



# CRITIC'S VIEW: 8 Artists To Know at PULSE Miami Beach

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by Pat Rogers

PULSE Miami Beach cleared their decks and closed on Saturday but the memory of the art seen continues on. The art fair expanded considerably from last year's edition by adding a second tent to its art fair set by the sea. PULSE plans an equal expansion for its upcoming edition in New York City in March 2016. With the expansion in Miami Beach also came a more polished fair. Video art played a much smaller part than last year but otherwise the fair kept steady in quality and booth presentation.

PULSE Miami Beach featured many of its expected exhibitors, some presenting a similar rooster of artists, but also added new galleries which breathed variety into the fair. One fun moment unfolded when Chuck Close made an appearance to visit Adamson Gallery / Editions (Washington, DC), who exhibited a large self-portrait of the artist. Close graciously accepted invitations for selfies, made jokes with the crowd and agreeably posed before his artwork solo and with gallery and fair representatives.



Chuck Close visited PULSE Miami Beach where Adamson Gallery / Editions exhibited a self-portrait by Close. Photo by Pat Rogers.

Chuck Close was hardly the only artist exhibiting at PULSE Miami Beach. Following is a list of eight artists worth knowing from this year's Miami Beach edition.

## MARIU PALACIOS

Mariu Palacios (b. 1976, Lima, Peru) had a solo show presented by Cede Galeria (Lima, Peru). The booth was a combination of installation, sculptural mixed media pieces and photography. Figures fully cloaked and bound, identities obscured, with extensive writing on their garments anchor the exhibition. The primary installation featured poetry on the wall, handwritten in Spanish, recalling a conscious choice to **regale** the past to memory and then let it go. The cloaked figures channel the emotions that make memories—devotion, sacrifice and mourning of both ideals and the love for another.

The cloaked figures, in particular, connect with Palacios's gallery show "heroína, under

construction” which presented works exploring the changing definition of what constitutes a hero and female quests for living a life of meaning. The works create a bridge between past and present through Palacios’s imagining of her historic relative, Enique Palacios (1850- 1879), who was honored as a Peruvian War Hero after fighting in the Peru-Spain war and the Peru-Chile War, according to the gallery. Creating a fictitious romantic life for Enique and casting his imagined lover in a central role, the Palacios’s narrative art straddles past and present while posing questions for the future.

Combining text, imagery and object, Palacios explores the ways the past can reveal truths about the present, the search for meaning and knowledge that may be gleaned from both.



Installation of art by Mariu Palacios exhibited by Cede Galleria (Lima, Peru) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



Art by Mariu Palacios exhibited by Cede Galleria (Lima, Peru) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



Art by Mariu Palacios exhibited by Cede Galleria (Lima, Peru) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## **TRAVIS LOUIE**

It’s easy to mistake portrait paintings by Travis Louie as drawings. It also easy to consider his portraits of unworldly creatures and fictitious people as illustration instead of fine art. Whether making drawings or paintings, Travis Louis’s formal portraits of people and characters who are likely to surprise have meaning that goes beyond what is easily seen.

Louie’s paintings are delicately rendered and each set in ornate frame or one that helps conjure a bygone era. Each portrait is a formal one and is presented as if it were part of a portrait gallery that might be found in home from the Victorian Age, the Gilded Age or some bygone era unspecified.

Art by Travis Louis (b. 1964, Queens, New York) were exhibited by William Baczek Fine Arts (Northampton, MA) at PULSE Miami Beach. Each portrait was accompanied by a short text relaying

an occurrence from the character's life which may have a direct result in their unusual appearance. Running with the premises that the portrait gallery is being presented by the home's host, the oddities of every family member raises questions: does politeness take over and the individuality dismissed or does their differences require a directness?

It is these reactions and the state of being different that are the muses for Travis Louis's art. Casting his characters in fantastic shapes set in historic and mythical times reveal an uncomfortable truth—it's not easy being different. Louis's removal of ethnicity, societal mores and specific historical references in his art that would otherwise ground the images, instead, leave the viewer alone with his or her reaction and the examination of whatever that might reveal.



"Miss Gloria" by Travis Louie exhibited by William Baczek Fine Arts (Northampton, MA) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



A wall of portraits of unusual creatures born from Travis Louis's imagination. Paintings by Travis Louie were exhibited by William Baczek Fine Arts (Northampton, MA) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## **JOACHIM GROMMEK**

At first glance, it appears as if paintings by Joachim Grommek (b. 1957, Wolfsburg, Germany) are made with a combination of tape and paint. That impression would be mistaken. Grommek's abstract paintings are made by building up thick layers of paint to achieve dimension and texture to create the illusion of tape. Exhibited with Taubert Contemporary (Berlin). The tape-like fields are labor intensive and methodically repeated (wet, dry, repeat) until the painting is created.

Before the examination of the methodology came the attractiveness of the geometric abstraction. Appearing familiar, the works embrace an unexpectedness that's subtle. They are familiar yet unique. They are harmonious but may be slightly off-kilter. There appears to be tape but there is not. This is the place Grommek wishes viewers to be—what your eyes see are an illusion; what you are experiencing may also be an illusion. Art is an illusion. What the viewers do with this knowledge is up to them.



Painting by Joachim Grommek exhibited by Taubert Contemporary (Berlin) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



Painting by Joachim Grommek exhibited by Taubert Contemporary (Berlin) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



“Untitled” by Joachim Grommek, 2014. Enamel on aluminum, 78.7 x 59.1 inches (200 x 150 x 2.5 cm). Exhibited with Taubert Contemporary. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## **KELLYANN BURNS**

The surfaces of Kellyann Burns’s paintings are impossible not to notice. Her art is frequently sanded to reveal history and reveal hidden layers of paint. The works are beautiful, rendered in vivid colors with interesting surfaces. American Modern Art history feels close and contemporary. Burns’s exhibited paintings are oil on alu-dibond, just like Gerhard Richter. Elements of form and implied architecture peer from below the color soaked paintings. What’s not as obvious is Burns consciously creates her abstract painting to be oriented at the viewer’s discretion.

My first reaction was to dismiss this as a cop out: abstraction...it’s whatever you’d like it to be / no right or wrong / the artist doesn’t decide. Gallerist Valerie McKenzie from McKenzie Fine Art (New York) set me straight. Burns does believe the work should be up to the viewer and she does decide: the ability for the painting “to work” from all four angles consciously takes place in the process and the installation and is an integral part of her art.

Burns works from above the “canvas” and coaxes the painting from all four perspectives into the art becomes four paintings in one. Frequently turning the painting while working, the process is a labor-intensive one. Burns paints, sands, paints, sands again until history is revealed and abstract elements are cojoined in harmony. To preserve her intent and make her vantage points available to viewers, Burns devised a unique framing system so paintings can easy switched and oriented as dictated by muse, mood and changing physical space.

As I’m ever the doubter, Valerie McKenzie switched paintings from horizontal to vertical in the installation at her booth at PULSE Miami Beach. It was then that the full strength of Burns’s work was revealed. The paintings did indeed “work” from a variety of angles and I found all perspectives to be beautiful.



An installation of paintings by Kellyann Burns exhibited by McKenzie Fine Art Inc (New York) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



A painting by Kellyann Burns exhibited by McKenzie Fine Art Inc (New York) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## **MARION WILSON & KIRSTEN NELSON**

The pair of artists are distinct but entirely complimentary. Presented in a beautifully curated booth by Frederieke Taylor Gallery (New York), Marion Wilson exhibited a delicate series of botanical portraits on mylar and Kirsten Nelson presented mixed media works that combined architectural elements with design ones to create fine art. Both artists exhibited works that were minimalist that presented an essence of form that involve environmental environments—whether manmade or natural.

Kirsten Nelson's art is constructed out of building materials that would be common to the typical homeowner. Extracted from their function and paired with material that may be decorative or function in relationships that are not usually formed, the sculptures feel like they could have been excised from a construction site, almost like a souvenir from a scavenger hunt or a beloved detail from a home set for demolition. Yet an examination for possible clues would turn up empty. The works are haunting and pleasing to look at.

Marion Wilson's art exhibited at PULSE Miami Beach felt like they belonged in a botany classroom where the specimens are especially lovely. Graceful in their singular presentation, the image is a microscopic look at weeds as a way of examining environment. Selected for their humble stature on the plant scale, this body of work relates conceptually to Wilson's work with homeless men and criminals, imbuing dignity and loft of a kind to living things passed by due to the place occupied in the environmental chain.



An installation of work by Marion Wilson and Kirsten Nelson exhibited by Frederieke Taylor Gallery (New York) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



An installation of work by Marion Wilson and Kirsten Nelson exhibited by Frederieke Taylor Gallery (New York) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## **MARKUS LINNENBRINK**

Markus Linnenbrink was exhibited by two galleries at PULSE Miami Beach presenting new and distinct works from each other. Between both exhibitors, a nice range of Linnenbrink resin-poured paintings were evident. In Linnenbrink's art, beauty is equally be found in the details and the overall composition. I first spied Linnenbrink work at Art Basel Miami Beach last year and the experience stuck with me. Working exclusively with poured color resin, the art allows viewers a look inside the painting where the core of beauty lies. Each window reveals process and the intricacy that comes from creating the work. It is process that Linnenebrink is most concerned with and the compositions easily match artist intent with viewer experience.

Linnenbrink was recently commissioned to make a mural for the Concourse Lobby of 75 Rockefeller Plaza in New York City, said gallerist Patricia Sweetow. The mural will be 7 x 90 feet made up of poured resin.

At PULSE Miami Beach, a variety of works presented by Patricia Sweetow Gallery (Oakland, CA) and Taubert Contemporary (Berlin, Germany) who represent Markus Linnenbrink's work in different parts of the world.



"INSIDEYOURHEAD" by Markus LinnenbrinkM 2015 exhibited by Taubert Contemporary (Berlin, Germany) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.



"GETUSEDTOYOU" by Markus Linnenbrink, 2014 exhibited by Patricia Sweetow Gallery (Oakland, CA) at PULSE Miami Beach. Epoxy resin on wood panel, 60 x 60 inches (154.8 cm x 154.8 cm)



Detail of a painting by Markus Linnenbrink exhibited by Taubert Contemporary (Berlin) at PULSE Miami Beach. Photo by Sage Cotignola.

## TEGENE KUNBI

I became enamoured with paintings by Tegene Kunbi after seeing them at PULSE New York in 2014. At that art fair, Margaret Thatcher Projects presented a solo show of the work. Channeling a variety of cultural influences, Kunbi creates paintings with bands of thick color made from thick brush strokes that infuse the works with texture.

By the time I passed by the booth at PULSE Miami Beach, there were only a few paintings remaining by Tegene Kunbi. Having seen an extensive array of paintings previously, the paintings remained strong and were standouts at this year's booth.



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**BASIC FACTS:** PULSE Miami Beach was presented from December 1 – 5, 2015 at Indian Beach Park in Miami Beach. [www.pulse-art.com](http://www.pulse-art.com).

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