



...the two

Artists often express the burden of having to make a living by working on jobs detached from their main vocation. Urgency disrupts relevance and everyday practical needs disrupt creativity.

Andres Michelena's experience was not different. The Venezuelan conceptual artist—with a progressive career spanning more than 20 years in Venezuela, USA and Europe—relied on his income from other sources. He just made sure that his non-artistic occupations were, one way or another, tied to art: arts programs coordinator, Art Collection Manager, gallery assistant.

He also made sure that disposed scraps and refuse available from his daily activities became valuable sources for his work. Leftovers, considered trash by others, were raw materials

for new work, re-appropriated, converted and transmuted into full pieces of art with aesthetic value and philosophical meaning. Two of these delightful appropriations are showcased at his new exhibition at Piero Atchugarry Gallery, Miami.

For one of his pieces, a box containing engravings created by Italian artist Sandro Chia as well as texts by American poet Michael Palmer referencing those engravings, were discarded after each piece was slated to be sold separately. This refuse conferred to Michelena several high-quality bi-fold (diptychs) with Palmer's poems printed on them.

Michelena's perpetual exploration of emptiness as a source, lead him to cut words from Palmer's poems, painstakingly filling the void with other textures that created a new unity: A novel text, captivatingly original with a renewed style. The wonderful result deeply expresses the workmanship quality imbued in Michelena's work.

While working parallel jobs at different institutions, Michelena became familiarized with Benjamin Moore's paints and samples. The artist found their titles to be more poetic than the pigments' palette itself, thus the conception of the second series in the exhibit: *Haikus*. Here, he creates a series of visual poems that follow the syllabic structure of Japanese haikus (5-7-5), using very thin pieces of wood to frame a void where he attaches cutouts of the paint swatches, clockwise along the frame, titles still included. These ribbons and their support were then transmuted into fully conceptual pieces. The results are delicate compositions of unusual beauty and uncommon minimalism.

Both works, as a single concept, will be showcased as ...**the two**. The exhibit will be at the Piero Atchugarry Gallery from February 15 through March 14, 2020.

Opening reception: Saturday, February 15 at 6 PM, followed by the Progressive Brunch, offered by the Little River Galleries on Sunday 16th, 11 AM – 3 PM.

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