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# Geometry over Geography A Conversation with Rodolfo Edwards

01/07/2015 by [NICK ROGERS \(HTTP://ARTEFUSE.COM/AUTHOR/NICK-ROGERS/\)](http://artefuse.com/author/nick-rogers/)

**Ciudades oil on canvas 45 x 60 inch, 2005**

**Do you find your works emphasize the concept and the process over the end product?**

I think they both are working together. When you are working in the artwork, the context, the idea is coming together because you start working on it and you start finding the images because you are scouring for information. When you are scouring for information you find one thing and you're curious so you try and find another thing and that leads to another one. So that's the interesting part of the work, sometime you have one part that's like 20 percent of the work ready but then you think , "Oh maybe i should work in some special architectural imagery" so you try to find cities, places, architecture, sculptures and bring it up in the canvas so maybe that makes a good contrast with whats already there. So the fact of the

concept of the work comes together in the same moment that you are creating it.

### **How has your style and process developed?**

I start with the carbon slides, and I noticed one day that when you alter the image, you can start creating by fusing objects. When you put two images together it's a different thing all of a sudden. Then you put 3 and then 4, 5, 6 together and it keeps changing. It starts going from the most figurative to the most abstract thing. Its also kind of like a music composition. There's a rhythm with the slides, when you are looking at the canvas, you are reading a rhythm so its talking to you in a way. In your brain you are hearing music. The colors have a meaning like a note, the high notes are brighter colors and the low notes are the darkest colors. In a way your brain is interacting with everything. The pieces reflect my mood, the ones with less color is my low mood and the more colorful ones reflect my happy mood.

### **What is your favorite art or architectural style?**

I mostly prefer Baroque and Neo-Gothic. I also love Medieval Architecture, it drives me crazy. I like how they built everything in circles. When I travel, I love to be inside of the castles and feel how the people were living in this kind of environment thousands of years ago. Here in New York, the kind of architecture I see I call perfumes. You have every bottle of different styles, you have the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the Flatiron building and they are all different! There is not a line, so you can say New York is a hybrid of different scents of perfumes. They copy styles from different parts of European and American architecture. More than any styles I am just inspired by cities themselves.

**Ciudades, oil on canvas, 45 x 60 inch, 2005**

### **Your work is inspired by urban design, What city inspires you most?**

Well mostly I like to work with big cities, like right now we are talking about how i like to google and read about the metropolis and big cities. One of the cities that I like to visit and emphasize in my work, because of the density and the living aesthetic of things, is Sao Paulo in Brazil. It's a very interesting city architecturally. Its not an old city, it has sprouted in the

past 200 years so everything is mostly brand new so it has a kind of stamp on there.

Also sometimes I use New York as a kind of geographical statement because New York is an island so I use it in my work like an island, the way it is connected with bridges and structural elements. The city works in isolation sometimes, it's not a unified city. So I try to find every specific characteristic when I reproduce cities in my work.

**You are from Santiago. A significant trait of Santiago is that you can see the Andes mountains from basically any point in the city.**

Yes you have a very strong geographical statement there.

**So do you enjoy the interplay between nature and the urban environment?**

Santiago is a city of 6 million people and it's over the Andes Mountains, and it's 4000 sq meters. So it's a huge city but you know the mountains are so huge that they look like a wall. So the city was constructed in the shadow of this wall and they had this measure looming in the near distance. It helps me to see things differently when you are in a place that's plain and everything is so different from that, where you don't have the notion of that dimension. Living everyday and looking at the mountains and the city, the relationship of the distance and scale, you get a little reminder of the amazing geographical location that you're living in.

**Why did you decide to come to New York?**

I came to New York for one month, I was invited by friends and I stayed there for a while. There's a big community of artists from Chile living in New York so I started visiting studios of friends and then I started getting into going to open studios and building relationships here and I realized it's a big field to make art, it's not so limited. There's so much information and places to go but I can see New York as a place where I can live, make my stuff, and I can be happy and inspired everyday to look for different things. It's also a platform for me to go to other places, unlike Chile which is very far away and it's very difficult to be an artist who travels to other places frequently.

Ciudades oil on canvas, 45 x 60 inch, 2005

### **How do you think architecture effects your life as a person who lives in a big city?**

I think mostly that architecture is a kind of stamp that defines a city so other people can recognize it, its that city's character. So if you live in your city you have to be part of it you have to represent yourself. Like for example, if you live in Europe, you are European. The architecture is associated with the social environment, the political environment and the traditions. Therefore, architecture is an important part of your cultural background. In my country, Chile, right now there is a thing happening where traditional architecture and rural architecture is beginning to be pushed by new architecture. We are talking about taking a small city an making it "huge-small" resulting in offending the people that have been living there their whole lives because they think it messes with the original personality of the city. So i think the architecture has to be respectful, representative and you have to be proud of having this physical environment where most people think it is beautiful architecture. You have to be honest.

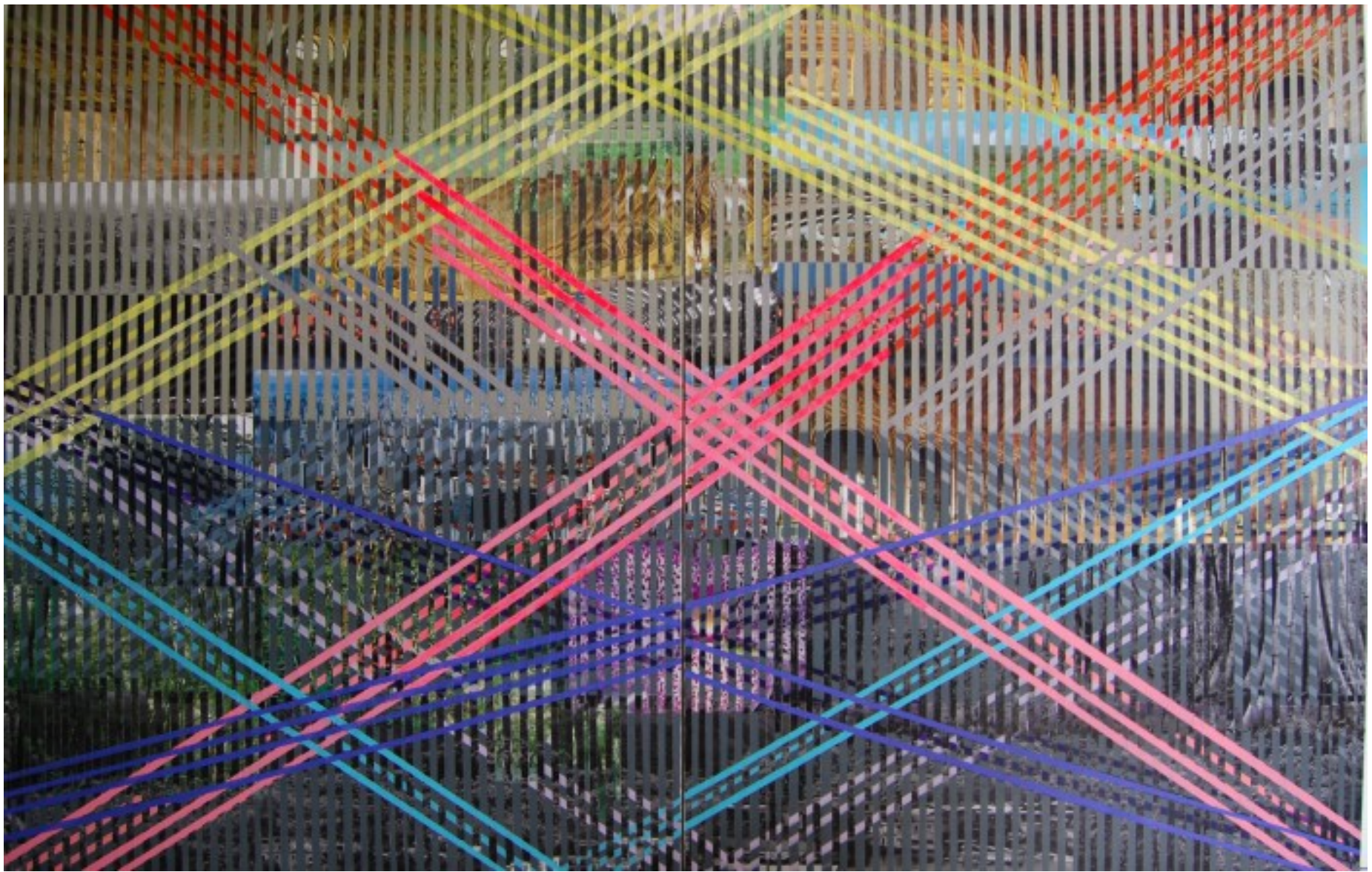
### **By this time, 2015, people thought we would be living in the future, do you find that it lives up to what they may have hoped for?**

Its a human argument from all time, we are always thinking the future is very close but its not true. They say the same thing in the 40s, and now were in the digital age and nobody even notices that everything has changed. We still can't escape bureaucracy. I think we are living in a very important stage technologically, from '97 to here. I wouldn't call it future though. The word "future" we can never really know. It is constantly there because its the kind of thing we are always thinking about but can never know.

### **What role do current events play in your artworks?**

I am a kind of google myself. I try to pick this information that I think, I try and make a random selection of images and sometimes I have in my head some images that I know I will take from a specific book. For example *Contemporary Architectural*, I take some structures or some cities, sometimes I take artists from contemporary or modernist movements. I also

use old places. The idea is to recreate this all together like a way to represent how the globalistic, digital world we are living in right now is perceived and in my work it will read like a map. All this movement with the stripes and stuff is more like the way to show the TV or Computer, showing information that is going up, back and forward back and forward. I'm training your eyes to recreate what you receive, what your eyes are getting first and what they are getting later. It's also kind of a shock or a thing that i want to express to the audience. I'm saying "This is not what you see right now, try to keep it there stay for a while and you start to see more stuff going on when you approach and you get away from this"



**We live in Crossroads, 78 x120 inch, dyptic mixed media on canvas, 2014**

**So you use fashion magazine in your work.**

Yes I just pick up the fashion magazine like I'm eating, I manipulate objects and information with whats going on right now and i put it with more historical things. So i confront things together to make kind of an explanation of contrasts, what is happening today with for example geographical things or globalistic things. I'm blending information from all over, like

the internet. So I'm trying to create a kind of blending of everything.

### **What is the function or meaning of collage in your artworks?**

The way i use the collage its called Metaphysics, from the 30s like Henri Gorski, they use lines and stuff like that for trying to understand the world which is something abstract. The way i do it is by creating these lines, like the world is kind of an abstract thing that is then constructed by my lines or geometrical forms. My media is a mixed media more like kind of alternation of materials, integration of materials. The collage is a way to approach the image in order to document what I'm taking from that information. Mostly the composition of the collage with acrylic, drawing and everything, that's what I call the whole landscape. The collage is one of the elements that approaches me as a way to communicate better, that would be the meaning.

### **Any shows coming up?**

I am doing an exhibition January 6th in Chile, the works are called *Wanderlust*. It's a kind of trip, a passion of travelling.

### **Interview by Nick Rogers**



### **[NICK ROGERS \(HTTP://ARTEFUSE.COM/AUTHOR/NICK-ROGERS/\)](http://artefuse.com/author/nick-rogers/)**

NICK ROGERS IS A WRITER AND INDEPENDENT CURATOR LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY. HE ATTENDED UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT FOR ENGLISH AND ART HISTORY.

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