



Mark Bradford's *Black Wall Street*, a 21-foot collage exhibited by Dennis and Debra Scholl during Art Basel Miami Beach 2006

## a perfect ten

NEXT MONTH, ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH HITS A MILESTONE: THE SHOW'S CODIRECTORS—AND ONE OF MIAMI'S TOP COLLECTORS—SPEAK ON WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE FAIR'S 10TH EDITION.

BY SUE HOSTETLER

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

After launching in 2002, ABMB quickly established itself as the most significant art show in the Americas. Dealers, collectors, curators, and art enthusiasts from all over the world descend en masse on our town for the annual extravaganza, which 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 that boasts some

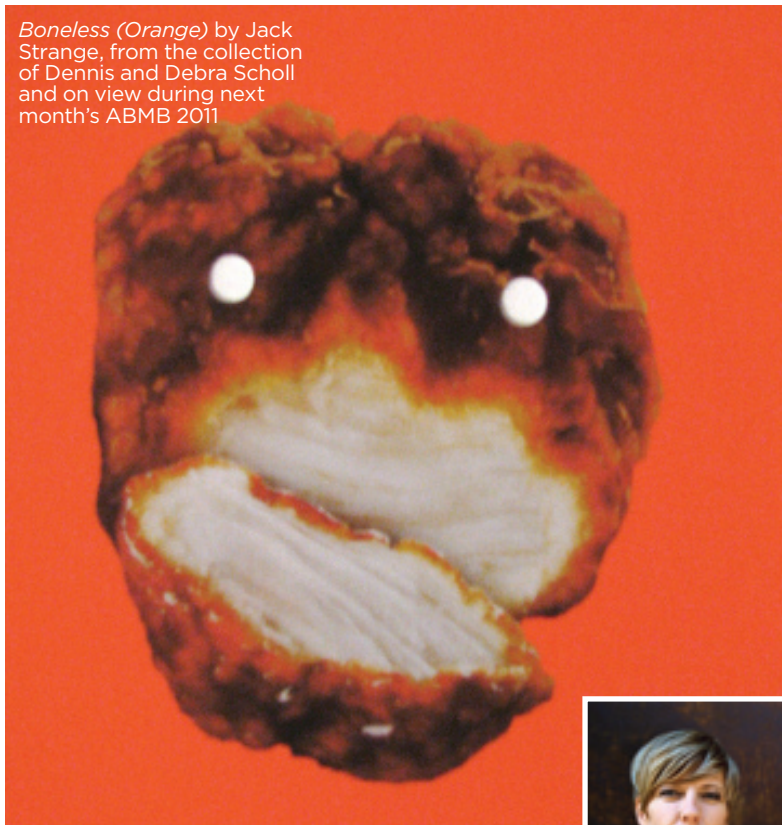


The Scholls at home atop Jim Lambie's *Zobop (Stairs)*

of the world's most ambitious private collections. This, coupled with the 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. Dennis Scholl, one of Miami's leading collectors who, along with his wife, Debra, helped put ABMB on the map, has an intimate understanding of why the show has become such a runaway success. "Just like a great piece of art, a great art fair needs provenance," offers Dennis. "Art Basel has been around for decades, and when they decided to launch in Miami Beach, they took their experiences from the Swiss fair and filtered it through the Miami scene to make ABMB what it is. Also, they are obsessive about quality in everything they do around the fair. They never settle or compromise when it comes to the quality of the art, the galleries, and the collector experience."

The Scholls know of what they speak; their Wynwood-based World Class Boxing is a favorite public exhibition  
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*Boneless (Orange)* by Jack Strange, from the collection of Dennis and Debra Scholl and on view during next month's ABMB 2011



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space, featuring rotating shows from their private collection. “Our ABMB show is always about finding the sweet spot of work by artists that the cognoscenti might know by name but may not have seen much of,” says Dennis, when asked how he and Debra decide what to exhibit during the fair. “We also like to produce projects for artists to work at a significant scale, like our show a few years ago where Mark Bradford made a 21-foot collage.” This year, they plan to introduce two new, up-and-coming artists, Jillian Mayer and Jack Strange.

Given the famously capricious nature of the contemporary art world, one has to wonder how ABMB has continued to remain such a force. Even Scholl

seems somewhat amazed at the unwavering passion and commitment of the art world with regards to ABMB. “Andy Warhol said, ‘Everyone has 15 minutes of fame,’ but the Miami art scene’s 15 minutes are going on their 10th year!”

Though details for this December’s special 10th edition celebration remain a closely held secret, we sat down with show codirectors Marc Spiegler and Annette Schönholzer to glean a little insider information.

**OCEAN DRIVE:** 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



ABMB codirectors Annette Schönholzer and Marc Spiegler



An image from the film *H.I.L.M.D.A.* by Jillian Mayer, an artist exhibited by the Scholls during ABMB 2011

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.

**Has the quality or makeup of the dealer applicant pool changed considerably over the years?**

**MARC SPIEGLER:** We had very high application numbers and a high re-application rate again this year. For European galleries, it is now the “must” show to do in America, and we have seen better and 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.

**The worldwide economic crisis has caused attrition of galleries, smaller fairs, and the like, yet ABMB remains a dealer favorite and show-sale results remain strong. How have you maintained 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.

**What is the best way for attendees to tackle the immense number of offerings at ABMB?**

**AS:** Download the [Art Basel Miami Beach iPhone] app, get a show guide, orient yourself, 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. **OD**

“The Miami art scene’s 15 minutes [of fame] are going on their 10th year!”

—Dennis Scholl