

## Checking Pulse's Pulse and Gauging Geisai

By Danielle O'Steen

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Copyright Leo Villareal, courtesy Conner Contemporary Art  
Leo Villareal's circular LED sculpture "Dark Star" sold out at Conner Contemporary Art's booth at Pulse.

MIAMI—Pulse Miami, now in its third year, is continuing to prove itself as one of the few worthy alternatives to Art Basel Miami Beach. Most of Pulse's 80 galleries might still hope to show at the big event one day, but they're holding their own in the more intimate affair. The show also boasts a new home, at the Soho Studios in Wynwood, and has changed its opening date, along with all the other Basel offshoots, to Tuesday, as opposed to Thursday. And this year, Pulse hosts Geisai, Takashi Murakami's artist-run fair, which is making its Miami debut.

The opening featured the DJ styling of Ryukyudisko, Japanese electronic artists and twin brothers, who were brought in by Geisai. The crowd was out in full force, with collectors such as Arnold Lehmann and Marty Margulies in attendance. Lance Armstrong made an appearance, too, to say hello to his new friend Murakami.

But the Tuesday opening had its drawbacks. Galleries seemed to be selling well, but buyers were still holding out for ABMB. "It was really busy. This was the place to be," says Leigh Conner of Conner Contemporary Art in Washington, D.C. "But I think a lot of people are coming [back to buy] on Thursday." She did sell out the new Leo Villareal series Dark Star, a circular LED sculpture with 10 different sequences on a black background. Three enormous, freshly painted serene and grotesque Erik Sandberg paintings his "Seven Deadly Sins" series (think Lucian Freud meets John Currin) also brought interest.

Richard Stewart, a New York-based private dealer, was operating the booth for New York's Magnan Projects, and remarked that many of the works were on hold. "I think people are

taking their time and really looking at things this year," he says. "It's less frantic, you can actually communicate with the collectors." The gallery featured several pieces by Amelia Biewald, whose part kitsch, part goth velvet works are delicately treated with bleach to form their designs. The enormous Looking for a Kiss (2007) has been attracting several interested buyers, and raising a few eyebrows. The design features unicorn-esque horses swirling around as nude women perform, cough, fellatio.

The fair has loads of other Chelsea galleries, including Jack Shainman, whose booth was right out front with a huge bronze Gucci bag, called The Birthday Present, 2007, by Jonathan Seliger, in an edition of 10. Three had sold for \$16,000 a pop.

Postmasters sold the installation High Seas (2007) by Jennifer and Kevin McCoy, to a private foundation for \$65,000. The work features a model ship, fit within a larger boat; cameras float around and project on a screen above.

At Geisai, artists set up in booths of their own, and the fair has a more intimate feel than the cavernous original Murakami mounted in Japan. The Miami version attracted some notables, including Paris/Miami dealer Emmanuel Perrotin, who was the first person to buy at Geisai (two large-sculptures by Kristin Posehn). Eric Doeringer—the New York artist who sells his fakes of contemporary paintings, everything from a Richard Prince to a Kehinde Wiley, outside the Whitney Museum and Gagosian Gallery in New York—was cleaning up, selling his "bootlegs" for \$200 each. But the most charming pieces were from Colombia-born, Miami-based artist Maria Adelaida Lopez, whose miniature dirt houses are formed using her dollhouse collection and the lint and dust from, of all things, a vacuum cleaner.