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Art Guide Alex Vallauri Anthony McCall Cinthia Marcelle Santander Cultural Recife IVAM Tarsila SP-Arte Armory Show
India Art Summit Venice's Biennale Lyon DocksArtFair Proa arteBA Beatriz Milhazes Art Basel Paulo Herkenhoff
Tomie Ohtake Raquel Arnaud MAM-SP May Mayo June Junho 2011 number número 9 www.brasileiros.com.br

Ingleby Gallery

Edinburgh

The Armory Show 2011 - Pier 94

739

er

: Latin America

738

Galería Enrique Guerrero

Mexico City

740

Galeria Leme

Sao Paulo

The Armory Show 2011 - Focus: Latin America

742

Baro Gallery

Sao Paulo

The Armory Show 2011 - Focus: Latin America

744

Faria Fátregas Galeria

London

The Armory Show 2011 - Focus: Latin America

THE ARMORY SHOW

A RECORD CROWD OF SOME 65 THOUSAND ATTENDED
NEW YORK ART FAIR AT PIERS 92 AND 94

BY JULIA P. HERZBERG

THE ARMORY SHOW is as important to New York as Art Basel Miami Beach is to Miami. Mayor Bloomberg opened the fair, welcoming visitors to the city of cities and, maybe by extension, the fair of fairs (For an overview of the founding of the Armory Show in 1994, as well as a list of seven other art fairs in New York during the unofficial arts week, please refer to *The Art Newspaper, The Armory Show Edition*, 4-6, March 2001). A record-breaking number of people (nearly 65,000) attended the show during its five-day run on Piers 92 and 94. While both piers had blue-chip galleries, 92 focused on modern and 94 on contemporary art. More than 275 galleries – from Chicago to Seoul, Helsinki to Johannesburg, Toronto to Amsterdam, Melbourne to San Francisco, Madrid to Japan – offered a multiplicity of expressions, mediums, and prices appealing to both seasoned and new collectors, an art public, critics, artists, and academics. The educational component included tours to artists' studios, private and public collections, museum previews, and receptions at consulates. Open Forum organized conversations among directors, curators, and artists to advance understanding of and dialogue on contemporary artistic practices. **Focus:** Latin America was highlighted this year (last year's focus was on Germany). On Pier 94 a special section featured 18 galleries from six Latin American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. Focus attracted interest in terms of visitors and sales. Galleries outside of Focus specializing in this field, such as the Sicardi Gallery (Houston), Nohra Haime, Cecilia de Torres, Ltd., Mary-Anne Martin/Fine Art, Leon Tovar Gallery (all in New York), Nina Menocal (Mexico), and Luciana Brito Galeria (São Paulo), deserve mention for their commitment to excellence in establishing the importance of Latin American artists in world art. There was also an increase in the number of these artists in non-specialized galleries.

From an art historical and curatorial perspective, The Armory Show gave me opportunities to see exceptional work in the expanded modernist canon, keep abreast of new work by established artists, become acquainted with unknown ones, and enjoy visual surprises from both groups. With this in mind, let's go on a quick walking tour.

Most of the art displayed on Pier 92 was of museum quality. Marlborough Gallery presented Fernando Botero and Magdalena Abakanowicz, whose diverse backgrounds have played very specific roles in their thematic development. Oriol Galeria d'Art (Barcelona) showed Joaquín Torres García's *Port constructif aux taches blanches*, 1930. The now iconic street scene was first exhibited at the Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas, Austin, in 1974, when interest in the constructivist artist was barely stirring in this country. Shinichi Maruyama (Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York) hurls sumi ink into the air, a performative action captured at different moments in two exquisite archival pigment prints. Keith Sonnier was one of the first artists to use light in his sculpture in the 1960s. His marvelous abstract neon wall sculpture at the JGM Galerie (Paris) reminds us of the importance of neon in contemporary work. Marie Orensanz's *Untitled*, 1987, drawing and collage on marble at the Sicardi Gallery, was a discovery. The conceptual artist's work from the late 1960s and 1970s is now receiving deserved attention. Hirschl & Adler Modern showed a group of seven exceptionally beautiful marble sculptures by Elizabeth Turk, the only artist in the fair who, in all probability, is both a Macarthur fellow and Barnett & Annalee Newman Foundation fellow (2010). Her hand-carved work furthers her explorations with lines and voids in a timeless medium.

As our walk continues on Pier 94, we find exciting work in such galleries as Sean Kelly (New York); Victoria



PHOTO: IGNACIO LIPRANDI/ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO, BUENOS AIRES COURTESY

ABOVE: ADRIANA BUSTOS, *MOLECULAR WEIGHT (PESO MOLECULAR)*, 2010. C-PRINT, 120 X 170 CM. OPPOSITE PAGE: ELIZABETH TURK, *CAGE: STILL LIFE, BOX 1*, 2011. MARBLE, 34 X 23 X 15 CM

Miro (London); Hauser & Wirth (Zurich/New York/London); White Cube (London); Daniel Templon (Paris) and Galleria Continua (San Gimignano/Beijing). The broad range of galleries from less familiar places provided visitors with new finds. For example, Turin's Galleria Franco Noero presented a solo exhibition of Gabriel Kuri's sculptures and collages made with recycled materials. The Armory commissioned Kuri, Belgium-residing Mexican, to create the visual identity of the fair. Ai Weiwei's mound of individually handcrafted porcelain sunflowers *Kui Hua Zi*, 2008-2010, at Galerie Urs Meile (Lucerne/Beijing), recalls the thousands in the installation now at the Tate Modern. Galerie Micheline Szwajcer (Antwerp) showed David Claerbout's video, *The Quiet Shore*, 2011, produced in Dinard, Brittany, where stop-motion shots of the beach together with the absence of sound evoke a distant time and place.

Several galleries in Focus: Latin America captured my attention. Galeria Nara Roesler's photographs of Paulo Bruscky's *O que é arte? Para que serve?* are examples of the artist's social, performance-based actions criticizing

the concept of art. A pioneer of mail art, the artist is now attracting critical interest outside of Brazil. Ignacio Liprandi showed Adriana Bustos' *Molecular Weight* (from a series on the cocaine network), a beautiful shot of a fraction of cocaine separating from adulterating compounds in a homemade test used by drug dealers to establish purity. Faría - Fábregas Galería featured Emilio Chapela's *The Long Tail/512 Drinks*, which proposes new possibilities for geometric abstraction, a direction at the center of critical attention and patronage. Hundreds of squares made by photographing beverages with a Macro Lens, out of focus, produce the broad array of colors.

We cannot end this walk on Pier 94 without noting Iván Navarro's *The Armory Fence*, a neon sculpture occupying about 750 square feet, blocking the public entrance to what would have been the traditional space of the Paul Kasmin Gallery. This spatial construct set up a series of conundrums (enticing/forbidding; protective/open) and is likely to be remembered as a signature work of this year's fair.

