

## Sarah Grilo and the Urban Unconscious

September - December 2018

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 20, 6-8 pm



“**The Urban Unconscious**” presents a selection of works by Argentine artist **Sarah Grilo** that were created in the years following her time in New York City from 1962 to 1970. This exhibition of paintings and works on paper from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s captures the formal elements which emerged during these eight highly pivotal years in the trajectory of the artist’s oeuvre.

Grilo moved to New York City in 1962 after being awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and it was at this critical point that the artist’s work took a radical turn as she broke from her background in Concrete abstraction. Grilo appropriated—through her own unconscious formal means—the graffiti that ran rampant throughout the city’s walls, the pieces of letters and numbers in various fonts and typographies that peeled off the signs on the sides of buildings, and the traces of deteriorating posters plastered around the city streets. All of these urban incorporations were covered by compulsively repetitive, erased, and re-written spontaneous scribbles, as if automatic writings were taking over her compositions.

Grilo’s works then and in the proceeding decades, all sustained a hyper-chromatic sensibility as manifested by her use of saturations of various tonalities and hues: from the most resplendent of golds to the deepest of violets, and from the loudest of turquoise and fuchsias, to the palest of yellows and sky blues.

This exhibition stands testament to the continuity of the formal elements which Grilo began to appropriate in the 1960s, and continued to employ throughout the remainder of her life. These works all share the same lyrical compositions that draw in the elements of time and the unconscious—for it is time that allows the viewer to decipher the various urban imprints, and time that in turn imprints this system of signs, numbers, letters, and scribbles in the viewer’s eye and their own unconscious. Grilo allows us to witness her process: from her drips of paint of various colors, to her highly gestural markings and erasures. All of these highlight the artist’s hand, as well as her own unconscious absorption of the urban landscape surrounding her.

Victoria L. Fedrigotti