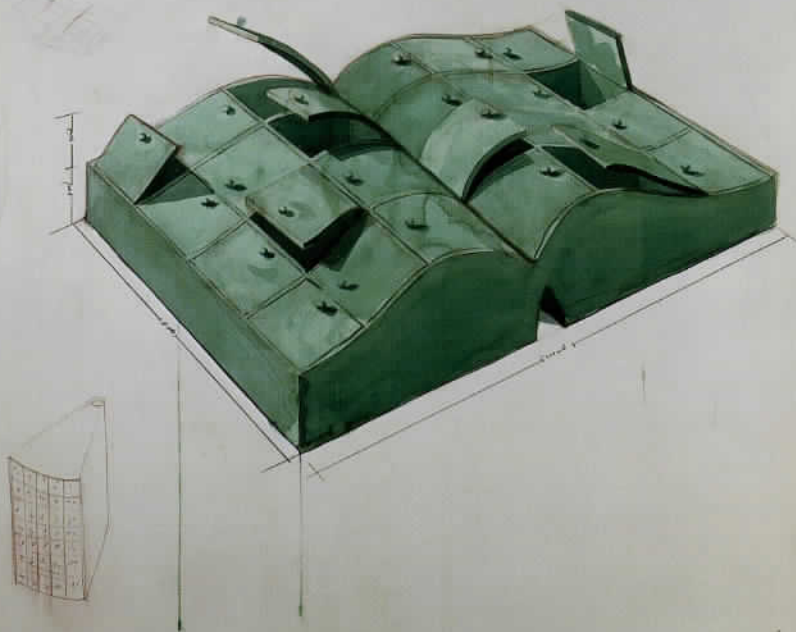


**OCTOBER 11-NOVEMBER 17, 2001**

San Francisco Art Institute  
Walter and McBean Galleries

**ARTIST PROJECT AND RESIDENCY**

# **LOS CARPINTEROS**



*Handwritten signature*

## LOS CARPINTEROS

Alexandre Arrechea, Marco Castillo, and Dagoberto Rodriguez began their association with the Art Institute by helping to arrange a visit to Havana for artist and faculty Tony Labat and his students in 1999. Later that year Labat reciprocated by inviting Los Carpinteros to do a workshop here at the Art Institute. Equally well-received by faculty, students and staff, it became clear they would need to return again for a longer period of time to work with students and produce a new commissioned work.

Los Carpinteros started collaborating in 1991 while attending the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, where they trained in various interdisciplinary practices. Their collective moniker references both the carpentry trade and their earlier wooden sculptures which re-consider and transform the function and meaning of everyday objects—often furniture. Harkening back to dada and surrealist transformations of found objects, and to 1960s minimalism and conceptualism, Los Carpinteros create hybridized forms and re-assign meaning to everyday things. They use drawings to work through their ideas as they alter the scale, physical properties or expected use value of an object or piece of furniture. Los Carpinteros' collective imagination yields odd, uncanny objects and structures, which are first perceived as witty ruminations on function and dysfunction, but always require a closer look to fully comprehend subtle visual puns and more sophisticated references. While Los Carpinteros now work with many materials besides wood, the importance of craftsmanship prevails; their artistic production is filled with aesthetic appeal, conceptual rigor and ironic humor.

**Karen Moss**  
Director of Exhibitions



**Espejos de agua (Mirrors of Water), 2001****Walter Gallery**

Wood, resin, water and lighting fixtures; dimensions variable

This newly commissioned installation, a complete re-construction of a project originally exhibited in Salamanca, Spain, continues Los Carpinteros' inventions of hybridized interior furnishings infused with new meaning. At first glance, the six wooden drafting tables—each with six black lamps—appear quite ordinary. Upon closer inspection, one realizes the lights are not reflecting on a piece of glass, but on a shallow pool of water, preventing the usual function of the table as a place to make drawings. Each individual table alludes to the nature of the artistic process and becomes a visual pun about the difficulty and even impossibility of rendering, of "drawing" upon ideas and making them palpable. With the ubiquitous presence of water and the precarious, potentially unstable tables, one may also imagine the installation as a referent to Cuba—the constantly shifting conditions of the island and the artists who work there.

**Biblioteca (Library, Part 1), 2001****Walter Gallery Annex**

Tape measures and paint; dimensions variable

This room-sized installation is a "library" of thirty-six carpenter's tapes containing text fragments of banned or censored books, which have been challenged throughout history, not only in Cuba, but also across the globe. The artists capture the unique capacity of the carpenter's "tool-of-the-trade" to be opened and closed, to both obscure and expose text. When open, the tapes reveal seminal literature and revel in open freedom of expression; however, when we imagine them closed, they become portable containers of clandestine and "forbidden" knowledge—illegal contraband—which must be smuggled in order to be disseminated.

**Libro verde (Green Book), 2001**

Watercolor on paper, 60x62 in.

**Agua (Water), 2001**

Watercolor on paper, 81x102 in., courtesy of Rosa Sandretto

**Cuatro espacios (Four Spaces), 2001**

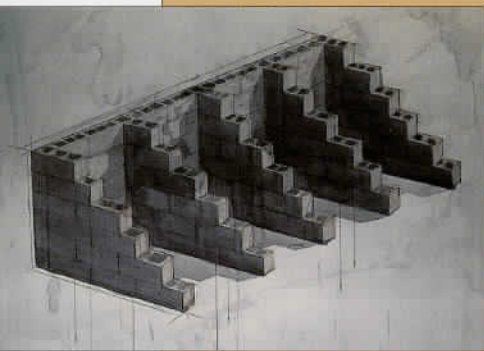
Watercolor on paper, 60.25x79 in.

**Pared (Wall), 2001****McBean Gallery**

Watercolor on paper, 50.50x79 in.

Los Carpinteros' process-oriented, often large-scale drawings explore ideas for sculptures or installations, but they exist as independent works of art and are not necessarily direct preparatory sketches for a specific object. When viewed together, they represent a compendium of conceptual ideas and a catalogue of images, which may or may not come to final fruition in material form or physical installation.

All artworks courtesy of Grant Selwyn Fine Art unless otherwise noted.



## Biography

Los Carpinteros have exhibited their work in New York at the New Museum and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center; the Palacio de Abrahante in Salamanca, Spain; the Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst in Aachen, Germany; the Kunsthalle in Berlin, Germany as well as participation in the Havana Bienale. Their *Ciudad transportable (Transportable City)*—the “tent city” installation which received the UNESCO prize at the 2000 Havana Bienale, is concurrently on display at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Los Carpinteros’ work is in many permanent collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the Ludwig Forum in Aachen, Germany; the Centro De Arte Contemporáneo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Spain; the Museo de Bella Artes in Havana and the Museo Gallego de Arte Contemporáneo in Spain.

## Acknowledgments

Very special thanks to: Kit and Peter Bedford for their generous support of this exhibition, Rosa Lowinger and Robert Espinoza for consultation and production on *Especios de agua*, Marc Selwyn and Lexi Brown from Grant Selwyn Fine Art for their generous loans to the exhibition, Tony Labat and San Francisco Art Institute New Genres students for working with Los Carpinteros during their residency; Larry Thomas for ongoing academic support; exhibitions staff Merry Scully, Erez Golan, and Bruce Brodie; and our student workers Karen Gallagher, Mary George, Miza Hadzic, Joshua Hartsough, Kerri Johnson, Jo Nigoghossian, and Sarah Vinci.

Last but not least, thanks to Los Carpinteros—Alexandre Arrechea, Marco Castillo, and Dagoberto Rodriguez—for their wonderful work, high spirit and sense of humor.

## San Francisco Art Institute Artists Projects and Residencies

The San Francisco Art Institute integrates its academic and public programs by providing visiting artists with opportunities to create new work utilizing the resources of the institution and by engaging directly with students over an extended period of time. Foremost in our efforts are residencies with national and international artists who take advantage of this unique creative environment by participating in activities including commissioned projects, exhibitions, public lectures, and critiques.

## Upcoming Projects

**Raul Cordero**

**Gal Weinstein**

December 7—December 29, 2001

**Michal Helfman**

January 10—February 4, 2002

**Ghada Amer**

**Tania Bruguera**

February 14—March 30, 2002

The San Francisco Art Institute is a privately supported fine arts college offering educational and cultural programs to the San Francisco Bay area. The Art Institute receives support from the California Arts Council, Friends of the Art Institute, and Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

design: Sara Cambridge

Cover image: *Libro verde (Green Book)*, 2001