

Davidoff Art Initiative Announces
Selection of Artists for Spring 2017 Residencies
Across Three Continents



Jorge Gonzalez
Arklu Chair, 2015
Woods of *Ocotea floribunda*



Jesus 'Bubu' Negrón, *Abstracción de Carnaval*, 2014
Cardboard and paint



Patricia Castillo
The Meeting, 2016
Nylon and wood

Patricia Castillo

Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany

(February – April 2017)

Jesús 'Bubu' Negrón

Red Gate Gallery, Beijing, China

(April – June 2017)

Jorge González

FLORA ars+natura, Bogotá, Colombia

(June – August 2017)

Basel, Switzerland, December 19, 2016 – The Davidoff Art Initiative (DAI) is pleased to announce the selection of three artists who will take part in the Davidoff Art Residency program in Spring 2017. This year’s participants present a diverse range of artistic practices and concerns, reflecting the Initiative’s ever growing commitment to celebrating and promoting the Caribbean region’s vibrant and expansive visual art scene on the international stage.

The selected artists are: **Patricia Castillo** (b. 1972, Dominican Republic), **Jorge González** (b. 1981, Puerto Rico), and **Jesús ‘Bubu’ Negrón** (b. 1975, Puerto Rico). Residencies in 2017 will take place at the **Künstlerhaus Bethanien** in Berlin, Germany; **FLORA ars+natura** in Bogota, Colombia; and **Red Gate Gallery** in Beijing, China, respectively.

Launched in 2012, the Davidoff Art Residency program partners with global institutions to support contemporary art and artists in the Caribbean and foster cross-cultural engagement. The program provides emerging and mid-career artists an opportunity to participate in leading residency programs worldwide, where they can connect within global networks, gain exposure for their work, and engage with the communities where their residencies take place.

During her residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, **Patricia Castillo** will engage with the city of Berlin as a site of perpetual transformation in order to consider the way in which new spatial contexts impact the creation of art. By bringing his collective platform Escuela de Oficios into conversation with FLORA, **Jorge González** will expand upon his ongoing investigation into the creation and distribution of knowledge through mapping, documenting, and employing artisanal techniques. In China, **Jesús ‘Bubu’ Negrón** plans to explore traditional culture and methods of production with the goal of producing artistic ethnographic documents that transcend borders between popular and contemporary art.

“It is exciting to collaborate with these artists and to see the energy they bring to their respective practices and to the growing international network we are building,” says **DAI Manager, Albertine Kopp**. “We are proud to continue our mission of increasing the visibility of Caribbean artists, as well as opening further opportunities for creative collaboration, conversation and exchange, in partnership with some of the world’s foremost cultural institutions.”

The selection committee of the Davidoff Art Advisory Council includes: Rocío Aranda-Alvarado, Curator at El Museo del Barrio, New York; Pablo León de la Barra, UBS MAP Curator, Latin America, Guggenheim Museum; Dominique Bluhdorn, President of the Altos de Chavón Cultural Center Foundation, Dominican Republic; Hans-Kristian Hoejsgaard, CEO Oettinger Davidoff AG; Sara Hermann, Dominican art historian, curator; and writer and Chief Consultant to the Davidoff Art Initiative Andrés Szántó.

About the Artists

Patricia Castillo (b. 1972, Dominican Republic) is an interdisciplinary artist who seeks to activate and energize space through geometric, often utilitarian forms comprised of found materials. She studied Fine Arts and Illustration at the School of Design de

Chavón, Dominican Republic, and has participated in numerous group exhibitions across the Caribbean and the United States. Her most recent solo exhibitions, *Where am I going?* and *Health*, were presented at the Cultural Center of Spain and the 6th Caribbean Biennial, both in Santo Domingo.

Jorge González (b. 1981, Puerto Rico) researches ecology, material culture and the history of modern architecture in order to consider Puerto Rico's political and economic position within the context of the Americas. A founder of the collective platform Escuela de Oficios, González's works take the form of drawings, rubbings, herbarium specimens, photographs, film, publications, sculpture, furniture, and site-specific installations. González holds a BFA from Escuela de Artes Plásticas, San Juan, and was a fellow of the post-academic program La Practica, also in San Juan, from 2013-2014.

Jesús 'Bubu' Negrón (b. 1975, Puerto Rico) re-contextualizes the everyday with minimal interventions, the examination of everyday objects, and the application of relational approximation to reveal historic, social, and economic vitality. Negrón studied at Escuela de Artes Plásticas in San Juan and is part of the Brigada PDT, a grass-roots community organization that advocates for the preservation and wellbeing of the Puerta de Tierra neighborhood in San Juan, its history and its people. Negrón has exhibited both locally and internationally, including at the Sharjah Biennial in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, in 2007, and in *Tropical Abstraction*, a group show at the Stedelijk Bureau Museum, Amsterdam, in 2005.

About Red Gate Gallery, Beijing

Founded in 1991 by Brian Wallace, who first arrived in China in 1984, Red Gate Gallery was the first private contemporary art gallery to be established in China. Today, Red Gate is recognized both as a tour de force and a trailblazer in the history and development of the contemporary Chinese art scene. Over the past twenty years, the gallery has been engaging and promoting Chinese artists by exhibiting the best of Chinese contemporary art, as well as facilitating cultural exchanges and dialogues between China and the rest of the world through its vibrant residency program, which was established in 2001. Red Gate Residency is an international artists residency program providing artists, curators, writers, and academics with the opportunity to live and create work in China. The objective is to provide facilities where artists can easily start their projects, and to offer a community in which they can participate as much as they like. Red Gate assists all participants to connect with the art scene, meet local Chinese artists, and source art materials.

About Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin

The Künstlerhaus Bethanien is an international cultural center in Berlin. An artist-in-residence program with workspaces for professional artists and exhibition spaces, it is dedicated to the advancement of contemporary visual arts. As part of its residency scheme, it aims to establish a lively dialogue between artists from various backgrounds and disciplines, and the public at large. To achieve these goals, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien organizes a wide range of events, ranging from monthly

exhibition openings to private and public studio visits. The focus of its manifold missions is the International Studio Program, where artists from around the world conceive and present new projects with the help of its team. The Künstlerhaus Bethanien continually strives to expand its international network by securing new partnerships.

About FLORA ars+natura, Bogotá

FLORA ars+natura is a space for contemporary art in Bogotá, Colombia, that specializes in the relationship between art and nature. FLORA's foci are: production through commissions and residencies; the circulation of the results; and education. FLORA is a meeting place for artists and those interested in contemporary art. It's a space with an open character and a domestic scale, with a high level of quality. FLORA intends to become a point of reference for the local scene in Bogotá, establishing links with the rest of the country and abroad through international residencies, commissioned projects, and intense educational activity. FLORA is settled in two main places: FLORA's House in Bogotá, where the library, art studios, and projects room are located; and Casa Deuxsoleils in Honda, where residences take place.

About the Davidoff Art Initiative

The Davidoff Art Initiative supports contemporary art and artists in the Caribbean, strengthens art organizations, and fosters cultural engagement between the Caribbean and the rest of the world. It brings opportunity and visibility to the art and culture of the wider Caribbean region, including the Dominican Republic, where much of Davidoff's production and many of the employees are based, and extending the company's long-standing commitment to artistry, craftsmanship, community and quality. The Davidoff Art Initiative's four global program areas are: Art Residency, Art Dialogues, Art Grants, and Art Editions. For more information, please visit davidoffartinitiative.com.

About Oettinger Davidoff AG

With sales of over CHF 600 million and 3,500 employees around the world, Oettinger Davidoff AG traces its roots back to 1875 and remains family-owned to this day with two distinctly different businesses: One that is focused on FMCG distribution in the Swiss market and the other is dedicated to the core business of producing, marketing and retailing premium-branded cigars, tobacco products and accessories. The premium-branded cigar business includes Davidoff, AVO, Camacho, Cusano, Griffin's, Private Stock, Zino and Zino Platinum. The Oettinger Davidoff AG business is anchored in a strong "crop-to-shop" philosophy, having pursued vertical integration from the tobacco fields in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Nicaragua to the worldwide network of over 70 Davidoff Flagship Stores that complement a network of strong Appointed Merchants around the world.

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Media Contacts

For further information, images, or to arrange an interview, members of the media may contact:

Kat Mills

Blue Medium, Inc.

kat@bluemedium.com

+1-212-675-1800

Oettinger Davidoff AG

Albertine Kopp

Manager Davidoff Art Initiative

media@davidoff.com

info@davidoffartinitiative.com

+41 61 279 3612