

THE WALLS ART SPACE

JORDAN AZCUNE

MIAMI/MIAMI [HOT STUFF]

10 -24 November, 2019

The taste of salty seaside air, the feel of a trickle of sweat running down your brow, the heat from a summer sun beating down. Lapping waves and sandy feet, tanned bodies in swimsuits, ice cream. While there is a certain universality shared by tropical beachside cities, they are rendered unique through local colour, their subtle (or not so) differences amplified by virtue of their climatic similarities.

Jordan Azcune's *Miami/Miami (Hot Stuff)* is a comparative study of Miami, Gold Coast and Miami, Florida borne out of his participation in an international artist exchange between the two cities. Working with wax and glass, materials that speak to the heat of these environments, Azcune plays with colour, pattern and form to explore the relationships between the two locations and draw parallels between their local identities, particularly through the lens of post-Christian camp.

Enamoured with the historic architecture of Florida, Azcune's cast wax works reference the Art Deco buildings of South Beach and their distinctive pastel colour palate. Originally white, the 1930s Art Deco buildings had fallen into disrepair by the late 1970s, and were slated for demolition. Leonard Horowitz and Barbara Baer Capitman lead a campaign to preserve and renovate the buildings with Horowitz boldly proposing a new colour-scheme for the district, which transformed the austere coquina-stone of the Great Depression architecture into a postcard-perfect candy-toned resort, the iconic aesthetic the area it still celebrated for today¹.

An industrial designer originally from New York, Horowitz' father forced him to leave when he came out as gay, when he relocated to Miami, which was a proving to be (somewhat) of a South-Western centre for the LGBT community² in a conservative Christian state during a homophobic era. Horowitz' vision for the colourful buildings contributed immensely to the revitalisation of the district, and his palate continued to be taken up widely even after he passed away, too young at only 43 years of age, a victim of the AIDS crisis³.

Azcune, whose practice is tethered in colour-driven minimal abstraction, connected not only with Horowitz' aesthetic but also his biography. Noting parallels to the history of the development of Queensland's Gold Coast, an equally constructed and economically manipulated tourist town in a similarly conservative, predominantly Christian state, whose aesthetic balances on the razor-thin edge of luxury and tackiness, Azcune identified a shared shallowness between the two cities; an emphasis on glamorous facades and surface-level beauty, ultimately resulting in gentrification and cultural homogeneity.

Azcune contrasts the soft peaches and cool teals of South Beach with the metallic sheen of the Gold Coast, and the red and black of ritzy hotel interiors. Gradients shift through the works like a changing sky, built up through layers of subtle tonal difference and glimpsed in the spherical voids. In other works Azcune has applied textured glass, creating an illusion of movement and fluidity, and disrupting the static nature of the patterns behind.

In *Miami/Miami (Hot Stuff)*, Azcune presents a series of work that reflects on the contemporary metropolitan identity of these two idealised commercial leisure destinations that share a name, unsettling the constructed nature of their cosmetic features in order to unfix the prescribed archetypes of 'paradise' as dictated by neo-liberal capitalism.

Lisa Bryan-Brown

[1] *Meet the Man Behind all those South Beach Pastels*, Julia Duba, 2013

<https://www.wlrn.org/post/meet-man-behind-all-those-south-beach-pastels>

[2] *Queer Miami: A History of LGBTQ Communities*, History Miami Museum, 2019 in

<https://www.tampabay.com/tbt/queer-miami-shows-often-erased-lgbtq-history-of-south-florida-20190405/>

[3] Duba, 2013

[Anti-clockwise from entrance]

All works (unless stated otherwise): Beeswax, pigment, aluminium composite board, aluminium, polymer adhesive, stainless steel, silicone

GOLDEN BOOK OF GIFTS [2019]
1105 X 615 mm
\$1,500

INFECTIOUS [2019]
615 mm diameter
\$800

SUNRISE STRIP (SOAK IT UP AND DRIP DRY) [2019]
1510 X 615mm
NFS

THE SUNSHINE STATE (IN GOD WE TRUST) [2019]
1205 X 615mm
\$1,600

CAUTION. CROCODILES [2019]
805 X 615mm
\$1,000

HALF IN SHADE [2019]
1705 X 615mm
\$2,000

FAENA [2019]
1305 X 615mm
\$1,800

SOMETHING I'M NOT ALLOWED TO SAY [2019]
same as above
705 X 615mm
\$900

EQUINOX [2019]
1853 X 1405mm
\$3,800

FISHERS OF MEN (GOING OUT IN TWOS) [2019]
1605 X 615mm
\$1,800

PARALLELS (NEVER MEET) [2019]
Glass, beeswax, pigment, silicone adhesive, aluminium, timber, stainless steel
1285 X 1285mm (diamond)
\$2400

HELLO ENERGISER [2019]
Glass, silicone adhesive, aluminium, timber, stainless steel, enamel paint
1285 X 1285mm (diamond)
\$2400

MATCHING OUTFITS [2019]
Beeswax, pigment, glass, aluminium, timber
stainless steel
360mm diameter
\$350

DECO DELIGHT [2019]
Ceramic tile, acrylic, aluminium, timber, stainless steel, polymer adhesive,
240 X 225mm
\$350

**THE WALLS
ART SPACE**

CITY OF
GOLDCOAST.

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