

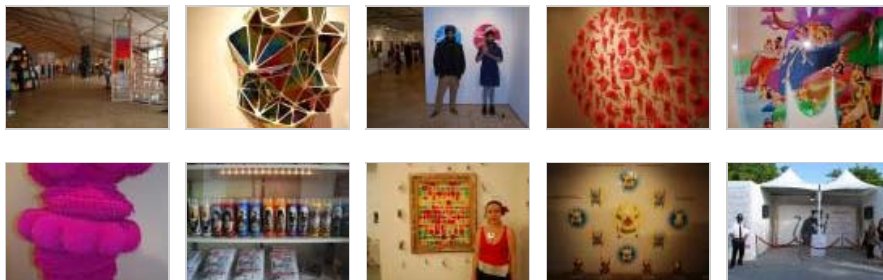


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Art Basel diary: SCOPE-ing, Context-ualizing, and a quick dip in Fountain

12.12.12 - 9:16 am | Caitlin Donohue |  (0)

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Last week, Miami was swept up in Hurricane Art Basel and goddammit if we weren't there to cover the thing. Check out Caitlin Donohue's past posts on the [scene in South Beach](#), and the rundown on [Wynwood and Art Asia](#). Here's her take on SCOPE, Context, and Fountain

SCOPE: This fair focuses on contemporary art, and always has some mind-blowing, large-scale stand-outs (check out [my run-down](#) from last year.) I even ran into my old friend, rhinestone hamburger -- who was joined by his friends this time around, rhinestone can of Spam, rhinestone bagel sandwich, and more. America!

In terms of artists I actually wrote the info down for, Galerie Art Felicia from Liechtenstein had a glorious, one-woman show of Anke Eilgerhard's cake freaks, made of highly-pigmented piped silicon. You need to see these [vaguely threatening odes to domesticity](#). They were a great counterpoint to Oakland artist [Scott Hove's](#) fanged cakes, pastries menacing on totally different levels.

Other winners: [Edgartista Gonzalez's](#) mega ink drawing, Ferris Plock's banquet paintings at the White Walls' booth, Carlos Aires' "La Vie En Rose" collection of pink record singles cut into skulls, geckos, triumphant figures, and soldiers -- and the turbans that the boys from London's fledgling gallery [Ivory and Black](#) were



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wearing. **Madeleine Berkheimer's** electric blue "Fruitbasket" (a statue of some stunning gams, stilettos, fringe-y underwear, sans torso) fit in perfectly with my current love of stripper homage. "Art that has no sexual connotation has no reason to exist," says the Netherlands artist on her website. [Here, here.](#)

Context: We braved the crushing crowds of Sunday afternoon for this fair with one goal alone in mind: to see the Banksy walls. I'll write more about them in my Street Seen column next week, but here's the basic rundown: Banksy did his soul-crushingly popular stencil art on five public walls around the world (two in Bethlehem), and those five walls found their way to Miami this week, presented by Context and a new photosharing platform called I PXL U. Who actually owns these walls? Did Banksy approve their relocation? And, *why?*

I'm hoping to track down someone from Context to explain the finer points of all this, but for now I'll just say it was really something to see all those walls behind red velvet ropes, each with their own oddly-attired (what was up with those pointy hats?) security guards, for all the world like some kind of performance art... hmmm... well anyway, more on that later.

Besides Banksy, Context and the attached Art Miami (Context was another one of them fair-in-fair thingys) were too crushed with people to really enjoy by the way-too-late hour we got to them on Sunday afternoon. I did, however, manage to appreciate Cuban multimedia artist and woodworker Alexandre Arrechea's looping skyscrapers and Eva Bertram's photo series capturing the maturation of her daughter Herveva.

Fountain: This was my first time at this seven-year-old Wynwood fair, and it provided a much needed counterpoint to the flash and fade of the rest of the mega-expos on our voyage, even if there was no complimentary St. Germaine spritzers at Fountain art fair. What it did have was tons of community-oriented art, at price points that were actually, actually thinkable for your average alternative culture journalist (unlike the others. Sample sign at NADA Art Fair: "signed, numbered edition of 100. \$1,000 for all six prints. Bargain!" And maybe it was?)

You enter Fountain through a grassy lot rendered dusty and tired by our late-in-the-game arrival. There was **Ryan Cronin's giant inflatable pink bunny** in one corner by the stage where New York's **Tiki Disco** played earlier in the weekend, and a geometric, angled sculpture equipped with battery charging stations for the fest-goer on the move. The lot's wooden walls were covered with murals coordinated by Atlanta's **Living Walls** street art conference.

Inside, it was a creative hothouse. Really, like sweaty. But the art was a lot fresher than at some of the other fairs: spray paint canvases by Los Angeles' Annie Treece, Amy Winehouse prayer candles by Miami heirloom conjurer **Evo Love** (Amy Winehouse occult, it seems, is big this year -- read [my post](#) on the Untitled art fair for news of Winehouse tarot readings), and of course, not-poop.

"I just want you to know, it's not poop." I had been examining New York artist **Virginie Sommet's** walls of small glass boxes, decoratively arranged in an ornate frame and filled with the results of three colonics she did in one week, when the artist herself popped up at my elbow.

"It's undigested food, stuck in the colon due to fear and stress," she continued. If a child sees a scary dog while eating a piece of bread, Sommet explained, that bread doesn't make it to the toilet, instead staying in the colon until one does an experimental art piece. What inspired the work? "I wanted to go forward in my life," she said calmly. And as luck would have it that year, boutique chain **Cream Hotel** was putting together a group project for Fountain in which 11 artists explored their relationship with the bathroom ("a place of unique significance on a personal, cultural, and social level," the company's press release put it.)

Thank god for art. Until next year, BASEL BASEL BASEL

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