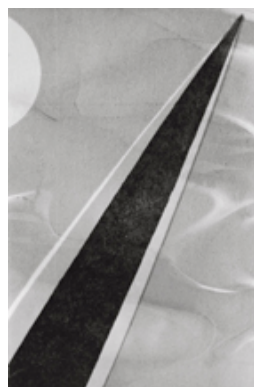




Press Release

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<http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/pressroom>

Adaptation Artists and Works



Arturo Herrera

Arturo Herrera investigates multiple media, including painting, sculpture, collage, photography, and drawing, and in his new work for *Adaptation*, animation. His practice is deeply informed by the history of modernist abstraction not only as manifested in static two-dimensional media but also within music and dance. He has combined these elements within his first video installation, which will have its United States premiere at the Smart Museum. This two-channel video is based on Igor Stravinsky's 1923 ballet composition, also titled *Les Noces* (*The Wedding*). Herrera digitally reworked and animated fragments of his earlier drawings and photographs into an ever-shifting dance of abstract black-and-white images set to Stravinsky's music.

This animation of a classic piece of music clearly nods to Disney's famous film *Fantasia* (1940). Herrera's *Les Noces* diverges, however, from that popular model. Rather than simply creating images to accompany music, he takes the whole of the ballet's 1923 Parisian premiere—an iconic modern production—as the object of his adaptation. The music is certainly central, for Herrera considers Stravinsky a key influence, almost a mentor. (For instance, the composer incorporated traces of Russian folk tunes into *Les Noces* and Herrera sees parallels between that method of abstraction and his own multi-layered processes of collage.) Herrera also invokes Bronislava Nijinka's stylized choreography. His precisely structured sequences of abstract images include quick, almost mechanical edits, complex visual rhythms, and marks that recur in ways that hint at the recurring gestures of dancers. Similarly, his black-and-white palette pays tribute to Natalia Goncharova's stark costumes and stage design.

Herrera initially tested his ideas for *Les Noces* as a six-channel installation with gentler fades and transitions between images. For the completed work shown in *Adaptation*, Herrera distilled his imagery into a diptych to better evoke the central storyline of the original: the marriage of two people. This final version of *Les Noces* simultaneously re-invents and pays tribute to the core aesthetic and structural elements of the original's choreography, costumes, stage design, and music. And while faithful to its source, this video installation extends Herrera's own processes of collage and abstraction

Work on View

For high-resolution images, please call C.J. Lind at 773.702.0176, e-mail cjlind@uchicago.edu, or visit <http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/pressroom>

Herrera's *Les Noces* (2007) will premiere at the Smart Museum in its final form as a two-channel diptych. (The artist has reconceived and re-edited the initial six-channel version shown at Ikon Gallery, U.K. in spring 2007.)

Les Noces, 2007

Running time: approx. 25 minutes

Black-and-white; sound

Two-channel projection running from synchronized computers with sound system

Black box space: 16' x 16' x 36'

Image width: 8'-15' each

About the Artist

Arturo Herrera (Venezualan, b. 1959) received his MFA from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Selected solo exhibitions of Herrera's work include those held at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, United Kingdom (2007), Art Gallery of Ontario (2002), Whitney Museum of American Art (2001), UCLA Hammer Museum (2001), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2000), Renaissance Society, University of Chicago (1998), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1995). Selected group exhibitions include *Comic Abstraction* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2007), *The Moderns*, Castello di Rivoli, Torino (2003), *Splat Boom Pow! The Influence of Cartoons in Contemporary Art* (Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, 2003), *Whitney Biennial* (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002), *The Americans* (Barbican Art Centre, London, 2001), and *Painting at the Edge of the World* (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2001). Selected awards include a DAAD Fellowship (2003), Pollock-Krasner Foundation award (1998), and an ArtPace Fellowship (1998).

Images: Arturo Herrera, source drawings from *Les Noces*, 2007. Courtesy the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.