

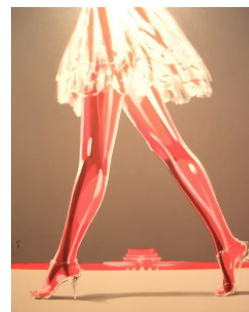
# Art | Basel | Miami Beach

## 4-7 | Dec | 08

Blue Tangerine Art's founder and art advisor, Trudy Montgomery, provides insights and highlights direct from Art Basel Miami Beach (ABMB) and its satellite fairs.

### CONTENTS:

- **Trends:** quality remains high and demand strong despite slowdown elsewhere in the economy; art fair fatigue; size matters in the search for paintings; photography phenomenon.
- **Highlights:** what's hot: Chinese supermarkets and artists selling direct to buyers at Geisei.
- **Best of the Rest:** Art Miami, Scope, Pulse, Red Dot, Flow, Art Now.
- **News & Views:** The number of fairs and dilution of foot traffic raises questions over the proliferation of art fairs this year. A reduction in the number of shows seems inevitable in 2008.



Feng Zheng-Jie, *Legs* (2007)

### ART BASEL TRENDS

- **Quality remains high & sales brisk:** Art Basel Miami Beach (ABMB) is the main attraction for serious collectors due to the quality and variety of work available and where collectors snapped up quality works from the opening bell. However, the rush was not quite as frenzied as in previous years, and this was particularly true in the satellite fairs where collectors took their time to pick up gems at more affordable prices.
- **Pecking order:** Selection is tight for a booth at ABMB: only 1 in 3 galleries that apply for booth space receive committee approval. The rest opt for a venue in one or more of the satellite fairs located across venues of variable quality - marquees, warehouses and converted hotels (and even a yacht).
- **Fair Fatigue:** Comfortable shoes were essential for getting the most out of the Miami art scene this year, but even the most energetic collectors found it impossible to see all 21 fairs. Galleries and visitors alike complained of art fair fatigue and, with collector foot traffic being diluted across multiple venues. A contraction in the number of satellite fairs seems inevitable in 2008.
- **Size matters:** demand for very large, ambitious works, especially painting, was strong. Several buyers also wanted whole installations and series, rather than individual works.
- **Photography phenomenon:** there was noticeably more photography on view. San Francisco's own Fraenkel gallery secured a booth at ABMB for the first time reflecting the growing attention on the medium. The Association of Photography Art Dealers' staged its first Miami fair, Aipad, while collectors also enjoyed Photo Miami.

### HIGHLIGHTS (What's Hot)

The talk of ABMB was ShanghART's Supermarket, a full size replica of a 24 hour convenience store by Chinese artist Xu Zhen, complete with shelves displaying candy, nuts and cigarettes. Everything was for sale, including store franchises at a cool \$20,000.

(Surprisingly, given the recent sky-rocketing auction prices for Chinese painting, Chinese art was thin on the ground elsewhere in Miami.)



Xu Zhen, *Shanghart Supermarkt* (2007)

Meanwhile Takashi Murakami, a Japanese artist whose work is currently being exhibited at Los Angeles' MOCA, launched **Gesai** to an international audience at Pulse art fair. Renting cheap booth space to 20 young artists selected by jury, Gesai cuts out the middle man / dealer by allowing artists to sell their work direct to the public. While the work was somewhat quirky or immature, prices started at a few hundred dollars and the concept was welcomed for allowing direct artist-to-buyer relationships in an otherwise elitist and dealer-driven market.

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## BEST OF THE REST

There was quality work to be found at a number of fairs including:

- **Pulse** and **Scope** remained favorites as the two leading satellite fairs.
- **Art Miami:** a favorite with Blue Tangerine with representation from strong local and international galleries including Haines, Sundaram Tagore, Stefan Stux, Kahya Hildebrand and Galerie von Braunbehrens.
- **Flow:** best of the art hotel venues, although **Red Dot** was strong on painting and sculpture
- **Art Now:** despite the dire state of the hotel hosting this fair, urban art from White Walls in San Francisco was a highlight.



Andy Denzler, *Urban Figures 3* (2007)  
oil on linen

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## NEWS & VIEWS

- **New territories:** Design Miami solidified its hold in Miami and received backing from Art Basel's owners who will expand into other territories such as China. *Russia*, sponsored by RI Group, presented its second curated exhibit of contemporary Russian Art in Miami. Balelatina presented contemporary art from Latin America.
- **VIP tips:** Most collectors conduct several viewings of ABMB as art hangings are changed daily. Early access is key however: the best work is shown and sold at the VIP preview upon opening bell. It's noticeable that gallery booth walls aren't dressed nearly as well by the end of the week.
- **Innovation:** Art Fair directors are becoming more creative in attempts to attract collectors. *SeaFair* is 18 year old ABMB's first floating art fair on a custom designed yacht offered more traditional art, leaving contemporary art to the land-based fairs.

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Planning your next trip to Miami? Art Advisor Trudy Montgomery offers private tours of the best of the fairs. Contact [trudy@bluetangerineart.com](mailto:trudy@bluetangerineart.com).

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