

CARLOS BETANCOURT

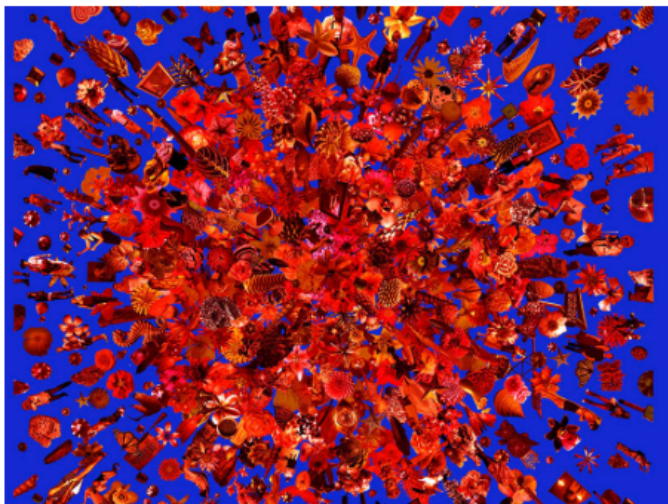
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VENICE PROJECTS

Venice, Italy. June 2012— **Carlos Betancourt's** most recent artworks will be on exhibit at the prestigious Venice Projects gallery in Venice, Italy. This will be the first solo exhibit of the artist in the city of Venice. The exhibition, consisting primarily of new photo-collages and sculptural artworks will also include the first glass artworks created by the artist and produced in conjunction with Murano's Berengo Studio, renowned for the GLASSTRESS exhibits. The opening of the exhibit will take place August 29th, 2012 starting at 18.00/6.00 pm. The artist will be attending the opening. The exhibit coincides with the opening of the Venice Film Festival and the Venice Architectural Biennial.

The exhibition at Venice Projects, titled *Cabinet of Wonders: Ornament and Obsession* was curated by Mariangela Capuzzo and Marco Berengo. A color catalog and essay is available upon request.

Carlos Betancourt's recent artworks continue his exploration into the functions of memory. Of this and in relationship to Venice, the artist says: "I have been traveling to Venice for at least twenty years now because I am attracted to of its rapport with the sea, as well as its romantic history of cultural fusion, appropriations, longing, nostalgia, melancholy, ornamentation, decay, and the contradictions of the passage of time. Like similar parallels in my Caribbean and Miami upbringing, definite has had definite influence in my artwork and it is a treat to be exhibiting here".

Always heterogeneous and diverse, multi-racial, multi-lingual, trans-cultural, the Caribbean culture is a vast kaleidoscope of complexity and variety that has been in the forefront of cultural fusion ahead of the digital age. After fifteen years of living in Puerto Rico, the artist's move to Miami in 1981 helped emphasized his quest for a mutant identity as well as develop a longing for blending and mixing. His artistic proposal includes meticulous accumulations and outlandish settings surrounded by absurd props that may appear at first glance as nonsense elements; yet these build up to create a complex, **new and vibrant cosmogony that is both beautiful and intellectually challenging, exploring a mixture of social identities and stereotypes ultimately linked to memory.** Betancourt's artworks are anything but conventional and have received lots of interest because of their exploration of fusion as a metaphor for multicultural overload as well as his constant interest in using and developing new techniques and materials.

The artist's photo-collages, assemblages and sculptures challenge the exciting techniques he explores. ***"It is in my nature to allow spontaneity so that I can invent."*** he says. His artworks are eccentric, rich and provocative. And in an ongoing quest to discover and convey his transcaribbean identity, Betancourt places himself as the master of ceremonies. The preference for the accumulation, the glossy surface, the exaggeration and nostalgic feeling of his artwork can be defined as Romantic Pop, but his artwork may defy current classification, challenging pre-conceived notions of art. **Betancourt pushes the boundaries of personal as well as social identities creating images that serve most of all as a ritual of remembrance, exploring and celebrating the continuous struggles between time, man, and nature.**

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Artist Carlos Betancourt (1966) was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In 1981 he moved to Miami Beach, Florida. Mr. Betancourt's artworks are part of public collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, the Miami Art Museum, the San Antonio Museum of Art in Texas, the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach, Museo de Arte Ponce, Puerto Rico, the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, the McNay Art Museum San Antonio, Texas, the Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno in the Canary Islands, etc. Mr. Betancourt's artworks have been included in multiple solo and group exhibits as well as art fairs such as Art Basel and Arco. He is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the Florida Department of State Millennium Cultural Recognition Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, and the Miami Beach Arts Council Grant. He has been awarded commissions to create artworks for various Art in Public Places programs. Betancourt was co-founder of *801 Projects*, an arts studio center that provided studio space for visual artists based in Miami. He currently keeps a studio in Miami while also working from various places around the world.

ABOUT VENICE PROJECT AND BERENGO STUDIOS

Venice Projects, located at *Dorsoduro 868, 30123, Venezia* promotes internationally recognized contemporary artists who have been in the Venice Biennale, or artists who have achieved similar stature, exhibiting their artwork and providing some with the opportunity to express their creativity in a new medium, glass. Through its cultural planning activities, and site specific projects, Venice Projects develops educational opportunities for dialogue and experimentation in the use of glass in contemporary art. To exemplify its mission, Venice Projects and Berengo Studio (Fondamenta Vetrai 109/a 30141 Murano, Venice, Italy) produces the prestigious exhibit *GLASSTRESS*, a travelling exhibition spreading the knowledge of contemporary art in glass worldwide that has included artworks from artists such as Jaume Plenza, Fred Wilson and Jean Michel Othoniel amongst others. The gallery is located in Dorsoduro, a couple of meters from the Peggy Guggenheim Museum.
