

Medium

Frost Museum in Miami Hosts “Deconstruction: A Reordering of Life, Politics and Art”

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For centuries art was produced in the service of the Church, with a capital C. At a certain point in time artists were liberated from this function and freed to explore other themes. Some became fascinated with light. Others with nature. (O.K. same thing usually.) In the twentieth century the winds of change were a-blowin' and artists began creating work in completely original languages, freed from the need to replicate what cameras and other new technologies were reproducing. Artists served their own inner visions. Simultaneously, there were other streams to which many artists were drawn. One of these was the powerful reaction against the Capitalism which had been in

ascendency for two centuries, creating higher living standards wherever it spread, with its dark side that included social dysfunction and colonialism.

When I was in college (19970–74) I had a friend who used to say to me, “Eddie, the artist is the vanguard of the revolution.” In other words, the proper use of my art would be for political purposes. Though I personally leaned away from making my art political, adopting the stance expressed in H.R. Rookemaaker’s *Art Needs No Justification*, producing work that challenges is sometimes required, I have on occasion produced work with a message (e.g. my painting addressing domestic violence and abuse, “[Mommy, Please Make It Stop.](#)”)

In point of fact, Marxist ideology was a binding force as a European movement in the first half of the century. **Dadaism** and the **Surrealists** were not politically benign. (Salvador Dali was shunned for not buying into the political views as presented in Andre Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto*.)



The Happy Hour (Gonzalo Fuenmeyer, 2018) 20' wide charcoal drawing.
Courtesy the artist and Dot Fiftyone Gallery



Detail from Cross-Cultural Trap, by Christopher Carter, 2018.

Guy Debord published a book that built on some of the ideas of Marxist critical theory in which the author develops and presents the concept of Spectacle. The book is considered a seminal text for **the Situationist movement** which was an outgrowth of avant-garde, anti-authoritarian Marxism. Many of the ideas conveyed by Debord were seeds that produced the art now on display at **The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art**

Museum in Miami. The exhibition is titled “Deconstruction: A Reordering of Life, Politics and Art.” More than fifty years ago, this book foreshadowed our reliance on isolating hand-held technology and the twenty-four-hour news cycle that dominates our times. The author Guy Debord warned about “a future world where social interactions become too influenced by images that would prevent us from direct personal contact.” (If you are sitting with a friend at lunch while reading this on your iPhone, raise your hand and shout “Guilty!”) “Deconstruction” features 12 Miami artists whose work is designed to confront contemporary issues and current events in the frenetic social media stream. The featured artists include Eddie Arroyo, Zachary Balber, Frida Baranek, Christopher Carter, Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova, Yanira Collado, Gonzalo Fuenmayor, Pepe Mar, Glexis Novoa, Sandra Ramos, Jamilah Sabur and Frances Trombly.



Apocalyptic Cartographies. Vano dello inferno (Sandra Ramos, 2017)



Timba (Glexis Novoa, 2017), Courtesy of the artist
and David Castillo Gallery

In remarks about the show museum director Dr. Jordana Pomeroy drew attention to the fact that this is the 10th anniversary of the Frost Art Museum's spectacular building. For this reason they wanted to produce a special show of equally exceptional work. The artists, working in a variety of media, aim to have us "take a long, hard look at our world today." Sometimes it makes us uncomfortable to look too deeply. Other times it's surprisingly rewarding and unexpected. Occasionally an exhibition can create both sensations simultaneously.

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The opening celebration with the artists took place in July. The exhibition remains on view through September 30 at 10975 SW 17 Street, Miami.

Photo Credit top of page: Varla TV (Pepe Mar. 2018) courtesy of the artist and David Castillo Gallery