

LOS CARPINTEROS
Susurro del Palmar - The Whisper of the Palm Grove
June 9 – July 27

Galerie Peter Kilchmann is pleased to announce its third exhibition with Los Carpinteros. Born in Cuba, Dagoberto Rodríguez (b. 1969) and Marco Castillo (b. 1971), who work together as a collaborative art duo since the 1990s, live and work between Havana and Madrid. On view are two new groups of works: large-format bronze sculptures and an interactive, space-filling sound installation. A new series of watercolors complement the exhibition.

Susurro del Palmar (The Whisper of the Palm Grove) is the result of a detailed research into the effects of devastating natural phenomena. The first room shows three bronze-cast tropical plants depicting palm and banana trees in their majestic appearance. Their feather-like tufts are heavily slanted. The leaves as if whipped by a storm and the slim, shimmering trunks bent far forwards.

The title of the exhibition *Susurro del Palmar* comes from a verse by the Cuban songwriter and guitarist Guillermo Portables (b. 1911), famous for his melancholic and lyrical songs. For Los Carpinteros the sentence describes the still quiet wind before a natural disaster. In contrast to their installation *Sala de Juntas*, in which a whole office explodes in an installative snapshot, here the theme is not only devastation. Going a step further the focus is not destruction but the resistance and tenacity of objects that endure the capriciousness of nature. The bronze sculptures convey visually the roar and the boom of an implacable force of nature. Nevertheless, the proud trees are neither uprooted nor appear fragile. Radiating astonishing strength, the Hurricane plants have almost a mythical aura. They become heroes of tenacious resistance and metaphorically stand for the history of a country whose paradisiacal idyll has repeatedly been afflicted by political turbulence and natural disasters. It is the history of prudent endurance, which in spite of phases of deprivation leads to triumph in the long term.

In the second room an interactive sound installation complements the exhibition. Here the visitor encounters a number of small, pastel-colored wall cupboards mounted on the wall just above eye level. Entitled *Alacenas (Closets)*, their unpretentious appearance is reminiscent of the reduced interiors of Cuban households in the 1950s. The paint has faded and the surfaces seem time and weather-worn but each object is completely intact in its original function. A diffuse sound of wind invites the visitor to approach the cupboards and open them, not suspecting that an ear-piercing storm is concealed behind each door. Los Carpinteros thus create a spatial situation in which visitors can enter and become a part of.

Los Carpinteros' oeuvre often entangles the observer in a complex discourse between utopia and dystopia. In *Hurricanes* and *Alacenas* the transformative power and devastation of nature remains unseen and appears to be the last resort against the rapid, modern, economic development of Cuban society. Since the beginning of their collaboration, Los Carpinteros' practice has been permeated by the economic and social transformations of Cuba and their monumental sculptures, installations and large-format works on paper, both in terms of technique and content, tell of a deep interest in innovation, architectonic construction and craftsmanship. However, as the exhibition shows, their works also reflect on the consequences of social-historical themes as well as political and climatic circumstances in an unusual, provocative, playful and poetic way.

A series of new works on paper, a central medium in their practice, was specially created for the exhibition and whose motifs draw on the themes of the works exhibited in the two gallery spaces.

Parallel to the exhibition the monumental sculpture *Torre Acostada*, 2017 will be on view in Zürich-Oerlikon as part of the New North group exhibition curated by Christoph Doswald. The sculpture shows a toppled watchtower. Its physical appearance unblemished, but it is nevertheless disabled. Here too, allusion is made to the political reality of their home country, ironically dissecting symbols of the Cuban system.

Los Carpinteros studied at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) in Havana and have been working together as an artist collective since the 1990s. Their works can be found in the collections of international institutions such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the Tate Modern, London. From Oct. 2017 to Feb. 2018 the Banco de la República, Bogotá presented a retrospective curated by Andrea Pacheco entitled *La cosa esta candela*. Over the last two years a major touring solo exhibition entitled *O Objeto vital* was presented by the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in several locations in Brazil. Further solo exhibitions were held at the MUAC in Mexico City and at the Museum Folkwang in Essen. In Dec. 2015 the Victoria and Albert Museum, London opened a permanent exhibition with a large-scale sculpture entitled *Globe*. From Sept. to Nov. 2018 Los Carpinteros will participate at the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea.