

Adler Guerrier: Here, Place the Lever.



Invested in what we might call vernacularism, Adler Guerrier's most recent solo exhibition, *Here, Place the Lever* at David Castillo Gallery, is a semiotic investigation and poetic rendering of the urban landscape of Miami. The exhibition consists of "generic drawings," collage works on paper of graphite, acrylic, and watercolor elements in an array of geometric and abstract gestures, combined with vestiges from the real world, such as shreds of newsprint. Semi-truncated text appears painted as both short poems and more graphic samples of appropriated signage and advertising formats, though the content is rendered mostly indecipherable. The collages are juxtaposed with c-print color photographs of a modest size (16 x 20") in the style of reportage or photojournalism, documenting street-level views of unmonumental scenes: pallets stacked beside a concrete wall, a puddle of murky water in a pothole, and an empty lot with a few forgotten campaign posters, the election concluded.

Works are installed in deliberate clusters and grids. At times, the relationships between collage and photographs are formal. Elements from a photograph are remixed into the collages, traffic lines in a road are flattened and abstracted, the pastels of MiMo architecture tint the background of an image. Other groupings suggest fundamental relationships between the two, revealing a DNA or complex energy

invisible to the naked eye.

The pairings meditate on the same key tenets suggested by Robert Venturi in *Learning from Las Vegas* by taking cues from the existing landscape— advertising, signage, architecture, vegetation—a megatexture making “verbal and symbolic connections through space, communicating a complexity of meanings through hundreds of associations in a few seconds.” Guerrier’s interest in the complexity of the urban landscape as a trope is longstanding and grounded in a psychogeographic reading of space, a fascination with local history, and an appreciation for how the forces of politics and business shape and manipulate place and the lives of the people.

At the core of Guerrier’s practice, Gean Moreno further describes these complexities of the urban landscape in the catalogue essay “Real Estate Stories,” for the project between Guerrier and Rosell Meseguer as part of the March 2012 Madrid-based exhibition *Lugares de Transito*. There, both artists turned to alternative photographic outlets via collecting tabloids, billboards, and political placards, to “get beyond photography, and plug into the stream of images that give certain shapes to the city...[to see] multiple layers, find the vectors between them, register the shifts in velocity.”

In keeping with these sentiments, what is at stake in this body of work is not a reduction of information to pictorial silhouettes or a sharing of revelatory insights, as in his investigations of the riots that historically rearranged Miami’s neighborhoods, featured in the 2008 Whitney Biennial. Rather, the point is poetics. What does the grass look like in this light? How do public policy for urban redevelopment and the smell of a local breeze mesh as two sides of a spinning coin? Guerrier seeks not activism but a deepened awareness of the intricate and synaesthetic landscape.