

Polaridad Complementaria

Recent Works from Cuba



Adonis Flores, *Tamiz*, 2005, digital print



Yoan Capote, *Mente Abierta/Open Mind*, 2006-2008, PVC and bronze

P*olaridad Complementaria: Recent Works from Cuba* is a major exhibition developed by the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana, offering audiences the opportunity to become acquainted with the island's current artistic production. The exhibition includes 54 works of painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video, and installation art by 27 Cuban artists. *Polaridad Complementaria* attests to the aesthetic and conceptual level that characterizes Cuban art today. The participants are mainly young artists who have attained international acknowledgment; the majority of them have taken part in biennials and art fairs in Europe and

Latin America. Several have exhibited in the the United States, among them René Peña, Abel Barroso, Aimeé García, Yoan Capote, and Roberto Fabelo. All artists in the exhibition were selected for the Havana Biennial in 2009.

Diverse in medium and ideology, the artists featured understand their art encompasses power to address a wide range of social issues. Often compared to American photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, René Peña explores the relationship between individuals within society and the struggle for their own identity. Abel Barroso carves three-dimensional pieces using wood

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and various printing methods to create a conversation about technology and the developing world. From Zulueta, Cuba, Duvier del Dago takes it one step further combining drawing with handmade 3D design examining the unattainable, whether it be the material or the ideal. Sandra Ramos incorporates themes into her paintings such as racism, mass migration, freedom and liberties to illustrate living within a communist government. Other artists in *Polaridad Complementaria* include Juan Carlos Alom, Lidzie Alvisa, Augustin Bejarano, Luis Enrique Camejo, Ricardo Elías, Adonis Flores, Aimée García, Glenda León, Frank Martínez, Douglas Pérez, Fernando Rodríguez, Ángel Ramírez, Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal, Lázaro Saavedra, Ludmila Velasco, Nelson Arellano, and Reinerio Tamayo. From simplistic to intricately fabricated, these artists create a narrative of Cuba today.

Polaridad Complementaria was developed by curators Margarita Sánchez and Jorge Rodríguez at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana. The Center is a cultural institution dedicated to the study, research and promotion of contemporary visual arts from developing countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean.

Polaridad Complementaria illustrates the features that have defined Cuban art in recent years, and pays particular attention to the works that illustrate the creators' capacity to connect the local reality to global concerns and universal human issues. This exhibition also aims to create a dialogue by examining and comparing the political, historical and common cultural links with the United States, while keeping in mind the lens in which the work will be viewed.



Duvier del Dago, *ADN*, 2008, Cotton and polyester thread, resin, wood, and metal



René Peña, From the series *Untitled Album*, 2007, Digital print



Douglas Pérez, From the series *Pictopias*, 2008, Oil on canvas

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Aimée García, *Atributos* from series "Orden," 2008, Digital print

Exhibition Curators

Jorge Fernández Torres (b. La Habana, 1965)

The curator of *Polaridad Complementaria* is the Director of the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam and the Havana Biennial, where he also works as an art critic. He is a past member of the Commission for Cuban Cultural Development of UNESCO and served on the Advisory Council for the Arts of the National Library of Cuba from 2000-2001. From 1998-2008 he was Vice Rector of the Higher Institute of Arts in Havana. Torres has curated and authored catalogues for numerous exhibitions in Cuba and abroad. Among his curatorial projects are *El lugar construido (The Constructed Place)*, Scholter Foundation in Altea, Alicante, Spain, 2005; *Three Cuban Artists*, Alicante, Spain, in 2006 and 2007; Cuban selection of *Imágenes multimedias de un mundo complejo. Visiones a ambos lados del Atlántico (International Video Art)* organized by Granada University, Contemporary Art Centre of Sevilla, Recoleta Cultural Centre in Buenos Aires, Mytho Gallery, Mexico D.F. and Ludwig Foundation and French Alliance in Havana. A Cuban native has a Bachelor in Art History from the University of Havana, 1990, and currently serves as professor of contemporary art at the Higher Institute of Arts and lectures internationally.

Margarita Sánchez Prieto (b. Havana City, 1953)

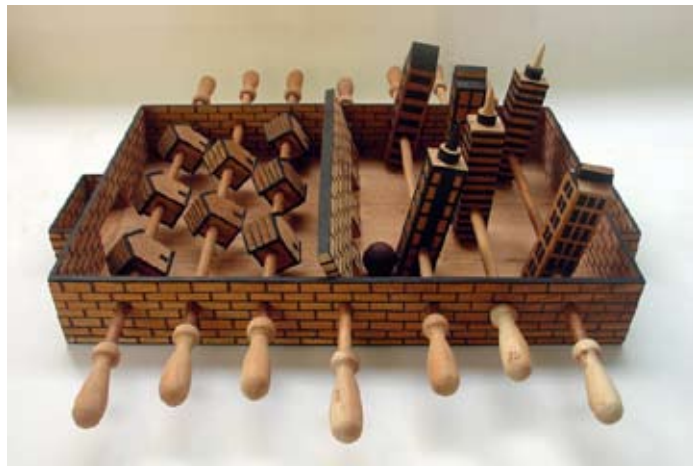
As the co-curator of *Polaridad Complementaria*, Prieto is a researcher and art critic for the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam in Havana. Previously she served as curator for the Havana Biennial and for cultural institutions and universities in the Netherlands, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Venezuela, Paraguay and Canada, as well as the University of Havana. She has authored for catalogues and art magazines and has lectured on contemporary Latin American art in Cuba and abroad. She is the author of the anthology *Visión del arte latinoamericano en la década de 1980 (Vision of Latin America Art in the '80s)* and of its foreword which was published by UNESCO in Lima, Perú. In 2001, she was awarded a Rockefeller scholarship for the research project *Identidades en Tránsito: ante la globalización (Identities in Transit: In Face of the Globalization)*. Born in Havana, Prieto has juried exhibitions sponsored by the National Council of Visual Arts of the Ministry of Culture in Cuba and received the National Prize for Curatorship from the 2000 Havana Biennial. She has a Bachelor in Art History from the University of Havana, 1976.

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Abel Barroso, *La ciudad en su laberinto/The City in its Labyrinth*, 2007, Three-dimensional xylographies



Lidzie Alvisa, From the series *Carrera de triple filo/Triple Edge Race*, Untitled, 2007, Digital print

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Number of Works:

54 works of painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video and installation art by 27 Cuban artists

Organized by:

The Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana

Curators:

Margarita Sánchez, curator and Jorge Fernández, director at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wifredo Lam, Havana

Requirements:

Moderate security, approximately 3,500 square feet

Participation Fee:

\$30,000

Booking Period:

8-weeks

Shipping:

IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing shipping within the contiguous US

Availability:

Mid-April 2011 to July 2011
November 2011 to December 2012

Contact:

Margalit Monroe
Exhibitions Manager
margalitm@artsandartists.org

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Juan Carlos Alom

(b. 1964, Havana, Cuba) A graduate of the International Institute of Journalism in Havana, Juan Carlos Alom is one of Cuba's most well known photographers. His experimental photography incorporates elements of ritual, magical realism and Afro-Cuban religion. He has had a number of solo and group exhibitions within Cuba and the United States. Alom lives and works in Havana.

Lidzie Alvisa

(b. 1969, Havana, Cuba) Lidzie Alvisa's conceptual photographs cover every topic from emigration, birth, life, death and time. She is a graduate of both the Escuela Superior de Artes Plásticas and the Instituto Superior de Arte in Cuba.

Abel Barroso

(b. 1971, Pinar del Río, Cuba) Abel Barroso combines printmaking, sculpture and installation, depicting often comical caricatures of Cuban culture. They are light-hearted yet thought provoking works that engage in human interaction and thought about materialism and distribution of wealth. He studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte (1995) and the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas (1990) in Havana where he currently resides. His sculptures and prints can be found in collections in Canada, Cuba, Germany and the United States.

Agustín Bejarano

(b. 1964, Camagüey, Cuba) Agustín Bejarano is the founder and director of Camagüey Engraving and a professor of Engraving at the Escuela Nacional de Arte. He is the recipient of several prestigious awards including first place for engraving at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (1989); the XI Latin American and Caribbean Biennial; and the bronze medal at the Society of the French Artists (2004). Exhibiting in more than 60 individual and 100 group shows, his work has been displayed in Croatia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Germany, and the United States.

Luis Enrique Camejo

(b. 1971, Pinar del Río, Cuba) Luis Enrique Camejo is an alumni and professor of painting at Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana. When describing his work, he states, "I depict life passing too fast, trying to catch the uncatchable, the artificial light, the images that stay in our minds as ghosts of an indifferent and strange reality."

Yoan Capote

(b. 1977, Cuba) Conceptual artist Yoan Capote encourages the viewers active involvement in his mixed media pieces, going beyond what is traditionally considered as "visual" by incorporating smells, flavors and sounds. He reflects on how human relationships and attitudes impact the social, economic, and cultural images that surround us. He has received several fellowships and residencies including the prestigious John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in New York.

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Duvier del Dago

(b. 1976, Zulueta, Cuba) One of Cuba's youngest and most widely known artists, Duvier del Dago translates his visionary drawings into 3D hologram-like installations. He takes his sketches of comic book-like characters and objects and then transforms them into large scale 3D installations using thread. Del Dago depicts the unattainable and materialistic. Studying under René Francisco Rodríguez (one of Cuba's most successful contemporary artists) at the prestigious Instituto Superior del Arte, del Dago participated in the 2000 Havana Biennial where del Dago's and Rodríguez's project "Galleria DUPP" won the UNESCO Prize for Promotion of the Arts.

Ricardo Elías

(b. 1969, Trinidad) Photographer Ricardo G. Elías has exhibited individually and collectively in Canada, Cuba, Greece, Japan and the United States.

Roberto Fabelo

(b. 1951, Camagüey, Cuba) Painter and member of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, Roberto Fabelo explores themes of human violence in relation to their immediate environment. He is a graduate of the prestigious Instituto Superior de Arte. Fabelo's work has won him numerous awards including first place in drawing at the Havana Biennial, the XI International Drawing Biennial in Great Britain, and at the Spanish American Watercolor Biennial in Chile. Fabelo's work is in the collections of museums in Cuba, Mexico, India, Denmark, Czech Republic and Switzerland.

Adonis Flores

(b. 1971, Sancti Spiritus, Cuba) A graduate of the Universidad Central de Las Villas in Architecture, Adonis Flores' work examines the institutionalization of the military, nationalism and identity. A veteran of the Angolan War of Independence in the 1980's, Flores uses his experience to find the connection between military and civil life in Cuba, which he expresses through his metaphorical photographs, video and performance art. His work has been exhibited widely in both solo and group shows.

Aimeé García

Aimeé García interprets women's lives, memories, death in relation to their roles in domestic life. She proclaims "her self-portraits are not only autobiographical testimonies; they are also a resource to invade the environment of women and society."

Glenda Leon

(b. 1976, Havana, Cuba) Glenda Leon combines, poetry, photography, dance, and video to create her whimsical installations focusing on existence within nature. Her work is in numerous collections and has been exhibited in Cuba, Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and the United States.

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René Peña

(b. 1975, Marianao, Cuba) René Peña has considered himself a photographer since he was eight years old. As a foreign language major at Havana University, Peña began photographing the people in Marianao, a suburb of Havana. His photographs play on the relationships and duality between individuals and social groups.

Frank Martínez

Painter and printmaker, Frank Martínez is fascinated by the way stories are told in his native Cuba. Depicted in his work through common Cuban narratives—music, dance and speech, Martínez uses bold colors and draws powerful figures to relay these important cultural pillars of Afro-Cuban life.

Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal

(b. 1955, Havana, Cuba) Afro-Cuban religious themes are Santiago Rodríguez Olazábal's source of artistic creation. His research of Afro-Cuban cults and mysticism has translated into his paintings through his visualization of iconic figures and divinities, linking word with images and symbols. Olazábal's work has been exhibited in Cuba, The Netherlands, Italy, and Spain.

Douglas Pérez

Painter Douglas Pérez portrays contemporary Cuban life through exploring taboo subjects: prostitution, poverty and racism.

Eduardo Ponjuan

(b. 1956, Pinar del Río, Cuba) Mixed media artist, Eduardo Ponjuan is the recipient of numerous awards for his drawings and collages from the National Museum of Fine Arts and the Provincial Center of Plastic Arts and Design in Havana. A graduate of the Escuela Nacional de Arte (1974) and the Instituto Superior de Arte (1983), Ponjuan's work has been exhibited in Argentina, Canada, Cuba, Germany, Venezuela, and the United States.

Angel Ramírez

(b. 1954, Havana, Cuba) A graduate of the prominent Escuela Nacional de Arte, Angel Ramírez collects and reuses old materials to create his paintings and sculptures. His recycling of objects, texts, and images allows him to weave stories of past and present Cuba.

Sandra Ramos

(b. 1969, Havana, Cuba) Considered a leading artist and intellectual of her generation, Sandra Ramos uses her mixed media drawings and paintings to discuss taboo issues within Cuban society, which include racism, mass migration, and freedom and liberties within a communist government. Her work has been exhibited in Cuba, The Netherlands, Mexico, Japan, England and the United States; she is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City.

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Fernando Rodríguez

(b. 1970, Matanzas, Cuba) Fernando Rodriguez graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana in 1994.

Lázaro Saavedra

(b. 1964, Havana, Cuba) Lázaro Saavedra's work combines photography, performance, and video installation. Since 1991 he has been a professor at the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, his alma mater. Saavedra has exhibited in solo and groups shows, and held residencies in Canada, Cuba, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and United States. He is the founder of Galería I-MIEL, an electronic art activism project.

Reinerio Tamayo

(Cuba) Reinerio Tamayo's often personifies humorous cartoon and caricaturist-like paintings play on popular cultures obsessions and "high culture" by using iconic images such as the Mona Lisa.

Liudmila Velasco (b. 1969, Moscow, Russia) &

Nelson Ramírez Arellano (b. 1969, Berlin Germany)

Husband and wife team, Liudmila Velasco and Nelson Ramírez Arellano have lived in Cuba since the 1970s. They both started as teachers of art and photography in Havana before coming together under the artist name Liudmila & Nelson. Their video and photography work combines clips and layers of imagery to compare old Havana with the present, asking their audiences to predict the future of Havana.