



Miami Day 3: NADA Miami Beach Opens

December 6, 2014

by Pat Rogers

Miami art fair week wouldn't be complete without a visit to NADA Miami Beach. Held in the oceanside Deauville Beach Resort, it's a perfect way to get your beach on and see new and edgy contemporary art—sometimes at the same time. Sage Cotignola, handling production and social media for Hamptons Art Hub, and I missed the press preview but were there shortly after the fair opened to the public. A live performance burst into the lobby and black clad artists waved fuzzy blue hand puppets and soft cartoon-like sea creatures. It was a fun way to start and get pumped for NADA.

NADA Miami Beach is set up in three separate conference-room type zones that are laid out like spokes on a wheel revolving around the hotel lobby as center. The most action (and booths) is on the right. We headed to investigate the other two areas first. I enjoyed abstract paintings by Lisa Ruyter set upon wallpaper featuring a recurring acrobatic pose pattern and discovering bronze sculptures cast from snacks (Fritos, Doritos, Ruffles potato chips) from Brooklyn artist Graham Collins exhibited with The Journal Gallery (Brooklyn). The series of sculpture were made expressly for NADA and were trucked in the day before, said Sarah, the gallerist.



Bronze sculpture by Graham Collins exhibited with The Journal Gallery (Brooklyn) at NADA Miami Beach. In rear is a painting by Chris Succo. Photo by Pat Rogers.

I loved abstract text art paintings by Despina Stokoy exhibited by Derek Eller Gallery (New York). I loved the combination of readable sentence, brash color and vibrant brush strokes that meshed abstract expressionism, street art and narration that had a graphic novel feel (that is, if living the artist life was made into a graphic novel).



Artwok by Despina Stokoy. Exhibited by Derek Eller Gallery. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Another highlight was an installation of four suspended plastic panels presented by Tomorrow Gallery (New York). Seeing beyond the bright colors, a closer examination revealed there were ant consuming what appeared to be small mounds of sugar or burrowing deep into the “land”. Their actions created the appearance of a mountainous terrain surface with visible tunnels below. The gallerist explained the work by Brad Troemel was a conceptual one—each plastic container represented multiple non-profits with the ants standing in for fundraiser workers. Whichever group of ants “wins”, the organization receives the biggest chunk of money raised and spoke to the competitive nature of fundraising in the arts and non-profits in general.

The ants would be released, unharmed, in a few days...after their work was done, he said. The gallerist repeated this often when asked by viewers if those were ants inside the clear suspended containers.



“Untitled” by Brad Troemel exhibited by Tomorrow Gallery (New York) at NADA Miami Beach. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Sage and I headed to the main exhibition area in Zone 2. We didn’t get far (just up the few steps) when a blue sticker project stopped us in our tracks. Participatory, we agreed to partake and accepted one sheet with four blue stickers (two long rectangles and two protractor shaped) and told we could put them anywhere in the growing mosaic beneath our feet but our stickers had to relate to those already affixed. Sage and I parted ways and got to it.

First, there were decisions to be made—where did I want to join and did I want my stickers to stand out or weave seamlessly with others had already contributed? I went with the blending concept and was happy with the way my stickers looked. Coincidentally, Sage and my chosen patterns were nearly identical.

The generative art project was courtesy of Amsterdam-based design collective Moniker and presented by P! (New York) Titled *Ultramarine Fungus*, the project is the latest in a series of interactive physical installations presented at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Artist Luna Maurer of Moniker explained the project was designed to have participants consider how they choose to see themselves through the process of deciding how to apply their four stickers: Do they wish to contribute to the existing whole or stand apart? With every choice, the growing design takes on a life of its own and changes with every participation.



A participant considers the choices in applying their four blue stickers to “Ultramarine Fungus”, 2014, at NADA Miami Beach. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Inside Zone 2 of the fair, it felt like we were suddenly transported to a place that was a combo of the LES and Brooklyn. Hipsters and people dressed in black with tattoo-laden skin were everywhere. Edgy NYC galleries like CANADA, The Hole, Martos Gallery, Zach Feuer Gallery were there. Some galleries said they presented art from recent gallery shows or works that would soon appear in the gallery. There was lots to see and lots of unusual art. It was great yet weird with plenty of work to investigate.

A highlight was running into a bit of the Hamptons. East Hampton Shed presented a single installation by Brian Kokoska of New York City and Water Mill, NY. The installation *Cocaine Coral (Snake Bite)* consisted of plastic snakes installed on the floor, one painting of a face with a demented expression and a single sculpture featuring a head with hat placed on a pedestal, all encased within three painted walls. Monochromatic and glowing a pink-red, the work was designed to explore identity, primal emotions, and the way individuals process personal mistakes, said gallerist Nate Hitchcock.

Kokoska work is primarily concerned with portraiture but also with the ways photography frames things intellectually and visually, said Hitchcock. East Hampton Shed featured Kokoska’s work a few years ago in one of their summer pop up shows installed behind the Vogel Bindery in East Hampton, N.Y. *Cocaine Coral (Snake Bite)* is a new work and was unveiled at NADA Miami Beach.



“Cocaine Coral (Snake Bite)” by Brian Kokoska exhibited with East Hampton Shed at NADA Miami Beach. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Time was starting to run out so Sage and I left to get a taste of Art Basel Miami Beach before it closed.

NEXT UP: [DAY 3 Continues: 75 Minutes at Art Basel Miami Beach](#)

BASIC FACTS: NADA Miami Beach takes place from December 4 to 7, 2014 at The Deauville Beach Resort. The Deauville Beach Resort is located at 6701 Collins Ave, Miami Beach, FL 33141. www.newartdealers.org.

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Pat Rogers is the publisher of Hamptons Art Hub and an arts journalist.

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