

THE ART NEWSPAPER



Hassan Sharif

Ladies and Gentlemen (2014)

Alexander Gray (K3)

Sharif's installation seems particularly relevant during the current global migrant crisis.

ART BASEL IN MIAMI BEACH 2015

Enter the politics: Art Basel in Miami Beach gets serious

A sea change for the sea town as the outside world comes in

by MELANIE GERLIS

With heightened security in and around the fair, visitors to this year's Art Basel in Miami Beach are finding it difficult to ignore the political uncertainty outside. The effect is compounded inside, where several works make it clear that an international art fair—even in the pool-party town of Miami—can no longer remain the insulated bubble of air-kissing and commerce that has become the norm.

“Presenting works with a political message feels immediately relevant,” says the New York-based dealer Andrew Kreps (J5). His stand includes Hito Steyerl's striking light-box installation *The War According to eBay* (2010, priced around \$85,000), which explores the point at which war becomes a social commodity.

Migrants in mind

Issues of migration loom large. Kreps is also showing Andrea Bowers's *Church Banners*, Adalberto United Methodist Church, Chicago, Member of New Sanctuary Movement (2007-08, \$45,000), which takes up the cause of immigrants in the US. The artist's work on this theme can also be found at Kaufmann Repetto (J7), where a slogan doubles as the title of her piece: “22% of deportations involve parents of US citizens” (2014, \$36,000).

Elizabeth Dee (J15) has brought a selection of haunting paintings of refugees by Miriam Cahn (ranging from 1973 to 2014, \$14,000-\$30,000). In the stand-out solo booth of works by the Dubai-based artist Hassan Sharif at Alexander Gray (K3; prices range from \$20,000 to \$200,000), his installation of mass-produced shoes recalls the movement of people who do not belong anywhere.

Roupen Kalfayan's solo-artist stand (N16) includes a project by Adrian Paci that documents how Albanian migrants changed their names when they came to Greece after the fall of communism (Names, 2015, €15,000-€35,000). "It's shocking, but everything repeats itself. It couldn't be more relevant today," Kalfayan says.



Other issues addressed at the fair include sexuality, race, climate change, religion and inequality. At Goodman Gallery (C20), Kendell Geers's Temene (2007, \$90,000) uses fair-friendly neon to address spiritual bankruptcy in a global society. At Alan Cristea (A12), a series of prints by the London-based artist Gordon Cheung, Minotaur 1-6 (2015, edition of 20; \$13,850 framed), tackles the extremes of Western capitalism. Henrique Faria (B9) has brought the Mexican artist Emilio Chapela's List of Countries by GDP 2010 (Nominal) (2014, \$40,000), which explores the unjust distribution of wealth.

This is, however, still Miami. Much of the serious-minded work is easy on the eye: Neugerriemschneider's stand (C15) includes trademark works by the Chinese activist artist Ai Weiwei and the ecologically minded Olafur Eliasson. At Magazzino (K10), a work by Vedovamazzei titled United Nothing (2015, edition of three, \$17,000 each; one sold yesterday)—an enlargement of graffiti from 1990s Sarajevo—shows the artist duo's way of "dealing with politics, but in a light way", says the gallery's Gabriele Gaspari.

There is still some glitz and glitter on show, including Kim Gordon at 303 Gallery (G5) and Chris Martin at Anton Kern (E7). Generally, however, dealers have brought art that is more sobering than usual, perhaps also reflecting a market that many no longer believe can turn its back on outside events. "We are all in it together," Faria says.

Artists speak out at ABMB



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Vedovamazzei

United Nothing (2015, edition of three)

Magazzino (K10)

The original graffiti on which this work is based is believed to have been written by a United Nations peacekeeping soldier.



Andrea Bowers

22% of deportations involve parents of U.S. citizens (2014)

Kaufmann Repetto (J7)

The artist regularly addresses issues relating to immigration in her work