



Glexis Novoa's "Ongoing Conversation" 2016, on display at David Castillo Gallery through May 31, 2017. Courtesy of David Castillo Gallery.

VISUAL ARTS

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Who says Miami's art scene closes in summer? Shows at three spaces prove otherwise

BY ANNE TSCHIDA

Special to the Miami Herald

Gallery exhibits across the county this spring give us a good feel for how far our visual arts scene has developed. The three highlighted here are just a sampling, serving to highlight the diversity of options in both genres and neighborhoods.

Let's start on South Beach, at the **David Castillo Gallery**, one of the many galleries to have departed Wynwood several years ago. Cuban-born, Miami-based

Glexis Novoa is one of our most prominent artists, his graphite on marble and canvas works instantly recognizable.

But these new works have a resonance that frankly, a year ago on this side of the Florida Straits, would not have provoked the same emotion. The beautifully composed cityscapes are stark barren worlds, devoid of humans but filled with missiles and monuments to totalitarian power. In muted gray, black and off-white coloring, numerous missiles are flying in all directions in one stunning, large-scale work. The current heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula, with North Korea launching frequent missile tests, makes this 2016 piece eerily prescient. And reference to one of the defining moments in the relationship between Cuba and the United States — the Cuban missile crisis — is obviously on the surface here as well.



Glexis Novoa's "View from Pravda tower, Havana" 2017, showcases a decidedly dystopian view. On display at David Castillo Gallery through May 31, 2017.
Courtesy of David Castillo Gallery

There is also no ambiguity in one of the show's introductory pieces. On what could be a ship's mast, several flags are flying and mechanical gadgets are attached; the post is topped by an eagle. Anyone familiar with Nazi symbolism will recognize this particular militaristic image, and because of that association the word spelled out below could be mistaken as "triumph." But it reads "Trump."

This new set of works is titled “Bad Niños.” They are all about a dystopian past, present and future. There are no human figures, aside from the occasional statue with arm raised in salute. Look closely at the image of a city on a bay. It is Havana — but it could be Miami in the future? At the edge of the water is an out-sized statue, as big as some of the monstrous buildings, pointing ominously out to sea. Some of the smaller pieces are drawn on marble, and the marked and scratched stone adds an unpredictable element to the scene.

The Puerto Rican painter Gamaliel Rodriguez has new works in the second exhibit here, “Greetings from the Abandoned Land.” His large-scale paintings, blurred in swirling purples, pinks and blues, depict modern buildings being subsumed by the natural environment — a kind of ashes-to-ashes, dust-to-dust inevitable ending to our overbuilt world.

In established commercial galleries, nonprofit spaces and small artist-run rooms, Miami is lucky to have such an array of contemporary expression, both locally generated and from artists from all over the globe. Gallery exhibits are always free, so there really is no reason not to take a day and explore our increasingly fertile terrain.

IF YOU GO

“Bad Niños,” “Greetings from the Abandoned Land”

Through May 31

David Castillo Gallery, 420 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach; www.davidcastillogallery.com

“Under Water”

Through June 10

Locust Projects, 3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami; www.locustprojects.org

“We’ll Weather the Storm Well”

Through May 21

12425 NE 13th Ave., #4; by appointment, call 305-987-4437.