



Onloaded: Alexis Duque

February 20 – March 15, 2015



phICA welcomes New York-based visual artist Alexis Duque to Phoenix for a phICA Immersive Artist Residency and solo exhibition. Originally from Medellín, Colombia, Alexis' paintings are intriguing, fantastical archeological-like compilations of cultures built one upon another,

structural piles which encode the fragile and dicey relationship between man and the natural environment manifested in “the chaotic and unavoidable processes of urbanization in our globalized and over populated world.”

According to Duque, “My paintings explore perceptions of innocence and violence, transgression and balance. I like to work with improbability and distortion, and this often lets us discern what is normal and what is not; dysfunction helps to elucidate function.” While Duque employs classical architectural elements one might see in European historic landscape paintings from the 17th and 18th centuries such as arches and columns, it is important to view and think about his paintings with lenses that help us see that these are what art historian and critic Claire Luna describes as “symbols of the bygone ruling culture and the aesthetic model of the European colonizers, now an integral part of daily life of the populations of Latin America.”

However, Duque’s work transcends a specific regional tagging in favor of a more global view that includes advocacy efforts towards sustainability in the face of a human epidemic of imbalance and disconnect with the fragility of the natural environment. It’s a new type of colonialism really. One where humankind is attracted to a place where they settle and thrive but, at the same time, which they scrape, build, pillage, desert, and often rebuild afterwards upon the ruins of their own destruction, ignorant or oblivious to historical precedents as well as contemporary knowledge. Alexis navigates this delicate but messy territory with depictions of deserted structures captured at the tense moment just after humans have fled or vanished.

Duque holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Antioquia, Colombia. His work has been exhibited at El Museo del Barrio, The Drawing Center, and Praxis International Gallery in New York; The Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA), Long Beach, CA; Champion Contemporary, Austin, TX; Rudolfv Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands, The Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, Midland, Michigan; and Galleri Oxholm in Copenhagen, Denmark. Images of his work have been featured in several publications, including *Blue Canvas Magazine*, *LandEspace Art Review*, *New American Paintings*, *Studio Visit Magazine*, and *El Diario* (New York).

Ted G. Decker
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