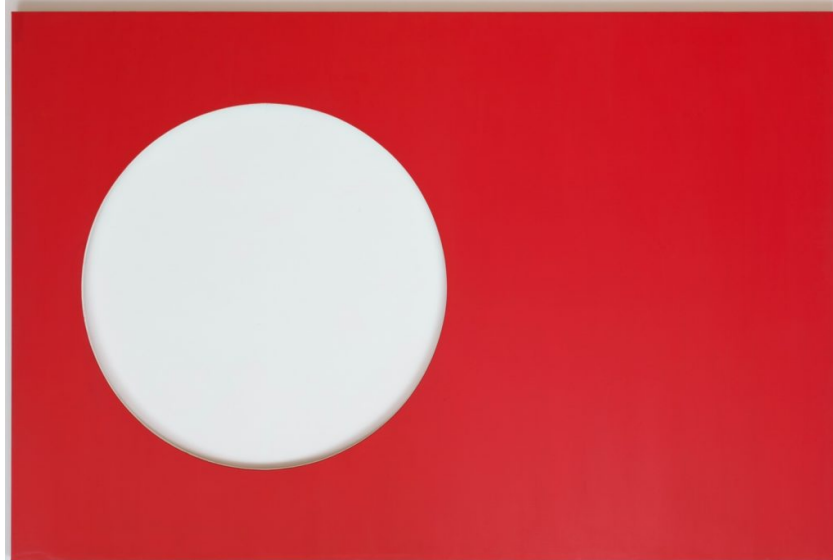


Larry Gagosian and Jeffrey Deitch Celebrate Abstraction With an Art Basel Group Show Extravaganza

Deitch calls for a reassessment of some painters he says were slighted as "Zombie abstractionists."

Sarah Cascone, December 6, 2017



Steven Parrino's *Untitled* (1988). Courtesy the Parrino Family Estate, Gagosian, and Jeffrey Deitch, Inc., New York. Photo Rob McKeever. Copyright Steven Parrino.

For the third straight year, dealers Larry Gagosian and Jeffery Deitch have teamed up for Miami Art Week, hosting a group exhibition at the historic Moore Building in the Design District. The new show, "Abstract/Not Abstract," features big names like Jeff Koons, Richard Prince, and Urs Fischer paired with emerging figures such as Christina Quarles and Math Bass. Also making appearances are Rudolf Stingel, Latifa Echakhch, John M. Armleder, and Analia Saban.

"We're trying to take on the big themes in contemporary art," Deitch told artnet News ahead of Tuesday's opening. His Miami partnership with

Gagosian kicked off in 2015 with “Unrealism,” an insightful overview of the state of contemporary figurative painting, and continued last year with “Desire,” an ambitious group show inspired by erotic art throughout the ages, curated by Diana Widmaier-Picasso.



John M. Armleder’s *Galaxy* (2014). Photo by EPW Studio. Courtesy the artist and Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong, Gagosian, and Jeffrey Deitch Inc., New York.

All three themes, said Deitch, “are broad, so we can accommodate many artistic directions.” He described the current exhibition as having “30 different approaches to contemporary abstraction. Sometimes the artists merge abstract and representational imagery. In some there’s a performative element; some, like Christopher Wool, are bringing in printing technology and contemporary means of making an image.”

The result is four floors of large-scale works, some made for the show, that would look equally at home in a world-class museum and the home of a monied collector. (Case in point, we spotted Deitch giving Los Angeles collectors Eli and Edythe Broad a tour.)

Where Miami Art Week in 2017 often means spectacle—the Instagram photo op, the virtual reality event, or the performance/experiential

installation, complete with celebrity guest—“Abstract/Not Abstract” relies on the power of painting and painting alone.



Sterling Ruby's *WIDW. ALLPORT.* (2017). Photo by Robert Wedemeyer. Courtesy Sterling Ruby Studio, Gagosian, and Jeffrey Deitch, Inc., New York.

Deitch certainly had in mind some of the recent debates over the state of abstraction as he was organizing the show. “Zombie formalism gets a really bad rap,” he said. “We’ve all seen abstract painting that is completely formulaic and doesn’t really resonate beyond looking for a few minutes, but some people were put into that category really unfairly. My test is that I can stare at every single work in the show for a half hour and not get tired.” It’s also a chance for Deitch and Gagosian to share some new voices, such as Quarles, who Deitch first encountered at the Studio Museum in Harlem, where she’s part of the group show “Fictions” (through January 15, 2018), featuring emerging artists of African descent. “I was just stunned by her painting,” said Deitch.

“I’ve been in the art world since I was 19 years old,” said Deitch. “What’s incredible is that every year there’s another two or three exceptional new talents. It shows the vitality of abstract painting today.”

“Abstract/Not Abstract” is on view at the Moore Building, 191 NE 40th Street, Miami Design District, December 5–10, 2017.