

ELIZABETH JOBIM: ENDLESS LINES

Acknowledgements

Elizabeth Jobim's installations with their dynamic lines and shapes were brought to our attention several years ago by Claudia Calirman, the co-curator of this exhibition. The work seemed just right for the gallery. Jobim's painted canvases, placed side by side, animate space and, in a sense, use the gallery itself as an integral part of the work. The paintings are panoramic and envelop the viewer. Lehman College Art Gallery is located in an architectural gem designed by the International Style architect Marcel Breuer. Its exhibition spaces are open, with sculptural curves and soaring angles. We felt it was a perfect pairing of aesthetic intent and architectural space.

Jobim starts with stones, those bits of earth that are so basic and universal yet particular—from the streets of Rio or in this instance, New York City. In geologic time they are ancient, as old as the earth itself. With them, Jobim begins a series of transformations, from stone to line drawing, to maquette, to painting, to installation. The work is about visual relationships, process, and translation from one incarnation to the next. It is about surface and saturation, boundaries and edges, flow and rhythm. The paintings can suggest the expanse of a landscape or the proportions of a still-life or an interior. They offer an abstract meditation on space as well as line.

We are so pleased to present **Elizabeth Jobim: Endless Lines**, Jobim's first major installation in New York. Special thanks are due to Elizabeth for the month she spent in New York this summer creating the work for this exhibition. We are grateful to Claudia Calirman for helping us introduce Jobim's work to our audience and for her insightful essay. Lurixs Gallery in Rio de Janeiro has provided invaluable support of this exhibition and has helped make this endeavor possible. Finally, we would like to thank the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs for their financial support of this exhibition.

Susan Hoeltzel, Director
Lehman College Art Gallery/City University of New York

Elizabeth Jobim: Endless Lines

Where does the work start and where does it end? Is there a beginning or a finishing point? An intermittent flow of blue lines and volumes takes over the white spaces of the canvases. Little by little they engulf their surroundings to create an architectural environment. Cut and continuity, flow and interruption, partial dwellings and total nests, restful and activated spaces made out of lines that continually advance and intrude from canvas to canvas. Elizabeth Jobim's work is in a state of process, in a permanent flux, always unfolding into new forms, either connecting one panel to the next or suddenly breaking them apart.

Jobim's point of departure is irregular stones that she finds in the streets of her native city, Rio de Janeiro. Based on the appearance and shapes of the stones, she then creates small volumetric drawings. Upon close observation of these sketches, one begins to understand how the large-scale canvases take their form. Her lines blend from one panel into the next in a row of square and rectangular surfaces that cover the walls of the galleries, both in Rio de Janeiro and in New York. The work is in continual renewal generating different patterns and configurations. In Jobim's painting-installation, the order of the canvases can be shuffled to allow different narratives. The work is made of parts that connect to other parts to create the whole. A straight line can transform itself into a volumetric shape or return to its linear primal state.

Jobim's lines are confident and uncertain at the same time. They can be straight and contorted, firm and staggering, thick and thin, flat and volumetric. This is as though they are overcoming obstacles in trying to find their way into the space. They seem to be based on geometric abstraction. Nevertheless, they are deeply rooted in figuration.

Coming out of the solid Latin American tradition of geometric abstraction, Jobim subverts the way in which line and volume have been used by artists from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s - as a logical, rational, mathematical and quasi-scientific way to convey a utopian longing for technology and industrialization. Different from the works generated by the Concrete artists from Brazil, where geometric abstraction was predominantly a conceptual game of forms organized in space, Jobim's shapes are in reality still-life-based. Her canvases are a play of stripping and veiling between abstraction and figuration.



Jobim's work alludes to the large-scale cut-outs by Henri Matisse, especially his architectural installation piece *The Swimming Pool* (summer 1952), with its expansive simplified design, as well as semi-abstract and compelling figuration, in blue freehand cutouts.

Through the use of ultramarine blue oil paint - applied with rollers, like the work of a wall painter - Jobim's canvases are unevenly painted, creating spots and stains that activate the whiteness of the background through the luminosity and transparency of the blue.

Her work invokes Yves Klein's monochromatic canvases made of his trademark and patented blue (International Klein Blue), and its connection to transcendence, immateriality, and spirituality. Jobim's architectural installations are reminiscent of modern temples of meditation. The calmness of their inner space and the energy with which they suffuse the surrounding space are inseparable and interdependent.

Her encompassing use of the ultramarine blue fully impregnates the space, bringing to mind Hélio Oiticica's use of color. As he wrote in the 1960s, Oiticica wanted to release color from its pictorial support, liberating it into the space. He created sensorial environments in which the viewer would no longer have a solely retinal experience, but could engage with color in a more corporeal way. Jobim also conflates a sense of color that escapes the limitations of the physical, and of the pictorial frame, immersing the viewer in its "blueness". The moment we enter the space, we are caught inside the installation and immersed in its elegant flow of shapes and lines.

The daughter of Antonio Carlos Jobim - the father of Brazilian Bossa Nova - Elizabeth Jobim is influenced by music and its connections to time, intervals, and composition. Her work creates a play of continuity and disruption, like musical notes arranged on time. They stumble and stutter, lose and find themselves over and over again. In this endless game - with no specific beginning or clear end -, the lines keep on dancing and vibrating in blue at the pace of their own cadence.

Claudia Calirman, Art Historian



**LURIXS ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA
RIO DE JANEIRO**

Opening reception

Thu 18 Sep 2008

6PM - 10PM

Visiting hours

19 Sep 2008 - 01 Nov 2008

Mon - Fri 2PM - 7PM

Sat - appointment by phone

Rua Paulo Barreto 77, Botafogo

Rio de Janeiro Brazil

**LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY
NEW YORK**

Opening reception

Tue 14 Oct 2008

6PM - 7:30PM

Visiting hours

07 Oct 2008 - 15 Dec 2008

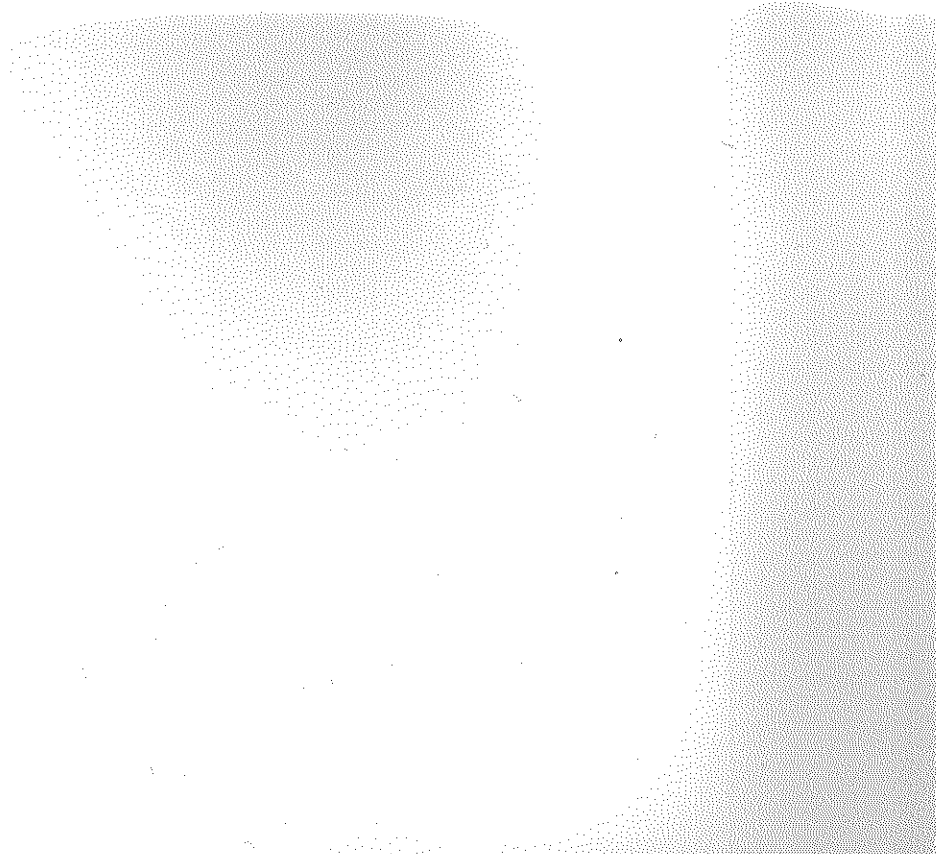
Tue - Sat 10AM - 4PM

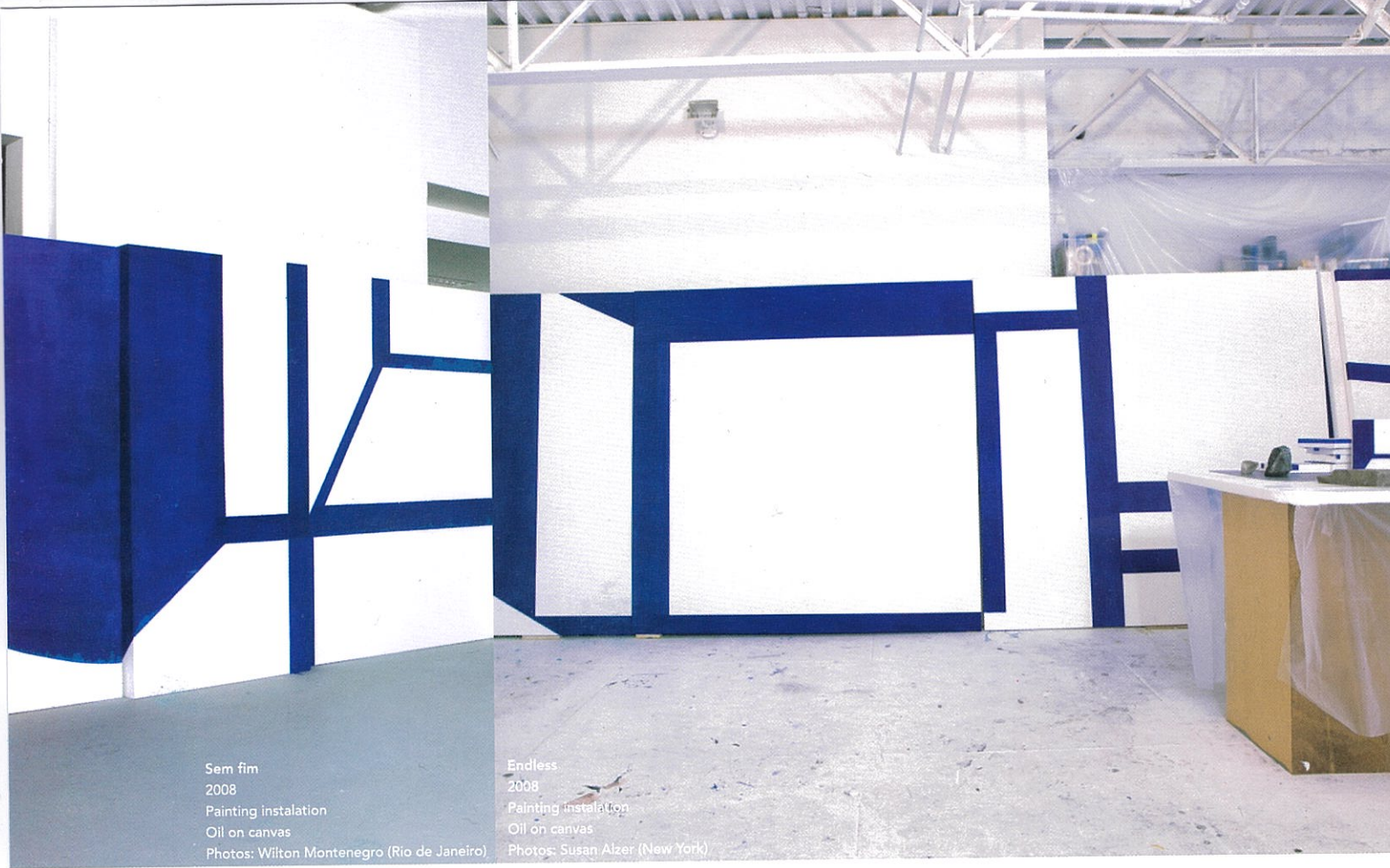
Bedford Park Boulevard West

Bronx, N.Y. USA

Endless Lines is co-curated by Claudia Calirman and Susan Hoeltzel

ENDLESS LINES





Sem fim
2008
Painting installation
Oil on canvas
Photos: Wilton Montenegro (Rio de Janeiro)

Endless
2008
Painting installation
Oil on canvas
Photos: Susan Alzer (New York)

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