

Daniel Boccato (b. 1991, Campinas, BR) makes sculptures with a minimalist sensibility. His work is made up of industrial materials—fiberglass, poly, and resin—simply shaped. Boccato has also arranged these materials with natural and found elements, from a lemon to a dryer machine.

Boccato received his BFA from Cooper Union in 2014, and has held solo exhibitions at Formatocomodo, Madrid, ES (2021, 2016); Galería Mascota, Mexico City, MX (2020); The Journal Gallery, New York, NY (2020, 2016); Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2019); Ribot Gallery, Milan, IT (2018); Sorry We're Closed, Brussels, BE (2017); Kasia Michalski Gallery, Warsaw, PL (2015); and Cooper Union, New York, NY (2014, 2013). Two-person exhibitions include *Cannibal Valley* with Loup Sarion at M+B in Los Angeles, CA (2019) and *FLAT* with Al Freeman at Carl Kostyál in London, UK (2018). His work has been included in group exhibitions such as *Ehrenfeld* at Berthold Pott, Cologne, DE (2021); *Friends, and Friends of Friends* at the Schlossmuseum, Linz, AT (2020); *Present* at the Musée & Jardins Van Buuren, Brussels, BE (2018); *Pretty. Vacant..* at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, OH (2017); and the White Columns Benefit Exhibition at White Columns, New York, NY (2016). Daniel Boccato has a forthcoming exhibition at Magenta Plains in 2023. The artist lives and works in New York, NY.

Elephant
September 15, 2023



What to See in NYC: September Gallery Guide

New York – It is only halfway through September, and an overwhelming number of new exhibitions have already opened. This month, successful photographers eschew their commercial acclaim for more daring, personal works — stylized depictions of queer intimacy; figurative painters examine the real and imagined nooks and crannies of domestic spaces; and a new wave of young artists filter the moment through everything from glow-in-the dark fabric to woven tapestries to AI-technology to glitter.

I've rounded up some of the shows that I can't stop talking about, from [Gagosian's](#) posthumous Ashley Bickerton retrospective to [Strada's](#) inaugural exhibition to [Austin Martin White's](#) two concurrent solo shows.

In case you missed it, Mellány Sánchez's thoughtful sartorial installation "Objects of Permanence" at [Abrons Arts Center](#) closed yesterday. Two buzzy exhibitions just opened in Chelsea: Bárbara Sánchez-Kane at [Kurimanzutto](#) and Wolfgang Tillmans at David Zwirner, and Magenta Plain unveiled concurrent solo shows for [Daniel Boccato](#) and [Zach Bruder](#). If you're going to openings tonight, head downtown for Sydney Vernon's debut at [Kapp Kapp](#), before catching two must-see openings ten minutes away at [Company Gallery](#). Then end your night at [Lubov Gallery](#) for a performance by fashion designer Gogo Graham. This weekend, check out the shows below and stay tuned for part two later this month. Happy gallery-going!

HyperAllergic
June 19, 2023

HYPERALLERGIC

Daniel Boccato, the Ghost Whisperer

In an interview with *Hyperallergic*, the Brooklyn-based nonbinary artist shares new sculptures inspired by the tension between the material and the spectral.



This article is part of Hyperallergic's Pride Month series, featuring an interview with a different transgender or nonbinary emerging or mid-career artist every weekday throughout the month of June.

Daniel Boccato's fiberglass and epoxy resin sculptures appear simultaneously heavy and light; elegant and scrappy; self-serious and self-deprecating. Many of Boccato's earlier pieces involved parsing through images and objects, extracting their outlines, and rendering these contours unrecognizable in the form of wall-mounted pieces that evoke contorted faces or mushrooms or the shape a feeling might take — anything but what they once were. The Brazilian-born, New York-based artist, who identifies as nonbinary and uses it/its pronouns, eases the constraints placed on our recognizable visual lexicon by emptying and rejiggering it, conveying levity and possibility. Below, Boccato discusses a new series of sculptures informed by ghosts and the delicious tension between spectral and material existence, and shouts out inspirations ranging from etymology and animism to *The Powerpuff Girls*.



Daniel Boccato, "ghost of bunk" (2022), epoxy, fiberglass, polyurethane paint, and steel, 13 x 21 x 8 inches

Hyperallergic: *What is the current focus of your artistic practice?*

Daniel Boccato: I am currently working towards an exhibition at Magenta Plains in September 2023 that will feature two bodies of work: ghosts and lions. The lions I started in 2018, and the ghosts are new. I have been developing them for about two years and I am very excited for this opportunity to share them. I am working with curvy, wavy, sinuous shapes, making them with fiberglass and epoxy resin, and then spray-painting them with car paint. They are hanging off the wall sustained by steel pipes, appearing to float in front of the viewer. The tension between the concept of a ghost and something that is ultimately fixed and grounded in material reality is fascinating to me. I try to capture shape-shifting identities and fix them, crystallizing their form with rigid industrial materials. Not in order to exercise control over them, or dominate them conceptually, apprehending and pinning them down; I want to play with form, to animate and be animated by these forms.

H: *In what ways — if any — does your gender identity play a role in your experience as an artist?*

DB: Although my work does not literally or directly address the checkmarks of my identity on paper, I think the fluidity in my gender identity, and what that means to perception and how I understand the world around me, is present in my art. The works I make are the result of who I am and the accumulation of my experiences. Since the two things are inextricably linked, I do not feel the need to sprinkle autobiographical signs throughout my work. There is plenty ego to go around, most of my job is to stand out of the way.

H: *Which artists inspire your work today? What are your other sources of inspiration?*

DB: Music, walking on the street, going out, dancing, talking to peers, language, etymology, constructing and destructing jokes, looking at how things are built, building and making things, YouTube videos from other makers, Cocteau Twins, Harold Budd, Kaari Upson, Al Freeman, Ivy Pham, Molly Rose Lieberman, Iris Touliatou, *Space Jam*, *The Powerpuff Girls*, *Mulan*, Frances McDormand, Lisa Cholodenko, seeing people talking and understanding each other, seeing people talking and not understanding each other at all, reading and thinking about artificial intelligence, catching the moment when I realize I was wrong or understanding something different from what was being said, *Blade Runner* (both the original and 2049), the orange smog from Canadian wildfires, Fiona Alison Duncan, Natasha Stagg, Mary Gaitskill, Philip K. Dick, the view from my rooftop which has spectacular sunsets laid on top of the bleakest most dystopian city view I can imagine, The Emerald podcast and talks about animism, and how everything is connected and teeming with life.



Daniel Boccato, "These two things" (2019), concrete, speaker, 14 x 47 x 15 inches

H: *What are your hopes for the LGBTQIA+ community at the current moment?*

I hope that we can all achieve a sweet spot balance between selling out and keeping it real.

Art Magazine
October 4, 2022

Art Viewer

Daniel Boccato at Berthold Pott

October 4, 2022



69 parrotpaintings features new works from the series parrotpaintings, started in 2014. These small paintings insist on the same theme: depictions of parrots and women together. In a range of styles, the works range from very representational to less literal interpretations on the theme. Boccato does not paint directly on canvas, the images are produced on paper with an array of drawing and painting media. Markers, inks, watercolors, oil pastels, graphite, colored pencils, acrylic paints etc. The edges of the paper are torn

by hand, irregular and frayed. The paper is then glued onto a linen canvas gaily primed with gesso.

The theme of 'woman with parrot' is no stranger to art history: From Egyptian hieroglyphics and Roman mosaics to Medieval tapestries, it has been repeatedly interpreted artistically. Particularly well known are the Flemish and Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century, inspired by imported parrots from expeditions to Brazil, the birthplace of Daniel Boccato. From the nineteenth century, Gustave Courbet's *Woman with Parrot* (1866) and Edouard Manet's *Young Lady with Parrot* (1866) are particularly noteworthy examples.

"Unerotic depictions of the female body reflect an innocent curiosity towards sexuality, while speaking to the absurdity of societal obsession with rigid classification. The humility of bodily experience is emphasized, illustrating the untameable corporeal functions that bring together human and animal alike. Boccato culls its source imagery just as much from art history as from Google Images, and reimagines them with a faux-naivety, suggesting that normative cultural understandings of gender are no less simplistic, or naive, than a child's." *

* Excerpted from an essay by Rosie Motley on the parrotpaintings. This essay will be featured in an upcoming publication focusing on these works and published and designed by Zolo Press.

Daniel Boccato, born in Campinas, Brazil in 1991, lives and works in New York. He graduated from Cooper Union School of Art, New York, 2014. His work has been exhibited widely, including: Schlossmuseum Linz, Austria; Galeria Mascota, Mexico City, Mexico; Sorry We Are Closed, Brussels; Formato Comodo, Madrid; The Journal Gallery, New York; Carl Kostyal, London and Malmö; M+B Gallery, Los Angeles; and Mister Fahrenheit, New York, USA. This is the artist's second solo show, in addition to several group exhibitions, at Berthold Pott.



Daniel Boccatto, 69 parrotpaintings, 2022, exhibition view, Berthold Pott, Cologne

Art Magazine
April 25, 2019

Art Viewer

Daniel Boccato at Berthold Pott

April 25, 2019



Titled *stiff neck garden*, Daniel Boccato's current exhibition is comprised of two intertwined sections. The first section is dedicated to the latest outcomes of his ongoing *faceworks* series. Inaugurated in 2015, Boccato's *faceworks* can be considered a peculiar interpretation to Donald Judd's characterization of Specific Objects as entities that are neither paintings nor sculptures. Made of epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, Boccato's *faceworks* are monochromatic reliefs, wall-mounted vertical topographies whose varying scale and formation accentuate a blown-up image of a cartoon-like face in the midst of spastic expression. Unlike the abstract Minimalism of Judd's Specific Objects, Boccato's *faceworks* culminate in a row of subjectively figurative images which represent the confrontational complexity of the face.

This complexity is represented in several ways. Boccato's *faceworks* are frameless. It is as if they were stiffened and frozen in the course of growth and expansion. As such, they react to the boundlessness of the face as an agitated dynamic topography. In addition, the *faceworks* are also headless, detached from the support of a head. They address the uncontainable nature of the face as an emergence that cannot be delineated within a head. They tell us something deep about the face of the other, or rather, about the absolute otherness of the face, the transgressive energy of its appearance in space. Boccato's engagement in defamiliarized and fragmented facial expressions carries his work away from the Minimalist context and reveals its affinity to Surrealist art and specifically to the Surrealist fascination with dissociated face parts (Man Ray's hovering lips can serve as one example out of many more which come to mind).

In the second section of his current exhibition, Boccato's interest in defamiliarization takes a different route. The second section presents a new group of works. Begun in 2018, the group consists of concrete cast sculptures depicting sitting lions, which, similarly to the face reliefs, stare at the viewers, inviting their eye contact. The sitting lions are lifted off the floor, placed on the upper surfaces of ready-made elements and objects which the artist utilized as pedestals. The defamiliarizing effect of the lions is double. As replicas of garden lions or of gatekeepers, they rearrange the gallery's inner space into a web of thresholds between indoor and outdoor spaces. At the same time, when positioned above ground, the sitting lions also revive the heraldic symbol of a rampant lion. As a result, they transform the space into an indeterminate situation transcending the conventional distinctions between the inanimate and the revived, the symbolic and the actual, the imaginative and the material. Much like the *faceworks*, the *lionworks* don't translate the world into images, but materialize images into three-dimensional phantomic presences in real space.

-Ory Dessau

Born 1991 in Campinas, Brazil. Lives and works in New York. Studies: Cooper Union, NY. Selection of solo and duo exhibitions: Berthold Pott, Köln (April/May 2019), M+B Gallery Los Angeles (summer 2019), Carl Kostyal, London (2018), Ribot Gallery, Milan (2018), Tabacalera, Madrid (2018), Sorry we're closed, Brussels (2017), The Journal Gallery New York (2016), Formatocomodo, Madrid (2016), Kasia Michalski, Warsaw (2016)



Carl Kostyál
November 29, 2018

CARL KOSTYÁL

EXHIBITION TEXT

FLAT: Al Freeman + Daniel Boccato

November 30th 2018 – January 17th, 2019

Preview, November 29th, 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Carl Kostyál is pleased to present FLAT, an exhibition of new work by Al Freeman and Daniel Boccato. Comprising three soft sculptures by Freeman, and two wall-mounted works by Boccato, the presentation will be on view from November 29th 2018 through January 17th, 2019.

On view in the gallery are two sets of large format sculptures, mounted to the walls. The first group pairs Freeman's "Soft Slide" with Boccato's "gulface." In the second group, Freeman's "Soft Vaseline" and "Soft Hose" are joined by Boccato's "fossface." The works in both groups take their forms from familiar domestic objects. Freeman's sculptures faithfully reproduce a tub of vaseline, a garden hose, and a slide sandal, respectively. Boccato's works take formal liberties with other household fixtures, exaggerating the shape of a faucet, and abstracting the silhouette of a teacup. Taken together, the presentation assembles a wonky quotidian vision, in which everyday objects are enlarged to humorous, exaggerated scales. The exhibition's title, "FLAT," makes reference to this subject matter, borrowing the colloquial British term for an apartment.

Freeman's work is marked by a deflationary impulse, visible in both her methods of production and her selection of subject matter. Her soft sculptures reproduce and exaggerate items traditionally associated with masculine domestic settings. She drains these objects of their virility in order to reinvest them with humor, replacing rigid geometries with flaccid forms. Juxtaposing a jar of Vaseline, notable for its use as a personal lubricant, alongside an oversized garden hose, Freeman subtly skewers toxic masculinity by letting the air out of its common accessories.

Boccato makes brightly colored sculptures from epoxy, fiberglass, and polyurethane. His process begins by sketching outlines of forms he encounters in the world and blowing them up to human scale. Based on these forms, Boccato makes rough molds out of cardboard and tape, which he lines with plastic tarp. He paints the tarp a solid color and applies layers of fiberglass to the mold, which binds to the paint and registers the wrinkles from the tarp. Removing the mold, Boccato is left with a dimensional, monochromatic shell that appears alternatively heavy and plush. The works on view ape the silhouettes of a leaky faucet and an oversized teacup, in a manner that creeps between abstraction and figuration.









Art Magazine
September 19, 2018

ART



EXHIBITION

Daniel Boccato - fly like an eagle
19 Sep 2018 - 3 Nov 2018

RIBOT gallery is pleased to present *fly like an eagle*, curated by Domenico de Chirico, the first solo show in Italy of the artist Daniel Boccato. A selection of recent wall sculptures from the series “Wall Works”, specifically made for this show, shall be presented.

About

RIBOT gallery is pleased to present *fly like an eagle*, curated by Domenico de Chirico, the first solo show in Italy of the artist Daniel Boccato (Campinas, Brazil, 1991; he lives and works in New York). A selection of recent wall sculptures from the series “Wall Works”, specifically made for this show, shall be presented.

Inspired by two complementary universes, the flora and fauna, these forms with Symbolist echoes, influenced by logos, flags, image libraries and devoid of details, emerge from the walls of the gallery taking, on the first floor, the aspect of proud birds of prey and, on the lower floor, those of trees of different species. Sharp outlined silhouettes which, through the use of vectorial rendering digitally developed by the artist, space *Pop Art* to *Minimal Art* references.

These chameleon-like works perfectly mimic the color and texture of the gallery walls. Even if these works protrude by a few centimeters from the walls, they still come across as being a part of the setting and contribute to the creation of a very special atmosphere. Boccato conceives the “Wall Works” as contemporary bas-reliefs, deprived of any purely figurative value in order to concentrate exclusively on the form and on the relationship that they generate with the environment.

Notwithstanding the digital planning of the silhouettes, the works are later shaped by a laser wood cutter, so they maintain all the distinctive features of a “unique piece” because, even though they can be reproduced on any walls, they must have the exact colour and particular characteristics of the walls hosting them and so, as a result, they are always different and never repetitive.

fly like an eagle transforms the neutral space of the gallery into a metaphysical atmosphere, an apparently mute space that is then animated by the presence of the viewers who, when entering a room populated by these forms, spark off a subjective, emotive, and spiritual relationship with them.

Daniel Boccato (Campinas, Brazil, 1991; he lives and works in New York) studied at the Cooper Union School of Art in 2013. He has held solo and group shows in such private and public galleries as Corrugate Contemporary, Columbus, 2018; Tabacalera, Madrid, 2018; Musée et Jardins Van Buuren, Brussels, 2018; Sorry We're Closed, Brussels, 2017; The Journal Gallery, New York, 2017-2016.

Art Magazine
March 28, 2018

arte
aldia



The proposals of Daniel Boccato (Campinas, Brazil, 1991) investigate the relationship between abstraction and figuration and are based on the investigation of the different discursive forms that pose language and form, suggesting other foundations that establish a new thinking with which to challenge any constriction. All this is reflected in Centinela, his last performance and specific project for the space Studies of the old tobacco factory in Madrid, where he follows another of the constants of his production: the breaking of any convention on formats and the preferential use of materials and objects of an industrial nature.

With this objective in mind, the Brazilian artist has prepared several lions of concrete for the execution of this installation, all similar to those animals guardians of the European classical tradition, in a room with a huge manufacturing load -the old dressing room and washbasins of the factory-. Each of them has been placed on a daily object, all of them linked to the secondary sector, which replaces the classic pedestal in its function of enhancing the figure, positioning it as a work of art moving it away from the ground. In this way, the concept that represented that lion is completely diluted in the passivity that confers the dislocation of his figure on a trash container or a cardboard box, in addition to its distribution in a totally out of place environment. The symbol has thus lost almost all its strength; it is no longer vigilant, it is no longer active, and its peculiarity no longer resides in itself, but in the platform that sustains it, since the roles have been exchanged: the uniformity of the sculpture has given prominence to what really is different.

Sorry We're Closed
2017



Daniel Boccato

Daniel Boccato collects the outlines of objects, freeing them from any narrative, placing them outside a preestablished context.

He reuses the forms found to create monochromatic sculptures, in fiberglass and epoxy, adaptable industrial materials, dried until they reach a strong finish which confers a density on these hollow objects.

Each of these sculptures recalls vaguely something of a déjà vu. The protruding elements, the reliefs wrinkles on the plastic surfaces inspire us to question ourselves indexing here and there grimaces or the human appearance of a grin, but reminds us also that they are above all forms. Nevertheless, there is an imaginary fragility, a remains of the delicate cardboard and the molds to strip which once contained them.

The cover placed during the process of casting prints wrinkles and folds on the surface, which give an aspect deceitfully thicker in the hard and inflexible shell. And if the works on the brilliant wall remind us of the lineage of a painting-cum-sculpture, there is no painted track: the resin adheres to the paint which was applied to the mold, by taking on the work in color in an immediate and irreversible way.

Sculptures show in a purely abstracted way, revealing an imprint, the extraction of a reality resisting the representation.



Daniel Boccato, hoxface, epoxy, fiberglass, polyurethane, 73 × 84 × 19 inches, 2017



Daniel Boccato, lagface, epoxy, fiberglass, polyurethane, 67 × 97 × 28 inches, 2017



Daniel Boccato, mobbface, epoxy, fiberglass, polyurethane, 110 × 55 × 24 inches, 2017

Autre
December 15, 2016

AU+RE

CREEPERS: AN INTERVIEW OF UP AND COMING ARTIST DANIEL BOCCATO

December 15, 2016



Daniel Boccato is a 25-year-old Brazilian artist living in New York and is the subject of his first New York solo show at The Journal Gallery, entitled Creepers. After studying at Cooper Union, he developed a style that merges painting and sculpture by utilizing industrial materials (Fiberglass and epoxy, resin, etc.) to create vague and opaque shapes that leave a multitude of impressions on the viewer. His work shares some characteristics with Justin Adian's foam paintings, but whereas Adian's work relies on a precision informed by art deco aesthetics, Boccato's angular figures take on no obvious meaning. The New York Times has fittingly referred to his work as, "dumb, but in a smart way."

The works on view at The Journal Gallery have a gloss and sheen that belies their harsh interiors and difficult to discern subtexts. Boccato's work connects with the viewers on an individual level. It doesn't force the viewer into reading his/her own perspective on the work as much as it facilitates a more general aesthetic imagination boost. That approach has resulted in Boccato's star rising: Ryan McGinley shouted Boccato out from Art Basel Miami Beach via his Instagram page: "New Discovery #danielboccatto" reads the caption of an image taken of a couple of Boccato's stylized forms. Daniel and I spoke at the gallery about his new show and finding his voice in an over-saturated art world.

ADAM LEHRER: *When did you start becoming aware of or interested in visual art and creativity of any kind?*

DANIEL BOCCATO: I was always drawing as a kid. My father is a musician so I always liked playing music and up until high school, those two things were really important to me. At a certain point in the course of my education, I was supposed to choose a path and go to school so then I chose to go to Cooper Union, but I still really liked to play music and it was just one choice.

LEHRER: *Did you want to be a rockstar first?*

BOCCATO: Well, maybe. I have this very cute picture of myself like banging on some tupperware.

LEHRER: *I wanted to be a rockstar, for sure. Music was the first thing that I liked. I got my first copy of Rolling Stone when I was 7. Marilyn Manson was on the cover and I went through all those bad phases of music.*

BOCCATO: It's funny this idea of developing taste. I grew up with my father who is a jazz and Brazilian musician so that was definitely a very strong influence and it's only fairly recently when I was living by myself or at least in high school that I really started picking out things for myself and started to question what I grew up with.

LEHRER: *What is Brazil's popular music?*

BOCCATO: Samba, Bossa Nova - those are the more famous styles. But also more folk and pop. There's a big mixture.

LEHRER: *What got you interested in visual culture?*

BOCCATO: I liked cartoons. That was my entry towards awareness of form. Up until my freshmen year in college, I was still doing experiments and playing around with [animation]. The first "job" I had was in an animation studio in Brazil of all places. [My boss] was an independent animator who was producing his first feature length movie. I was able to participate in that. I was twelve and I did it twice a week. It was just an internship at first and then it became more regular because in Brazil school starts in January. So because of that gap, I was able to not go to school for half a year just work and play music and draw and do animations.

LEHRER: *That must have taught you a lot about professionalism?*

BOCCATO: Kind of. When I was at Cooper, I took three semesters away. Throughout all of them, I was working for artists to not be stuck in a school environment. I think it's very important to have this balance to be in this institution and then coming back in with a different critical perspective and going out again and continuing to develop.

LEHRER: *When you were at Cooper Union, did you already have an idea of the specific medium that you developed for yourself using industrial materials and playing with form the way you do?*

BOCCATO: It's a very personal question, I can see a lot of connections with things that I was doing [in school]. I was doing a lot of sculptures then but in a more abstract way. And these works, they came out of that aesthetic in some sense, but I think they came together with this "caricature-esque" sense of form and color; something more deliberately formed. The work is more constructed from an initial idea. So this way of working is something that I started in the latter part of my school years.

LEHRER: *What was it that drew you to using these types of more industrial materials?*

BOCCATO: It was the necessity to achieve what I wanted to do. I do understand that the materials I used in the show you could categorize as industrial, but I see a difference in two kinds. One is the actual materials that I'm using that will remain in the piece: resin, fiberglass all that stuff. And the other is simplified DIY Home Depot material: tarp, plastic, tape. I look at them differently. Those materials allow me to do the piece and I need those materials for certain physical characteristics, and the other stuff is about the aesthetic and the texture, about shape and form. What drives me to it? I don't know. I like the fact that they're cheap and simple and give a certain kind of humble vibe to it.

LEHRER: *What I find interesting about them is that they look kind of polished and they have a sheen to them. They don't look harsh or aggressive.*

BOCCATO: They're very unassuming. It's kind of a blank slate in which I can use to create these forms.

LEHRER: *'Creepers' is an interesting name for a show and you use titles rather interestingly. When you are using a title, does it become part of the piece in a way? Are you trying to express something that you find in your concept or is it an impression on a piece or do you just like playing with words?*

BOCCATO: I like playing with words, for sure. Well the title has become like database entry where you need the dimensions, the medium, and the title is part of that as well. The title is perhaps the more significant information, but all of this database context is significant.

I like Excel a lot. It's less of an interpretation of the piece. It's a funny question because titles can have that function, but I look at it the same as using these other rows on Excel sheets like color, size. It's not my reading of the work. Of course, everyone can have their own subjective relations and connections with what it sounds like and what it looks like the same you can have that with the color or the form or whatever. It's just another element, another dimension.



LEHRER: *I thought it was interesting reading the press release for this show and it says something about your work having "figuration and abstraction, but never anything in between." What do you think about that reading and do you think that's true at all?*

BOCCATO: Yeah, it's the idea that you can be in one moment or another and shifting back and forth between these two quite distinct things. Figuration and abstraction can be seen as a spectrum but it can also be seen as two different ways of thinking or approaching objects I like the idea that something arbitrary can be felt as not arbitrary. The same way that I like to talk about data: color and form are all just data. Data in some sense is arbitrary. That's what this play between these two modes of figuration and abstraction mean to me. That you suddenly walk into this room and you see these shapes but then you start having an emotional and spiritual subjective relation to them because they become these sort of characters, they have their own souls in a way. But you can also shift back, backtrack from that. There's something very compelling for me in this activity.

LEHRER: *Is there an architectural element at work in this show? Do you always know exactly what you're going to do before you start a piece?*

BOCCATO: Because of the nature of the process I need to have an outline and I need to cut it. In that moment, to be able to cut it, that outline is pretty defined. I can't really add to it or change it that much. As soon as I start painting—that's the first step and then I do the mould and then I reinforce it with resin—there's no chance to go back and to end it. So I need to have a good plan but there's a lot of unexpected things that happen in the middle. For example, the walls of the piece, because of the weight of the resin, start to flop down or the piece starts to contort.

LEHRER: *Yeah, that's what I figured because it just seems like you have a precise handling of your process. Do you listen to Malcolm Gladwell's podcasts ever? He has this one episode about how genius emerges and the two type of artists. He uses Elvis Costello's fifth album, his shittiest album, but there's one song on there that he re-worked several times and then it became one of his biggest hits so he argues that Elvis Costello's an experimental artist: he really has to work at what he's doing. Whereas a conceptual artist has their idea, knows how to carry it out and carries it out right away.*

BOCCATO: Yeah but I think it begs the question: where's the experimentation? And where's the discovery? And where's the delivery? And where's the production? I think all those things have their own places. I do like very much the idea that I can be my own assistant in a way. That once I have a certain vision I'm also able to carry that out without having to be creative and sensitive all the time. I like the idea of having an idea and then being able to do it. Also I think you can be creative by editing or deleting your choices.

LEHRER: *Writing about the NADA Art Fair last yeah, Ken Johnson, writing for the New York Times, considered your piece one of the pieces to look out for and wrote that your work is "dumb in a smart way." Would you describe that as a fair statement?*

BOCCATO: I think it's very a special compliment. I think it's true. I like the idea of dumb and stupid, or even retarded, even if it isn't politically correct. It's cool to go slow, it allows you to see other things that you wouldn't otherwise.

LEHRER: *That's true. And when I think of something that's dumb in a smart way I think of so many awesome things: I think of John Waters movies, I think of Devo the band—*

BOCCATO: That's also true for most of the things I do. That's why I think of it as a compliment.

LEHRER: *What type of beauty are you trying to create? If you could describe it?*

BOCCATO: Beauty has to do with form. So that's the type of beauty I'm interested in. It's what I was saying before: of course everything is arbitrary but it is the illusion, the idea that things aren't arbitrary. That you can have a reason to make this thing or that thing is a beautiful idea.

LEHRER: *Yeah, for sure. Just to finish up: as an artist of a certain age, I was interested in talking about what it's like to break into the art market now. You're twenty-five years old and you're picking up heat in your career. Do you find that it's easier to get your work noticed now? Or easier and harder to make a living? How does one break into the market now?*

BOCCATO: I don't know. Let me know when you find out.

LEHRER: *Haha. This is huge though, getting a solo show. The way I think about it now, for all creative fields, is that it's way easier to get noticed but way fucking harder to get paid.*

BOCCATO: Well I think what's easier is to disseminate but it's harder to create a sense of history. There's so much going on and increasingly less memory.

LEHRER: *As a critic, the amount of press releases that I get on daily basis that I could never get to is totally overwhelming to both buckle down and make my art but also to stay tapped in. I wonder if our generation will have its Cindy Sherman, you know?*

BOCCATO: I think that throughout wars and everything you have those who win and those who lose but that's not actually because of what happened but because of how people narrate it and because of the future. So I think that will continue to happen but if you have a lot of people writing history then perhaps it will be different.

Hyperallergic
December 3, 2016

HYPERALLERGIC

[Art](#) [Reviews](#) [Weekend](#)

Daniel Boccato: Sculpture in a Crowded Field

In a savvy move, Daniel Boccato has latched onto a currently popular color-and-shape-based aesthetic and taken it to a material extreme.



Daniel Boccato, "bopface" (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 43 x 33 x 6 inches (all images courtesy the artist and The Journal Gallery, New York)

Funny and slick, Daniel Boccato's exhibition at The Journal Gallery is called *Creepers*, and comprises six wall-based sculptures in cast fiberglass and epoxy, all dated 2016. Boccato is a native of Brazil, currently resident in New York with a newish (2013) BFA from Cooper Union. He has already shown a bit in Europe and elsewhere in North America; *Creepers* is his New York solo debut. In a savvy move, Boccato has latched onto a currently popular color-and-shape-based aesthetic and taken it to a material extreme. His work is impressive, well-wrought and beautifully installed, but too strategic to be psychologically engaging in the way that truly odd work is. Such conservatism is entirely understandable given Boccato's situation as a smart, ambitious young artist in a field already quite full of them.

This is not to deny the artist's considerable achievement with this show, which has both forcefulness and staying power. The shapes of these monochrome works (and their titles) refer obliquely to exterior sources; some may be entirely abstract, but even those seem to be motivated by observation of mechanical and/or natural forms. The front of the sculptures is parallel to the wall, from which they protrude a few inches to a couple of feet; they are, roughly speaking, silhouettes. But not entirely, because they are constructed in two or three levels or steps; within the overall shape are sections that either extend still further into space, or recede by a similar depth.



Daniel Boccato, "knipface" (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 114 x 94 x 8 inches

The largest work, at over nine feet high, is “knipface,” painted an eye-popping violet pink. It looks at first quite like a tree of some kind, or maybe a wonky umbrella — it has a curved, roughly vertical stem, topped by a kind of mound shape. But that easily translates into a head atop an elongated neck, with a schoolgirl flip and a wiseacre grin. The “face” side is, then — a face. In fact, they’re *all* faces: “laxface,” “belface,” “ribface,” “bopface” and “tokeface,” in (respectively) green-yellow, cobalt blue, coal black, lemon yellow, and a deep orange that’s close to burnt sienna, but more saturated. Coated with polyurethane, the color seems embedded, flawless.

The surfaces, on the other hand, are flawed indeed — deliberately so. They are networked with wrinkles and crinkles from the casting process. The mold the artist used was evidently a pliable material (or was lined with one), and the resulting buckles and ripples are immortalized in resin. So although they appear at first sight to be soft or underinflated, these works are hard, shell-like. (Yes, I tapped one with a knuckle.) The self-conscious glitches spanning the surface of every piece are neither visually incidental nor technically unavoidable; they are ostentatious displays of “process” that don’t make the work any more approachable, but all the more polished. That’s interesting in itself, and it’s cool that the pieces look like they’re sagging, but it’s not clear to me why the illusion of instability and immanent collapse is important to the work.

I’m reminded of a criticism you sometimes hear of Meryl Streep’s acting — that while her technique is impeccable, she doesn’t often truly inhabit a role. Frequently, she’s just not believable as the character she’s playing. As a viewer of Boccato’s work, you become acutely aware that the artist has opted for a formal vocabulary that teeters on the brink of recognition, an unequivocal palette, and a method of color application that eliminates any hint of hesitation or adjustment, along with a reliable procedure for enlarging those forms to an institutional scale. While that’s no mean feat, it isn’t enough to draw you in, to beguile you, to take you elsewhere. Rather than inhabit the process by which it is made, Boccato’s work declaims it.



Daniel Boccato, "belface" (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 55 x 117 x 27 inches

The outside contour of "belface" recalls a rotary telephone; roughly semicircular shapes take it a second step into real space, indicating downcast eyes and an angry frown. If the work's title refers to the old phone company, Bell, then it's easy to think of this scowl as the aftermath of a disconnection. But what about "laxface"? Has it something to do with negligence, or the Los Angeles airport, or magnesium citrate? The work is four-and-a-half feet high, bottom-heavy like an ink bottle, sporting a centrally located cylinder for a nose and a gaping mouth that, in an animated cartoon, would signify a panicked bellow. ("WIL-MAAA!")

The outside contour of “belface” recalls a rotary telephone; roughly semicircular shapes take it a second step into real space, indicating downcast eyes and an angry frown. If the work’s title refers to the old phone company, Bell, then it’s easy to think of this scowl as the aftermath of a disconnection. But what about “laxface”? Has it something to do with negligence, or the Los Angeles airport, or magnesium citrate? The work is four-and-a-half feet high, bottom-heavy like an ink bottle, sporting a centrally located cylinder for a nose and a gaping mouth that, in an animated cartoon, would signify a panicked bellow. (“WIL-MAAA!”)



Daniel Boccato, “laxface” (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 56 x 31 x 12 inches

Maybe it’s better not to take the “-face” reference literally, but in that case I wouldn’t know what to make of the creeper called “tokeface” (the dark orange one). Of all the works, it has both the most generalized, blob-like outline as well as the most articulated secondary feature — a hybrid of rectangle and oval that suggests forearm and fist. If, as the title suggests, we’re looking at the visage of a pot smoker, then he’s bogarting that joint while he laughs his head off.

As to Boccato's artistic lineage, Richard Tuttle made thickish, shape-heavy wall works in the 1960s, though they are painted plywood, much smaller, and generally desaturated in color. In the same vein is Imi Knoebel's "24 Colors — For Blinky" (1977), a group of 24 large, oddly shaped, chromatically exacting monochrome paintings on 4-inch-deep wood panels. (The set was recreated under Knoebel's supervision in 2008 for an installation at Dia:Beacon.) Doreen McCarthy has recently shown some eccentrically shaped, inflatable monochrome sculptures that allude to biological forms without representing one; Justin Adian's pillowy, stuffed-canvas works, while not invariably monochrome, are similar to Boccato's high reliefs in their wall-flowering three-dimensionality. This necessarily abbreviated list of kindred spirits must include the late, great Richard Artschwager, who presided over the mid-'60s marriage of minimalism and Pop and whose influence I sense in Boccato's choice of industrial materials, minute attention to craft, and deadpan presentation.



Daniel Boccato, "tokeface" (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 83 x 77 x 23 inches

Is it fair to subject Boccato to so many comparisons? I think it is. He strikes me as a strategist who is trying to stake out his territory in the contemporary artists' land-grab by fabricating studiously awkward, ungainly objects on a public-address scale — Donald Baechler meets Jeff Koons, but without Baechler's illustrational nostalgia or Koons's kinky gaudiness.



Daniel Boccato, "ribface" (2016), epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane, 80 x 49 x 15 inches

This work has moxie, a quality many collectors seem to appreciate. But it may be that six Boccatos in one space are five too many. To come upon "ribface," for example, while wandering around a museum or corporate lobby might be tremendously exciting. It is the black one, nearly seven feet high and over a foot deep, and inscrutable to an extent the others are not. Its knotty, goofy shape doesn't signify anything in

particular; it looks unlike a rib, and even less like a face. The pruney randomness of its front surface is contrapuntally at odds with the orderliness of a pair of inverted triangles — one protruding, the other recessed — that dominate the work's upper and lower registers. Its alt-jazziness in full swing, "ribface" shows that you shouldn't have to sacrifice perversity for the sake of professionalism.

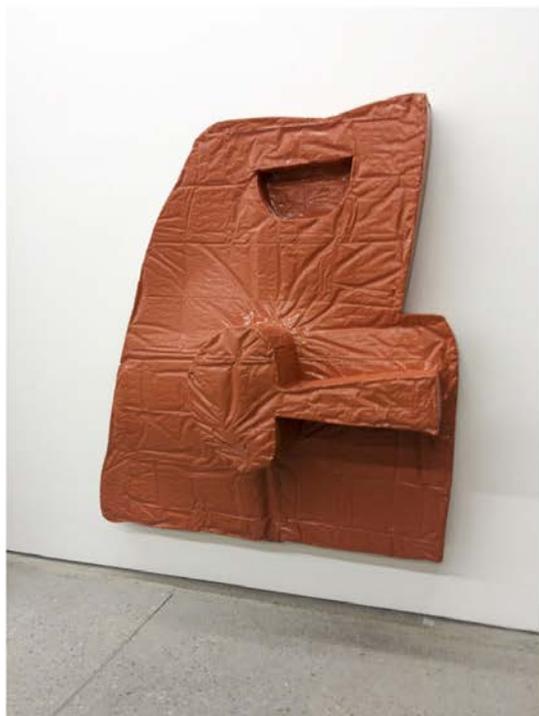
Daniel Boccato: *Creepers continues at The Journal Gallery (106 North 1st Street, Williamsburg, Brooklyn) through December 18.*

Office Magazine
November 6, 2016

office

Daniel Boccato at the Journal Gallery

— Art



November 06, 2016

On November 2nd, Brazilian artist Daniel Boccato opened his first solo exhibition, *creepers*, at The Journal Gallery in Williamsburg. Boccato, a recent alumnus of the Cooper Union, focused on industrial materials, like fiberglass and epoxy, that make the work look more solid than it actually is—the sculptures are actually hollow—making for an interesting play on shape and form. The exhibition is open through December 18th.

Photos by Sjoerd Cuypers



The New York Times
May 5, 2016

The New York Times

ART REVIEW

NADA Art Fair Offers the Wacky and the Political, Plus Basketball

By Ken Johnson
May 5, 2016



Daniel Boccato's "blogface" vaguely resembles a one-eyed, big-mouthed cartoon monster. Daniel Boccato, Formato Comodo (Madrid)

Formato Comodo The bracingly bumptious sculpture "blogface" (2016), by [Daniel Boccato](#), is a crudely made, all-green construction of epoxy, fiberglass and polyurethane vaguely resembling the visage of a one-eyed, big-mouthed cartoon monster. It's dumb in a smart way.

“Each of these sculptures recalls vaguely something of a déjà vu. The protruding elements, the reliefs wrinkles on the plastic surfaces inspire us to question ourselves indexing here and there grimaces or the human appearance of a grin, but reminds to us also that they are above all forms.”

-Sorry We're Closed Gallery