

LAST YEAR THE CITY OF MIAMI thanked former Art Basel director Sam Keller for founding the fair that has brought it so much cultural tourism by declaring December 5 Sam Keller Day. Nevertheless, the seventh edition of Art Basel Miami Beach opens next month without Keller, under the fresh management of Marc Spiegler and Annette Schönholzer. The fair goes on despite the economic gloom that deepened in September with the U.S. financial crisis. Indeed, the annual Miami spectacle has become so sturdy that it would take a hurricane to blow it away. "I think the city is expecting the same frenzy with 25 fairs," says the local collector Dennis Scholl. "I myself think it might be more toned down this year." Still, he adds, even if the economic doldrums lead to a "10 or 15 percent drop in intensity, it probably wouldn't even register. This fair is a blue-chip event. Everyone knows it's a great moment for the city."

The serious collectors who fly, drive, sail or simply walk to Miami Beach will make a beeline for the 240 galleries (chosen from 800 applicants) in and around the convention center. Fortunately the powers that be, forever tweaking the ABMB format, have come up with an antidote to art-fair attention-deficit disorder. This year organizers have added a supplemental VIP hour—from 11 A.M. to noon on the day after the December 3 vernissage—so that collectors needn't feel pressured to make snap decisions before the convention center throws open its doors to the public. "A lot of the

best art takes a while to catch on to," says Spiegler. And there is, after all, a lot to see. "The most obsessive aisle walker will still end up having friends ask, 'Did you see this? Did you see that?' And there's a lot of social activity on the first day. We wanted to give our VIPs a second chance to look before the general public enters."

It's probably a good move considering that, after September's credit crisis, it may no longer be so easy for collectors to make major financial commitments in the blink of an eye. "Art Basel

Miami Beach will be a barometer of the art market and the American economy in general," predicts Adam Sheffer, a partner at the exhibiting gallery Cheim & Read, of New York. "Unlike Frieze or FIAC, it is incredibly American-centric and has brought people out of the woodwork who just a few years ago had very little interest in art collecting. As their economic situation has changed, it will be interesting to see what role art plays in their lives. Will it become just a recreational activity?"

In other words, it remains to be seen whether some people will come for the fun in the sun without buying much. However, Sheffer notes, "great works will always be great works, in a good economy or a bad one."

And there will be plenty of great works in the main fair. New York's Sperone Westwater is packing its Art Kabinett, a special curated section of its booth, with a group of new works by Malcolm



## Miami's Silver Lining

Now under new management, Art Basel Miami Beach remains a beacon amid the clouds of economic uncertainty. By Sarah Douglas

Morely priced from \$50,000 to \$375,000. A 2007 David Hockney country scene is at London's Annely Juda for \$1.6 million, and Lucian Freud's moody 2008 portrait of Sally Clarke can be seen at New York's Acquavella—where it can be bought for around \$6 million. The Paris and Salzburg gallery Thaddeus Ropac will show a brooding 2007 Georg Baselitz figure for \$819,000, while Jeffrey Deitch's booth is stocked with new works like Kehinde Wiley's *Dogon Couple*, which depicts a pair of youths based on African statuary, for \$125,000, and *The Beatles*, an exuberantly goofy painting of child rock musicians, a few putti and ballerinas on a hillside, by the Russian duo Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov, for \$150,000. ABMB has a history of strong Latin American material: New York's Galerie Lelong is bringing *Metaesquema 209*, a circa 1956–58 gouache by Hélio Oiticica, priced north of \$150,000.

Collectors in the market for sculpture can head to Cheim & Read, which has an abstract piece in bronze and gold leaf by Lynda Benglis, from 1995–96, priced at \$350,000, or New York's Jack Shainman Gallery, which will feature a new wall-hanging sculpture made from found objects by the



arsenault's *Palm* (left), *Palm Springs*, (top), evokes the ting of Art Basel Beach. Offerings in this year's fair de Tony Cragg's *ught Dreaming*, 2007, at Galerie Thaddeus Ropac, (above), and Naum Construction in (face: *Suspendedainless Springs*), from the 1970s, at Annely Juda Fine Art.

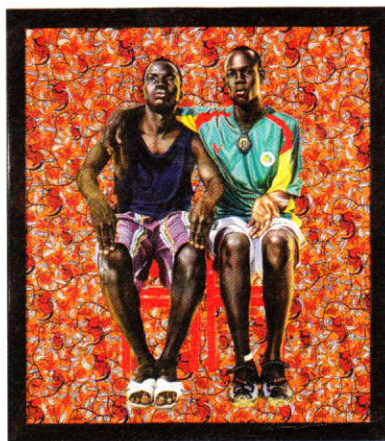




African artist El Anatsui. (No price was available, but at Basel a version sold for \$500,000.) Ropac is bringing a 2007 biomorphic bronze sculpture by the British-born Tony Cragg for \$682,000. On the historical side, Kenewig, from Cologne, is displaying an austere sculpture by the Arte Povera artist Giovanni Anselmo. Made from a slab of canvas from which two rocks are suspended by steel cable, it is priced at £210,000 (\$302,000).

Fans of outdoor sculpture will notice one significant alteration: The Art Projects section of large plein air works has been expanded and moved from its former location (between the convention center and Collins Park) to Lummus Park, a strip of green, popular with joggers and bicyclists, that runs along Ocean Drive, seven blocks south of the convention center.

Along the periphery of the convention center are the 58 booths in the Art Nova section, where emerging and established galleries can show new works by a maximum of three artists. One highlight is a new, large chandelier sculpture by the Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei at Urs Meile, a Lucerne and Beijing gallery. As in past years, Art Positions, a cluster of 20 shipping containers on the beach, will have an irreverent spirit. The Los Angeles gallery Steve Turner Contemporary is giving over its container to the raucous art and music



a tradition for them to open their homes and exhibition spaces during the fair. For the 10th year running, Debra and Dennis Scholl have invited a curator

to reinstall their home; this year's invitee is Nicholas Baume, from the Boston ICA. Across town, in the Scholls' exhibition space, World Class Boxing, are specially commissioned works by the Dutch landscape painter Carla Klein and the young American photo-based installation artist Zoe Strauss. Opening at the Rubell Family Collection on December 3 and running through November 28, 2009, is "30 Americans," an exhibition of contemporary African-American art.

At the Margulies Warehouse, you won't be able to miss one of Martin Margulies's most recent acquisitions: *Hurma*, an arrangement of 250 life-size figures of women and children made from burlap and resin between 1994 and 1995 by the Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz; that takes up fully half of the warehouse's largest room. Beyond the private museums are Miami's other noncommercial spaces: Taking over the Miami Art Museum is Yinka Shonibare's work, based on

**An extra VIP preview hour means that collectors will have more time to make decisions.**



group My Barbarian, which will transform it into a womblike space decked out in red velvet in which the group will perform "Hystera-Theater," a piece inspired by ancient pagan rites. At New York's Newman Popiashvili Gallery, Raul De Nieves is responsible for the installation *I scream you scream we all scream for ice cream*. "There will be some serving of ice cream," promises the gallery's director, Marisa Newman. However, this section is not by any means reserved for experimental youth. Miami's own David Castillo gallery is bringing a site-specific installation of collages made from fashion-magazine clippings by the Cuban-born midcareer artist Quisqueya Henriquez, who just had a retrospective at New York's Bronx Museum.

Rounding out the fair is Art Supernova, an open-format 20-gallery section introduced last year. Look for the Los Angeles gallery Cherry and Martin, which is showing a new sculpture by Nathan Mabry, who has welded a cast of a Halloween-style mask to a version of a Rodin sculpture produced in Mexico.

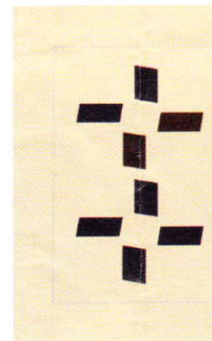
Several galleries are making their ABMB debuts, and, not surprisingly, a few of them come from developing art markets, such as India and the Middle East. The Third Line, from Dubai, is exhibiting in the Art Supernova section, where it will show gallery artists like the Paris-born, Beirut-based photographer Fouad Elkoury. "It is fantastic that we will be able to promote our gallery on the international stage," says director Claudia Cellini.

Miami, of course, has plenty of homegrown collectors, and it's become

clothing designs made from African fabrics; on display at MOCA are works by Albanian video maker Anri Sala; and at MOCA at Goldman Warehouse, "Possibility of an Island," a group show inspired by visions of the future that takes its name from a novel by the French writer Michel Houellebecq, will include artists like Mungo Thomson and Peter Coffin.

Next year the fair will reformat by expanding into a fourth hall of the convention center, although it won't add more galleries. For now, though, Spiegler and Schönholzer are taking the old "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach. "We do not want to make changes that will be in place for only one year," says Spiegler. Now that the fair's parent firm, Messe Schweiz, is in a partnership with the convention center—it shares a financial stake with the management company Global Spectrum—ABMB has finally signed on for a three-year stint, rather than renewing its lease yearly.

In other words, whichever way the economic winds blow, the city of Miami can sit back and relax, assured that its tourism dollars will continue to flow: ABMB is here to stay. »



On view around ABMB, clockwise from top: Lynda Benglis's *Ghost Dance/Pedmarks*, 1995-96, at Cheim & Read; Hélio Oiticica's *Metaesquema 209*, 1956-58, at Galerie Lelong; Malcolm Morley's *Untitled*, 2008, at Sperone Westwater; Fouad Elkoury's *What I Miss Most Is Your Incredible Smile*, 2008, at the Third Line; and Kehinde Wiley's *Dogon Couple*, 2008, at Deitch Projects.