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Photo Walk-Through: "Beyond the Supersquare," Part 1
A Cuba-focused look at the international exhibition just opened in the Bronx



Co-curators Holly Block, executive director of the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and María Inés Rodríguez greet visitors at the start of the preview tour.
Photo: Cuban Art News

Last week, co-curators Holly Block and María Inés Rodríguez gave a preview tour of *Beyond the Supersquare*, the new show at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. An international look at the influence of Latin American and Caribbean modernist architecture on contemporary art, features more than 60 works by more than 30 artists from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe. It includes several artists from Cuba—so many that we couldn't fit all the photos into one article, so Part 2 follows immediately after Part 1.

The curators started their tour by referencing Brasilia, the modernist capital whose basic unit of residential urban planning, the *super quadra*, inspired the show's title. But while architects like Oscar Niemeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier are a presence in the exhibition, they aren't its focus. "What we're interested in," said Block, "is artists' responses, their feedback—whether positive or negative—to this modernism." That feedback includes critiques of political, social, economic issues as well as imaginative and at times humorous responses to modernist design and its history.



Photo: Cuban Art News

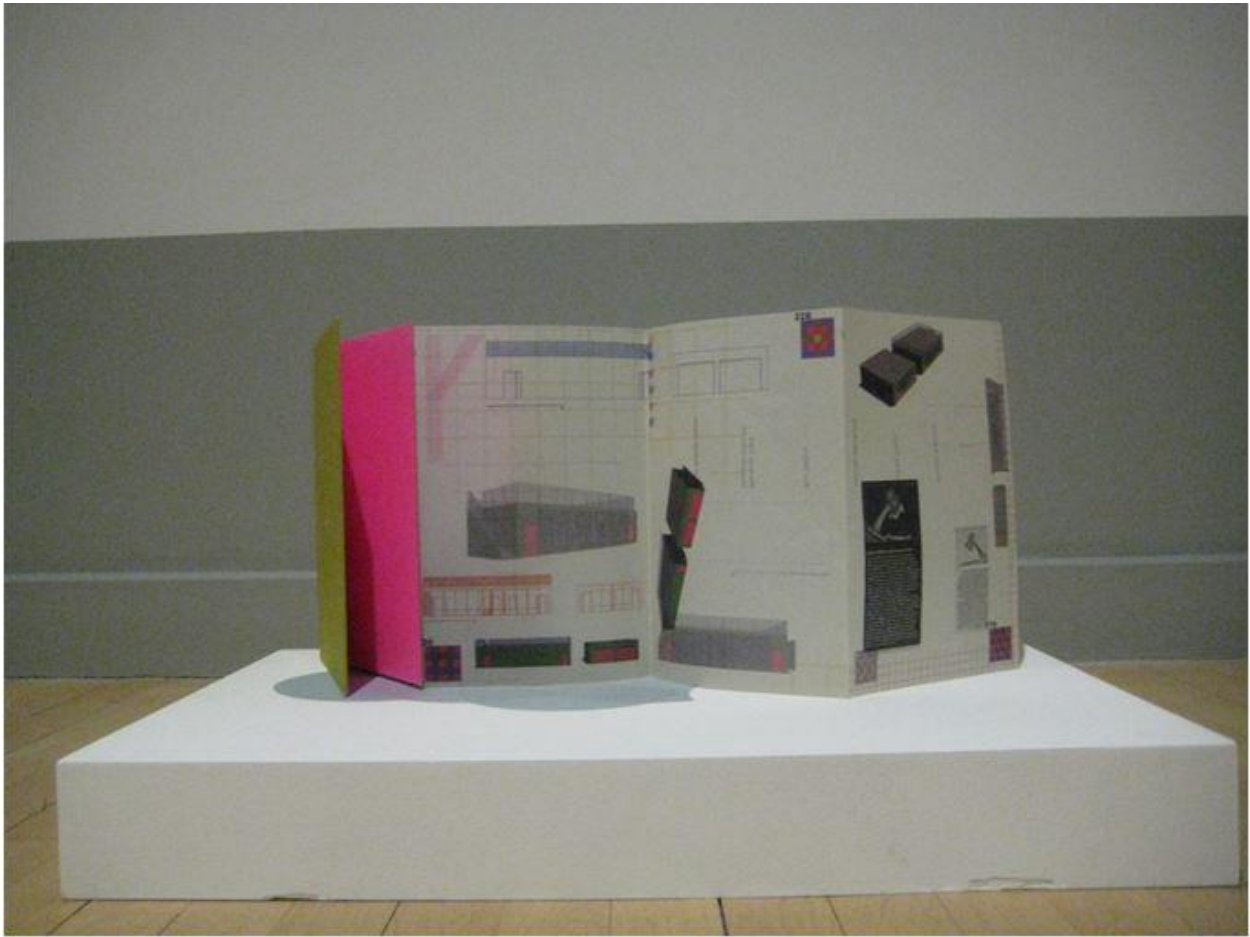


Photo: Cuban Art News

Works in the opening gallery include Jorge Pardo's *Ten People, Ten Books*, a project begun in 1994. Positioned on a shallow plinth close to the floor, the book includes 10 pages of architectural drawings and an essay by Pardo that also explore principles of color and form found in painting.



Photo: Cuban Art News

Also on view in the first gallery: *Bunker Series 004* and *Bunker Series 005*, both 2013, a collaboration between María Martínez-Cañas and Rafael Domenech. Starting with images taken from Paul Virilio's book *Bunker Archeology*, depicting bunkers used in World Wars I and II, the artists overlaid the photos with geometric forms in watercolor and paper.

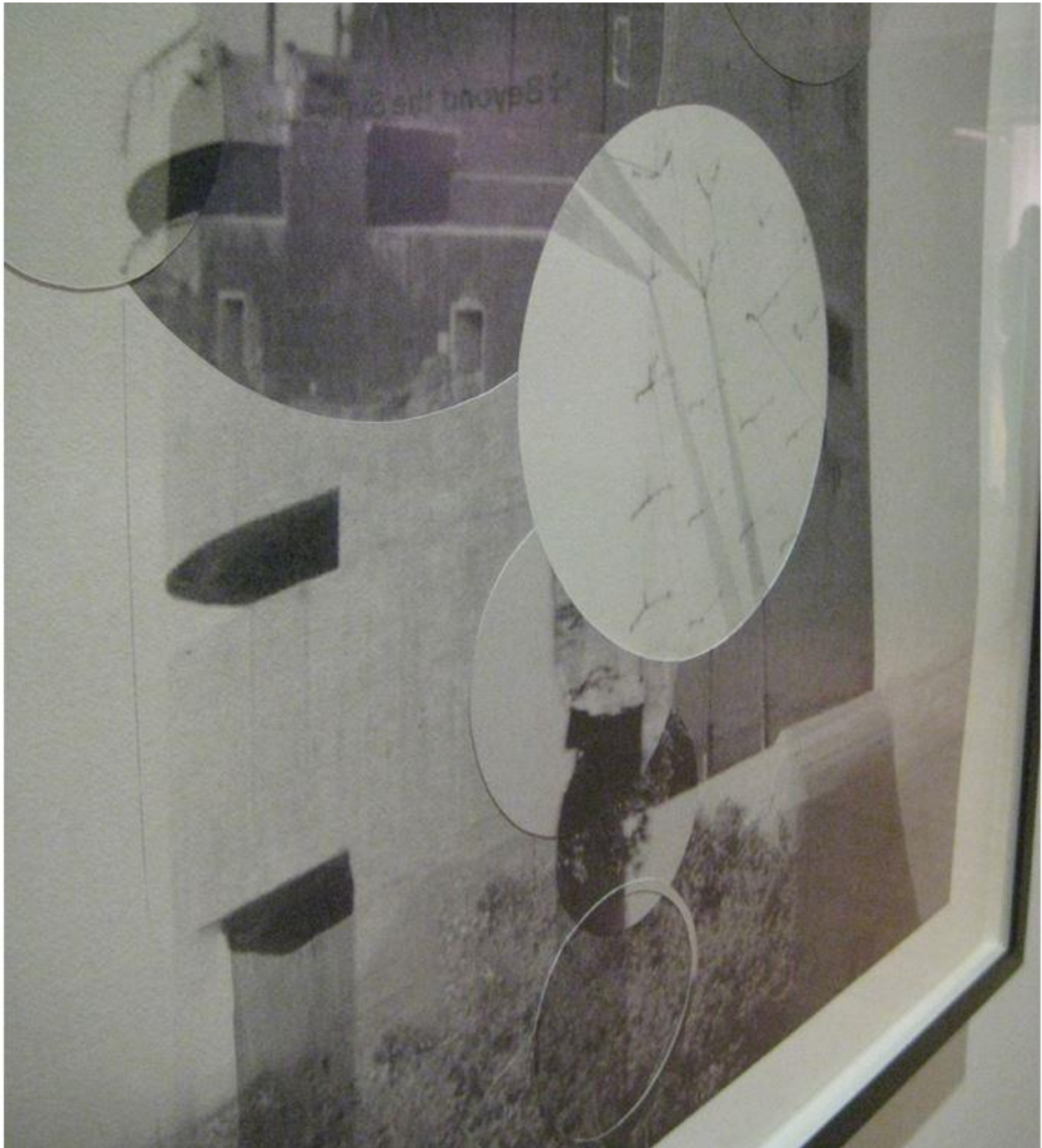


Photo: Cuban Art News

The collage overlay is visible in a close-up detail of *Bunker Series 005*.



Photo: Cuban Art News

Two works by Manuel Piña are included in *Beyond the Supersquare. Of Constructions and Utopias II*, 2000, shown here, is a grid of 16 framed images depicting housing built by Cuban micro-brigades—a utopian project to alleviate the housing crisis, using primarily untrained volunteer construction crews—in the 1970s.

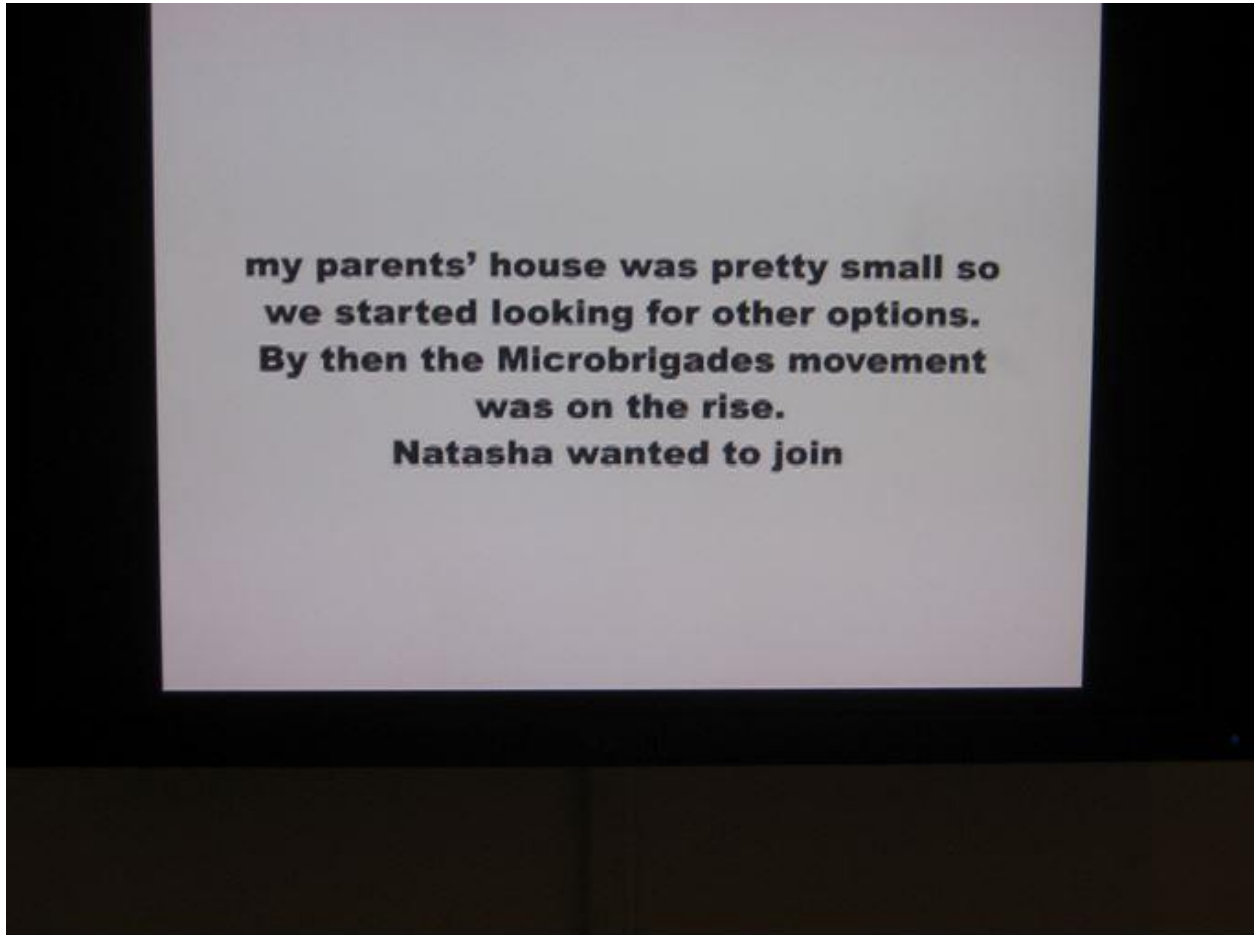


Photo: Cuban Art News

The photographs were accompanied by *The Hope and the Rope*, 2003, an eight-minute video about micro-brigade-built housing. Here, a frame from the video.



Photo: Cuban Art News

A suite of drawings by Alexandre Arrechea humorously transforms four of Havana's modernist icons for other uses. Left to right: *Opening Ceremony* – “Riviera,” *Opening Ceremony* – “Trampolin,” *Opening Ceremony* – “FOCSA,” and *Opening Ceremony* – “Habana Libre,” all 2003.



Photo: Cuban Art News

Portuguese artist Fernanda Fragateiro's *After Clara Porset and Xavier Guerreiro drawing "Muebles de bajo costo" for International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture, MoMA, 1950* turns a thoughtful eye on Cuban-born designer Clara Porset. Fragateiro came across Porset's drawing, submitted for an international design competition hosted by MoMA, and felt compelled to render it in three dimensions.

"It's a very simple chair to make," Fragateiro said. "Just mold the line, then use strings for the seat and back. She was mixing a very modern design with a traditional fabric technique." *After Clara Porset* is part of a larger series, *Frente Comun*, which explores the impact of architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock and his 1955 MoMA exhibition, *Latin American Architecture After 1945*.

Porset herself was an influential design figure, and some of her designs remain in production today. Look for an upcoming article about her—particularly her designs in Cuba—on Cuban Art News.

Part 2 of the walk-through for *Beyond the Supersquare* follows immediately on Cuban Art News. The exhibition remains on view at the Bronx Museum of the Arts through January 11, 2015.