

# At Art Basel in Miami Beach, Dealers Test Whether Art Market Can Take a More Political Turn

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
BY ALEXANDER FORBES  
DEC 1ST, 2016 4:01 AM



Art Basel in Miami Beach, 2016. Photo by Alain Almiñana for Artsy.

Art Basel in Miami Beach opened its 15th anniversary edition on Wednesday at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

This year sees 269 galleries from 29 countries showing across the fair's five sectors. And while political turmoil across the globe, the U.S. election, and Zika convened to dampen dealer expectations for the fair this year, initial results suggest that those with diversified programs and—most importantly—work of real resonance and quality are faring just fine.

“Art Basel has truly transformed our community,” said Art Basel in Miami Beach host committee chairman and auto magnate Norman Braman, inaugurating this year's fair. Miami has been a hallmark example of the Art Basel brand's ability to elevate a city far beyond expectations, in part inspiring the Swiss fair's Art Basel Cities initiative, which begins in Buenos Aires next year. It will see Art Basel work with municipalities around the globe to increase cultural programming, in hopes of capturing the same essence that “helped spur the renaissance of Miami Beach,” according to Miami Beach mayor Philip Levine.

Over its 15 editions, Art Basel in Miami Beach has expanded from 160 galleries (half of which still participate) to nearly 300. It has seen the formation of over 20 additional satellite fairs that each now set up shop during the first week of December. It has seen the Miami art scene expand from just six galleries in 2002 to over 130 galleries in 2016. And it has seen a remarkable commitment to culture from its residents: Braman and others have rallied to create the ICA Miami, which will open its permanent location next year; Jorge Pérez announced on Wednesday that he would give an additional \$15 million gift to the Pérez Art Museum Miami, which was relaunched in 2013, following his initial \$40 million gift (\$20 million of which was donated in artworks); and numerous other collectors have launched private institutions in Miami, including the Rubell Family Collection, which on Tuesday announced that it is building a new 100,000-square-foot space slated to open in December of 2018, more than doubling its current size.



Installation view of Blum & Poe's booth at Art Basel in Miami Beach, 2016. Photo by Alain Almiñana for Artsy.

What might have otherwise been a purely celebratory occasion for Art Basel in Miami Beach did, however, reflect the state of our times. The year 2016 has been cast as bruising by many, and this has not been lost on the art world—far from it. “We’ve faced health issues. We’ve faced unexpected political transitions that we’re in the middle of here [in the United States] but also further afield. One need only look at Brexit or the state of the Brazilian government or what’s going on in Korea to realize that this is a time of great change,” said Art Basel director Marc Spiegler.

And there has been no lack of debate regarding art’s role in such tumultuous times. In an essay earlier this week, Ben Davis smartly questioned whether or not the only resonance created by artistic forms of protest, at a time when an educational divide sits at the center of politics, is that of an echo chamber among progressives. But Spiegler disagrees: “I would argue that art is more relevant than ever. Artists have an important role to play.” He pointed to the fact that artists are able to react to and record changes in society much more quickly than can politicians and CEOs—and that we should expect to see a more politically engaged and more deeply probing form of art gain greater prominence in the coming years. There has been considerably less time for art to come to the surface in the few weeks since the American election than there was


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Brown is presenting a trio of works by Rirkrit Tiravanija created on November 9th. Titled *untitled 2016 (the tyranny of common sense has reached its final stage, new york times, november 9, 2016)*, the works use the pages of said day’s paper as a backdrop for the titular message, which has been painted on in Tiravanija’s typical block lettering. “We planned for a completely different hang of the booth, but following the election we decided that what we had planned to show wasn’t necessarily appropriate to the mood,” said the gallery’s Thor Shannon. “I can’t imagine not addressing everything that’s happening right now. It would seem too cavalier or mercantile to do that.”



Installation view of Gavin Brown’s enterprise’s booth at Art Basel in Miami Beach, 2016. Photo by Alain Almiñana for Artsy.

Just adjacent to Brown, Blum & Poe’s booth greets those entering the fair through Door B with another late

addition, Sam Durant's *End White Supremacy* (2008)—the words of the title scrawled out on a neon orange electric sign. The booth's interior sees a further pair of works by Durant, one reading, "Landscape art is good only when it shows the oppressor hanging from a tree by his Motherf\*\*ing (*sic*) neck." Two booths away at Sprüth Magers, Barbara Kruger's *Untitled (Cast of Characters)* (2016) portrays a more pluralistic view of this year ("Fatuous Fools," "Brutal Schemers," "Jerks," and "Haters" alongside "Lovers," "Kind Souls," "Doers," and "Believers"), following her now-infamous cover for *New York* magazine's election issue, for which she printed "Loser" over an image of Donald Trump.

While far from all of the artwork at Art Basel in Miami Beach this year—or even a majority—is directly political in orientation, shifting political and economic realities the world over weighed heavily with all of the dealers I spoke to on opening day. "In truth, I think all of us were somewhat uncertain between the political environment, the strength of the dollar, even Zika, quite honestly," said Paula Cooper director Steven P. Henry. "There have been a lot of headwinds to the market recently."

Henry reported a "moderated" pace in comparison to previous years at the fair, as well as fewer Europeans in attendance. However, the director went on to say that early results had nonetheless outstripped their dampened expectations going into Art Basel. A fresh painting by Cecily Brown, *Frenchy* (2016), sold quickly, as did works by Tauba Auerbach, Kelley Walker, and new addition to the program, Evan Holloway. As has been the case for the past year, Henry noted some benefits to the slower pace: "Rather than buying with their ears, people are looking. It's better for the artists and it's better for the collectors, really."



Installation view of Acquavella Galleries's booth at Art Basel in Miami Beach, 2016. Photo by Alain Almiñana for Artsy.

Across the fair, no single market segment or genre of art appears to be especially harder hit by the overall softening that has been observed over the past 12 to 18 months. It's just that fewer works in each category are going overall. Towards the upper end of the spectrum on day one in Miami was a remarkable 1964 canvas by Kenneth Noland, *Mach II*, which sold from Acquavella Galleries in the fair's first hours in the region of its \$1.25 million asking price. "It's an A-plus example of his work, with really incredible provenance," said Eleanor Acquavella of the piece, which had remained in the same private collection up until the gallery's exhibition "Postwar New York: Capital of the Avant Garde" this past summer.

Acquavella said that dealers, like her family's, have been experiencing the same supply constraints that have hobbled the secondary market over the past year. Sensing uncertainty in the market, collectors have shown significant reticence to offer up top-quality material. And like in the secondary market, when they have decided to sell, much of the material has been kept private. "That's the bulk of our business," she said, noting that fairs serve more as a form of advertising. "That's why we really try to bring an array of things." This time, that ranges from the Noland and a set of Andy Warhol "Dolly Partons" to paintings by rising Chinese abstract painter Wang Yan Cheng and Spanish painter and ceramist Miquel Barceló.

Other major sales on opening day included a work by Mark Bradford, which sold for \$2 million from Hauser & Wirth;

a Yoshimoto Nara wood panel painting, which Blum & Poe sold for \$1.2 million; Bridget Riley's *Rose Gold 2* (2012) and Albert Oehlen's *Interior* (1998), which sold for \$1 million each at Max Hetzler's stand; an Enrico Castellani canvas for €1 million from Tournabuoni Art; a new painting by Kerry James Marshall (*Untitled (Curtain Girl)*, 2016) for \$600,000; a pair of paintings by Lee Ufan for \$750,000 apiece from Pace; Craig Kauffman's *Untitled Wall Relief* (1967/2008) and DeWain Valentine's *Triple Disc Red with Blue Lip* (1967), which each sold for \$750,000 from Sprüth Magers; Carmen Herrera's *Untitled Estructura (Blue)* (1966/2015) and *Ave Maria* (2011) for \$450,000 each from Lisson; and *Solstice VII* (2016) by Sam Gilliam, sold from David Kordansky Gallery for \$400,000.



Installation view of Sprüth Magers's booth at Art Basel in Miami Beach, 2016. Photo by Alain Almiñana for Artsy.

According to Cheim & Read's Adam Sheffer, who also serves as ADAA's president, dealers at Art Basel in Miami Beach this year might expect the tempo "to be more like some of the European regional fairs where you do a little bit each day." Sheffer had already swapped out a number of sold works from his booth, including a \$250,000 Jenny Holzer, a \$350,000 Sean Scully, and a \$30,000 Chantal Joffe. Ghada Amer's *Three Girls in Black and White* (2016) had also sold for \$150,000—as had an untitled Adam Fuss from this year, for \$60,000.

Sheffer said that successfully dealing art at the present moment does require significantly more work than it has at previous

stages in the art market. “There’s no question that sales are the most important part of being in an art fair. This is like the world’s most expensive parking space of all time and the meter is running. But at the same time, if you’re handed lemons, make lemonade,” he said. In some cases that means knowing when to put immediate worries about total sales volume aside and instead taking the time to have more extended conversations with those choosing to attend the fair despite Zika and political turmoil. “Collectors who have come here this year are the ones who have always made a life in art. And regardless of what’s going on or what they hear about on CNN or MSNBC or Fox, this is something that is inherent to their lives and they’re going to be here because of it.”

Perhaps, if Spiegler has his way, those collectors will this week be the ones who begin to help fund a more radical and politically engaged art world—precisely *because* of what they’re reading in the news. At least then we’ll know for sure if art can make a difference.

—Alexander Forbes

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## The 20 Best Booths at Art Basel in Miami Beach

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BY MARINA CASHDAN  
NOV 30TH, 2016 11:19 PM

As the 15th edition of Art Basel in Miami Beach opened its doors, visitors were treated to a surprisingly serene atmosphere and a serious tone that the Miami fair's audience doesn't typically encounter. Gallery presentations were strong and deliberate, whether they were delving into the current political climate, mining art history, or debuting new works from blue-chip artists, fresh out of the studio. The fair's curated sections, like NOVA and Kabinett, felt cogent and cohesive, each standing firmly on its own. And while many booths stopped me in my tracks, these 20 made me stick around for a while longer.

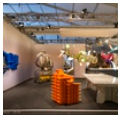
## Esther Schipper / Johnen Galerie

GALLERIES SECTOR, BOOTH G6 • KABINETT SECTOR

WITH WORKS BY TOMÁS SARACENO, ANGELA BULLOCH, MARTIN HONERT, LIAM GILICK, ȘTEFAN BERTALAN, RYAN GANDER, MATTI

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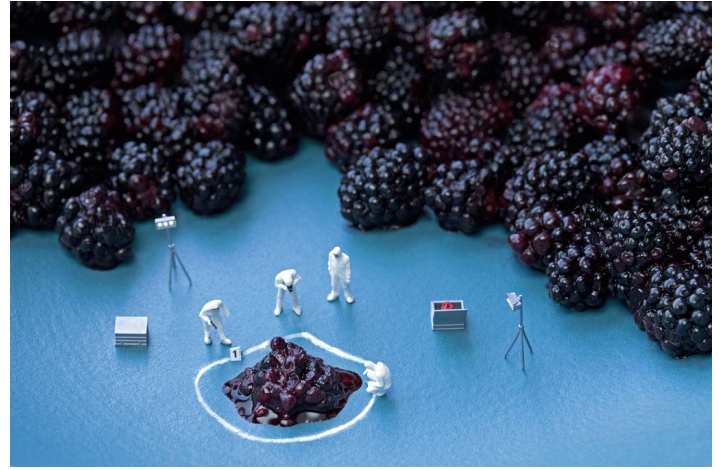
At Art Basel in Miami  
Beach, Dealers Test  
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Political Turn

## These Artists Are Tackling Big Issues through Tiny Works of Art

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT  
NOV 30TH, 2016 6:29 PM



Christopher Boffoli  
*Pharmaceutical Memories*, 2013  
 Winston Wächter Fine Art



Christopher Boffoli  
*Blackberry C.S.I.*, 2013  
 Winston Wächter Fine Art

If you run into artist Curtis Talwst Santiago on the street, he just might pull a tiny sculpture out of his pocket. While it may look like a time-worn ring box, it doesn't contain the kind of treasure you might expect. Once opened, a miniature world is revealed; a scene that, at first glimpse, is small and endearing, but given a closer look, packs a searing, emotional punch.

"We love looking down on the world like you would in 'god mode' in a video game, or through Google Earth," Santiago explains, as he discusses the very small sculptures in his "Minimized Histories" series. One four-inch-wide box opens to display a minute boat, loaded with 50 or more passengers, that's pitching precariously in stormy seas. After you get past the awe-inspiring intricacy, Santiago's work will likely inspire meditations on fleeing refugees. "When something so large is brought down to such a tiny, boiled-down, concentrated moment, it's shocking and fascinating all at once," Santiago offers. "For me, that's the impact I want my work to have, and I feel like miniatures do have."

Santiago is one of a number of contemporary artists working on a very, very small scale. The choice may seem at odds with an art world that, in the past 20-odd years, has seen both the size and price of contemporary art balloon to epic proportions (Jeff Koons's towering balloon dog and Carsten Höller's suspended sculptural slide come to mind). But these creatives find they can communicate more effectively by tapping into the age-old allure of small, sometimes downright microscopic forms, which bear a shock value all their own.

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# The 13 Best Booths at UNTITLED, Miami Beach

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
BY MOLLY GOTTSCHALK  
NOV 30TH, 2016 10:08 AM



Photo by Casey Kelbaugh, courtesy of UNTITLED, Miami Beach.

The fifth edition of UNTITLED, Miami Beach opened Tuesday, returning to its enviable spot on the shoreline of South Beach. The fair, which launches its inaugural San Francisco edition in January, is a perennial favorite among the satellites for its tight curation—and this edition, featuring 129 galleries from 20 countries, is perhaps its strongest yet. Below, we bring you 13 standout presentations, from a powerful and timely statement on gun violence against black bodies to a young artist's 21st-century update on classic landscape photography.

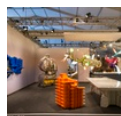
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## Sustainability Reigns at Design Miami's 2016 Edition

ARTSY EDITORIAL  
BY ALEXXA GOTTHARDT  
NOV 29TH, 2016 10:13 PM

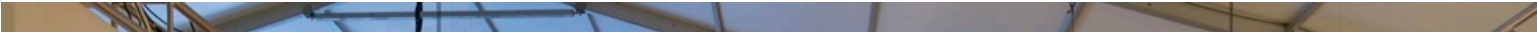


Installation view of ammann//gallery's booth at Design Miami/, 2016. Photo by James Harris, courtesy of Design Miami/.

Design Miami/ opened its doors on Tuesday with a new look and a big announcement. The fair, which has made a perennial home in Miami since 2010—and has since established itself as the leading platform for innovative design, both historic and brand spanning new—will be partnering with the United Nations in 2017. Together they've formed an initiative called "Building Legacy: Designing for Sustainability," which was created to help mobilize the intergovernmental organization's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The result is an unprecedented relationship for a commercial art or design fair.


"This fair is all about how our lives can be improved by thoughtful design and thinking," said Design Miami/ executive

director Rodman Primack in the opening hours of the fair. “It’s not just about making something, it’s about making something better and more beautiful. And right now, that also means sustainably.” Primack was standing in the middle of a round amphitheater—the likes of which ancient Romans used to work out pressing state issues—a “conversation pit” as it’s affectionately called, designed by architecture firm DDG and made of spruce sourced from one of the globe’s most environmentally responsible factories. Fittingly, it will host the first of Design Miami/’s collaborative efforts with the UN, a series of “Building Legacy Talks.”




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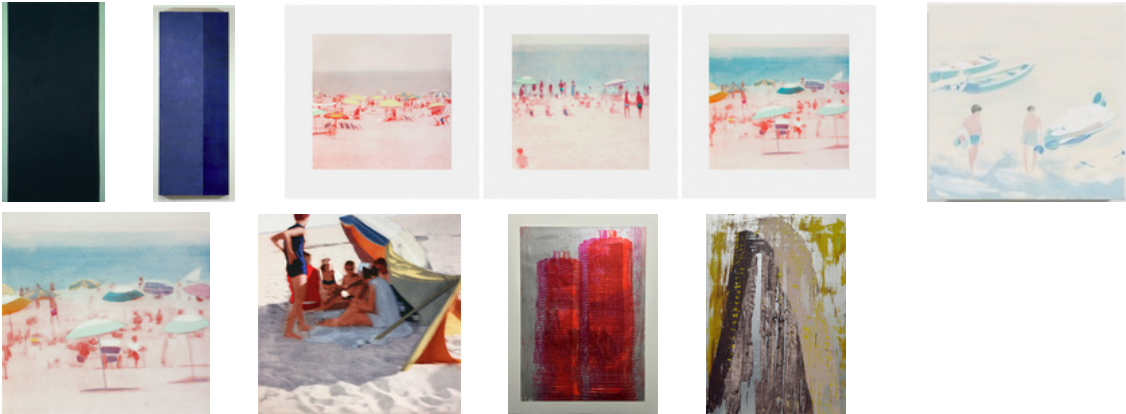


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