

DAGOBERTO RODRÍGUEZ - Broadcasting the Unknown

by Emanuela Mazzonis

The multidisciplinary and internationally acclaimed Cuban artist, Dagoberto Rodríguez, is being presented for the first time in Luxembourg with a solo show displayed in two different locations: the Annexes at the Château de Bourglinster and the former church Al Kierch in Roodt/Syre. The exhibition titled Broadcasting the Unknown presents a selection of sculptures, paintings, watercolors and video focused around the idea of the satellite as both technological object and cultural metaphor and the value of culture in an era dominated by virtual attractions.

The original meaning of the word broadcast was rooted in agriculture, referring specifically to the scattering of seeds over a field, rather than planting them in rows. By the early twentieth century, broadcasting had acquired its modern technological meaning, applied to the dissemination of information: signals are “cast broadly” to reach a mass audience. In this sense, broadcasting is fundamentally an act of dissemination—something released from a central point and carried across a territory. With the advent of satellite communication, this principle expanded beyond the terrestrial landscape into planetary space.

In the context of this exhibition, presented across two different venues, Dagoberto Rodríguez gives physical form to an otherwise invisible infrastructure. Both sites are historically connected to the history of technology and communication. The RTL antennas in Junglinster represent an earlier architecture of broadcasting: monumental structures transmitting radio signals across Europe. The SES Astra satellite infrastructure in Betzdorf, by contrast, embodies the next technological stage—the extension of communication from a terrestrial distribution system into a planetary network. The artist's works become material markers of this technological continuum, making the invisible visible. His terracotta satellites transform signals, networks and systems of communication into tangible objects, bringing the technological apparatus of global connectivity back down to earth. Like archaeological fragments from a future civilization, these sculptures are made from one of the oldest materials in human history. Terracotta evokes the earth, craftsmanship, archaeology and the origins of civilization. Satellites, by contrast, represent one of the most technologically advanced forms of human intervention in the environment. As the artist states, “clay speaks of the origins of technology, but also of the continuity of the way we think.”

In Rodríguez's sculptures, an emblem of technological modernity is returned to the earth and transformed into an archaeological object—something that seems to belong simultaneously to the past and to an imagined future. At the same time, the artist depicts satellites in watercolors, a medium he uses to translate ideas into images. His fascination with satellites is rooted in his Cuban origins, where, during the 1970s, space exploration came to embody the promise of scientific progress.

Today, technology has become an almost invisible presence in our everyday lives, something we barely notice. Yet it is through satellites that our relationship with, and understanding of, the Earth's landscape has been profoundly transformed. The satellite, as we understand it today, functions as a planetary eye: distant but constantly present, observing, connecting and transmitting. Yet the origin of the word itself leads us back to something deeply human. In Classical Latin, *satelles* referred to an attendant, bodyguard or follower accompanying a powerful person. Only in the seventeenth century, through the work of the astronomer Johannes Kepler, did the term enter the language of astronomy, designating a celestial body that “accompanies” a larger planet. The modern artificial satellite extends this ancient metaphor into the technological age: an object travelling alongside the Earth, observing, connecting and increasingly mediating our experience of the planet.

This tension between the distant technological gaze and the lived experience of the natural world emerges particularly clearly in Rodríguez's series of oil paintings on canvas, *Hurricanes*, and in the video *Simplicity*. Drawing on satellite images that capture the immense and destructive force of hurricanes, the artist translates these remote views through a profoundly human eye. In *Simplicity*, a hurricane painted in watercolor is reconstructed through millions of tiny LEGO pieces, before being captured in slow motion. The monumental scale and power of the natural phenomenon are thus filtered through fragile, handmade and almost playful materials.

Once again, the connection to Rodríguez's childhood in Cuba is essential. Between September and November, hurricanes become part of the rhythm of everyday life for the island's inhabitants. They are not experienced solely as destructive tragedies, but also as manifestations of the immense power of nature. This constant coexistence between human vulnerability and the overwhelming force of the natural world permeates Rodríguez's work, revealing his enduring fascination with the extraordinary forces that shape our planet.

The selection of works presented at the Annexes of Château de Bourglinster brings these different dimensions together. At its center lies a fundamental ambiguity in the meaning of the satellite. It is both observer and companion, an instrument of power and a silent presence, an object that watches from afar while remaining bound to the world it observes. It is at once a technological apparatus and a metaphor: a distant eye through which humanity has learned to look back at itself and at the fragile landscape it inhabits.

About the Artist

Dagoberto Rodríguez Sánchez (Cuba, 1969) is a Cuban-Spanish artist whose multidisciplinary practice explores the intersections of art, architecture, technology, politics, and everyday life. He first gained international recognition as a founding member of **Los Carpinteros**, the Havana-based collective established in 1992, whose work challenged the boundaries between art, design, and architecture through irony, humour, and social critique. With *Los Carpinteros*, Rodríguez participated at the **Venice Biennale in 2005** and exhibited internationally in major museums and institutions.

Since 2018, Rodríguez has pursued an independent practice encompassing sculpture, painting, installation, video, architecture, and design. Drawing on his experience of growing up in Cuba, he examines how systems of technology, communication, and infrastructure shape our perception of the world. Familiar objects and structures are transformed into poetic and often ambiguous forms that question ideas of progress, power, collective memory, and globalization.

His works have been exhibited in Museums and cultural institutions around the world such as **MoMA, Whitney Museum of American Art or Guggenheim in New York, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Tate Modern in London or the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid**, among others.

Dagoberto Rodríguez is currently based working in Madrid, Spain.

DAGOBERTO RODRÍGUEZ. Broadcasting the Unknown | October 24-November 29 | Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays 11.00-19.00h | Al Kierch. Roodt/Syre, Betzdorf & Annexes Château de Bourglinster, Junglinster | Free entrance

This exhibition is presented by the Commune of Junglinster and the Commune of Betzdorf, for the first time together in a joined artistic project. Curated by Emanuela Mazzonis and produced by VF Art Projects, the show counts also with the support of the Spanish Embassy in Luxembourg.

