

ZHANNA KADYROVA - PERMIT FOR THE COCKTAIL

SATURDAY APRIL 13TH , 2019

ARTE CONTINUA - RAYO 108 ENTRE ZANJA Y DRAGONES, BARRIO CHINO, CENTRO HABANA

On Saturday, April, 13th, 2019, as a part of the XIII Havana Bienal's collateral program, Arte Continua is delighted to present for the first time in Cuba a solo exhibition by Zhanna Kadyrova. Born in 1981, Kadyrova, a leading artist on the vibrant Ukrainian scene, lives and works in Kyiv.

Her practice, tackling since its very beginning disciplines as different as drawing, performance and sculpture, deeply focuses onto the exhibition site and space. In her work, the issue of context unravels to reveal the rhythm of History on the move - that of a world whose multiple layers disappear behind their immediacy.

Often diverting the aesthetic canons of the socialist ideal still present in the heritage of contemporary Ukraine, Kadyrova's perspective is partially informed by the plastic and symbolic values of urban building materials. Thus, ceramics, glass, stone and concrete enter the spotlight of her work.

After extensively visiting Havana and its periphery, the artist realized that although history once paralleled Soviet Ukraine and Revolutionary Cuba, the island shines with a unique aura, shaped by historical and socio-cultural layers so thirsty of more and diverse narratives that, just like Havana, endlessly entangle.

This fragmentation manifests itself in the form of oversized fruit quarters, scattered onto the gallery's floor as if they were a child's toys. Their bright colors, that become even brighter when in the light, recall Cuba's typical stained-glass windows. The glass halfmoon, the *mediopunto*, a colonial times' heritage, overlaid onto the citric elements of an imaginary cocktail, evoke images steeped in history and popular culture. Yet, these get diverted by "pieces" of everyday life as simple as fruit in a once again fragmented but recurring line of thought.

The glass, both robust and fragile, is also present on the gallery's stage, a former cinema. This curtain is made of bric-a-brac found-objects such as lamps, bottles or table glasses that the artist collected during her wanderings. Inspired by the bead curtains present in some Havana houses, this "glass curtain" is perhaps what better embodies, in this show, the artist's practice of unveiling a place and its history.

Within the city's architecture, Kadyrova was particularly struck by Hospital Antituberculoso Joaquín G. Lebrado. Built in 1936, this hospital, spoiled from its function during the Special period, a major economic crisis that hit the country following the fall of the Soviet Union, now serves as a place for nighthawk meetings. Kadyrova collected the ceramics similar to the ones that still decorate some of the walls of the building and turned them into clothes, a sort of textile patron memorial of this significant place in Cuban history where, for instance, the intellectual and revolutionary leader Rubén Martínez Villena perished. In the line of the series initiated in 2014, *Second Hand*, with these works, Kadyrova contributes at writing a segment of Havana's architectural biography.

This particular assemblage of materials and forms attempts at exploring how the country's urban framework is a concrete and tangible projection of its historical fragmentation.

Whereas the metaphor of the fruit and its game of scales suggest the possibility of reuniting history's misplaced components, the use of Cuban decorative elements preserves the narrative potential of architecture: that of eclectic yet harmonious encounters.

Kadyrova's works ultimately become, in an intuitive-deductive approach, a testimony of the richly heterogeneous history of the Cuban people. By titling her exhibition *PERMISO PARA EL CÓCTEL* (Permit for the cocktail) Kadyrova invites us to savor a celebration. Yet, in this case, just like with construction work, we need a permit to begin blending the ingredients.

Bio: Zhanna Kadyrova was born in Brovary, Ukraine in 1981 and nowadays lives and works in Kyiv. Over the past years she has held solo exhibitions in Galleria Continua, San Gimignano; Bureau for Cultural Translations, Leipzig and the Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria among others. She participated in collective exhibitions at: Garage, Moscow; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Ludwig Museum, Budapest; Centquatre, Paris; Ukrainian Pavilion, 55th and 56th Venice Biennale; Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; Polish Institute, Dusseldorf; Saatchi Gallery, London; Architekturzentrum, Vienna; Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt; Zimmerstraße, Berlin; Museum of Moscow, Moscow; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Izolyatsia, Platform for Cultural Initiatives and the Donetsk Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw among others. She won the Miami Beach Pulse Prize, PinchukArtCentre Prize in 2011 and, in 2013, the Kazimir Malevich Artist Award.

In 2019 Kadyrova will take part in the International Exhibition of the 58th Venice Biennale curated by Ralph Rugoff, as well as the Ljubljana Graphic Biennale, curated by Slavs and Tatars.

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SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

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