

abstraction and concrete art

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In 1930, the Dutch artist Theo van Doesburg had published a manifesto in which he made a distinction between concrete and abstract art. Concrete art corresponded to some kind of absolute visual reality, expressed only through lines, colors and shapes, without any connection with the manifestations of the world.

Abstract art, in turn, was presumably an earlier (and somehow inferior) stage, which stemmed from the observation of nature and the simplification of its visual forms. In contrast, concrete art is purely mental, without any connection with the reality external to the materiality of the work itself. Throughout the 1930s, these ideas had a significant impact on a group of artists in Zurich, one of whom, Max Bill, became their main propagator. From the 1940s onwards, his ideas resonated in Latin America, especially in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

From 1952 to 1956, at the time of the First National Exhibition of Concrete Art, also

held at MAM, the artists from Ruptura strengthened their identification with concrete art in terms very similar to those sponsored by Max Bill. Based on the notion that concrete art is an idea that becomes visible through shapes and colors, they went on to work with mathematical concepts, such as the Archimedean spiral, the golden ratio or the concept of arithmetic progression. Not coincidentally, several works by Waldemar Cordeiro bear the title *Ideia visível* [Visible idea]. It is also worth noting that, throughout the 1950s, these artists increasingly resorted to industrial materials such as synthetic varnish, chipboard and Plexiglass (a type of acrylic). However, this was not done in a widespread manner, as many artists also continued to work with traditional materials, such as oil paint and tempera on fabric and wood surfaces.

The coincidence of the problems and instruments with which the artists from Ruptura dealt attests to their most outstanding feature as a group. However, this did not prevent the group's trajectory from being permeated by internal conflicts and disagreements.