

ARTNEWS

Gagosian and Jeffrey Deitch Join Forces Again to Present 'Abstract / Not Abstract' at Moore Building During Art Basel Miami Beach

BY [Nate Freeman](#) POSTED 11/09/17 2:03 PM



Sterling Ruby, *WIDW. ALLPORT.*, 2017, to be featured in 'Abstract / Not Abstract,' a show organized by Larry Gagosian and Jeffrey Deitch, and staged at the Moore Building in Miami this December. PHOTO BY ROBERT WEDEMEYER. COURTESY STERLING RUBY STUDIO AND GAGOSIAN.

In 2015, the Miami developer and collector Craig Robins offered Larry Gagosian the chance to put on a show at the Moore Building, an historic property in the Design District, during Art Basel Miami Beach. Gagosian said yes, and turned to an old acquaintance, Jeffrey Deitch, to help curate it. What they came up with was "Unrealism," a show riffing on the notion that, as the press release at the time put it, "After a decade when conceptually based abstraction dominated the art dialogue, an exciting new group of figurative painters and sculptors has emerged."

"The exhibition became very influential," Deitch told me this week in an email from Shanghai. "It was one of the first shows to showcase an exciting new generation of figurative painters."

In retrospect, the show did seem to anticipate an exciting if only tenuously linked group of predominantly female artists, all of whom in some way explore the boundaries of realism: Jamian Juliano-Villani, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, Chloe Wise, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Tala Madani, Sascha Braunig. Since the show, many have had scored solo outings at institutions, won representation by blue-chip galleries, and in the case of Akunyili Crosby, earned a MacArthur "Genius Grant."

The next year, Gagosian and Deitch combined forces again, but switched gears, and asked Diana Widmaier-Picasso to curate a show that focused on the erotic through the ages. Called "Desire," it was equally ambitious.

"We spent the money, we went for it!" Deitch told me last year, hours before the opening, while standing beside a beyond-scale Jeff Koons sculpture of the artist in the nude and visibly copulating with his muse, the Italian politician and porn star Cicciolina.

This year, for their third outing, the Gagosian-Deitch duo will present “Abstract / Not Abstract,” a meditation on the topic that their first show seemed to rally against.

“The theme and title of ‘Abstract / Not Abstract’ was Larry Gagosian’s suggestion,” Deitch said. “Millions of abstract paintings have been made since 1910, but the concept of abstraction continues to be expanded and reinvented by each generation of artists. There is an especially strong and diverse generation of painters working today in a mode that opens the definition of abstraction.”

The few details that have leaked out indicate that the show will feature recent painting by Josh Smith, John Armleder, Sterling Ruby, as well as Tauba Auerbach woven works and Seth Price pieces made with vacuform plastic.

“We are exploring how artists are expanding the concept of abstraction to reflect the contemporary world,” Deitch said, not one to spoil the surprise. “A number of the artists in the show work on the boundary between abstraction and representation.”

All will be revealed when “Abstract / Not Abstract” lets in its first visitors the morning of December 6. Glean what you can from the artist list below, which is still growing and evolving.

John Armleder
Korakrit Arunanondchai
Tauba Auerbach
Math Bass
Kerstin Brätsch
Dan Colen
Latifa Echakhch
Jeff Elrod
Urs Fischer
Aaron Garber-Maikovska
Wyatt Kahn
Elizabeth Neel
Albert Oehlen
Steven Parrino
Seth Price
Christina Quarles
Daniel Richter
Sterling Ruby
Borna Sammak
Jan-Ole Schiemann
Josh Smith
Ryan Sullivan
Torey Thornton
Kelley Walker
Christopher Wool