

ARTnews

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fishing huts on the Rhine with his friendly abstractions.

For his first solo gallery show in the United States, Herrero presented works that were meant to be hung indoors, on walls, filling Bridgette Mayer's recently

...grating light into the sea (1996). The

The

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Federico Herrero

Bridgette Mayer
Philadelphia

The Costa Rican artist Federico Herrero is best known for his tropically colored geometric compositions painted on floors, walls, parking garages, and buses in England, Japan, Sweden, Italy, and Colombia, among other places. At last year's Art Basel fair in Switzerland, he covered the facades of traditional



Federico Herrero, *Pan de Azúcar*, 2011, oil on canvas, 106 1/4" x 102 3/8".
Bridgette Mayer.

renovated space with large-scale oil paintings that left mere inches between the edge of the canvas and the gallery's ceiling and floor. A couple of smaller site-specific works, painted along the upper corners of the walls and onto the ceiling, provided an introduction to the artist's mural practice.

Herrero's compositions of blocklike shapes suggest architectural ruins and jumbles of street signs, minus words. Their brilliant colors bring to mind the roofs and walls of houses found in his native San José. In *Pan de Azúcar* (2011), a pale-turquoise, mountainlike shape looms in the center of the canvas, surrounded by rectangles of various colors and a cadmium-yellow sky. It's an image reminiscent of the 1968 animated film *Yellow Submarine*, but also recalls the work of Latin American modernists such as the Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral. *Cangrejo* (2011), depicting a robotlike form on a black background, suggests a hybrid of Aztec motifs and a Keith Haring painting.

It's tempting to say that Herrero's outdoor work is his strongest suit, but these playful paintings have the same exuberant character.

—Edith Newhall



GUNTER THORN