

Press release

ARIAMNA CONTINO & ALEX HERNÁNDEZ-DUEÑAS
Atlas of the Delirium

Opening: Wednesday, May 15th, 2024 | 6pm
Duration of the exhibition: May 16th – July 27th, 2024

With the exhibition "Atlas of the Delirium," Galerie Andreas Binder is presenting the works of Cuban artists Ariamna Contino and Alex Hernández-Dueñas for the second time.

Atlas of the Delirium is inspired by the investigative praxis of the natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt in his travels through the Americas. His encompassing and complex vision links diverse knowledge such as botany, geology, economics, and politics. From a similar perspective and using statistical sources, Ariamna Contino and Alex Hernández-Dueñas created a body of data to model their works. This project is conceived as an exhibition of landscapes. Contino and Hernández use the notions wielded by Rosalind Krauss in her essay on the "*Sculpture of the expanded field*" as a reference to configure their concept of total cartography. In this way, the landscape functions for Contino and Hernández as a document, a physical and symbolic record of events and practices that are generated in each cultural space.

The artists symbolically created a garden from magic or hallucinogenic plants in this exhibition. The works deconstruct the complex cultural universe of using these botanical varieties with psychoactive principles. These practices come from the heritage of the so-called original peoples, have been documented in diverse geographic regions, and are commonly related to shamanism, divination rites, and physical and spiritual healing. Contino and Hernández set out in these works to document the different botanical varieties and the substances present in their chemical composition. As a function of this objective, they created several bodies of work that interact with each other, generating rereading.

Contino's *The Garden of Delights* is a group of open-work paper landscapes with which she visualized the different ecosystems of these plants. In this series, Contino alludes directly to the notions of representation of an exotic garden in the history of art, whose fundamental archetype is the remarkable work of Hieronymus Bosch. The cutout technique and the superimposition of countless layers of paper further reinforce the intention of breaking down a seemingly coherent surface and visualizing the complexity of aesthetics and their social relevance in Ariamna Contino's work.

Hernández's work, *Atlas of the Delirium*, starts from an exercise of superposition to generate an abstraction by combining layers of information. He has made the chemical formula of the molecules in these plants coexist with the vision of distorted images provoked by the hallucinogenic effects of those who consume these plants according to their own testimonies.

Another of the bodies of work of this project consisted of articulating the volume of information compiled during the project's research. Using a conceptual drawing exercise, the artists created a registry combining a group of statistics to geo-reference the data in a cartographic projection system to give shape to maps that describe the perception of this phenomenon in contemporary culture. These sources when merged become vectors, shapes, surfaces, and reliefs, creating new meanings from their interconnections. One of the conceptual objectives of this project is to show the complexity of overlapping the cycles of nature, politics, and industry. These works are a way to create a hyperbole on some ideas that the artists are interested in underlining. And show how these processes shape the cultural environment and directly impact nature.

Ariamna Contino (born 1984) and Alex Hernández (born 1982) live and work in Havana and Madrid. 2004, they graduated from Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro in Havana.

Institutional exhibitions (selection): HALLE 14, Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig (G); Hispanic American Cultural Center, Havana; You Know Who You Are: Recent Acquisitions of Cuban Art from the Jorge M. Pérez Collection, El Espacio 23, Miami; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana; Pan American Art Projects, Miami; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana; Cuban Pavillon, Isola di San Servolo, the 58th Biennale di Venezia; Museum für konkrete Kunst, Ingolstadt (G); National Museum of Fine Art, Havana; Collateral of the 13th Havana Biennial; Contemporary Art Center, Nürnberg; (G) Ludwig Forum Aachen (G); Torrance Art Museum, Torrance; 2016 Ludwig Museum, Koblenz (G); Americas Museum of Washington; Wilfredo Lam Center, Havana; 12th Biennial of Havana; Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana; Factoría Habana, Havana; Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana; Engraving Salon, Development Center of Visual Arts, Havana; Manoir of Cognoy Cultural Center, Geneva; 11th Biennial of Havana, Havana; Cleveland Contemporary Museum of Art, Cleveland; Fundación Ludwig, Havana; Academia de San Alejandro, Havana; Krannert Art Museum, Illinois; New Museum, New York; 10th Biennial of Havana, Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, Havana; Iniva Museum, London; Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, Havana; Rufino Tamayo Museum, Mexico City; Brooklyn Museum, New York;