



The 8th Floor
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DRAPETOMANÍA: GRUPO ANTILLANO AND THE ART OF AFRO-CUBA

Curated by Alejandro de la Fuente

March 7th – July 18th, 2014

The 8th Floor

www.the8thfloor.org

Tuesday – Thursday 11am – 6pm

Friday 10 am – 5pm

The 8th Floor is proud to present *Drapetomania: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*, curated by Alejandro de la Fuente, Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics and Professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. Originally presented at the Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño in Santiago de Cuba, where it was described as “one of the best visual arts exhibits of the last few years in Santiago de Cuba,” *Drapetomanía* travels to The 8th Floor from the Centro de Desarrollo de las Artes Visuales in Havana. The exhibition, which celebrates a group of artists from the late 1970s, will go on to the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco and Harvard University’s Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.

Drapetomanía is a tribute to Grupo Antillano (1978-1983), a forgotten visual arts and cultural movement that privileged the importance of African and Afro-Caribbean influences in the formation of the Cuban nation. The art of Grupo Antillano belongs to a long tradition of Caribbean resistance and cultural assertion. It is part of what Haitian poet René Depestre has described as the African slaves’ “prodigious effort at legitimate defense” and “ideological *cimarronaje* (“Self-liberation”)” by which they managed to recreate their pasts and cultures in the new world.

The exhibit showcases works by the artists of Grupo Antillano (Esteban Ayala, Rogelio Rodríguez Cobas, Manuel Couceiro, Herminio Escalona, Ever Fonseca, Ramón Haití, Adelaida Herrera, Arnaldo Rodríguez Larrinaga, Oscar Rodríguez Lasseria, Alberto Lescay, Manuel Mendive, Leonel Morales, Clara Morera, Miguel Ocejo, Rafael Queneditt and Julia Valdés) and of a group of contemporary artists who share some of the concerns that Grupo Antillano articulated thirty years ago (Belkis Ayón, Bedia, Choco, Diago, Esquivel, Marta María Pérez Bravo, Montalván, Olazábal, Douglas Pérez, Peña, Elio Rodríguez and Leandro Soto).



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Curated by Alejandro de la Fuente, *Drapetomanía* is sponsored by the Afro-Latin American Research Institute at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, with support from the Ford Foundation and the Christopher Reynolds Foundation. The exhibit is complemented by the book [*Grupo Antillano: The Art of Afro-Cuba*](#), edited by Alejandro de la Fuente, with essays by art critic and historians Guillermina Ramos Cruz, José Veigas and Judith Bettelheim.

The 8th Floor is a private exhibition space established to promote cultural and philanthropic initiatives. Opened in 2010, recent shows have primarily focused on the presentation of contemporary Cuban art under the direction of curator Rachel Perera Weingeist, and worth with partners in Cuba. The 8th Floor is free and open to the public. School groups are encouraged; viewing hours are Tuesday through Thursday 11-6pm, and Friday 10-5pm.

For more information about the exhibition, or to request press images, please contact Anjuli Nanda, anjuli@the8thfloor.org or (646) 738-3988.