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ART AND THE CITY

BY SOPHIE KALKREUTH

Miami Art Week flaunts furry beasts, gilded furniture and flamboyant architecture, but it is the city's enduring design choices that matter most

Wave or reptile? The renovated Miami Beach Convention Center

Each year during Art Basel the drive from Miami Airport reveals a new and altered skyline. The latest building boom includes projects by Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas and Jean Nouvel, and this year even the Miami Beach Convention Center was transformed following a US \$620-million renovation by local design firms Pentress Architects and Arquitectonica.

More than 200 galleries convene in its air-conditioned corridors during Art Basel, and its striking new hurricane-resistant facade is clad in 500 angled aluminium fins designed to filter the intense South Florida sun. The undulating shape evokes, depending on your vantage point, the curve of an ocean wave or the scaled back of a giant reptile.

In its new form the hall offers a more intuitive layout and about 10 percent more space. This year about 35 galleries made their fair debut, and highlights from Asia Pacific included ink paintings by Xu Longsen, exhibited by Hong Kong's Hanart TZ Gallery, and *Semiotic Abstraction*, an exhibition of two young Japanese painters, Toru Kamiya and Daisuke Ohba, presented by Japan's SCAI The Bathhouse.

Gagosian's new Senior Director for Hong Kong, Han-I Wang, was also in attendance. "There is a continued flow of inquiries from collectors in America on the works by Asian artists," she said, adding that Miami collectors Martin Margulies and the Rubell family in particular are known for their commitment to promoting contemporary Asian art.

Collectors were quick to open their wallets. Early sales included a brushy Picasso portrait, *Tete de Femme* (1971), listed at US\$17 million with Van de Weghe, and a new painting by Mark Bradford listed for US\$5 million with Hauser & Wirth. Even less practical works sold well. Goshka Macuga's *Make Tofu Not War* (2018), which shows polar bears wandering through a barren, snow-free forest, and is designed to be viewed through 3D glasses, sold for US\$102,100.

Perhaps in tribute to their impending extinction in the wild, polar bears roamed widely at Art Basel. Perrotin gallery showed Italian artist Paola Pivi's *What goes round – art comes round*, a giant sculpture comprising more than a dozen fake bear fur pelts in white, brown and black that circle the walls, ceiling, and floor of the booth's entrance. And a few blocks away at The Bass Museum of Art, Pivi's trademark feather bears were also on display as part of her solo exhibition *Art with a View*.

Also at The Bass, Los Angeles design duo the Haas Brothers staged their first solo show entitled *Ferngully*. Twin brothers Nikolai and Simon Haas are known for creating objects that tread the line between art and design and their show presented a collection of whimsical beasts made of sheepskin, beadwork and chocolate goat fur. At once functional and sculptural, playful and irreverent, the pieces were staged in a colourful, forest-like environment the brothers described as "a fantasy reality of flora and fauna".

The 13th edition of Design Miami also linked the worlds of art and design with nearly 35 participating galleries. Furniture highlights included Dutch designer Joris Laarman's sculptural bench – made up of intricate diamond-shaped pieces of maple and North American



Goshka Macuga's *Make Tofu Not War* (2018)



Paola Pivi's trademark feather bears



Haas Brothers' *Ferngully*: Both sculptural and playful

walnut at Friedman Benda gallery (New York); lounge chairs from the 1950s designed by J Zanine Caldas at Mercado Moderno (Rio de Janeiro); as well as the MY Collection, polished metal stools and tables by Michael Young that premiered at Gallery All (Beijing, LA).

Next year Aric Chen, former lead curator at M+ in Hong Kong, is set to join Design Miami as curatorial director, bringing his strong institutional experience and a knack for balancing cultural and commercial demands.

Unlike the contemporary art world, Chen contends that design is characterised by a 'disconnect' between theory-based practice and collectible design objects. He hopes to help bridge this gap, an aspiration he shares with fair founder Craig Robins. "Craig has long understood that the discursive and cultural side go hand-in-hand with the commercial side, and that it's necessary to have both a creative network and infrastructure for design to thrive," he said.

Miami's Design District, also spearheaded by Robins, is an experiment in place-making founded precisely on the symbiosis between creativity and commerce. "Everyone is saying retail is dead," Robins said during a tour of the area's glittering flagship shops. "So, part of our inspiration was to do something that would help redefine retail by

creating a place that advocates culture through art, architecture and design."

Recent additions to the upscale shopping district include a sculptural fountain by the artist Urs Fischer and an installation by Paula Crown. Miami's latest work of 'parkitecture', the Museum Garage, has also opened adjacent to the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA).

The structure's maximalist facade was a collaboration between four designers, WORKac, J. Mayer H, Clavel Arquitectos, Nicolas Buffe and Keenan/Riley. The resulting tapestry ranges from WORKac's, *Ant Farm*, a series of circulation corridors and perforated metal screens that take their cue from the maze-like layout of an ant colony, to *Urban Jam* by Spanish-firm Clavel Arquitectos, in which 45 gold and silver car bodies cling to the elevation, stacked atop each other like a vertical traffic jam.

Meanwhile, back on the beach construction continues on the last remaining oceanfront lots, including Eighty Seven Park by Renzo Piano and Arte by Antonio Citterio, which marks the Milanese architect's first US project. The rectangular, glass-clad building has protruding floor plates that form deep eaves and travertine balconies, as well as intricate glass panels and a polished poolside pagoda that reflects a timeless Miami modernism.



'Parkitecture' at the Museum Garage: *Urban Jam* by Clavel Arquitectos



Arte by Antonio Citterio: 16 residences 'ooze luxury'

The project houses just 16 residences and oozes luxury much like Citterio's Bulgari Hotels, though the architect emphasises durability over glimmer. "For us it's really important to keep the quality for the future, not just for now, but for the next 50 or 100 years or more," Citterio said.

Designing for the future isn't nearly as fashionable as it should be in this low-lying city built on porous limestone, though some, like local architect Rene Gonzalez, have made a point of building structures that accommodate storm surges. And it was nice to see Gonzalez's sensitive design selected for Miami's newest museum, The Berkowitz Contemporary Foundation.

The Berkowitz Foundation announced during Art Basel that the 4,200sqm (45,000sqf) art space will be located in Miami's heavily trafficked Edgewater neighbourhood. Early renderings show a precast concrete structure with a large tapered and cantilevered upper floor.

The museum is also designed to accommodate two large permanent installations: James Turrell's 25m-tall immersive light sculpture, which will hang in the lobby, and a 55m-long wall-like sculpture by Richard Serra located in the open-air courtyard. At the launch, Gonzalez said his aim was to create a civic building that "elevates the spirit and engages the community". Which is, of course, exactly what good design should do. ■

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The Berkowitz Contemporary Foundation by Rene Gonzalez