

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST (EXPANDED)

Francis Alÿs

Una casa como Dios manda, 2000

Reproduction of original drawings

The work of Francis Alÿs is very close to urban iconography and operates on the basis of the passerby's experience of the city. On this occasion, the passerby, like Baudelaire's flâneur, is at the center of a work titled *Una casa como Dios manda*. The poetic imagery of Alÿs's work is present in this series of drawings and invites the interpretation of the spectator ("make sense who may"). His oneiric idea of the ideal house is materialized in the form of a somewhat monastic dwelling, at the center of which we find the "room of the lost steps." And also in another model—in which the monastic aspect is also manifest but more in reference to its size than to its design—that clearly points in the direction of the nomadic condition of the passerby, and which resembles a hybrid between a cell and a cupboard. The work of Alÿs is very related to the Situationist experiences of the 1950s and 1960s, and more than presenting utopia as a project of transcendental aspirations, seems to find it in wandering the streets, in the experience of the city. It speaks of a utopia that is only consolidated space of experience.

Carla Arocha

Hogar Espacioso, 2000

Digital print

Carla Arocha's ironic proposal for a "spacious home" is a critique of public housing policies, especially in third world or developing countries. In this work, she makes a direct reference to "disaster area" solutions drafted by the Venezuelan government during natural catastrophes, which, by the way, are almost invariably caused by heavy rains and the subsequent floods that occur. The camouflage print and red handle of her "parasol house" are also direct allusions to the military disguise that the country's recent "revolution" has adopted.

Atelier van Lieshout

Untitled (Living Units), 1998

Reproduction

Untitled (Kitchen), 1998

Reproduction

The Rotterdam collaborative Atelier van Lieshout is known by their "capsule" designs that seem to be hybrids between caravans, office units, sensory deprivation chambers, and portable toilet booths. More than articulating a discourse on the architectural hybrid, Atelier van Lieshout's work is oriented towards creating "container sculptures" that simultaneously make reference to popular culture and to the tradition of modern art. These are sculptures that recall the failed utopias of Futurism. The reference to popular culture, especially B-movies, takes Atelier van Lieshout's work beyond parody and towards a discourse on the cultural implications of the relations between art and economy. For this exhibition, we have reproduced two drawings that correspond to a housing development that the group is presently building on the outskirts of Rotterdam. This "commune", called AVL Ville, is the headquarters of a fictitious terrorist group, a sort of movie set to be inhabited by the members of the Atelier. Rotterdam is a city with an important tradition of working class housing and they take this tradition to transform it into a sculptural proposal, more than an architectural one, that looks ironically on the utopian aspirations of modernity.

Anna Best in collaboration with Gemma Nesbitt

Anti-Lonely House, 2000

Ink on paper and video

Anna Best is a British artist whose performative work engages the community's and the spectator's active participation in the sense that they become the real performers. Her works include actions in bingo clubs, a festival of lies, a wedding in the as-of-then unfinished Tate Modern building, and the staging of a dance performance in a gas station. On this occasion, the artist has invited her mother to collaborate on the project for this exhibition. The *Anti-Lonely House* is a communal living model that addresses the social needs of senior citizens, but also single and immigrant workers, according to the artist's mother's statements in the video interview conducted by Best. It also evokes the garden city designs of Ebenezer Howard in nineteenth century industrial England. Curiously though, the plan of this house coincides exactly with that of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon design for prisons. The elevation, on the other hand, speaks of an entirely different use, stressing the discursive properties of the different types of architectural rendering.

Stefan Bruggemann

Everybody is Thinking Outside This Room, 2001

Vinyl lettering

Mariana Bunimov

Churuata-Trailer, 2000

Ink on paper

The work of Mariana Bunimov makes a particular emphasis on the hybrid. For *Demonstration Room: Ideal House*, the artist has "designed" a house titled *Churuata-Trailer* that combines the architectural typologies of Amazonian indigenous communal huts and American trailer homes. It is also a merging of sets of binary oppositions, such as communal and static housing vs. one-family mobile homes, pre-Hispanic culture vs. vernacular contemporary American culture. It is a bizarre and uncanny architecture in which the irrationality of its structure finds an echo in the irrational and barely feasible aspects of utopian projects.

Minerva Cuevas

Home Sweet Home, 2000

Digital print of website

Minerva Cuevas proposes a "living space" in which the boundaries between public and private, domestic and corporate spaces are erased. This is accomplished through the design of a house made up of the non-places of transit and consumerism, such as a McDonald's eating area, the waiting room of an airport, office toilets, a Sears furniture showroom, etc. With this work, Minerva Cuevas points towards the preeminence of a public and corporate image in a world that increasingly tends towards globalization and makes a critique, via architectural design, of the decrease in individual differences, characteristic of these spaces, which tend to homogenize the experience of "place." For Cuevas, the notion of "ideal" takes the form of a critique through a dystopian vision of globalized and consumer societies, taken to an extreme. It is also an explicit reference to the non-place as representative of the contemporary sense of alienation brought about by space.

Stan Douglas

Project material for the construction of the set for *Win, Place or Show*, 1999
Ink on paper

Win, Place or Show is a video installation that, like most of Stan Douglas's work, speaks of the failure of modern utopias. The film is set in a fictitious housing project for single male workers in Vancouver during the early 1960s. The apartment's decorations and furnishings, typical of the time, resemble what we are now accustomed to seeing in magazines like *Wallpaper*, that have taken modernist aesthetics and converted it into an iconic fetish to the extent of emptying it of its utopian and social content. The work of Stan Douglas makes a critique directed in this sense. On this occasion, the artist has presented some of the project material that he used for the construction of the set for *Win, Place or Show*. These plans correspond to a real housing project projected for Vancouver in the late fifties that was never built, another allusion to the impossibility of concretization of utopian aspirations. The video and these drawings are an explicit critique of a socially-oriented architecture that reflects the urban policies of modernism, and in particular the influence of the ideas of architects such as Le Corbusier, an architecture that has been come to be catalogued as an "architecture of cruelty."

José Gabriel Fernández

Untitled, 2000
Wood

José Gabriel Fernández takes up one of the elements present in his recent body of work, the pattern of the bullfighter's cape, in order to allude to a space that is molded and projected according to the more immediate needs of shelter and comfort required by the human body. The shape of this cape is abstracted so as to make it unrecognizable; it resembles the reinforced concrete structures of 1950s architecture, such as those of Pier Luigi Nervi and Eero Saarinen. An architecture that made a departure from the "less is more" aesthetics to imbue its concrete structures with an apparent lightness that represented the technological utopian ideals of the "societies of the future."

Carlos Garaicoa

Acerca de la construcción de la verdadera Torre de Babel, 1996
Digital prints

Carlos Garaicoa employs architecture to enunciate a subtle but, at the same time, incisive critique of totalitarian regimes, especially of "third world" ones. Two architectural and allegorical figures are particularly important in his work: the monument and the ruin. Allegory, and its essential ambiguity, is the operation through which Garaicoa articulates a critique of certain political and economic systems. *Acerca de la Construcción de la Verdadera Torre de Babel* projects over the structure of a building in the Habana Vieja, an architecture that expresses the utopian aspirations that originally animated the Cuban revolution. Over the actual edifice, the artist built a precarious wooden structure, a sort of "useless scaffolding." This structure, which, in the drawing, contrasts with the projection of a clean and monumental architecture, is representative of the unfulfilled promises of the revolution. Garaicoa's work is a commentary about the failure of utopian undertakings; *Acerca de la construcción de la verdadera Torre de Babel* seems to say that all that remains of these utopian "projections" are the ruins of an ideology.

Alexander Gerdel

Untitled, 2000
Video, 15:00 min.

The "shanty" is a recurring theme in the work of Alexander Gerdel, who resorts to this marginal, peripheral architectonic figure—excluded from official histories—to analyze the idiosyncrasy of a country and also to address the issue of its cultural identity. The shanty is the emblematic housing unit of the third world, spawned by poverty and population density. It is, at the same time, a model of primordial shelter—the hut—but also a construction that reflects many ideas regarding utopia, such as the abolition of private property and the marginality implicit in the very notion of isolation proposed by Thomas More's *Utopia*. On the other hand, the shanty is a sort of dystopian reification of the utopian desire to design a type of house that would somehow exert an influence on the psychological well-being of its inhabitants, specifically the attempts of modern architecture in this direction, such as Le Corbusier's Unités d'Habitation and the Bauhaus and De Stijl experiments with housing. It is the anathema of modern urbanism's proposals. In this sense, the shanty is the place where the asynchrony between the third world and modernizing processes is materialized.

Liam Gillick

Literally No Place, 2000

Wall painting, digital prints, and text

Liam Gillick works with architecture and space. Many of his installations are site-specific interventions in the places where he exhibits, in which he alters certain architectural elements and adds others to the exhibition space. For *Demonstration Room: Ideal House*, and taking into consideration our reference to the demonstration room/architecture studio space, the artist proposed a mural foyer painting for a corporate or office space. This mural has been placed in the actual reception space of Apex. The pattern, which is depicted in the wall painting, could be interpreted as a reference to the influence that architectural space has on behavior and how it can be used to regulate social conduct (both in residential or community situations as in corporate ones). Read in terms of his text titled *Literally No Place*, it also refers us to a labyrinthine prison-like architecture that fosters repression. But unlike the panopticon, in which a central authority watches over the others, this space effectuates repression via the surveillance that each inhabitant of the space performs on his peers. It is a spatial allusion to utopian communities such as the one portrayed in B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*.

Dan Graham

Project for *Video Projection Outside Home*, 1978

Digital print

Dan Graham's work is heterogeneous and takes on various forms: installation, drawing, text, video, sculpture, model, music, and project all coexist in his work. Architecture is the discursive axis of a body of work that, since the sixties, has been fundamental to the conceptually-oriented practice of contemporary art. The suburban house, and its utopian origins in the Garden Cities of Ebenezer Howard in nineteenth century industrial England, is a recurring theme in Dan Graham's work. It has been exhaustively analyzed throughout his work but most compellingly in *Homes for America* (1967). The idea underlying the project for *Video Projection Outside Home* (1978) was to reinsert into the public sphere something as public as television programming, but with the particularity that it was a specific family's choice of television programs. What was seen by the passerby on the large screen outside the house was whatever was seen in the intimacy of the "den" or "family room." This project merges several of Graham's interests, such as the utopian aspect of suburban housing, the integration of public and private spaces, and vernacular American culture as a sub-product of an "Adamic utopianism" that animated a great part of the "colonization" of the country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Jeanne van Heeswijk

Room With a View, 1993–2000

Mixed media

Jeanne van Heeswijk posits the museum as the ideal domestic space. Her installation *Room with a View* is a traveling room of sorts that she installs for her exhibitions and that has different functions (domestic or working ones) depending on the specificities of each venue. Given the projective nature of this exhibition, van Heeswijk proposed to exhibit a record of her past experiences with *Room With a View* as well as the "kit boxes" she has edited to document the several installations of the room. The work of van Heeswijk is inscribed within an artistic practice that takes the museum not only as an exhibition space but as one for dynamic social interaction, capable of generating social change, a concept that descends from the utopian avant-garde's ideas and which, in that sense, is very close to El Lissitzky's proposal for the *Demonstration Room* and the later theories elaborated on it by Alexander Dorner.

José Antonio Hernández-Diez

Untitled, 2000

Classified newspaper ads

José Antonio Hernández-Diez proposes an exercise in representation that refers to other works in the exhibition. His project for an "ideal house" consists of a series of ads in local newspapers in which he either solicits or offers the "houses" proposed by some of the artists for the show. He thus projects into the public sphere his own and others' desires for an "ideal house." The work of Hernández-Diez also evokes the desire of the "ideal" that is present in everyday things such as these ads that begin with "wanted" or that offer "spectacular" and "once in a lifetime" opportunities. Moreover, in making the reference to other pieces in the exhibition, the artist performs a double operation of representation and frames the "ideals" of the other artists within the limits of the concrete, the quotidian, and the possible.

Gabriel Kuri

Gesamtkunstwerk, 2000

Ink on paper

Gabriel Kuri presents a set of instructions for the elaboration of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*/House. This set of instructions refers also to our highly technological society and to the computer operations that permeate our everyday activities, such as clicking, closing, and opening windows or virtual spaces.

Diana López

Un Pair of Bluejeans and \$25,000 in My Pocket, 2000

Ink on paper, 11 x 8 1/2 in.

Diana López denies the concrete and real possibility of an "ideal house." For López, the ideal house is only that: an idea that exists exclusively within the realm of representation. She takes the concept of representation even further in her denial of any iconic representation of a tangible object or edifice, situating it within the text. It is a work that also speaks of the shift from a sedentary condition to a nomadic one, which changes and is conditioned by market values.

Mauricio Lupini

Habitat, 2000

Digital prints

Penetrable Diorama with Exotic Landscapes, 2001–02
Cut geography books and silicon glue

The museum's modes of representation—as expressed in its collections, selection, classification, and exhibition mechanisms—are some of the ideas present in the work of Mauricio Lupini. These images, belonging to the series titled *Habitats*, form part of a "collection" of photographs taken in science museums where different types of environments are built to exhibit specimens—live or desiccated—of the world's fauna and flora. These simulated spaces, even though some of them may reproduce ideal life conditions for the specimens, partake of human avidity of accumulating things and spaces. Museum dioramas, and the objects exhibited in them, illustrate the idea of scientific progress proposed by the encyclopedic thought of the Enlightenment. In this sense, Lupini's work seems to point acutely at the materialist and progressive notion that even natural environments can be cultural constructs.

Rita McBride

Mid-rise

Birdcage and acrylic

The work of Rita McBride proposes a critique of modernity, or rather, of its sub-products. Her work refers to architecture and makes an ironical comment on the utopian aspirations of modernism via her small-scale sculptural reproductions of the residual spaces and constructions of contemporary urban landscape. Her sculpture titled *Mid-rise* makes specific reference to the nondescript corporate suburban architecture that is found all over the United States. This little "glass box," a far cry from Mies van der Rohe's or Gordon Bunshaft's modernist high-rises, is a bird cage covered with a faux curtain wall which eloquently conveys the artist's ideas on the failure of modernist utopia's face, to a machine-age aesthetics of industrial and massive reproduction of commodities proper to post-industrial societies.

Carlos Julio Molina

Apartamento 21, 2000

Drawing on wall

The work of Carlos Julio Molina concentrates on the iconic figures of popular culture in order to re-contextualize them in the gallery or museum space. The artist has, on previous occasions, cast into his work television characters like Hulk, Mr. T, Arnold (from *Diff'rent Strokes*), Rambo, and others. On this occasion, the face of salsa musician Hector Lavoe serves as model for the plan of an ideal house in the work titled *Apartamento 21*, after a song by Willie Colón. According to the artist, this house would have all the facilities and amenities that salsa musicians require: a long table with a mirror top for serving cocaine, rooms for smoking pot and for making out with groupies, a small cannabis plantation in the terrace, a diving board coming out of the main window, etc. In the work of Molina, the notion of "ideal" can be found in the recuperation of these show-business characters (all of them with a story of failure and descent from their "star" status). In this sense, this work is another addition that the artist has made to his "pantheon" of failures in the museum space.

Ernesto Neto

Study for Nude Plasmic, 2000

Digital print

In Ernesto Neto's work, nature's round and soft forms coexist with the rational discourse of constructivism. Coming from the Brazilian neo-concrete tradition, and especially influenced by Lygia Clark's experiments with therapy, Ernesto Neto makes a "gestalt"-oriented work that invites the senses and in which the figure of the maternal womb is a recurring one. *Study for Nude Plasmic* is a digital rendering for one of his penetrable installations in which the public becomes part of the work that, in turn, exists in terms of the sensory experience of the spectator. In regard to the specific ideas on architectural space, Neto's installations could also refer to some of Archigram's utopian designs, such as the "cushicle" or the "suitaloon," or to media culture icons such as the "boy in the bubble." They also allude to a type of primordial architecture that reproduces the essential conditions present in the maternal womb.

Claudio Perna

Casa, 1975

Gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 in.

Claudio Perna, who died in 1997, is one of the most significant and prolific Venezuelan conceptual artists of the seventies. In his work, the disciplines of cartography and geography coexist with photographic representation and conceptual proposals. The choice of this work, since it was not a submitted proposal, is animated by Perna's continued questioning of visual representations. In this work, he photographs an isolated shanty detached from the larger and more general urban context of the shantytown, and writes the word "Casa" (house) on the ground in front of it. This is a direct allusion to the primitive hut and its utopian overtones which decontextualizes the shanty from its associations of poverty and marginality, restoring once again its meaning as the primordial shelter.

Proyecto Incidental

Home Sweet Home, 2000

Mixed media

Paul Ramírez-Jonas

1968 Scale Model, 2000

Mixed media

Paul Ramírez-Jonas addresses the issue of utopia through the reference to a particularly utopian year—1968. More than proposing a house, he alludes to a system of representation—in this case, a model of the solar system arranged to correspond to a given month of that year. In his scale model of 1968, the artist has substituted the planets for small vegetables and fruits that must remain in place throughout the duration of the show, evidencing the process of decomposition and decay that is natural to every living being, and which clearly refers also to one of the failures of utopian scientific thought—that of preserving life eternally. This work could function as a metaphor for the whole exhibition as a living organism—a reference to El Lissitzky's ideas about the Demonstration Room—and points towards the notion of process which is very present in all the works in the exhibition.

Juan Carlos Rodríguez

Karin Schneider

Coca-Cola House, 2000

Mixed media

Karin Schneider's *Coca-Cola House* is a "refrigerated" version of Philip Johnson's Glass House. The Miesian dictum of "less is more" was materialized in this house, clearly influenced by van der Rohe's earlier Farnsworth house. However, Johnson, decades later, seemed to have forgotten modernism and became one of the most prominent advocates of post-modernist architecture with his AT&T Building, crowned with a Chippendale style frontispiece. Schneider's inclusion of the Coca-Cola can symbolizes this change in ideology, not only in Johnson's architecture, but also related to modernism in the United States, which her work suggests it's being doomed to only refrigerate the Coke can, an icon of American popular culture. This work makes a very particular critique of modernism in the United States, and points towards a loss of utopian content in architectural design and a shift towards the iconic. But there is also a subtle critique of modernism as related to American culture from the perspective of Latin America in the sense that the image of Coca-Cola has been a recurring icon in the conceptual work of Latin American artists. Cildo Meireles and Antonio Caro, in the 1960s and 1970s, made a critique of American "cultural imperialism" by subverting the image and distribution mechanism of Coca-Cola. Another aspect of Schneider's work is that she posits the house in the realm of feminine stereotypes and turns it into a household artifact in order to reconfigure a "new domestic landscape."

Teresa Serrano

Mi Casa Soy Yo, 2002
Video, 7:00 min.

Javier Téllez

LC/4 R-Machine, 2001
Plywood crate, Le Corbusier chaise lounge, and video monitor

Meyer Vaisman

The World is Yours, 2000
Digitally printed stills from Brian de Palma's *Scarface*

For Meyer Vaisman, the ideal house is a two-family residence inspired in the noses of Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino in Brian de Palma's film *Scarface*. This work makes clear allusions to the aesthetics of post-modern architecture in the 1980s, especially that of Miami, which reeked of nouveau riche taste, money laundering, and the glamour of drug trafficking, superbly depicted in de Palma's film and in the television series *Miami Vice*. Vaisman's work also speaks of an architecture that posited its discursivity upon the icon and its representation. In this sense, we witnessed the Miami of the 1980s proliferating with luxurious pink homes, curved walls, organic forms, and an excess of glass brick, which portrayed the personality and whims of its inhabitants. They were ostentatious houses that shone with the luster of newly acquired wealth. This work could also be read as a commentary on the utopian aspirations (failed ones, as every utopian undertaking is) of an architecture which sought to detach itself from the programmatic rationalism of modernism in order to retrieve the textual and narrative sense of the building.

Sergio Vega

Axis del cuerpo transurbano, 2000
Text and reproduction of original drawing

Sergio Vega presents a drawing and a poetic text written to paraphrase the Borgian (as in Jorge Luis Borges) tradition of Latin American fantastic realism. He thus integrates the literary element into the conception of

the work, be it a house, a painting, or a text. His work elaborates a discourse on the ontological and metaphysical implications of the production of the work of art.