

'I DID IT MY WAY AND TOOK THE HIGHWAY'

Alejandro Almanza Pereda



MAGNANMETZ
GALLERY

CHERT.

Private View: 12th May 2011, 18:00 - 20:00

ROVE Gallery
Lincoln House
33-34 Hoxton Square
London, N1 6NN

13th May - 11th June 2011
Mon- Sat 11:00 - 18.00
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Fundacion Magnolia is delighted to present the first UK exhibition of Mexico City based artist Alejandro Almanza Pereda (b. 1977). This presentation will offer an overview of Almanza Pereda's practice, which consists of installation, video and drawing. The exhibition will feature new commissions as well as recent work.

Known for questioning and challenging the rules of physics Alejandro fiercely explores the concept of gravity in his work. Relentlessly pushing these boundaries, Almanza Pereda relies purely on the forces of resistance to hold his works in place.

Travelling across the US and Mexican border brought Almanza Pereda to explore a variety of situations of intense contrast and sensibility. One may describe such an approach as an exploration of the safe and secure as opposed to the dangerous and unmasked, expressed through the use of precarious experimental assemblages with a poetic narrative.

Almanza Pereda's construction of major installations is an important part of his practice. The artist always builds his delicately balanced structures on site, exploring gravity through an intense and sometime theatrical visual language. Almanza Pereda offers an intricate experience that can only be explored in person.

Another major aspect of the artist's practice lies in his fascination with consumerist consumption and its worldwide repercussions. Through each of his projects in Colombia, Brazil, Russia, Mexico and Germany he religiously searches through flea markets, gathering used objects, many with local historical connection and others with the global presence of mass market goods.

In his studio in Mexico City one may find the essence of his practice; discovering a collection of carefully combined objects, some collected over a period of several years, that eventually become part of a work. Almanza Pereda refers to this as a '*cabinet of curiosities*'.

By exploring the poetics of the everyday with its precariousness and performative qualities, Alejandro continues a similar tradition of well established artists working in Mexico like Francis Alÿs, Gabriel Orozco, Abraham Cruzvillegas and Damian Ortega.

Marina Kurikhina
Chief Curator
Fundacion Magnolia

Work Overview



Just give me a place to stand, 2008



Change the world or go home, 2009

Home is where you lay your hat, 2010.



There's many a slip twixt cup and lip, 2009

I was adored once too, 2010



Horror vacui. 2010

The Remains... just empty cups & Oil & Lamp, 2008



Untitled (Reja). 2006

Untitled (Ropero), 2006



Born in Mexico City in 1977. Lives and works in Mexico City.

Education

Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Texas at El Paso 2005

Solo Exhibitions

2011

Arco, Madrid, solo presentation with MagnanMetz, New York

Chert, Berlin - Upcoming July

Kenny Schachter Rove, London

2010

"Room with no view", exhibition in the frame of "Latitud 19° Arte Contemporáneo, Public Art Festival", Mexico City.

"The heaviest luggage for the traveler is the empty one", MagnanMetz gallery, New York.

"Ideational Architectures", with Alexandre Arrechea, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles.

2009

"Those who live by the sword die by the sword, or by third hand smoke", Chert, Berlin.

2008

"The Fan and The Shit", Magnan Projects, New York.

2007

"Andamio (temporary frameworks)", Art in General, New York.

2006

"Stand Clear", Magnan Emrich, New York.

2005

"Mix Series", Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, Dallas TX.

"Verdevete", Glass Gallery, El Paso TX.

2003

"Impermeable", Union Gallery, El Paso TX.

Group Exhibitions

2010

Moscow Biennale for Young Art, Moscow.

"Drinnen und Draussen", Chert, Berlin.

"You are free", Tape club, Berlin, curated by Julie Mc Kim and Daniel Kingery.

2009

"One foot apart", Galeria Leme, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"Hecho en Casa", Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico.

"Drafts establishing future" ABC, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, with Chert galerie, Berlin.

"There are false problems more than there are false solutions more than there are false solutions for true problems. or the first time is always the second. or being must have a fundamental lapse of memory", La Galería en el Taller Mecánico, Nuevo León, México. An exhibition organized by Proyectos Monclova in collaboration with Nrmal.

"La Constelación del Perro", Casino Metropolitano, Mexico City.

"Andrew Palmer, Alejandro Almanza Pereda, Patty Chang", Galerie Rüdiger Schottle, Munich.

"The Grand", Amelie A. Wallace Gallery, Old Westbury NY.

2008

"Tension-Release", Caren Golden, New York.

"My Little Membrane", Nurture Art, Brooklyn.

"Interrogating systems", Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami.

"Displacement", Greenbelt, Brooklyn.

"Squaring the Circle", Alphazed Project, Brooklyn.

2007

"Making Good Luck", Y Gallery, New York.

"Host", Soap Factory, Minneapolis.

"S-Files 007", Museo del Barrio, New York.

"Creacion en Movimiento Jovenes Creadores 2005-2006", Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico City.

2006

"Queens International 2006", Queens Museum of Art, New York.

"El equilibrio y sus derivados", Casa del Lago Mexico City.

"Intersections", Waterstop Gallery, Marfa Texas.

"Performagia 3", Museo del Chopo, Mexico City.

Awards & residencies

Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation Grants Program, Miami FL 2008.

National Fund for the Arts and Culture (FONCA) Programa Jovenes Creadores Mexico City 2007.

National Fund for the Arts and Culture (FONCA) Programa Jovenes Creadores Mexico City 2005.

Best of Show Arlene Mc Kinon Award, University of Texas at El Paso.

2005, 2003, & 2002 Juried Student Art Show.

Selected Collections

Goetz Collection, Munich.

Museo Del Barrio Collection, New York.

Colección Jumex, Mexico City.

Mali-Museo de Arte de Lima.

Toviar Collection.



Solo Show

Alejandro Almanza Pereda and Alexandre Arrechea

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

Issue #77 Jun - Aug 2010

United States, Los Angeles

Institution:

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery

Selene Preciado

Curated by Ernesto Pujol, Ideational Architectures proposes the pairing of two artists that work in similar conceptual arenas and communicate their ideas through the use of architectural structures in mediums like drawing, sculpture, and photography, questioning our relationships with everyday objects and their connotations. At first sight it would seem as Alejandro Almanza Pereda (Mexico, b. 1977) and Alexandre Arrechea (Cuba, 1970) share the same aesthetic; Almanza's serigraph *All mod cons and living in the same block*, 2010, where a display of 79 different views and versions of cement blocks (arranged in 9 rows by 9 columns; the last row short by two), struck me as a characteristic; Arrechea drawing; at first, but upon closer inspection, the message was obviously different, as the different patterns and unsuspected gaps of the blocks made them non-functional,; cons; that obviously could not be used in construction. The same sort of composition appears in his other drawings, where a section view of a well is reflecting a bucket that is not really there and another serigraph where a scale is placed on top of a case of eggs. Almanza's work is characterized by this idea; it deceives your eye and your mind with the unusual combinations of elements that seem to put the viewer and the objects themselves in safety hazards, such as in the object-sculpture *Home is where you lay your hat*, 2010, which is a glass door with a metal door knocker. The consequences of knocking on that door seem obvious due to the nature of the materials it is made out of. Arrechea's combination of materials is more symbolic and not as; dangerous;. His hybridization of objects and scenes, such as *Masculinity 2*, 2010, a photograph of a construction crane holding a butterfly, which does not only represent a different approach to photography; Arrechea photographs the light and colors reflected on metallic surfaces (the shapes of the objects in the image); but also continues on his exploration of improbable amalgams like a building on a spinning top, or a running man with helicopters replacing his head and feet. Both Almanza and Arrechea work on the limits of the possible and the impossible, constantly challenging the viewer to question the codes associated with the nature and function of every day objects and how we recognize their; correct; purpose in the contradictions of their compositions. Almanza's main piece in the exhibition is *Change the world or go home*, 2009, a scaffolding structure created with fluorescent light bulbs in place of metal pipes, a development on his *Andamio* from 2007, which explores a twist on the fragility; a test on fate; of a structure made to support materials and people during a construction. This impossible construction in which Almanza gives protagonism to trivial materials such as light bulbs by providing them with a silent; power; or control over the viewer's safety and the safety of the materials themselves, creates a nice dialogue with Arrechea's works about rolled buildings, such as in his watercolors titled *After the Monument Series*, 2009, and the sculpture *Elastic Time*, 2009. Buildings encounter themselves in the impossible situation of being rolled in a reel as a cord or a film, acquiring a vulnerable quality that could not be real according to the laws of physics. A work originally produced for the Havana Biennial of 2009, *The Room of All*, works as a physical representation of the processes of the stock market index, as well as an ironic comment since the sculpture is made with steel panels, playing again with our notions about the connotations of certain materials, in this case steel, and how we associate it with qualities such as durability and indestructibility.

The common language that these artists share, their; ideational; architecture, as Pujol appropriately describes it, should not be mistaken as an idealization or utopia of architecture in their works, but instead of the use of the language of architecture as a suitable system to convey their ideas. The sensible curatorial choice of presenting these two artists together at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery was a perfect opportunity to experience two different formal approaches from Latin American artists that do not ascribe to the conventional resort of narrative. Almanza's impossible pairing of objects and Arrechea's compositions made with improbable materials challenge individual and social; balancing acts; in trying to understand our contradictory relationships with everyday objects, private and public spaces.

ART EXHIBIT
www.chert-berlin.com

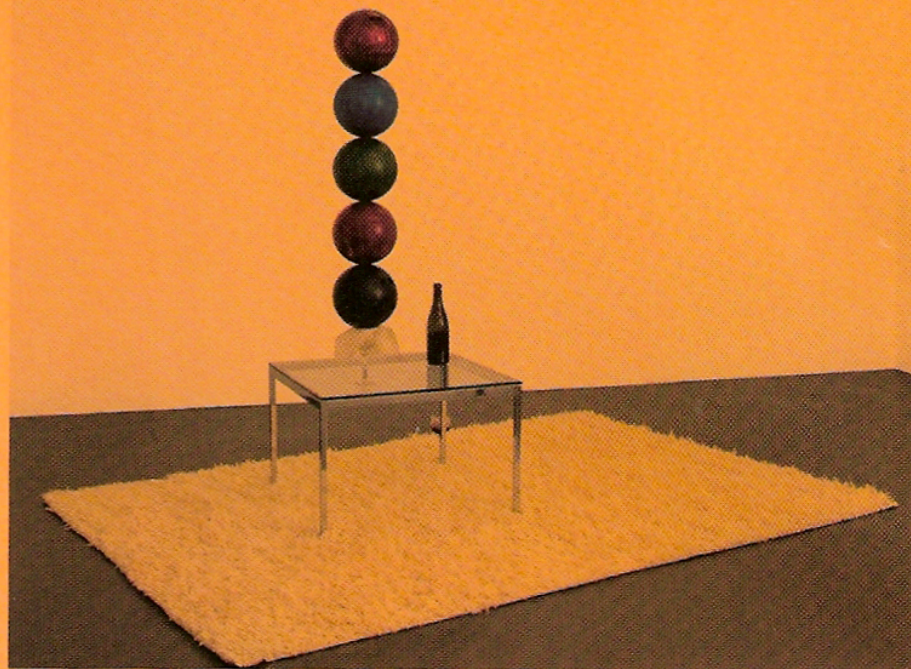
ALEJANDRO ALMANZA PEREDA



Qual è la nostra reazione di fronte a un pericolo? Per scoprirlo Alejandro Almanza Pereda costruisce funamboliche installazioni, dove oggetti più o meno comuni – come bicchieri e scale, tavolini di cristallo e palle da bowling – sono sovrapposti, affiancati o appesi in un improbabile equilibrio precario, congelati in una sorta di istantanea, che sembra presagire un possibile imminente disastro. Nella galleria berlinese Chert, che lo scorso marzo ha ospitato la prima personale in Europa dell'artista messicano, per esempio, un'affilata

mannaia era appesa al soffitto, una scala poggiava su un piano di bicchieri di vetro e una fila di palle da bowling si reggeva in equilibrio su un bicchiere, poggiato a sua volta su un tavolino di cristallo. Nell'immaginario di questo giovane artista, che lavora al confine tra Stati Uniti e Messico, niente è dato per scontato. Anzi, ogni elemento sembra sul punto di infrangere il precario equilibrio delle sue complesse installazioni. Ma in realtà questo non succede. Perché, come recitava l'ironico titolo dell'esposizione, "Chi di spada ferisce, di spada perisce. O muore di fumo passivo".

How do we react to danger? In an attempt to find out, Alejandro Almanza Pereda builds acrobatic installations with somewhat everyday objects – such as glasses, ladders, glass tables and bowling balls. They are stacked up, placed alongside one another or hung



in an improbable and precarious equilibrium, frozen in a kind of snapshot that appears to portend imminent disaster. For example, at the Chert Gallery in Berlin, which in March hosted the Mexican artist's first one-man show, a sharpened axe was hung from the ceiling, a ladder sat on a series of glasses, and a string of bowling balls were balanced on a glass, in turn resting on a glass table. Nothing is taken for granted in the imagination of this young artist, who works on the border between the US and Mexico. On the contrary, every element seems to be on the point of shattering the precarious equilibrium of his complex installations. In reality it doesn't happen. Because, as in the ironic title of the exhibition, "Those who live by the sword die by the sword or by third hand smoke."

Sinistra/Left, Alejandro Almanza Pereda, *Death by Metal*, 2009. Sopra/Above, *There's many a slip twixt cup and lip*, 2009. Courtesy the artist and Chert, Berlin

b. 1977 Mexico City, Mexico

ALMANZA PEREDA, ALEJANDRO



Alejandro Almanza Pereda graduated with a BFA from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2005. He currently lives and works in New York, where he had a solo exhibition at Art in General in 2007. His sometimes perilous and fragile installations use various discarded objects and are influenced by urban landscapes and his childhood in Mexico City.

1. Andamio (Temporary Frameworks)

2007, fluorescent light tubes, steel clamps, ballast, and wood, 12 × 20 × 13 ft (365 × 600 × 400 cm)

2. Just empty cups

2008, fish tank, table, water, cups, tray, tabletop, and air, dimensions variable

3. Untitled (Wardrobe)

2006, wardrobe, fluorescent light tubes, fish tanks, bricks, plant, and sheets, dimensions variable

4. Untitled (Chest of drawers)

2006, lumber, chest of drawers, table, fish tanks, water, doily, carpet, cinder blocks, electrical cable, lamp, bed sheets, vase, and plant, dimensions variable



More works by Alejandro Almaza Pereda can be seen on his website:

www.alejandroalmanzapereda.com

Fundación Magnolia

Fundación Magnolia is a non profit organization connecting other nations to Mexico through Contemporary Art. Using notions of soft diplomacy as its core, Fundación Magnolia is a trans- disciplinary body providing a range of services and initiatives, and often facilitating cultural projects and events that can assist in the good representation of Mexico, and in establishing international contemporary dialogue with Mexico.

www.fundacionmagnolia.org

ROVE Gallery

www.rovetv.net

Special thanks to :

MananMetz Gallery in New York

Chert Gallery in Berlin