

Media release

PRESENTE! Contemporary Art from Cuba opening 6 October 2016

VENUE: GX Gallery

LOCATION: 43 Denmark Hill, London SE5 8RS

DATES: 6 - 29 October 2016

WEBSITE: <http://presentecubanart.org> and gxgallery.com

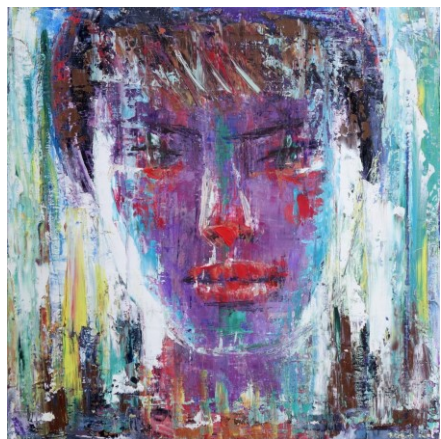
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Niels Reyes *Untitled* (2016)

Oil on canvas 50 cm x 50 cm



Lisandra Isabel García Lopez *Untitled*

from the series *Self-Portrait of an Adolescent Artist* (2009)

Acrylic on canvas 80 cm x 60 cm

The exhibition and sale of art has been organized by the UK charity the Music Fund for Cuba in collaboration with the GX Gallery and will bring a stunning showcase of contemporary Cuban art to London. This free event will be the first major group show for Cuban artists in the UK for many years, offering a unique opportunity to view a cross-section of the island's lively visual arts scene today. With over 30 artists exhibiting up to 50 works, PRESENTE! offers the most extensive display of work created by Cuban artists on the island, with the broadest generational spread, ever shown in an exhibition in the UK. It is a wonderful complement to the Wifredo Lam retrospective at the Tate Modern.

PRESENTE! will display paintings, works on paper, and photography by artists living and working on the island. It includes artists already internationally recognised, such as Luís Camejo, Kcho and Reynerio Tamayo, to emerging stars such as Adislén Reyes, Harold Lopez and Lisandra Isabel

Garcia. All capture the dynamism and diversity of contemporary Cuban art at its best: the freshness of its aesthetic, its powerful breadth of vision – from the deeply personal to the global – and its multi-faceted relation to the distinctive history, culture and social evolution of Cuba itself.

Participating artists include: Lidia E Aguilera, Luís Camejo, Manuel Comas, Roberto Diago, Nelson Domínguez, Darwin Estacio, Ernesto Fernández, Moisés Finalé, Ernesto Garcia, Lisandra Isabel Garcia, William Hernández, Alexis Leyva (Kcho), Harold Lopez, Rigoberto Mena, Osy Milian, Michel Mirabal Martínez, Pedro de Oráa, René Peña, Rafael Pérez Alonso, Yasbel Pérez, Ernesto Rancaño, Adislen Reyes, Niels Reyes, Eduardo Roca (Choco), Richard Somonte, Reynerio Tamayo, The Merger, Liudmila & Nelson, David Velázquez, Lesbia Vent Dumois.

Artists Luis Camejo and Adislen Reyes and curator Chrislie Perez from Galeria 718 ARTIS in Havana will come to London for the opening on 6 October. Camejo and Reyes are professional artists and they also teach at Cuba's most prestigious art institutions. All three will participate in a programme of associated events including seminars and activities at a number of art schools in the capital as well as addressing public meetings in London, Northampton, Hull, and Norwich. They will be available for interviews on Thursday 6 October and at other times by arrangement.

The overriding feature of the artworks selected in PRESENTE! is its enormous diversity in themes, genres, styles and artistic languages. Yet despite this diversity, all the works reflect concerns within current Cuban society and also insert themselves into international artistic discourses. Amongst the younger generation, with artists like **Harold Lopez**, figurative painting and pop art loom large – large formats, a bright palate, and references from fashion, the street, domestic spaces and advertising icons. **Adislen Reyes**, **Lisandra Garcia** and **Osy Milian** – and numerous women are in the forefront of newly emerging talent – use the image of the female form to interrogate universal issues associated with gender and young womanhood, but with a quirky, personal stamp – not at all didactic.

Choco uses collography to make visible the internal world of his Afro-Cuban characters, referencing elements of santería, the syncretic religion born in Cuba with its roots in West Africa, which permeates all of Cuban culture, regardless of religious belief. **Kcho's** drawings of people and parts of boats bring to mind the current crisis of migration of people on a global scale. **Luis Camejo** also engages with the sea, skilfully captured as waves encroach on the city in his cinematic meditations on the Malecon. **Pedro de Oráa**, who displayed in London last year, is from a group of renowned abstract artists from the 1950s. Today he uses the computer as a tool to help create his images.

A fully illustrated 60 page catalogue accompanies the exhibitions and an online educators pack will be available on the exhibition website.

Links between the art community in the UK and Cuba are beginning to develop. Richard Wentworth who is a supporter of PRESENTE! and Anish Kapoor both participated in the Havana Biennial last year. Several artists have welcomed the exhibition.

"A country can be put under siege, but not the human mind, not its creative imagination which has produced an enormous body of art in Cuba; and we in Britain are honoured with the work of Cuban artists when it will be shown in London in October. La Luta Continua." Rasheed Araeen, artist, curator, writer

"Art is the expression of the individual creative human soul which combines with all other

individual voices to make up the soul of a nation. I am pleased to lend my support to Contemporary Art from Cuba and look forward to seeing it.” John Keane, artist

Support has also come from respected cultural figures including the curator Professor Dawn Ades, actors Maxine Peake, Peter Capaldi, Andy de la Tour and others.

“I’m very pleased to support the forthcoming exhibition, Presente!, a unique opportunity for UK audiences to enjoy the best that the rapidly changing Cuban art scene has to offer.” Emma Thompson, actor

iPRESENTE! is a project of the Music Fund for Cuba, a UK charity working with the Cuban Ministry of Culture, the Fondo Cubano de Bienes Culturales and GX Gallery, London. Any surplus from sales of the work will go to the recently established Fund for Art Materials for Education in Cuba, badly needed in light of the US government’s continuing blockade of the island despite the resumption of diplomatic relations.



Supported by:



Press information:

GX Gallery Opening hours: Mon/Tue/Wed/Sat 9.30am-6.00pm
Thu/Fri 9.30am-7.00pm Closed on Sundays
Arrangements for special press view upon application.

Presente! Coordinating team:

Music Fund for Cuba Tel 020 7490 5715 or 07958 169627

Images:

High res images are available upon application at presentecubanart@gmail.com

Associated events:

Details of public events with artists and curator <http://presentecubanart.org/events>

Support:

Further messages of support <http://presentecubanart.org/supporters>

Special Fund:

Details of Fund for Art Materials for Education in Cuba at <http://presentecubanart.org/support>

Listings 50 words

iPRESENTE!Contemporary Art from Cuba, 6-29 October 2016, GX Gallery, Denmark Hill, London. Showcasing stunning painting, photography and works on paper by over 30 Cuban artists living and working on the island. Established artists and upcoming talent from Cuba's vibrant art scene. Programme of associated events with artists. W: presentecubanart.org

100 words

iPRESENTE!Contemporary Art from Cuba, 6-29 October 2016, GX Gallery, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8RS. Showcasing stunning painting, photography and works on paper by over 30 Cuban artists living and working on the island. Unique opportunity to have a glimpse of Cuba's vibrant art scene. Internationally established artists and emerging young stars include Luis Camejo, Reynerio Tamayo and Kcho as well as Harold Lopez, Adislen Reyes, Osy Milian and Niels Reyes. Programme of associated events. Works for sale, raising funds for art education projects in Cuba. Free entry. Further details presentecubanart.org and gxgallery.com.