

Clockwork for Oracles (2008), Ugo Rondinone, De la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space



miami heat

THE BOSTON GALLERY SET WILL FLOCK TO FLORIDA THIS DECEMBER FOR THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH, THIS COUNTRY'S PREMIERE CONTEMPORARY FAIR. BY SUE HOSTETLER

It's been a very good year for the folks behind the prestigious Art Basel contemporary art shows. This summer record numbers flocked to the 42nd annual Art Basel in Switzerland. The company then purchased the Hong Kong International Art Fair—the leading show in Asia, giving them critical leverage on that key continent and its ever-expanding market. And this December 1 through 4, Art Basel Miami Beach (ABMB)—sister event to the Swiss behemoth—celebrates its 10th anniversary.

With a committed and growing contemporary art community here in Boston, more and more residents are joining the dealers, collectors, curators and art enthusiasts from all over the world who make the pilgrimage to the show. Local collector Mario Russo feels that the city of Miami itself helps to boost ABMB. “The town is well-suited for the event,” Russo offers. “With the convention center being conveniently located to the hotels and beach, it has proven to be a great venue. When people aren't looking at art, they are still genuinely enjoying themselves.”

Fellow Boston collector Bridgitt Evans attends the show every year, usually joining

the curated tour given by Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art. This annual expedition is incredibly comprehensive; participants make visits to the main fair, local museums, private collections and satellite fairs, “all while enjoying the warm Miami weather,” says Evans. “It is a great gathering of like-minded individuals in search of knowledge and understanding about today's art.” Adds Russo, “Miami has fine-tuned the best galleries from around the world to exhibit the art, and the codirectors' expertise has truly set this fair apart from others. Art fairs have become homogeneous, but ABMB has differentiated itself by location, time and environment.”

Indeed, after launching in 2002, ABMB quickly established itself as the most significant art show in the Americas. It has grown to include an international selection of more than 250 galleries, cutting-edge exhibitions and performances featuring music, film, architecture and design. The show has also helped transform Miami into a leading cultural capital, which boasts some of the world's most ambitious private collections. This, coupled with the



Codirectors Annette Schönholzer and Marc Spiegler

“If I had to pick one private collection to visit, I would choose the de la Cruz Collection. I very much admire the selection of artists they have amassed.”
—BRIDGITT EVANS



Color Aditivo (1975-2010), Carlos Cruz-Diez, Sicardi Gallery



Punkt, Absatz, Blümlü (2011), Kai Althoff, Gladstone Gallery

tropical climate and South Florida's location at the social and economic nexus of North America and Latin America, makes the city a perfect backdrop for the show and helps draw an elite global audience.

So out of all of those offerings, what does Evans most look forward to during the show? “My favorite program is the Artist Conversation Series,” she says, referring to the platform for international art-world luminaries to exchange ideas and discuss issues of the moment. “If I had to pick one private collection to visit, I would choose the de la Cruz collection,” she continues. “I very much admire the selection of artists they have amassed.”

Though details for this December's special 10th anniversary celebration remain a closely held secret, show codirectors Marc Spiegler and Annette Schönholzer share a little insider information with *Boston Common*.

BOSTON COMMON: Art Basel Miami Beach has become the most important event in the US for the contemporary art world. To what do you attribute this success?

ANNETTE SCHÖNHOLZER: There are many reasons, although the foundation of the success has been the galleries that return every year and bring fantastic pieces. Many also mount carefully curated exhibitions for Art Kabinett in their booths and participate in additional sectors such as Art Public outdoors. The programming of Art Basel Conversations and the Art Film night also make the week rich in content and ideas. Equally important are the city of Miami Beach, which has always been supportive, and Miami's private collections and remarkable museums, which enrich the experience by staging superb exhibitions every December. Seeing the cultural scene blossom in the Miami area over the last decade has been really rewarding, and we're proud to have been part of that renaissance.

BC: Has the quality or international makeup of the dealer applicant pool changed over the years?

MARC SPIEGLER: We had very high application numbers and a high reapplication rate again this year. For European galleries, it is now the “must” show to do in America, and we have seen more Latin American galleries applying every year as the art scenes surged in places such as São Paulo, Mexico City and Bogotá. It's always a pleasure to see new dossiers coming in from places that used to be totally off the art world's radar.

BC: People have been wondering how the worldwide economic crisis would affect the overall art market, yet ABMB remains a dealer favorite and the show's sale results remain strong. Have you employed a specific, strategic approach that is responsible for this continued success?

MS: We mainly kept doing what we have always done, which is to build the best possible platform for our galleries. Obviously, we also work hard to make every edition of Art Basel Miami Beach exciting for exhibitors, museums, curators and visitors—and of course, to bring the most important collectors and museum groups to the show. A huge factor on that front is the ever-growing collector bases from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Puerto Rico, who are all now regulars at Art Basel Miami Beach. During the most difficult year for the US economy, 2009, those collectors greatly compensated for the Americans who had slowed down their collecting.

BC: What is the best and most efficient way for attendees to tackle the immense offerings of Art Basel Miami Beach?

AS: Download the Art Basel Miami Beach iPhone app, get a show guide, make a plan and start to walk the halls. Be sure to visit the Art Galleries sector for top-level modern and contemporary art, along with Art Nova for two or three artists showing new work, and Art Positions, which features 16 major solo projects by emerging artists. Then leave the halls to go to Art Public, newly focused within the Collins Park area, and watch the Art Video program on the New World Center projection wall. **BC**