

CARLOS GARAICOA

Sin Solución

Opening: Saturday 11 February 2012, Via del Castello 11, 6pm-12 midnight

El camino más largo comienza con una simple línea

LÁZARO SAAVEDRA, NEDKO SOLAKOV, JOSÉ ANTONIO SUÁREZ LONDOÑO

curated by Carlos Garaicoa

Opening: Saturday 11 February 2012, Via Arco dei Becci 1, 6pm-12 midnight

Both shows run until 31 March 2012, Tuesday–Saturday, 2–7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to present a new solo exhibition by Carlos Garaicoa, *Sin Solución*, in its San Gimignano gallery.

Carlos Garaicoa belongs to a generation of internationally established Cuban artists. His multi-faceted practice and provocative works encompass sculpture, photography, drawing, video, installations and urban interventions. Taking his home city as a source of inspiration and as a laboratory, Garaicoa develops a model in which Havana is a metaphor not only of human nature, but also of the failure of 20th-century ideologies. The concept of utopia lies at the centre of his work: the contrast between utopia and reality has given rise to a series of 'project' works in which the investigative model extends out from Havana to take in other cities. Indeed, the city offers unlimited possibilities of representation, it is the place where imagination acquires form. For Garaicoa, artistic practice is both a tool and a language for engaging with the public and the private city.

Sin Solución comprises a series of works created especially for the show, plus other pieces produced over the last year, in which the artist explores the importance of architecture as a way of deconstructing the complexity of the socio-political and historic narrative of a city. The stalls area of the former cinema-theatre is occupied by *Fin de Silencio*, a large installation which takes the urban reality of old Havana as a point of departure for developing a narrative charged with thoughts, forgotten places and spaces of the imagination. Presented for the first time in 2010 as part of a solo show of the same name in the former abattoir of Madrid, and then, the following year, in the show *Penelope's Labour* at the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice, the installation consists of seven tapestries reproducing the street paving of a shopping area of Havana. Garaicoa uses the names of shops embedded in the marble grit of pavements to create new slogans. *La Lucha*, *El Pensamiento*, *Sin rival*, *Reina* ("the struggle", "the thought", "without rival", "queen") are transformed, in his tapestries, into poetic, critical or nostalgic micro-narratives such as *La lucha es de todos* and *Reina destruye o redime* ("the struggle is for everyone", "queen destroys or redeems").

In the Arco dei Becci gallery space Garaicoa is appearing for the first time in the guise of curator, with an exhibition of drawings entitled *El camino más largo comienza con una simple línea*. The show brings together the work of three artists in whom Garaicoa has always been greatly interested: Lázaro Saavedra, Nedko Solakov and José Antonio Suárez Londoño.

He shares with them an approach to drawing that goes beyond its use as an expressive tool. In the work of Saavedra, Solakov and Suárez, the *simple línea* emphasizes the complexity of the medium, redefining the art object from an introspective and social point of view through political engagement.

Lázaro Saavedra (Havana, 1964–) first made a name for himself as a visual artist in the 1980s, focusing on political and existential themes, and becoming an important point of reference for Garaicoa and a whole new generation of Cuban artists. Versatile, ironic and conceptual, his work takes the form of writing, performance and happenings, but also videos, installations and, naturally, drawings, which, in this exhibition, are being shown for the first time in Italy.

The style of Nedko Solakov (Cherven Briag, Bulgaria, 1957–) is distinguished by the use of a subversive and subtle language that invariably poses a challenge for viewers and their reactions to the work and the exhibition space, dwelling as it does on the meaning of art but also on the mechanisms regulating expression within the art system. *El camino más largo comienza con una simple línea* offers Garaicoa the opportunity to engage in a conceptual dialogue with the Bulgarian artist, the point of contact being an investigation of the art system and political issues but also poetic reflection on emotions and human behaviour.

The drawings of the Colombian artist Antonio Suárez Londoño (Medellín, 1955-) take us into an arcane microcosm of humour and imagination. Various sources intermingle in his work, ranging from youthful studies in biology to literary texts, popular proverbs, songs and news stories. His narratives, occasionally accompanied by texts in diary form, are peopled with images of animals, buildings, vehicles and ships, and points and numbers organized in an enigmatic classificatory system. For Londoño drawing is an intimate, daily practice which he pursues with an almost monastic rigour and dedication.

Carlos Garaicoa (Havana, 1967-) divides his time between Havana and Madrid. After taking a degree in thermodynamics, he attended the Institute of Fine Arts in Havana between 1989 and 1994. He has shown in many solo and collective exhibitions, at Art in General and the MOMA in New York, at the Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango in Bogotá, the Museo de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and the Tate in Liverpool. He has participated in the 5th, 6th and 7th Havana Biennial, the 1st Johannesburg Biennale, the 17th Paiz Biennale in Guatemala, the 8th Shanghai Biennale in China, the 24th, 26th and 29th São Paulo Biennial in Brazil, Documenta XI in Germany, the 1st Yokohama Triennale in Japan and in the Venice Biennale in 2005 and 2009. His works are housed in many private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Havana and the Tate Modern in London. In 2005 he won both the 34th International Contemporary Art Prize of Montecarlo and the Katherine S. Marmor Award, Los Angeles M.O.C.A.

**For further information about the show and for photographs:
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