

*Island Nations: New Art from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico,*  
October 29, 2004-January 20, 2005

The rich ties that bind Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico are as complex as the stark differences between their respective societies. Foreigners, however, still tend to think of the Caribbean in terms of a secluded tropical paradise. To defy this overly simplified view, many works featured in the exhibition contrast the islands' stunning natural beauty with their often difficult economic and political situations. Others take on the theme of isolation either by underscoring the greater connectedness of this age of global communication or by pointing out its political rather than geographic causes. A third, related issue involves those who move between several nations and the complicated relationships between those who have emigrated and those who have stayed in their country of origin. The influence of these island nations continues to spread far beyond their borders. Rather than representing the region in its entirety, this exhibition offers personal reflections that may be seen, heard, and felt.

## Architecture/Dreams/Memory

Architecture exerts a strong but largely subconscious influence on our perceptions and emotions. The artists featured in this gallery explore the intimate relationships between an individual's memories and his/her built surroundings, as well as the ways in which architectural environments may reflect or express our collective dreams and visions for society. La arquitectura expresa una influencia grande pero subconsciente sobre todo lo que percibimos y sentimos. Los artistas incluidos en esta galería exploran las relaciones íntimas entre nuestras memorias individuales y el ambiente construido que nos rodea, así como la forma en que los ambientes arquitectónicos pueden reflejar o expresar sueños y visiones colectivas para la sociedad.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Allora & Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora, American, b.1974

Guillermo Calzadilla, American, b.1971

*Land Mark*, 2001

Color chromogenic print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2005.18.1



In *Land Mark* (footprints), Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla enlist the feet of protestors at Vieques, the former U.S. Navy weapons test site that was for many years a bitter reminder of Puerto Rico's submission to the power to the north. To the protestors' shoes the artists added custom-designed soles with subversive slogans and images carved in relief. The beach on which they illegally

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demonstrated thus became imprinted with their respective visions for the land reclamation campaign, just as it has been imprinted by U.S. bombs.

*En Terreno marcado (huellas), Jennifer Allora y Guillermo Calzadilla enlistaron los pies de protestantes en Vieques, el lugar donde la Marina de los E.U. probaban sus armas. Por muchos años Vieques era un amargo recuerdo de la sumisión de Puerto Rico al poder del norte. A las huellas de los zapatos de los protestantes, los artistas añadieron suelas de zapatos mandadas a hacer con inscripciones subversivas e imágenes al relieve. La playa donde se llevaron a cabo las demostraciones ilegales fue impresa con las respectivas visiones de una campaña para reclamar la tierra, así como había sido impresa por bombas.*

Courtesy of the artists and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Abel Oliva

*La Moneda del Che 1,00 C/U U.S.D., Los Chicos Felices de Robin Hood,*  
2003

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.9

These prints depict everyday objects (clothespins, air freshener, etc.) along with the prices that they fetch in Cuba. Such mundane necessities are often sold by street vendors known as *pregoneros*, whose musical chants compose a vital part of the typical Cuban auditory environment. In the context of a socialist society, the *pregonero's* efforts represent a pure form of capitalism beyond the realm of official, state-sanctioned commercial activity. To underscore the economic issues involved in this work, Oliva sells each print for the same price as the pictured object.

*Estos grabados muestran objetos de uso diario (palitos de tender, ambientador, etc.) junto a los precios a los cuales se consiguen en Cuba. Estas necesidades mundanas suelen ser vendidas en la calle por vendedores conocidos como *pregoneros*, cuyos pregones musicales son una parte típica del ambiente cubano. Dentro de una sociedad socialista, los esfuerzos del *pregonero* representan una manifestación del capitalismo pura y fuera de las actividades comerciales sancionadas por el gobierno. Para enfatizar la cuestión económica, Oliva vende cada lámina por el mismo precio de cada objeto.*

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Abel Oliva  
*Cuchillo \$5,00 C/U, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*  
paper; pigment  
Anonymous  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.8



Abel Oliva  
*20 Politos Por 5.00, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*  
paper; pigment  
Anonymous  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.7

Abel Oliva  
*Aporato de Hacer Disco \$25,00 c/u, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*  
paper; pigment  
Anonymous  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.6



Abel Oliva  
*Meprobamato a 10.00 m/n la Ttirita, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*  
paper; pigment  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.5



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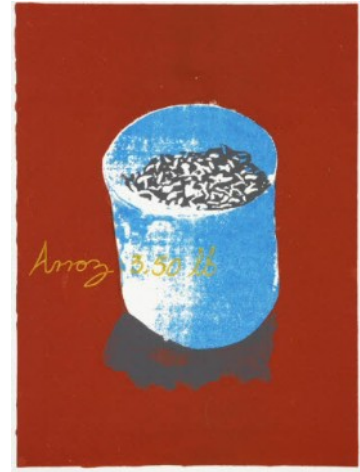
Abel Oliva

*Arroz: 3.50lb, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*

paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.3



Tony Capellán, Dominican, 1955 - 2018

*Mar Caribe [Caribbean Sea], 1996*

Plastic and rubber sandals with barbed wire

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.10

The bright-blue flip-flops were collected by the artist after they had washed up along the Ozama River as it passes through the city of Santo Domingo. A closer look reveals that these sandals – intimate artifacts of the tropical urban poor – are symbolic of societal and economic ills; the artist has replaced the rubber toe straps with barbed wire.



*Las brillantes sandalias azules que componen esta instalación fueron recogidas por el artista a las orillas del río Ozama en Santo Domingo después de haber sido arrastradas por la corriente. Vistas desde cerca, se descubre que estas sandalias, artefactos íntimos de la población urbana pobre del trópico, funcionan como iconos del dolor social, puesto que el artista ha sustituido las correas de hule de las sandalias por alambre de púas.*

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Allora & Calzadilla

Jennifer Allora, American, b.1974

Guillermo Calzadilla, American, b.1971

*Land Mark*, 2001

Color chromogenic print

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2005.18.2



Abel Oliva

*El Peine a \$5.00, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood*, 2003

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.12



Santiago Hernández

*Cuba Camouflage*, 2004

oil on canvas

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.9

Hernández inserts the graphic shape of the island of Cuba into Rorschach blots and camouflage patterns. The images embody the pressure to assimilate into a new culture, while indicating a heritage that does not easily dissolve.



*Hernández inserta sutilmente la forma gráfica de la isla de Cuba entre manchas similares a las de las pruebas psicológicas de Rorschach, y entre patrones de camuflaje. Las imágenes dan voz a la presión por integrarse, pero indican a la vez una herencia que no se disuelve fácilmente.*

Chemi Rosado Seijo, American, b. Puerto Rico, 1973-

*El Cerro (The Hillside)*, 2000

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.16.1

In this ongoing project, Rosado Seijo solicits the cooperation of the residents of the impoverished and crime-ridden town of Naranjito, Puerto Rico, to repaint their homes in different shades of green. In reclaiming the verdant grace of the surrounding mountains, the

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camouflaged community that is slowly materializing speaks of social unity and convergence with nature, dreams to which the Caribbean seems particularly given.

*En este proyecto aún en construcción, Rosado Seijo solicita la cooperación de los residentes de Naranjito, un pueblo de Puerto Rico azotado por la pobreza y el crimen, para que pinten sus casas en diferentes tonos de verde. Al recobrar el verde encanto de las montañas circundantes, la comunidad camuflada, que lentamente se materializa, se vuelve un testimonio de cohesión social y comunión con la naturaleza: sueños que el Caribe es tan propenso a darse.*

Chemi Rosado Seijo, American, b. Puerto Rico, 1973-  
*El Cerro (The Hillside)*, 2000  
Paper  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.16.2

Quisqueya Henríquez, Dominican, 1966  
*Helado hecho de agua de Mar Caribe (Ice Cream Made from Water from the Caribbean Sea)*, 2002  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.17

Quisqueya Henríquez uses sensory experience to break down the cultural and psychological distances between the Caribbean and the rest of the world. This photograph was created in conjunction with an interactive performance/installation for which the artist worked with an ice cream company to bring her ocean directly to the palates of foreign audiences as a transubstantiated, universally salty treat.

*Henríquez utiliza la experiencia visceral para eliminar las distancias culturales y psicológicas entre el Caribe y el resto del mundo. Esta fotografía fue creada junto con un proyecto interactivo en el cual la artista trabajó en colaboración con una fábrica de helados para hacer llegar su océano directamente a los paladares de audiencias foráneas, como una delicia transustanciada y universalmente salada.*

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Ignacio Lang, American, b. Puerto Rico, b. 1975  
*Antenna, Looking for a Signal (Buscando un señal)* 1999  
Photograph; color  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.15.1



Raquel Paiewonsky, Dominican, b. 1969  
*Parida (Birthed)*, from the "Vestial" series, 2001  
Plastic and rubber dolls hand sewn onto fabric  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.13

Abel Oliva  
*Untitled, Los Chicos Felizes de Robin Hood*, 2003  
Paper; pigment  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.2



Rafael Ferrer, American, b. 1933  
*The Balata River: "In the mountains, there you feel free" (El Rio Balatá: "En las montañas te sientes libre")*, 1988  
Oil on canvas  
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 1989.034





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In this painting set in the Dominican Republic, the artist presents the kind of unspoiled tropical landscape that has traditionally epitomized the Caribbean. This romanticized view is reinforced by the work's subtitle, which reads, "In the mountains, there you feel free," a line taken from T. S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" (1922). The image seems to exorcize the tensions that exist between the region's undeniable natural beauty and its rampant urbanization, between its sometimes hard realities and its long-standing promise of earthly paradise.

*En esta pintura de un lugar de la República Dominicana, el artista nos muestra el paisaje tropical que tradicionalmente caracteriza al Caribe. Esta visión romantizada se refuerza a través del subtítulo (escrito en el reverso de la pintura): <<En las montañas, ahí te sientes libre>>, tomado de las primeras líneas del poema de T.S. Eliot, La Tierra Perdida. La imagen parece exorcizar las tensiones que existen entre la belleza indudable de la región y la rampante urbanización, entre sus duras realidades y su eterna promesa de un paraíso terrestre.*

Ernesto Pujol, American, 1957  
*Frontal Novice [Novicio frontal]*, from *Hagiography series*, 1999  
Color photograph  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.17.2





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Marta Maria Perez Bravo, Cuban, b. 1959

*Todo lo tengo, todo me falta [I Have Everything, I Have Nothing]*,  
1997

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1999.12

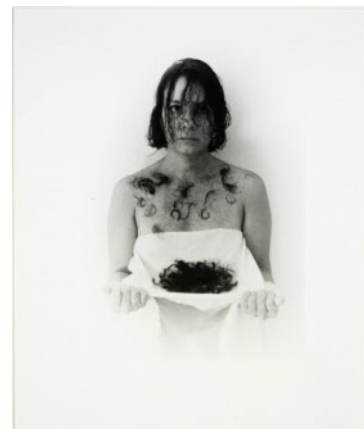


Marta Maria Perez Bravo, Cuban, b. 1959

*Para la entrega [For the Offering]*, 1994

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Barnet Fain 1998.16.2



Pepón Osorio, American, b. Puerto Rico, b. 1955

*T.K.O.*, 1989

Mixed media

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.30

In this work, Osorio has placed various objects and tokens that he associates with his native Puerto Rico within a velvet-lined box, along with images of the political figures whom he holds responsible for decades of corruption and violence there.

*En este trabajo Osorio ha colocado varios objetos y símbolos que él asocia con su nativo Puerto Rico, en un cofre forrado de terciopelo. El artista colocó también imágenes de figuras políticas a los cuales él hace responsable por años de corrupción y violencia en su tierra natal.*



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Ana Mendieta, American, 1948-1985

*Furrows*, 1984

Gelatin silver print

Mary B. Jackson Fund 1998.4.5

In 1984, Mendieta created this piece – an outline of a woman's body that encompasses the viewer as she or he passes by – for the front terrace of The RISD Museum. The work is typical of the many temporary earth "drawings" that compose Mendieta's *Siluetas* (Silhouette) series. Throughout her brief career, Mendieta merged aspects of her cultural heritage, particularly the traditions of Afro-Cuban *santería*, with contemporary artistic idioms, such as feminist art, land art, and performance.

*En 1984, Mendieta creó esta obra - la silueta de un cuerpo de mujer que envuelve al espectador - para la terraza del Museo RISD. El trabajo es típico de muchos de los <<dibujos>> de tierra que componen la serie de Siluetas de Mendieta. A través de su corta carrera, Mendieta combinó aspectos de su herencia cultural, particularmente la santería afro-cubana, con el lenguaje artístico contemporáneo, tal como el arte feminista, el arte de la tierra y el performance.*

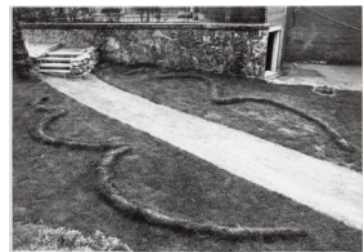


Ana Mendieta, American, 1948-1985

*Furrows*, 1984

Gelatin silver print

Mary B. Jackson Fund 1998.4.4



Abel Oliva

*Vaya, Pomodito China \$10.00 C/U, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood*, 2003

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.10



# RISD MUSEUM

Ana Mendieta, *American*, 1948-1985  
*Furrows*, 1984  
Gelatin silver print  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1998.4.2



Abel Oliva  
*La Musica del Mement \$2.00 c/u, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood*,  
2003  
Paper; pigment  
Anonymous  
Anonymous gift 2004.18.11



José Bedia Valdés, Cuban, b. 1959  
*All My Life Like This?*, 1991  
Acrylic on canvas with rope  
Nancy Sayles Day Collection of Modern Latin American Art 1992.025



*All My Life Like This?* depicts the precariousness of daily life in Cuba throughout the early 1990s as a walk on a tightrope. During those years, euphemistically known as the “special period,” Cubans suffered great economic hardship, largely because of the abrupt termination of aid from the collapsing Soviet Union.

*¿Toda la vida así? compara lo precario de la vida diaria en Cuba al comienzo de los años 1990s, a caminar en una cuerda floja. Durante estos años, eufemísticamente conocidos como el período especial, los cubanos sufrieron grandes necesidades económicas, mayormente debidas a la súbita falta de ayuda de la Unión Soviética, que en ese momento se estaba desintegrando.*

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Abelardo Morell, American, b. Cuba, b. 1948

*Camera Obscura Image of Havana Looking Southeast in Room with Ladder*, 2002

Gelatin silver print

Mary B. Jackson Fund, by exchange 2005.84

Morell's camera obscura pictures present the public exterior world projected into intimate interior spaces, so that it becomes difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is imaged or imagined. The camera obscura technique employs a process whereby the photographer blocks all the light shining into a room from the outside world except for a single ray, which enters through a tiny hole. This narrow beam of light causes the panorama outside to be projected upside down on the room's walls. The image is then captured photographically using an extremely long exposure. One of these photographs was taken at Morell's home in Brookline, and the other was taken during a return visit to Cuba forty years after having emigrated to the U.S.A.



*Estas fotografías presentan el mundo público exterior unido con íntimos espacios privados. Se hace difícil distinguir entre lo real y lo proyectado, o imaginado. La técnica de cámara obscura emplea un proceso en que el fotógrafo bloquea toda la luz que entra en un cuarto excepto un solo rayo de sol que entra a través de un pequeño agujero. Esta rayita de luz hace que el panorama exterior se proyecte piés arriba en las paredes del cuarto. La imagen es capturada entonces fotográficamente usando una extremadamente larga exposición. Una de estas fotografías fue tomada en la casa de Morell en Brookline, y la otra durante una visita a Cuba cuarenta años después de haber emigrado a los Estados Unidos.*

Glenda León, Cuban, 1976

*Destino (Destiny)*, 2003

Video, color, sound

Mary B. Jackson Fund 2005.12

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Abel Oliva

*Vaneno de Cucrache de la Pastica Amarilla \$20.00 M.N. C/U, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.15



Abel Oliva

*Ambientador \$0.00 M.N. C/U, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.14



Abel Oliva

*10 Pesos el Paquete de la Bodega, Los Chicos Felices de Robinhood, 2003*

Paper; pigment

Anonymous

Anonymous gift 2004.18.13



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Ernesto Pujol, American, 1957  
*Frontal Novice [Novicio frontal]*, from *Hagiography* series, 1999  
Color photograph  
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2001.17.3



Ana Mendieta, American, 1948-1985  
*Furrows*, 1984  
Gelatin silver print  
Mary B. Jackson Fund 1998.4.3

