

ABUC - Eleven Cuban Artists

Vernissage: Thursday, October 31, 2019, 6–8 pm
Duration: November 1, 2019 – January 11, 2020
Opening hours: Tues–Fri 11 am – 6.30 pm, Sat 11 am – 4 pm

ABUC brings together eleven Cuban artists as a personal overview on the current contemporary art scene in Havana. It is a glimpse into an island universe and a personal choice. Victor Gisler (owner Mai 36 Galerie) has regularly visited Havana and its artists' studios over the last 8 years. This show aims to introduce to a western audience a group of four generations of artistic practises in Cuba – mythical, mysterious, sensual, dynamic, unique, bizarre and misunderstood.

The conditions and themes of these practices are precarious, not just economically, but also psychologically, spiritually and politically.

The title of the exhibition derives from the painting **ABUC** by **Flavio Garcíandía**. He was born five years before the Cuban Revolution. He devoted himself to teaching at the Instituto Superior de Arte, becoming the Dean of School of Fine Arts there. He was also one of the founders of the Havana Biennial in 1984.

In the spirit of this exceptional Biennial, this curatorial essay into the precarious conditions, dangerous and instable, insecure and dicey, endangered and vulnerable, we present

Alejandro Campins' desolated landscapes, which invite us to reflect on notions about loss, transformation and resilience. His bunkers, which are found all over the world, remind us, that loss and failure are part of conflict, that "Fear to Death is Fear to the Truth" (as was the title of his solo show at the Contemporary Art Centre Wilfredo Lam), a notion also reflected in the constructions of **Carlos Garaicoa**. Through a wide variety of materials and media, Garaicoa found ways to criticize modernist Utopian architecture and the collapse of the 20th century ideologies, while keeping the possibilities of poetic meditations as a hopeful methodology.

Michel Pérez Pollo is contributing a large format painting from the recent series **MARMOR**, where the pictorial order of the real object is dislocated, where there is no prominence of depth or distance; however, issues like composition and space are resolved with balance and grace, countering the precarious conditions faced by his generation. While **Leandro Feal** seeks to capture the experience of daily life in Havana, by the image of its inhabitants, through video and photography. He captures the frail existence of these inhabitants with psychological acuity, showing the connection of the inner state of mind and the urban sprawl, the terrain vague of everyday life.

Orestes Hernandez seems not to care about conventions. His playful animations hide various dramaturgies, which give us the opportunity to see different aspects and facets of the conditions of creation. His drawings arise from an existential necessity, regardless of any aesthetic or formal criteria.

Jose Yaque's conceptual landscape paintings suggest a memory of nature, the admiration for it, the profound connection between humans, earth and our environment. He aims to widen each personal horizon and to deconstruct the idyllic Greek utopia.

Reynier Leyva Novo's wall installation **Manifest Destiny**, from de series **The Weigth of the Land** is made from the amount of ink used in official documents that expanded the territory of the United States. The selected documents are four treaties and one bank check. It is through these documents that the United States acquired its greatest land expansion. The measurement of ink is taken using **INk 1.0**, a software developed to calculate the area, volume and weight of the ink in manuscripts and printed documents from digitized images of the original documents.

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Raul Cordero's paintings are reduced from initial levels of information. The pictures are blurry and deconstructed into horizontal stripes, while the texts are rendered in a typography the artist has designed out of dots, bringing their characteristic almost to the nature of a drawing. Images that are difficult to decipher with texts on top, that are hard to read, become a problem to solve for the viewer, who will have to slow down his pace and infuse what he sees with his own ideas and notions.

The works of **Irving Vera** are always based on improvisation. Through improvisation, he explores the poetic possibilities offered by his life experiences: from personal microhistories as well as, references to art history, religion, and literature. The relation between materials-technique-genre, memory and mind self-observation during the work process, is key to what he does. Romanticism, eastern cultures, shamanism, Surrealism, Haiku poetry and minimalism are his main influences. The scale and materials he has used till today, have been little and fragile. That fact is a response to the need of immediacy, but also a focus on the transient and ephemeral nature of life's phenomena.

Laura Carralero paintings systematically deal with the reminiscence of spaces. The basis of her work is the precise observation of her environment and its subsequent reduction to fundamental spatial experiences. Throughout this process, the impressions Carralero captures transform into fragmentary spaces in which fiction and reality, the well-known and the unknown coexist.

This co-existence describes exactly what Sigmund Freud meant with his concept of the uncanny. The precarious condition is a fragile equilibrium, existing within it are the uncanny and the beautiful, the spaces in between, are the cracks from which art nourishes itself, giving birth to a Cuban state of mind.

(Text: conducted by Andrea Hinteregger De Mayo, Text: reference by the artists)

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We are happy to provide visual materials on request (office@mai36.com).

We look forward to seeing you at the gallery and thank you for your interest.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

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