

Doing Miami, again - D. Dominick Lombardi

Well, it happened. It got even bigger, this super bowl of the art world. With some dozen and a half fairs, Miami in early December is Art World. And everyone was there, catching up with art esthetics, theories and achievements that seemed endless and bright. As I took in the first day and a half with friends Betty (art shipper and curator), Robert (gallerist and projects person) and Carl (artist and dealer), who I found the most fascinating since this year was his first time seeing this fair extravaganza, I quickly became simultaneously entrenched and overwhelmed. And despite Carl's newness here, he expressed definite opinions and valuable insights as we bounced from booth to room, and fair to exhibition.

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And There is one more big reason to smile here. You see, there are so many who have made it to this point, who deserve this stage, that you could not help but feel good about.

It is a given that Basel is grand, stupendous - the heartbeat of the core that feels like the energy stored up in a volcano. And it was great to see works like Michael Anderson's mesmerizing collages at the Marlborough booth that are painterly and potent.

And the other perennial show to see, Scope, with galleries like Ricco Maresca who offered up the magical life forms in ceramic by Christopher Adams; the gutsy and fresh group show of contemporary Polish artists at Kasia Kay Art Projects; the creepy cool works on paper by the Icelander Sigga Bjorg Sigurdardóttir at Galerie Adler; and the crisp cross-section of new realist art at the booth of ADA gallery were all show stoppers.

Surprising, I found two fairs to be so strong and so vibrant that they alone hold all of my allotted attention. The first is Flow, which was put together and run by Matt Garson of M%. He managed to amass just the right 18 institutions such as Arthur Roger Gallery which featured the stirring post Katrina, Louisiana portraits by David Bates. And the Anime looking photo portraits of fab-female nubile by Chris Scarborough at Marcia Wood Gallery were sheer knock-outs to name just a few.

Then there was the Bridge fair - with its edgy, funk'd out esthetic most noticeable in the over the top, Billy Shire Fine Arts Gallery. Bleu Acier Inc. from nearby Tampa was another great find - a gallery that displayed discerning taste and vision that featured a unique combination of styles and media. Here, I found the paintings of Elisabeth Condon to be particularly fine and compelling, while Marie Yoho Dorsey's stitched fabric paintings were quite beautiful. Then there is Rupert Ravens Contemporary with its amazing constructions by James A. Brown, that present this down and dirty sweet darkness that continues in the paintings of German Pitre.

I also managed a gander at the local art scene in the Wynwood Art District, and found it world class on many levels. Kevin Bruk Gallery had a show of Fabian Maraccio's works which were as twisted as painting can get. They gallery also feature the elusive, yet solid works of Richard Butler, and the quirky and sexual narrative drawings of Su-en Wong which rounded out that program nicely.

Then there is Praxis, another fine gallery featuring, among others, a number of sculptures by Ruben Torres Llorca that are well delivered conceptually, and incredibly well crafted.

Over at the Design District, I took a long look at Design Miami, a multi-leveled fair featuring incredible examples of modern and contemporary design. There, I found the objects comprised of reclaimed and reoriented ceramic statues in David Gill Gallery by Barnaby Barford to be quite profound and funny in a sea of high design steeped in pivotal works and potent trends.

Next year...