

SICARDI GALLERY

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BUILDING ARTS

Alexander Apostól / Dias & Riedweg / Thomas Glassford / Marco Maggi / Clarissa Tossin

October 15 – November 12, 2011

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 15th, 6-9pm



Marco Maggi, Turner Box: Complete Coverage on Piano (Menil Collection), 2011, Cuts on 500 pages, 11" x 8.5"

Sicardi Gallery is pleased to present *Building Arts*, an exhibition that brings together gallery artists who have directly engaged with architectural themes in their work. An opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, October 15, from 6 to 9 p.m.

The show includes projects by Alexander Apóstol, Dias & Riedweg, Thomas Glassford, Marco Maggi and Clarissa Tossin. Together, these artists reveal deep concerns with urban,

economic, and political issues, particularly the elusive pursuit of modernist utopias in twentieth-century Latin America. They explore these themes through a wide range of media, including digital photographs, videos, cut-paper, and monumental installations.

In separate works, Clarissa Tossin and Thomas Glassford focus on specific landmarks, one in Brasilia and the other in Mexico City, that formed part of Corbusian schemes to reshape national identity. Tossin's "White Marble Everyday" shows Oscar Niemeyer's Supreme Court in Brasilia being scrubbed clean, a daily ritual that serves as a metaphor for the class divisions and wastefulness lurking behind utopian ideals. Glassford's documentary film features his "Xipe Totec," a public sculpture from 2010, in which the artist installed a complex network of flexible neon lights on the sides of a 1960s tower in Tlatelolco, designed by architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez. The pattern of the network alludes to the mathematic complexity of Islamic tile work, while engaging with the violent history of the site, including the tragic events of 1968, as well as hopes for future regeneration.

In three works involving precisely cut sheets of paper, Marco Maggi also deals with specific high modern spaces: Gropius's Bauhaus and Renzo Piano's Menil Collection. In these wall pieces, Maggi converts two-dimensional blueprints of floor plans into three-dimensional images that occupy the border between sculpture and drawing. He plays with and against the discipline of the modern grid, wittily commenting on the discipline of modernity with playful forms that pop up across the surface. And he reminds us that in our world of unlimited information, blueprints—like many other documents—are out there for the taking.

In a series of digitally-manipulated photographs, Alexander Apóstol streamlines dilapidated buildings in Caracas, giving them mute facades with no entry or exit, as if fragments of an urban dystopia. In a video piece also included in the show (done in collaboration with Mexico City filmmaker Rafael Ortega), Apóstol reimagines the relationship between Diego Rivera and Le Corbusier, two committed modernists who never met, yet whose ideas were intertwined in two Mexico City monuments built by Juan O'Gorman: Rivera's 1930 Studio, and the Anahuacalli Museum, a later neo-Aztec response to functionalist dreams.

In a more intimate look at architecture, Mauricio Dias & Walter Riedweg interrogate the interrelationship between dwelling and self-portraiture. Their five-screen video installation "House" shows the artists in different daily situations lived out in the varied domestic spaces of their own home. Here, rather than concerns with political utopias (or dystopias), the two artists investigate the anonymous self: the visual repetition of the characters/authors prevents the viewer from recognizing individual identity, just as individual identity is so frequently lost in the modern city.

The exhibition will be on view at the gallery until November 12, 2011. For more information, visit www.sicardi.com or email info@sicardi.com.