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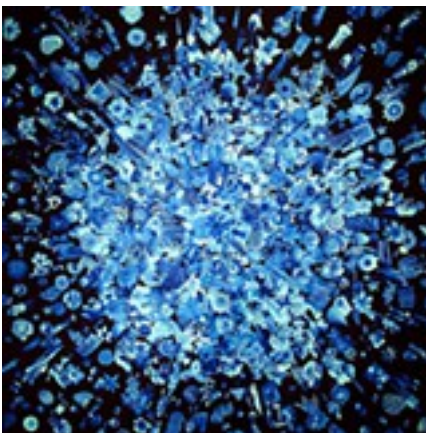
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# Works by Jason Leinwand, Lindsay Kane, Rachel DeTrinis and Carlos Betancourt



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Looking at Carlos Betancourt's work can be like stepping through the looking glass: It all seems familiar yet skewed in unlikely ways. In art as in life, context is everything, but here we are strangers in a strange land of exotic flora and preposterous kitsch where everything makes a bold statement — even if that statement has been digitally encrypted as decorously exotic babble. Cynics might say that sounds a bit like Miami, and they would be right. Betancourt was born in Puerto Rico of Cuban parentage but has lived in Miami since 1981, so it should come as no surprise that his work suggests a nexus where Carmen Miranda and Tito Puente meet Jeff Koons and Lady Gaga. Miami is where New York meets the tropics, and Betancourt evokes a loopy new strand of aesthetic DNA. Large, kaleidoscopic photomontages like *Re-Collections* (pictured) mingle flowers, butterflies, starfish and fruit with candy, beads and action figures in explosive cornucopias of pop-cultural delirium. His sculptures are neoclassical columns that might evoke the gravitas of ancient Rome were they not festooned with bananas, pineapples, grapes and bunches of other stuff that look like leftovers from Miranda's crazy carioca hats. In these works, Betancourt takes the typically tart conceptual art memes of appropriation and deconstruction to giddy new levels of tropical extravagance.

More kaleidoscopic compositions appear in Jason Leinwand's meticulous paintings at the Front. Based on G.I. Gurdjieff's metaphysics, and psychedelic in tone and content, they also employ pop-cultural references such as UFOs and hearts and skulls in tattoo-like abandon to produce images that are seriously mystical yet also zany, recalling both the Aleister Crowley tarot deck and old Grateful Dead album jackets. The kitsch may conflict with the metaphysics, but Brooklyn-based Leinwand is serious, and the intensity he puts into his work augurs well for its future evolution. — *D. Eric Bookhardt*

**Mine Eyes: Works by Jason Leinwand, Lindsay Kane and Rachel DeTrinis**

**Through March 6**

**The Front, 4100 St. Claude Ave., 920-3980; [www.nolafront.org](http://www.nolafront.org)**

**Portrait of a Garden: Photomontages and Sculpture by Carlos Betancourt**

**Through March 20**

**Heriard-Cimino Gallery, 440 Julia St., 525-7300; [www.heriard-cimino.com](http://www.heriard-cimino.com)**

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