

Wynwood Wonder

Gallery Projects

Through July 31
David Castillo Gallery
2234 NW Second Ave., Miami
305-573-8110
davidcastillogallery.com
Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

BY CARLOS SUAREZ DE JESUS

Aramis Gutierrez has a gift for engulfing both his characters and the viewer in looming anguish. His deftly rendered painting *At the Water Park* depicts a scene some South Floridians will be familiar with. In it, two pasty-skinned, slightly dazed tourists are at the end of a frolic on a snaking orange water slide. The woman, who is quite pregnant, has lost her bathing suit top and covers her bare breasts with one hand as her husband fumbles for the garment in the water rushing around her knees.

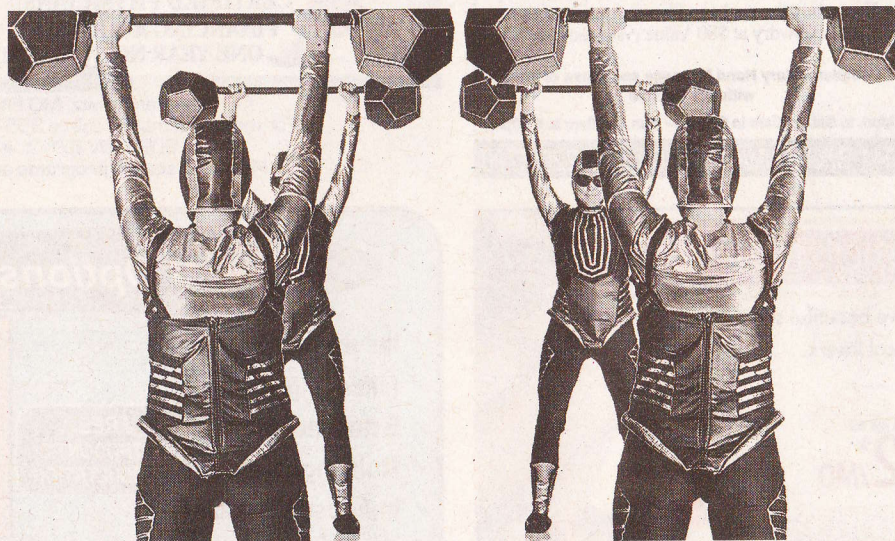
Beneath the surface of the awkward moment, one notices that the woman, who seems to glance at the spectator with a hint of embarrassment, is beginning to realize the sun has dessicated her body.

Her neck and cheeks are on the verge of becoming raw with blisters. Her husband is already the color of a boiled crawfish. Forget that in her teeny bikini, she looks like three pounds of sausage stuffed into a one-pound bag; she cringes at the notion their vacation might be over before it has even begun.

Gutierrez's arresting image is on display at the David Castillo Gallery in Wynwood, where a summer group show is showcasing the space's stable of local talent.

Simply titled "Gallery Projects," the intriguing exhibit includes new work by Adler Guerrier, Quisqueya Henriquez, Susan Lee-Chun, Pepe Mar, Glexis Novoa, Javier Piñón, Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova, Frances Trombly, and Wendy Wischer. The works range from paintings to drawings, installations, collage, sculpture, and an assiduously executed fiber piece that lassoes one into incredulity.

The Castillo Gallery's usual suspects assemble a winner.



Susan Lee-Chun's *Suz-ercise... (and lift)*

cult of aerobics to examine how health instructors employ a regimen of exercises to encourage others to join the herd and become fit.

Suz-ercise (mirrored symmetry, composition #1) is an installation where Lee-Chun has created identical sets of weightlifting benches, barbells, and dumbbells separated

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by a curtain of Plexiglas suspended from the ceiling's rafters. The sleek, provocative piece suggests how personal trainers engage clients in repetitive actions. It is part of a body of work in which the artist has photographed multiple versions of herself wearing a black-

and-gold Flash Gordon-style getup while hoisting barbells over her helmeted head.

The show has a seamless flow. Rather than organize it conceptually, David Castillo took a risk by giving his artists carte blanche to choose current works to display. "What really fascinated me about this particular exhibit is that rather than curating it around a theme like everyone else, I asked the artists to provide a new piece without restrictions," Castillo says. "If you look at the works, regardless of the difference in media or concept, you can detect a strong connection between this totally diverse group of artists, and I think that speaks well for them as a group and for the vision of the gallery."

An example of how these artists' visions share a common appeal can be found in the work of Adler Guerrier and Glexis Novoa. In his striking graphite, watercolor, color pencil, screen print, and solvent transfer on paper pieces, Guerrier evokes a jazzy, abstract vision.

Novoa approaches the cityscape with a remarkable eye for detail in the Lilliputian-scale, site-specific graphite-on-drywall drawing in which he has depicted what appears to be a political monument soaring above an ancient Mayan skull-like foundation. Four anvil-shaped beams jut from the menacing structure, where men limply dangle by the neck on ropes festooned with banners, perhaps suggesting the aftermath of a political firestorm.

In the project room directly behind Novoa's miniature atmospheric opus, Pepe Mar pounces on the peepers with his *Zona Rosa* installation, which brims with obsessively rendered assemblages that resemble tribal totems or fetishes and poke fun at rampant consumerism. Some of his funky creatures crawl across the walls like jungle vipers; others are tucked into corners behind metal barricades as if trapped from snapping at spectators' heels. Naked light bulbs illuminate the room, casting it in a ghostly pink hue that heightens the eeriness of the installation.

"You never know what to expect when you ask artists to submit work for a show without a direct theme," Castillo observes. "It can almost be like setting up a booth at an art fair."

At the David Castillo Gallery, the dealer's stable of talent flexes artistic muscle and creates a compelling exhibit to combat the dog days of summer.

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