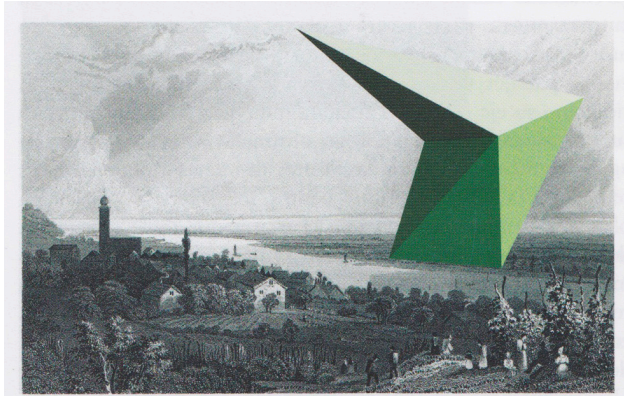


JOHANNES VOGT



URBAN GESTURES

by Claire Breukel
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Jaime Tarazona. *Rheineck*, 2013. Vintage etching, acrylic, 6 x 9.5 in. / Grabado de época, acrílico 15,2 x 24,1 cm. Image courtesy / Imagen cortesía de Johannes Voigt Gallery.

URBAN GESTURES

Johannes Voigt
New York

After a sell-out booth at last year's ArtBo art fair in Bogota, Johannes Voigt, owner of Johannes Voigt Gallery in New York, has a good reason to be fond of Colombia. Emerging from his enchantment is the gallery's latest exhibition, *Gestos Urbanos* | *Urban Gestures*, curated in collaboration with the Bogota-based art space Nueveochenta Arte Contemporáneo. The exhibition features the work of three Colombian artists, Juan Fernando Herrán, Jaime Tarazona and Kevin Simón Mancera who are almost precisely a decade apart in age. This is significant as the trio's grading maturity defines their personal portrayal of Colombia's urban systems.

Juan Ferrando Herrán's three photographs are formal, almost stoic in their execution. By portraying deadpan frontal viewpoints of staircases informally built, side tracked and left unfinished, he reveals a heartfelt metaphor for the haphazard constructs that happen when a country is simultaneously emergent and urbanizing. Simply titled *Escalas* (*Steps*), the series depicts these architectural constructs in areas outside the city, suggesting their presence is an attempt at urban progress, but in the end, for reasons of social inadequacies, they fall short.

Kevin Simón Mancera, the youngest of the three artists, takes on an incredible feat by painstakingly pen and inking the text and images of the January 16, 1890 edition of the New York Times to scale. These pages are framed so that they can be viewed from both sides to mimic an actual newspaper. The frames hang above two stacks of printed newspapers, bound as if to be delivered, that become sculptural obstructions on the gallery floor. Mancera has recreated the moment that pre-empts the newspapers circulation in to the streets of New York. A rolled up newspaper is tucked

in the door handle of the gallery suggesting the papers escape—however they never actually leave. Somehow, it may have been more convincing if actual circulation within the public sphere completed the concept.

Too hot, too cold? Goldilocks samples the porridge and finds Jaime Tarazona just right. Appropriating historical European etchings of four cityscapes that each features a river as its central focal point, Tarazona intervenes with these illustrations by superimposing colourful abstract forms above the depicted waterways. These colourful three-dimensional abstract forms appear as UFO's against the serene black and white landscapes making the viewer aware of their harsh insertion. In addition to suggesting the failure of Latin America modernism, these pink triangles, blue and brown rectangles and green origami forms are obstinate montages that make apparent man's – often – misguided dominance over the landscape—a simple yet superb juxtaposition that cuts to the core of problematically imposed architecture.

Through the exploration of geographical constructs that proffer notions of progress, communication through mass circulation, as well as a critique of Colombia's architectural (also colonial) inheritance, *Gestos Urbanos* | *Urban Gestures* offers viewers three lively and pointed perspectives. As such, by avoiding what would be an impossible survey of an expansive urban theme, Juan Fernando Herrán, Jaime Tarazona and Kevin Simón Mancera deliver a convincing, pointed commentary on the processes of developing the urban landscape.