



Glaxis Novoa, *Timba*, 2017. Graphite on Carrara marble (marble recovered from Havana) 14 x 16 inches. Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The University of South Florida's Institute for Research in Art (IRA), made up of the USF Contemporary Art Museum, Graphicstudio and the Public Art program, is committed to introducing the students, faculty, staff and the broader community to innovative art that engages challenging issues confronting our global society and culture. Because of the proximity and the historical relationship between Cuba and the Tampa Bay area, the IRA has cultivated significant programs of cultural exchange with Cuba.

Noel Smith, Deputy Director of the USF Contemporary Art Museum and Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Art, has been researching and creating opportunities for exchange and the production and presentation of work by leading artists from Cuba for more than a decade. Some of the highlights of her curatorial projects for the USF Contemporary Art Museum include *Los Carpinteros: Inventing the World* in 2005; *Carlos Garaicoa*, a solo exhibition in 2010; and the inclusion of José Toirac and Meira Marrero in 2013's group exhibition titled *Subrosa: The Language of Resistance*. In the summer of 2013 she worked with Denny Matos to present an exhibition of Cuban video. In addition she has organized artist residencies to produce prints at Graphicstudio for Ibrahim Miranda, Liset Castillo, Abel Barroso, Los Carpinteros, Carlos Garaicoa, Esterio Segura, and most recently, Glenda León.

For *Climate Change: Cuba/USA*, Noel Smith has invited four Cuban and Cuban-American artists to produce new work in a variety of media that reflects on the changing political environment and its effect on their practice and personal lives. Glaxis Novoa, Celia y Yunior, Antonio Eligio Fernández "Tonel" and Javier Castro address a range of themes including survival, uncertainty, prosperity, greed, tourism, and capitalism. In addition to organizing the exhibition and encouraging new work, Noel conducted a series of interviews with each of the artists highlighting their personal history and illuminating aspects of their practice. The interviews are printed separately from this brochure and are available to all visitors.

Cuba has long been recognized for its strong support of culture and the arts, and has gained international prominence after the emergence of a generation of artists in the 1980s. The Tampa Bay area has rich historical connections to Cuba including cigar makers from Cuba setting up factories in the 1880's, José Martí's repeated visits in the 1890s seeking funds for the liberation of Cuba from Spain, and Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders headquartered in Tampa during the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In the 1980s the founding director of Graphicstudio, Donald Saff, directed the Rauschenberg Overseas Cultural Interchange (ROCI). As part of this global project Rauschenberg produced a series of paintings on aluminum and steel for *ROCI CUBA* that were exhibited at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Casa de las Américas and Castillo de la Fuerza in Havana in 1988. The response to this project was at once inspiring for generations of artists while also provoking some to consider the project an act of American imperialism.

Under the Obama administration, the IRA welcomed the establishment of direct flights between Havana and Tampa and the increased availability of visas, making residencies at Graphicstudio easier. However, relations with Cuba remain complicated and in flux. President Trump announced the tightening of regulations on Americans traveling to Cuba and the strengthening of the U.S. trade embargo in June 2017, however he did not change the Obama-era restoration of diplomatic relations including the reopening of embassies and the exchange of ambassadors. The IRA's history and participation in the evolving relationship between Cuban contemporary art and the United States position us well to respond to these developments.

It is with great appreciation that I acknowledge Noel Smith for her many years of curatorial research and engagement with artists from Cuba. The remarkable staff of CAM function as a team to ensure that all aspects of this exhibition and related programming meet the highest professional standards for presenting contemporary art. Exhibition Designer Tony Palms worked closely with the artists to assist in the production of their commissioned works and to design the overall installation, while Exhibitions Manager/Registrar Shannon Annis coordinated the loans of works and shipping. Don Fuller provided oversight for printed materials and the banner, and Madeline Baker served as the graphic designer of the materials associated with the exhibition. Others on the team who worked together to bring about this exhibition and its related educational programs and special events include Bobby Aiosa, Kate Alboreo, Amy Allison, Alyssa Cordero, Leslie Elsasser, Peter Foe, Mark Fredricks, Sarah Howard, Eric Jonas, Vincent Kral, Will Lytch, Scott Pierce, David Waterman, and Randall West, as well as students Jessica Abbajay, Adam Bakst, Ronika Baldwin, Natalie Bohin, Faith Gofton, Leya Ibrahim, Ashley Jablonski, Samantha Juárez, Sierra Louder, Zoe McIlwain, Angel Poulos and Annalith Garzon.

Several aspects of this exhibition were made possible by the generous support of Dr. Allen Root in honor of his late wife Janet G. Root. We are deeply grateful for his commitment to the cultural exchange afforded by this memorial contribution. Contributions made by attendees of a fundraising trip to Cuba in early 2017 also helped enable this exhibition. Many others from across campus and in the community have collaborated with various aspects of *Climate Change: Cuba/USA*. For their interest and support, I thank Matthew Knight and Andy Huse from the USF Library Special Collections, the Cuban American Student Association, USF World, the CAM Club, USF's Institute for the Study of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Prodigy Program at the University Area Community Development Corporation.

It is always the quality of the work that makes for a great exhibition. I am most grateful to Glaxis Novoa, Javier Castro, Antonio Eligio Fernández "Tonel" and Celia y Yunior for their participation in *Climate Change: Cuba/USA*.

Margaret Miller, *Director and Professor, USF Institute for Research in Art*



Glaxis Novoa, *Tania*, 2014. Acrylic on canvas, 39-1/2 x 78-3/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL.

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN ART

University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Avenue, CAM101
Tampa, FL 33620-7360 USA

Hours: M-F 10am-5pm, Thurs. 10am-8pm, Sat. 1-4pm
Closed Sundays and USF Holidays (Jan. 15)
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813-974-4133 | info: 813-974-2849 | caminfo@admin.usf.edu



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Javier Castro, still from *Cuatro Cosas Básicas/Four Basic Things*, 2018. Video installation, four digital videos; 6:30 min. each USFCAM Commission 2018.



CLIMATE CHANGE: CUBA / USA

JANUARY 12 – MARCH 3, 2018 • USF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

JAVIER CASTRO • GLEXIS NOVOA • CELIA Y YUNIOR • ANTONIO ELIGIO FERNÁNDEZ "TONEL"

CLIMATE CHANGE: CUBA/USA

In titling this exhibition, we have taken great liberties with the words “climate change.” Hotly debated and widely politicized, this scientific term is even banned from discussion at some levels of government. NASA’s webpage *Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet* defines climate change as “a change in the usual weather found in a place. [...] Weather can change in just a few hours. Climate takes hundreds or even millions of years to change.”¹

The political, diplomatic and economic relationship of Cuba and the United States is, similarly, a lightning rod for controversy. Thus “climate change” seemed an appropriate semantic twist for giving a larger context to the ups and downs of the centuries-long association of our two countries. Real steps toward normalization appear to be occurring, but at a very slow pace.

Climate Change: Cuba/USA invites Cuban and Cuban-American artists to reflect on the consequences of the recent fluctuations in the relationship between Cuba and the United States. Artists Glexis Novoa, Javier Castro, Antonio Eligio Fernández “Tonel,” and Celia y Yuniór have produced new works, in sculpture, painting, drawing, installation and video. They were asked to consider the changes, or “no changes,” that the political and diplomatic developments have wrought in their personal lives and in Cuban society. Their responses are nuanced, and seldom straightforward, revealing subtleties of their artistic positions and processes as well as differences in their approaches.

The artists are variously well-established and mid-career as well as emerging, and span generations, from the 80s to the present. They have varied life experiences living in and out of Cuba, and diverse artistic expressions. CAM, in keeping with its mission, commissioned the majority of the works specifically for this exhibition, and we are proud to support important new research by these artists.

The exhibition has been two years in the making. Travel and communications between the US and Cuba are not always easy, but personal contact between artist and curator is a very important part of the curatorial process, especially when new, commissioned work is envisioned. I conducted numerous conversations and studio visits in Havana and Miami, Skype conversations with artists in Canada, Spain and Scotland, and too many emails to count from the many places the peripatetic artists happened to be at the time.

Sometimes ideas come in surprising ways. On a visit to the Vedado studio of Glexis Novoa, I observed how he had collected many objects of Cuban revolutionary era ephemera—photographs, flags, documents—that were strewn through the space amidst his paintings and drawings. They seemed to all belong together as part of a larger investigation into Novoa’s artistic process and personal history. I commented upon that, and how interesting it might be to think of an installation that combined them all. His multimedia installation examines the development of his work from his native Cuba to his life in the United States and finally to the recent reestablishment of his studio in Havana. Included are exquisite graphite drawings on reclaimed marble slabs that speak to the political power of architecture, colorful paintings that reflect on the new Cuban “wordscape” he encountered, and vintage flags and ephemera which focus on aspects of Cuban Revolution ideology.

In my first meeting with Javier Castro, when he was halfway through a residency in Miami, he confessed to a sense of dislocation—a feeling that he was between Cuba and Florida but not really in either place. His work was intimately tied to his own Old Havana environment, and he wondered how he could give it a wider focus. In his own words, his “... works will eventually speak of both contexts, as I focus more and more on universal topics.” Castro presents four richly chromatic and visually mesmerizing interrelated digital videos, collectively titled *Cuatro Cosas Básicas/Four Basic Things*, that reflect on basic aspects of human behavior, desires and struggles. The approximately six-minute videos, filmed in Castro’s marginal Old Havana neighborhood and in Miami, are arranged in the gallery for simultaneous viewing. Through single metaphorical images and repetitive actions, the works speak compellingly of life in Cuba while addressing issues of concern shared by individuals in contemporary societies.

Antonio Eligio Fernández “Tonel” is a distinguished and prolific writer, critic and curator, much in demand internationally, as well as an accomplished artist. After much discussion, we decided to include two installations and a drawing created in his deceptively simple, and often satiric, style that enfolds a rigorous intellectual content. *Hacer arte no debería ser caro (Art Shouldn’t be Expensive to Make)*



Antonio Eligio Fernández “Tonel”, *(Elogio del) darwinismo [(In Praise of) Darwinism]*, 2010/2017. Concrete, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

critiques the massive infusion of capital invested in the global production of art and its effect on artistic values, while *(Elogio del) darwinismo/ (In Praise of) Darwinism* comments on social Darwinism and the conquest of Cuban society by money and market forces. *Iluminaciones*, a large-scale drawing, pays tribute to philosopher Walter Benjamin and points to the role the distortion of truth and reason played in his tragic death and that of millions of others in the Second World War.

Celia y Yuniór—Celia González Alvarez and Yuniór Aguiar Perdomo—have been working together as artists since 2004. The central focus of their intensively research based work is an interest in the relationship of the individual to the institution. Their expressions can vary from incognito staged performances, to video installations documenting their explorations of contradictions in critical areas of reality. When we first met in the café of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana two years ago, they were very interested in exploring the shared history of Tampa and Havana, and they found the cigar industry to provide ample common ground. Their structure *Varaentierra*, built on site at CAM, takes its inspiration from a rustic storm shelter common in rural Cuba, and incorporates tobacco leaves and stripped tobacco stalks as well as historical research in the form of text. The work investigates the history of unionism that united Tampa and Havana cigarworkers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. What was in Tampa once a thriving, important industry that supported many thousands of families, has declined into a tourist-oriented, boutique attraction, mirroring a similar process experienced by the cigar industry in Cuba.

Working with the artists on this exhibition has been an honor and privilege for me. I am deeply grateful for their interest, trust and tremendous talent, and I am proud to present their work to our community.

Noel Smith, *Curator of Latin American and Caribbean Art, Deputy Director USFCAM*

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

JAVIER CASTRO

HAVANA, CUBA, 1984

Javier Castro is a photographer and video installation artist. He received a degree from the Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana. Castro is a recipient of a 2015 Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation grant. He has exhibited his work in museums and galleries around the world including Cuba, Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina, Austria, Italy and the United States. Castro’s artworks can be found in the collections of Daros Latinamerica,, Mediatica Caixa Forum, and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana. His work has been shown in the *Wild Noise/ Ruido Salvaje* exhibition at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. He lives and works in Cuba and Miami.

CELIA Y YUNIOR

CELIA GONZÁLEZ ALVAREZ HAVANA, CUBA, 1985

YUNIOR AGUIAR PERDOMO HAVANA, CUBA, 1984

Celia y Yuniór is Celia González Alvarez and Yuniór Aguiar Perdomo. They have been working as a duo since 2004 when they met as students at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes “San Alejandro” in Havana. Their video installation projects focus on the organization of society and daily life. Celia y Yuniór’s work has been featured in numerous exhibitions including *Cultura Autóctona*, Renier Quer Studio, Havana; *Six eyes and three tongues, looking out of the corner of the eye*, Arte Actual, Ecuador; International Day, new talents biennale, Cologne, Germany; *BITE THE BORDER*, Riad Denise Masson, Institute Facais, Marrakech, Morocco; *The artist between the individual and the context*, 56 Venice Biennale, Cuban Pavilion, Venice, Italy. They are the recipients of the International Cuban Art Award in the category of Young Cuban Artists of the Year from The Howard and Patricia Farber Foundation. Celia y Yuniór live and work in Havana and Aberdeen, Scotland.

GLEXIS NOVOA

HOLGUIN, CUBA, 1964

Glexis Novoa lives and works between Miami, FL and Havana, Cuba. Novoa received a degree from the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes “San Alejandro” in 1984. He is a visual artist who works in a range of media and is best known for his graphite drawings and site-specific wall drawings. Novoa is a recipient of The Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant Program as well as Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation grants. His work has been shown internationally in solo and group exhibitions including *Glexis Novoa*, David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach; *Drones*, Saltworks Gallery, Atlanta; *Emptiness*, Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, Miami; *On the Horizon: Selections from the Jorge M. Pérez Cuban Art Collection*, Pérez Art Museum Miami; *The Chosen*, Jewish Museum, Miami; *MIA-BER*, Verein Berliner Künstler, Berlin; *Politics: I do not like it, but it likes me*, Center for Contemporary Art Laznia, Gdansk, Poland; *Columna infinita*, Galeria La Acacia, Havana; and *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

ANTONIO ELIGIO FERNÁNDEZ “TONEL”

HAVANA, CUBA, 1958

Tonel as an artist, writer and curator and is known internationally for contributing to a revival of thought-provoking conceptual humor in Cuban art. Tonel earned an art history degree from the University of Havana in 1982. He is the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship and a John S. Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. His solo exhibitions include *The Journey (Talking Walls)*, Factoría Habana Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Havana; *Feeling the pull of gravity*, Chelsea Gallery, Miami; and *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Tonel’s artworks have been collected by Havana’s Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes; Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany; Van Reekum Museum, Apeldoorn, The Netherlands; Daros Collection, Zurich, Switzerland; University of Northumbria at Newcastle, Department of Fine Arts, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, among other institutions. He lives and works in Havana, Vancouver and the San Francisco Bay Area.

CHECKLIST

JAVIER CASTRO

Cuatro Cosas Básicas/Four Basic Things, 2018

video installation

four digital videos; 6:30 min. each

USFCAM Commission 2018

CELIA Y YUNIOR (Celia González and Yuniór Aguiar)

Varaentierra, 2017

wood, tobacco leaves and stems,

landscaping fabric, vinyl

dimensions variable

USFCAM Commission 2017

GLEXIS NOVOA

CUC, 2014

acrylic on canvas

78-3/4 x 78-3/4 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

Hemingway, 2014

acrylic on canvas

39-1/2 x 78-3/4 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

Los americanos, 2016

acrylic on canvas

79 x 78 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

Primero de Mayo, 2017

graphite on Carrara marble

(marble recovered from Havana)

12 x 136 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

Tania, 2014

acrylic on canvas

39-1/2 x 78-3/4 in.

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

Timba, 2017

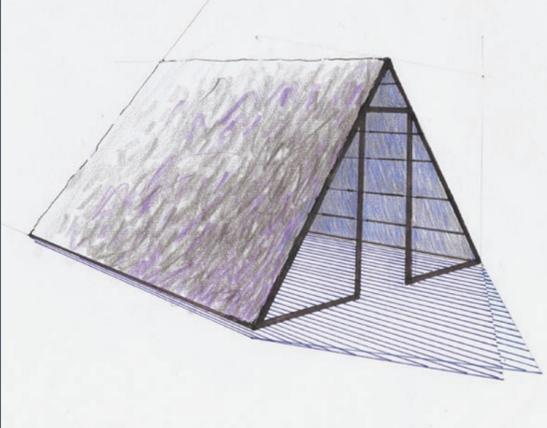
graphite on Carrara marble

(marble recovered from Havana)

14 x 16 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL



Celia y Yuniór, *Varaentierra* (artists’ rendition), 2017. USFCAM commission.

GLEXIS NOVOA

Trump, 2016–17

graphite on Carrara marble

31 x 25 inches

Courtesy of the artist and

David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach, FL

GLEXIS NOVOA

View from Pravda Tower, Havana, 2017

graphite on Carrara marble and granite

(marble recovered from Havana)

10-3/4 x 20-3/4 inches

Collection of Leslie & Greg Ferrero, Miami, FL

ANTONIO ELIGIO FERNÁNDEZ “TONEL”

(Elogio del) darwinismo [(In Praise of) Darwinism] 2010/2017

concrete

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

ANTONIO ELIGIO FERNÁNDEZ “TONEL”

Hacer arte no debería ser caro (Art Shouldn’t Be Expensive to Make),

2012/2017

wood, cardboard, glass, plastic, leather, brick, ink, acrylic paint

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

ANTONIO ELIGIO FERNÁNDEZ “TONEL”

Iluminaciones (Illuminations), 2012/2017

ink on paper

78-3/4 x 59 inches

Courtesy of the artist

Flags, scarves, posters and photographs in Glexis Novoa installation
Collection of Glexis Novoa.

1. <https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/stories/nasa-knows/what-is-climate-change-k4.html>, downloaded December 14, 2017