

Marcia de Moraes

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With an intensity bordering on obsession, the young Brazilian artist Marcia de Moraes questions the nature of coexistence in the six large-scale abstract drawings in colored pencil and graphite—five diptychs and one polyptych—that made up her exhibition “*Corpo Duplo*” (Double Body). Far from spontaneous, de Moraes’s drawings take as long as a month to finish. As significant as their pictorial form and color palette are the psychological qualities the artist attributes to them, as indicated by their titles. They evoke ambiguous mental spaces where opposing and attracting forces contend.

The two parts of *O Obsessivo* (The Obsessive) (all works 2012) present a central mass of colors made up of smaller forms predominantly in tones of red and brown, spiked and constricted by greens and whites. These color areas are at times solid and at others textured. A solid green in all corners constricts the main mass. Where the sheets of paper meet, a slight gap reminds us of their physical independence and their need to coexist in this context. *Corpo Dubio* (Dubious Body) puts greater emphasis on the separation between parts. The focal mass is less tightly packed than in *O Obsessivo*, and a closer look reveals that although the colors harmonize on both sides of the work, they do not always connect across the central seam, highlighting the doubtful nature signaled by the title. In *Euforia* (Euphoria), there is no focal point and both parts appear to burst beyond the work’s edges in all directions. Here, once again, we see a lack of correspondence at the point of convergence. The show’s title, “*Corpo Duplo*,” implies that the independent drawings paired to make up each of the six works can be understood as bodies attempting to coexist physically and psychologically. The delicate, nerverlike forms that make understated appearances in *Corpo Dubio* and *O Obsessivo* grow in *O Alagamento* (The Flood) and *O Transe* (The Trance) to sprout budlike protrusions at their extremities that evoke abstracted flora. Also peculiar to these two works are shapes that resemble claws, reminiscent of the work of Brazilian Surrealist sculptor Maria Martins. And finally, *O Compulsivo* (The Compulsive) combines elements seen in all five other drawings, but on a larger scale and with a new degree of complexity: This is no longer a couple but a family, a group of four parts or a pair of double bodies.

De Moraes’s drawings constitute an inquisitive search into her own psychological makeup and a meditation on coexistence through abstraction. The tensions created by line and color, harmony and organic form, all slightly askew, along with the obsessive repetition of marks and the theme of doubling that permeates the exhibition from title to compositional structure, create unexpected echoes of the Surrealists’ efforts to tap into the unconscious and question binary oppositions between mind and body, reason and desire. Were I to try to define these elusive, neurotic images, I would call them “mindscapes”—renderings of the structure and dynamics of the psyche. Similar in outcome to the famous Surrealist parlor game *cadavre exquis* (in which a body is assembled on a single page through group authorship) but eschewing the coauthorship and impromptu action characteristic of the game, de Moraes’s drawings, in which each fold reveals the limits of coherence, revel in the dynamic tension at their seams. We can never be sure if these mindscapes are coming together or drawing apart.

—Camila Belchior

