

From Radiance and Dissolution

**Aids-3D, Max Eastley, Diogo Evangelista, Tamara Henderson, Eduardo Kac,
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curated by Margarida Mendes

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Within this era of great acceleration, with suspicious eyes and moderate disbelief, we face abstraction today. Given the atmosphere of hybrids that continuously proliferates around us, as sign of the distortion and opacity provoked by the accumulation of successive layers of abstracted value, finite entities can no longer be perceived as such. Instead, these operate as spectral surfaces for conduction of meaning, ideal vessels that, more than ever, allude to zones of intensity in permanent battle.

From primordial spiritualism to the rise of algorithmic mysticism in the early cybernetic days and the era of financialization, the role of abstraction has always been that of rendering complexity and representing the unknown. For this greater task, man developed scientific tools and mystical discourses to help him comprehensively map the universe and explain the mysteries of the cosmos. However, the study of teleology was soon proven doomed by the very fallacy of transcendental reasoning, which only raised blurry conflicts and a continuous collapse of meaning.

In reaction to the overload of these processes of encryption and erasure, today's take on abstraction is as complex as ever, for it is the result of a clash of previous models. The inclusion of satire or randomness, along with the resurgence of naiveté or psychedelia, allows thus the present moment of post-digital abstraction to be considered as relevant as it is criticisable by its superfluous expenditure, that exhausts the visual domain.

Could we be facing a moment where imagery and information has reached such an hybrid level, that any image is but a blind spot or an after image of itself? And if so, should we feel enclosed or relieved by the possibility of an ever-renovating mutant form which transubstantiates itself?

From Radiance And Dissolution is an exhibition about the structuring forces that run through representation regimes, with its focus on processes of liberation of form. From stream-of-consciousness, to visual hallucination, or fluid computation, this exhibition includes works that appeal to the formlessness of the inner eye, stimulating the ephemeral biochemical cartography of the human and the empowered expansion of form. For the quest of abstraction is still as pertinent and as precious as ever – almost similar to that of alchemy – in seeking the substance of an image itself through a search for the unknown.

Margarida Mendes runs the project space *The Barber Shop* in Lisbon since 2009.