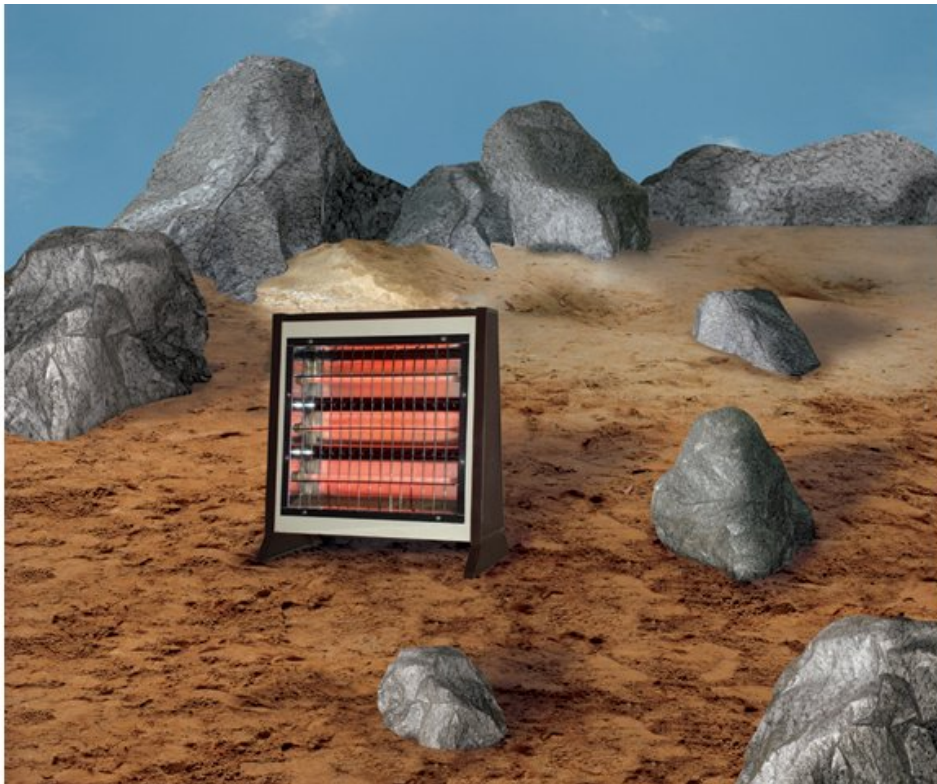


DAILYSERVING

AN INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

November 24, 2010 Written by [Rebecca Najdowski](#)

Rodrigo Matheus



Verão (Summer), 2007. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

The calling card of artist [Rodrigo Matheus](#) is double-sided: a enchantment of the everyday on one side, the reverse, a wry disillusionment. My first encounter with the work of Matheus was not his own artwork, but a curatorial project for the gallery [Mendes-Wood](#) in São Paulo. He brought together pieces that engaged perception and representation; there were works that played with optics and material, works that looked at the gallery structure, and a minimalist aesthetic that seemed to be strategy for incorporating the maximum amount of pieces to build up to a grand moment without overwhelming the exhibition space. This interest in representation and perception carries through in his own art. Matheus has often utilized the apparatuses of corporations, the mechanism of identity development and also

everyday equipment and furnishings, to examine representation and perception, most often that of nature and art.



Criptonita (Kryptonite), 2008. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

In his solo show *Handle with Care* at [Galeria Fortes Vilaça](#) in São Paulo, which runs through December 18th, Matheus expands and complicates his assimilation of the corporate institution by utilizing the accoutrements of art circulation within the gallery system. Here, the notion of a box, an apparatus used for both containment and circulation, is used as both raw subject matter and as a vessel to house videos. In a work reminiscent of [Walead Beshty's](#) FedEx kraft and copper boxes, *Caixa Pirâmide* (Pyramid Box) are wood boxes that will bare the marks of their passage, the accumulation of stamps and labels reminding the viewer of the often invisible circuit operating behind artworks. Also exhibited among boxes is the video piece *Patenon* (Parthenon). 24 hours of Google Earth images of the Greek ruin are distilled into a 30 second loop creating a video that sits somewhere between postcard picture and video surveillance.



Handle With Care, 2010. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

Hollywood, a concurrent solo show in Rio de Janeiro at [Silvia Cintra + Box 4](#) will be up until December 11. Again, time and passages are looked at, but here through the imaging of the landscape of Rio de Janeiro. Delicately idyllic painting of the tropical environment partially cover concrete, neo-classical, decorative forms. *Hollywood*, as the title suggests, takes on the construction of representation, specifically an imagined colonial iconography.



Travel Expenses, 2008. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.

Matheus's work is most successful when it embodies a topography of accessible, every-day technology that upends the construction of landscape – when the viewer, despite a framework of familiar technology and artificiality, still discovers a sense of wonderment. Representations of nature are often pushed through the sieve of technology to produce simulacra, but Matheus's artworks are also a distillation of grand sensations into the human scale, carrying with them the legacy of Brazilian sensorial exploration. The use of industrially designed objects like humidifiers, fans, and spotlights to contain, organize, and model natural phenomena is a micro-scale experiment in forces, both natural and corporate. *Work Station*, 2008, is an installation environment that relishes in and transforms the everyday office. Computer monitors exhibit silent, uninhabited nature imagery from video games while artificial stone speakers play actual nature sounds. The non-functionality of the work station which runs parallel to an invented natural system asks the question: how do we apprehend the world?



Work Station, 2008. Courtesy of Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo.