

TROPICAL LIFE M

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'POLES IN A LANDSCAPE': By Richard Florsheim, part of the Social Realism exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART.



FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

'WHEN YOU SAID WE': By COOPER, part of the Florida Artists Consortium show at the Frost-FIU Museum of Art.

SURFACE AND SOUL

Two shows of work by Florida artists reflect both the beauty and the grittiness of their visions

BY ANNE TSCHIDA
Special to the Miami Herald

Two images of gray cinderblocks are on display at two ends of South Florida. Appearing three-dimensional from a distance, these wonderful, slightly strange acrylic-on-silk paintings by Fort Lauderdale artist Nolan Haan are part of two juried shows, The South Florida Cultural Consortium Exhibition at the Frost Art Museum at FIU and the 60th annual All Florida Juried Competition and Exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

Haan's cement blocks are perhaps the only common bond between the group shows. While both succeed in revealing the depth and scope of Florida's artistic talent, they couldn't be more different in aesthetic emphasis or layout.

Although the artists are chosen from five South Florida counties, the Consortium show at the Frost is very Miami in its urban, edgy feel. This is one of the region's most prestigious competitions, with generous awards of \$7,500

• TURN TO ART, 3M

LITERARY APPRECIATION

With Eliseo Alberto's death, a king is gone

BY FABIOLA SANTIAGO
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He died far from his beloved Havana. But Eliseo Alberto — one of the most critically acclaimed and storied of Cuba's contemporary writers — came to embrace his adopted Mexico City as home, albeit with mournful nostalgia.

"Exile is an obligatory state of sadness," the 59-year-old essayist and novelist said, explaining the melancholy that permeated his prize-winning works and his conversations, whether he was at a book fair in Miami or holding court in his book-filled apartment.

Affectionately known as "Lichi," Alberto died last Sunday at a Mexico City hospital from complications following a kidney transplant.

He came from a Havana family considered literary royalty — a clan of poets, artists, filmmakers and musicians. His father, Eliseo Diego, was one of the island's most revered poets, and the *tertulias*, the literary gatherings at his home, were as legendary as their charming host. They would only end after Diego fell asleep in his chair and his wife, Bella García Marraz, took the burning cigarette from his hand and the empty glass of fiery *aguar-*



Eliseo Alberto

diente from his lap.

"To be part of that family meant inheriting a tremendous lineage, and Lichi was himself a great talent and a good man, humble and generous," says Alejandro Ríos, a coordinator of the Miami Book Fair International's Spanish-language program, which hosted Alberto several times in the past decade.

In a groundbreaking book published three years after his father's 1994 death, *Informe contra mi mismo (Report Against Myself)*, Alberto revealed a more sinister side to the literary gatherings. In 1978, during his military service, a superior asked him to spy and report on the international visitors his father received. In particular he was to spy on the exiles from Miami who were for the first time being allowed to visit to the island.

As part of this invitation to betrayal for the cause of the Revolution, he was shown copious reports the government had gathered about him and his family from neighbors and friends who had attended the *tertulias*. Despite a change of heart about leaving Cuba, the family had been suspect since Diego made arrange-

• TURN TO ALBERTO, 9M

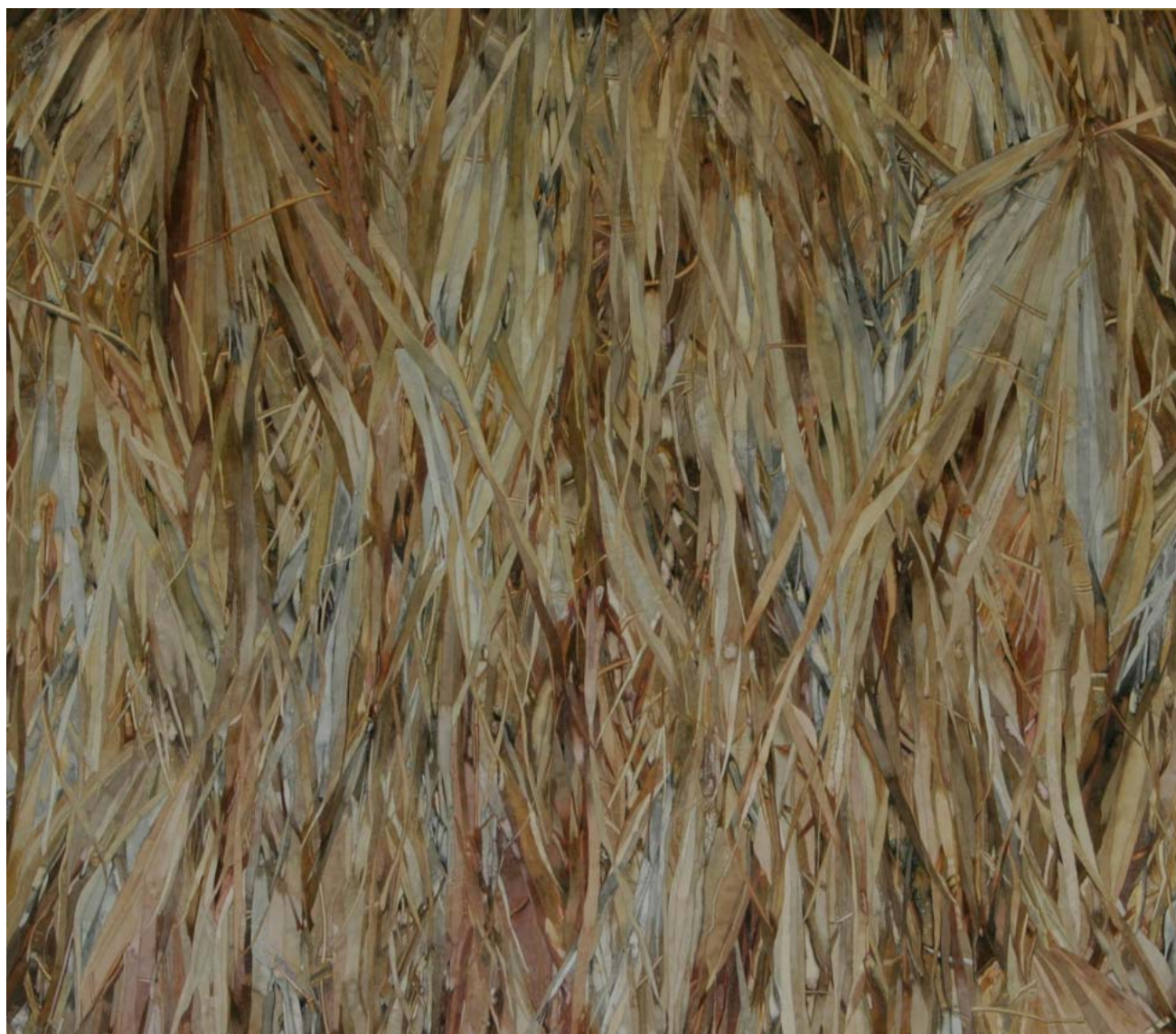


'JERSEY BOYS'

Season of the Arts

The Miami Herald is compiling its annual Season of the Arts guide to music, theater, dance and visual arts, to be published Sept. 18. If you would like your event listed, email information (including full name of presenter, show titles, dates, venue and phone number for tickets) to seasonofthearts@gmail.com by Aug. 14. You may include one photo in .jpeg form as an attachment to your email.

VISUAL ARTS



BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART

'TANGLED PALMS': By Bonnie Wolsky, part of the All Florida show at the Boca Raton Museum.

Gritty urbanism at Frost, Florida in the wild at Boca

• ART, FROM 1M

and \$15,000 in nonmatching grants, and the names of many of the dozen artists will be familiar to anyone acquainted with the local art scene.

A sculpture by Michael Genovese, who is represented by the hip New York gallery OHWOW (it has a space in Wynwood), is the literal and metaphorical centerpiece of the exhibit. It is a replica of plumbing pipes that once stood above ground, acting as urban fences as well as a means of water delivery.

These nickel-plated steel pipes are recreations of a memory from Genovese's childhood in Chicago, specifically the plumbing at the corner of *Waveland and Troy*, the name of the piece. Behind the beautiful, clean-lined sculpture is a performance video of several characters dismantling the pipe work, and within that video is a replica of a Jackson Pollock painting. There is a lot — maybe too much — going on here.

Haan's cinderblock paintings, in the next room, also clearly reference the urban landscape. Accompanying the gray blocks is another painting shows them painted over in bright graffiti. COOPER, a founder of Locust Projects, contributes a somber black-and-white piece made of charcoal, tape and silver-leaf depicting a chick or featherless bird in bondage — or is it just in agony? Nearby, Beatriz Montevano's mixed media statue *I'll Have a Blue Christmas Without You* drips with creepiness.



BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART

'MAMAYEV SQUARE': By Glexis Novoa, part of a show of works by Florida artists at the Frost-FIU Museum of Art.

Francie Bishop Good's distinctive style is instantly recognizable in four photographs. The subjects, usually in a down-and-out setting, stare out at us with little or no emotion, their faces reflecting the sometimes-grinding nature of everyday life. Likewise, Cuban-born Glexis Novoa's graphite-on-marble drawing is devoid of feeling, which is the point. His sterile city skyline is strewn with harsh and lifeless totalitarian trappings.

ALL FLORIDA SHOW
At the Boca Raton Museum of Art.

um, the atmosphere is lightened as the imagery moves from the urban to the rural, or more precisely, to the nature of Florida.

Many of the 101 pieces in the All Florida show reference the unique and fertile ground of this state. That may sound quaint, and in some cases it is, but it is also refreshing.

The top award this year went to a lovely piece called *Tangled Palms* by Bonnie Wolsky of Coral Gables. A neighboring charcoal work by Virginia Fifield depicts flowers just on the wrong

side of life, beginning to fade and wilt. Hanging from the ceiling in the main corridor is a tapestry by Alia Sanchez made from magazine cut-outs of flowers called *National Audubon's Field Guide*. All are good-looking pieces.

More challenging is a tapestry by Tampa's Noelle Mason based on a satellite photo of the Mexico-California border. The hand-woven work shows dramatic differences in terrain — the U.S. side green and blooming, the Mexican side barren and dry.

Some works get lost in the sheer size of this show. It's a noble ambition to showcase as much art as possible from all corners of Florida, but the quality fluctuates wildly as a result.

Still, it's worth ferreting out the gems here, including Miamian Thomas Virgin's woodcut print, *13 Views of Mt. Hood: From I-26 (Mirror)*. The craft of woodcarving has sadly been out of fashion, and in South Florida is a rarity to find, which makes the image all the more attractive. Miami artist Hugo Moro's graphite-on-paper drawing of a lonely pair of formal men's shoes, *Captains of Industry III*, is another stand-out.

These sober, two-toned works do seem to have a relationship with their cousins showing at the Frost, so Nolan Haan's cinderblocks are not the only link, after all.



BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART

'12 WOMEN': Reginald Marsh's painting is on view at Boca Raton Museum of Art.

EXHIBITS

Social Realism resonates in our troubled times

BY ANN TSCHIDA
Special to The Miami Herald

The Boca Museum of Art offers an extra treat for visitors: an amazing collection of photography, drawing and painting gathered together under the title *Art for the People: 20th Century Social Realism*.

Social Realism can be a loaded term, but it shouldn't be confused with Socialist Realism, that highly stylized art that sprouted in the early Soviet Union. This American realism does depict average Americans, often in a state of struggle, from the Great Depression to the Civil Rights era, and in that sense it can be considered political and populist, but these images come straight from the heart.

Some are classics: a Dust Bowl migrant mother and child in a photograph from Dorothea Lang; a "kitchen" made up of several forks and a spoon hung on a wooden wall, from Walker Evans.

Others are more obscure, such as the painting of dancing revelers in an African-American bar, with German Expressionist flourishes.

The exhibit is divided into sections that include harsh hyper-industrialized cities, and most interestingly, the Midwest. The latter features work by *American Gothic* painter Grant Wood as well as some unknown photographers and painters who depicted a vanishing way of life in the rural hinterland. One of the best examples in this subsection is a fluid painting from Richard Florsheim, *Poles in the Wind*, detailing frayed colored banners attached to dead tree trunks, swaying in the wind under stormy Midwestern skies.

There are many more works worthy of discovery. In these unsettling economic times, this exhibit resonates more powerfully than it might have just a decade ago, and it is a good companion to the modern-day angst expressed in the 21st century contemporary art shows.

If you go

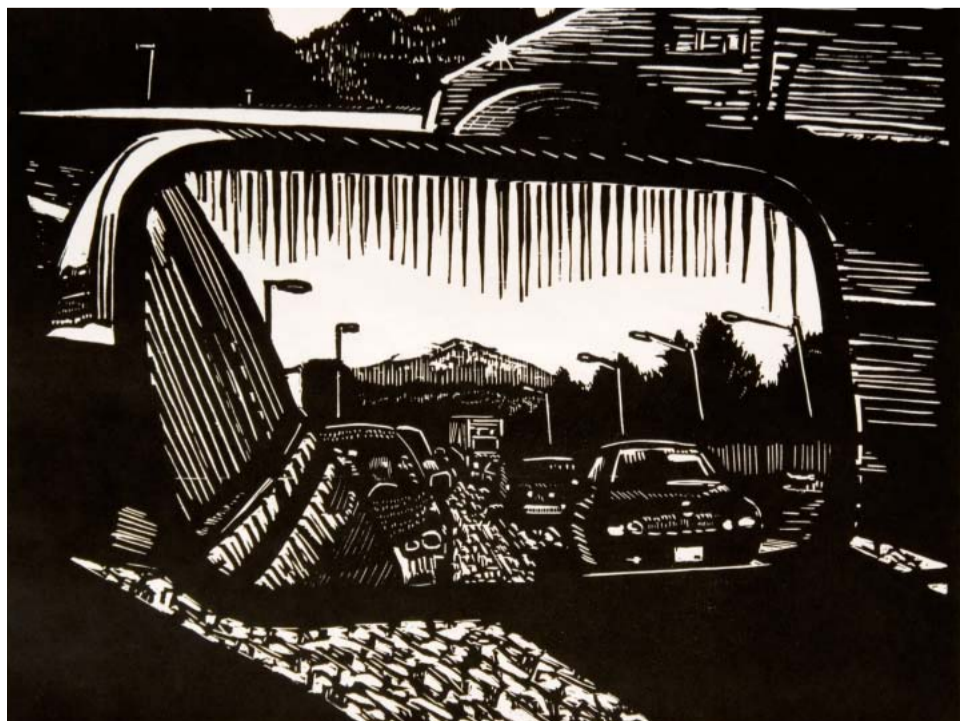
60th annual All Florida Juried Competition and Exhibition and Art for the People: 20th Century Social Realism run through Sept. 11 at the Boca Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real, in Mizner Park; www.bocamuseum.org. Adults \$8, 12 and under free.

The South Florida Cultural Consortium Exhibition runs through Aug. 21 at the Frost Museum of Art at Florida International University, 10975 SW 17th St., Miami; www.thefrost.fiu.edu. Free admission.



BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART

'GROUND CONTROL': Noelle Mason's work is part of the All Florida Juried Competition and Exhibition.



BOCA RATON MUSEUM OF ART

'13 VIEWS OF MT. HOOD FROM I-26 (MIRROR)': By Thomas Virgin, part of the All Florida show at the Boca Raton Museum of Art.