

Media informaton

HALLE 14 OVERSEES THE CONTEMPORARY ART FROM CUBA AND THE BAHAMAS IN IT'S NEW EXHIBITION

(Leipzig, April 24, 2017) For the Spring Tour of the SpinnereiGalleries, the art centre HALLE 14 opens the exhibition »Overseas: Cuba and The Bahamas. Contemporary Art from the Caribbean« on April 29 at 3 pm. Featuring photographs, paintings, installations and video works from 38 artists, the show offers an unique insight in the current art scene of the two island nations. The exhibition is curated by Holly Bynoe, curator of the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, and Cuban independent curator and art critic Antonio Eligio (Tonel), based in Havana and Vancouver, and runs until August 6, 2017.

At the [press preview on Thursday, April 27, at 11am](#), the curators as well as some of the artists, among others Felipe Dulzaides, Adrián Fernández, Alex Hernández, Jeffrey Meris and Dave Smith, will be present.

FACTS

Title of the exhibition: Overseas: Cuba and The Bahamas. Contemporary Art from the Caribbean

Artists: Juan Carlos Alom, John Beadle, Alejandro Campins, Iván Capote, Yoan Capote, Ariamna Contino & Alex Hernández, Blue Curry, Susana Pilar Delahante, Felipe Dulzaides, Ricardo G. Elías, Adrián Fernández, Adonis Flores, Kendra Frorup, Tamika Galanis, Orestes Hernández, Arnold Kemp, Dominique Knowles, Los Carpinteros, Anina Major, Jace McKinney, Jeffrey Meris, Kareem Mortimer, Angelique V. Nixon, Marianela Orozco, Holly Parotti, Lynn Parotti, Marta María Pérez Bravo, Manuel Piña, Khia Poitier, Carlos Quintana, Antonius Roberts, Heino Schmid, Steven Schmid, Dave Smith, Giovanna Swaby, Tessa Whitehead and Natalie Willis

Curators: Holly Bynoe, The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, Nassau and Antonio Eligio (Tonel), Havana & Vancouver

Duration: April 29 until August 6, 2017

Opening: Saturday, April 29, 2017, 3 pm

Opening hours: Tue-Sun, 11 am-6 pm

Entrance fee: 4 €, reduced 2 € (free on Wednesdays)

Location: HALLE 14 – Centre for Contemporary Art

Address: Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei, Spinnereistr. 7, 04179 Leipzig, Germany

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Funded and supported by:



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CONCEPT

Overseas: Cuba and The Bahamas. Contemporary Art from the Caribbean

Seen from the continental shore, islands can be mythic and idyllic places of longing. Medieval historians conjectured that the Portuguese Christians who fled from the Moors ended up on »Antilia«, the Isle of Seven Cities. After Columbus' discovery of the »New World«, the name Antilles was transferred to the archipelago off Central America.

The West Indies or the Caribbean islands are other names that carry with them expectations and a claim to dominance. The name of the Caribbean region comes from the Island Caribs (»caribes«, in Spanish) and is the result of what can be described as a cultural and linguistic misunderstanding, that took place during the first encounters between the Europeans and the indigenous people of the region. Writing in his »Journal«, Christopher Columbus identifies »cannibal« with the mythical »Cynocephalus« – dog-headed people who ate other people.

The insular heterotopias often mingle with ideas of paradise. The genre of the Robinsonade, originated by Daniel Defoe, plays out in literature an island life far from the discontents of civilization. Often these ideal worlds are overtaken by dystopias, as in Golding's »Lord of the Flies« where the elite British students fall victim to hate, envy, murder and torture on an island paradise. The happily stranded often encounter savages, mutineers, looters, or even monsters – either as neighbors or found deep within themselves.

This Janus face of islands is also reflected in tourism. Palm trees, glistening beaches, turquoise seas, an ocean of old-timers, picturesquely flaking colonial facades, a carefree life – this is the stuff of holiday dreams and the main resource of the tourism industry, on which almost everything in the Caribbean depends. Of course, behind the scenes it looks different.

For centuries, the Caribbean Islands were chess pieces for competing European powers. The arrival of conquerors and explorers caused the almost total extermination of the indigenous inhabitants through massacres, famine, and illnesses. The islands became suppliers of sugar, coffee, cocoa, and cotton for a burgeoning European capitalism, and Africans were enslaved and transported to the islands as cheap labour. In the 20th century, tourism replaced the plantation economy.

Spurred by a deepening socioeconomic crisis and a dictatorial, violent regime, the 26th of July Movement led to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. This event marked the end of a long historical period of American dominance in Cuban affairs. Cuba has existed as a socialist state for almost 60 years, outliving the entire Communist Bloc. For decades, Cubans have enjoyed a comparatively high standard of health and education within the Latin American region. That standard of living has been eroded after the disappearance of the Eastern Bloc and the ensuing, long-lasting economic crisis of the late 20th century. The stereotyping of Cuba as a place frozen in time has become a unique selling point today for affluent tourists. After nearly sixty years, the historic dispute between Cuba and the United States, including the blockade, or economic and commercial embargo is still ongoing. The resumption of diplomatic relations between these two countries, announced in December 2014, is an encouraging development.

Stretching out from the east of Florida across 700 islands (30 of which are inhabited), The Bahamas have had a contradictory history since Spanish conquest. The name originates from *baja mar*, meaning »shallow sea«. For a long time, pirates had their stronghold there. The privateer Woodes Rogers put an end to the stronghold on behalf of Great Britain, and so the Bahamas became a British Crown colony. In the following centuries, smuggling to the various American colonies became the preferred source of income, reaching its height during Prohibition in the United States. The archipelago's path to complete independence from the United Kingdom in 1973 was relatively peaceful. Nevertheless, Queen Elizabeth II remains the head of state of this constitutional monarchy. Daily life is marked by poverty, crime and violence, as well as low educational and health standards. An end to colonial rule did not diminish this undeniable social inequality.

The Bahamas and Cuba share a common history of colonialism and slavery, and yet they are very different, not only in their traditions and form of government (socialism and capitalism), but also in

ethnicity, language (Spanish, English and Creole), and religion (Christianity, West African Kongo and Yoruba cultures). African, Indigenous, Asian and European roots have developed a kaleidoscope of hybrid cultures.

Caribbean identities are as fleeting, fluid and precarious as they are layered and perplexing. This exhibition shows what it means to create contemporary art in the context of complex and, at the same time, fragile conditions in the isolation of an island, wrestling with entrenched circumstances (inequality, racism, neo-colonialism, identity crises) and often in conflict with social reality.

In collaboration with the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas curator Holly Bynoe and Cuban independent curator and art critic Antonio Eligio (Tonel), based in Havana and Vancouver, HALLE 14 brings together, for the first time, artworks – including material collages, sculptures, paintings, photography and installations – by established and emerging artists from both island nations in one show.

PROGRAM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ART TOUR OF THE SPINNEREIGALLERIES

Opening hours:

April 29, 2017, 11 am-6 pm

April 30, 2017, 11 am-6 pm

Events at HALLE 14:

April 29, 2017, 3pm

Opening of the exhibition »Overseas: Cuba and The Bahamas. Contemporary Art from the Caribbean«, with a welcoming speech by Michael Arzt (director of HALLE 14) and an introduction in the exhibition by curator Antonio Eligio (Tonel)

April 30, 2017, 2pm

»Archipelagic Art« – Artists talk with curator Antonio Eligio (Tonel) and the attendant artists, among others Felipe Dulzaides, Adrián Fernández, Alex Hernández, Jeffrey Meris and Dave Smith

April 29 until May 12, 2017

»I don't need society« – Presentation of the school project, guided by the artists Heide Nord and Georg Weißbach

IMAGE

Download in high resolution: www.halle14.org/presse.html



Marianela Orozco
Isla (Island), 2006
Digital print
66,6 x 100 cm



Dave Smith
Profiles, 2014
Acrylic on canvas
92 x 122 cm

PRESS CONTACT

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HALLE 14

As a non-commercial art centre, HALLE 14 is a space for the presentation of, reflection on and communication about contemporary art. It has been operating since 2002 in a listed historic industrial building on the grounds of the Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei (Cotton Spinning Mill). With the conscious intent of highlighting the »luxury of emptiness«, an initiative of art enthusiasts created unique spaces in the generous halls of this late 19th century industrial building. A multi-functional visitor centre offers 600m² for learning, reading, and lingering. The 2,400 m² exhibition hall is available as a presentation space for international group shows of contemporary art. Courses, workshops, and school projects take place regularly in an expansive room for art education. Additionally, there are 16 studios and seven workspaces for international and local artists. The dense artistic sociotope of the Spinnerei – with over a dozen galleries and project spaces, 130 artist studios, numerous other creative offices, a cinema, a café and more – combined with the countless off-spaces in the surrounding neighbourhood create an enriching environment.