



Rafael Ferrer Gets Bumped

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by Pat Rogers

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LANCASTER, PA

The most difficult parts of having a museum show should be securing the exhibition and selecting the art. Rafael Ferrer's recent experience upped the ante. With 29 days to go, Ferrer's solo show was cancelled and then postponed by the Lancaster Museum of Art in PA. Plans now call for the exhibition to be held in the fall, said Lancaster Museum of Art board president Bernadette Taylor.



Photo: Gary Mamay.

Originally, the solo show was slated to open tomorrow (Mar 30). An "Art After Dark" private tour and event had been scheduled for May 17. Instead, the exhibition remains a concept and the catalogue and artworks are unseen.

The exhibition upset was prompted by the abrupt departure of Stanley I. Grand, the museum director and curator for the show.

The small staff (three, to be exact) didn't feel they could give Ferrer's show the curatorial expertise it deserved, said Taylor. The board voted to pull the exhibition from its slot.

"We felt in order to do a great job for the museum and for Rafael Ferrer, the best solution was to postpone, said Taylor. "We couldn't give the show the attention it deserved so we decided to postpone out of respect for the artist."

There's no question that Ferrer's diverse works can be a challenge to curate. Esperanza León of Solar art gallery curated Ferrer's solo show at Guild Hall in East Hampton, NY last winter. "Contrabando" was a short visual walk through the artist's decades-long career. The exhibition was inspired by a Ferrer retrospective held at the El Museo del Barrio in New York City in 2010.

During an interview held near the closing days of "Contrabando," León discussed the challenges and triumphs of curating an art show by a man who uses unusual and everyday objects to make his wide-ranging art. Materials include paper bags, gourds, chalk boards, metal, discarded parts, dead leaves, blocks of ice and more.

Compounding the challenge is Ferrer's oeuvre ranges from conceptual to process art to figurative to surrealism to expressionism. Art can be couched in politics, social issues, dualities and exploring things that are out-of-place.

In the meantime, here's some of the art exhibited at Guild Hall last winter:



Photo By: Gary Mamay.



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BASIC FACTS: "Rafael Ferrer - Contrabando" was presented at Guild Hall from Nov 5, 2011 to Jan 16, 2012. The show featured over 50 artworks made from the mid-1970s to 2011. Esperanza León of Solar art gallery in East Hampton, NY was the guest curator for the exhibition.

Ferrer's solo show at the **Lancaster Museum of Art** is expected to be held in the fall. Instead of

the Ferrer show, artworks from the museum's collection will be presented. "Permanent Collection: Featuring Recent Acquisitions" will be held from Apr 6 to May 27, 2012. The exhibition is unique as the museum rarely presents shows culled from the collection, said Taylor. The show is guest curated by Claire L. Giblin, Curator of Exhibitions for The Phillips Museum of Art at Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA.

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