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Carlos Betancourt's *Untitled / 1,000 with Souvenirs* at Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts

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MIAMI HEAT by Walter Robinson

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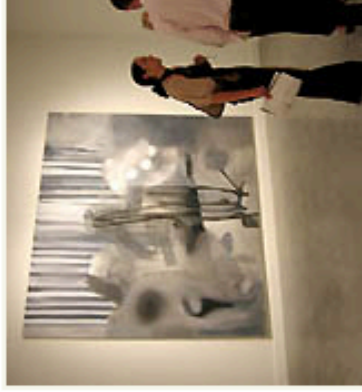
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The Wave Hotel in South Beach



Albert Oehlen's *Dose* (2003), from the collection of Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami



Still from Isaac Julien's film installation, *True North*, at MOCA North Miami

MIAMI HEAT by Walter Robinson

The latest round of art festivities in Miami began on Nov. 29, 2005, with a welcome party at the **Delano Hotel** thrown by **Art Basel Miami Beach**, the 600-pound art-world gorilla whose four-year-old presence at the Miami Beach Convention Center provides the occasion for a record number of additional art fairs -- how many are there? Five? Seven? -- and a host of ancillary events. Art Basel director **Sam Keller** set a hospitable tone, standing at the entrance to the Art Deco hotel, welcoming visitors from Europe, Latin America and points elsewhere. Inside were fetching young hostesses in low-cut orange dresses -- a bit of local color, so to speak -- as well as music, cocktails, a dinner buffet and a cigar bar. It was noisy, crowded and annoying -- in other words, a success.

Your correspondent, by the way, was enjoying the hospitality of **Alessandro Ferretti's** lovely **Wave Hotel** on Fourth Street and Ocean Drive in South Beach. With wireless in every room, it's the perfect place for a visiting art critic. Plus, the Wave is just around the corner from the MacArthur Causeway leading right to Miami's downtown art district.

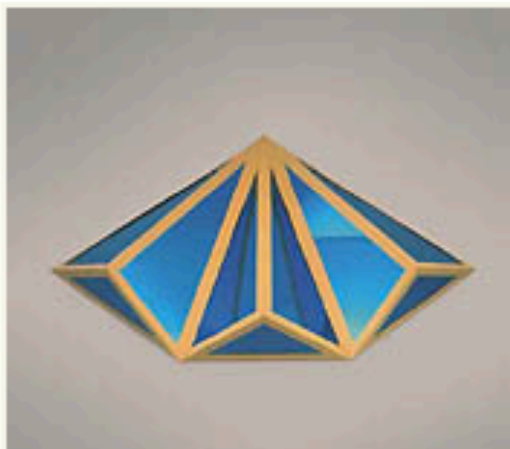
Contemporary Art at MOCA & MAC
Buses were provided to ferry visitors first to the **Museum of Contemporary Art** in North Miami and then to **Miami Art Central**, or MAC, a rather formidable jaunt that's not unlike starting out in midtown Manhattan and visiting the Brooklyn and Bronx Museums in turn. But food and drink were provided at each stop, lubricating the proceedings. At MoCA North Miami, the galleries are filled with the raucous, elegantly ugly abstractions of the German artist **Albert**



William Kentridge film installation at MAC



William Kentridge



Robert Smithson's untitled mirror sculpture from 1964.

abstractions of the German artist **Albert Oehlen**. His paintings are an acquired taste -- acquired by many important collectors, as it happens -- not least because he never takes, as a painter, the "tasty" way out.

In the MoCA theater is a new, 18-minute-long, three-screen film installation by the gay black British filmmaker **Isaac Julien** called *True North*, an ode to **Matthew Henson**, the African American companion of turn-of-the-century North Pole explorer **Robert E. Peary**. The bare narrative involves taking a statuesque black actress to the arctic, where she trudges across the frozen white landscape and communes with the Eskimos. The audiotrack includes snatches of text that sound like they come from Henson's diary, elemental and dramatic statements about an elemental and dramatic environment. The film seems to begin in the deep freeze, and end with a spring thaw. Her darkness seems congruent with the patches of rock and earth, as well as with the native people -- it's a sweet conceit, a new myth of primordial Africa exploring the globe.

Over at MAC is a major new show of films and drawings by **William Kentridge**, the celebrated South African animator who resembles a gray-haired professor with patches sewed to the elbows of his corduroy jacket. At the reception, he readily posed for pictures with one fan after another. "I love Miami," he said. "But I've only been here for 24 hours." Spread over two floors, the several black-and-white films included the suite of projections, comically running backwards like early cinema experiments, that was included in the **2005 Venice Biennale**, and a kind of silhouetted "magic lantern" show of a medieval "Passion Play" processional. The exhibition includes an extensive selection of drawings as well, which have a humanity that is all the more notable in the face of the nihilism of so many of his contemporaries.

Robert Smithson's untitled mirror sculpture from 1964, which sold for a record \$710,400 (with premium) at Christie's New York on Nov. 8, 2005



Pino Pascali's *Cannone Bella Ciao* (1965), sold for £1,352,000 at Christie's London on Oct. 24, 2005



Entering Art Basel Miami Beach



so many of his contemporaries.

Art, Money & Power

Things really took off on Wednesday, Nov. 30, with the openings of all the art fairs and the many breakfast welcomes at the private museums of local collectors like **Martin Margulies**, the **Rubell Family**, **Rosa de la Cruz**, **Ella Cisneros** and others. At the **Ritz-Carlton South Beach**, a ballroom filled with potential investors gathered at 9 am sharp to hear "Art, Money & Power: Collecting & Investing in Today's Art Market," the third in a series of such panel presentations sponsored by the art insurer **Hiscox plc** (which plans to open a U.S. office soon). Among the speakers were **Viscount Dupplin**, head of the art and private client division at Hiscox; **Philip Hoffman**, CEO of the London-based **Fine Art Fund**; **Christie's** contemporary art expert **Amy Cappellazzo**; and **Daniella Luxembourg**, the former partner in **Phillips, de Pury & Co.** who now heads **Artvest SA**, her own art investment fund.

The focus on art-as-investment, though timely and appropriate considering the context, was nevertheless rather unsettling in its intensity and single-mindedness. The market for works by **Jean-Michel Basquiat**, for instance, is "perfect," because the artist was prolific, museums never bought his work, and he produced work only for a short eight-year period -- before dying young from a drug overdose. All agreed that "art as an asset class provides the opportunity to generate large returns," in the words of Hoffman, who also noted that art investments have certainly outperformed equities in recent years.

In her presentation about record-breaking auction sales at Christie's, Cappellazzo noted how quickly the art market has accelerated, with contemporary art totals growing from \$50 million when she started in 2001 to more than \$200 million now. Despite the rapid rise in prices, Cappellazzo thought the market for many of her "greatest hits" -- record-setting works by **Jeff**



Chris Ofili's *Blue Moon* and *Silver Moon* (both 2005) at Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin



Kehinde Wiley
Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps
2005
Deitch Projects



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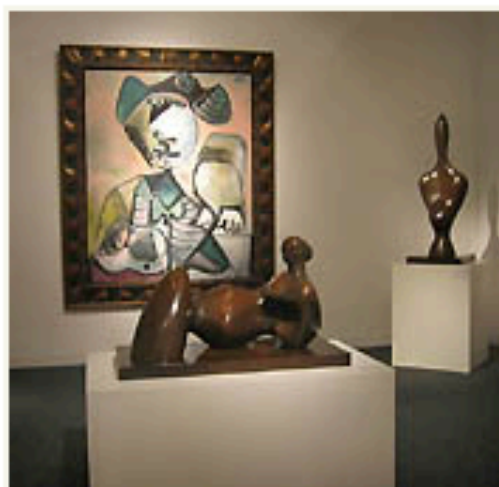
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Cappellazzo also repeatedly remarked on the ways that museum exposure can influence the market: the **Richard Prince** photo of a Marlboro Man that sold for a record \$1.2 million at Christie's last month, for instance, was helped by the fact that another print from the edition has been on almost constant view at the **Metropolitan Museum**. And the recent traveling **Robert Rauschenberg** retrospective, though not an especially good show, helped to focus the late artist's auction market, when a 1964 mirror sculpture taken right out of the exhibition sold at auction for more than \$700,000, well over its presale estimate of \$300,000-\$400,000.

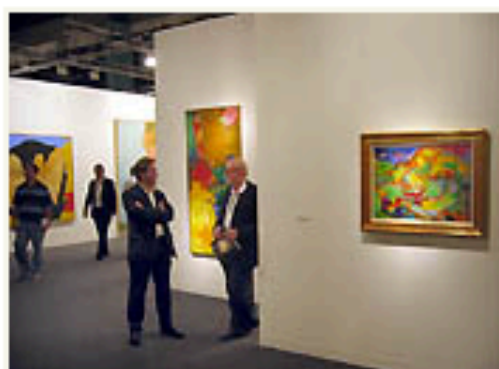
Few museum curators have the ability to organize an artist's market, Cappellazzo said, and one of them is **Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art** curator **Paul Schimmel**, who is putting together a show of works by **Takashi Murakami** for 2007 -- an exhibition that is likely to bring order to a production that is quite large with many internal variations. Murakami's work first broke through the \$500,000 ceiling in 2003, a price level that separates two classes of buyers, Cappellazzo said, noting that his market has nevertheless been inconsistent since then.



Nancy Rubins
Drawing
2005
Paul Kasmin Gallery



Pablo Picasso's *Musketeer*
(1972), with sculptures by
Henry Moore and Jean
Arp, at Landau Fine Art,
Montreal



Hans Hofmann at
Ameringer & Yohe Fine Art

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It was left to Viscount Dupplin, in an understatedly comic presentation, to sound a bit of a cautionary note, relating several missteps in the history of the Hiscox corporate collection. These included an IRA bomb attack that flung a **Frank Auerbach** painting across a corporate office, a Gilbert & George postcard piece of Prince Charles and Diana that faded badly and had to be sold, a **Willie Doherty** photograph that was accidentally ruined after it was windexed by a well-meaning janitor, and a **Damien Hirst** medicine chest work that ran afoul of environmental regulations after it was reported to be "poisons kept in a locked cupboard."

Overall, the insiders' view was illuminating, to say the least, particularly in regard to the "invisible" forces that move the art market. Hoffman hazarded that the current demand for Russian art may well be the result of a few Russian billionaires pushing up prices (which would collapse once their interest waned). Uncommented upon was the way that "alpha" art investors, as Hoffman called them, may themselves influence the art market in their quest for higher-than-average returns.

Luxembourg reported that Artvest, for instance, had been buying **Piero Manzoni's** classic white "Acrome" abstractions and works by the late 1960s Italian artist **Pino Pascali** -- whose prices have spiked recently. Luxembourg also recommended late works by **Alighiero Boetti**, **Alberto Burri**, **Willem de Kooning**, **Robert Rauschenberg**, **Slavatore Scarpitta**, **Oskar Schlemmer** and even late-Roman Jewish mosaics. "There are so many things to buy," she said.

said.

Art Basel Miami Beach 2005

By noon on Nov. 30, the big show -- Art Basel Miami Beach (ABMB), 195 galleries strong -- was ready to admit press and VIPs for the "First Choice" preview, an event that would extend through a "professional preview" and a "vernissage," finally ending at 8 pm. It's a big production, with good reason -- art fairs are the place to buy for new collectors, more accessible and democratic than the traditional gallery setting, a kind of theater of art and fun. Even artists come to Art Basel Miami Beach, to install their works, or to do special projects, or simply to go to parties and enjoy *la plage*.

But what's the "price point," to borrow a notion from the morning's "Art, Money & Power" panel? It starts at \$500,000 for the Fine Art Fund, according to CEO Philip Hoffman, while the price ceiling for younger material at a fair like ABMB is closer to \$200,000. Coming in exactly at that level is one of the surprises of the fair, **Chris Ofili's** new sculptures, a pair of polychromed silver and blue life-size bronzes of an African king and queen, dropping their drawers and taking a serpentine shit. Brought by **Contemporary Fine Art** from Berlin, the works are in an edition of three (and \$200,000 each).

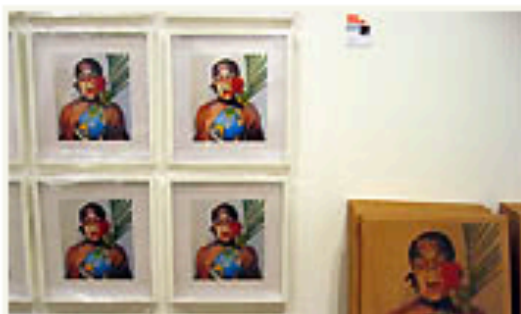
Other material in this range would include **Kehinde Wiley's** *Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps* (2005) at **Deitch Projects**, a 9 x 9 foot pastiche of **Jacques-Louis David's** Neoclassical masterpiece, featuring a young black man in camouflage gear in place of the French general, sold at \$45,000, and **John Wesley's** charming, classic pink and blue *Alice* from 1965 at **Waddington Galleries**, bought for something like \$150,000 plus.



The Gagosian Gallery booth at Art Basel Miami Beach



Julian Schnabel
Self Portrait
2004
Mitchell-Innes & Nash

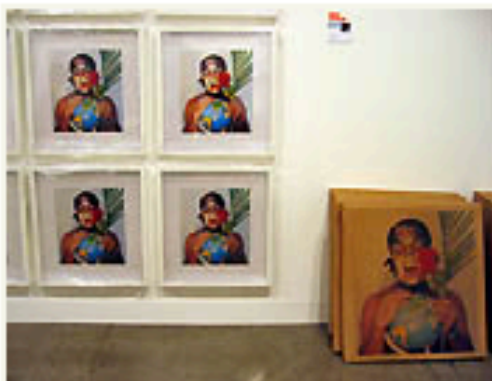




The Gagosian Gallery booth at Art Basel Miami Beach



Julian Schnabel
Self Portrait
2004
Mitchell-Innes & Nash



Carlos Betancourt's
Untitled / 1,000 with
Souvenirs at Diana
Lawenstein Fine Arts

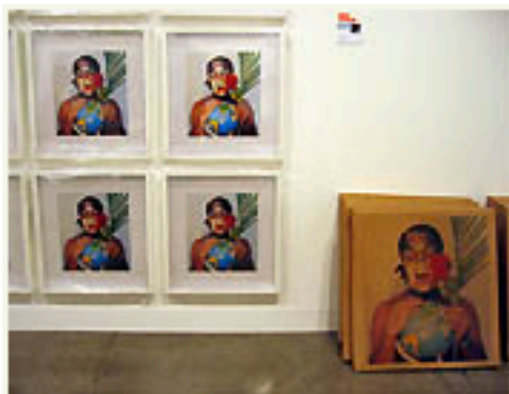
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Still available halfway through the first day was **Nancy Rubins's** *Drawings* (2005), a 20-foot-long swath of heavy, torn paper densely covered with graphite and pinned to a stretch of wall, brought to the fair by **Paul Kasmin Gallery** and priced at \$95,000. Rubins's drawings are in institutional



Carlos Betancourt's *Untitled / 1,000 with Souvenirs* at Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts



Eduardo Sarabia at I-20 gallery



over the top (2009) at **Green Projects**, a 6 x 6 foot pastiche of **Jacques-Louis David's** Neoclassical masterpiece, featuring a young black man in camouflage gear in place of the French general, sold at \$45,000, and **John Wesley's** charming, classic pink and blue *Alice* from 1965 at **Waddington Galleries**, bought for something like \$150,000 plus.

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But more expensive wares are needed to push the fair to the next level. The middle range of the market, seen during **Sotheby's** and Christie's day sales of contemporary art, has moved in recent years from \$50,000-\$150,000 to \$400,000-\$800,000, and bigger dealers are encouraged to bring better material to Miami -- even though the number of clients for million-dollar-plus pictures may be limited. Among the big-ticket items: **Pablo Picasso's** 1972 *Musketeer* at **Landau Fine Art** from Montreal is priced at \$7,500,000; a little-seen **Lucien Freud** portrait of **Harry Diamond** (also the subject of the artist's 1951 *Interior in Paddington*) at London's **Lefevre Fine Art** is \$3,850,000; a brilliantly colored and rare 1958 oil-on-wood abstraction by **Hans Hofmann** at **Ameringer & Yohe Fine Art** is \$2 million; and an **Yves Klein** fire drawing at Cologne's **Galerie Gmurzynska** is \$1.6 million.

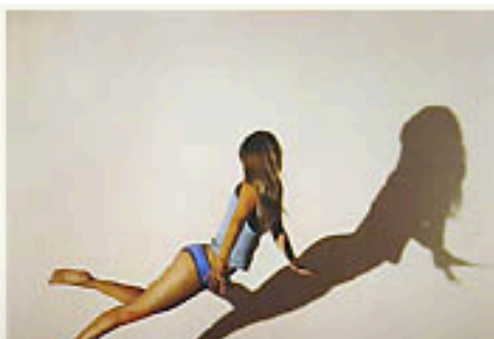
As soon as this neat theory is concocted, the real world intervenes to knock it to shreds, via the booth of **Gagosian Gallery**, which is filled with works by **Jean-Michel Basquiat**, **John Chamberlain**, **Willem de Kooning**, **Ed Ruscha**, **Mark Tansey**, **Richard Prince**, **Jenny**



Sarah Lucas
Coco
2005
Sadie Coles HQ



Marc Quinn
The Big Bang (Pop)
2005
White Cube / Jay Jopling



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Then, there are always desirable works to be had at a price point more suitable to an art critic's budget. The booth of **I-20 gallery**, for instance, is stacked high with **Eduardo Sarabia's** blue and white Talavera pottery vases, made at a family-run factory in Guadalajara and mixing traditional designs with more contemporary decorative motifs -- drawings of girls in bikinis, goats, cash money, margaritas, parrots and pot leaves. The vases, each of which comes with its own silkscreened box, are priced at \$2,200-\$3,500.

And, at **Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts**, a well-known Miami gallery that is opening a new space in Miami's **Wynwood Art District** this weekend, there is a new edition of framed color photographs by the Puerto Rican-born Miami artist **Carlos Betancourt**. A man who clearly enjoys pagan rituals, Betancourt poses for his

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Sam Taylor-Wood
Bram Stoker's Chair V
2005
White Cube / Jay Jopling



"Jess Word Pictures Ray Johnson" at Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco



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YBAs, special presentations and more

Despairing of market analysis, one turns to other pastimes, like, say YBA-watching. In addition to the aforementioned new Chris Ofili sculptures, the (formerly) young British artists are out in force with new work at ABMB. **Sadie Coles HQ** has given over the booth to the earthy assemblages of **Sarah Lucas**, an assortment that includes *Coco* (2005), a lapdog figurine (pace **Jeff Koons'** ubiquitous white porcelain vase) covered with a tight mosaic of filter cigarettes. It's sold at \$65,000.

White Cube / Jay Jopling is introducing new work by both **Marc Quinn** and **Sam Taylor-Wood**. Quinn's polychrome bronze statue of a huge kernel of popcorn (carefully selected by the artist) is titled *Big Bang* (2005) and priced at £48,000 (in an edition of three), while Taylor-Wood's inventively erotic series of five C prints, titled *Bram Stoker's Chair*, showing the artist miraculously perched in midair on a tipping chair -- which, like a vampire, casts no shadow -- are £24,000 (in editions of six). The pose was obtained with the assistance of a bondage expert named **Master Rope Knot**, who tied the artist into position (the ropes were then digitally erased from the picture).

Sam Taylor-Wood
Bram Stoker's Chair V
2005
White Cube / Jay Jopling



"Jess Word Pictures Ray Johnson" at Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco



Sandra Bermudez
Little Birds
2005
Kasia Kay Art Projects,
Chicago



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Many galleries organize special shows for their booths at ABMB, and one of the best of these was "Jess Word Pictures Ray Johnson," a survey of collages by **Ray Johnson** (1927-1995) and **Jess** (1923-2004) at the San Francisco gallery **Hackett-Freedman**. The selection of Johnson's works, drawn from the estate (which is handled by **Richard Feigen Gallery**), includes about two dozen collages and the famous 1964 *Letterbox*, a tenement mailbox stuffed with more than 100 letters, announcements and other "Correspondance School" productions sent to **David Bourdon**, the late critic and longtime Johnson friend. Collages, famously mixing witty references to art-world personalities and movie stars, can be had for as low as \$7,500, while the *Letterbox*, which was



Breck Brunson
The Martyr Projects
2004
Curator's Office,
Washington, D.C.



Andy Moon Wilson's
drawings, at Curator's
Office, Washington, D.C.



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As for Jess, who trained as a scientist and worked on the Manhattan Project before having a revelatory dream of nuclear annihilation at age 25 and turning to art full time, most of his fantastic "paste-ups" are in museum collections already. A large collage, such as the one on view here, *The Chariot: Tarot VII* (1962), can run upwards of \$500,000. **De Young Museum** director **Harry Parker**, who is scheduled to retire this month, installed several Jess works in the galleries at his new \$200-million, copper-clad, **Herzog & de Meuron** facility in Golden Gate Park.

Scope at the Townhouse Hotel

Time permitted only the quickest dash through **Scope Miami**, a gathering of about 60 galleries in the rooms of the **Townhouse Hotel**, located just off the beach on 20th Street. Adorning the lobby is a giant motorcycle fabricated entirely out of paper, foam board, mylar and such by **Dennis Harper**. Sponsored by **Rudolph Projects / ArtScan Gallery** of Houston, the work is priced at \$18,000.

Most of the galleries were featuring solo shows in their rooms. Upstairs, **Kasia Kay Art Projects** from Chicago had on display a variety of works by the multimedia artist **Sandra Bermudez**, who in addition to her appearance at Scope has also made an installation at the **Miami Design District** of silver helium balloons spelling out "Be" and "Mine" (buttons expressing similar sentiments, if that's what they are, were available for the taking at Scope). In a serenade

The NADA Art Fair at the Ice Palace Film Studios, Miami



Scott Reeder and Elysia Borowy-Reeder at their desk at the booth of General Store, Milwaukee



Photo by Michael Linares at Galería Commercial, San Juan

hand made in polymer clay, painted in pretty pastels and given false eyelashes. Called *Little Birds* (2005), they're a bargain at \$500 each.

Andrea Pollan was for ten years director of the **McLean Project for the Arts** in McLean, Va., before opening **Curator's Office** in Washington, D.C. a year ago with a project by **Jenny Holzer**. At Scope, Curator's Office had a mini-installation by **Corcoran School of Art** grad **Breck Brunson** of something called "The Martyr Projects" -- nicely framed tail-ends of burst balloons. They date from 2004 and are priced at \$350 each. In the bathroom, an artist named **Andy Moon Wilson** has papered the walls with doodley little drawings done on yellow Post-It Notes. They're \$20 each.

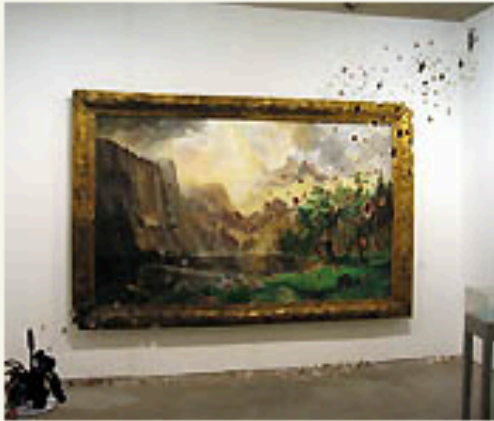
NADA in downtown Miami

It's a \$20 cab ride to the Ice Palace Film Studios on NW 14th Street in Miami proper, home to the **New Art Dealers Alliance** (NADA) fair. Now in its third year, the NADA fair has grown to more than 80 galleries, up from about 60 in 2004. Relaxed, friendly, doing good business -- NADA had the best atmosphere of any venue so far. Are they pumping helium in through the vents again?

It was fun to meet the kids from the **General Store** in Milwaukee, **Tyson Reeder**, his brother **Scott Reeder** and Scott's wife, **Elysia Borowy-Reeder**. By their somewhat manic account, the General Store operation combines a gallery, a shop selling artist-made goods, a weekly youth group meeting and perhaps some stand-up comedy. In any case, they were emphasizing their rural roots -- is Milwaukee what you would call a city? -- by furnishing their booth with a desk and chair made of hay bales.

A similarly festive spirit prevailed at **Galería Commercial** from San Juan, which was adorned with potted palms and a jukebox filled

at Galería Commercial,
San Juan



Valerie Hegarty
*Among the Sierras with
Woodpecker*
2005
Guild & Greyshkul



At Canada, two sculptures
by Sarah Braman and
Wallace Whitney's *Fruity
Cocktail* (2005)



A similarly festive spirit prevailed at **Galería Commercial** from San Juan, which was adorned with potted palms and a jukebox filled with reggaeton CDs (a hip-hop, reggae and dance-hall fusion, for those not yet hip to the craze). Gallery founder **Francisco "Tito" Rovira** must be doing something right -- two of his artists are included in the Whitney Biennial: **Carolina Caycedo**, who is responsible for programming the music; and **Jesús "Bubu" Negrón**, the "dean" of Puerto Rican conceptualists. Among the works featured in the booth are **Michael Linares'** small color photograph of a man -- the local art-school janitor -- who has miraculously sweated a heart shape through the front of his gray T-shirt (\$800, in an edition of three), and a color poster by **Pedro Vélez**, an artist, critic and sometime contributor to *Artnet Magazine* who is known for his often-troublemaking flyers for imaginary art shows. Over a photo of a sullen, negligee-clad blonde with a black eye, Vélez's writes a kind of free-form text, gnomically headlined "Hell in Lamb UC" and containing the disturbing phrase, "the beating of a cute girl by Maurizio Cattelan Jorge Zeno and Dee." This poster is priced right -- it's free.

Also drawing comment was the large installation against the back wall of the **Guild & Greyshkul** booth by **Valerie Hegarty**, an artist who installed a papier-mâché tree erupting from a hallway wall at **P.S.1** for "Greater New York 2005." Her piece for NADA is *Among the Sierras with Woodpecker*, apparently an 8 x 12 foot painting - - based on **Albert Bierstadt's** 1868 *Among the Sierra Nevada* -- that has been raked with automatic weapons fire. Up in one corner is a woodpecker, presumably pecking away at one of the last bullet holes. Actually made from paper and foamcore, the piece is more anti-war than anti-art, with the woodpecker adding a lighthearted and very contemporary back-to-nature touch. The work is priced at \$30,000, and was on reserve.



**Jennifer Allora and
Guillermo Calzadilla**

Download

2005

Punto Gris, Puerto Rico



Frank Benson

Human Statue

2005

Taxter & Spengemann



Probably the best thing about the prevailing sticks-and-carpet-remnants esthetic of **Canada**, a gallery founded on Christie Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side by four artists in 2000, is that it leaves room for old-fashioned expressionistic abstraction. **Wallace Whitney** unabashedly picks up where de Kooning left off in his *Fruity Cocktail* (2005), which forgoes those awful pinks, oranges and yellows for a nice combination of green, white and burnt sienna. It's \$7,000. Nearby are two sculptures by **Sarah Braman**, formally challenging constructions of scrap wood, paint, metal and plastic that come dangerously close to being the sort of distressed boxes you might see in an alley. The pale blue and tan *Freedom from Bondage of Self* (2005) is \$4,800 (and sold), while *Pink Surrender* (2005), which is pink and yellow, is \$2,200.

"Art Positions," more, at the beach

By 8 o'clock, it was time to head back to the beach, where ABMB's famous "Art Positions" section -- 20 galleries housed in converted cargo containers -- was to begin its festive if cramped run. Talk of the town, so to speak, was the entry by the charismatic new Cuban art team (and 2006 Whitney Biennial participants) of **Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla**. Dubbed *Download* (2005), the 2 x 12 x 40 foot container has been absolutely, resolutely crushed and flattened, to such an effect that I completely forgot to ask the price, but I heard it was sold to Puerto Rican collector **Mari Lopez**. The work is sponsored by **Punto Gris**, a gallery that was opened by **Mariely López Bermúdez** in San Juan in 2002.



The New York Dolls,
glowing on South Beach

flattened, to such an effect that I completely forgot to ask the price, but I heard it was sold to Puerto Rican collector **Mari Lopez**. The work is sponsored by **Punto Gris**, a gallery that was opened by **Mariely López Bermúdez** in San Juan in 2002.

Another highlight at the container village is *Human Statue* (2005), a statue of a man pretending to be a statue made by **Frank Benson**, a 29-year-old resident of Germantown, New York. Resembling one of those street performers who puts on white body makeup and stands stock-still in public plazas and byways, the sculpture is uncanny in its realism -- it is cast in high-def latex, complete with glass eyes -- and made even more unsettling by the fact that it's nude. The work is presented by the New York gallery **Taxter & Spengemann**, and is \$35,000 in an edition of three.

The opening evening of Art Basel Miami Beach came to a thundering climax at 10 pm with a performance by 1970s kitsch-rock band the **New York Dolls**, featuring **David Johansen** sharp and clear-headed on lead vocals and **Sylvain Sylvain** camping it up on rhythm guitar, along with several brilliant new supporting musicians. The band started its set right on time and finished an hour later without an encore -- adults at last.

WALTER ROBINSON is editor of *Artnet Magazine*.

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