

Rodrigo Franzão: Abstract forms



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Born in São Paulo, Brazil, Rodrigo Franzão makes mixed media textile art influenced by geometric abstraction, figurative and constructivist art. Rodrigo currently lives and works in Abadiânia, where he is studying art history and aesthetics.

In our interview with Rodrigo we discuss the inspirational influence of his seamstress Mother, his tendency for structural work and why bold fabrics play an important role in his creative practice.



Rodrigo Franzão – Involuntary Decomposition

Innumerable possibilities

TextileArtist.org: What initially captured your imagination about textile art?

Rodrigo Franzão: I was a Portuguese teacher for almost a decade; during this time, I had the opportunity to combine art into my classes. In one of these classes, I prepared a class about **fabric weaving**. I realized then that textile art was my calling. Now, for my art research, the idea of interlacing different textile materials has become my passion as it allows me to express innumerable possibilities.

What or who were your early influences and how has your life/upbringing influenced your work?

My mother was my biggest influence. She is a seamstress. I grew up around that environment which inspired me to research and study textile art. I still remember the typical sounds that echos from a seamstress studio, the cutting sound of a **heavy pair of scissors**, needles rolling against each other, and the sewing machine that seems it can talk to you.

What was your route to becoming an artist? (Formal training or another pathway?)

I majored in Portuguese and Brazilian literature, after that Psych pedagogy – Art therapy then Communication in Art Education. At the end of 2015 I will graduate art college where the core is about art history and aesthetics.



Rodrigo Franzão – Structural 1, 2, 3 & 4

The limit is the imagination of the artist

How would you describe your work and where do you think it fits within the sphere of contemporary art?

My chosen medium depends on the subject. In my series titled *Involuntary Exclusion*, I created a dialogue between consumerism and its effect on the human condition, where being becomes less important than to be visible. For this, I researched materials that had a dialogue with the subject such as industrial fabrics, copper wire and needles. My technique uses interlaced fabrics and stitching with copper wire to create abstract forms. The color of the fabrics also plays a very important role in my work – I like to be bold, to choose the colors and mix them up. I find myself breaking the rules, mixing materials to see the end results. **Contemporary art** allows an artist to express himself with freedom. I believe the more you research the materials the more you will find possibilities to create. Textile art allows the union of these possibilities; the limit is the imagination of the artist.

Tell us a bit about your process and what environment you like to work in?

First, I choose a subject then I do extensive research on it. After I look for the materials that are related to the subject, then my work begins. I like to work in a quiet environment with easy access to my tools. I am very practical.

Do you use a sketchbook?

I do not have the habit of using a sketchbook.



Nelson Leimer – Homenagem a Fontana I

Unmistakable colors

What currently inspires you and which other artists do you admire and why?

What inspires me the most are materials used in every day life and the gap between them and the human figure. I admire the works of **Francis Picabia**, because of his relationship with psychoanalysis, **Willem de Kooning**, for his spontaneity, **Alfredo Volpi**, creates his own way of representing art through its own and unmistakable colors, **Josef and Anni Albers**, for their dynamic, mixing colors and different materials, lastly **Shelie Hicks**, her work has a soul and it is alive, to me she plays with the emotional that has a very colorful and visual dynamic. I also love the studies of **Bauhaus** and the **Malevich's Suprematism** ideas.

Tell us about a piece of work you have fond memories of and why?

The piece of work I have fond memories of it's from **Nelson Leimer**. He is a Brazilian artist and the title of his artwork "Homenagem a Fontana I", a tribute to the artist **Lucio Fontana** and for his famous art piece that has a tear in the canvas. A piece done with textile and zipper that by simplicity it becomes an inspiration to me.

How has your work developed since you began and how do you see it evolving in the future?

I have a strong tendency for structural work – my feeling is that the art I create has always a structure.

In my early stages I was using paper and paint, mixing small pieces of fabrics with them, and as the work progressed fabric became the main focus. Towards the end of this series I was already making big panels made solely out of textile. I believe my work will evolve to **larger installations** using textile to create forms and shapes.



Rodrigo Franzão – Untitled (detail)

There are no rules

What advice would you give to an aspiring textile artist?

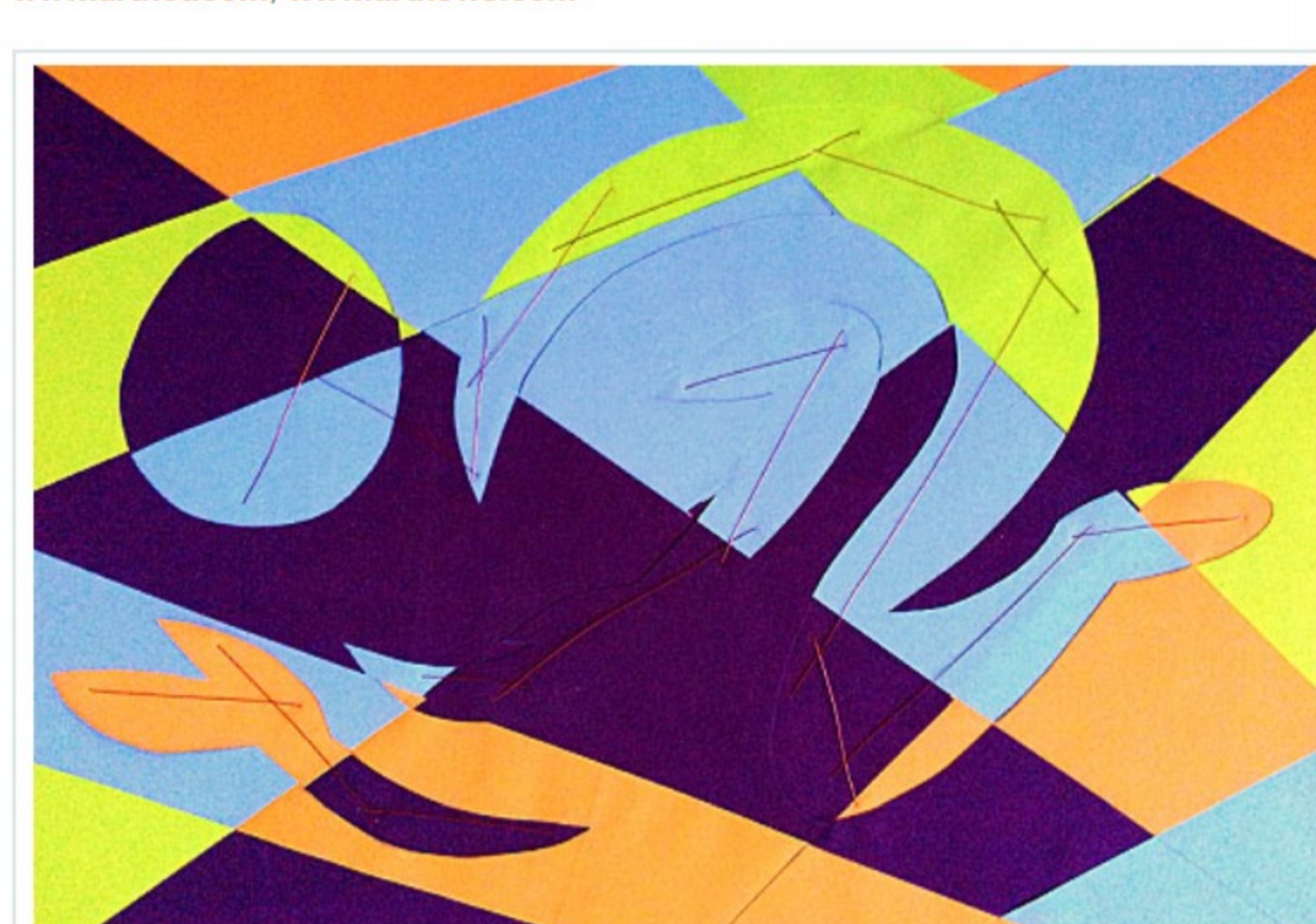
Let the imagination flow and loosen up, there are no rules, no beginning, middle and end for art. Allow yourself to be free, but always do your research and study a lot of art history, I believe this way you are able to create authentic and original pieces of art.

Can you recommend 3 or 4 books for textile artists?

I recommend [easazon_link asin="0714832472" locale="US" new_window="default" nofollow="default" tag="textileorg0a-20" add_to_cart="default" cloaking="default" localization="default" popups="default"]The Story of Art by E.H. Gombrich[easazon_link]; [easazon_link asin="0500288445" locale="US" new_window="default" nofollow="default" tag="textileorg0a-20" add_to_cart="default" cloaking="default" localization="default" popups="default"]Styles, Schools and Movements: The Essential Encyclopedic Guide to Modern Art by Amy Dempsey[easazon_link] and [easazon_link asin="B00A162146" locale="US" new_window="default" nofollow="default" tag="textileorg0a-20" add_to_cart="default" cloaking="default" localization="default" popups="default"]Contemporary Textiles: The Fabric of Fine Art by Janis Jefferies and Bradley Quinn[easazon_link].

What other resources do you use? Blogs, websites, magazines etc.

I like visiting museums and art galleries, anytime I take a trip somewhere I always check to see what is happening in terms of art first, then I am free to do my sightseeing. I like to research websites such as: www.artby.net, www.artforum.com, www.catalogodasartes.com.br, www.mapadasartes.com.br, www.artprice.com, www.artnet.com, www.artnews.com.



Rodrigo Franzão – Intuitive Imitation

Bright spaces with high ceilings

What piece of equipment or tool could you not live without?

I could not live without **scissors**, [easazon_link asin="B002P1751C" locale="US" new_window="default" nofollow="default" tag="textileorg0a-20" add_to_cart="default" cloaking="default" localization="default" popups="default"]needles[easazon_link] and cloths/pins.

How do you go about choosing where to show your work?

For the coming year it's on my agenda to create workshops and classes, I also plan on teaching and introducing textile art to unprivileged kids here in Brazil.

I like to showcase my work in bright spaces with high ceilings this way the larger panel pieces can hang nicely harmonizing the ambience and the observer can walk freely and interact with the pieces.

Where can readers see your work this year?

I am currently showing my work at **Anexox Gallery** in Brazil. It is possible to see my work at the gallery website at: frandolice.com/ANEXOX

For more information please visit: rodrigofranzao.com

If you've enjoyed this interview with Rodrigo let us know by leaving a comment below

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