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The Best Booths at Art Basel Miami Beach, From Female-Gazed Men to Painstaking Assemblages

BY **MAXIMILIANO DURÓN**

The scene at Art Basel Miami Beach. A week and a day later than usual, Art Basel Miami Beach, now on its 21st edition, has finally touched down at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Just before its 11 a.m. opening, a seemingly endless line had already wound its way through the center's Washington Avenue entrance. Inside, the energy was strong, even if the aisles seemed slightly thinner this year. Several blue-chip dealers did report sales by the early evening, though that is a far cry from the first-hour sales that were commonplace only a few years ago.

Since late summer, there has been much talk about whether the market is softening. That clamor has only increased since the Hamas attack of October 7 and Israel's subsequent airstrikes on Gaza. Are sales really that depressed? Dealers queried about this Art Basel Miami Beach seemed split, with some agreeing that the market had weakened and others saying that their sales had picked back up. Most expressed a cautious sense of optimism about what's to come.

What was clear was that the fair was physically different than it was before. Its floor plan has shifted—a welcome change after last year's much more chaotic arrangement. While the fair might be a bit harder to navigate the aisles vertically (east to west, per the map), a methodical approach can be had with by tackling the aisles horizontally (north to south, beginning from the Meridians section). Plus, there are now mini cafes that dot the fair; these had shorter lines that took only 10 minutes to get food, as opposed to the usual 45-minute-plus waits that often accompany food options on opening day.

Art-wise, the pickings are rather safe this year—which is typically the case in a soft market, as galleries look to balance their books come December 31. But you will find gems among the 175 booths no less.

Shizu Saldamando at Charlie James Gallery

"Brockman Days: 1967–1990" at Parrasch Heijnen and Franklin Parrasch

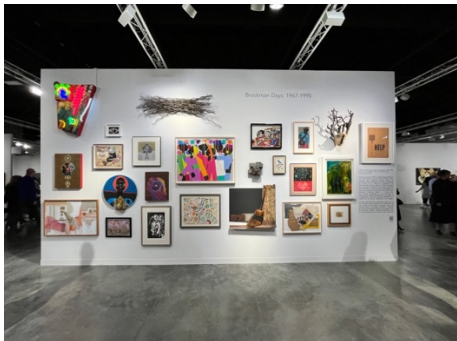


Photo : Maximiliano Durón/ARTnews

One wall of this booth is dedicated to the important work of the Brockman Gallery, the first Black-owned, artist-run space in Los Angeles. Founded by brothers Alonzo Davis and Dale Brockman Davis in 1967 and located in the historically Black neighborhood of Leimert Park, the gallery was instrumental in giving early support to Black and Latinx artists at a time when they would likely be ignored by white-owned galleries. Among the artists included in the booth are Romare Bearden, David Hammons, Suzanne Jackson, Maren Hassinger, Noah Purifoy, Mildred Howard, Samella Lewis, Frank Romero, Linda Vallejo, and Charles White, the brothers' one-time professor at Otis College.

Vivian Browne at Ryan Lee Gallery

Kang Seung Lee at Commonwealth & Council

Pepe Mar at David Castillo Gallery

Azza El Siddique at Bradley Ertaskiran

Devin N. Morris at Deli Gallery

Pedro Figari at Galeria Sur

David Almeida and Fran Chang at Millan

Caroline Coon at Stephen Friedman Gallery