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Comix-Inspired Sculpture and Portraits of Lindsay Lohan Lend a Youthful Beat to the Pulse Art Fair

by Kate Deimling

NEW YORK— The mood was cheerful and at times even giddy at the **Pulse Art Fair's** opening yesterday. Maybe that's because "Pulse is consistently good," as one peppy fairgoer told **ARTINFO**. Or maybe it's the welcoming environment, since, as artist and independent curator **Valeri Larko** noted, "they feed you, which is really nice." Everyone seemed pleased with the new **Metropolitan Pavilion** venue on Chelsea's 18th Street. (Losing the trek to West Street on the outer reaches of the West Village certainly had something to do with it).

The fair was a bit smaller this year due to its new space, but the consensus seemed to be that it had made up for less quantity with even better quality. While only a smattering of galleries reported sales to **ARTINFO** in the opening hours, many optimistic dealers said that deals were hatching. One busy collector announced his plan to purchase two large works by **Graham Gillmore** for \$16,000 and \$22,000 at the booth of San Francisco gallery **Fouladi Projects**, before scurrying off to check out other stands. Those numbers were somewhat atypical at Pulse, where the majority of prices are comfortably ensconced in the four-digit range.

The **Mark Moore Gallery** of Culver City, California, made some swift sales, parting with two works in the first thirty minutes of the VIP preview. Moore always showcases a single artist at Pulse, preferably one who has not shown in New York before. "As a visitor at the Armory Show, the booths I remember most are the solo booths," he said by way of explanation. This year Belgian painter **Cindy Wright** took the spotlight with works that resembled a **Minimalist** take on the Flemish *vanitas* theme, priced between \$7,000-14,000.

At **Fred Torres Collaborations**, director **Elana Rubinfeld** had a different approach, bringing

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work by all the gallery's artists. She reported "a lot of interest, people saying, 'Send me a jpeg.'" Sales had built up slowly in this way at **Pulse Miami** as well, she noted. Among the gallery's offerings were paintings by **Gretchen Ryan**, a photograph by **David LaChapelle** priced at \$12,000, and a large-scale diptych by Detroit artist **George Rahme** for \$14,000. Fred Torres also displayed a selection of works by emerging photographers, organized by **LACMA** curator **Edward Robinson**, in the "Pulse Projects" special exhibition area.

The stylish booth of **Galerie Stefan Röpke** of Cologne and Madrid offered a civilized enclave with stools, a bench, and a glass table that put fairgoers at ease. Gallery representative **Noel Estrada** remarked that collectors come to Pulse to find younger artists, and that Stefan Röpke's booth aims to present "new art linked to tradition." Thus, the gallery brought a secondary-market piece by **Rebecca Horn** consisting of a delicate butterfly machine, which sold to a Pennsylvania collector in the \$50,000-100,000 range. By noon, the gallery had sold several **Rainer Gross** paintings for prices between \$10,000 and \$20,000, replacing them one after another in the booth, which felt like a carefully curated show. Estrada was also enthusiastic about a giant photo grid by **Sharon Harper** that he said had attracted museum and institutional interest.

A youthful comic-book spirit is found all around Pulse. At the booth of Memphis's **David Lusk Gallery**, sculptor **Greely Myatt** was on hand to talk about his over-sized steel sculpture with speech bubbles, which could be displayed flat against a wall or opened up into separate "pages." Despite the spatial challenges that displaying such a work entails, it found a buyer right away, selling for \$16,000 to the grandson of **Whitney Museum** trustee **Emily Fisher Landau**. Myatt told ARTINFO that his interest in comics sprang from his Mississippi childhood, when his early experience of art came from Biblical paintings, historical paintings, and comic books.

Meanwhile, cartoon characters abounded at Los Angeles-based **Charlie James Gallery's** booth, where artist **Lizabeth Rossof** was present to show her terracotta statues of **Batman**, **Bart Simpson**, and **Mickey Mouse**. Produced in the Chinese city of Xi'an — where knockoffs of the country's storied terracotta soldiers are plentiful — the sculptures are, among other things, a comment on cultural appropriation and outsourcing. In addition to small versions (\$1,500 each), large-scale versions measuring up to six and a half feet tall (\$12,000 each) were being shown for the first time. When asked if she's had any trouble from **Fox** or **Disney** about copyright infringement, Rossof said, "Not yet." Had there been interest in the works? "Shitloads," replied gallerist **Charlie James**.

At Brooklyn's **Black & White Gallery**, director **Tatyana Okshteyn** said that she was interested in "how artists organize and process information," and it certainly showed in the selection

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of works she brought to the fair. "Spanish-American War/Iraq War" a huge red banner by **A.J. Bocchino**, was made up of hundreds of actual headlines from the New York Times during both conflicts and was priced at \$9,000. The gallery also showed intriguing portraits by **Alicia Ross** of **Miley Cyrus**, **Lindsay Lohan**, and other celebs for \$3,800 apiece. Ross uses pixellated digital images from the internet and adds needlepoint work on top of them, merging new and old technologies.

On the second floor, the **IMPULSE** section of the fair was devoted to solo shows, which are given smaller booths. A representative of Montreal's **Art Mûr** — where darkly-painted works on aluminum by **Jinny Yu** were displayed — said that it had taken some time for visitors to make their way upstairs, but that before the end of the VIP preview they had needed to unwrap and take out more works by Yu because deals were shaping up swiftly. Collector **Douglas Lederman** of New York snapped up a large piece by Yu for \$3,800, which he considered a very good price. "It's been a very nice show, much nicer than last year," Lederman said, partly due to "a better location."

One of the most unusual installations could be seen — and heard — at the "Impulse" booth of Chelsea's **Joshua Liner Gallery**. Fairgoers were mesmerized by a large group of paint cans of different sizes and shapes that played music with flapping lids and tapping paint stirrers inserted inside. A hidden computer communicated the 30-minute score, which was composed by a friend of artist **David Ellis**. It was like a street performance by invisible drummers, and provided rhythmic background music for neighboring booths. "We haven't had any complaints yet," said gallerist Joshua Liner. "But we'll see after a couple of days." One of the priciest works at the fair, it was being offered at \$50,000, and Liner said that previous editions had sold to the **Saatchi** and **Margulies Collections**.