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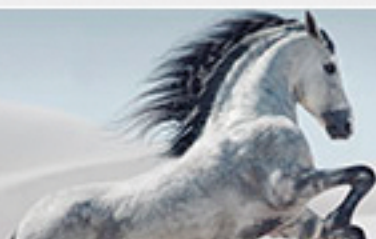
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30 SEPTEMBER 2015 | ART & PHOTOGRAPHY | BY: RACHEL STOPLAR

Predictable Photos Of Cuba Are Still Exotic And Evocative

Viva Cuba! at Lumas Gallery ★★★★★

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Cuba has become synonymous with retro cars, colourful houses and decaying glamour. [Viva Cuba!](#) at Lumas Gallery takes those clichés, blows them up and adds extra gloss.

That's not to say these glossy clichés aren't beautifully done. Photographer Werner Pawlok, the Stuttgart-based star of this show, shoots in such high definition that you might think the flaking paint on the walls of his mysterious interiors is on the gallery wall itself.

The cracked colourful tiles and shafts of light in each picture tell a predictable story of the exotic Caribbean. But the roughly made bed, hanging laundry and curious tidbits like ceramic fruit and Orientalist busts all hint at the more unusual, more human stories of the unseen occupants.

Other Pawlok works play interestingly with perspective with one notable piece shot from low down, like high-quality Google street view. We felt like we were in one of those vintage automobiles looking out, rather than staring at them in a travel magazine.

The exhibition also features Luigi Visconti and Larry Yust, but the fact that it's almost impossible to tell which photograph is by which artist says a lot about the lack of individuality on show.

Werner Pawlok says he tries to find places to photograph "that are not so easily accessible... to uncover things." If that's his aim, he needs to try a bit harder than hitting Old Havana. But as travel snaps go, these are tip top.



House of Chino by Werner Pawlok.