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ART REVIEW

Gathering of Far-Flung Friends, and Trends

NADA NYC This art fair, at Basketball City on the Lower East Side, features work by Xaviera Simmons, at the Miami dealer David Castillo's project.

Philip Greenberg for The New York Times

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Within the commercial realms of art, the New Art Dealers Alliance, known as NADA, has earned its good reputation. Founded as a nonprofit in 2002 with the conviction that the "adversarial approach to exhibiting and selling art has run its course," it even has a cool name. ("What are you doing this weekend?" "NADA.")

Technically, NADA has been in the art fair business since 2003, running fairs with Art Basel Miami Beach and more recently in Hudson, N.Y., and Cologne, Germany. The current edition in New York City is only its third here, but it is already one of the better fairs in town.

How so? The sport-utopian-sounding Basketball City is a nice complex for a fair. It's near the Lower East Side galleries that make up much of the alliance's membership, it's on the water, and it's fairly

close to subways. And for any art students or struggling artists reading this: The NADA NYC fair is free.

The other thing NADA does well is reach out to like-minded colleagues from other cities and countries. Among the booths here is Springsteen, a year-old, artist-run gallery in Baltimore, which is showing some yoga mats with cutouts by Alex Ebstein that are hung like Asian scrolls. A London gallery, the Sunday Painter, has work by Hannah Perry related to car culture, including a cast of a skid mark done in fiberglass and resin, subwoofers encased in plastic foam and bent aluminum pieces.

What Pipeline is another artist-run space, this time from Detroit and with a group show shoehorned into a tiny project space. The Green Gallery of Milwaukee, showing eclectic paintings and reliefs by Peter Barrickman, is a well-known outpost. (Among its stable is Michelle Grabner, a curator of the current Whitney Bienn

The amusing project spaces along the back wall of Basketball City are so minuscule, they're like an art assignment for exhibitors. One of the best is from P!, which has paintings from the '60s by Elaine Lustig Cohen, including one on the ceiling, paired with a sculpture made of reclaimed window frames by Heather Rowe. The artist Devon Dikeou, also the editor and publisher of zingmagazine, has created a kind of public-service art project: seating for the fair in the form of 17th-century Italian monk chairs, under the title " 'Pray for Me' — Pope Francis I." (Each chair is named after a historical painting of a pope.)

Also on project-space row is a pop-up souk with a lush installation of Moroccan carpets offered by Youssef Jdia, who is married to the artist Katherine Bernhardt. Brian Belott's collages, including many transparent ones made with a laminating machine, are at Essex Flowers. Rob Tufnell of London is presenting the project "LSD": sheets of designer blotter (without the actual lysergic acid diethylamide) by artists like Pae White, David Shrigley, Mark Leckey and Art & Language, with the deadpan explanation that the works "look back to the shamanic, drug-induced rituals of prehistory and to the signatory grid of Modernism."

Some of the fair's better photography can be seen at Miami dealer David Castillo, who is showing Xaviera Simmons's "Index" works in which a sitter (technically a stander) is draped with personal objects to look like a totem, or a human charm bracelet. Klaus von Nichtssagend has a large anti-still-life photograph by David Gilbert (that is, a kind of junk assemblage in a studio), and Glen Baldridge's images made with nocturnal photographs taken by a hunting camera.

A Toronto gallery, Cooper Cole, has works by Sara Cwynar, for which she scanned old photography textbooks and manuals to make new images marked with smears of CMYK color (the standard four of color-process photography). Rawson Projects has photographs from Lyndsy Welgos's slyly titled Suggested Donation series, taken at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (where the suggested-donation policy was allowed to continue by a court ruling).

The fair isn't immune from art-world trends. One is ceramics. Showroom has a nice little porcelain sculpture of a bear cleaning house, made in the Amstel tradition by the Dutch artist Joke Schole. Asya Geisberg has goofy ceramic trophies of a sort, by the Icelandic artist Gudmundur Thoroddsen; Freight &

Volume has an installation of humble cleaning sponges cast in porcelain by Ezra Johnson. The Lower East Side gallery Sargent's Daughters is showing ceramics and paintings by Saira McLaren. Ernesto Burgos's sculptures at Kate Werble look ceramic but are instead a clever concoction of cardboard, fiberglass and charcoal.

Poetry of a certain stripe is also popular — that is, from poets like Frank O'Hara (also an art critic and assistant curator at the Museum of Modern Art), who was eschewed by later conceptual poets. On Saturday afternoon, a marathon reading by 30 poets, organized by Sam Gordon, will take place. The alliance's brochure includes this introduction, referring to the O'Hara poem "Having a Coke With You": "When Frank O'Hara wrote 'Having a Coke,' poetry and painting walked hand in hand through the streets of New York." Now it takes place at an art fair in Basketball City.

NADA NYC runs through Sunday at Basketball City, Pier 36, 299 South Street, at Montgomery Street, Lower East Side; newartdealers.org.