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# Daniel Fiorda's Sculptures Raise Questions About Time and Technology.

TYLER FRANCISCHINE | JULY 27, 2021 | 8:00AM



One series of Fiorda's sculptural works featured in "Concrete" uses the titular material to imagine technologies of just yesterday as remnants of a past long forgotten. **Photo by Daniel Fiorda**



A row of typewriters hangs on the wall like so many payphones, their ribbon spools emptied and painted white, their keys swallowed by concrete, the strikers used to press the ink to the page rendered relics of the past. Viewing these objects is an experience akin to discovering an ancient technology utilized by a civilization that no longer inhabits the Earth.

In “Concrete,” on view through September 4 at **Lélia Mordoch Gallery**, **Daniel Fiorda's** sculptural works treat the titular material as both a physical substance and an immaterial metaphor, transforming found objects from just yesterday into fossils of a forgotten past.

Fiorda says that just like the substance covering his sculptures renders the previously useful objects inutile, our race for tomorrow's technologies may deprive humanity of enjoying what exists in the here and now.

“These works connect with social issues. We are playing with a double-edged sword when it comes to technology. On one side, technology allows us to connect. That aspect is fantastic and helps stimulate our spirits. On the other side, we are creating a lot of contamination and pollution,” says Fiorda, a Buenos Aires-born, self-taught artist whose work is housed in the permanent

collection of the **Museum of Latin American Art** in Los Angeles. “For \$100, I bought 200 flip phones that were owned by the City of Miami. I covered each phone in concrete and painted them white. I wanted to give the impression of making these found objects into archaeological findings. In the future, we will find these objects as relics of our civilization.”

Fiorda's penchant for transforming found objects into art developed during a childhood spent in his father's welding workshop in Buenos Aires. While his father repaired antique cars, Fiorda dreamed of building spaceships like the ones in *Star Wars*. By the time he was a teenager, he was well on his way to developing an artistic process in which inspiration isn't an ethereal concept but rather a hands-on experience.

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“I used to play with toys under my father’s working table as he was welding, and all the sparks would fall toward the floor. I felt I was in a spaceship. It was very stimulating. I think that was very important for me as a child to have that inspiration,” Fiorda says. “When I was 15, my dad handed me goggles and taught me how to weld. The only way for me to make art was to use the pieces of metal I saw sitting there in my father’s workshop. Many times, I made artwork without permission from materials at my father’s studio. He would tell me, ‘That’s from a 1937 car! Who told you to use that?’ I would say, ‘Sorry.’ I’m very much into process art. How can I use this object right in front of me?”

Fiorda continued his family’s tradition of working with metals for the first two decades of his artistic career, later incorporating wood into his sculptural pieces. When he began to pour concrete onto metal, he felt a spark of inspiration that has burned for the last five years, a flourishing period in Fiorda’s career memorialized in “Concrete.”

Initially, Fiorda used concrete to encase objects, thereby creating relics of the past. In the last couple of years, his focus has shifted to using experimental casting techniques that allow him to explore the negative space inhabited by everyday objects like packaging materials.

“I fill a plastic water bottle with concrete, and when I pull out the concrete, I see all the spaces on the inside of the bottle. I look at the negative space of packing material and I see a sculpture,” he explains.

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"Concrete", on view at Lélia Mordoch Galerie, is an exhibition of the past five years of Daniel Fiorda's practice in sculpture. Photo by Daniel Fiorda

“When I finish eating a carton of eggs, I bring the container to my studio and use it as a mold,” Fiorda says. “I pour concrete into discarded containers to create my objects. Then I see how these objects connect with each other.”

Yet another series of works in this exhibition features a collection of digital-display alarm clocks encased in concrete structures whose shapes echo the immutable monoliths of Brutalist architectural designs. Fiorda says the series functions as a cautionary tale about our lack of control over the finite amount of time we’re given in this life.

“I encapsulate these vintage alarm clocks in tape so the concrete doesn’t interfere with the electronics. I pour the concrete around them, freezing them in time. Nobody can change or set the time displayed on the clocks. Nobody can change the clicking of the seconds. It’s a metaphor for life,” Fiorda says. “Who knows when the clicking clock inside of us will stop? Who can change that? This is about the impermanence of life.”

Lélia Mordoch, owner of Lélia Mordoch Gallery in Miami and its sister space in Paris, says visitors of all ages – even those who haven’t lived long enough to have fond memories of pressing a button on an alarm clock 50 times to set their wake-up call or clacking the keys of a manual typewriter – will benefit from viewing Fiorda’s works in “Concrete.”

“This work is about memory. It’s almost like there’s no one left on earth, and you find these works and you don’t know what these objects were for. Daniel wants to show a new way of looking at what we have and maybe what we will have,” Mordoch says. “Daniel is an artist who is using a lot of mediums in very poetic ways. He’s very imaginative in his work with objects from our everyday life.”

The works in “Concrete” raise questions about the rapid pace of obsolescence and humanity’s affinity for discarding objects when the next, new shiny screen hits the shelves, but, for Fiorda, concrete is also a reminder of the substance at humanity’s core: strength.

“Concrete has a double meaning: It is the material and it’s symbolic for solidity and strength. I feel very much about having a strong foundation: emotional, physical, and spiritual,” Fiorda says. “I want this show to be eye-opening. Viewers will see an overwhelming amount of consumerism through my making these objects into art. Maybe they leave with a question of, How can life be more simple? How can we live more happily?”

**“Daniel Fiorda: Concrete.”** *On view through September 4, at Lélia Mordoch Galerie, 2300 N. Miami Ave., Miami; 786-431-1506; [leliamordoch.com](http://leliamordoch.com). Admission is free.*