

# TOMÁS ESSON

Tomás Esson is one of the defining painters to emerge from the Cuban generation of the 1980s. Born in Havana in 1963, he studied at San Alejandro and graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte in 1987. His controversial late-1980s exhibitions in Cuba helped establish him as a central figure in the decade's artistic renewal before his departure from the island in 1990.

Since then, Esson has worked between Miami and New York, developing a practice that moves from grotesque figuration, political allegory, and mythic caricature toward the immersive abstractions and "wet paintings" of his later years. In 2020-2021, ICA Miami presented Tomás Esson: The GOAT, the artist's first solo museum exhibition, surveying three decades of studio production.

Born in Havana, Cuba, 1963.

Education: Academia de Artes Plásticas San Alejandro, 1982; Instituto Superior de Arte, 1987.

Lives and works in Miami, Florida.

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 EKELE KWA, David Lewis Gallery, New York, NY  
MIMAMI POP, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2023 El rugido del león, Easy Does It, Los Angeles, CA
- 2022 Tomás Esson: MUSA, David Lewis, East Hampton, NY
- 2021 S.O.S. CUBA, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL  
KRAKEN, David Lewis, New York, NY
- 2020 Tomás Esson: The GOAT, Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Miami, FL
- 2019 Miami Flow II, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2017 Miami Flow, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2010 Tomás Esson: THE RETURN OF THE DRAGON, Ramis Barquet Gallery, New York, NY
- 2008 EL BICHO 2008/09, Hammonds House Galleries and Resources Center of African American Art, Atlanta, GA
- 2000 MONDONGO GORDO, Wet Drawings Show, Denise Andrews Gallery, Miami, FL
- 1997 WET PAINTINGS for The White House, Brewster Arts LTD, New York, NY
- 1995 AGUA, Vrej Baghoomian Gallery, New York, NY
- 1993 Chá-Chá-Chá, Galería Ramis Barquet, Art Cologne - Internationaler Kunstmarkt, Cologne, Germany
- 1991 ¡Que Calor!, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 1988 A Tarro Partido II, Galería 23 y 12, Havana, Cuba  
ESSONSISEHACE, Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba
- 1987 A Tarro Partido, Museo Provincial de Villa Clara, Santa Clara, Cuba

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 under the beating sun, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL  
Everyone Loves Picabia, David Lewis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2023 45th Anniversary Show, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL  
Syphilis Too (II), David Lewis Gallery, New York, NY
- 2022 Florida Prize in Contemporary Art, Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL
- 2021 The New Age of Bronze, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2020 A9, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2019 El circuito del arte cubano, El Apartamento, Havana, Cuba
- 2017 Adiós Utopia: Dreams and Deceptions in Cuban Art Since 1950, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Houston, TX
- 2016 Go Figure, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2009 EXILES, Ramis Barquet Gallery, New York, NY  
POST-SCRIPTUM, EDITART, Chêne-Bougeries, Geneva, Switzerland  
Irreversible 100 Most, CIFO Art Space, Miami, FL  
Arte América, Miami Beach, FL
- 2008 GIANTS In The CITY, Miami, FL
- 2006 Group Show, José Alonso Art Gallery, Miami, FL  
Unorthodox Drawings, José Alonso Art Gallery, Miami, FL  
Big Juicy Paintings, Miami Art Museum, Miami, FL
- 2004 Nepotism: The Art of Friendship, Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
- 2003 Drawing Conclusions, Miami, FL
- 2002 Art From Cuba, The Ludwig Collection, State Russian Museum and Ludwig Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia  
Contemporary Cuban Art in New York, Benefit and Silent Auction, New York, NY  
Why Don't We Do It On The Road?, Ambrosino Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2001 New Art OFF Cuba, José Alonso Art Gallery, Miami, FL
- 2000 Palmas Reales y Vitrales, José Alonso Art Gallery, Miami, FL  
Paper Papel, José Alonso Art Gallery, Miami, FL
- 1999 Size Matters, GALE GATES et al., Brooklyn, NY
- 1998 Loin de Cuba, Musée des Tapisseries, Aix-en-Provence, France
- 1997 Form und Funktion der Zeichnung Heute, Frankfurt, Germany
- 1996 Monkey Business, Brewster Arts LTD, New York, NY  
Selection Summer '96, The Drawing Center, New York, NY  
Cuba Siglo XX Modernidad y Sincretismo, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain
- 1995 Caribbean Visions: Contemporary Painting and Sculpture, Miami Art Museum, Miami, FL

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1994** Premio MARCO 1994, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico  
Cuba la Isla Posible, Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
- 1993** Prospect 93, Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany
- 1992** Aquí Arte Hispano en Orlando, City Hall, Orlando, FL  
Drawings, Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami, FL  
Cuatro Que Se Fueron, Osuna Gallery, Washington, DC  
Von Dort Aus: Kuba, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany
- 1991** De Cubaanse Renaissance, Maatschappij Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
Los Hijos de Guillermo Tell, Museo de Artes Visuales Alejandro Otero, Caracas, Venezuela  
Nuevas Adquisiciones Contemporáneas: Muestras de Arte Cubano, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba  
Ostkunst - Westkunst, Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany  
Senki Sem Sziget, Ernst Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary
- 1990** Aktuelle Kunst aus Kuba, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, Germany  
The Nearest Edge of the World: Art and Cuba Now, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA; traveled to The Bronx Museum, New York, NY  
No Man Is an Island, Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland; traveled to Pálffy Palace, Vienna, Austria
- 1989** Contemporary Art from Havana, Riverside Studios, London, UK; traveled to Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville, Spain  
Jóvenes Artistas de la República Democrática Alemana y Cuba, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba; Neue Berliner Galerie im Alten Museum, Berlin  
Patria o Muerte, Castillo de la Real Fuerza, Havana, Cuba  
II Bienal de Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador  
III Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba
- 1988** Contemporary Cuban Art, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Soviet Union  
Made in Havana: Contemporary Art from Cuba, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; traveled to Brisbane and Melbourne, Australia  
No Es Solo Lo Que Ves, Facultad de Artes y Letras, Universidad de La Habana, Havana, Cuba  
Raíces en Acción, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City, Mexico; traveled to Lima and Caracas  
Segundo Encuentro de Jóvenes Artistas, Museo Provincial de Villa Clara, Santa Clara, Cuba
- 1987** Estrictamente Personal, Fototeca de Cuba, Havana, Cuba  
Primer Encuentro de Jóvenes Artistas, Museo Provincial de Villa Clara, Santa Clara, Cuba  
I Bienal de Pintura Jaime Guasch, Barcelona, Spain
- 1986** Concurso 13 de Marzo, Galería L, Havana, Cuba  
Relevo, Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba
- 1985** Pinturas y Dibujos, Centro Provincial de Artes Plásticas y Diseño, Havana, Cuba  
IV Jornada Científica Estudiantil, Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba
- 1984** Arte en la Fábrica, Havana, Cuba  
Instituto Superior de Arte Saluda la I Bienal de La Habana, Galería Habana and Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba
- 1983** My First Show, Sala Talía, Havana, Cuba

## AWARDS

- 2018 CINTAS Foundation Fellowship, Visual Arts
- 1987 First Prize, I Bienal de Pintura Jaime Guasch, Barcelona, Spain
- 1986 First Prize in Painting, Concurso 13 de Marzo, Galería L, Havana, Cuba

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, USA.
- ICA Miami, Miami, Florida, USA.
- Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen, Germany.
- Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba.
- Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Monterrey, Mexico.
- Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA.
- Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Florida, USA.
- Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, California, USA.
- Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, New York, USA.
- Pérez Art Museum Miami, Miami, Florida, USA.
- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, USA.
- Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York, USA.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Tomás Esson: The GOAT. Edited by Gean Moreno; Hirmer in association with ICA Miami, 2021.
- Trouillot, Terence. "Tomás Esson's Erotic Politics." Frieze, April 23, 2021.
- Uszerowicz, Monica. "Tomás Esson's Whirling Gyroscopes of Paint." Hyperallergic, December 11, 2020.
- McEwen, Abigail. "Looking to Cuba's Past to Fabricate Tomorrow's Utopia." Hyperallergic, March 13, 2018.
- Batet, Janet. "A Fertile Universe: Tomas Esson's Miami Flow." Cuban Art News, April 25, 2017.