

Carlos Reyes
7129619
Art Basel Miami Beach
December 6–9, 2018

Carlos Reyes's presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach 2018 is a continuation of the artist's work using salvaged elements of men's bathhouses that are downsizing or going out of business—the physical cruising spaces whose functions are being replaced by digital platforms like Grindr. This presentation uses the awning of Melrose Spa, which was located at 7269 Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles. Reyes has reconstructed the salvaged elements of the awning with fresh green canvas, a decision that highlights the dramatic fading of the awning caused by the Los Angeles sun. The awning, which provided physical protection from the elements, represents the spa in a larger sense: physically, psychically, and spiritually. Anonymity, discreet private pleasure, and the flourishing of sex-positive gay subculture is both folded in on itself (compounding the interiority it once helped to facilitate) and in full view.

The awning is juxtaposed with sun-faded jewelry displays from a shop at 191 Canal Street, New York. After years of use, the once bright red velvet has faded to a dusty rose. These jewelry displays are unintentional photograms that Reyes uses as readymades, forming the basis of the remaining sculptures in the booth. Both the awning and the jewelry displays show the markers of time, fading from the bright green and bright red they once were. In this presentation, Reyes positions them as opposites: one representing inward-facing, discreet privacy, the other representing outward facing, public desire.

7129619 addresses location as a perceived physical construct, and “post-cruising” as a counterpoint to that perception. “Cruising,” used in its colloquial form, might refer to the leisurely movement and promenading of bodies in relation to a specific space and set of activities (men cruising, cars cruising, etc.). “Post-cruising” dislodges the specificity of location from geography and instead situates location as a partial function of time, transition, and dissociative tendencies. This is part of Reyes's ongoing work addressing confluences of multiple locations, both physically and mentally. Prompted by an awareness of a transition in “lived experience” from analog to digital, “post-cruising” meanders in and out of measures of time, and considers the effect of mental projection on environment and the enjoyment of anxiety related to the perversion of objects against their intended function.

Reyes has engaged with this concept and the disruption of location in previous works by using homing pigeons to expose photo paper to the sun as the pigeons race towards their point of origin, producing sealed mirrored suitcases containing a hidden arrangement of forms that are viewed specifically at airport security checkpoints, tracking the expansion of air through bread baked into industrial fans, and most recently, excavating a sauna from a men's-only “social relaxation club” and reinstalling the panels as new sculptures inside a gallery space.

Carlos Reyes was born in 1977 in Chicago, IL, and received his MFA from New York University in 2011. He has held solo and two-person exhibitions at Bodega, New York; White Flag Projects, St. Louis; Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris; Vie d'Ange, Montreal; Jan Kaps, Cologne; Arcadia Missa, London; and Tomorrow, New York, among others. His work has been shown in group exhibitions at venues including Luxembourg & Dayan, New York; the CCS Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson; Futura Center for Contemporary Art, Prague; Bortolami, New York; Croy Nielsen, Berlin; What Pipeline, Detroit; and Tanya Leighton, Berlin.