

Whitewall | Katy Donoghue | December 3, 2019

'Shinique Smith's "Indelible Marks" at Art Basel's UBS Lounge'

<https://www.whitewall.art/art/shinique-smiths-indelible-marks-art-basels-ubs-lounge>

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Shinique Smith with Bale Variant No.0025 (Good & Plenty), 2019

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By Katy Donoghue

This week at the **UBS** Lounge within **Art Basel in Miami Beach**, you'll find the exhibition, "Indelible Marks," featuring new sculpture, paintings, and site-specific installation by **Shinique Smith**. The Los Angeles-based artist was inspired by memories of her grandmother's garden in Baltimore City.

The project also helps to raise awareness for **#TogetherBand** in support of 17 **United Nations** Sustainable Development Goals, which visitors can learn more about in the UBS Art Studio.

Whitewall spoke with Smith about "Indelible Marks" and what she's looking forward to seeing in Miami this week.

WHITEWALL: Can you tell us about the ideas behind the new works at the UBS Lounge within Art Basel in Miami Beach?

SHINIQUE SMITH: The new works in the UBS Lounge began with memories of my grandmother's garden, where she cultivated gorgeous roses against the urban backdrop of Baltimore City where I grew up. Visual contrasts like this have always stayed with me—the soft against the rough, the joy on the other side of sadness. The paintings are flashes and patches of memory manifested in the movement of unraveling lines of script and fabric patterns—the sculptures are bound forms and bulbous shapes that morph like shapeshifters. Through the work, I'm creating my own rituals of transformation to bring the unruly aspects of the world and my life into harmony.

WW: Can you tell us about your study of Japanese calligraphy, and how that's incorporated into this installation?

SS: My calligraphic brushstrokes are informed by writing graffiti in my youth, years of drawing and dance training and basic courses in Japanese calligraphy. Together these different forms of mark making, and movement have become a direct channel for my voice as an artist and as a woman. The works chosen for this presentation are focused on my use of line as a compositional element, like the baseline in a song or a conduit of emotion—like heartstrings.

WW: How has waste and sustainability in fashion continued to inspire your practice?

SS: When I began making artworks with clothing from my closet, recycling processes were evolving into concepts of sustainability. I was inspired by the social and environmental implications surrounding the exportation of used clothing from the US along with the notions of belonging placed on the objects we consume. Also, I think that the impulse to reuse fabrics was in part culturally inherited from the way our elders pieced together and created beauty from scraps.

WW: You've also selected works by other artist on view. Can you share with us your process for that selection?

SS: UBS Art Collection generously gave me the option of borrowing works from their collection. I was excited to comb through collection art works in their recent publication. I decided to share works on paper by artists with whom I felt an affinity with their different approaches to gesture.

WW: Outside of this project with UBS and the fair, what are you looking forward to seeing and doing in Miami this year?

SS: I'm participating in an event to promote awareness for **#Togetherband**, an amazing organization sponsored by UBS that supports the **UN's** Global Goals for a sustainable future. I look forward to visiting the new **Rubell Museum, The Bunker** in Palm Beach and **the Margulies Collection** where one of my early Bale sculptures is on view. Also, excited to see **Isaac Julien's** new work at **Meridian** and **Cecilia Vicuna** at **NM MOCA**. I have a list of shows and friends I hope to see, so resting up for a whirlwind week of art and maybe karaoke at the end.