

KUNST X KUBA

Contemporary Perspectives since 1989



Ludwig
Forum
Aachen

Short Guide



P A T R I A

O

M U E R T E

KUNST XKUBA

Contemporary Perspectives since 1989

Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas,
Patria o Muerte [*Fatherland,
or Death*], 1989 (Detail)

Titel:
Adrián Fernández Milanés,
*Cosmonaut (In Search of
Orientation)* 2015

Art x Cuba

Contemporary Perspectives since 1989

The collection of Peter and Irene Ludwig contains the largest and one of the earliest assemblies of contemporary Cuban art in Europe. This fascinating part of the collection offers insights into the visual art of this Caribbean state and was created primarily during the eighties and early nineties—a time of great crisis and change as well as attempts to overcome it.

With the exhibition *Art x Cuba – Contemporary Perspectives since 1989*, the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst will stage, for the first time, an encounter between works from the Aachen collection and more recent works from Cuba. This multilayered dialogue opens up a discussion about the aesthetic, thematic, and formal development of Cuban art in the last thirty years while negotiating issues surrounding the relationships between culture and politics, art and the market, and globalization and power.

The Cuban part of the Ludwig Collection is largely based on works that were presented in the exhibition *Kuba o.k. – Aktuelle Kunst aus Kuba [Cuba ok – Contemporary Art from Cuba]* at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. A large portion of the works presented in that exhibition were acquired by the Aachen-based collector couple. In the present exhibition, this earlier part of the collection is supplemented by two further contexts. One consists of later acquisitions of Cuban art for the collection. The other, significantly larger context is the addition of recent contemporary Cuban works spanning the spectrum of all the usual media—from paint-

ing and sculpture through to photography and video, all the way up to installation. Many of the works will be presented in Europe for the first time. The exhibition *Art x Cuba* is the most comprehensive presentation of contemporary Cuban art in Germany to date, and it would not have been possible without the generous support of the Peter und Irene Ludwig Stiftung as well as the Kulturstiftung des Bundes.

The works will be presented in the Ludwig Forum in loosely grouped thematic islands with fluid boundaries. These islands sketch out a variety of areas such as feminism, utopia and freedom, or social and youth cultures. Furthermore, the installation aims to enable discursive juxtapositions and comparisons between older works and ones from the immediate present.

This Short Guide offers brief introductory texts for each of the artists represented in the exhibition. These texts contain summarized information about the respective artists and the exhibited works. The labelling of each artwork in the exhibition includes a number which corresponds to an entry in the guide so that the texts can be easily located.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition!

Antonio Eligio (Tonel) and Andreas Beitin

Curators

Janice Mitchell and Denise Petzold

Curatorial Assistance and Project Management

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Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Opciones para el mito: Leda piensa (Alternatives For a Myth: Leda Thinks)*, 1989

1 Juan Carlos Alom

*1964 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and New York City, USA

The work of photographer and filmmaker Alom is characterized by a cultural awareness. In *Habana Solo* [*Havana Solo*] (2000) music and musicians, the city and its inhabitants operate as actors driving a restless story forward. In the final sequence, we see the performance of a dancer on the roof—a "solo" performance and the effusive expression of a body as an instrument. The photo series *La Clase* [*The Class*] (2017), by contrast, offers a moving portrait of a school class—that of Alom's daughter. It is a mosaic of very young people, who at least in this moment are looking into their inner selves instead of what's in front of them. **AE(T)**

2 Rubén Alpízar Quintana

*1965 in Santiago de Cuba, lives in Havana, CUB

In the early nineties, the painter Alpízar alongside several other young Cuban artists turned to Christian iconography and thus placed a dialogue with Western art history at the center of their work. The examples presented here, *La ultima cena* [*The Last Supper*] (1993) and *Sin Título* [*Untitled*] (1992), the latter of which picks up on the medieval idea of mobile images of Christ, testify to his meticulous application of traditional painting techniques and love of detail. **AE(T)**

3 Tanya Angulo / José A. Toirac

*1968 in Havana, CUB, lives in Valencia, ESP /

*1966 in Guantánamo, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Influenced by American Appropriation Art of the eighties as well as the artists associated with institutional critique, Angulo and Toirac question the function of the museum as the site of representation for national and cultural identities with their work *Museo Nacional de Habana* [*National Museum of Havana*] (1988). The viewer only gets to see small segments of paintings from the collection. One can only speculate on the identities of the works depicted. The negative spaces (in the paintings) thus come to the fore, not just as the negation of the representative function of art within a national or political framework, but also as spaces whose functions should and must be reconsidered.

JM

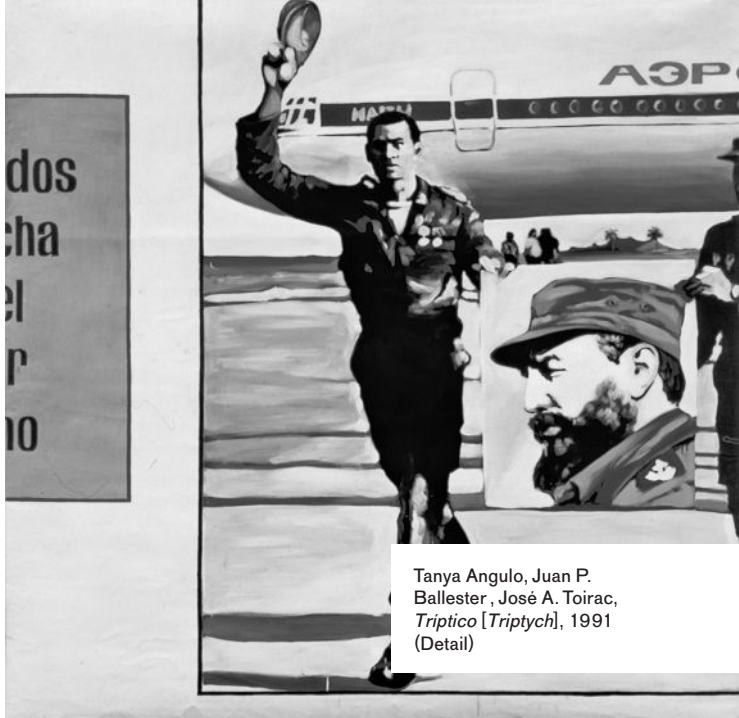
4 Tanya Angulo / Juan Pablo Ballester / José A. Toirac

*1968 in Havana, CUB, lives in Valencia, ESP /

*1966 in Camagüey, CUB, lives in Barcelona, ESP /

*1966 in Guantánamo, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

From 1988 to 1992, Angulo, Ballester, and Toirac often appeared together with Ileana Villazón as the group ABTV. Their work was based on cultural-historical research and the critical appropriation of works by international artists. The work *Triptico* [*Triptych*] (1991) presents photos and text fragments from the party newspaper Granma, which embodied the central ideals of the Cuban Revolution and, at the time, celebrated the triumphant return of the Cuban military from the Angolan Civil War in 1991. The withdrawal of the troops coincided with the most difficult phase of the Cuban economic crisis, which was



Tanya Angulo, Juan P.
Ballester, José A. Toirac,
Triptico [Triptych], 1991
(Detail)

triggered by the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc. Against this backdrop, the melodramatic revolutionary rhetoric became purely a matter of faith, as the title *Triptico* subtly suggests . **AL**

5 Belkis Ayón

*1967 in Havana, CUB, †1999 in Havana, CUB

Ayón worked with representations of the myths and figures of the Abakuá, a secret society of men with its roots in West Africa, which has spread throughout Cuba since the 19th century. Her collagraphs, for which she developed her own special printing technique, demonstrate great technical expertise and mastery in the use of color tones and patterns. Some of her recurring motifs are Tanze, the holy fish with the three-pronged tail; Sikán, the young woman who encountered the fish and was sacrificed as a result; and Ekué, a three-legged drum in which the spirit of the holy fish resides—an iconography developed by a female artist for a system of beliefs from which she was per definition excluded. **AE(T)**

6 Juan Pablo Ballester / Ileana Villazón

*1966 in Camagüey, CUB, lives in Barcelona, ESP /

*1969 in Sancti Spiritus, CUB, lives in Spain

Creating space for oneself or appropriating it, critically questioning well-known artistic forms of expression and themes—this is often the focus of Ballester & Villazón's artistic production. They collaboratively work through the art of the 20th century. One thus finds things borrowed from and citations of Louise Lawler or Marcel Broodthaers. The question of the function and meaning of art as an expression of cultural identity thus runs throughout their collaborative work: art as part of history and its development, but also as part of a production process and the context of its presentation. **JM**

7 José Bedia

*1959 in Havana, CUB, lives in Miami, USA

From the very beginning, Bedia has shown a great interest in the manifestations and influences of African culture in the Americas, especially with respect to cultic and religious motifs as well as the forces of nature and belief that affect humans. In particular, he focuses on the indigenous inhabitants of Meso-America and their history. The large-format drawings in the Ludwig Collection were first exhibited at the 3rd Havana Biennale (1989). With a sketch-like simplicity, they show fundamental aspects of human experience. In *Madre de Guerra* [*Mother of War*] (1989), for example, armed soldiers hang from the breasts of a terrifying chimera. **AB**

8 Alejandro Campins

*1981 in Manzanillo, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Campins belongs to the recent generation of Cuban artists who turned to classical painting at the beginning of the 21st century. His monumental images examine the relationship between human architecture and nature. He has a "great interest in the concepts of transience and timelessness". With its bleak color palette evoking darkness and ruin, *Empatía* [*Empathy*] (2015) presents a panoramic image that brings together two emblems of the Cold War: a Cuban and an American fallout shelter. *Hip-Hop* (2015) shows a stage in a small town in the Cuban province, which was hastily erected for a political campaign and simply left behind afterwards. **AE(T)**



Alejandro Campins, *Hip-Hop*,
from the series *Declaración
Pública (Public Declaration)*,
2015

9 María Magdalena Campos-Pons

1959 in Matanzas, CUB, lives in Boston, USA

The sculptor, photographer, performance, and multimedia artist Campos-Pons was one of the few artists in Cuba who worked with feminist themes in the mid-eighties. In her early work *Opciones para el mito: Leda piensa* [*Options for the Myth: Leda thinks*] (1989), she uses the Greek myth of Leda and the swan to speak about women's right to sexual pleasure. Unlike other Cuban artists who took sexual allusions to the point of the grotesque, Campos-Pons produced a highly differentiated image of the (female) body and its sexuality in her work. **AE(T)**

10 Raúl Cañibano

*1961 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Cañibano's childhood in Manati in rural eastern Cuba had a lasting impact on him. He has repeatedly traveled back there, and the photographs presented here from the series *Tierra Guajira* [*Land of the Guajira*] originated there. Originally a professional welder, he discovered photography in the eighties and eventually devoted himself to it completely. By now, he has become an internationally recognized artist. In Cuba his work occupies an exceptional position given its unusual intimacy with the subjects portrayed. His photographs are documentary yet full of poetry and, at the same time, characterized by great aesthetic ambitions. Never that of a distanced voyeur, the intensity of his gaze gives the images their great presence and credibility. **AE(T)**

11 Iván Capote

1973 in Pinar del Río, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Capote's work operates at the intersection of language and image, bringing together the traditions of Concrete Poetry, Conceptual Art, and language-based art. Sculptures like *Somos sombra* [*We are Shadows*] (2016) investigate the relationship between object and image as well as the subtle transition between the real and the virtual. In *Resilience* (2017), the paradoxical relationships between the title, the object itself—a tipped-over chair, and the word "Up" inscribed on it irritate the viewer. *Aritmética* [*Arithmetic*] (2016) in turn plays with the pair of opposites East and West, subtracting one from the other to produce "Waste". **AE(T)**

12 Yoan Capote

*1977 in Pinar del Río, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Capote's sculptural works often take on the form of functional objects, inviting viewers to engage in physical interaction. In *Lagrimal [Tear Duct]* (2001-2010), he replaced the faucet of a water fountain with the bust of a former classmate who had to earn her living through sex work, which is widely practiced in Cuba contrary to revolutionary doctrine. By throwing in coins, visitors activate a flow of red wine. In order to drink, visitors must bend towards the woman's face as though to kiss her. In *Lacerante (mi silencio) [Piercing (my silence)]* (2003-2013), the word "silencio" is visualized in the form of a three-dimensional, sculptural amplitude. **ML**

13 Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas

1962 in Sancti Spíritus, CUB, lives in New York City, USA

The painter and printmaker Cárdenas was a key figure in the critical art scene at the end of the eighties. Against a backdrop of deep economic and social crisis, he responded to Cuba's stereotypes and state propaganda as well as the state-decreed perception of social reality with irony and bitter humor. In the installation *Patria o muerte [Fatherland, or Death]* (1989), the Cuban Revolution's battle cry appears as a sober text in the style of a digital display on an insurmountable wall in a world of blinded, faceless avatars. Given its obvious sarcasm, Cárdenas' work was often subjected to censorship. The artist eventually left the country in the early nineties. **AB**

14 Carlos Martiel

*1989 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and New York City, USA

In his performances, Carlos Martiel examines the human condition within radical situations and contexts, such as censorship or cultural and political persecution. By subjecting his body to extreme pain, Martiel often lends his work a religious character evocative of sacrificial rituals. For *Condecoración Martiel, Carlos* [Award Martiel, Carlos] (2014), the artist had an imitation of a certain medallion that was only awarded to selected Cuban citizens produced from a piece of his own skin. A tattoo next to the scar describes the process, using a bodily limit experience to comment on both social and political tensions. **DP**

15 Los Carpinteros Alexandre Arrechea / Marco Castillo / Dagoberto Rodríguez

*1970 in Trinidad, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Madrid, ESP /

*1971 in Camagüey, lives in Havana, CUB and Madrid, ESP /

*1969 in Caibarién, Las Villas, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Madrid, ESP

The collective *Los Carpinteros* [The Carpenters] was founded in the early nineties (Arrechea left the group in 2003 to pursue a solo career). It developed out of a group of classmates at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) and was significantly influenced by the pedagogical project of the artist and professor René Francisco Rodríguez. He saw art as a field for experimentation, which was open to being combined with traditional labor practices and technical skills, such as those of masons, plumbers, and carpenters. In the group's early work—which includes *Colibri* [Hummingbird] (1996-1997)—found objects drawn from cultural history were often used. **AE(T)**

16 Yaima Carrazana

*1981 in Santiago de Cuba, lives in Amsterdam, NLD

Carrazana's work moves between various media and formats such as painting, video, performance, and installation. Well-informed and often tongue-in-cheek, her conceptually oriented works insert themselves into the discourse of contemporary art. With a refined sense of irony, her works question the status and legitimacy of the idea of art within the tensions between different cultural and political contexts. In her series *Cartas de Declaración* [*Declaration Letters*] (2016), she handles the process of her own integration into Dutch society. The abstract paintings transform the typical envelopes used by the Dutch legal and tax authorities that she received during her naturalization process. **DP**

17 Javier Castro

*1984 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In Castro's films, the documentary form is inseparably linked to the anthropological. His camera is his constant companion as he moves through the streets of Havana. He collects evidence of everyday conversations, sometimes about religious questions, sometimes by mestizo mothers about the violence on the streets. In *La Edad de Oro* [*The Golden Age*] (2013)—the title plays on a children's magazine published in the late 19th century by Cuba's national hero José Martí while in exile—children disclose their professional goals with unsettling naturalness. Their responses are a catalog of the dreams, grievances, and potentials of their homeland. **AE(T)**

18 Celia-Yunior

*1985 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB /

*1984 in Havana, CUB, lives in Perth, GBR

The relationships between individuals as social beings and the institutions that direct and govern them lie at the heart of Celia-Yunior's work. It explores how institutional systems in their immediate surroundings define the relationships between individuals as well as between individuals and the state. One good example of this is *Estado Civil [Marital Status]* (2004–2006). The work documents six marriages and divorces which Celia-Yunior went through over the course of two years.

Apuntes en el hielo [Notes on the Ice] (2012) is the result of six months of research in the archives of the sociological faculty at the University of Havana. It presents the final theses of students and doctoral candidates from 2001 to 2012 that were never published outside of Cuba. **JM**

19 Jeanette Chavez

*1980 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In her political performances, installations, videos, and photographs, Chavez reflects on a society which has ossified in its resignation at existing structures and offers an impetus to break out of them. In the installation *Cambio de Estado [Change of Status]* (2005–2008), Chavez dissolves the hierarchy of military ranks. The epaulettes of Cuban uniforms are arranged to become the starlit sky over Cuba according to the time of year. In *Integration II* (2011–2012), she appropriates the melody and lyrics of the German national anthem with the help of a teacher, but without understanding the meaning of the content. She thus thematizes the process of immigration and the subsequent subjective and cultural transformations of identity. **JF**



Jeanette Chavez, *Integration II*, 2011-2012

20 Ariamna Contino / Alex Hernández

*1984 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB /

*1982 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

The small "lake" embedded in the concrete slabs of the work *Mirage (Island)* (2017) reproduces—in allusion to the close relationship between Cuba and the former GDR during the Cold War—the outline of an island in the Cuban archipelago that bears the name Cayo Ernest Thaelmann. In 1972 Fidel Castro symbolized his gratitude for the GDR's support of Cuba by renaming the island after the historic KPD chairman Ernst Thälmann. In *Mirage (Island)* the concrete slabs are the ocean as walkable ground, while the island consists of water, reflecting the changing history around it. The work thus refers to a little-known aspect of the Cuban-German relationship and also a place where the GDR to some extent still lives on. **AE(T)**

21 Susana Pilar Delahante Matienzo

*1984 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In her works, Delahante Matienzo explores the boundaries of the human body between birth and death, while the questions posed often circle around themes of ethnicity and gender. In the performance *El Tanque* [*The Tank*] (2015–2016), the artist's mother irons her hair with a hot straightening iron—an effect which is then immediately destroyed by the artist when she dunks her head in cold water. The radical gesture questions this ideal of feminine beauty and the occasionally painful bodily transformations subsequently connected with it. Likewise in the photographic series *Llave maestra* [*Master Key*] (2012), she examines the Cuban image of women by variously staging herself between restrained submission and aggressive self-defense. **DP**

22 Departamento de Intervenciones Públicas (DIP)

DIP, the "Department of Public Interventions", was established in 2001 by Ruslan Torres, a professor at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana, together with a group of students. The goal was to move beyond the institutional boundaries of the university and bring art into everyday life. Their actions, which frequently made viewers into participants, often remained largely unseen. For the action *De norte a sur (y de sur a norte)* [*From North to South (and from South to North)*] (2002), the group scooped up seawater from Cuba's north coast then emptied it out on the south coast, doing the same but the other way round. They thus mixed the waters of the Gulf Stream with the Caribbean Sea, which are as different as the cultures in the north and south of the island. **JM**

23 Felipe Dulzaides

*1965 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Dulzaides gave up his career as an actor in Cuba during the eighties and established himself in the following decades as an artist in the US. His most recent work comprises multimedia installations, videos, performances, and drawings on the history and construction of the Escuelas Nacionales de Arte, an unfinished project by the architects Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti, and Roberto Gottardi started in 1961. Its exceptional buildings occupy the grounds of the former Havana Country Club, one of the most exclusive private clubs on the island before the revolution. Dulzaides' work examines the ways in which the buildings' aesthetics, which were entirely attuned to the surrounding landscape, was rejected by the same revolution which inspired it. **AE(T)**

24 Ricardo G. Elías

*1969 in Trinidad, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In the work *Oro Seco [Dry Gold]* (2005–2009), Elías addresses the Cuban sugar industry and the central role this "white gold" plays in Cuba's national economy. After the end of the Eastern Block and the subsequent loss of Soviet subsidies, the country's economy experienced an unprecedented decline. The photo series presented here portrays the workers who were affected by the collapse of this centuries-old industry. **AE(T)**

25 Enema Collective

Founded in 1999 in the class of Lázaro Saavedra at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA), Enema Collective explores the possibilities of humor and the grotesque in relation to art history and the social realities of Cuba. Their works are performative and usually recorded with the help of video and photography. The action *Morcilla [Black Sausage]* (2003) was realized during the 8th Havana Biennial and counts as one of their most sensational works. The screening shows the group's members as they prepare a sausage made from their own blood. **AE(T)**

26 Alexis Esquivel

***1969 in La Palma, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB**

In the work of painter, sculptor, and performance artist Esquivel, art, politics, and historiography melt together in a subtle mixture. His painting *Postales de la guerra [Postcards from War]* (2012) criticizes Cuba's involvement in African wars (Angola) since the seventies. With the person of a dark-skinned child that hardly fits notions of a threatening giant, *La profecía del ciclope [Prophecy of the Cyclops]* (2012) presents the Greek mythological figure as the builder of gigantic oil rigs in an ocean where whales spew fountains of oil. As the viewer looks the cyclops in its single piercing eye, they involuntarily begin to ask themselves questions about the future. **AE(T)**

27 Tomás Esson Reid

*1963 in Havana, CUB, lives in Miami, USA

Visual effects form a central interest in Esson Reid's artistic work. Using vulgar or grotesque motifs, he deliberately provokes a feeling of shame in the viewer, while his special sense of humor questions pictorial conventions. Positioning himself in the tradition of expressive art such as Goya, van Gogh, and Siqueiro, Esson Reid takes alienation, violence, and isolation as the subjects of his work. The large-format image *Swing à la Cucaracha* [*Cucaracha-Swing*] (1990) expresses drastic social criticism. The figure titled "SOCIAL" has chopped off its left foot with a machete. It pisses from its oversized genitals while a cockroach resides in its farting anus. **AB**

28 Tomás Esson Reid / Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas

*1963 in Havana, CUB, lives in Miami, USA /

*1962 in Sancti Spiritus, CUB, lives in New York City, USA

The inspiration for the painting *Viva Cuba libre!* [*Long Live Free Cuba!*] (1989) came from the popular Russian children's story *Masha and the Bear*, which the artists adapted to serve as an allegory for Cuba's dependency on the collapsing Soviet Union during the period of Perestroika. Here, the Soviet Union appears as a large, grotesque bear with thin legs—a wounded creature moving forward despite its precarious situation. Riding on its back we find Masha with her flag in hand, a symbol of Cuba. Masha's craftiness in the original story corresponds to the new Cuban pragmatism, which seeks to distance itself from any connections to the Soviet Block while still trying to preserve trade relationships with the wounded bear by any means necessary. **AE(T)**

29 Carlos Estévez

*1969 in Havana, CUB, lives in Miami, USA

"My goal is to achieve knowledge through art; discovering the meaning of life is my obsession", Estévez said. The sculptor, painter, and draftsman is interested in philosophy as well as myth and ritual; he is fascinated by universally valid forms and motifs. His works are often prepared with natural materials and occasionally reveal references to Christian art. The wood sculpture *Todo lo llevo conmigo* [*I Carry Everything with Me*] (1993) carries its spiral-crested, broken-off hands as a relief sunken into its chest. Its face is masked with a pink sash. The sites of perception and action are transplanted into the realm of emotions. **AB**

30 Leandro Feal

*1986 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

The photographer Feal demonstrates a keen eye for the slip-ups and confusions of contemporary Cuban culture. He focuses the viewer's attention on young Cuban intellectuals, tracks down their meeting places and documents their lifestyles. Along the way, he observes the tones and textures of the surrounding urban landscape. In black and white or washed-out colors, he casts a sober glance at the buildings in cities like Havana, Moscow, and Warsaw. These photographs, which capture the differences and similarities of the architecture in these cities, complement his individual and group portraits of Cubans—including the artist himself—that live in these urban neighborhoods. **AE(T)**

31 Adrián Fernández Milanés

*1984 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Fernández uses postal stamps published after the revolution as the foundation of his work. In *Masa* [*Mass*] (2015), he captures the masses of people which were supposed to demonstrate the power of the revolution since the sixties. The grain of these highly enlarged stamps projects an almost abstract presence of the masses. *Cosmonaut (In Search of Orientation)* (2015) makes reference to Cuba's participation in the Soviet Union's Interkosmos space program, which enabled a celebrated Cuban cosmonaut to fly into space in 1980. The staged photographs in *Epilogue II* (2012) confront problematic stereotypes and cultural prejudices promoted by the tourist industry using the example of Havana's famous nightclub Tropicana. **AE(T)**

32 Adonis Flores

*1971 in Sancti Spiritus, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Adonis Flores had barely come of age when he was deployed as a soldier as part of Cuba's military intervention in the Angolan Civil War (1975-2002). His experiences there form a central biographic backdrop for his artistic work. In his photographs, videos, and performances, he parodies the repressive paradigms and structures of the military apparatus with anti-heroic poses and actions. In the video *Danza sobre alfombra persa* [*Dancing on the Persian Carpet*] (2014), Flores dances on a Persian rug in combat boots to the 1982 song *Bad to the Bone* by George Thorogood and The Destroyers. Filled with the joy of conquest, the cultural artifact of supposedly inferior states is crushed underfoot. **AB**



Diana Fonseca Quiñones,
Pasatiempo [Pastime], 2004

33 Diana Fonseca Quiñones

*1978 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Reality and fiction are mixed in Fonseca Quiñones' work. In a playful, almost poetic language, she tells of human desire and longing while nevertheless expressing subtle criticism of the Cuban state. Everyday objects, experiences, or childhood games become metaphors for the Cuban people's desire for freedom and symbolize the wish to break out of isolation, such as in *Pasatiempo [Pastime]* (2004). *Puente [Bridge]* (2015) makes this even clearer. Words like "fear", "clarity", and "enemy" are sewn into the pages of an open notebook. Each word is connected to a corresponding one in another notebook via a long thread: a bridge that nonetheless leads nowhere. **JM**

34 René Francisco Rodríguez / Eduardo Ponjuán

*1960 in Holguín, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB /

*1956 in Pinar del Río, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Francisco and Ponjuán studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) during the eighties. They began their collaborative practice after graduating from the academy to which they would later return as professors. Early on, they revised fragments of Malevich and van Gogh by means of parody and persiflage. The early nineties then gave rise to a group of works which examines the aesthetic doctrines of Socialist Realism. In *Utopía* (1991), they deconstruct the visual language of Soviet posters from the Second World War and generally question the propagandistic excesses of official artistic languages. **AE(T)**

35 Fidel García

*1981 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

For the installation *STATIC* (2009–2013), García constructed a small broadcasting station in Death Valley, California, which transmitted ideologically motivated reports from the Cuban state radio station 24 hours a day. Like many of García's works, *STATIC* comments on Cuban reality. García sees himself as a close observer of the public systems and networks which structure and influence our psychic and material worlds. He then uses the most diverse technologies to infiltrate these systems. In *STATIC*, the artist lets the official announcements to which Cuba's citizens are subjected on a daily basis resonate throughout the valley of death. **JM**

36 Lázaro García

*1968 in Cuba, lives in Spain

The paintings shown here are a selection of García's early work produced when he had just begun his career at Havana's Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA). The aesthetic ideas associated with postmodernism were being hotly debated in Cuba at the time. The practice of appropriation, for example, pervaded the work of many young Cuban artists. García considered a variety of historical sources and references while developing an iconography that for him is as much religious as it is autobiographical. The images are inspired by Christian faith. Whether in the form of syncretic Afro-Cuban religions or traditional Christianity, religion has become a regular source of inspiration and has played a key role in Cuban art since the eighties. **AE(T)**

37 Rocío García

*1955 in Santa Clara, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

García's paintings are colorful and lively snapshots of a fantasy world where dangerous situations befall the characters as they pursue exciting love affairs. They violate social taboos; sex and violence are recurring themes, reflecting the frustrations of psychological, socio-cultural, and political problems. For the artist, sexuality is the origin of human conflict. Eroticism presents the opportunity for manipulation and the exercise of power. Nevertheless, her paintings also represent a liberation from social constraints, which suppress individual desire in favor of the public interest. Her characters resist societal norms and expectations. **JM**

38 Carlos García de la Nuez

*1959 in Havana, CUB, lives in Mexico City, MEX

The painter García de la Nuez, who has lived in Mexico for almost three decades, combines figuration and abstraction in his work. Although he initially oscillated back and forth between the two painterly vocabularies, he arrived at a more thorough fusion in his later works, which variedly manifest a fluid, and at times almost sculptural, design. Occasionally, depictions of external, visible realities emerge, inviting one to reflect on the concepts of home, travel, emigration, and dislocation. At the same time, language has also taken on a fundamental role in García's recent creations. **AE(T)**

39 Kattia García Fayat

*1961 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In her piece *Las mujeres sostienen la mitad del cielo* [*Women Hold Half of the Sky*], García Fayat portrays women in a densely populated working class district of Havana in the tradition of street photography. They are mostly young women struggling to survive every day in a dysfunctional economy. By primarily documenting the rituals and ceremonies of syncretic, Afro-Cuban religions, she draws our attention to the spiritual dimension of the depicted characters' lives. Moreover, she gives an impression of these women's socio-economic milieu: from their streets and living quarters-cum-workplaces, all the way to their private altars and sacrificial sites. **AE(T)**

40 Flavio Garcíandía

*1954 in Caibarién, CUB, lives in Mexico City, MEX

Garcíandía is among the central figures of the loose collective Volumen Uno, which organized the eponymous groundbreaking exhibition in 1981. Since the early eighties, his work has approached indigenous cultures with a certain ambivalence since their aesthetic is considered inferior. He thus uses forms, colors, and textures that a "normal" artistic sensibility would write off as *picúo* (kitsch). Since 1981 his work has been in dialogue with "uncultivated" forms, spontaneous design, and "bad blueprints" for public spaces and objects. His commentary on Cuban popular culture has developed into a study of the particular stereotypes that have come to represent the island, its political symbols, and its inhabitants' sexual behaviors. **AE(T)**

41 Luis Gárciga Romay / Miguel Moya

*1971 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Mexico City, MEX /

*1974 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Gárciga Romay and Moya's film *Mi familia quiere un cambio* [*My Family Wants a Change*] (2007) depicts people fantasizing about how they would change their homes if they had the means to. They spend a lot of time visualizing their ideas: a better organized pantry, a backyard that can transform into a living room, new tiles for the wall. The film's theme, however, is not its protagonists' possibly unrealizable hopes; rather, at the heart of the film is the desire for change as a force against the status quo of a society that has come to a standstill. The "change" in the title denotes a process of development that could spread from each individual home to the entire country. **AE(T)**

42 Luis Gárciga Romay / Miguel Moya

*1971 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Mexico City, MEX /

*1974 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In Cuba, there is a two-tier currency system: the Cuban peso (CUP) is used by most Cubans, while the peso convertible (CUC), which corresponds to the value of the US Dollar, is intended for tourists and indigenous people. The currency and the economy have been in a sorry state for decades; once the US dollar was illegal, then legal, and today its circulation is limited. *Calobar (Vidrio polarizado)* [*Calobar (Polarized Glass)*] (2003) illustrates the absurdity of the currency system. Like a thimble rigger, the artists carry out a series of currency exchanges between CUP, CUC, and US dollars. By the end, there are not enough Cuban pesos to pay for a single US dollar with which the exchange began. The receipts that resulted from the exchanges are shown here. **AE(T)**

43 Luis Gómez Armenteros

*1968 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

As with some other Cuban artists in the Ludwig Collection, Gómez examined mythical, symbolic, and religious elements of American indigenous cultures in his early work. Although he now works more with the media of film and photography, the artist limited himself to natural materials like wood and metal in this early phase under the influence of his teacher Juan Francisco Elso (1956-1988). His sculpture *Los ojos que ven* [*The Eyes That See*] (1992) creates a symbolic connection between the totem pole (belonging), the crucifix (sacrifice), the figure of the bird (freedom, flight) and eyes (vigilance, prophecy). **AB**

44 Alejandro González

*1974 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

"I show a part of society that is somehow being officially silenced... Photography shows me things that I didn't know I knew and allows me to reconsider them..." (A. González). The photographer grew up at a time when non-conformist behavior was suppressed; English music and jeans, for example, were taboo. Since 2005, he has documented life on the Caribbean island with his photography: the socially ostracized in *Conducta Improbia [Improper Behavior]* (2008), youth in *Cuba, Año Cero [Cuba, Year Zero]* (2010-12), wild nightlife scenes in *AM-PM* (2005), but also successful and failing state projects. **AB**

45 Jesús Hdez-Güero

*1983 in Havana, CUB, lives in Venezuela and Cuba

Hdez-Güero's work is directly and uncompromisingly political. With a rational gaze, he scrutinizes the visual representation of his environment's social and political fabric. For *Cambio de Bola [Ball Change]* (2005), Hdez-Güero sewed a Cuban-made baseball inside an American one, thereby referring to Baseball as a national sport not only in the US but also in Cuba. Being a symbol of freedom and egalitarianism since the days of the first War of Independence against Spain in 1869, Baseball also serves as a special mediator of cultural identity since the revolution in 1961. This work is contrasted by the dark, almost intimate photographic portraits from the series *Lecturas difíciles [Difficult Readings]* (2009-2010). Despite restricted freedom in Cuba, the free press has nonetheless created a space for itself, even if its existence will never be officially acknowledged. **JM**



Jesús Hdez-Güero, *Cambio de Bola [Ball Change]*, 2005-2015

46 Diango Hernández

*1970 in Sancti Spiritus, CUB, lives in Düsseldorf, DEU

Like many other artists, Hernández left Cuba relatively early in protest against the system. His conceptual work is nevertheless humorously and critically permeated by visual and thematic references to his Caribbean homeland. The minimalist lights of *Las Luces de Miramar [The Lights of Miramar]* (2016) refer to Havana's former upper-class district of Miramar, which became the diplomatic quarter following the revolution. Instead of candles, oranges "light" his chandelier: "on the one hand, it stands for enjoyment and tropical pleasure, and on the other for colonialism, mono-culture, and exploitation, which go back to the time of slavery", said Hernández. **AB**



Kcho, *Untitled* 1994
(Detail)

47 Orestes Hernández

*1981 in Holguín, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Hernández is considered one of the rejuvenators of Cuban painting in the last decade. To offer a broader view of his creative output, the exhibition presents a selection of his animations. Like his canvasses, these animations are full of humor and irreverence. They map a repertoire of images and figures that populate all of his work across a variety of media. The artist himself speaks of "absurd, imaginary narratives... images that abandon reality as well as any type of logical understanding of the real through representation. [They] are conceived as an act of sabotage against any pretension or the pathos of intellectualism". **AE(T)**

48 Kcho (Alexis Leyva Machado)

*1970 in Nueva Gerona, lives in Havana, CUB

Leyva Machado, better known as Kcho, is one of the most significant Cuban artists of our time. In his early work *La peor de las trampas* [*The Worst of All Traps*] (1990), the artist forms a useless, but nevertheless mythical ladder out of rusty machetes, the symbol of Cuba's independence. His work *Como el garabato se parece a Cuba* [*How Much the Hook Resembles Cuba*] (1991) also plays on the theme of the island. Developed during a residency in Aachen, the work *Sin título* [*Untitled*] (1994) displays 260 circularly arranged lead boats pointing inwards—heavy and inert, they remain in the same spot. **ML**

49 Tony Labat

*1951 in Havana, CUB, lives in San Francisco, USA

The performance and multimedia artist Labat, who has lived in the US for decades, investigates Cuban partly through the perspective of a foreigner in his own land. The *Riviera Project* (2005) addresses the three buildings that constitute a historical ensemble in Havana's Vedado district: the Hotel Habana Riviera, built in 1957 by Meyer Lansky; an apartment project from the seventies inspired by the Soviet prefabricated building style of the period; and the Meliá Cohiba Hotel, a government project from 1994. The film explores the interior and exterior lives of these architectures and functions as a commentary on the ideological shifts over the course of history that they mark.

AE(T)

50 Ernesto Leal

*1971 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Leal's work is incisively intelligent, softened only by a dry wit. In *Psycofonias (Instituto Superior de Dobles Agentes)* [*Psychophonia (Higher Institute of Double Agents)*] (2011) he deals with the phenomenon of voices from the past that are trapped in a room. Dressed as a ghost-hunter, he records the inexplicable noises that one hears in empty rooms, like the lecture halls at the University of Havana. In a slightly mocking tone, he draws attention to phenomena that are not scientifically proven, in a place where science and rationality are at home and the plausibility of such metaphysical manifestations must be denied. **AE(T)**

51 Glenda León

*1976 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana and Madrid, ESP

The conceptual artist León works in the mediums of drawing, installation, and video art. In the video work *Inversión II* [*Investment II*] (2011), the protagonist painstakingly scrapes the color off the surface of an American 100 dollar bill. She then inhales the collected pigment through rolled tobacco leaves. Not only is the banknote entirely devalued in this process, but currency as an object of desire is taken to the point of absurdity. The work *La Internacional* [*The International*], a sheet of music made from a collage of shredded banknotes, confronts the anthem of the socialist workers' movement with the world of money, which now sets the tone more powerfully than ever. **ML**

52 Glexis Novoa

*1964 in Holguín, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Miami, USA

In the late eighties Novoa became a key figure in the Cuban art scene. His performances, paintings, prints, and installations were known for their trenchant irony and their criticism of the Cuban state's socialist ideology. In his "practical phase" during which this installation was created, Novoa focused on the material aspects of art and the art market, which was very local at the time but nevertheless of great importance. The monumental appearance of the installation *Aguilera, Ciro, Flavio, Ana Albertina, Adriano, Tomás, Carlos, Mosquera y Tonel* (1990), in which Novoa portrays nine of his artist and art critic friends, parodies the pathos of Socialist Realism and reveals its manifestations as pure kitsch. **AE(T)**

53 Antonio Nuñez Hernández

*1971 in Camagüey, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Aachen, DEU

Having lived between Germany and Cuba since 2001, Nuñez' work reflects on the differences between visual conventions inside and outside of Cuba. The large-format prints from his Almanach series of woodcuts direct the viewer's gaze down the narrow back alleys of European cities. Slogans like "*Viva el Pueblo*" ["*Long Live the People*"] and the iconic face of the rebel Che Guevara appear on the graffiti-covered walls. They belong to the repertoire of the graffiti scene, which uses these images to express an indomitable and liberated attitude toward life. The delicate technique lends the dense compositions a vibrant liveliness; but at the same time, the narrow passageway with skulls and symbols of Cuba's state propaganda becomes a nightmarish ghost train. **AL**

54 Ernesto Oroza

*1968 in Havana, CUB, lives in Aventura, USA

Oroza studied at the Instituto Superior de Diseño (ISDI) in Havana. Since the early nineties, he has belonged to the artist collective Ordo Amoris Cabinet. His training as a designer is key to understanding his reflections on Cuba's scarcity-plagued material culture. The principles of ordering and preserving form the foundation of his work. He is a collector obsessed with the universe of things, instruments, buildings, and spaces that Cubans have appropriated, modified and produced in the last decade. His photo series *Arcitecturas de la necesidad* [*Architecture of Necessity*] (1997– present) illustrates how the human need for creativity manifests itself even in times of extreme scarcity. **AE(T)**

55 Marianela Orozco

*1973 in Sancti Spíritus, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Orozco deploys living creatures, natural processes, and her own body as tools to explore the boundaries between nature and society as well as the ruptures and reconciliations between these two worlds. The means of observation plays a major role here, leaving the viewer with a sense of uncertainty: her works primarily explore the moments when everything seems to stand still. She describes the often absurd relationship between humans and nature in her video *Ave* [*Bird*] (2003): a chicken matures to a hen by being fed the innards of its biological relatives. **DP**

56 Ramón Pacheco

*1956 in Ranchuelo, CUB, lives in Ranchuelo, CUB

In the blossoming photographic scene of the nineties, Pacheco was one of the few artists who was able to continue working as a photo journalist, even though he didn't live in Havana. To this day, he still lives and works in the Matanzas province, which has been an important center for the sugar industry since the era of colonialism, when it was maintained by thousands of African slaves. Their descendants' tightly-knit community has created a long-lasting culture primarily expressed through music and religion. Pacheco's photographs mirror the idiosyncrasies of Afro-Cuban culture. He offers an intimate testimony to his community from the perspective of a black man. **AE(T)**

57 René Peña

*1957 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Like most photographers who grew to prominence in the nineties, Peña abandoned the propagandistic style that defined photography in Cuba during the revolution. Peña turns his camera back onto himself, thereby directly dealing with two relevant themes: race and sexuality. The viewer is confronted with the suggestive body of the depicted black man, who is occasionally naked as he interacts with everyday objects like a knife, light bulbs, jewelry, or a (white) puppet. The images convey a complex mixture of emotions, pain, and phobias and even narcissistic desires, eroticism, and taboos. **AE(T)**



Marta María Pérez Bravo,
Recuerdo de nuestro bebé
[*In Memory of Our Baby*],
1987/88

58 Marta María Pérez Bravo

*1959 in Havana, CUB, lives in Monterrey, MEX

Pérez Bravo began her largely autobiographical work during the early nineties. She portrays her own body by capturing each of her unique performances in black and white photographs. In her work, women function as symbols of maternal strength and embody specific cultural and syncretic traditions that have strong African elements. Her dream-like photographs depict her varying, often contradictory identities as mother, woman, Cubana, and practicing member of the Santería religion. **AE(T)**

59 Michel Pérez Pollo

*1981 in Manzanillo, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

The objects in Pérez Pollo's paintings lead poetic lives of their own. Drawing on Giorgio de Chirico's conception of *pittura metafisica*, Pérez himself speaks of "metaphysical painting". His works are produced in two successive stages: first he forms a model from colorful modeling clay and found objects, then he transfers this to the canvas in a significantly enlarged form. In a new series of works which includes the piece *Mango* (2016), he goes a step further and uses fragments of public furniture from the sixties as the motifs for his large-format paintings—in this case, fruit-shaped concrete seating. **ML**

60 Manuel Piña-Baldoquín

*1958 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana and Vancouver, CAN

In his work, the photographer and video artist Piña-Baldoquín sheds light on the relationships between power, utopia, and history. His film *The Hope and the Rope* (2003) blends autobiography with reflections about the urban landscape's influence on the process of social change. In a combination of image and text, Piña's film humorously details the story of the "micro-brigadas", DIY construction groups that were supposed to alleviate the housing crisis in Cuba during the seventies and in so doing left behind countless monotonous, gray housing developments. Just below the surface of his work, there is always a question about the failure of transformative utopian ideas. **AE(T)**

61 Mabel Poblet

*1986 in Cienfuegos, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Poblet's work is characterized by introspection, an analysis of the role of women, and the differences between life and death.

The color red plays a central role throughout her work.

Simplemente Bellas [*Simply Beautiful*] (2012) questions the relationships between established concepts like kitsch, folklore, and art. She mounted plastic flowers made by prison inmates from Holguín—the epitome of kitsch for Poblet—onto rotating wheels to cover a large portrait of a woman. The image is constantly deformed by its rotation and thus represents the relativity of kitsch on an individual, societal, and aesthetic level. **JF**

62 Wilfredo Prieto

*1978 in Sancti Spíritus, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB and Barcelona, ESP

Prieto uses absurdity as an artistic strategy in his work. He occupies public spaces and exhibition spaces with objects and interventions that blend humor with critical reflections about socio-political realities. In *Hero* (2011), six glass plates form a completely empty, human-sized glass box. When a viewer approaches the box hoping to find the "hero", they only catch a glimpse of their own reflection, becoming at once the exhibited object as well as the hero of their own existence. **ML**

63 Sandra Ramos

*1969 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

In her artworks, Sandra Ramos deals with the realities specific to Cuba. Self-portraiture serves as a central tool for this, conveying the often contradictory conditions and processes of membership, migration, and emigration. Personal memories and experiences are constantly interwoven with the collective history of Cuba. In her works *El bote* [*The Boat*] (1994), *La balsa* [*The Raft*] (1994), and *El batiscafo* [*The Bathyscaphe*] (1994), the artist thematizes the "insularity" both of an individual and an entire nation, which holds its flag high despite its isolation in dangerous waters. **DP**

64 Grethell Rasúa

*1983 Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Rasúa investigates the cultural and ideological elements of our daily existence with an almost painful frankness. The main theme of her work is often utopia, which she frequently simulates to the point of farce. For *Con tu propio sabor* [*With Your Own Flavor*] (2005–2006), Rasúa swapped fresh herbs with the excrement of around twenty people. By fertilizing the plants with the collected excrement, she examines how biological organisms generate themselves and form systems. This produces a kind of personalized, collective body art in which the process overshadows the object itself. **DP**

65 Ricardo Rodríguez Brey

*1955 in Havana, CUB lives in Gent, BEL

"I try to discover my own continent and its history, myself and my biography as well as the exact points of contact between them (...)", remarked Brey. In the eighties, his interest took a strong turn toward religious mysticism and traditional spirituality. In his piece *Un objeto inocente* [*An Innocent Object*] (1988), the artist uses household materials which play a role in everyday life but also in the rites of Afro-Cuban religion practiced in Cuba. The title of the work points to the puppet at the center of the installation. It is one of the figures that are supposed to protect the home against evil and can be found in any number of living rooms across Cuba. At the same time, it stands for Santería and its central deity Elegguá, the god of paths. **DP**

66 Fernando Rodríguez

*1970 in Matanzas, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

At the outset of his artistic career, Rodríguez created an alter ego with whom he has "collaborated" ever since. Francisco de la Cal is a farmer, naive painter, and charcoal producer who was blinded during the year of the Cuban Revolution. Together they create humorous and ironic artworks that result from combining naive forms of expression with conceptual claims. In *Mi guía y mi sostén* [*My Guide and My Support*] (1992/93), four of the most important Cuban revolutionary heroes—namely Fidel Castro, Camilo Cienfuegos, Che Guevara, and José Martí—are portrayed on the handles of walking sticks. On the round wood panels, the blind de la Cal is pictured in various scenes; in each of these, the walking sticks bring him "enlightenment". **AB**

67 Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal

*1955 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Together with Belkis Ayón, José Bedia, Ricardo Rodríguez Brey, and Marta María Pérez Bravo, Rodríguez Olazábal belongs to the group of artists in this exhibition whose work is based on the knowledge, philosophy, and beliefs of Afro-Cuban religions. He is a babalao, a priest of the Yoruba religion Ifá, and his work is indivisibly connected to his deep knowledge of the signs and rituals of his religion. The work *La Dualidad* [*The Duality*] (1993) thematizes the merging of African and Christian religion through a Janus-faced, male being—perhaps the artist himself—who holds a figure of Christ in one hand, while a snake of the Ifá cult wraps itself around the other, stronger one. **AE(T)**

68 Lázaro Saavedra

*1964 in Havana, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

Due to his biting commentary on his country's social and political situation, the conceptual artist Saavedra has earned the title "satyr of the satire" (O. Sanchez). "Paradoxes especially arouse my attention. They are a constant in my work, on a formal and conceptual level", Saavedra said. With the intentionally careless, large-format collages on wrapping paper in *Sin título* [*Untitled*] (1993), Saavedra addresses the challenges of the artistic creative process in a comic-like fashion: despairing over his lack of success, the artist sells his blood to a vampire who promises him success in return. **AB**

69 José A. Toirac

*1966 in Guantánamo, CUB, lives in Havana, CUB

The self-described political artist Toirac began doubting the authenticity of the medium of photography at a very early stage, having seen the way it was arbitrarily used for propagandistic purposes. Toirac deconstructs the myths of the Cuban Revolution by placing heroic photographic subjects and historical moments in a new context. In *Eternidad* [*Eternity*] (1996), Fidel Castro is seen in an American cologne advertisement. The painting *Autorretrato (Homenaje a Durero)* [*Self-Portrait (Homage to Dürer)*] (1995), which actually depicts Fidel Castro, is a doubly provocative gesture: not only does Toirac put himself on the same level as the Máximo Líder; he also dedicates his image to the Renaissance painter who shocked his contemporaries by posing as Christ in his self-portrait. As a result, both Castro and the artist ironically rise to the status of saviors. **AB**

70 Rubén Torres Llorca

*1957 in Havana, CUB, lives in Miami, USA

"The appearance of my artworks is very attractive, but the irony of the literal subjects that they conceal negates them from within", said the sculptor, painter, and photographer Torres Llorca. In his early years, he was initially fascinated by kitsch, which spoke a profound truth to him. Later on under the influence of Joseph Beuys, he developed a critical attitude toward social conditions in connection with a great aspiration toward humanistic values. *Si pierdo la memoria que pureza* [*If I Lose My Memories, Which Purity*] (1989) presents itself as a totem: the wooden head bashed in with nails reveals the artwork's sarcastic statement. **AB**

71 Jorge Wellesley

*1979 in Havana, CUB, lives in Guttenberg, USA

Painting, drawing, installation, and video are the artistic tools that allow Wellesley to investigate language, text, structures of communication, and the social relations that accompany them. His installation *Árbol semiótico* [*Semiotic Tree*] (2004-2015) illustrates how the concepts of truth and reality are linguistic constructions, whose abstract character is emphasized by straightforward graphic design. Starting with the term "Warheit" ("truth" or "verdad"), he creates a word tree from synonyms and antonyms that calls the complex system and consensus of semiotics into question: how can language define something that is in and of itself ungraspable? **DP**

72 Osvaldo Yero

*1969 in Camagüey, CUB, lives in Vancouver, CAN

An unparalleled love story between art and kitsch played out within Cuban art from the late eighties until deep into the nineties. To this day, Yero continues this romantic pursuit and builds a bridge to popular craft art. In particular, he parodies the aesthetic of traditional stucco work (*yseria*) with its exaggerated decor by outfitting his works with accessories drawn from high culture and enriching them with allusions to sex, politics, religion, and patriotic symbols. He likes to attack the audience's taste with his occasionally crude and irreverent humor, such as in the work *Flechazos* [*Arrow Shot (Love at First Sight)*] (1993). **AE(T)**

Illustrations / Photo Credits

Tanya Angulo, Juan Pablo Ballester, José A. Toirac, *Triptico [Triptych]*, 1991 (Detail), Oil on nettle, each 180 x 180 cm. © The Artists, Photo: Anne Gold; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Collection Ludwig.

Alejandro Campins, *Hip-Hop*, of the series *Declaración pública [Public Declaration]*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 257 x 390 cm. © Alejandro Campins, Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery.

Maria Magdalena Campos Pons, *Opciones para el mito: Leda piensa [Alternatives For a Myth: Leda Thinks]*, 1989, Acryl on wood, plaster, 281 x 185 x 4 cm. © Maria Magdalena Campos Pons, Photo: Anne Gold; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Collection Ludwig.

Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas, *Patria o muerte [Fatherland, or Death]*, 1989, Oil on nettle, two parts, 400 x 400 cm. © Carlos Rodríguez Cárdenas, Photo: Anne Gold; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Collection Ludwig.

Jeanette Chavez, *Integration II*, 2011-2012, Video, 05:23 min. © Jeanette Chavez.

Adrián Fernández Milanés, *Cosmonaut (In Search of Orientation)*, 2015, Inkjet Print on Alu-Dibond, 150 x 300 cm. © Adrián Fernández Milanés, Courtesy Fabian & Claude Walter Gallery.

Diana Fonseca Quiñones, *Pasatiempo [Pastime]*, 2004, Video, 4:45 min., Videostill. © Diana Fonseca Quiñones, Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery.

Jesús Hdez-Güero, *Cambio de Bola [Ball Change]*, 2005-2015, Leather, thread, Ø ca. 7,5 cm. © Jesús Hdez-Güero.

Kcho, Untitled, 1994, (Detail). Ø 470 cm. © Kcho, Photo: Carl Brunn; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Collection Ludwig.

Marta Maria Pérez Bravo, *Recuerdo de nuestro bebé [In Memory of Our Baby]*, 1987/88, from a series of 8 photographs. 41,5 x 51,6 cm. © Marta Maria Pérez Bravo. Photo: Carl Brunn; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst Aachen, Collection Ludwig.

Imprint

Short Guide of the exhibition

Art x Cuba. Contemporary Perspectives since 1989

08.09.2017 – 18.02.2018

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Contemporary Perspectives since 1989

The collection of Peter and Irene Ludwig includes one of the largest and one of the first selections of contemporary Cuban art in Europe. The exhibition, which is the largest one of contemporary Cuban art to date, initiates an encounter between the works in the collection and young Cuban art. With approximately 150 works by over 70 artists, it provides insight into the development of Cuban art during the last 30 years.

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