

## A Breath of Fresh Air: Palm Beach Modern + Contemporary Art Fair Present by Art Miami

January 10, 2017  
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Downtown West Palm Beach is a stone's throw from the tropical island of Palm Beach on the east coast of Florida, close to where the mighty Gulf Stream current of the Atlantic Ocean flows, which helps generate perfect weather during the winter season and makes the area's air quality arguably the best in the nation. Palm Beach County is one of most popular travel destinations on the Southeastern seaboard, with its pristine beaches, cultural attractions, outstanding restaurants, and distinguished museums and galleries all providing a lively supportive spirit to the vibrant local art scene, which continues to energize the downtown locale. In the last two years, West Palm Beach has received international attention with the annual CANVAS event, in which muralists from around the world are commissioned to create remarkable large-scale paintings on available building façades along the city center corridor, making the thriving arts district also one of the world's most ambitious outdoor museum shows. The community always has been encouraging of art initiatives, including the latest round of a \$60 million expansion of the nearby Norton Museum of Art, while downtown West Palm Beach is experiencing a construction boom and a renaissance of sorts that has acted as an invisible magnet, drawing in thousands of people who want to enjoy the adventuresome vitality offered by its metropolitan landscape. So, it should be no surprise that the timing is perfect for Art Miami, one of America's premier art fairs, to set up shop in the very heart of downtown, taking advantage of the creative dynamism this exciting city provides and the traditional strong interest in serious art collecting that is a tradition in the Palm Beaches.

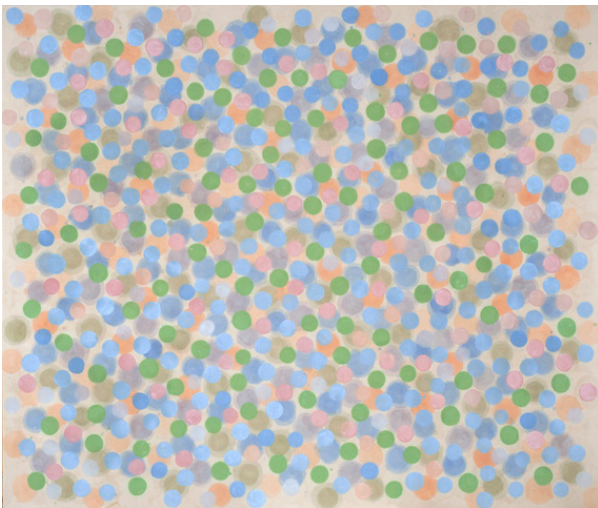
In what seems to be the most anticipated and talked about art event of the Palm Beach season, Art Miami, the longest-running continuous art fair in America, is presenting Palm Beach Modern + Contemporary, which will debut at the fair's downtown pavilion site on Thursday, January 12th (and run through Sunday the 15th). This highly respected and distinguished showcase for internationally renowned artists will open with a VIP Preview benefiting the Palm Beach Zoo & Conservation Society and sponsored by Christie's International Real Estate. With a worldwide reputation for excellence, there's no doubt that a fair from Art Miami coming to Palm Beach County during the height of the season undoubtedly will fill a welcome niche in the local art collecting landscape.

Palm Beach Modern + Contemporary, which will offer investment quality works from the 20th and 21st centuries as well as mid-career artists with impressive auction records, will take place in the modern setting of a 65,000-square-foot clear span pavilion located between CityPlace and the luxurious Hilton West Palm Beach.

Centered at the major crossroads of Lakeview Drive and Okeechobee Boulevard at Dixie Highway, this fair city of 100,000 residents and visitors can enjoy at the pavilion a remarkable variety of exemplary work at a major art fair. It's about time.

A massive, towering white tent covers the entire city block, which is a masterpiece of engineering and a perfect accompaniment to the masterworks that will be on display. None of this would have been possible without the foresight of the City of West Palm Beach, and the welcome support of Mayor Jeri Muoio. Art Miami Founder and Fair Director Nick Korniloff said, "I started my career in Palm Beach, so it is an honor to bring back a much needed first class high quality Modern & Contemporary Fair that matches the culturally savvy lifestyle and philanthropy of the community." Korniloff's decades of experience is what makes this fair among the best in America and around the world. The fair also has partnered with the historic Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Cultural Council of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach Zoo & Conservation Society, Norton Museum of Art and Perry J. Cohen Foundation. Palm Beach Modern + Contemporary will present an exhibition curated by Jeffrey Deitch, featuring works by Francis Picabia from the Jeff and Mei Sze Greene Collection, with additional selected works currently on display at The Museum of Modern Art through mid-March. An impressive group of international galleries from cities around the world, including Paris, Amsterdam, London and Tokyo will complement the line-up from U.S. cities such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

While it's not possible to explore everything on view, the following is a selection of my favorite artworks:



Thomas Downing, Untitled, 1959, Magna on canvas, 77 5/8 x 92 in. © Thomas Downing. Courtesy CONNERSMITH.

Thomas Downing, like Anthony Caro, was a great explorer of forms and movement, and this untitled painting on canvas of repeat dot irregular patterns is historically a fascinating picture when you consider it was executed prior to 1960, over forty years before Yayoi Kusuma's overall dot paintings and Damien Hirst's recent massive spot paintings. The only real difference is that the work illustrated here seems far superior and engagingly more handsome than others who incorporate spots.