

PICTORIAL EDIFICATION

A Practice-Based Proposition on Material Organization in Painting

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Pictorial Edification is a practice-based proposition for understanding painting as a process of material organization. Developed through Ovatsug Figueiredo's studio practice, it shifts attention from what painting represents to how painting constitutes itself as a material and pictorial body. The concept begins from a simple premise: a work is not merely the execution of an image, nor the accumulation of matter on a support, but the progressive organization of relations among matter, color, time, physical forces, perception, and artistic decision.

Terms such as layering, mixed media, construction, or assemblage can describe procedures, components, or modes of production. **Pictorial Edification** addresses a different question: **by what processes does a material configuration acquire pictorial coherence?** To edify is therefore more than to construct. Construction describes how a work may be materially assembled; edification concerns how that configuration becomes pictorially organized through time. **To edify is to organize material relations until they acquire sufficient pictorial coherence.** Such coherence does not require visual harmony or physical stability: a painting may remain fractured, irregular, compressed, eroded, or structurally tense while its material, chromatic, spatial, and perceptual relations become decisively articulated.

This organization emerges through an iterative negotiation between artistic intention and material response. Matter is neither passive nor autonomous. Gravity, absorption, drying, sedimentation, contraction, fracture, and changes in surface alter the conditions of the work as it develops, yet these processes do not substitute for authorship. The artist observes, intervenes, waits, interrupts, removes, reinforces, redirects, or accepts what emerges. Each action modifies the field in which the next decision will occur. Authorship therefore resides not in absolute control over matter, nor in surrender to accident, but in the sustained calibration between intentional action, material behavior, and perceptual judgment.

Accumulation, within this framework, is not an end in itself. Greater material complexity does not necessarily produce greater pictorial organization. A work may reach thresholds at which further intervention begins to diminish rather than intensify its internal coherence. Artistic judgment involves recognizing states of emergence, instability, saturation, and sufficient organization, as well as the limits beyond which addition becomes loss. **Completion is consequently understood as an act of recognition rather than the fulfillment of a predetermined image.**

Pictorial Edification also positions the studio as a site of artistic research. Observation, repetition, interruption, documentation, comparison, and material experimentation allow relations to become perceptible that could not be fully known in advance. The knowledge generated through this process is situated and practice-based: it arises from following how particular materials, temporal processes, decisions, and perceptual conditions interact in the formation of particular works. **The work does not illustrate a theory conceived beforehand; the theory is extracted from the work's formation.** Painting thus functions simultaneously as aesthetic object, material event, and record of inquiry.

Developed across bodies of work including *Pandemic Memory*, *Mental Health Stigma*, and *S.O.S. Oceans - Unstable Structures under Sensitive Pressure*, **Pictorial Edification** is not proposed as a style, technical recipe, or universal model. It is a working proposition and an analytical vocabulary generated through practice. Its value lies less in naming a recognizable visual appearance than in making available a precise way of examining how contemporary painting organizes matter, temporality, perception, and decision - and how the formation of a work can itself become a mode of artistic knowledge.