

# ARTFORUM

INTERNATIONAL

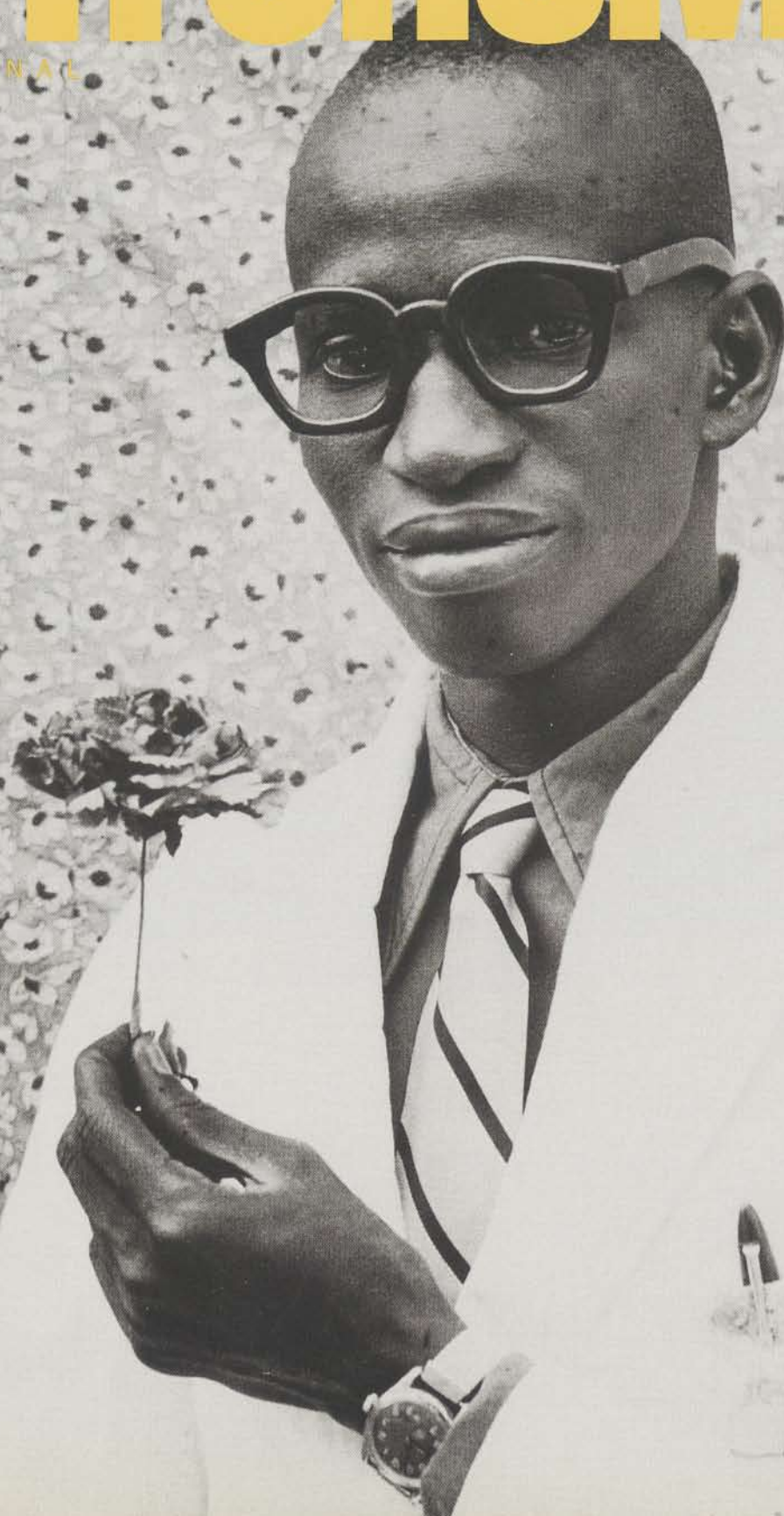
FEBRUARY 1998 \$7.00



**DIEBENKORN**  
BY PETER PLAGENS

**JACKSON POLLOCK**  
SKETCHBOOKS AND DRAWINGS

**SEYDOU KEÏTA**



MAY BE CHECKED  
OUT AFTER

MAR 10 1998

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
FURNACE LIBRARY





with the volumes themselves, sometimes battered and soiled, their covers faded, the designs simple if not naïve. This library—its U design functions as an invitation to the otherwise hands-off museum visitor—could be seen as a humbler relation of MOCA's sleek reading room at the nearby Geffen Contemporary. Though the reading room is refurbished with Frank Gehry chairs and a better class of books—weighty art catalogues and high theory—Kcho's book stall trumps it for superior status: it was art.

The vast majority of Kcho's books were, of course, in Spanish (a few are in English and Russian, and at least one is in Portuguese), and their contents generally seemed outdated. Yet this collection speaks in an eloquent and cacophonous way of an experience that is far from most of its viewers: the time and place of their collector, the artist himself, represented in volumes on Russian literature, on the poetry of revolution, on the geography of Cuba, on José Martí, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro; and on medicine, biology, advertising, management, geometry, mathematics, music, dance, high and low literature, and, of course, art. It is worth noting that Kcho was not granted a visa to install the work: the library-boat, then, stands in for the absent librarian.

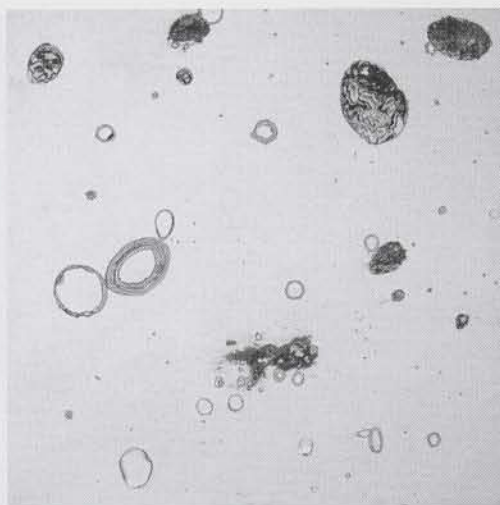
There is a strong textual character to Kcho's library—not so much in the endless succession of printed pages, but in the interrelationships between foreign languages and categories of knowledge and the different narratives one may construct in browsing through them. Each time you walk through the exhibit, everything changes. The interpretive barriers to this part of "Todo Cambia" were manifold: the books' origin in embargoed Cuba, their (for many viewers) foreign languages, their diverse contents, their sheer quantity of items. Open as the work seems to be, it raises obstacles for the viewer to surmount and multiple possibilities that he or she must choose from, posing a piercing metaphor for the perils and limits of this highly enigmatic activity: reading.

—Adriano Pedrosa

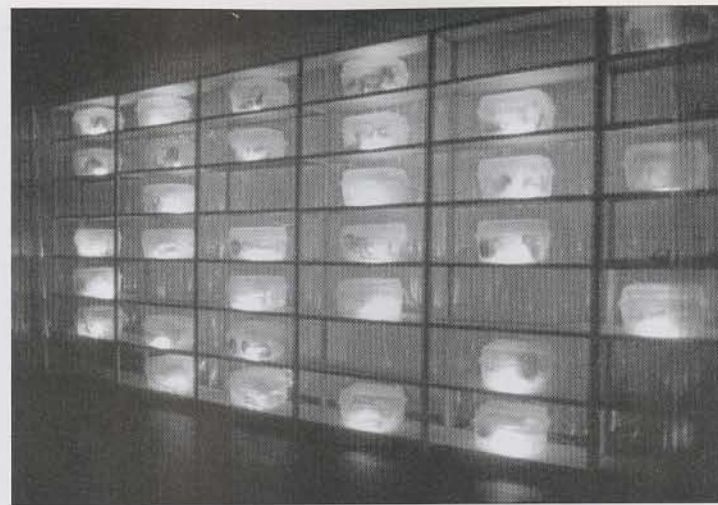
## "MALIBU SEX PARTY"

PURPLE

Although it has that kind of *jeu d'esprit*, "Malibu Sex Party" was no mindless frolic on the beach. Featuring thirty younger Los Angeles artists casually brought together by artist John Geary, the show escaped cliquishness by inclusivity and had no overarching principle other than exuberance.



Francesca Gabbiani, *Sucker*, 1997, oil and wax on aluminum, ca. 24 x 24".



Paloma Navares, *Luces de Hibernación (Hibernation lights)*, 1997, mixed media. Installation view. From "Primera Bienal Iberoamericana de Lima."

Everyone is by now aware of the hype about the LA art scene (articles have appeared in almost every magazine of note, from *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* to *Spin* and *Forbes*), but there is no discernible "LA School," thank God, and what keeps things exciting is the variety of the work being produced despite the academic training and affiliation of many of the artists. Even if "Malibu Sex Party," like recent openings at 702 (a lively venue for the more rambunctious cream of the crop) left me not entirely convinced or enchanted by all the art, the vibrancy of the goings-on helped me feel as if the whole project of artmaking is worthwhile, at times thrilling, and probably one of the better uses of everyone's time—vibes too rarely resonating anywhere else.

And what does the art look and feel like? The best of the younger artists are trying to figure out what it means to make anything anymore in a world that keeps vomiting up all kinds of things, some of them quite interesting just as they are. Having learned as much from toys, amusement parks, and television as from Matisse or Nauman (which is to imply not that they are unsearching, but awake to the full breadth of Southern California's cultural milieu), they create work that looks like little else you've encountered.

Take David O'Quinn's *Angeles Falls*, 1997, a dainty pair of gurgling fountains, one a rocky reflective silver with a current of hot pink fluid, the other mirroring gold and television blue, each adorned with live flowers; or Greg Einhorn's *Do You Know How To Waltz?*, 1997, a petite boxed diorama of fake birds chirping while picking at a Coors, the grass and vibrant sky shining from the glossy paper that makes up the

avian setting, all of which can be hidden by a flimsy drape of fabric. Both works nod to Mother Nature but remain steadfastly unrelated in every other aspect. One offers nature via some hallucinogenic experience, like the psychosadism of Disneyland or Bel Air landscaping, the other, nature via science projects, commercials, shop windows, and Joseph Cornell. Similarities in form, material, and use of space might be seen to link the work of Jason Meadows and Evan Holloway, but where Meadows' *Untitled*, 1997, explores shape and light by bending and combining wood, plywood, Masonite, and fluorescent lights in a streamlined assemblage that a surfer who moonlights as a CalTech engineer might invent, Holloway, with *Spleen (The Oranur Experiment)*, 1997, formulated a sinister device by deploying a thick blanket of puce felt, fluorescent light and an amplifier to agitate Orgone to a toxic level, creating negative, carcinogenic energy. Other high points included Francesca Gabbiani's swirling, scarred painting on aluminum, *SUCKER*, 1997, a fierce lunar affair; David Korty's minimal, deft, Tuttle-esque *Good Vibrations*, 1997, which curved away from the wall in a graceful arc of what seemed to be warped fishing lures; and Amy Sarkisian's *Free Shrimp Drawings*, 1997, hand-drawn shrimps, one per page, endlessly Xeroxed, a cocktail riff on Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

Of course, in any group show there are going to be clunkers. Rather than name names—everyone here is young, who knows what may happen?—I'll just state that more and more I feel that most video art may not be as prepossessing as people would like to believe, and that one Lari Pittman in the world is enough. But all

in all, "Malibu Sex Party" was sexier than most gallery shows and I was ready for another go-around, primed and available.

—Bruce Hainley

L I M A

## "PRIMERA BIENAL IBEROAMERICANA DE LIMA"

MUNICIPALIDAD DE LIMA

Biennials seem to be popping up everywhere, and now it's Lima's turn. The city recently chose to follow in the path taken by cities like Venice, São Paulo, Havana, Quenca, Istanbul, Johannesburg, and Kwangju. Last October, the Peruvian capital inaugurated the first Iberian-American biennial at the same time as the opening of the first Mercosul Biennial in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The show's organizers adopted the policy of showing the work of one artist per Iberian-American country (except in the case of Chile, which sent three artists, and Peru, which was represented by fifty chosen through a voting process), spread throughout fourteen centrally located buildings.

Biennial exhibitions seem to have become fabulously efficient diplomatic tools in a global era. Lima is no exception: the organizers invited artists and curators from many parts of the world to witness the city's little-known artistic production, to experience its recent urbanization, and to view the renovation of historical monuments and buildings in its central area. Luis Lama, the show's organizer, along with an international team consisting of one cura-