

CRITICS' PICKS MILAN

Luis Molina-Pantin

WIZARD GALLERY

Aurelio Saffi 6, First floor

April 6, 2008 - May 24, 2008

By Paola Noé 

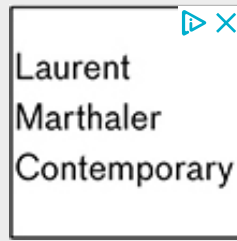
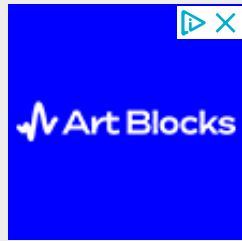




Jaime Duque Park 2, 2004–2005, color photograph, 47 1/4 x 39 6/16".

The main focus of this photographic series by Venezuelan artist Luis Molina-Pantin can be surmised from the show's title alone: "An informal study of the hybrid architecture, vol. 1—The narc-architecture and their contributions to the community (Cali-Bogotá, Colombia)." While human figures never appear, the artist evokes the ghosts that inhabit the edifices seen in his photographs. It is no accident that Molina-Pantin calls his subject hybrid architecture—the description aptly evokes the mysterious and dangerous presences that infuse and merge with the otherwise earthly monuments and buildings. The photos depict the Jaime Duque Park, as well as the villas, palaces, and buildings that sprout with the untamed ease of mushrooms throughout Bogotá and Cali. These were projects commissioned and built in an unfettered fashion by various Colombian drug-trafficking bosses during the 1980s and '90s, their cartels' golden decades. The language adopted by the artist could be that of German neo-objectivism, but in the case of this show, his images do more than just document a singular architectural style (dictated by a kitschy and heavy-handed South American aesthetic). These are outright *monuments*, through which the artist alludes to risky and unfortunate fragments of a social and cultural history that is difficult to forget. The aesthetic of shameless luxury—fountains, Moorish castles, and gilded sphinxes—is epitomized by the archaeology of an era that wounded an entire nation: absurd evidence that celebrates a past many would like to erase.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.



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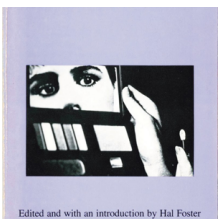
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