



AMERICAN DREAM

3.12.04 - 4.24.04 The Olga M. & Carlos Saladrigas Gallery The Ignatian Center For The Arts

AMERICAN DREAM

curated by Pedro Vizcaino

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The Olga M. & Carlos Saladrigas Gallery **Julio Antonio**

The Ignatian Center For The Arts **Carlos Betancourt**

Belen Jesuit Preparatory School **Silvia Gai**

500 SW 127 Ave. Miami, FL 33184 **Carlos García**

For more info. call 305.223.8600 **Sergio García**

Carlos Luna

Ferrán Martín

Federico Uribe

Pedro Vizcaíno

“Dreams are dreams,” says the old Spanish proverb; its import so matter-of-fact that there’s is no way out of it. Then came the 20th century and we all felt we had to dream a different world to make this one better. Following years of despair, we had no choice but to equate the idea of dream to that of a hope.

For many, America became that hope. More than a name, a concept, an emblem, a piece of land, the promise of a better future or a life-style, the American dream happens differently to different people. If so, this show means more than what we see in these works. The art reflects a moment in these artist’s lives related to a place where dreams happen and the geography is inconsequential, because one can always dream a place one has never been to.

On the other hand, many people live exiled from their own land. A kind of self-exile happening in the “America of our dreams.” Turn that metaphor on its head and this show begins to make sense. After all, making art is like working with dreams. And though it seems a bit optimistic to take America for a dream, some of these images are anything but optimistic. It’s in that sense of ambivalence that dreams happen and to that idea of America that these artists travel.

Julio Antonio’s art blends primitive totem-like figuration with visceral

political cartooning. One finds anecdotal tableaux—as if the works were illustrated stories of the artist and his time. Infused with male ennui, sin, and nostalgic guilt, Antonio’s images reflect social and political views in a way that relates to a generally pervasive and unending Latin-American political affliction, ours.

As Carlos Betancourt, Da Vinci wrote backwards, but he didn’t have the color of the Caribbean to play with. Betancourt’s color saturates everything (as if nature was not enough). See his symbols and text on human bodies: the writing over the faces, hands, arms and abdomens. A lost language, when family and religion coalesced in a better world, a noble aim of transforming human identity through images of ecstasy and sacrifice.

Some hate anything modern. Pedro Vizcaíno takes us into a gentler side of the modern world where airplanes, and taxis and trains come to life. These anthropomorphic machines speak a language alien to our day and age. A bit Expressionist, a bit scribbling, a bit cartoon, they resemble crazy artifacts longing to make friends with us. This is not the sugar gloss or plain stupid we find so often in today’s pop references. Vizcaíno’s images are bittersweet. In his hands man-made machines exhibits an odd and forgiving innocence.

Have you seen an art that happens frantically, where honesty means more than protocol? Sergio García's paintings are self-destructive to the point where some of the canvases have literally been slashed and stitched back together. See conflicting moments of humanity, brought forth with a sense of urgency, brutality, and carelessness. Enjoy García's nervous scribbling untroubled by color scheme. Dark in mood but truer to its essence, I find his delicate penmanship conveying subtler human marks.

Mix the horse, roosters, bulls, a bit of Miro's Cubism, the Cuban *güajiro* and you get Carlos Luna. His images have a Baroque quality that turns life in the Cuban country site into poetry. See jealousy and romance, the ups and downs of life amidst the occasional idle pondering under the shade of a big tree while smoking a cigar. Luna's art is like music, with *clave* and *son montuno*. A romantic who longs for a truer essence of the country, but more so, this is art about life itself.

Isn't knitting a sort of human technology? Silvia Gai's art is an expert at producing embroidered volumes that defy definition. By reviving forgotten practices, Gai's art goes against the grain. Who would, after the Industrial Revolution, indulge in wasting time? It pays to get the pleasure of seeing soft, delicate cell forms and tissues. Or else, abnormal growths or webs... the idea of insect life capturing before killing and feeding.

Carlos García's paintings are metaphysical and expressionist. It's a

rare mix that he achieves because he paints abstraction to bring back the concrete. García is a sort of Caribbean Rothko—with a similar pain and the courage to show it with modesty. And behind his emotional monochromatic expanse of color we find sparse meaningful traces: García's signs, too personal a signature; like the vestige of gone but indelible human presence.

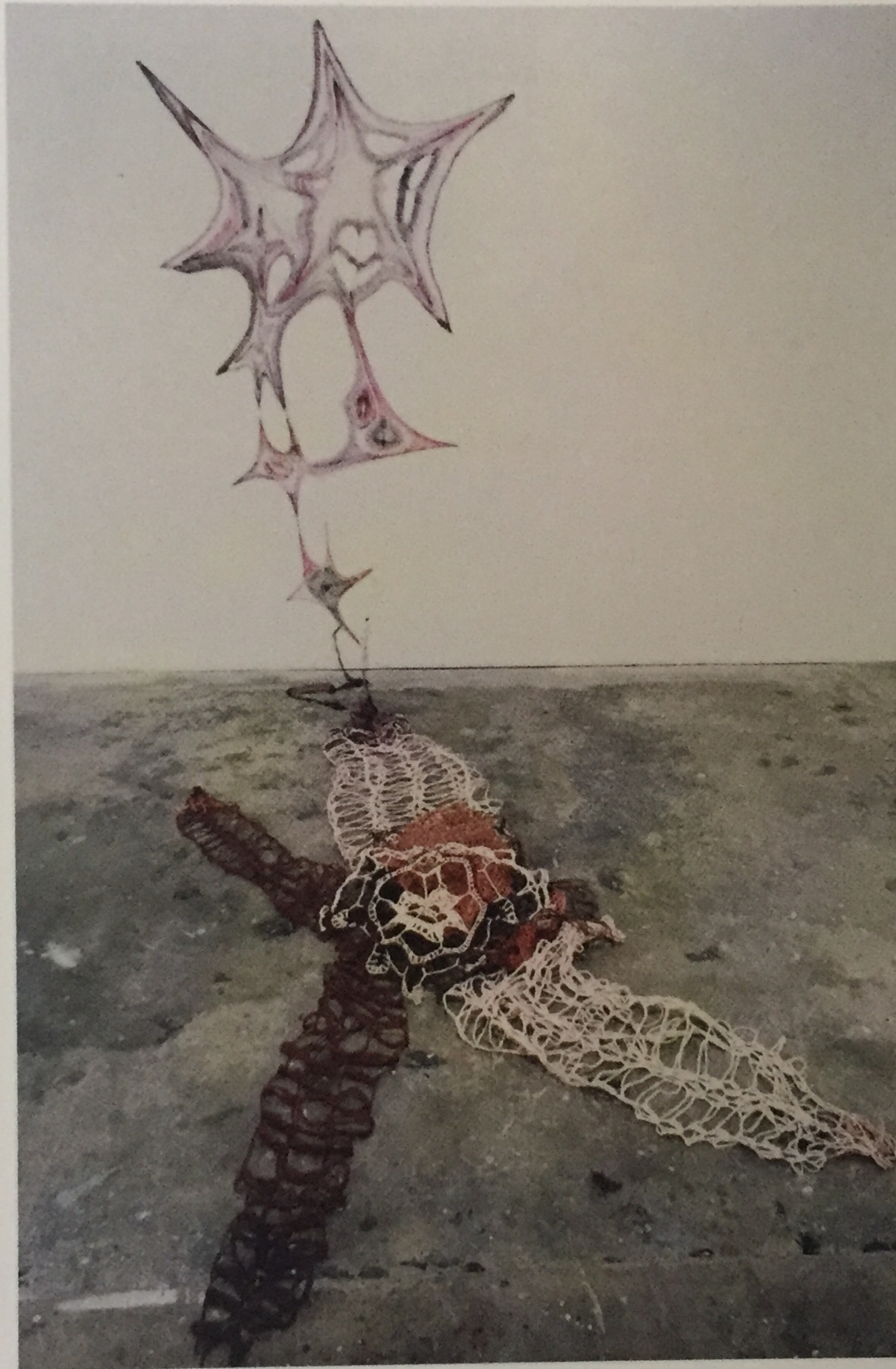
More than anything, Colombian Federico Uribe loves to trick our vision. What to expect from an artist that build an artificial garden made up with shovels? Uribe can create the expressive qualities of a Van Gogh with color pencils glued to the canvas. In a way, his pieces are also sculptures. More so, they are bric-a-brac taken from other utensils, particularly his torsos, invested with the imperative of social norms. It's here that Uribe touches our Latin American chauvinism with wit and irony.

Whether realizing a foodstuff project, being Mirror Box Man, acting as performer, sculptor, impossible architect, or assembling a weird cabinet of curiosities Ferrán Martín is a trickster who mixes anything anytime under his criteria of controlled absurdity, which yields important discoveries we all partake in with a bit of amusement—though he gets the last laugh. Martín goes on finding and regaining truths and candor for all of us.

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Carlos Betancourt Foto performance in San Antonio, 2003 Durst Lambda digital prints on plexiglass



Silvia Gai

Cnidario rosa con corte 3, 2001

Crochet, glue & pigments



Carlos García

A los cuatro vientos, 2003

Acrylic on Linen



Sergio García

Zombie-Man, 2000

Acrylic & oil on canvas

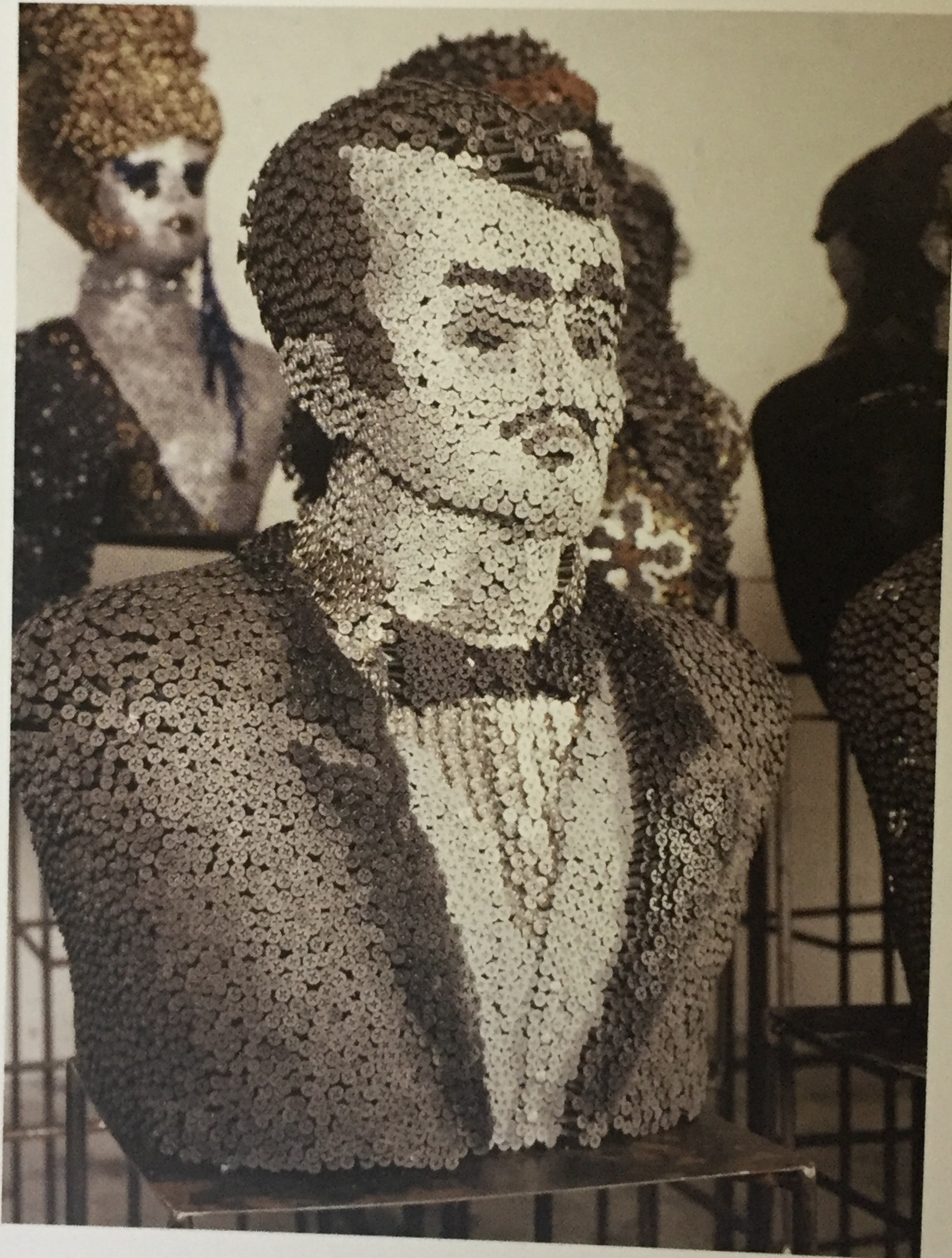




Ferrán Martín

Le Modulor 2, 2001 to present

Quick time movie

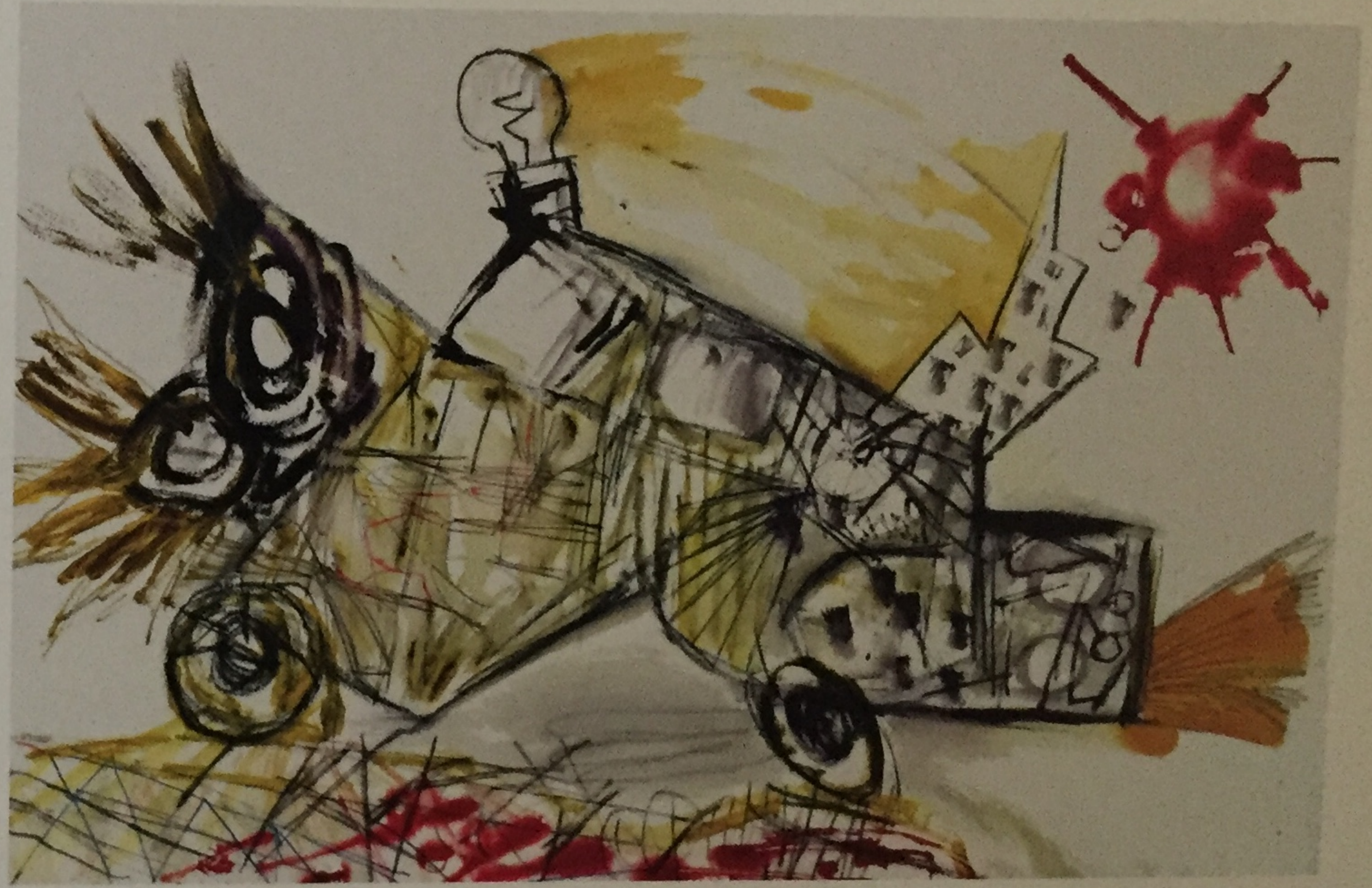


Federico Uribe

Groom, 2003

Screws

From the series: Every body gets screwed



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