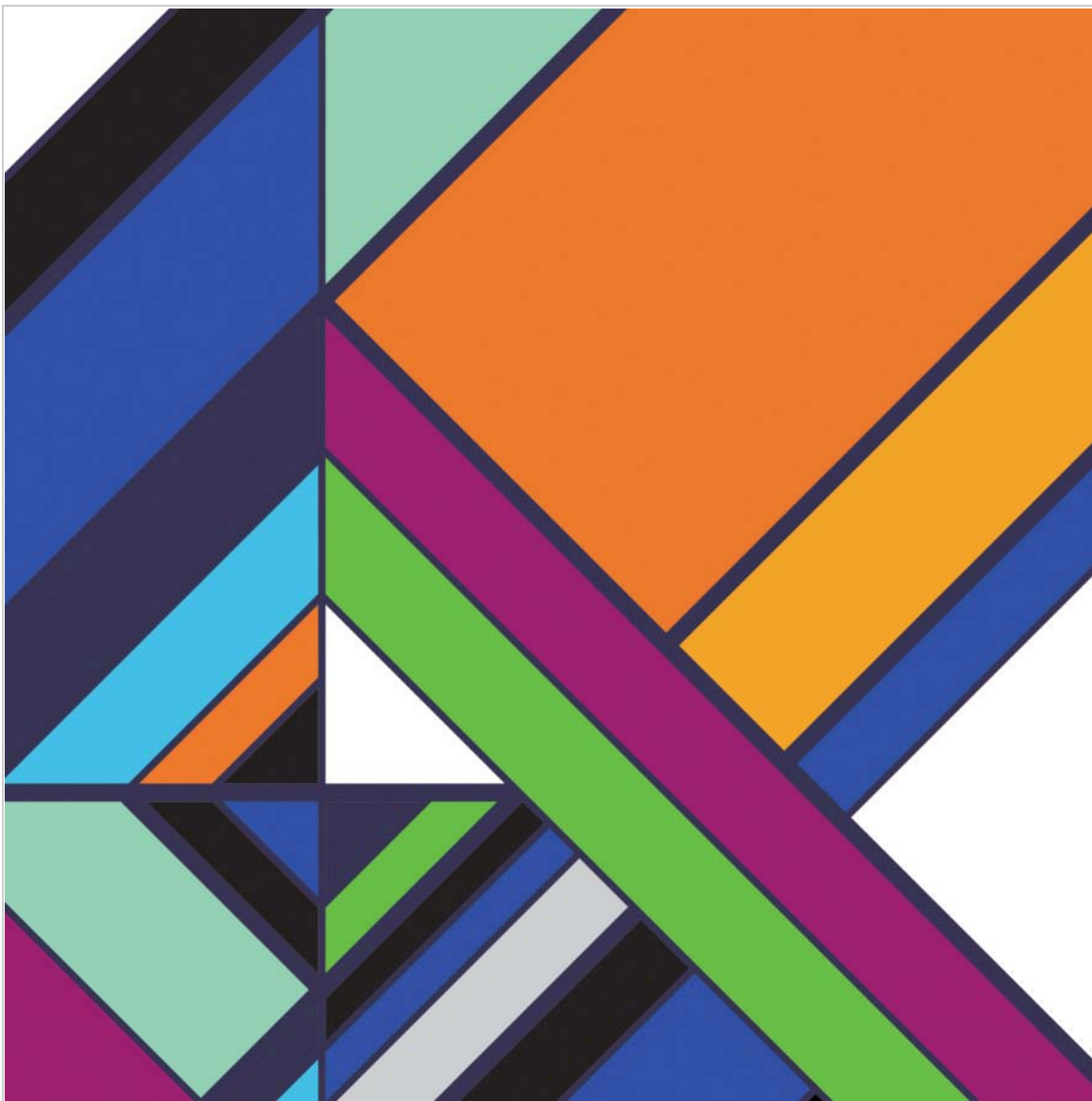


HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

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Sarah Morris Translates Brazil's Paradoxes Into Paint

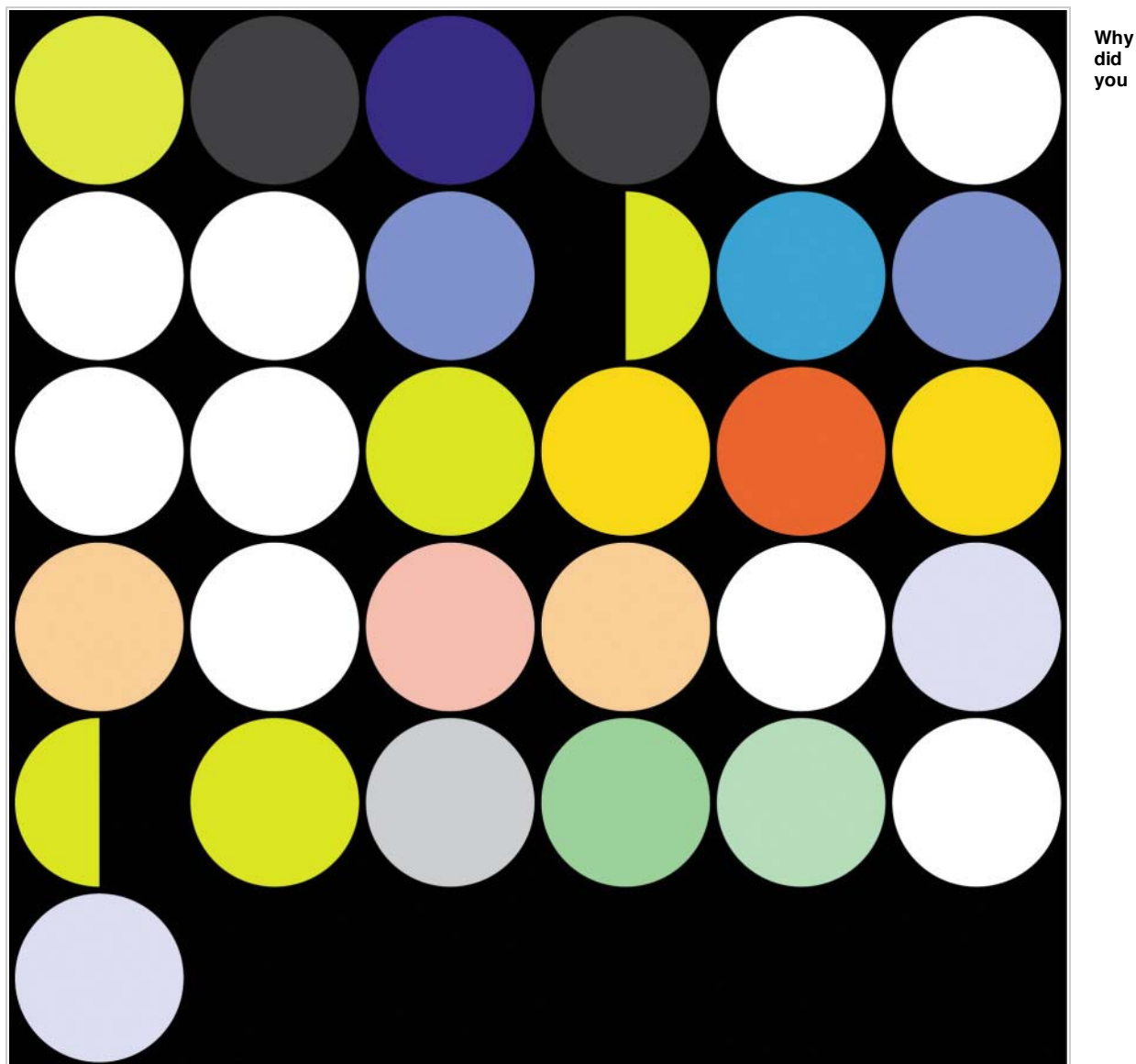
Look at the abstract paintings in [Sarah Morris'](#) exhibition "[Academia Militar](#)" and you may detect a playground of color-drenched geometry. Yet what you're actually seeing is a coded abstraction of Brazil, incorporating the visual influence of pharmaceutical packaging, birdcages, textbooks on fruit, Bossa Nova music as well as the work of Roberto Burle Marx, Lina Bo Bardi, Oscar Niemeyer and J. G. Ballard.



Morris' hypnotic paintings and films create a hallucinatory vision based on the erotic curves, intoxicating colors and darkness lurking in Brazil's contradictory political history. Through vibrating forms, sumptuous circles and imposing grids, Morris conjures the eroticized image of Brazil's surface while hinting at the more sinister complexities that lie beneath.

[Morris explained her manifold influences in an interview with ARTINFO](#): "I look for inspiration or images and colors from titles, from literally everything. In a way, [my] films function like a manifesto, they function like an index to everything that is capturing my eye. And they're [also] charting the eye in general, in the sense of all the things you're taking in or consuming in the span of a single day."

We reached out to Morris to learn more about her life and work:



decide to explore Brazil's contradictions in this new exhibition?

Contradiction is obviously everywhere, but Brazil's is particularly captivating, hypnotic, and dark.

What is your personal history with Brazil?

It's as circuitous as a Pynchon novel, involving several missed flights, endless discussion, and many vodka caipirinhas that started several decades ago and continues to unfold.

What, in your opinion, is the greatest advantage of working in abstraction?

Abstraction has the ability to access economic and social forms through the visceral and the shared and collective subconscious.

If you could trade skills or brains with one other artist alive or dead who would you choose?

That's a very difficult decision. I really wouldn't want to trade. I'd much rather be in conversations with the past and the future, but if I was forced, there would be many -- [Marcel] Duchamp and [Francis] Picabia; and for writers, [Alexander] Pushkin, Joan Didion, Don DeLillo, Martin Amis, or Thomas Pynchon.

What is the most off-base statement you've heard or read about your work?

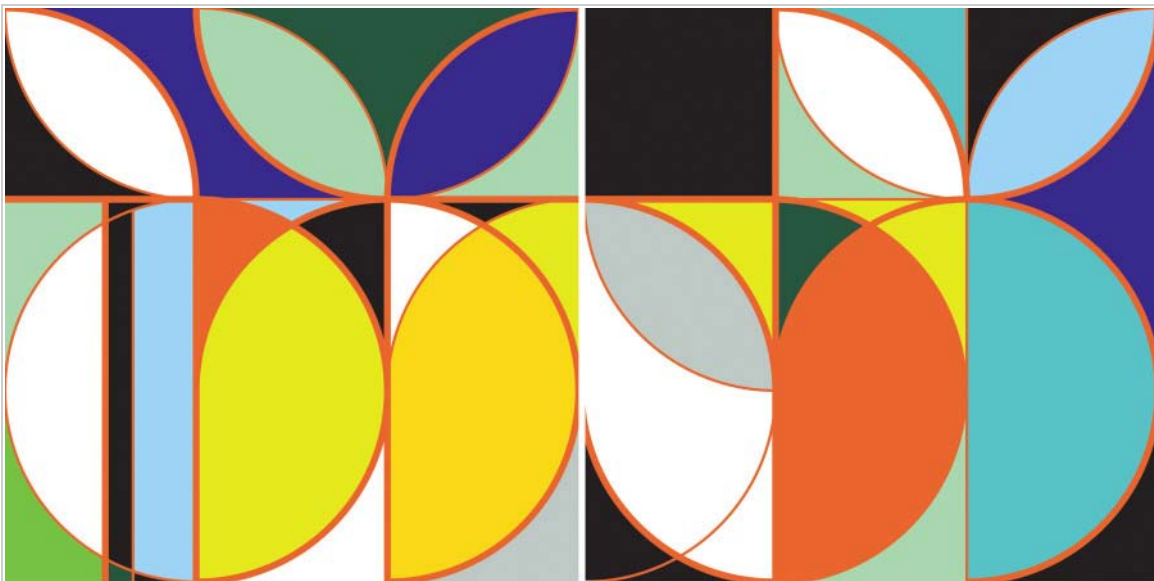
That I am aligned with or am the power that I am depicting.

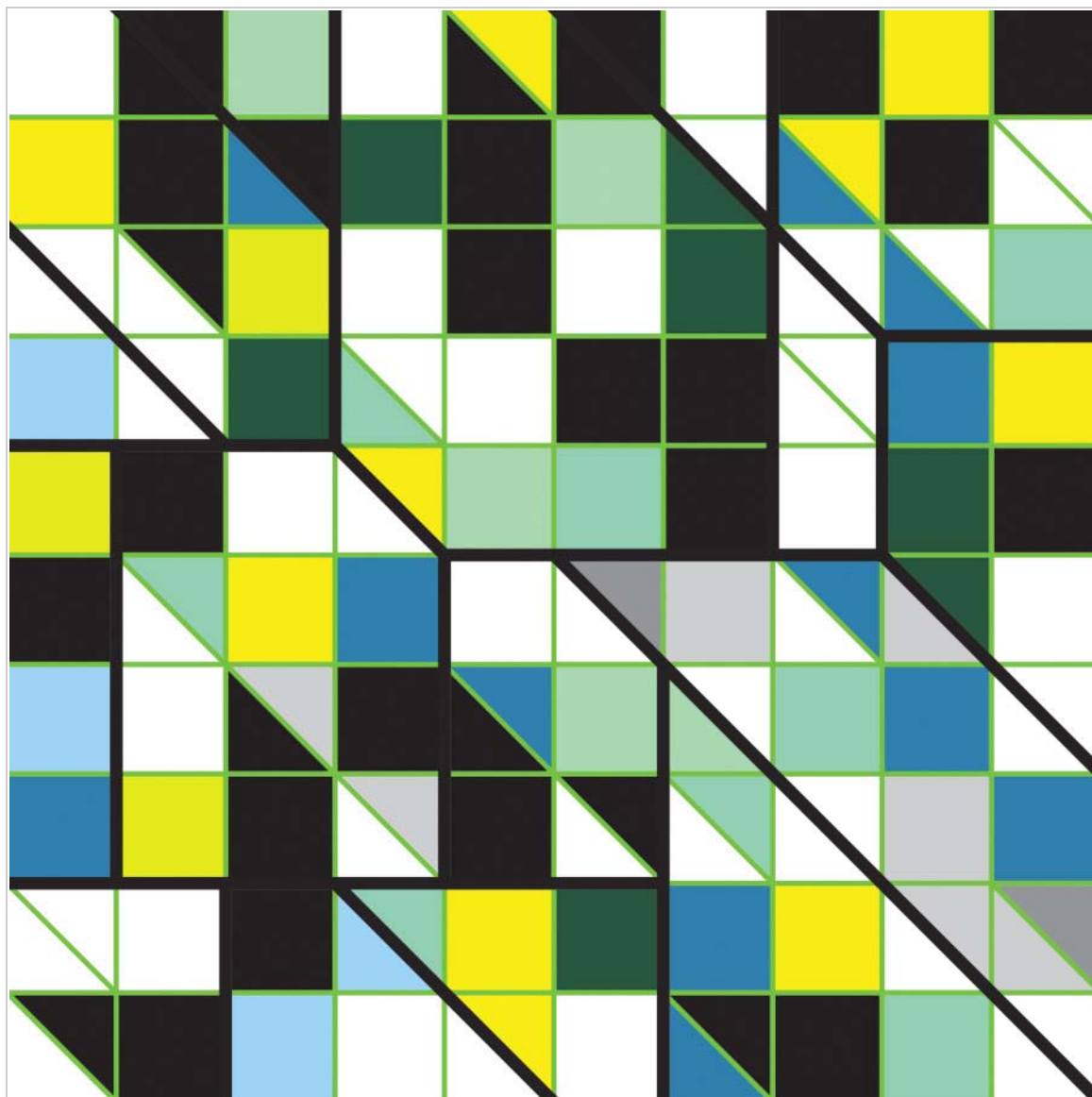
The most annoying thing about the art world is...

Sexism.

What are your favorite things to snack on while working?

Dark chocolate and pink lemonade.





Morris' "Academia Militar" runs until December 21, 2013 at [Petzel Gallery](#).

