



## Miami Art Week opens with a bang, Art Basel to follow

December 1, 2015

Size may not be what matters most in contemporary art, but when it comes to the 2015 edition of Miami's Art Week, the sprawling pageant that for six days every December engulfs the Beach, Midtown and Wynwood in a mind-boggling tumult of art gazing and acquisition, not to mention partying and rubber-necking, it matters quite a bit.

Big art, big ideas, big crowds and big price tags were everywhere in abundant evidence on Tuesday, the traditional starting bell for the scads of satellite fairs and ancillary events that orbit around the official Big Show, Art Basel Miami Beach, which won't open until Wednesday morning to an invitation-only crowd.

Carlos Lamas, looks up at Carole Feuerman's piece at Art Miami as it opened its doors in Midtown. CARL JUSTE [cjuste@miamiherald.com](mailto:cjuste@miamiherald.com)

But big did not need to wait for Wednesday. Tuesday's openings by themselves offered an exhaustive, and exhausting, panoply of what's hot and cool in the contemporary art market, a range of art that ran from the sublime to the, perhaps, ridiculous.

In the sculpture garden in front of the Art Miami tent, the first mate of the week's art fairs, the VIP swarm — 11,000 were invited, and most seemed to show up — was greeted by a 16-foot bronze spiral by American Gino Miles. Inside, they found a piece by Briton Damien Hirst, dead butterflies in a ring six feet around, for \$950,000, and more blue-chip works than ever, including a massive, nine-foot-plus kinetic sculpture by Alexander Calder, for \$12.8 million.

Nearby, on the edge of Midtown Miami, stood an illuminated 50-foot-tall dandelion sculpture by Robert James Buchholz installed just for the week. A couple of blocks north, Snarkitecture's four curling, 30-foot-long "candy cane" sculptures in fiberglass and foam — 75 times longer than an actual candy cane, the artists proudly note — occupy a chunk of the reborn Design District's Palm Plaza for the holidays.

Just to the west, at a Wynwood Walls expanded with a new garden and new graffiti-style murals, some 200 guests, including street artists from Latin America and Spain, gathered for what Jessica Goldman, daughter of the project's founder, the late Tony Goldman, called "a big family dinner." Four new murals, including one of enormous

floating Greek Gods, by Spanish artists Piki & Avo, and another of giant hands, by German artist Case, hovered around them.

Down the block, art dealer Gary Nader hosted dignitaries to his Wynwood gallery to celebrate his soon-to-be Latin American art museum.

“This means that Miami will be taken to a whole new level that we’ve never experienced,” said Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado.

Not far from there, at Miami Dade College’s downtown campus, performers swam in a 4,500-gallon tank installed in a plaza, undertaking mundane daily activities underwater — a foreshadowing of life in the coming Holocene era, after climate change and sea-level rise have conquered the world, courtesy of director and media artist Lars Jan.

There were some big stars in attendance — Sylvester Stallone swung through the VIP opening at Design Miami, little sister to the Basel fair, while Basel frequenter Leo DiCaprio got a private preview at Art Miami, his first time there. Also in attendance: Developer Jorge Perez. He stopped in at the Pinta Miami fair, in Wynwood, which features Latin American art — including an installation by Carlos Martiel that consists of one live naked man, lying motionless at the base of a flagpole, his neck bolted to the ground with a metal collar. The Mexican flag initially flying atop the pole was later changed to a Costa Rican flag, and will be changed continuously throughout the exhibit.

An elderly woman gave the naked man a thumbs-up, but he just blinked.

The naked man wasn’t for sale, but plenty of other art was. Despite economic softening in Latin America, a principal source of art collectors for Miami’s fairs, and turmoil over migrants in Europe, Art Miami was mobbed — fair director Nick Korniloff said the number of requests for VIP credentials this year exceeded 2014’s, and he expects to surmount last year’s total visitor count of 82,500.

Some art was already selling big. At Pinta Miami, Bogota gallerist Luis Angel Parra said he sold two sculptures by Colombian Hugo Zapata for \$50,000 each. And to judge from asking prices, gallerists came to Miami with big expectations. At Art Miami, an Andy Warhol flowers painting was going for \$6.5 million, and a rare 1980s collaboration between Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat for \$3.4 million. **An unusual 1960s painting by Alma Thomas that graced the cover of her 1972 solo show catalogue at the Whitney Museum, the first African American female artist to be featured there, was going for \$950,000.**

By Sunday, many fairgoers may be ready for the perfect gift, courtesy of Paris-based Galerie Kreo, at Design Miami -- the chance for a soothing bath in a boat. Studio Wieki Somers created the “Bathboat” tub, with a white ribbed interior and honey-colored

outer shell that resembles one of those highly prized handmade boats. Only 30 were made, plus one prototype, from oak and red cedar.

Their scale may not be monumental, but the price of a soak will be. They sell for \$50,000 each.

Miami Herald Staff Writer Nicholas Nehamas and Herald Writer Jeffrey Pierre contributed to this report.