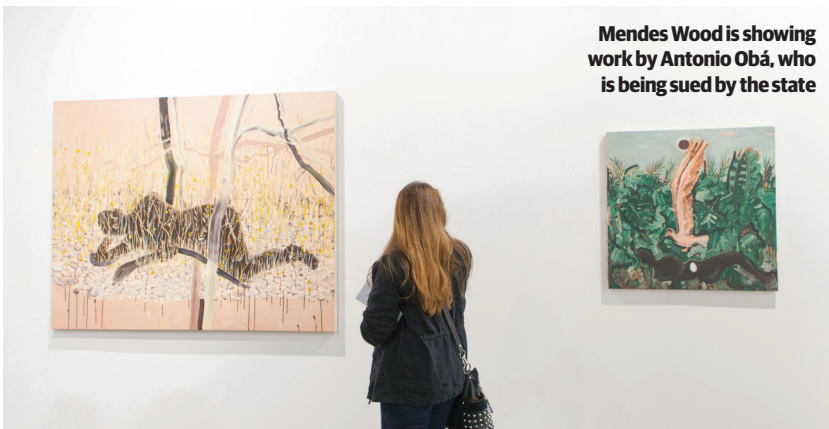


THE ART NEWSPAPER

Art Basel in Miami Beach: 6 December 2018

Brazil fights back



Mendes Wood is showing work by Antonio Obá, who is being sued by the state

Country's galleries are out in force at the fair after far-right Jair Bolsonaro's election

Brazilian galleries are the largest delegation of Latin American exhibitors at Art Basel in Miami Beach, accounting for 14 stands – and responses to the country's recent election of the far-right president Jair Bolsonaro can be felt around the city this week. The former army captain, who takes up office in January, has been dubbed “the Trump of the tropics”, and his controversial views and apparent lack of a cultural policy have caused alarm in Brazil's art sector.

Mendes Wood, based in São Paulo, Brussels and New York, is showing paintings by Antonio Obá that respond to the Afro-Brazilian artist's recent self-imposed exile in Europe and the US. Obá received hundreds of threatening messages after his 2015 performance Acts

of Transfiguration: Disappearance of a Recipe for a Saint, in which he ground up a statuette of the Virgin Mary and poured it over his naked body, was shared on social media by far-right groups last year. The gallery's director Renato Silva says that Obá, in the paintings, is “trying to bring back to life the body and the mind that [the far right] stole from him”.

The artist is now “being sued by the state for public moral indecency and damaging a religious object. Given Bolsonaro's appointment, we are probably going to have to get him out of the country,” says the gallery's co-founder Matthew Wood. Mendes Wood is also exhibiting works by Sonia Gomes, the first living Afro-Brazilian woman to have a solo show at a major Brazilian museum (Still I Rise, São Paulo Museum of Art, until 10 March). Wood says: “A lot of leftist intellectuals are using their agency in art

to express their opposition to the political situation. But who knows for how much longer we're going to be able to do that?”

The Brazilian artist Marcius Galan, who is showing with Galeria Luisa Strina at the fair, says that some of Bolsonaro's plans, such as the “end of the ministry of culture” and “the criminalisation of activism”, are worrying. Pointing to the closure of an exhibition dedicated to queer art at the Santander Cultural Center in Porto Alegre in 2017, Galan says: “I think artists are the biggest risk to an authoritarian system of government, so today, a cruel narrative is being constructed to demoralise artists.”

Bolsonaro's divisive ascent echoes increasingly polarised politics worldwide, from the election of US President Donald Trump to the UK's vote to leave the European Union. “The population was so divided – families were fighting, friendships were being shattered,” says Thiago Gomide, the co-director of Bergamin & Gomide, another São Paulo-based gallery showing at the fair.

Some are taking matters into their own hands; for example, under the “collective action” known as Colera Alegria, people are encouraged to share posters on social media to reappropriate “forms and words misrepresented by right-wing discourses”, using the hashtag #coleraalegria.

Miami's institutions are also providing a platform. This week, the Portuguese artist Pedro Neves Marques unveils a new work called A Mordida (the bite) at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. The film, he says, “fictionalises the Zika epidemic through genetically modified mosquitos, creating an eerie mood reflective of the increase of intolerant conservatism in politics in Brazil, especially with the election of the fascist Jair Bolsonaro”. Although the work is abstract, he hopes that it is “very clear about the current militarisation of society”.

Anna Brady

Talking points: kids, Kabinett and going crazy for KAWS



Two local children are taking it in turns to man Josh Lilley's stand in the Nova section of Art Basel in Miami Beach, as part of the artist Derek Fordjour's rough-hewn installation Backroom. The brothers are not actors; Fordjour wanted to introduce the future of the “real” Miami to the fair. Lilley says: “We all just come here for a week and end up engaging so many people in this city without even thinking about who they are.” Of the eight mixed-media works on the stand, seven had presold; the remaining piece, Haberdashery (2018), was being held for one of several interested institutional buyers.

VIPs stormed the Pace Prints stand when the fair opened on Wednesday, in the hope of snagging an editioned triptych by KAWS, priced at \$65,000. After a slew of \$40,000 prints sold out last year, collectors were eager to get their hands on the next round, but the demand well exceeded the edition run of 100. Within ten minutes, a lottery system was put in place, and many would-be buyers left empty-handed. “There's a crisis in value-making going on here,” says the art adviser Lisa Schiff, who adds that people are “buying with their ears” rather than their eyes.



Fair looks to the future as 'campus' around convention centre grows

With the renovated \$615m Miami Beach Convention Center fully open for this year's fair comes a transition to what Noah Horowitz, Art Basel's director of the Americas, describes as the “next chapter” for Art Basel in Miami Beach.

One of the biggest additions is the 60,000 sq. ft Grand Ballroom, half of which is given over to Abraham Cruzvillegas's Autorreconstrucción: To Insist, to Insist... (2018). This work is the only free project, after the fair discontinued its Film and Public sectors. However, Art Basel is “focusing on developing a new concept”, according to a spokeswoman for the fair.

So does this signal an intention to introduce something like Unlimited, the show of large-scale installations that is such a hit in Basel? “We are not ruling out any possibility,” Horowitz says. “This is the first step in that direction. We want to see how visitors circulate and use the space.”



Abraham Cruzvillegas's performance and installation piece is in the Grand Ballroom

The Grand Ballroom is large enough to host large-scale sculptures, and the fair's spokeswoman says that installing and accessing such works in the mezzanine space would not be an issue. The carpeted floor could make the room more fitting for performance, however.

Horowitz stresses that more outdoor spaces will be available by 2019, including a 5.8-acre park planned for the convention centre's parking lot and a 3.5-acre green space around the historic Carl Fisher Clubhouse to the north. An 800-room hotel, to be built on a parking lot behind the Fillmore Miami Beach theatre, will create what Horowitz calls a “campus” around the convention centre. “There are more opportunities before us in terms of retail, lifestyle, indoor and outdoor space, but we don't need to rush into this decision,” he says.

Anny Shaw



Sold for \$500,000: Red Hat (Nicole) (2013) by Alex Katz

On Richard Gray Gallery's stand in the Kabinett sector, an installation of intimately scaled post-war works drawn from Gray's personal collection proves a poignant tribute to the dealer, who died in April. The works have all been promised as institutional gifts, but also on the gallery's stand are paintings by Alex Katz and Franz Kline, which sold to private collectors for around \$500,000 each. **M.C.**

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6 December 2018

Agony Uncles

The Haas Brothers

answer our readers' questions



Nikolai (left) and Simon Haas

How can I think critically about my work without being too negative and sabotaging myself? Can I be my own best worst enemy?

SIMON That is a hard line to navigate. Just remember that you can make the choice between letting your inner voice be a saboteur or a constructive helper. Go with your gut more than with your head—the ego is a dangerous thing and can make you fear putting yourself out there, even when your work makes you feel something. Putting out work requires you to be vulnerable, so you have to remember your own worth regardless of how people respond to it. Work is about the feeling it gives its maker, so it cannot be wrong. Let the critic come in when it is helpful, but not otherwise. [The drag queen and actor] RuPaul says that he tells his inner critic: “You can look, but don’t stare.” I think that is great advice.

NIKOLAI Show it to people you love and even those you do not. Take what they say to heart if they give it to you in earnest. Art is a form of communication; I want to make things that speak to a lot of people. So understanding your audience is very important. Again, just be yourself.

Who would win in a fight, you or the Campana Brothers?

NIKOLAI If they wanted to fight, they would win. I have been in enough hockey fights to never do that again. I think we would be pretty passive.

SIMON I really do not like fights. I hope we would instead agree to work on a piece together. I admire those guys; it would be a cool piece.

Cherry on top



Partygoers at White Cube’s lavish Art Basel bash, held at Soho Beach House earlier this week, chomped on mountains of seafood, quaffed buckets of champagne and went back to the 1990s, dancing to classic hits performed by none other than Nene Cherry. The sassy Swedish rapper belted out some of her most famous tunes, including *Buffalo Stance* and *Manchild*, sending the well-heeled crowd into a frenzy. “You’re a classy crowd,” Cherry hollered. “This is all for the love of art.” Most of the arty bunch were determined to throw their best moves, with some rather interesting jerking motions in evidence on the dance floor. “Yo, Miami bitch,” shouted Cherry, before quickly correcting herself wryly. “Sorry! Miami Beach.”

Chocoholics anonymous

Who likes chocolate and art? Just about everybody this side of the North Pole. Those who crave the sweet stuff are bound to “almond joy” the US artist Peter Anton’s ten-foot-high sculpture *Choco Tower*, which comprises six lip-smacking, supersized stacked chocolates that look good enough to eat. This tower of sweet treats, presented by Germany’s Galerie von Braunbehrens, is on show at the Art Miami fair. “The creation of *Choco Tower* is a natural evolution of my work. Chocolate has a powerful influence over us and stirs passion and emotions like no other food,” Anton says, outlining why the brown stuff matters. “I love to celebrate the importance and allure of food within people’s lives, both past and present,” he adds. But chocoholics looking for their daily fix should not sink their teeth into the good-enough-to-eat piece unless they want a mouthful of aluminium casing.



Visions of (very big) bon bons: Peter Anton’s *Choco Tower*

OVERHEARD AT ART BASEL IN MIAMI BEACH

“I could never fit all those big beasts in my back bedroom”

A VIP confronted with Paola Pivi’s floor-to-ceiling installation of fake bear rugs on Perrotin’s stand



FROM THE ARCHIVE

2008: Chris Taylor arrested—again

No Art Basel in Miami Beach would be complete without some Chris Taylor catastrophe, for this handsome, part-time rock star and full-time gallerist with Museum 52 is a lightning rod for the wrath of US authorities. Readers may remember that he was brought to the ground by a Swat team outside Miami’s Deuce bar last year, after police mistook him for a South Beach gangster of a similar description. Now, in another case of mistaken identity, he was nearly refused entry into the US by Homeland Security, who assumed that he was the deadbeat Georgian criminal of the same name. Only after strenuously explaining that he had never been to the state was the hapless Taylor reluctantly admitted into Miami.

Bidders, Bono and bonkers bespoke trainers

Stars came out in force last night in Miami’s Design District for the (RED) charity auction in support of HIV/Aids causes. U2 frontman and (RED) co-founder Bono was on hand to launch the event, co-organised by the UK starchitect David Adjaye and the artist Theaster Gates. Presiding over the auction was Oliver Barker of Sotheby’s, who encouraged the audience to take home the paddles “and use them for whatever”. Bidders vied for pieces by Adjaye, Gates and other art-world heavyweights including Marilyn Minter, Jeff Koons, Jenny Holzer and Ebony Patterson, whose work was snapped up by Gates for the hammer price of \$58,000. Two lucky bidders



From left: Larry Gagosian, Theaster Gates, Bono and David Adjaye

walked away with snazzy bespoke trainers designed by Christian Louboutin, stiletto-maker to the stars—in red, naturally.

Artoon by Pablo Helguera



“He is the best art critic of our era—and I don’t say it just because he is the only critic who likes my work.”



CARLOS ALFONZO (1950-91) *A Tongue to Utter*, 1988, acrylic on canvas, 11 x 16 ft and *Ballerinas*, 1988, steel and paint, 115 x 45 x 48 in; 95 x 47 x 50 in; 92 x 60 x 47 in. Courtesy of private collection and LnS Gallery. Photo: Nuuris Ortiz.

REJOINED IN MODERN CONCERT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TWENTY YEARS

Carlos Alfonzo’s *A Tongue to Utter* and *Ballerinas*

On view at the Lowe Art Museum through May 2019, courtesy of LnS Gallery

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