



CRITIC'S VIEW: CONTEXT Art Miami Opens Quality International Show

December 2, 2015

by Pat Rogers

CONTEXT Art Miami opened a strong 2015 edition for its fair located in the Design District. The fair was clearly an international one, with artists and galleries representing the U.K., Canada, South America, Korea, Europe and America. Painting and sculpture were prominent with figurative and figurative-inspired work noticeably strong. The fair included a special focus on Korean galleries presenting a range of contemporary art.

CONTEXT Art Miami felt refreshing as there was plenty of new art works, even from artists well-known on the art fair circuit. Artists appearing previously in fairs held in Miami/ Miami Beach, New York or The Hamptons presented some of their latest directions. Even those artists new to these circuits seem to bring their A game to CONTEXT.

Russian artist Maxim Bashev, exhibiting with 11.12 Gallery (Moscow), presented new paintings referencing art history in vivid color, representing a departure from the rawness and street art vibe evident in earlier works. German artist Juliane Hundertmark, exhibiting with Knight Webb Gallery (London), presented a lighter side to her narrative paintings. Still possessing a punch and weaving mythical tales yet unknown, the works were noticeably lighter than earlier series in both palette and in implied narration while still retaining their power to entrance.



Artwork by Maxim Bashev. Exhibited with 11.12 Gallery. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

American artist Jeff Muhs, exhibited with The McLoughlin Gallery (San Francisco), exhibited a knock out abstraction painting that married an airiness with vivid color and confident brushstrokes and a concrete sculpture that infused a new delicacy to the tabletop work. Muhs is based in The Hamptons.

Artist Ewa Bathelier, born in Warsaw and now living in France, continues her paintings presenting ballerina tutus as portraits. Exhibited with Galleria Ca' D'oro (Rome, Miami and New York City), the paintings at Context commanded attention born from the use of color and from the painting's dimensions. Even though the subject matter is a constant for Bathelier, each painting is its own and tells a unique story each time.

Paintings by Han Young-Wook, exhibited with Galerie Bhak (Seoul) were amazing in the way they combined hyperrealism with the mystical, conjuring the idea that behind each portrait is real person but elevated into a legend. The paintings are oil on aluminum and scratched, infusing texture and mystery to the work through the interplay of grooves, color and sometimes its removal. Think Lord of the Rings meeting Contemporary Realism and the image will bring you close to Han Young-Wook's artwork.



"Face 205" by Han Young-Wook, 2013. Oil on aluminum, scratch, 78 x 55 inches. Exhibited with Galerie Bhak, Seoul. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

Paintings by Russell West, exhibited with Woolff Gallery (London), were also of note. Favorites were dreamy cityscapes created through dried painting drips suspended from wire frames. The process is made an integral part of the sculptural painting by the inclusion of stationary puddles of color pooling at a disconnected base at the foot of the work, helping to form an unusual slice of a metropolis landscape.



"Neighborhood" by Russell West. Oil on wire on board, 28 x 24 x 6 inches. Exhibited with Woolff Gallery, London . Photo by Sage Cotignola.

Also catching my eye were figurative sculptures by Max Leiva, exhibited with ten472 Contemporary Art (Nevada City) and Peter Demetz, exhibited with Liquid Art System, White Room (Capri/Positano). I enjoyed portraits by Seung Mo Park, exhibited with Blank Space (New York City) making use of layered mesh to create suspended artworks. Also, colorful paintings by Speedy Graphito (Culver City, CA) incorporating pop culture imagery were easy enjoyments.

Overall, CONTEXT Art Miami was a gratifying fair that married interesting art with an inviting viewing environment. The tone was set right at the entrance with the installation of a field of bobbing pink poppies by Jannick Deslauriers, exhibited with Art Mur (Montreal). Popular for selfies and social media pics, it was impossible not to be enchanted by the floral garden that seemed to sway from an imagined Miami wind.

CONTEXT Art Miami continues through Sunday, December 6, 2015.

To see images of artwork found at CONTEXT Art Miami, view our slideshow:

[View Slideshow](#)

BASIC FACTS: CONTEXT Art Miami remains on view through December 6, 2015. The fair is located in the Design District at the Art Miami Pavillion, 2901 NE 1st Avenue, Miami, FL 33137. www.contextartmiami.com.

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