

Gabriel Massan

Nova Iguaçu, RJ, Brazil, 1996

***Baile do terror* [Ball of Terror]**, 2024, video installation — multichannel videos with sound and color, 7min56s | 4min11s | 4min25s | 5min25s

Artist's collection

With a unique aesthetic featuring fluid forms, an explosive palette, and strange creatures—digital life forms known as “actor-sculptures”—Gabriel Massan’s practice focuses on creating 3D images and games, as well as installations and objects related to computer technologies. In his compositions, ideas take on peculiar shapes, bringing forth zooanthropomorphic figures—part human, part beast—integrated into liquefied landscapes with intricate, ultracolorful, and fiery textures. His creations are based on methods he refers to as “fictional archaeology,” combining artifact analysis, documents, and historical episodes with speculation and fabulation. Alongside this conceptual and theoretical foundation, the artist incorporates world-building techniques and storytelling in the digital realm. Through environments, dynamics, and narratives that transcend real facts, his works immerse the audience in fictional situations that recontextualize certain places, episodes, and objects, discussing their sociocultural implications and proposing critical perspectives on the past, present, and future. In this sense, his work offers (often interactive) experiences that deal with themes such as identity and emancipation within contexts of structural oppressions. Through an approach he terms “subversive alterity,” the artist asserts difference not as a basis for exclusion but as a key to accessing new understandings of the world’s structural issues. His visual syntheses, both captivating and ambiguous, function as devices to circumvent rigid preconceptions and dominant discourses, ingeniously bringing to light traditionally overlooked and marginalized perspectives.

At the 38th Panorama, Gabriel Massan presents a new development of his work *Baile do terror* [Ball of Terror] (2022–2024), drawing parallels between the escalating global tensions and violence, and the traumas of deadly brutality perpetuated by the “war on drugs” in the Rio–São Paulo axis. In this regard, the foundations of the work are informed by his experiences in Baixada Fluminense, where he was born and raised, and his experience as an immigrant since moving to Berlin, Germany, in 2020. The immersive nature of the installation reinforces the cosmology and recurring concepts in the artist’s practice, offering a situation of sensory displacement and serving as a tool to challenge colonial paradigms and distorted conceptions of the so-called “Third World,” while underlining the power of imagination to affirm other possible forms of life.