

MIAMI ARTIST NICOLAS LOBO EXPLORES MIAMI'S RUINED LANDSCAPE

BY NEIL VAZQUEZ

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Leisure Pit, at PAMM

Courtesy of Nicolas Lobo

Growing up in South Florida's harsh suburban landscape can be suffocating. The tract homes, insular ethnic communities, and lack of a distinct regional art scene can crush a young creative teen. Nicolas Lobo, an artist born and raised in West Kendall, is looking to point out Miami's decayed core. His latest show, "Leisure Pit," debuted last month at Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) and is already making waves for its sensually acerbic point of view.

"I was really interested in displaying concrete work in a concrete room," Lobo says, "so we kind of pushed it from there."

The concrete on concrete aesthetic was originally inspired by Miami's ruined landscape. While nascent art movements have taken over the city's cultural scene in the 90s, when Lobo was growing up, it was primarily a town for northeastern snowbirds to relax poolside while locals toiled away in backrooms.

After a youth spent meandering around Miami, Lobo studied at New York's Cooper Union. The distance from the immersive upbringing gave the artist the perspective he needed to unpack the minutia of Miami in his work.

"Leisure Pit" consist of large concrete sculptures cast within a swimming pool. The particularly taxing process is meant the highlight the environmental strains of private leisure activities on public infrastructure and ecosystems.



Courtesy of Nicolas Lobo

Lobo is no stranger to mixed media. His latest projects have employed decayed perfumes, soft drinks, and chemical cleaners. For the artist the potency of the materials come from their relationships to the ideas he's wrestling with.

"That's really what I care about when I make something," Lobo explains, "that uncanny gut feeling of being a genetic snapshot that is being pushed around by the rest of the universe."

Influenced by the Young British Artist's approach to relational aesthetics, Lobo's projects incorporate found objects from the surrounding environment that speak to the core of his message.



Courtesy of Nicolas Lobo

In "Leisure Pit," he explores the boom and bust cycles that have characterized his hometown. Since its swampland past, South Florida has been known as a city that's grown too fast for its own good. The result is a ruined landscape, that hides its creatively devoid center by masking it in the glitz and glamour of afternoon pool parties, and late night clubbing.

"Someone once described Tokyo to me as 'a place where the future happened 40 years ago,'" Lobo says. "Miami is kind of in this constant state of 'the future' so when the mask slips a bit and you see the moldering, salt crusted, off-season side of things it's kind of satisfying."

If you, like Lobo, share the same frustrations about Miami's geographical and psychic disposition check out "Leisure Pit" at PAMM, where it'll be on display till December 13, 2015.