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Glexis Novoa Vian

Glexis Novoa was born in Holguín, Cuba in 1964. Novoa was one of the most radical influences in the vibrant art scene known as, “The Renaissance of Cuban Art of the 80s”, he was the founder of the Provisional group, pioneers of performance, political activism and collectivist practices. Novoa established in Miami in 1995 and has been sharing his time working in Havana and Miami

since 2013. Novoa is recognized for his site-specific wall drawings and ephemeral projects around the world, which exist on the border between ephemeral art and architecture. He frequently focusing on the architecture of power and community as the main subject. Novoa's work has been exhibited extensively around the world and is part of numerous museum collections.

QUOTES

"They are all meticulous representations of architectures that unite modernity and totalitarianism. They thus remind us that the voluntarism to force an economic, social and cultural revolution typical of fascism and communism – like these systems themselves – are monstrous children of the utopian ideals of modernity. The cities of Novoa are utopias that have become their opposite.] ... [,Novoa disturbs us with the inhuman unreality of perfect and empty cities. Its urban panoramas and its architecture of exalted imagination are as impeccable as they are worrying: the fruit of a perverse modernity. The exquisiteness of the almost invisible drawing contrasts with the grandiose, often faked, of the buildings and monuments that he has represented, in a nightmarish contrast.] ... [The artist has thus dedicated his entire work to deconstructing empty, oppressive rhetoric, and dreams as false as they are misleading."

Gerardo Mosquera (Art historian & curator), NG Art Gallery, Panama 2022

"Novoa undermines, desecrates the imagery and official discourses, the mechanisms and representations of power; explores and manipulates the concept of politics, religion, myth, art; interrogates and deepens the prodigious resources of the visual image," the extension of

its aureole imaginary ”(Gaston Bachelard).

Novoa paints and draws landscapes of buildings and cities with metaphoric, dystopian appearances, to question the manifestations of the ideological, political, religious or financial manipulation prevailing in them. His work is a landscape of iconographic discourses; he represents the aesthetics and the spectacle of power in the imaginary city of the counter-utopia, to induce the viewer to reflection and interaction.

He is one of the most audacious, radical, unique and admirable contemporary Cuban artists of his time. “

François Vallée Hypermedia Magazine, July 28, 2020

“...Glexis Novoa draws dreamy cities on marble panels with graphite, also adorning the museum’s walls with site-specific doodles worth looking out for... ”-

Will Heinrich (Freelance Arts Writer, Queens, New York) The New York Times

“... Glexis Novoa’s site-specific Emptiness: Queens Museum, 2019. Novoa hand-drawn directly on the walls, with a pencil, a series of gently fabulized, tiny but thrillingly detailed NYC architectural cityscapes. There are bridges and monuments, the ruins of the 1964 World’s Fair adjacent to the Queens Museum, even the newly opened Hudson Yards (...). Around and between the individual cityscapes are numerous rockets, drones and bombs flying through the “air,” falling, surveilling. ”

Beck Feibelman (Art historian and cultural critic, He is an Editor at The Clyde Fitch Report.) The Clyde Fitch Report, New York, New York 2019

"At once a timeline, an autobiography, and a meditation, Glexis Novoa's exhibition is encircled by a site-specific drawing of a horizon line along the gallery walls, punctuated by the artist's small, meticulously rendered images of cultural and political landmarks. The scenes involve people, flags, and banners emblazoned with "Fidel," "Socialismo," and "Yankees Go Home," as well as sketches of Cold War missiles and Havana's Revolutionary Plaza. The work unfolds through space and time. As visitors walk the perimeter, tracing the drawing from beginning to end, they grasp in an embodied manner the artist's migration history, one of political exile—from Cuba to Mexico to Miami—and of spiritual growth, concluding with pictures of sacred Buddhist temples."

Kaira M. Cabañas (Associate Professor in Global Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Florida) Gainesville, Florida. Artforum 2019

"...as in much of Novoa's work, including that produced in the studio, he conflates decaying architecture with drawings of utopian, totalitarian-like architecture drawn primarily on marble, a material that is often used in government buildings worldwide. Novoa renders his buildings in miniature to diminish the authoritarian government that his buildings are meant to evoke. He creates a looped, doubling, and time-travel effect as these totalitarian buildings of the future are inscribed on totalitarian-tinger fragments of marble from the present."

Artishock

Tyler Stallings (Artistic Director, Barbara and Art Culver Center of the Arts, UCR ARTSblock) Riverside, California 2017

"... Novoa made a point of having him use a brush and paint, thinking that it would later enhance the poster's value. Rauschenberg, drunk but not offended, autographed it

requested. The young men, members of the anarchist Provisional Group, planned this performance to criticize the government's decision to allow an American celebrity artist to monopolize their cultural space. "

Robert Rauschenberg, The Museum of Modern Art, New York (Book)

Hiroko Ikegami (Art historian) Kobe University, Japan 2016

"One with the most conceptual finesse was Glexis Novoa's gallery of drawings-a sort of miniature museum of Soviet iconography camouflaged inside a ruin, a rich contrast of meanings that isolated us in a heterotopic perceptual experience."

Hamlet Fernández (Art critic, professor at the University of Havana) Havana, Cuba 2016

"... Provisional Group members Glexis Novoa, Carlos Cárdenas and Francisco Lastra presented Rauschenberg with a crudely painted placard bearing an Indian head that said, 'Very Good Rauschenberg', and asked him to sign it, which he did. In these performances, the artists were once again making fun of the hypocritical obsequiousness of the Cuban cultural bureaucrats, who, despite the anti-American stance of the Cuban government, had given the 'Yankee imperialist' free rein to show his art in several of Havana's art spaces at once, a gesture they viewed as a form of neocolonial submission It was a symbolic assault on the cultural bureaucracy in which body language spoke louder than words. "

Coco Fusco (Interdisciplinary artist and writer), New York, New York 2015

"Novoa communicates this latent power, endemic to the built environment through his powerful drawings, which reference humanity's capacity to breach the porous membrane

separating civic reform and totalitarian oppression through the very structures they design and build.”

Jill Deupi (JD, PhD Beaux Arts Director and Chief Curator, Lowe Museum), Coral Gables, Florida, US 2015

“... some of the most memorable work (XII Havana Biennale) came, this time, from two who were associated with the ‘golden age’ of the 1980s, [...] the same Novoa, a member of the conceptually and critically aggressive generation ... ”

Rachel Weiss (Art critic, writer & curator), Chicago 2015

“Glexis is the essence of the rebel and the survivor.” He’s been confronted with different forms of control and power, but always resisted through his art. His multi-faceted practice is rooted in his ethics, spirituality and humanism, which I find deeply inspiring . ”

Catherine Sicot (Independent Curator, Producer & Arts Consultant), Toronto 2015

... “Like in Practical Stage, Novoa plays in the power structures of the art market, this time with the market that perception of the legitimacy of Cuban art is contingent upon where it is produced (Cuba), eschewing diasporic productions and increasing transnational relations among Cubans in and outside the island that had been destabilizing previously rigid territorial and ideological demarcations. Novoa both reinforces and challenges those market biases by producing work in Havana intended to circulate outside the specific charge of its conceived site and for the audience of audiences in Miami That Cuban artists in Cuba have been doing exactly that, for those compounds and contradictions inherent in such biases but also helps understand Novoa’s gestures of return as performative and strategic. ultimately reveal the

inherent tensions and inevitable interconnectedness between the local and global in today's cultural production, as well as, the de-territorialization of nation and diaspora. "...

Elizabeth Cerejido (Independent curator) Miami 2014

"Novoa's work is part of the living memory of Cuban art, which activates what can be thought of as contemporary tradition, and a great value in the context of a youth culture that forgets easily."

Magaly Espinosa Delgado (Lecturer professor of aesthetics and art theory at the Superior Institute of Art) Havana 2013

"The grandiose scale of Silveira's installation is countered by Glexis Novoa tiny surrealist graphite wall drawings combining architectural and biomorphic forms that one comes upon here and there in such unexpected places as the edge of a wall or in an out of the way corner."

Saul Ostrow (American art critic and art curator), New York 2012

"... Equally important is the impact they have been leaving since the mid-nineties, the Cuban artists who have lived in the city (Monterrey, Mexico) Glexis Novoa is one of the most striking examples of the Caribbean heritage."

Patrick Charpenel (Freelance curator and collector), Mexico DF 2007

“... Novoa uses the tradition of drawing seen in the detailed backgrounds of Flemish and Northern Renaissance paintings to sharpen our perception and melancholy awareness of the implacable onwards flow of events that where set in motion long ago, but have arrived at apocalypse now”

Paula Harper (PhD American art historian and art critic), Miami 2006

“Rem Koolhaas once wrote that in the future, all cities will be generic, as bland and as nondescript as airports, Many of Novoa’s drawn [...] landscapes, depict the generic city of the future: unspecific urban spaces that could be located in Europe, in India, or Africa .The cityscapes seem ostensibly prosperous – the buildings are tall, the streets are clean – but they dovoid of life. environments is further intensified by the artist’s choice of slabs of marble as suport for his drawings. Novoa provokes our thoughts: Are these dehumanized cities what the future holds in store? Or do they already have a reality in many parts of the world? “

Rubén Gallo PhD Director of the Latin American Studies Program at Princeton University, New York 2005

“While in Mexico in the early 1990s, Novoa felt akin to Tomás Sánchez’s treatment of the landscape (though Sánchez’s trade is the country not the metropolis). Later, he fixed his attention on the often-ignored, detailed background renditions of the Flemish masters’ paintings and engravings. Add to this Édouard Baldus’ photos, Escher, and American pop– plus all architectural styles enamored with power – and you get an idea of Novoa’s influences... Drawing– not painting– these possible worlds is what interests Novoa, a perspective virtuoso who indulges in a practice considered second to painting and passed along (since the Renaissance) to the architecture profession. His pulse is careful and precise

and his fantastic images are realistic and obtained in extremely small detail."

Alfredo Triff Ph.D. in Philosophy and art critic. Miami 2004

"When the show closes, the museum will whitewash the walls, erasing the drawing." Worcester: Gold and Smoke "critiques the powerful, as represented in the drawing's architecture and its depiction of Worcester's halcyon industrial past, not to mention the unsettling and near -constant references to surveillance The temporary nature of Novoa's installation both critiques power – in this case, the vaunted art object and its marketability – and undercuts it.

That's part of Novoa's recipe: as imbedded in history as a city, or as imbedded in relationships as a person may, all will eventually turn to dust. In essence, we're all exiles. This land, these structures we build, these bodies we inhabit, are illusory. Enjoy, observe, and take responsibility, this work says. Then pack your bags and move on. "

Cate McQuaid Art critic for the Boston Globe, Boston 2004

"The artist's handling of" hyperspace "is impregnated by an action central factor to his artistic and political system. The total flux of images set against perpetual horizons is invariably countered by a device introduced to distract or dislocate. In his 2001 installation at the Miami Art Museum, the drawings on the museum walls met a challenging counterpart in the form of a public telephone. Visitors could call anywhere in the world for five minutes. Crayons next to the telephone, callers to write down their comments, typical of the graffiti of the telephone booths. In this context, the spectator recovered his critical distance, his individual and collective temporality; instead of simulated illusions, hypnosis was transformed into action, into experience. "

Marcelo Pacheco Chief Curator, Museum of Latin American Art, Buenos Aires Argentina 2003

“Novoa’s work juxtaposes imagined and real architectural structures within a seemingly unified space both by the tenets of Renaissance perspective and seventeenth century Dutch landscapes. More specifically, his marshalling of these earlier illusionistic aesthetic codes works in tandem with and in contrast to a marked sci-fi aesthetic and contemporary principle of digital morphing-that is, with his structures that combine, for example, details of the Taj Mahal with Mesopotamia’s Ziggurat. “

Kaira Cabañas Art historian. New York 2002

“Until now, Glexis’ work had seemed directed to the others. Only the others and very little himself. It had been a rather exteriorist, active, positive, even combative, critical work. Whether it was “romantic” or “practical”, it had lacked (or jealously concealed) a large part of its objectivity, its emotionality. He had avoided registering, penetrating himself. He had fought, if you will, against more or less abstract but recognizable enemies: politicians, artists, religious, assembled – like a great dragon with several heads – in what he called El Poder, which he could mock or ironic. “

Orlando Hernández Curator and art critic, Espacio Aglutinador, Havana 1994

“Though probably based on personal experience, Novoa’s art is not as much a critique of any one system as it is an ironic subversion of all attempts at manipulation and control. “

Giulio V. Blanc Curator and art critic. Miami 1993

"... Glexis has persevered to satirize the language of totalitarian propaganda, but it has done in a way that -due to the ignorance- is imperceptible to the social watchdog. the weight, the failed greatness of fascist and communist art, but diluting the references to reach also destabilize the commercial propaganda and the "Japanization" of corporate images. His case is exceptional to the extent that it has extended its traits against the totalitarian capitalism, the market and its media machine. "

Osvaldo Sanchez Curator and art critic. Mexico DF 1993

"... Glexis Novoa (1964) and Carlos Cárdenas (1963) sarcastically deconstruct the official rhetoric in their criticism of political iconography. ..."

Edward J. Sullivan Helen Gould Sheppard Professor of the History of Art at New York University and author

"His work is a sarcasm of art and media manipulation. After a "Romantic Stage" consisting of a direct mockery of tricks, poses and artistic pedantry in art without the slightest ambition status (liked to call himself "The worst painter of the world"), Novoa now develops the "Practical Stage" he paints good, build a personal style, sells and is recognized. His cynicism is greater than that of Polke or Richter: someone who becomes a good painter in order to ironically dismantle the system gears. .. and takes advantage above all. But also his "good" painting is in itself the most stinging criticism to rhetoricalization of communication in Cuba, adding edges to his gesture His signs as a way of slogans on billboards of political propaganda are meaningless signs that can be read as constructivist flavor abstract paintings He also painted portraits of heroes in the best Stalinist style, playing with some fascistic aesthetic made by postmodernism, and in allusion to deification of leaders.

With both elements Novoa build huge altars, the sum of all this very dense web of ironies and counter ironies about art, culture and politics. “

Gerardo Mosquera Freelance curator, critic & art historian. Havana 1990

