

# locustprojects

3852 North Miami Avenue, Miami, FL 33127

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### Locust Projects presents

#### MAIN GALLERY:

Juana Valdes:

*Rest Ashore*

#### Exhibition Dates:

September 12-

October 24, 2020

#### Public Hours:

Wednesday-Saturday,

11am-5pm

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

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## MAJOR NEW INSTALLATION BY JUANA VALDES REEXAMINES THE MIGRATION EXPERIENCE



Film still from *Rest Ashore*, 2020

[Miami, FL] Locust Projects presents *Rest Ashore*, a new large scale multi-channel video installation by LatinX multi-disciplinary artist Juana Valdes. *Rest Ashore* reexamines the Cuban migration experience over the past sixty years and how it relates to the current global refugee crisis. The installation explores similarities in how the refugee crisis has been documented and disseminated in mass media throughout the years, both past and present, while creating a new visual vernacular honoring those who died at sea in their travels. *Rest Ashore* marks Valdes's first significant expansion into video and a dramatic shift in her artistic process.

While this project differs significantly from Valdes's past work, it continues her thematic explorations of the sea, ocean, rivers, and "bodies of water", which have always played a significant role in her practice and shifted the way in which she perceives and reimagines the Caribbean.

Upon entering the space, visitors will encounter *Waves of Migrations (Olas de Migraciones)*, a multimedia sculpture of stacking CRT (cathode-ray tube) televisions, each screen depicting a different decade of Cuban migration—the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Repurposed archival footage tells the story of each wave of migration: the first wave of Cuba's elite executives between 1959-1962; the second wave between 1965-1974 when America and Cuba negotiated the orderly departure of Cubans; the 1978 Cuban government's agreement to release political prisoners and allow Cubans in the U.S. to visit

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Cuba, resulting in the chaotic flotilla exodus in 1980; and the most recent fourth wave resulting from America's updates to the embargo in 1992, during which Cubans made a dangerous journey to America by sea on drifting *balsas*- makeshift rafts created with wood, doors, tires, and other repurposed floating objects and cloth sails.<sup>1</sup>

Walking past the tower of CRT screens, visitors enter a vast space in shades of green and blue, creating the feeling of being suspended deep beneath the waves of the ocean. On opposite ends of the space, two video walls display *Eternal Sunshine/Dreams of a Foreign Landscape (Eterno Resplandor del Sol/Sueños de un Paisaje Extranjo)*, a new video work portraying a man looking out to sea beyond the horizon and a never-ending sunset over the ocean.



Film still from *Rest Ashore*, 2020

The floor is covered in shipping pallets in various sizes, with several reconfigured and connected into three larger functional structures that welcome visitors to stand or sit upon their rough wood. Once situated on the pallets, viewers are in perfect position to look upwards towards massive canvas screens reminiscent of sails. Suspended in the air over each structure, the sails show a video projection of brand new film *Rest Ashore (Descansar en la Orilla)* by Valdes, confronting viewers with imagery of objects lost at sea, descending into the ocean and washing ashore, referencing loss, sacrifice, and the loss of human lives).

<sup>1</sup> *Cuba's Revolution and Exodus*, Silvia Pedraza [Volume 5, Issue 2](#), The Journal of the International Institute, Winter 1998) : <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.4750978.0005.204>, [Permissions](#)

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Using the Cuban-American rafters “*Balseros*” experience as a starting point and reflecting upon past and current migration by sea, *Rest Ashore* aims to address the current refugee crisis worldwide, remembering and recognizing those refugees who died at sea in their journeys. The project pushes past the conventional beliefs of what it means to be a refugee and questions how these experiences are chronicled in the media and recorded in our memories.

***This exhibition is made possible, in part, with support from Funding Arts Network, Oolite Arts’ 2018 Ellies Creator Award, and University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMASS) 2019 Research Healey Endowment Grant.***



Juana Valdes, photo by Pedro Wazzan, courtesy of Locust Projects

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Juana Valdes uses printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, and site-specific installations, to explore issues of race, transnationalism, gender, labor, and class. Functioning as an archive, Valdes’s work analyzes and decodes experiences of migration as a person of Afro Caribbean heritage.

**Recent solo exhibitions include:** *Terrestrial Bodies*, Cuban Legacy Gallery, Miami Dade College Special Collections, Freedom Tower (2019-2020); *An Inherent View of the World*, Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami (2017); *From Island to Ocean: Caribbean and Pacific Dialogues*, Center for Cultural Analysis, Rutgers University, NJ (2015), and *Remnants-What Remains*, Thomas Hunter Project Space, Hunter College, CUNY (2014). Her exhibition *An Inherent View of the World* was acquired in full by the Pérez Art Museum, Miami and will be featured in the upcoming exhibition, *Polyphonic: Celebrating PAMM’s Fund for African American Art from February 7 – August 9, 2020*.

**Recent group exhibitions include:** *Queer + Peculiar Craft*, showcasing recent work by an international group of artists, designers and makers working with ceramics and textiles, The Clemente Abraço Interno Gallery, NYC (2019-2020); *GROUND*, Spinello Projects, Miami (2019); *RAW: Craft, Commodity, and Capitalism*, Craft Contemporary, LA (2019); *Building a Feminist Archive: Cuban Women Photographers in the US*, Pompano Beach Cultural Art Center, FL (2019); *Round 49: Penumbra: Sacred Geometries* at Project Row Houses, Houston (2019); *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago*, Museum of Latin American Art, presented as part of Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA, Long Beach, CA (2017) traveled to: Wallach Gallery at the Lenfest Center for the Arts, Columbia University and Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling, NYC; and the Delaware Art Museum (2018).



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Her work has also been included in group exhibitions in such museums and university galleries such as: Site Santa Fe, Perez Art Museum, El Museo del Barrio, NYC; P.S. 1 MOMA, NYC; MOCA, North Miami; Galerie Verein Berliner Künstler, Berlin; the Mason Gross Galleries at Rutgers University, NJ; Newark Museum, NJ; Galerie Binnen, Amsterdam; and FreeSpace, Sydney.

**Grants, Awards and Fellowships include:** Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2018), The Ellies Creator Award (2018); The Netherland-American Foundation Cultural Grant, (2011); New York Foundation for the Arts, Sculpture/Craft (2011); the National Association of Latinos Arts and Culture Visual Artists Grant (2009); and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (1998).

Born in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, Valdes came to the United States in 1971. She received her BFA in Sculpture from the Parsons School of Design (1991), her MFA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts (1993) and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (1995). She is currently an Associate Professor in the Art Department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and is represented in Miami by Spinello Projects.

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## ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.

Locust Projects 2019-2020 exhibitions and programming are made possible with support from: The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; The National Endowment for the Arts Art Works Grant; Hillsdale Fund; the Albert and Jane Nahmad Family Foundation; The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; Funding Arts Network; The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation at The Miami Foundation, Kirk Foundation; Miami Salon Group; and the Wege Foundation; and the donors to the Still Making Art Happen Campaign and Locust Projects Exhibitionist members.

**ART HAPPENS HERE.**