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Alexandre Arrechea, *Empire*, 2009, Watercolor on paper, 67 x 44 7/8 in. (170 x 114 cm), *Empire*, 2010 (large), Lacquered wood, 44 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. (170 x 40 cm), *House*, 2010 (small), Lacquered wood, 31 1/2 x 7 7/8 in. (80 x 20 cm), Courtesy Galerie Suzanne Tarasieve, Paris. +33 1 42 71 76 54

## ALEXANDRE ARRECHEA

ARTIST TO WATCH

Arrechea is from a younger generation of contemporary Cuban artists who are building successful careers on the international art scene, exhibiting all over the world and have gallery representation in major art capitals. Arrechea works in drawing and sculpture, with forays into video, installation and public art. His imaginative compositions on paper are potential mock-ups (and effective final pieces) for highly crafted, conceptually loaded sculptural objects. The artist clearly internalized the effects of growing up in Cuba as it pertains to the government's control of its people, since a critique of authority is an underlying theme in all of his work. Structures of power, in their many forms, and investigations into the symbolism of public and domestic space, define his subject matter. Arrechea's assessment of these potentially didactic topics is refreshingly playful, with elements of fantasy and humor (both the dark and light varieties) making them more universal. The artist's work reveals the creative counter-control that can be rendered on structures of power (thereby personally

challenging them) through his inventive, lively manipulations and recreations of industrial and domestic objects. *The City that Stopped Dancing*, a recent body of work, depicts incongruous hybrids that are half skyscrapers/half spinning tops. The artist turns iconic Cuban architectural structures into giant toys. The result is mischievously double-edged, with a political statement just under the surface of a wink and a smile. Arrechea, born (1970) and raised in Cuba, currently lives in Spain. He graduated in 1994 from Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, and was a member of collaborative group, Los Carpinteros, until 2003. In 2010, he had solo shows at each of his representing galleries: Magnan Metz Gallery, New York, Suzanne Tarasieve, Paris and Galeria Casado Santapau, Madrid. In 2011, he was one of seven artists selected for the Cuban Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. His work is in dozens of museums and private collections. —KWT