

Eye on the Scene

by Jori Finkel

Making the rounds at the Miami art fairs this December just may go down in the books as a new, unusual (and at times cruel) endurance sport. How can you visit 10 fairs, tour over 500 booths, and see work by, say, 5,000 artists without dropping from pure exhaustion? The gang behind Photo Miami, the latest fair to pitch its tent during the week of Art Basel Miami Beach, has one answer: rickshaws.

From December 7 to 10, Photo Miami will be the main drag for picking up rickshaw rides through the Wynwood Art District. It will also, organizers hope, become a necessary stop on the busy itineraries of contemporary art collectors. "This is not at all a traditional photography fair," says Tim Fleming, managing director of Artfairs Inc., best known for staging Photo L.A. "It's a fair about light and time—a contemporary art fair with performance, video, conceptual work as well as photography." At press time, Fleming was aiming for a total of 50 galleries, with some international entries such as ADN Galeria of Spain, Tagrom of Puerto Rico, and Peak Gallery of Canada already on board. The number of rickshaws on hand to rescue weary collectors remains to be seen.

Given the pivotal role of the art fairs, it's almost shocking that new galleries are still opening in New York every month, but they are. Galerie Poller of Frankfurt, Germany, has just opened a New York branch at 547 West 27th Street to serve its U.S. clientele (which already makes up about 70 percent of business). From November 2 to December 9, the new space features Danish artist Nicolai Howalt's portraits of boxers, before and after the fight. But the main focus will be young German photographers, or what owner Thomas Poller describes as the "third generation after Bernd and Hilla Becher."

Also in Chelsea: Peter Hay Halpert is moving this month from a by-appointment-only space to a public gallery at 511 West 25th Street. "Both my artists and clients wanted to see us in a white cube environment," says the ever-busy collector/curator/dealer. His first confirmed show is new work by Susan Opton, running in early 2007: large-scale portraits of soldiers recently returned from Iraq. "It's neither a pro-war nor anti-war statement but powerful in that the soldiers are lying on their stomachs, almost like fallen soldiers," he says.

Meanwhile, peace is the clear message of work by Manuel Bauer, whose intimate portraits of the Dalai Lama will be exhibited during December at Scalo/Guye in West Hollywood. The gallery, located at 302 North Robertson Boulevard, was founded earlier this year by Zurich transplant Christophe Guye. "When I visited Los Angeles a year or so ago," he says, "I saw great vintage work but not so much contemporary, internationally recognized photography." Guye also carries a good selection of Scalo books and, starting this month, is teaming up with Jonathan Schilder Brown of Leadapron to offer rare, first edition art books in the gallery.

Guye might be wise to study the example of Photo-Eye in Santa Fe. Now a gallery and bookstore (both on and offline), the company has come a long way since Rixon Reed opened shop in 1979 as strictly a mail order book business. And this year marks a new phase, as the gallery and bookstore have traded spaces in Santa Fe to make for a larger, more formal gallery setting. (The December show is *Post-Pictorialism: Photographs* by Nick Brandt and Raymond Meeks.) More news: Photo-Eye is launching web site hosting and design services for photographers who can't be bothered with the html of it all.

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