

MAI 36 GALERIE

Michel Pérez Pollo

Exhibition opening: Thur., 30 October 2014, 6 – 8pm
Duration: 31 October – 20 December 2014
Opening hours: Tues – Fri, 11am to 6.30pm; Sat 11am to 4 pm

Michel Pérez Pollo was born in 1981 in Manzanillo, Cuba, and studied there, first at the Escuela Profesional de Artes Plásticas Holguín, then at the Instituto Superior de Arte ISA in Havana, where he also lives and works. He is professor at the Havana Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro. His works have been exhibited at various Ibero-American venues such as the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana, in the United States at the Central Trak Gallery of the University of Texas, Dallas, in 2013, and occasionally in Europe. Works of his could be seen at the Mai 36 Gallery in 2012 along with others by Flavio Garciandía and Raúl Cordero in the exhibition “IB 6621”.

We are now delighted to be able to present the first solo-exhibition of works by Michel Pérez Pollo in our gallery.

The painter Pérez Pollo's abstract-figurative works give him a unique position in his generation, and among artists in Cuba as a whole. Abstract-figurative – surely a contradiction – given that Pérez Pollo develops his paintings out of at least two contexts, so that his works consist of at least two stories, one that is more realistic and one that is abstract:

First he is struck by a psychological constellation to which he would like to give expression. He could of course depict this realistically with figures, and in a landscape or even an urban setting. But this is of no interest to the artist. Instead he reconstructs the situation three-dimensionally and abstractly: Pérez Pollo uses play dough in various colours, then possibly adds something that suits, like a matchstick, a piece of string or some other item which then often has to serve as a crutch. He creates different volumes, shapes and weights which, in combination, encumber or support one another. The figurations that emerge in this way incorporate, or better still symbolise, something like personality or personalities, or even architectonic presence. The shaped figures or models are then placed on a plane.

Now the second story begins: such a figure or construct then becomes a model for a painting – the main objective of the enterprise. In the lower third section of the painting the plane becomes a painted area that can again be understood as a plane when a horizon is added. And the model is painted “on” this “plane”; dimensions are radically shifted.

Pérez Pollo's subjectivity engenders a more dissociated reality, a reality of a second category that extends beyond one's own.

Michel Pérez Pollo's particular style of painting makes an important contribution towards creating this impression; it is bold, often lavish in his application of the fluid paint, and therefore reminiscent of revolutionary murals, depictions imbued with messages. In his case, however, and that is what is special about his art, he focuses on the superordinate, the human-personal, so that his paintings seem like expressions of a new humanism, especially wherever there is talk of a “tropical depression” – an actual meteorological term for a weather situation in the Caribbean that is dismal, grave, densely cloudy and dark. While many artists understand this situation as melancholic, Pérez Pollo reinterprets it expressionistically, in strong paintings. Where once debilitating melancholia loomed, he reports with a positive attitude, with personal gravity and self-assertion.

To accompany the exhibition we are happy to be able to present the book *Michel Pérez Pollo 2008-2014* recently published by Turner Libros, Madrid.

The exhibition opening is on Thursday, 30 October, from 6 to 8pm. Michel Pérez Pollo will be present. We would be glad to provide you with images (office@mai36.com) on request.

Mai 36 Galerie
Victor Gisler

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