

Press release

ARIAMNA CONTINO & ALEX HERNÁNDEZ
Militancy Aesthetics

Opening: Thursday, 6th of October 2016, 7 pm
Duration of the exhibition: 7th of October – 19th of November 2016

In the exhibition *Militancy Aesthetics* Galerie Andreas Binder shows for the first time works by the Cuban artists **Ariamna Contino** and **Alex Hernández**, who already were part of this year's group exhibition *Cuba Libre* at the Museum in Koblenz as well as the Havana Biennial in Cuba.

In their collaborative work series, which is likewise called *Militancy Aesthetics*, **Ariamna Contino** and **Alex Hernández** refer to medially spread material that is accessible to everybody. Topics include sociopolitically relevant issues such as drug trafficking, migration, gun possession or homicide crimes. By transforming these geometrically abstract models into aesthetic, two-dimensional artworks they address the relation between the visual arts and its social function – and simultaneously also the ambiguity between ethics and aesthetics.

Ariamna Contino's series *Relicario*, which centers on pistols embellished by diamonds and golden lettering, also seizes the militant potential in aesthetics by translating the actual aestheticization of murder weapons as decorative accessories into autonomous artworks. They hence turn into symbols of the abuse of art in society. The artist thus highlights the strong connection between social patterns and their aesthetic surface, deconstructing this symbiosis so to speak through the formal act of artistic reprocessing.

The technique of paper cutting and the overlapping of countless layers of paper further amplifies the intention of subversion, the cracking open of a seemingly coherent surface, making visible the multifacetedness of aesthetics and its social relevance.

Alex Hernández' series *Feng Shui* has a similar concept. He also uses the "Oval Office" of the American President as a key symbol for political power and thereby criticizes the state's instrumentalization of aesthetic expression as a tool to influence social developments.

This clear conceptual focus of the works of **Ariamna Contino** and **Alex Hernández** puts *Militancy Aesthetics* in line with a form of art that follows the art theoretical as well as political discourse; art itself becomes the ornamental surface and site on which the fight between formal aesthetics and an aesthetic sense of beauty takes place.

Ariamna Contino (born 1984) and Alex Hernández (born 1982) live and work in Havana, Cuba. In 2004 they graduated from the Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro in Havana. National and international exhibitions (selection):

Alex Hernández: 2016 Cuba Libre, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz; Americas Museum of Washington, USA; Rogue Space Chelsea, New York; Wifredo Lam Center, Havana; 2015 Octavia Art Gallery, New Orleans, USA; Gallery Veerbeek van Dyck, Antwerp; 12th Biennial of Havana; Gallery Havana, Havana; 2013 La Galería Cubana, Boston, USA; 2012 11th Biennial of Havana, Havana; 2011 Cleveland Contemporary Museum of Art, Cleveland, USA; Art 12 Gallery, Antwerp; 2009 Krannert Art Museum, Illinois, USA; New Museum, New York; 10th Biennial of Havana, Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, Havana; 2008 Iniva Museum, London; 2007 Rufino Tamayo Museum, Mexico City; Brooklyn Museum, New York;

Ariamna Contino: 2016 Cuba Libre, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz; Americas Museum of Washington, USA; 2015 12th Biennial of Havana; 2014 Galería Havana, Habana; Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales, Havana; Factoría Habana, Havana; Fábrica de Arte Cubano, Havana; 2013 Engraving Salon, Development Center of Visual Arts, Havana; Manoir of Cologny Cultural Center, Geneva; 2012 11th Biennial of Havana, UNEAC, Havana; 2011 Fundación Ludwig, Havana; Academia de San Alejandro, Havana; 2009 Digital Clone Project Ludwig Foundation, Development Center for the Visual Arts, Havana; 2008 Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, Havana