



*Love Stream #2*, by Randy Polumbo, 2012, from New York's Paul Kasmin Gallery, was featured in the Art Public Sector at Art Basel Miami Beach last year.

## The Fairest of Art

CHICAGO COLLECTORS ARE GEARING UP FOR THE EXCITEMENT OF THIS YEAR'S ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH, WHERE SOME OF THE WORLD'S FINEST ARTISTS AND GALLERIES WILL MAKE HISTORY ONCE AGAIN. BY SUE HOSTETLER

As the contemporary art world hurtles into the annual fall whirlwind of auctions, exhibitions, and institutional galas, one event easily stands apart from the rest—Art Basel Miami Beach. Launched in 2002, the show quickly established itself as one of the most prestigious in the world, drawing the crème de la crème of international collectors, dealers, artists, and curators each year.

“The best thing about a fair like Art Basel Miami Beach is the concentration of objects and works of art under one roof,” says James Rondeau, curator of contemporary art at the Art Institute of Chicago, in a recent discussion about the upcoming show, which is set to run December 5–8 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. “Seeing gallerists, collectors, and museum colleagues from around the world can be a pleasure, and it’s

productive. For us, it is not necessarily about buying... It’s about research and development. Often good things happen far down the road as a result of conversations that happen at the fair.”

The show, which has been a major influence in Miami’s transformation into a thriving cultural hub, has grown to include a selection of 258 galleries from 31 countries, plus cutting-edge performances, films, talks, and music. One of the most impressive examples of art changing the public sphere in Miami over the past few years has been the Public Art Sector, which is staged in Collins Park in collaboration with the adjoining Bass Museum and which will be curated this December by Nicholas Baume, director and chief curator of New York’s Public Art Fund. “I have known Nicholas for almost 10 years, and we

*continued on page 82*



*continued from page 80*

have been following with great enthusiasm what he has been doing since joining PAF,” says Marc Spiegler, director of the three Art Basel shows in Miami Beach, Switzerland, and now Hong Kong. “We think he will bring similar brilliance seen in his ‘Tatzu Nishi: Discovering Columbus’ project last year to Art Public in December.”

The Miami show is the culmination of a year of incredible excitement and growth for the Art Basel brand. “We launched our first show in Hong Kong in May 2013,” Spiegler offers, “which was a moment the whole team had worked toward for the past three years.... It was very special seeing everything finally come together. And in Switzerland in June we were able for the first time to make use of the new exhibition halls designed by Herzog & de Meuron, the renowned Basel architects. Now we are looking forward to Miami; it will be an amazing show with a particularly strong lineup of

galleries from the United States and Latin America, plus new galleries from Europe and Asia.”

This year, all eyes will be on the Pérez Art Museum (formerly the Miami Art Museum), which has been under construction for almost three years in Bicentennial Park. Also a Herzog & de Meuron design, the structure is built on what look like

stilts (a measure to protect against storm surges); its hotly anticipated grand reopening is set for December 4 and will feature exhibitions by several artists, among them Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei, whose “According to What?” showcases political and cultural issues and encompasses multiple art forms.

Another attention grabber in December will be Miami’s newest resident artist, notorious British bad-girl Tracey Emin, who will be celebrating her first US retrospective at North Miami’s Museum of Contemporary Art. Emin, who currently splits her time between Florida and England, will show a collection of her renowned neon text-based pieces in “Angel Without You,” also opening December 4. To honor the occasion, the hotel Fontainebleau Miami Beach has adorned its beach towels with the words KISS ME, KISS ME, COVER MY BODY IN LOVE, a message from one of her featured works.



FROM LEFT: *Concetto Spaziale* by Lucio Fontana and Perino & Vele's *Boom* appeared at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2012.

BELOW: James Rondeau of the Art Institute considers ABMB a must-see event. BOTTOM: Chicago's Valerie Carberry Gallery will present Judith Rothschild's painting *Untitled*, among other works, at ABMB this year.

“Often good things happen down the road as a result of conversations at Art Basel.”

— JAMES RONDEAU

For Rondeau, attending Art Basel Miami Beach is a vital part of his annual curatorial research and greater collector outreach. “It is important for all of us on the curatorial side of museums to always be looking at art and to understand the marketplace,” he attests. “Visiting Art Basel helps on both counts. One of the best things that can happen is if we help steer a Chicago-based collector or Art Institute supporter toward a great purchase at the fair. Bringing great works of art to the city is a good thing in and of itself, but of course there is always the hope that someday the museum might benefit directly.”

Spiegler believes that attendees of this year’s fair—particularly younger collectors—will be most intrigued by the newly added sector, Edition, which is dedicated to works presented by 13 galleries, mostly limited-edition pieces and prints that tend to be more moderately priced and represent an attractive entry point into the collecting market. Indeed, introducing new collectors to contemporary art is top of mind for the Basel team. “Art fairs, especially international ones like Art Basel, are definitely becoming more and more important in this context,” states Spiegler. “They provide a global platform for galleries to meet new collectors from around the world, make new connections with museum directors and curators, and introduce artists to new audiences. Our shows do not become bigger because of a strong market—they become better.” *Art Basel Miami Beach is held December 5–8; 305-674-1292; artbasel.com* **MA**

