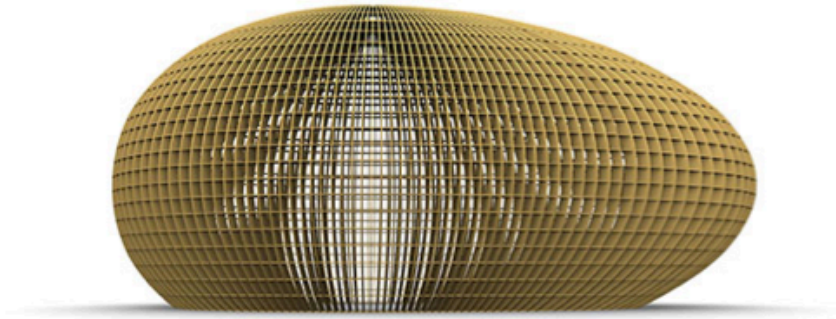


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Three Questions for Los Carpinteros About Their High-Concept Art Basel Miami Beach Bar



At **Art Basel Miami Beach**, even the bars are works of art. Cuban artist duo **Los Carpinteros** is creating a latticed, circular bar installation on the South Beach waterfront that will be open to revelers for the duration of the fair. The construction, titled "Güiro," draws its name from the Cuban percussion instrument created from a dried hard-shell, tropical fruit. (Fittingly, güiro is also Cuban slang for "party.") The oval-shaped bar will hold live music, performances, and activities throughout the week, including a set by Mollorcan composer **Joan Valent** that incorporates the güiro instrument.

The bar and accompanying events are sponsored by the **Absolut Art Bureau**, which also organized **Jeremy Shaw's** "The Kirlian" at **Art Basel** in Switzerland last June. Ahead of the fair, **ARTINFO** asked **Marco Costillo** and **Dagoberto Rodriguez**, the artists behind Los Carpinteros, to explain how this art bar fits in with their broader interests. Just as they sign their work as a collective, they opted to answer in one voice. Check out their responses below.

You are best known for building and drawing architectural spaces that are fantastical and nonfunctional. What interested you about creating a bar — a functional space with a very specific purpose?

Actually, even in our early work we were very interested in the functionality of objects and the meanings that they generate. These objects can be 100 percent functional and some people have in fact used our sculptures in their daily lives. For example, we created a work that looks like a hand grenade but is a wooden chest of drawers — our friend used it in their home for storing their clothes. Our friend assigned a specific use to this piece and in doing so extended the metaphorical meaning of the work. Although our sculptures question the meaning of the term "functionality," not all of them have a practical use. We apply functionality in a variety of ways. "Güiro" is a work that derives its meaning at the crossroads of functionality. It's a sculpture that offers a number of

uses: it's a library turned into a pavilion where drinks designed by us are offered, and there is music especially composed for the occasion. But we are still considering it a work of art and want people who come to experience "Güiro" to understand it in this way.

"Güiro" expands on a recent body of work of yours that involves creating civic spaces inspired by the architecture of panopticon prisons. Why create a bar that places revelers in the position of prisoners? In the context of this particular space, who will be doing the surveying?

The panopticon system has been applied in structures that we see every day. For example, the concept of the kitchen island in the middle of a room is something that has been used a lot in interior design in recent years. It has to do with the idea of controlling and observing the movement of people in a space. In our series of reading rooms — Sala de Lectura — the spaces are panopticon-shaped rooms. We have used a historic prison design and applied it to a civilian use. In the reading rooms, the reader is located in the center and has easy access to the literature on all the shelves. In the "Güiro," the bartender is the "jailer" and will have control of the "prisoners" because of the bar's central position in the space. Also from this viewpoint, all the shelves are completely visible to the central character because of the way columns exist in panoptic spaces, so nothing is blocking the view of outdoor activity as well.

Since we're talking bars, we must ask: What is your cocktail of choice?

Cuba libre?

— *Julia Halperin*