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## LAS FARC DID IT: Cesar Forero (Columbia)

Master's Thesis Exhibition (University of Waterloo)

January 15th to February 12th, 2006

Dr. Douglas Wright Education Gallery

On May 18, 2005, the subversive group "Las Farc" placed a horse bomb in front of a plaza, which was exploded. Blowing apart the poor animal, the terrorist group destroyed more than twenty homes and the police station. "Fortunately" at that time no human lives were lost. In July 2002, more than 8 policemen were wounded as a consequence of the exploding of another horse-bomb in the town of Guadalupe. Also, a similar event on September 2003 in Chita, Boyacá, left 8 people dead and more than 10 wounded.

Cesar Forero's installation shows an optimistic position despite the tragedies that are now unfortunately a common blight in our modern society. He uses this drama to transform it into an interactive-dancing narrative presentation. As living sculptures he and ballet dancer, Michelle Molyan, are integrated within the scene. Four more marionettes, arranged as sculptures, are also part of the composition. All six characters are masked and disguised, reminding one of the illusions of a carnival. The colorful costumes draw one's eye, distracting viewers from the drama. Further, they remind viewers through their dramatic presence of violent animal parts such as shark fins and jaws, rooster spurs, horns, thorns etc.

While music plays, dancing and acting takes place as Forero and Molyan interact with the marionette-sculptures. A circular mirror, whose surface is painted with the world map appears in the center of the scene, and above it two balloons are



Centre installation



Installation detail of puppets



suspended holding a hanging ceramic horse. Suddenly the dancers let loose the balloons and the ceramic horse falls - destroying the world-map mirror, symbolically presenting viewers with the destruction of our world. As a spotlight hits the surface of the broken glass the room itself seems to become part of the broken world's reflections. Like in a street performance carnival, a social story is told. The whole community participates and gets involved, aspiring to make of the world a more peaceful and unified place.

Like in a carnival, Forero's installation work is composed of various small "parades," in which different stories are told. The complete installation always leaves viewers to feel as if they are participants at a street festival. Joy and social questioning work together creating a unique representation of the thoughts. His work starts from the creation of two-dimensional masked characters. The painted object's direct relation with the human body appears in the scale and attitude of the cut out components. Through customizing the image a relationship between the mask and the body parts is created. Although two-dimensional the object always seems to emerge from the wall. The principles of the mask creation and the relation to human scale are also represented in the three-dimensional works. His sculptures appear within the gallery space as if they had emerged from the wall, fully integrated. The three-dimensional object allows the viewer to become involved and assimilate themselves within the installation. Small objects are scattered across the floor.

Story telling becomes an important part of the work. The compositions explore social problems, question our presence and how we live in the world, our use of natural resources. And more than anything, Forero's work insists that the only way to defeat tragedy, horror and cruelty is to fight back with art, dance, joy and beauty.

Masks for audience during performance



Puppet detail



Installation puppet

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