

LOS
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ART IS AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO REALITY.

LOS CARPINTEROS

16m, in other words “sixteen meters”, the title of an installation by Cuban artists Marco Castillo and Dagoberto Rodríguez, who form the art duo Los Carpinteros, is a direct reference to the length of the work presented for the first time in the context of their monographic exhibition *Drama Turquesa* (Turquoise Drama) at Ivory Press Arts & Books in Madrid in 2010.

The installation consists of 200 black suit jackets over white shirts, both of which have been cut with scissors, leaving irregular holes on the right. Looking into these holes we see how they visually form a dark tunnel measuring sixteen meters in length, at the end of which we catch a glimpse of light. In actual fact, the tunnel is an illusion, for it exists only insofar as the 200 jackets are arranged in a row, giving rise to an inner sculpture of empty space on the border between the real and the imaginary.

As is usually the case with these artists, their works continue to deliberately provoke debate between the handcrafted and the artistic. Characterized by an extraordinary finish, design, or control of aesthetic space, their levels of interpretation and their ability to generate symbolic spaces are extremely rich.

Through serialization, the multiplication of objects (in this case, mutilated black jackets on mutilated white shirts) in constructions evocative of Pop Art and postminimalism, the artists create a huge visual poem, a meta-object with numerous poetic

reverberations and social and political undertones. Once again, by decontextualizing and manipulating them, these artists transform and recode everyday objects into aesthetic-political artifacts.

When we face their works, we often feel we are in a state of ambiguity, of comfort and discomfort, such as we feel when wearing a suit that doesn't quite fit or is made of a fabric that triggers an allergic reaction and therefore makes us want to take it off completely, or in part at least, thereby allowing our body, our skin, to breathe as soon as possible. Perhaps the cutting is a gesture of resistance in a confined, standardized social and political space, an individual action that could become collective. Indeed, developed collectively, this gesture, this primal cut, would be strong enough to generate a tunnel space to guide us to a new light.

It is no coincidence that Los Carpinteros should define art as “an allergic reaction to reality”.

Orlando Britto Jinorio

Translated by Josephine Watson

Marco Antonio Castillo Valdés, born in 1971 in Cuba, and Dagoberto Rodríguez Sánchez, born in 1969 in Cuba. Both live and work in Madrid, Spain.



16m, 2010
Fabric, plastic, and metal
95 x 1600 x 60 cm