

# The New York Times

## EXIT ART

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**Polilla x 200 (en quinteto), 2006**

### **‘COMPLICATED STORIES: SCULPTURES AND WRITTEN TESTIMONIES, 1998-2008’**

“Complicated Stories” indeed. If Charles Juhasz-Alvarado were a less inventive and industrious sculptor, you might think he missed his calling as a magic-realist novelist.

Born in 1965 and based in San Juan, P.R., Mr. Juhasz-Alvarado has been included in international biennial exhibitions in Brazil, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Russia and Singapore. This entertaining, intermittently inspired 10-year survey is his first solo show in New York.

Mr. Juhasz-Alvarado’s works are full of visual puns, surreal juxtapositions and political metaphors. The multimedia installation “I-scream (Resist!)” (2004) is about the 1983 robbery of a Wells Fargo warehouse in West Hartford, Conn., by a group of pro-independence Puerto Rican revolutionaries. It includes a full-size hybrid of an armored car and an ice cream truck neatly built of wood; a bigger-than-life chocolate-covered ice cream bar whose partly eaten top resembles Mount Rushmore covered by dollar bills; and wall-mounted concrete panels bearing resistance wires (a pun on resistance intended) representing the robbers’ escape routes. The wires glow red when switched on.

Another installation features human-size foosball figures shaped like African sculptures, with cavities in their torsos displaying small wooden carvings of Christian saints.

Sometimes conceptual complexity exceeds representational clarity. “Garden of Forbidden Fruit/Duty-Free Zone” (2006) involves so many different materials and forms of representation — including photographic billboards, printed fabric, sound and a large model airplane made of clear plastic — that its commentary on the rules for taking plants in and out of Puerto Rico eludes comprehension.

Mr. Juhasz-Alvarado is best at constructing objects, like the scary-funny, Kafkaesque giant conga-drum-playing wooden termites, above, that greet visitors at the gallery’s front door.

- KEN JOHNSON

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/27/arts/design/27wartlist.html?scp=1&sq=complicated+stories&st=nyt>