



ART BASEL ENCORE

The world's premier contemporary art fair returns to Miami Beach.

With the arrival of the fourth annual Art Basel Miami Beach, from December 1 through 4 this year, art connoisseurs from around the world descend upon the city for what *The New York Times* has called the "Olympics of the Art World." The 20th- and 21st-century works that comprise the show have been created by more than 2,000 artists and will be exhibited by 195 leading art galleries from North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Intermingled with performances and events, the show and its peripheral activities coalesce into a dynamic mélange of happenings.

Whether you're a veteran art collector or someone who doesn't yet know a Rauschenberg from a Rothko, there is plenty to excite. "Art Basel Miami Beach acts as a vital resource for discovering new developments in contemporary arts and rare museum-caliber art," says the show's director and founder Samuel Keller. "We also have programs for art collectors and curators, which makes this show a special place for those who want to educate themselves." In terms of budget, nothing is off limits. There is something for just about everyone. Prices start at a few hundred dollars for innovative works by young artists and soar into the millions for museum-quality masterpieces by established artists.

38 Fisher Island



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The core of Art Basel Miami Beach is housed in Halls A and D of the Miami Beach Convention Center. Doors open at noon and close at 8 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and at 6 p.m. on Sunday (one- and two-day tickets, and permanent passes are available). On the eve of the opening, November 30, a glamorous event, called the *Vernissage*, will welcome an international crowd to the convention center from 5 to 8 p.m.

Within the show itself, Art Statements is being discontinued this year, but Art Nova, which proved to be an enormous success last year, is expanding. The number of participating galleries, which will offer the latest works by approximately 150 of the hottest young artists at reduced rates, will increase from 22 to 52.

New this year is Art Kabinett: small, curated exhibitions within the booths of fifteen galleries that represent everything from thematic group exhibitions and single-work presentations to film programs, room installations and tributes. Also new is Art Perform, during which international artists will present performance pieces and live art works on the beach.

Returning are Art Video Lounge with its extensive videothèque and Art Conversations, a forum that offers attendees the perspectives of international art-world celebrities on a variety of subjects. The incredibly popular Art



During Art Basel, connoisseurs can expect to see the most rigorously juried selection of what the international art market has to offer, along with the insiders and stars of the art scene.



Roy Lichtenstein, *The Mermaid*, Miami Beach



Vladimir Dubossarsky/Alexandr Vinogradov, *Underwater*, 2002

Positions, a "village" of shipping containers at Collins Park (on the beach between 21st and 22nd Streets), also returns. This venue for lesser-known galleries will introduce fifteen new participants and welcome five returning galleries this year. Art Sound Lounge will energize the venue daily with audio creations from noon to 10 p.m., and during happy hour (between 7 and 10 p.m.) popular New York DJs will work their trance-meister magic.

Though the show itself doesn't debut until Thursday, December 1, crossover events start as early as Tuesday, November 29. Miami's major museums will host receptions to coincide with openings of new exhibitions, and some of the city's most renowned art collectors will open their collections to the public. For a comprehensive look at the activities that constitute Art Basel Miami Beach, go to www.artbasel.com and click on the Miami Beach show, choose Special Exhibitions + Events at top left and download the calendar.

With Art Basel almost here, it's difficult to find anyone in Miami Beach who isn't excited about the show. On deadline and experiencing a loss of electricity from Hurricane Wilma, I camped out in News Café on Ocean Drive for an afternoon in order to complete this assignment. Manager Victor Cuevas was happy to help. "One of the things we love about Art Basel is the caliber of people it brings to our area," he remarks. "And who doesn't love great art!"

By Saxon Henry

