

---

nara roesler

---

**marco a. castillo**

---

**nara roesler são paulo**

propiedad del estado  
june 10 – july 24, 2021

---

**sp-arte online viewing room**  
june 9 – 13, 2021



# nara roesler são paulo

## propiedad del estado

june 10 – july 24, 2021

Nara Roesler São Paulo is pleased to announce *Propiedad del Estado*, artist Marco A. Castillo's first solo exhibition in Brazil. The exhibition develops from his iconic presentation titled *The Decorator's Home*, showcased on the occasion of the 13 Bienal de Havana (2018), in Cuba and subsequently at UTA Artist Space (2019), in Los Angeles, USA.

Marco A. Castillo is a founding member of the Cuban collective, Los Carpinteros, alongside Alexandre Arrechea and Dagoberto Rodríguez Sánchez. In his career as a solo artist, Castillo has focused on a body of work that engages with Cuban history, concentrating on the social and cultural shifts that occurred in the country following the revolution. The artist has undertaken an ample investigation in the fields of architecture, design, and sculpture, which have come to form the core of his practice. Castillo's artistic production consists of installations, drawings and sculptures, which establish an intricate relationship with space—both contextual and physical—and occupy a liminal area between the functional and non-functional.

The works exhibited in *Propiedad del Estado* result from the artist's interest in the utopic universe of Cuba's modernist designers and architects at work in the 1950s, in the early years of the Cuban revolution. During this period, these professionals developed a series of projects that would later be part of an aesthetic revolution in the country. Their work notably consisted of creating new spaces meant to accommodate and mold the life of the 'new man', words used to describe an individual who could build new relations towards working life, and thus construct a new society, with new modes of

production and morals. The design and architecture produced during this time, were characterized by austere designs that intertwined references ranging from the aboriginal past, to Nordic and African influences, resulting in a unique visual lexicon. However, in the 1970s, the aesthetic project was abandoned due to the new government denouncing it as being derived from 'bourgeois taste.'

Castillo has worked to recover and revive the tradition, developing new approaches and perspectives for it. He has therefore undertaken extensive research with the aim of retrieving formal and technical vocabulary of the time, engaging with key figures of a 'forgotten generation', including individuals such as Gonzalo Córdoba, María Victoria Caignet, Rodolfo Fernández Suárez, and architect Walter Betancourt, among others. Castillo notably makes direct reference to these figures by naming many of his works after them, making each piece a homage that also prevents an entire generation of creators from being forgotten.

Ultimately, in juxtaposing historical and political components, with artisanal techniques of production, Castillo establishes an artistic process capable of weaving together different narratives and forms. His propositions are imbued with his own personal perspective, which put forward new interpretations of Cuban modernism, and of its trajectories.

---

cover Marco A. Castillo. *Lourdes (Piel)*, 2021

---

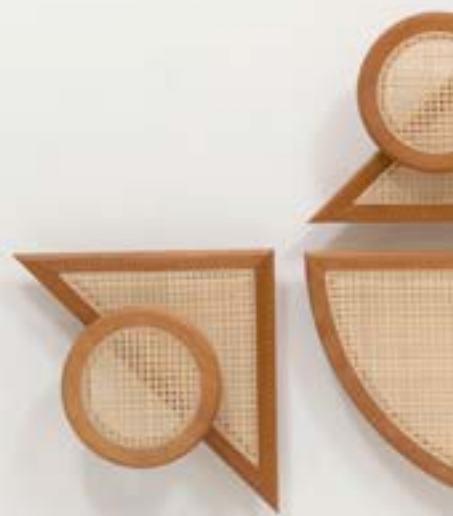
all images © Marco A. Castillo. Courtesy Nara Roesler.

## beltrán 2021

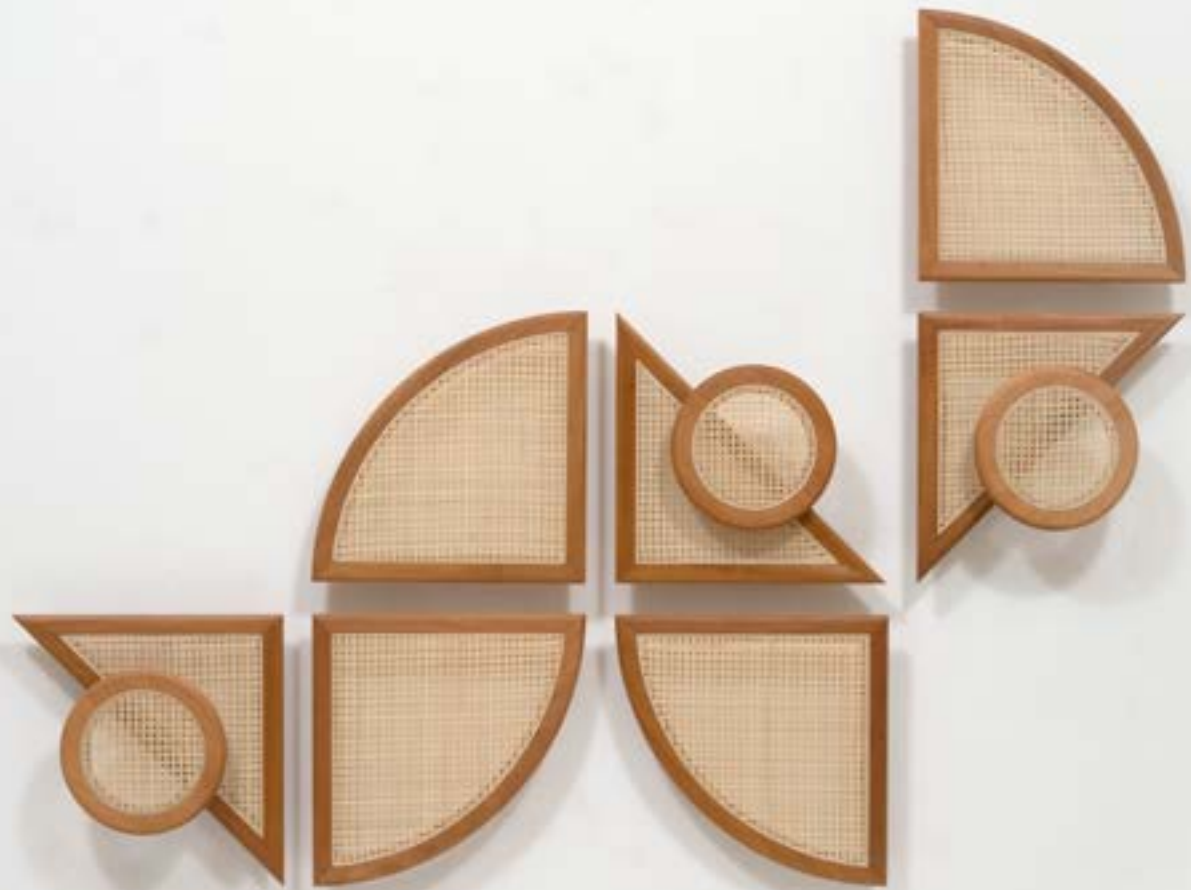
Marco Castillo's wood and rattan works are rooted in the designs of Cuban modernist practice, juxtaposing a colonial and traditional past with more ideological and figurative influences of the 1960s and 1970s. The pieces take on Soviet-era designs, and intertwine them with traditional elements of the Cuban production such as latticework and rattan. It is also important to note that the works are titled after the names of Cuban architects and designers of the time. For example, *Beltrán #3*, *#4* and *#5* (2021) refer to Félix Beltrán, considered the father of Cuban poster design and one of Latin America's most important figures of design. The compositions are inspired by a logo, which Beltrán created on the occasion of Expo 67 in Montreal, specifically for the Cuban pavilion.



*Beltrán #04*, 2021  
mahogany wood and rattan  
208 x 155 x 12 cm  
81.9 x 61 x 4.7 in







---

*Beltrán # 03*, 2021  
mahogany wood and rattan  
155 x 208 x 12 cm  
61 x 81.9 x 4.7 in





---

*Beltrán # 05, 2021*  
mahogany wood and rattan  
208 x 208 x 12 cm  
81.9 x 81.9 x 4.7 in



## **lourdes #2** 2021

*Lourdes #2* (2021) was inspired by two fundamental references. On one hand, it was influenced by a line of lamps named *Ambiente Joven*, designed by Gonzalo Córdoba in the 1970s. These objects were characterized by the use of fabric and plywood allowing for mass production, and by being adapted for precarious settings, all while embodying highly sophisticated designs. On the other hand, it was inspired by radars and tools for telecommunications from the Cold War. Specifically, the work posits a commentary on the structures installed at the Lourdes Base, built in the 1960s by soviets in order to spy on Washington.



---

*Lourdes (Piel)*, 2021  
mahogany wood and fabric  
150 x 150 x 50,4 cm  
59.1 x 59.1 x 19.8 in







## low reliefs

The *Low Relief* series seeks to engage with the idea of the poster—delving into the tradition of Cuban, and more widely of Latin American graphic design of the 1960s and 1970s, and transforming the conventional two-dimensional poster into a three-dimensional object. Castillo's *Low Reliefs* are characterized by a process of compositional carvings whereby the artist cuts through large stacks of cardboard. In slicing through piles and into the various layers of paper, Castillo creates geometric drawings made of bas-reliefs using the physicality of the support to give the composition depth, layering, and symmetry. The pieces evoke architectural elements and capture a historic Cuban endeavor for modernist, utopian, and high-minded aesthetics through their razor-sharp lines and perfectly geometric designs.



---

*Low Relief with 10 circles and  
10 polyhedric depressions, 2020*  
cardboard  
77 x 51,5 x 12 cm  
30.3 x 20.3 x 4.7 in









**iván** 2020–present

*Iván* is a series of wall sculptures that follow a common constructive principle. The works are composed of numerous elements of wood, sculpted into the shape of rifles. The rifles are subsequently assembled into different patterns, creating an optical installation. The idea emerged as the artist imagined that, at a time of militarization, ‘an artist or a designer could have composed an optical art poster by assembling rifles to create a monument’, but having never seen such an image, he decided to create one himself. The series also plays on the idea that the sculptures, though identical in form, are not the same object as a store—bought rifle—the artist therefore extricates the shape from the function, going even further with his play, as he propels the rifle into the realm of art.

---

*Iván (Square)*, 2021  
mahogany wood  
240 x 95,6 x 17 cm  
94.5 x 37.6 x 6.7 in





---

46209

*Iván (Circle)*, 2021  
mahogany wood  
250 x 86,4 x 17 cm  
98.4 x 34 x 6.7 in











---

*Iván (Triangle)*, 2021  
mahogany wood  
254 x 86,4 x 17 cm  
100 x 34 x 6.7 in





---

46208  
*Iván (Hexagon)*, 2021  
mahogany wood  
250 x 86,4 x 17 cm  
98.4 x 34 x 6.7 in





## generación 2019

*Generación* [Generation] works as a metaphor for the cultural and aesthetic programs that have cyclically occurred in Cuba and—possibly—in other countries around the world. The film includes fictional characters enacted by artists, photographers, writers, architects and curators, who make up today's Cuban intellectual scene. As they embody the 1970s state of mind, the metrage establishes a time ellipse between Cuba's past and present contexts. The visuals are accompanied by the song *Pólvora Mojada*, an iconic track of the 1970s performed by one of the country's most prominent singers, Beatriz Márquez. This video was created in collaboration with Cuban filmmaker Carlos Lechuga, who directed films such as *Santa y Andrés* and *Melaza*, and who also represents a younger generation of artists affected by Cuban censorship. Castillo sought to insert viewers into this experience, confronting them with the deep damage that extremist and stigmatizing narratives cause to humanity.



---

*Generación*, 2019  
video 2K, single channel, video projection,  
color, stereo sound  
6'45"







## sketchbooks 2019–present

As its name suggests, this body of work designates a series of sketchbooks, which the artist carved into. Cutting through the cover and into the various layers of paper, Castillo creates geometric drawings made of bas-reliefs using the physicality of the support to give the composition depth, layering and symmetry. Some of the pieces evoke architectural elements, and capture a historic endeavor for

modernist, utopian and high-minded aesthetics through its razor sharp lines and perfectly geometric designs. Others, are made of groups of sketchbooks, where each one is carved with two different letters - one is visible from afar, and the other is only visible from close by—and thus, when hung together the sketchbooks spell out two words, both of which have the same number of letters but have different meanings, and are visible from different positions. *Antifa/Kuklux* and *Negro/Poder*,

both dated 2021, are examples of this practice. Castillo says that the ideas which are juxtaposed in these works, ‘seem like opposites, but they represent coincidences’, once more intricately inserting his work into the socio-political history of his country and the trajectory of creative practices.



---

*Estado/Pueblo*, 2021

paper

6 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 2 cm (each)

6 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 0.8 in (each)



PROPIEDAD

NEGRO

LAPOSSESION

FIDELCASTRO

ESTADO

COMPROMISO

ELHOMBRE NUEVO



---

*Fidel Castro/Costa e Silva, 2021*

paper

11 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 2,5 cm (each)

11 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 1 in (each)

---

*Estado/Pueblo, 2021*

paper

6 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 2 cm (each)

11 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 1 in (each)

---

*Compromiso/Lo material, 2021*

paper

10 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 3,5 cm (each)

11 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 1 in (each)

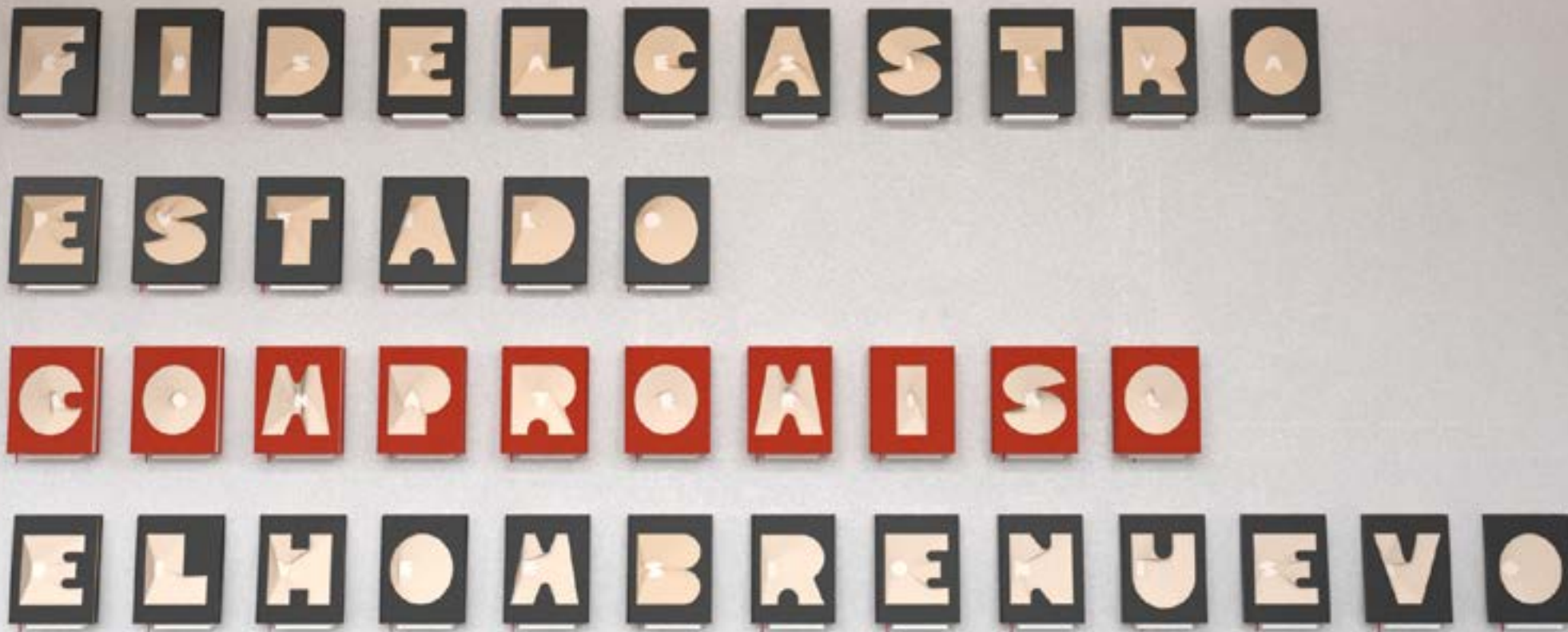
---

*El hombre nuevo/Diversiónismo, 2021*

paper

13 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 2 cm (each)

11 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 1 in (each)





---

*Negro/Poder*, 2021

paper

5 pieces of 27 x 22 x 2 cm (each)

5 pieces of 10.6 x 8.7 x 0.8 in (each)





# sp-arte online viewing room

june 9 – 13, 2021

On the occasion of the 2nd edition of SP-Arte Online, Nara Roesler is pleased to present a selection of works by Marco A. Castillo. The exhibition opens in conjunction with *Propriedad del Estado*, the artist's first solo show in Brazil, on display at Nara Roesler São Paulo, expanding the public's understanding of the artist's compelling practice.

Nara Roesler's presentation for SP-Arte Viewing Room 2021, includes works in wood and rattan, such as *Lam* and *Ana*, as well as from the *Low Reliefs* and *Libreta de Notas* series. His *Lam* and *Ana* series are rooted in the designs of Cuban modernist practice, juxtaposing a colonial and traditional past with more ideological and figurative influences of the 1960s and 1970s. While in *Ana*, Castillo intertwined Soviet-era designs with traditional elements of the Cuban production, in *Lam*, he juxtaposes forms derived from indigenous and african art, evoking influences from Cuban modernist design. The name of the series was chosen in homage to Wilfredo Lam, who also worked with visual elements of the like, becoming an icon of modernity in Cuba.

The series *Libreta de Notas*, consists of works made of ink and pencil on paper, through which Castillo explores modernist designs and structures. *Libreta de Notas* are not studies for his sculptures, but rather a means of delving into an aesthetic program, and into the role of reviving or reconstructing his country's heritage.



*Séptima libreta de notas, page 2, 2020*  
mixed media on paper  
27,9 x 20,8 cm  
11 x 8.2 in

**Ana # 02, 2020**  
wood and rattan  
242,4 x 211,4 x 13 cm  
95.4 x 83.2 x 5.1 in









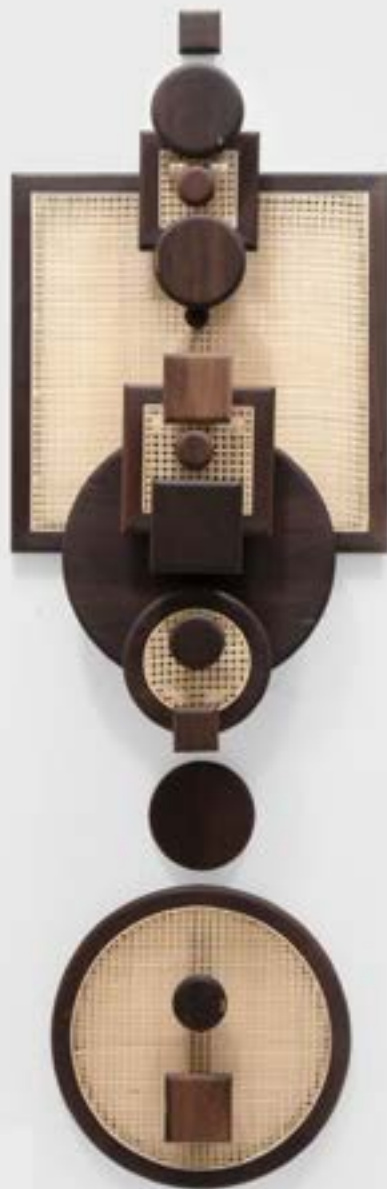


*Primeira libreta de notas, page 41, 2018*  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm  
9.8 x 7.8 in



*Primeira libreta de notas, page 13, 2018*  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm  
9.8 x 7.8 in





---

*From the Lam series (Katalox # 03), 2021*  
katalox wood and rattan  
193 x 63 x 20 cm  
76 x 24.8 x 7.9 in









---

*Primeira libreta de notas, page 12, 2018*  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm  
9.8 x 7.8 in

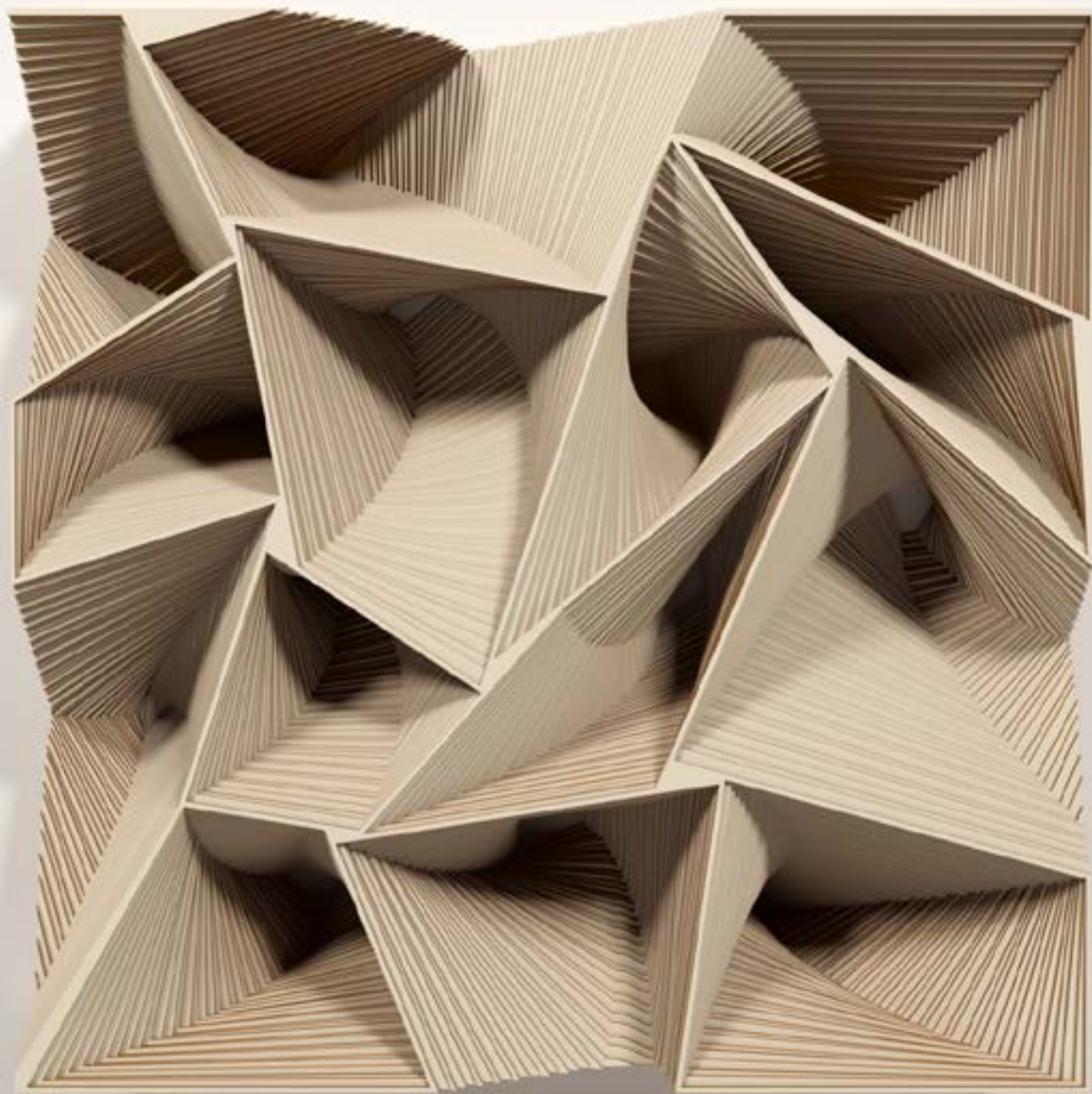




---

*Low relief with 14 polyhedral  
depressions (2), 2021*  
cardboard  
77 x 77 x 15 cm  
30.3 x 30.3 x 5.9 in



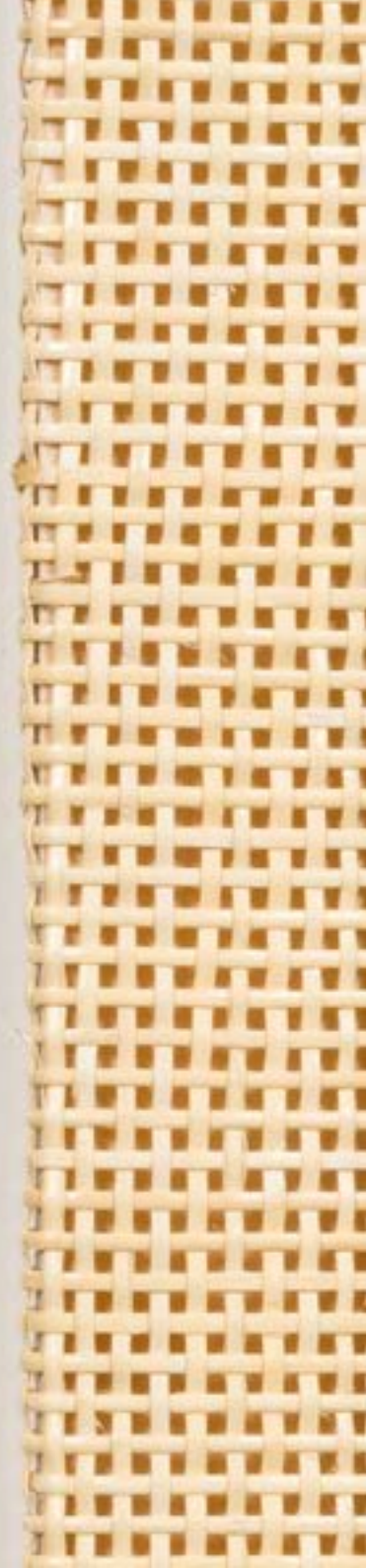
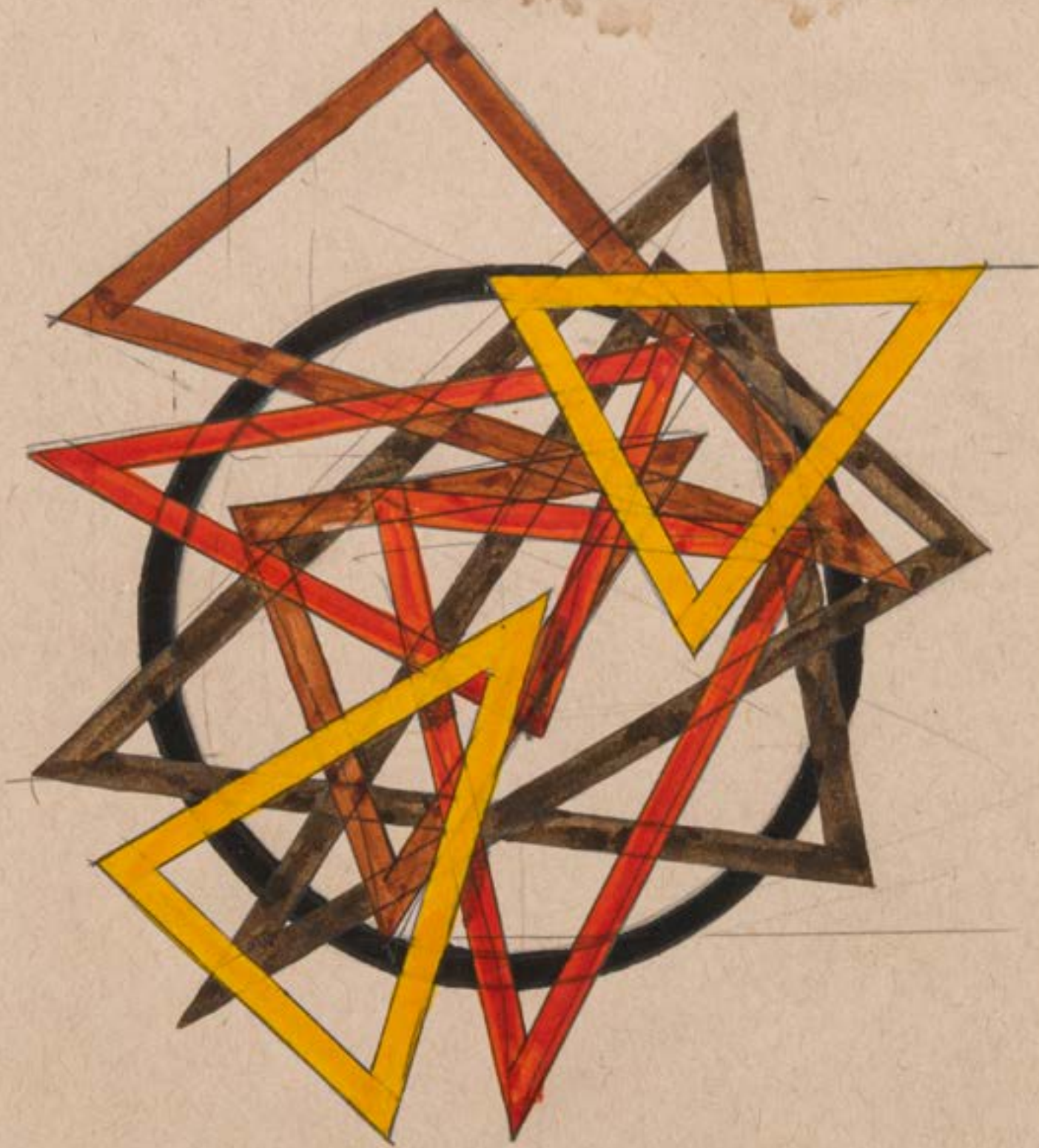






*Primeira libreta de notas, page 9, 2018*  
mixed media on paper  
24,8 x 19,8 cm  
9.8 x 7.8 in







*From the Lam series (Katalox # 01), 2021*  
katalox wood and rattan  
162 x 77 x 20 cm  
63.8 x 30.3 x 7.9 in









Cuarta libreta de notas, page 5 | Textil, 2020  
mixed media on paper  
27,9 x 20,8 cm  
11 x 8.2 in



---

*Low relief with 13 circles and  
12 organic depressions, 2020*  
cardboard  
103 x 77 x 17,5 cm  
40.6 x 30.3 x 6.9 in







---

*Séptima libreta de notas, page 3, 2020*  
mixed media on paper  
27,9 x 20,8 cm  
11 x 8.2 in



---

*Nosotros/Sin Usted*, 2021

paper

8 pieces of 28,5 x 22 x 2 cm (each)

8 pieces of 11.2 x 8.7 x 0.8 in (each)



---

## marco a. castillo

b. 1971, Havana, Cuba

lives and works in Havana, Cuba and Madrid, Spain

Marco A. Castillo is a founding member of the art collective Los Carpinteros, and his work is permeated by an interest in the history of Cuba and the country's post-revolutionary, social and cultural changes. Castillo has been extensively investigating architecture, design and sculpture, which are fundamental aspects of his artistic practice in seeking to create installations, drawings and sculptures that engage with space and negotiate between the functional and non-functional, often expressed in a humorous way.

In tandem with a global movement of historical revision, Castillo reflects on Cuba's modernization in the 1960 and 1970s and refers to influential Cuban artists, architects and designers. The sculptures and works on paper pertaining to his most recent project combine elements of modern design and socialist realism of the Soviet period with traditional Cuban techniques and materials—including mahogany wood and rattan fabric, as well as with graphic designs of the time.

Lately the artist has been focused on reinterpreting the works of key figures from what he calls a 'forgotten generation', such as Gonzalo Córdoba, María Victoria Caignet, Rodolfo Fernández Suárez (Fofi), Joaquín Galván and Walter Betancourt. From a political standpoint, Castillo seeks to follow these artists' historic trail, while positioning himself as an advocate and herald for Cuban artistic heritage.

---

[click to see full cv](#)

### selection of solo exhibitions

nb. any exhibition before 2017 was presented with the artistic collective Los Carpinteros

- *The Decorator's Home*, UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles, EUA (2019)
- *El susurro del palmar*, Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zürich, Switzerland (2018)
- *La cosa está candela*, Museo de Arte Miguel Urrutia, Bogota, Colombia (2017)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2015)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, UK (2015)
- *Los Carpinteros*, Faena Art Center, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2012)
- *Ciudad Transportable*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA (2001)
- *Los Carpinteros*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, USA (2001)

### selected group exhibitions

nb. any exhibition before 2017 was presented with the artistic collective Los Carpinteros

- *Everyday Poetics*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, USA (2017)
- *Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA (2017)
- *Alchemy: Transformations in Gold*, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, USA (2017)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Biennial, Beirut, Lebanon (2017)
- *Contingent Beauty: Contemporary Art from Latin America*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA (2015)
- *The Kaleidoscopic Eye: Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2009)
- Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba (2019, 2015, 2012, 2006, 2000, 1994, 1991)
- 25<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2002)

### selected collections

- Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
- Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain
- Daros Foundation, Zürich, Switzerland
- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

---

nara roesler

---

---

**são paulo**

avenida europa 655,  
jardim europa, 01449-001  
são paulo, sp, brasil  
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

---

**rio de janeiro**

rua redentor 241,  
ippanema, 22421-030  
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil  
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

---

**new york**

511 west 21<sup>st</sup> street  
new york, 10011 ny  
usa  
t 1 (212) 794 5034

---

[nararoesler.art](http://nararoesler.art)

[info@nararoesler.art](mailto:info@nararoesler.art)