

OCTAVIA

ART GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Art Knows No Boundaries: Cuban Art in the US

August 5 – September 30, 2017

Opening Reception: August 5, 6 - 9 pm in conjunction with *Whitney White Linen Night*

One of the focuses of Octavia Art Gallery is emphasizing the preservation and conservation of unique and authentic cultures worldwide. In continuing this mission, we are pleased to present *Art Knows No Boundaries: Cuban Art in the US*. This exhibition explores the notion that through creative expression, each artist's work unifies and transcends borders. Artworks featured in this exhibition are by Cuban artists: Alexandre Arrechea, Neisys González, Roberto Diago, Alex Hernández Dueñas, José Emilio Fuentes Fonseca (JEFF), Kcho (Alexis Leyva Machado), The Merger, and Adislén Reyes.

Alexandre Arrechea's work explores contemporary social and economic issues such as the stock market, migrants in Latin America, and issues of accessibility and the qualities of public and private space. Within his art-making practice, he is known for his installations, paintings, and his creation of objects with "elements of truth," such as tape measures, fragments of walls, or other remnants of places.

Neisys González is an architectural photographer who tells stories of Havana, the sinuosity of its forms, and its sea of contrasted longings and utopias. She is inspired by the unfathomable seducing charm that captivates and conquers all who have stepped onto its streets.

Roberto Diago works in various media including photography, engraving, painting, and drawing. He has a preference for rough subject matter, raw materials, and riveting juxtapositions of text and imagery. Diago creates paintings and conceptual installations with things he finds around his neighborhood, such as bits of wood, plastic bottles, and rusty metal. His work is a spiritual commentary on race and religion in Cuba.

Alex Hernández Dueñas is a painter whose work investigates themes of status, privilege and hierarchical structures within society through images of pristine pools, manicured lawns, sleek homes and country clubs. Influenced by a wide range of artists, including David Hockney and Richard Diebenkorn, Dueñas's flattened, simplified and colorful handling of compositions creates atmospheres that are dreamlike and often times eerily void of human life.

JEFF is a sculptor whose work gives the impression of simplicity while keeping the complexity hidden from view. Often working with the theme of childhood, he manipulates the language of children toward that of an adult. Threads of love, danger, and play are largely at work in his sculptures, which are also imbued with melancholy and nostalgia.

Kcho paints and fabricates boat-like forms using recycled materials like bottles and lumber salvaged from docks. He grew up near the ocean surrounded by the driftwood, fishing nets, and propellers scattered across beaches, which now figure into his imagery. His works also reference figures culled from traditional Cuban folk icons meant to honor the dead, bringing a spiritual and mournful element to his art.

The Merger is a union of three artists: Alain Pino Hernandez, Mario Miguel González Fernandez, and Niels Moleiro Luis. Their sculptures are greatly influenced by the current economic, political, and social state of Cuba. Using popular icons and tools for their work, they are able to distort them and adapt them to new circumstances in order to highlight issues in culture and society.

Adislén Reyes began painting on a very large scale, but over time the size of her paintings significantly decreased. She has created the *Retroceso* series, which are miniature paintings that convey the idea that everything is significant if you take a close enough look. In the *Fossil Generation* series, she has screen-printed and embossed almost invisible prints on paper. Reyes sees this body of work contemplating our generation and whether it will be capable of leaving an impression or a print of its presence on history.

While the United States and Cuba have differing cultures and visions, we are connected by the same determination to create and participate in artistic expression. Creativity knows no boundaries.