

LORIEL
BELTRÁN
*CONSTRUCTED
COLOR*
NOV 6, 2021—MAY 1, 2022

MUSEUM
OF ART
AND DESIGN
MIAMI DADE
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THURSDAY
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DESIGN: VACAVISION ALTERNATIVA/ PRINTING: BELLA COLOR

MOAD Projects

Constructed Color

Loriel Beltrán

Nov 6, 2021 – May 1, 2022

Loriel Beltrán
Constructed Color

To construct his recent paintings, the Miami-based Venezuelan American artist Loriel Beltrán affixes slabs of layered paint, sliced from blocks hardened in boxlike molds, to panels. These innovative abstract works of dazzling opticality and metaphori- cal density appear as stacked structures, assemblages, or objects. But the optical mixing of the colors perceived by view- ers also make the paintings seem somewhat intangible. This contradiction between object and opticality constitutes only one of the work’s paradoxes.

Beltrán uses such contradictions to create a tension-filled space within which he explores possible modes for contempo- rary painting. His works harken back to historical references, such as Gerhard Richter, Alejandro Otero, and Carlos Cruz-Diez, all of whom contrasted the construction of color to vision’s physiological and psychological subjectiveness. Yet it is Constructivism’s legacy—its drive to conceive vision in terms of the object and the object in visual terms—that Beltrán’s recent production revisits and redirects. For color, to use the artist’s words, here oscillates between a “mediated” or visual and a “primary” or physical status; constructed color affirms itself both as an optical event and as a structured material that can only belong within the realm of things.

The artist has said of his studio practice:

The process to make these paintings is slow and labor intensive. I make the paintings in groups, and I start with sketches of color ideas and a rough format of the works I want to make. Then I make custom rectangular molds in which I start pouring the paint, layer by layer. I pour a color and have to let it dry for about two to three days, then I can pour the next color. I repeat this process for a few months until the mold is full. I remove the block of paint from the mold and set it up in a custom-made cutting machine. The machine has a guide for a guillotine blade that gets pulled by a hoist while the paint is held by a pressing system made of car jacks welded onto a steel plate. The paint comes out as strips, and those get arranged on custom tables that have a built-in storage rack. After all the blocks of paint have been cut, I start pulling out sheets with strips to decide a final format and composition. Then I make wood panels to the specific formats, transfer the material onto the panel, and glue the strips to finish each painting.

This process began unintentionally and has changed substan- tially over time. It started in my last year of high school, with an old painting palette that I used. I did not like to scrape the paint off or clean the palette after every use, so the paint began to accumulate on it. After a few years of painting, I realized I was much more interested in the accumulation of paint on the palette than in any of the more traditional paintings I was making at the time. I really liked the sponta-

neous growth and especially the idea that every painting I had made till that point was somehow present in that object. One day I decided to cut the palette in half to reveal this history, and, from then on, I started experimenting with slowly building slabs of paint to be cut.

I moved to the U.S. when I was fifteen and I felt really discon- nected from the culture here, so I think making these accu- mulations was like building a literal ground to start making my own work. Painting is a medium that is so old and has such a rich history, I thought that making paintings this way, rather than reinventing painting, was more like connect- ing painting with this vast history of cultural accumulation and thinking of painting as objects rather than images. These ideas of Painting as accumulation, Painting as object, still drive my work.

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1985, Beltrán earned a BFA from the New World School of the Arts at Miami Dade College. Beltrán’s work has been included in exhibitions at the Pérez Art Museum Miami; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; the Museo de Arte Acarigua-Araure in Venezuela; and the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia; and he has had solo exhibitions at the Wolfsonian Museum Bridge Tender’s house, Central Fine, and the non-profit Locust Projects in Miami. Beltran was also a co-founder and co-director of the artist run gallery and collective Noguchi Breton (formerly GUCCIVUITTON).

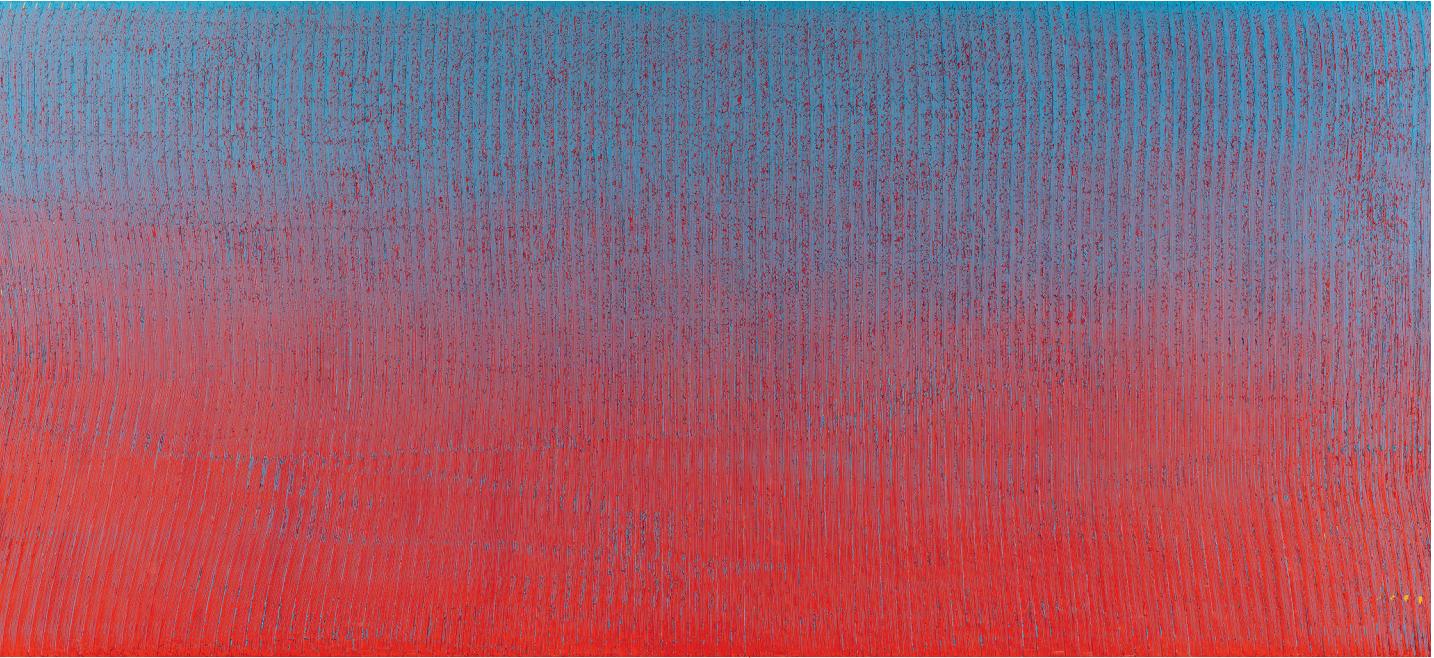
Loriel Beltran: Constructed Color inaugurates MOAD Projects, a new series of exhibitions that features work by Miami-based artists, including distin- guished Miami Dade College and New World School of the Arts alumni and faculty. MOAD Projects provides a platform for local artists to realize new projects or exhibit recent bodies of work, as well as for investigations of understudied historical develop- ments in Miami’s cultural past. MOAD Projects expands upon the swing/ SPACE/Miami alumni exhibition series that began in 2013.



This exhibition is curated by Rina Carvajal, MOAD’s Executive Director and Chief Curator, and is made possible by the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; and the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



Loriel Beltrán in his studio. Photos by Karli Evans. ©Museum of Art and Design at MDC.



Loriel Beltrán, *OBSDV*, 2020–21, latex paint on wood panel, 70×155 inches (177,8×393,7 cm). Collection of John Marquez. Promised gift to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. Photo by Zachary Balber. Courtesy of the artist and Central Fine, Miami Beach.