



## FOR FRANCISCO CORREA CORDERO, RUNNING A GALLERY IS AN ARTFORM

ELYSSA GOODMAN (/COOLS.COM/AUTHOR/ELYSSA/) × JANUARY 23, 2018 × CULTURE (/COOLS.COM/CATEGORY/CULTURE/)

Images by Kyungroc Kim for COOLS

### How do you show art in a 200-square-foot gallery? Just ask him.



Up an office building's wooden, maroon stairwell, down a skinny hallway with white walls, there's a crowd of people standing near suite 207. Wearing glasses and jackets and all manner of interesting tote bags, they sip beer or Coke and lean against the walls, chatting about weed or hamburgers or poetry or nothing in particular. It's a Saturday night, a time when people might normally be out having dinner or hanging out at a bar. But instead, they're seeing art.

Suite 207 is home to **Lubov** (<http://www.lubov.nyc/index.html>), a tiny, 200-square-foot gallery in Tribeca that's run by owner **Francisco Correa Cordero** (<http://franfranfran.com>). Cordero started the gallery a little over a year ago, in November 2016. The space's size makes it unconventional to say the least, allowing artists to take over the whole thing and transform it however they wish. It's a good opportunity for the people Cordero prefers to work with, emerging artists who have not previously had their own solo exhibitions and can now realize a vision all their own in a space that, at least for a few weeks, holds a part of themselves.



After years of working on curatorial projects with spaces around New York, one particular show Cordero worked on, a one-night engagement called “Nonspace” at New York artist workspace and gallery Recess, left him wanting more. As soon as the show went up, he was nostalgic for it, wishing it had lasted longer. He kept pitching shows at galleries and was so excited by one particular idea he had yet to place that he had a dream about it.

“I actually had a dream that I did a show in a hotel room and the dream was so vivid and I remembered waking up from the dream and trying to remind myself what was in the show,” Cordero says. “There was artwork under the bed, in the closet, in the television there was video.” The next morning, he woke up and decided to find a space where he might produce his own shows, his own gallery, on Craigslist. Cordero found suite 207, and realized it would work. He

signed the lease, and in two weeks the first show was up. “I thought, I need to open immediately just to make the most of the space,” he says. “If I’m just sitting on it, I’m just wasting money and then what’s the point?” Realizing he needed a name for the space shortly before it opened, he named it after his girlfriend Lubov—with her permission, of course—whose name means “love” in Russian.

A little over a year later, Cordero is hosting the opening of his gallery’s latest show, “A groundbreaking, missed party,” which is a series of installed works by interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker Pedro Sanchez, who goes by PS3\*. Since Cordero allows artists to use the entire space when assembling their exhibition, PS3\* has painted the walls yellow and blue, hung a painted sheet of canvas inside a metal apparatus, and placed on another shelf a variety of mixed media objects, like a package of colorful plastic Easter eggs and a rainbow of gym shorts and a sparkling Christmas ornament and a stapler and what looks like yellow liquid latex that’s been nailed to the wall and a menagerie of other trinkets.



The space is packed with people inside, and they’re spilling out into the hallway. “You wouldn’t have anything like that in Chelsea. They would probably have someone serving wine or at least someone handing out the beers so people don’t steal them. So I don’t have that luxury. So people do steal them,” Cordero laughs. Women wear red lipstick and drink beer, men wear beanies and beards and glasses unless they are the artist, who has blue hair, or Cordero who wears black and smiles and hugs visitors he knows, shaking the hands of those he doesn’t.

Cordero initially moved to New York from Tijuana, Mexico in 2007 to study photography, but ultimately decided he says it more gratifying to work with artists and help them realize their goals. He began working at galleries like Aperture and Martos and Yancey Richardson. He now works full time at Independent Curators International while running Lubov, whose hours are Thursday and

Friday from 2pm-5pm (for which he has an intern at the gallery) and Saturday and Sunday from 10am-6pm. So he works seven days a week for this dream. "I never considered myself a photographer to begin with and I never considered myself a curator either. I'm not sure I believe in those kinds of titles," he says. "I feel like all those titles always seemed a bit pretentious to me. I prefer to think of me being able to facilitate artist projects than a curator."

"So maybe...you're like the ocean to an artist's vessel?" I ask.

"That's better, I like that," he laughs, a dimple appearing in each cheek. "I'm picturing it."



Cordero is constantly going to shows to find new artists across all mediums, asking friends who are artists about their favorite new work they've seen, and going on studio visits, all in hopes of procuring fresh talent for the gallery. He's especially interested in people who can transform the space, and currently has shows planned out through the beginning of summer 2018. "If I see something that I like, I can't not immediately jump in it and be like, 'Let's do a show together,'" he says. But for as many galleries as there are in New York, there are infinitely more artists. "I feel like I see so much good stuff and I just wish I could do projects with all of [the artists] and I realize then how I have to be extremely selective and I can't work with everyone that I wish I could," he says.

But even so, Cordero remains true to his initial goal with Lubov, to promote the work of newer artists. "I have the opportunity to tell a public, 'Hey, this is something you should look at that you haven't seen before,'" he says. "I have the space...and I just think it would be more valuable to give that opportunity to someone that hasn't had it."







Visit **Lubov** (<http://www.lubov.nyc/info.html>) at 373 Broadway, #207 on Thursdays and Fridays from 2pm-5pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 10am-6pm, or by appointment.

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