

HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE



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ABMB Extravaganza: The Playground for Avant Garde Art Collecting

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Art Basel Miami Beach 2015 (ABMB) got off to an impressive start this week. Hard to believe it has been 14 years since its debut in 2001. This year's ABMB art fair includes a whopping 267 galleries and 4,000 artists all on display under one roof at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

What makes ABMB remarkable is not just the benefit it brings to art students and the Miami community but the intangible networking opportunity it provides gallerists, curators, dealers, museum administrators and most notably, artists and collectors who come together under one roof from all corners of the globe. It continues to be and has been a catalyst and valuable incubator for forging strong relationships and partnerships in the art world.

ABMB week runs from December 1st through December 6th 2015. December 2nd and the morning of December 3rd are VIP preview days. After a day or two at the convention center, make some time to check out the satellite fairs around town like Art Miami, Design Miami, Pulse, Nada, Untitled, Spectrum and Aqua. Miami is highly regarded for its private collecting museums like the de la Cruz Collection, the Rubell Family Collection, Ella Fontanals Cisneros CIFO, the Margulies Warehouse and Cricket and Marty Taplin's Art Hotel, the Sagamore. Then there is Miami's burgeoning museum scene, PAMM, Wolfsonian, Bass, Lowe, Frost Museum, MoCA, ICA. Not to mention the Wynwood Walls, private gallery showings, artist residencies like the Fountainhead, the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance opening, Yeelen Gallery, Prism and Moksha.

Trying to see it all is a stretch but like curator Dominique Lévy says, *You Must Go On. I Can't Go On. I'll Go On.* And go on you should. Did I mention the private collector parties like television personality Raul and Lily de Molina, Lin Lougheed's Casa Lin brunch and Craig Robin's pre-party for Jeffrey Deitch and Larry Gagosian's "Unrealism" exhibit on view at the Moore Building?

We are mid week into ABMB and here are some of my highlights thus far. From Raul and Mily de Molina's cocktail party, artwork by Chinese artists Liu Bolin and Li Hongbo left an indelible impression. Art Miami was amazing and Gallerist Bernice Steinbaum's booth was slammed with well wishers. Yes, Bernice's entourage of artists convinced her out of retirement and back into the gallerist saddle. For ABMB I had lots of favorites but I was drawn to Alexander Gray Associates' booth and the powerful artwork by UAE artist Hassan Sharif (see above noted image). Sharif's shoe installation is on one level a retrospective of re-engineered rubbish which is my preferred medium. On a sensory level it speaks volumes. For me it echoed the empty shoe installation in Paris.

Speaking of shoes, make sure you pack some comfortable ones! Your feet will thank you. And don't forget to download the Art Basel app. Nothing better than a personal assistant to help keep track of the multitude of art stops and events. You can download the Art Basel app here for [Apple](#) and here for [Android](#). If you use Snapchat, just add Art_Basel to your list so you can stay up to date with their daily postings.