

BLOUIN ARTINFO

The Definitive Top 11 Booths at Art Basel Miami Beach

by Scott Indrisek



The Jack Early solo presentation at Fergus McCaffrey's booth at Art Basel Miami. (Photo by Scott Indrisek)

According to press materials, there are more than 165,250.7 galleries participating in this year's edition of Art Basel Miami Beach (our fact-checkers are on vacation, so don't quote us on that figure). To help you focus your marathon art expedition, we've culled, narrowed, and judged our way to a hyper-scientific, incredibly definitive list of the fair's top 11 booths

Fergus McCaffrey

You can't miss the booth for this gallery, which now has outposts in both New York and St. Barth's — just look for the gigantic, blown-up mugs of Paul McCartney and John Lennon, staring each other down across what appears to be a floor of bright yellow puzzle pieces. That work is one part of a solo presentation by Jack Early, which also includes a series of stuffed, photo-printed soft sculptures, paintings (homeroptic portraits layered over what looks like children's wallpaper celebrating military conquests, with some of the soldiers happily holding hands), and a record player spinning "Jack Early's Life Story In Just Under 20 Minutes." It's all silly and smart in equal measure.

Honor Fraser

As part of ABMB's Positions programming, this Los Angeles gallery presents a single work by Botswana-born, New York-based Meleko Mokgoso. The multi-part figurative painting becomes an environment of its own, with one long diptych wedged tightly into the booth, facing a pair of accompanying tondos. It's part of a new body of work from the artist that will form the basis of an April 2015 exhibition at ICA Boston.

Thomas Dane Gallery

This London institution scores with an array of works by Alexandra da Cunha. The artist's "Amazons" series combines mass-produced beach towels with various colored fabrics, creating compositions that will make you think deep thoughts about the nature of the readymade, seriality, and cartoon babes wearing pythons around their necks. (Da Cunha isn't the only one exploiting kitsch towels to make paintings; Josephine Meckseper pulls a similar trick with "rainbow-cheetah" patterned terrycloth over at Timothy Taylor's booth.) A trio of accompanying sculptures round things out — our favorite is one that appears to deconstruct an acoustic guitar into a minimalist drawing-in-space.

Galerie 1900-2000

As part of Basel's Kabinett programming, this Parisian gallery has a tight solo presentation of works on paper by the late Brazilian artist Ivan Serpa. The rest of the booth is an eclectic, nicely curated affair, ranging from an uncharacteristically goofy Rosemarie Trockel embroidered work to grotesquely erotic drawings by Hans Belmar, a limited-edition party invitation from 1963 by Marcel Duchamp, a Ray Johnson assemblage, and a Francis Picabia drawing from 1924.

Stuart Shave Modern Art

The name of the game at this year's booth is quirky and delicate: a 1983 Richard Tuttle assemblage of wood and cardboard, Paul Lee's self-explanatory "Untitled (painting on rock)," and a standalone mini-solo of new painted bronzes by Ricky Swallow are among works on view.

Kuri Manzutto

This Mexico City gallery earns its place on our list thanks to a sweet, very Miami-appropriate juxtaposition: Paintings of generic palm-tree scenes by Allora & Calzadilla paired with industrial chic concrete worm-coils by Damian Ortega.

Galerie Rodolphe Janssen

Marble and dyed-fabric pieces by Sam Moyer (who also has a great sculpture in ABMB's Public program outside the Bass Museum of Art) are joined by a photo-printed-on-foam by Adam McEwen and a trio of oddly adorable sculptures of miniature radiators by David Adamo.

Paula Cooper

Thoughtful choices here draw connections between the gallery's artists: Kelley Walker's toothpaste-defaced works speak to Justin Matherly's large-scale monoprint, and Christian Marclay's humanoid sculpture made using album covers resonates with Matherly's own bodily sculpture (a lump of concrete draping its weight around a hospital walker). A 13-part photographic piece by Tauba Auerbach is smart and beautiful, and would look great above our couch in an alternative universe in which we bought art rather than writing about it. Ditto a 12-piece Sherrie Levine "collage": A dozen matted-and-framed versions of the exact same generic postcard of a sunset over water, begging you to look close and spot differences that just aren't there.

Tornabuoni Art

The white carpeting in this booth is a nice touch, and completes the impression of a time machine to some swinging mid-'60s mod paradise. All the work here is about hacking, cutting, bending, bulging, and contorting, from Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases to Enrico Castellani's incredibly cool sculptural monochromes.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash

There's a little bit of everything crammed into this New York gallery's booth, from the expressively raw (William Pope L.) to the handcrafted (woven paintings by Brent Wadden) and in-your-face erotic (a photo by Leigh Ledare of his nude mother, augmented with oil pastel scribbles). A new painting by Keltie Ferris is a stunner, and slightly resembles what might happen if someone went wild with neon spraypaint on top of a Gerhard Richter. Minimalist pieces by Virginia Overton conjure magic with truck tires and rusty metal; Karl Haendel proves that draftsmanship isn't dead; and Chris Johanson's goofily optimistic "LA Life" will just make you smile.

Corbett Vs Dempsey

This gallery lands on our list thanks to a small booth-within-a-booth of early '70s drawings by Robert Lostutter, which combine Hairy Who flair for the grotesque with R. Crumbian thunder thighs and an interestingly sexualized array of sports-and-bondage equipment. Confused? Go look for yourself.

ALSO WORTH THE ATTENTION OF YOUR EYEBALLS:

Regen Projects, which brings textile paintings by Sergej Jensen, photography by Wolfgang Tillmans, and an amazing new self-portrait by Gillian Wearing; Urs Fischer's storm of plaster rain droplets, which makes navigating Sadie Coles's booth a bit of a production; and Ajay Kurian's Isa Genzken-indebted garbage-can sculptures at 47 Canal.