



CRITIC'S VIEW: Miami Art Fair Week Grows Up

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by Sandra Hale Schulman

We all have to grow up sometime and Miami's Art Fair Week has finally gotten the memo. With a major renovation at the Miami Beach Convention Center, a higher caliber of art, fairs in every part of town and museums that have the sheen of polished professionals, the town has gone adult.

But adulting doesn't mean you can't have some fun.

Art Basel Miami Beach

At the main fair, the ginormous new convention center was still unwrapping kitschy sleek lobby furniture hours before the opening but was otherwise ready to roll with a sophisticated, expanded layout, bigger wider aisles and easier access from all sides of the building.



Art Basel Miami Beach 2018. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Despite the pricey \$60 entrance fee, over 83,000 people passed through the new doors in five days, spending tens of millions of dollars, according to Art Basel Miami Beach. So many galleries reported selling out their entire booths within hours of the opening day that it was rare to find anything left for sale by the weekend, galleries told the art fair.

Buzzing in the aisles was the Keith Haring installation, presented by [Gladstone Gallery](#) and [Lévy Gorvy](#). Using the original black and white graffiti wallpaper from Haring's innovative Lower East Side NYC Pop Shop from 1984, the rooms were filled with rarely seen works including Japanese influenced painted screens, rare ceramic vases with alligators (hello Florida), and a knockout triangular painting called *Silence = Death* that soon sold for close to \$9 million - a record for Haring.



"Silence=Death" by Keith Haring, 1988. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Haring started painting subway stations and walls, creating a hugely popular iconography of radiant babies and jumping men. He protested AIDS in particular, the unforgiving disease that took his life in 1990 at age 32. Both galleries sold all their Haring works, [according to ArtNEWS](#).



Keith Haring artworks exhibited by Gladstone Gallery at Art Basel Miami Beach 2018. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Abraham Cruzvillegas's *Autoreconstrucción: To Insist, to Insist, to Insist...*

The larger new center allowed the fair to host a major new performance, [Autoreconstrucción: To Insist, to Insist, to Insist...](#) in the new Grand Ballroom, a second floor space the size of a football field. Produced by [The Kitchen](#) in NYC, artist [Abraham Cruzvillegas](#) scavenged Miami for weeks leading up to the public performance of the sculptural work, picking up lounge chairs, chests of drawers, lamps, shopping carts and other daily use objects.

Three of the large groupings were suspended on a gate like platform by wires then attached by straps to female dancers. Wild frenetic drum and violin music began playing as the women ran, wrestled, charged and ran circles around the clunky hanging sculptures they were attached to.

Eventually the pieces began to fly away, leaving piles of scattered debris. At the end of the 20-minute performance, the dancers collapsed amid the rubble. As a metaphor for wrestling with daily life, dilapidated conditions and decaying physical objects, it was exhilarating.



Abraham Cruzvillegas's "Autoreconstrucción: To Insist, to Insist, to Insist..." at Art Basel Miami Beach 2018. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Inside the Bass Art Museum

The renovated Bass Museum has settled into a curious position of exhibiting art that seems tailored for millennial selfies. Paola Pivi has replaced last year's room full of clowns by Ugo Rondinone in "[Good Evening Beautiful Blue](#)" with neon colored polar bears made with feathers for "[Art with a View](#)." Climbing the walls, reclining on floors and hanging from swings, the bears are more than

photo-op ready.



Paola Pivi Bears at the Bass. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Fantastical creatures by the Haas Brothers in "[Fergully](#)" populate two museum galleries on the ground floor with sci-fi inspired furrries that mash up taxidermy, chair ottomans and pets. Twisted horns and polished metal feet give these morphlings a whimsical life of their own. My personal favorite Public Sector of large sculptures in the park out front has been suspended this year with [Rondinone's Magic Mountain](#) rock star totem the lone dramatic holdout. On long-term view in the park is the more subtle "[Chess Tables](#)" by Jim Drain.



Rendering of "Miami Mountain" by Ugo Rondinone. Rendering © Ugo Rondinone, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and The Bass, Miami Beach.

"Unofficial" Banksy at Magic City Studios

Over on the mainland, the talk of the town was the sprawling Banksy exhibit in the new [Magic City Studios](#) space in Little Haiti. Plopped down in a hot new warehouse district, this well curated show features 80 pieces from Banksy, many of them never before exhibited in the USA.



Installation of artwork by Banksy in the exhibition "The Art by Banksy" in Miami. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

The artwork exhibited in "[The Art of Banksy](#)" all belongs to mostly UK collectors, properly signed and numbered, all on loan and not for sale, so Banksy's website protests about it being "unauthorized" is weak. Most of these were in editions of 600 to 750 so Banksy's money was definitely banked. The show itself is very well done, with high end lighting, ambient piped in music, videos of the dealer show producers speaking throughout, and it climaxes with some large wall sized works.

Like the film says exit through the gift shop and there are interactive photo ops and a clever t-shirt gimmick – pick your [Banksy](#) design and they screen it onto a shirt or tote bag for you then you can customize it with spray paint on the spot.



Entrance to Bansky exhibit. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Deitch and Gagosian

The Design District hot ticket was the opening of “Pop Minimalism/Minimalist Pop” curated for the fourth year by Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian at the four-story Moore Building. This year, works by masters [Ed Ruscha](#), [Roy Lichtenstein](#), [Andy Warhol](#), [Richard Prince](#), [Dan Flavin](#), [Yayoi Kusama](#) and dozens more filled up the building. It’s a candy colored neon head trip through the 60s and 70s greatest hits. The stylish crowd included artist [Shepard Fairey](#) and his wife Amanda, who were in town to support a pop up shop and do a DJ stint at Wynwood Walls.

“It’s nice to be here this year without the pressure of a new mural,” Fairey told me. “For me [Art Week] is an opportunity to focus on seeing new work. I’m passionate about seeing new work but I’m always so absorbed in my own I don’t see as much as I’d like. A lot of molecules collide for me here. It’s also important for me to be here and shake hands with the people who’ve supported me.”

The affable artist was stopped every few minutes by people wanting to shake his hand and take a photo.



Shepard Fairey at “Pop Minimalism/Minimalist Pop.” Photo by Jordan Levin.

NADA MIAMI BEACH

NYC made a staggering showing at the [NADA fair](#) at the Ice Palace Studios. [Howl Happening’s](#) booth brought wild East Village art to town, with floor to ceiling paintings and collaborative work from two of their mainstay artists [Brett de Palma](#) and [Scooter LaForge](#). De Palma has recently been seen in the new documentaries on his friend [Jean Michel Basquiat](#), while LaForge has been painting up a storm with ground murals in the Howl Gallery alley where CBGB’s back door was.



Howl Happening Exhibiting artists. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Stopping by the booth to ogle was artist, designer and drag queen performer Stephen Tashjian also known as Tabboo, curator Bill Arning who recently left his job as head of the Contemporary Art Museum Houston, and photographer Dustin Pittman who got his start at Warhol's factory.



Dustin Pittman snaps Tabboo. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Miami Art Scene

On the local front, [Primary Projects](#) presented [Carlos Betancourt](#)'s first solo show in Miami in a decade, "[Process Ritual Future Eternal](#)." A huge crowd marveled at his glowing sculptural work made from vintage tree toppers. A new piece called *Mancini Curtain* features hundreds of cascading light strings from a black metal arch; other works have stars that twirl and twinkle in their wall mounted frames. [Gloria and Emilio Estefan](#) collect Betancourt's work and stopped by the opening in the Design District for an impromptu song and drum performance.



Carlos Betancourt at "Process Ritual Future Eternal." Photo by Jordan Levin.



Installation shot of "Process Ritual Future Eternal" by Carlos Betancour at Primary.
Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Over in the Design District at [Swampspace](#), the artist run free form gallery that doubles as owner (and former NYC assistant to Keith Haring and Kenny Scharf) Oliver Sanchez's studio space, his 26 year-old daughter Lulu Sanchez debuted a new large scale work that reflects Miami's socio-political structures and climate changes.



Lucia Sanchez at Swampspace. Photo by Sandra Schulman.

Using a wall sized found banner, Sanchez embellished the cheery normcore image with shells, dried flowers, colored beads and paint by sewing, tearing, and embedding, moving the scene away from slick commercial into the natural world. It's a 20-foot long stunner, and quite a Miami debut for such a young artist.

Growing up in the art world: it's all the rage.

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