

civic room

The Followers

Ximena Garrido-Lecca

Private View: Wednesday 28 April, 6-9 pm

Dates: 29 April – 6 June 2010

Hours: Thursday - Sunday, 12-6 pm or by appointment

The Followers' takes as inspiration a burial ground located in Cuzco, Peru. In this place, as in many deprived areas of Central and South America, the tradition persists of placing the dead in raised vertical concrete structures called *nichos*. The *nichos* often resemble something akin to a hotel of still lives, all stacked up one on top of the other. They are each fronted by a space full of photos, flowers and idiosyncratic offerings carefully arranged by the deceased's family and loved ones.

The offerings, left in the belief that they will accompany the departed into the realm of the dead, result in colourful and often wildly obscure compositions. Garrido-Lecca's faithful reproductions of these structures become still life homages (to still life homages) to non-stationary lives. The resulting aesthetic is reminiscent of the *Vanitas* tradition of still life painting. The influence of the Baroque style, as well as pre-Colonial visual traditions of the Peruvian indigenous culture are also apparent, as is the aesthetic of the hybrid religion that sprung from the Peruvian amalgamation of Catholic and Pagan iconography.

By re-contextualising the *nichos* in a conceptual art framework Garrido-Lecca emphasises the historicity behind these (conversely, often) joyful tombs. The consolidation of their particular visual language is magnified and celebrated, as it becomes installation.

Growing up in a developing country with profound social and economic inequality, the artist was witness to the ravaging results of colonialism and the effects of contemporary imperialism. A spectator of the gradual collapse and extinction of indigenous culture, she is a keen commentator of the results of non-integration.

A lineage of works addressing the bias and glorification of European art and Western culture is always acknowledged by Garrido-Lecca. She sets about addressing this bias by tracing the indigenous arts movement that was formed in Peru during the early 20th Century. It took as its philosophy a rejection of the modernist model in favour of valuing the traditions and customs of the native Peruvian population.

Ximena Garrido-Lecca was born in Lima, 1980 and has lived and worked in London since 2001. She completed an MA Fine Arts (2004) and a Post-Graduate Diploma (2002) at Byam Shaw School of Art, as well as a BA at Universidad Catolica del Peru. Her work has been shown in Peru, Germany and the United Kingdom.

For further details or images, please email info@civicroom.org.uk or call 020.7923.4660