

*The macro is not the micro enlarged:  
gesture, matter and colour in the work of Maria Lucia Cattani*

The spatial quality of Maria Lucia Cattani's print work since the early 1980s has been strongly marked by formal questions related to line and colour interventions on surfaces of restricted scale. She is now experimenting with deeper investigation of some the propositions formulated in her work of recent years. These propositions are fundamentally related to formal questions that involve the inclusion of gesture, the exploration of chromatic-tonal variations and the perception of the material in governing spatial qualities that operate at a scale that is no longer restricted.

From the micro of the early eighties to the macro of the recent works, Cattani takes a route that is not confined to mere increase in scale but relates to exploration of limits: from the limits of line to the extroversion of gesture; from the limits of accurate and synthetic incision to the tactile multiplicity of textures; from the limits of colour composition that, while constitutive, always affirms itself as drawing, to a palette that is also an organiser of visual fields and planes.

The macro is not the micro enlarged - that diverse spatial reasoning cannot be reduced to a simple question of size, for the nature of the composition changes, bringing in painterly dimensions, going beyond the resource of modulating the transition between earlier and current formats, shifting from the intimist concentration of form to an extroverted plurality of form and moving towards a more fully constitutive palette.

The work that Cattani has been systematically producing therefore presents continuity and fracture. Continuity in graphic mastery of her working process within a visual language. Fracture in the expansion from the linear to the painterly, from accurate incision to vigorous brushstroke.

A record of a process of reflection and production, Maria Lucia Cattani's work is both regional – not for a moment regionalist – as shown in its obvious affinity with the work of Iberê Camargo, and universal, as shown in its no less obvious connection with the contemporary formal repertoire. The prints (and drawings) that now invite us – or even urge us – towards a gaze with attentive eyes are thus at the same time an expression of the current vitality of Rio Grande do Sul graphic-visual production and of the possibility of restoring respect – national and international – to Brazilian printmaking.

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