

# VISIÓN | doble

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**Título:** Terrenos de perturbación de Julio Lugo Rivas  
**Title:** Julio Lugo Rivas' Terrains of Disturbance

**Autor / Author:** Cheryl Hartup  
Curadora, Escritora y Conferenciante Independiente

**Resumen:** En su exhibición Aproximaciones, Julio Lugo Rivas explora los campos compartidos entre arte y ciencias naturales, situando al espectador al límite de su imaginación, con el fin de provocar una visión que parte de lo microorgánico y se extiende hasta la inmensidad del cosmos.

**Abstract:** In his exhibition Aproximaciones, Julio Lugo Rivas explores the shared knowledge between art and natural sciences, placing the viewer at the limit of their imagination, in order to provoke a vision that goes from the micro-organic world to the vastness of the cosmos.

**Palabras clave:** Galería de Arte de la Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, Julio Lugo Rivas, Pintura, Ciencias naturales, Cheryl Hartup

**Keywords:** Universidad del Sagrado Corazón Art Gallery, Julio Lugo Rivas, Painting, Natural Sciences, Cheryl Hartup

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**Visión Doble: Revista de Crítica e Historia del Arte**  
Programa de Historia del Arte, Facultad de Humanidades  
Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras  
13 Ave. Universidad Ste. 1301  
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00925-2533

+1 (787) 764-0000, extensión 89596  
[vision.doble@upr.edu](mailto:vision.doble@upr.edu)  
<http://humanidades.uprrp.edu/visiondoble>  
<https://revistas.upr.edu>



## Julio Lugo Rivas' *Terrains of Disturbance*

Cheryl Hartup

Curadora, Escritora y Conferenciante Independiente

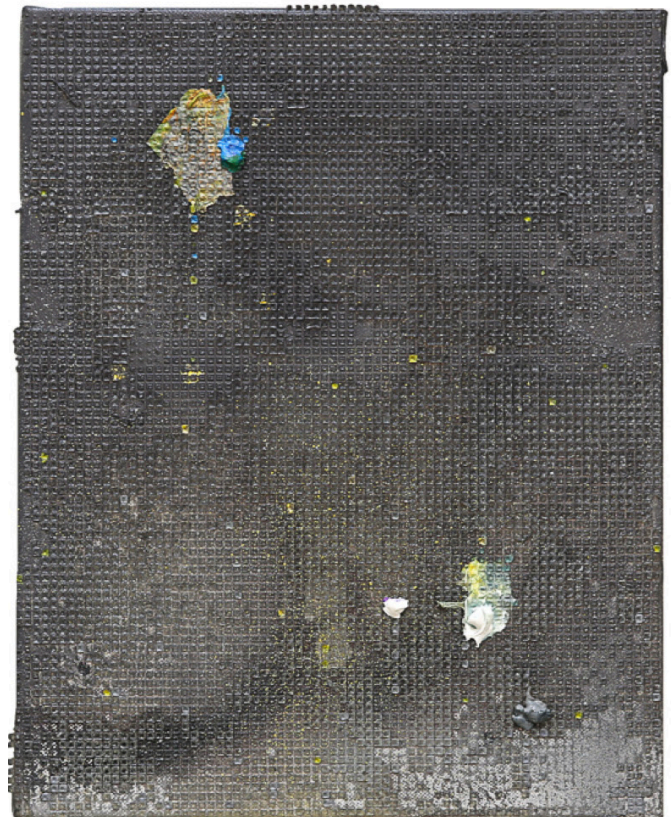
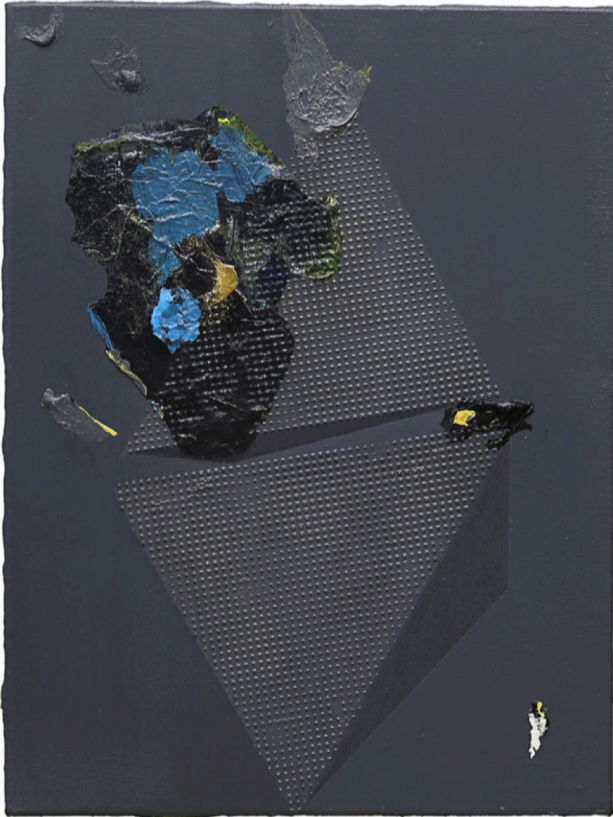


Julio Lugo Rivas, *Fragmentación del universo paralelo*, 2014. Foto: Galería de Arte USC.

The artistic expressions of Julio Lugo Rivas probe the possibilities of creative symbioses. *Approximations* presents uneasy interactions between two dissimilar elements in a painting, two distinct bodies of work, and the relationship between the maker, the spectator, and the canvas. These encounters between unlike entities can be at once mutually rewarding, uncanny, and strained.

Lugo Rivas studied art and biology, and his process, imagery, and titles are influenced by the natural sciences. He refers to his large atmospheric canvases as macrocosms and his small abstractions as microcosms, but one can imagine just the opposite, as well. The artist begins

both bodies of work by observing the canvas surface from above. In fact, *Acercamiento objetivo 20x* alludes to the initial focus and magnification of a specimen under a microscope. Lugo Rivas places his large canvases on the floor and he frenetically applies many layers of aqueous acrylics so that the colors soak, splatter, and drip across the unprimed cotton fabric. This chaotic and intuitive physical act is followed by a period of observation.



Left.: Julio Lugo Rivas, *Acercamiento, Objetivo 20x XIV*, 2014. Right: Julio Lugo Rivas, *Acercamiento, Objetivo 20x XIII*, 2014. Fotos: Galería de Arte USC.

Next, the artist positions the canvases vertically, and he begins to work on the delicate mechanics of the picture. He carefully paints and draws simple and more complex, irregular geometric shapes that float and propel through an effervescent and rhapsodic radioactive fallout. They seem to advance, retreat and hover in the indeterminate overall plane. Lugo Rivas uses the hard-edge forms to balance color, form, light, weight and movement in his watery underworlds and interstellar gaseous clouds. The dynamic, unresolved state of these explorations express the present moment and its duration. Yellow beams of light emanate from some shapes and suggest perception and communication in these acts of drawing close.

Lugo Rivas mixes acrylics and dirties them a little. His colors look poisonous and this dissonance disrupts and intensifies one's sense of the paintings. The viewer's mind is put on edge. The artist

presents us with a curious elsewhere that ravishes and irritates the eye--a blissful open field for mutual discovery, a smothering environment contaminated by deafening noise, exhaust, black ash, and toxins. His intension is that viewers experience the fusion and confusion of these varied ecologies with all their senses—feeling, smelling, and tasting the atmosphere—and imagining the speed, energy, movement, sound, and vibration of the scene.



Julio Lugo Rivas, *El origen de las estrellas*, 2013. Foto: Galería de Arte de la USC.

Unlike the large paintings that have a deep sense of expanding space that gently pulls the spectator into the far-off distance, the *Acercamiento objetivo 20x* series comprises textured topographies that project outward. Both bodies of work juxtapose the organic with the angular, and fluid abstraction with sensitive geometry. Lugo Rivas “contaminates” his landscapes with a foreign and artificial presence to interrogate the response of the painting’s formal elements to sudden contact with the unforeseen. Likewise, we may question our own response to unexpected encounters in our polluted environment.

Lugo Rivas likes to experiment with different materials and their effects. He covers his small canvases with gloss medium or modeling paste, presses a plastic mesh onto the surface, and then lifts it. The result is a grid of tiny raised squares with a squishy (gloss medium) or hard (modeling paste) texture, which he then paints with many layers of acrylics. The compact, miniature squares evoke pixels in a blurred LED display. Sometimes the grid is broken with gaps and unraveled edges like a decomposing shroud or a frayed urban fabric. Other times it is a regular shape that suggests a window or door. The artist contrasts his layered tonal nuances with black paintings that have shiny, obsidian-like surfaces made with graphite and shellac.



Julio Lugo Rivas, *Planos del microcosmos*,  
2013, Foto: Galería de Arte USC

From the palettes he uses to paint each large canvas, Lugo Rivas scrapes off multi-colored chips, like a kind of tissue culture. He archives his favorite fragments and later applies these recycled elements to the surfaces of his small canvases sparingly. These colorful sculptural forms slow down the viewer’s act of looking. They are like multifaceted jewels carefully placed in a setting, or wondrous artifacts that remain after the dirt has sifted through an archaeological box screen. Lugo Rivas balances chance and imperfection with deliberate acts that he does not belabor. Once he attaches the “tissue culture” onto the surface of his small paintings, he does not alter it by painting it or painting around it. Working in a serene more contemplative manner on a smaller scale leads the artist back to action painting and his large canvases.

Lugo Rivas’ creative process and formal expressions in *Approximations* are inspired by his memories of observing living organisms conduct themselves in both benign and hostile environments. When organisms and objects collide, a new understanding arises that is

perceptive, dynamic, and mutually mutable. These works relate to the artist's concerns about humans co-existing with waste in fragmented, disconnected and dysfunctional environments interspersed with abandoned spaces and ruins. How do we repair the broken wefts of our world? Approximations, the act or process of drawing together, engender strategies of relation in terrains of disturbance. Lugo Rivas' strident colors and hard, soft, and permeable surfaces mingle and blur to create a space that is at once disruptive and interventionist, and constructive and ameliorative.

Edited by David Auerbach