

CULTURED

Frazadas, Tetrominoes, and Seagulls: Our Critics Share an Essential Guide to This Month's Tribeca Shows

Shiv Kotecha

January 22, 2025

This month, Shiv Kotecha loves Feliciano Centurión's blanket-based works, Will Harrison picks a Tetris-inspired installation by the Estate of Joshua Caleb Weibley, and Paige K. Bradley praises Ian Miyamura's paintings of birds, grids, and Warhammer figurines.



Feliciano Centurión, *Untitled*, 1990. Image courtesy of Ortuzar. Photography by Steven Probert.

Feliciano Centurión

Ortuzar | 5 White Street

On view through February 8

Before he died of AIDS-related complications at the age of 34, in 1996, the queer Paraguayan artist Feliciano Centurión produced a powerful body of work about the inexhaustibility of good faith, that order of generosity with which you—or I, or we—might call upon when bracing for some unknown future. For the works in the riveting exhibition “Sol naciente” at Ortuzar, Centurión used paint, collage, and an Indigenous lace technique called *ñandutí*, embellishing the hairy, pre-patterned surfaces of *frazadas* (blankets) and other mass-produced textiles with stars and stripes, creatures from the Paranaense Forest where he grew up, and gutting phrases that feel both fresh and old as time. The piece *Que en nuestras almas no entre el terror (may fear not enter our souls)*, 1995, is composed of a placemat-size fragment of a shipping blanket, embroidered with the artist’s blessing in red. The script of the show’s exquisite title work appears in a tiny cosmos of floral orbs.

Centurión grew up in rural towns during the military dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner, living with his mother and grandmother, who taught him to sew. After his family moved to Argentina, he attended art school in Buenos Aires, joining a group associated with Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas (El Rojas). The 26 works assembled here limn Centurión’s dislocated position as a migrant within this elite artistic milieu; he was the queer exile, unafraid of kitsch, who unabashedly doubled down on subjects already laden with cultural associations, such as the solar orb of the Argentine flag, the martyred body of a saint, and the Eye of Providence (the disembodied organ in a radiant triangle, as seen on the back of a one dollar bill). Also on view is the bestiary of Centurión’s “Familias” series, c. 1990, plastic figurines dressed in crocheted outfits—one, a serpent in a turtleneck, emerges from a pink plastic vessel; another, a fiery-eyed Godzilla, models a lemon sweater dress. The animals bear their fangs from inside their cozy armor, glowering back at the inhospitable world they call home.—*Shiv Kotecha*