

SEANKELLY

Halle, Howard. "Los Carpinteros, 'Irreversible,'" *Time Out New York*, May 28, 2013.



Los Carpinteros, "Irreversible"



Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery. Installation view of Los Carpinteros, "Irreversible" at Sean Kelly Gallery

Time Out rating: ★★★★★

Time Out says

Tue May 28 2013

Today, Cuba is known as the host of America's gulag, at the U.S. Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, but half a century ago it was the hottest of Cold War hot spots, nearly precipitating a nuclear conflict. Like the handful of other socialist states that survived the Soviet Union's collapse, Cuba has become a vestigial marker of the boundary that separated the so-called free world from the Communist one. Neither a source of cheap labor for globalist enterprises (like China and Vietnam) nor a hermit kingdom (like North Korea), Cuba exists in a twilight zone between past and future.

Historical limbo has been something of an ongoing theme for the Cuban art collective Los Carpinteros (“the carpenters”), and it’s particularly evident in the group’s latest sculptural works, which, as usual, combine dry ironies with refined design. The pieces, including their first foray into video, evoke the wages of both collectivism and liberty in equal measure.

The displeasure of the mob is channeled through an installation of dozens of tomatoes hurled against the walls, leaving violent splatters of watery red stains. Each is actually an exquisitely crafted ceramic relief. LEGO blocks are used to re-create some of the monuments to socialist perfection that still dot former Soviet-bloc countries as remnants of a failed utopia. Conversely, the video, showing a samba procession in Havana running backward, speaks to the stubborn persistence of folk culture under the scientific strictures of Marxist rule.

These objects could be construed as elegant art-market trophies of capitalism’s ultimate triumph, but the artists are smart enough to know this, and to offer their work instead as a reminder that even the supposed genius of the free market is vulnerable to unpredictable events

.—Howard Halle



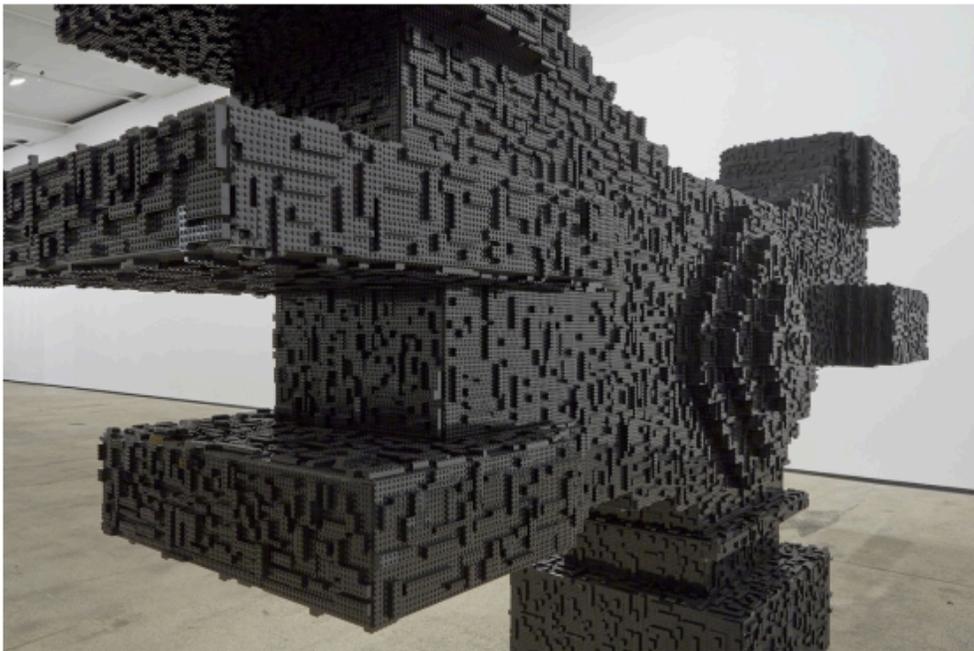
Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery

Los Carpinteros, Emelino, 2013



Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery

Los Carpinteros, Cachita, 2013



Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery

Los Carpinteros, Podgaric Toy, 2013



Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery

Los Carpinteros, Tomates, 2013



Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery

Los Carpinteros, Tomates, 2013, detail
