

ARTS

"En Bola" at de stijl | Podium for Art

The pairings of artists in this Los Outsiders exhibition yield works that are at once chaotic and harmonious, loud and quiet

REVIEWED BY SAM ANDERSON-RAMOS, FRI., JULY 7, 2017

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Though "En Bola" is the work of six artists, it functions as the work of three. Each pairing of makers has its own character with its own philosophy, which together form a cohesive, multidimensional experience.

Lisette Chavez and Michael Anthony Garcíá combine pattern with the body. At the same time that they reference clothing, upholstery, and wallpaper, they also employ the body, especially the face, minimized to its bare essentials – eyes, mouths, noses – made eerie for their isolation, as though they've been sliced away. Their video projection, *Love to Hate, Hate to Love*, depicts a framed sketch of a nose and mouth, teeth bared – an image that is repeated in the pair's sculptures, *Cantilever* and *Is This Seat Taken?* In *Love to Hate, Hate to Love*, the only video piece in the show, human eyes dot the wallpaper. The eyes are closed, but intermittently, and without warning, they jerk open, making us the watched ones.

The photographic work of Mauro C. Martinez and Hector Hernandez is enigmatic and striking, and like that of Chavez and Garcíá, uses the body as a reference point. In *Nomad*, a nude woman, face hidden by hair,

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flings her arms back, pelvis forward, as a red and yellow wave pours from above, falling like a tongue of fire. The word "nomad" is scrawled in black across the center of the image. In another photo, *Citizen*, what may be the same figure has lifted her head, raised a knee, and thrown her arms high, reaching back to another swatch of red, a cape flying behind her. As in the first image, she is blurred. Even though she faces us, her features can't be made out. Chavez and Garciá single out mouths, noses, and eyes; Martinez and Hernandez obscure them. The word "citizen" is written in black oil to the left of the figure. *Nomad* and *Citizen* have equal power. One can't tell if, from the artists' perspective, a nomad and a citizen are the same. A nomad may be placeless and a citizen inextricably linked to a place, but in these images, each are lost and found.

Jean-Sebastien Boncy and Roberto Jackson Harrington's *Take a Peek Version 1* is a hilarious Rube Goldberg-esque snarl, a mash-up of items – pencils, sunglasses, keychains, toys – attached to the ceiling by brightly colored rope. The sculpture functions as a frame for a simple photograph at its center. It may be an empty lot bordered by a distant fence, but it doesn't matter much. The objects are the thing. In a separate, standalone photograph labeled *Untitled*, a wood fence stretches in front of a prefab house, the house's beige siding making a looming bulwark. Two small blue flags and a sheet of glass can be made out on top of the fence. The objects shouldn't be there, but they make sense. They are the kind of anonymous, counterintuitive artifacts that turn up on any suburban block, like an unclaimed action figure in a gutter or a tire swing with no one in it. Unlike the sculpture, here the photo frames the objects, lending them a reliquary quality. Yet the image is mundane, a curious contradiction. As with the ghostly eyes and the convulsing nomad, even this unassuming picture is inhabited by chaos. And harmony. That's the pleasure of collaboration (and relationships). Each artist relinquishes some control. The result is messy at times, but largely melodic. It is loud and quiet at once.

“En Bola”

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