes of persistent violence and injustice, Jano's fabric work panels are delicate and reveal his care for the craft by which they are made.

The softness of Jano's *Axiluanda* (2021) is echoed by the wallpaper sculptures of **Alexandre Canonico**, in which the paper hangs from the wall and is pulled down and out by the force of gravity, emphasising the sculptural and architectural potential of the material. Wallpaper is conventionally associated with its decorative function and can provide camouflage and disguise to the surface it covers. Canonico turns the material inside out and, by hanging it using masking tape, reveals its other side. Canonico frequently uses industrial products in his work, subjecting them to some obvious and playful forms of intervention by his hand. This contrast between the materials and the artist's gestures point not just to his presence in the making of the work, but also to the artist's power to explore the precarity of the materials, disclosing their underlying fragility.

By contrast to Canonico, **Nikolai Ishchuk** works with materials that are fragile and unstable, in some cases almost intangible, but which he manipulates with light to allude to hard, variegated forms that appear substantial. He creates geometric compositions with strong visual lines that evoke solid architectural structures both in their physicality and opticality. Ishchuk works mostly on the surface of photography paper adding photochromic emulsions, paint, pastes, and varnishes to create the impression of multi-dimensional and multi-directional planes, playing with variations in the transparency, luminosity, and thickness of the surface of the paper. If for Canonico the materials used in the work are to be challenged, for Ishchuk the materials are to be marshalled and controlled. Despite the apparent solidity of the surfaces of the work, the fragility of the materials is presented to the viewer through the lack of rigidity of the paper. In addition, to balance out the sharp, precise lines Ishchuk disrupts them by deliberately leaving behind brush marks when applying the cyanotype emulsion.

The physicality of the paintings – their material presence in the gallery space – is central to the experience of looking at the work of **Gabriela Giroletti**. When she paints, Giroletti anticipates the way in which the work will occupy the site where it will be viewed, ignoring the frame, and going beyond the limits of the canvas, rendering her paintings on the wall as if they were organically connected to it. This ambiguity between the experience of what is seen and the experience of knowing how we have seen what we have seen, is central to the viewer's engagement with her work. Giroletti pays particular attention to the texture of her paintings, to which she adds sand, and plays with translucency effects to create the richness of the colour field and the sense of pictorial volume. She creates tension in the relationship between the formal geometric shapes and the disobedience of her hand in making them.

Ambiguity of form is also to the fore in the work of **João Villas**, amid the diverse range of architectural, pictorial, and video formats, using an array of industrial, organic, and hand-made materials. Animal skins have long been used by humans for warmth as clothes, or decoratively as carpets for the floor, but the skins that have been used and the methods by which they were treated before use, were conventionally connected to their easy availability and their functional utility. Not so for Villas, who makes use of the scaly skin of the fish (the salmon) rather than the furry pelt of a mammal, for his floor-based installation. For humans, looking is done with the eyes, but other species might "look" with their antennae or proboscis, the sensory organs through which they experience the world. It is difficult to imagine what we might understand of their sensory

experience. Could we ever know what it is like to be a green shield bug? Likewise, could an insect ever know what it is like to be human in an art gallery?

BIO

Alexandre Canonico is a Brazilian visual artist living and working in London. Having trained as an architect, his work is influenced by the principles of architectural language, producing drawings and sculptures characterised by experimental methods. Many of his works shift from drawing to sculpture. Alexandre holds a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Academy Schools, London (2021).

Gabriela Giroletti is a Brazilian painter living and working in London. With her deliberately ambiguous work, Gabriela explores the relationship between the painted image and the material presence in the painting. Gabriela received an MFA in Painting from The Slade School of Fine Art in 2018 and a BA in Fine Art from Middlesex University in 2015.

Januario Jano is an Angolan, multidisciplinary visual artist with interests in sculpture, textiles and performing arts, video, and photography, based in Luanda, Angola and London. He is interested in the use of textiles, fabric, and other materials to display researched ideas such as worldly topics, economics, and politics. In 2020, Januario Jano obtained a Master's degree in Fine Arts from Goldsmith University in London.

João Villas is a Brazilian artist developing a multimedia practice that spans across the fields of alternative photography, video, printing, and self-publication. He lives and works in London. His artistic materials come from different worlds, from industry to nature. He has obtained an MA from the Royal College of Art. He is a co-founder of Plaintiff Press.

Nikolai Ishchuk is a Russian-British artist living and working in London. His practice departs from elements, forms, and techniques of photography by reconfiguring them into mixed-media works that are formal propositions rather than depictions of elements of the surrounding world. Nikolai attained an MA in Fine Art from the Chelsea College of Art and Design in 2013.