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Art Market

NADA's Emerging Art Community Thrives amid Turbulent Times

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Installation view of Martos Gallery's booth at NADA Miami Beach, 2016. Photo courtesy of the gallery.

The 14th edition of NADA opened its doors on Thursday morning with buoyant energy and significant sales, gathering 110 galleries from 17 countries. As is tradition for the emerging art fair—a perennial foil to Art Basel in Miami Beach's more formal atmosphere—the ambiance felt communal, even familial as the day kicked off. Dealers, collectors, and

MARTOS GALLERY

artists filing into the halls of the Deauville Beach Resort could be overheard discussing the power of art and coming together in moments of political and social turmoil, the likes of which we've seen of late. Indeed, never before has NADA's warm environment been more welcome. And that atmosphere encouraged interest in a strong, wide-ranging selection of work—from sought-after figurative paintings by Alex Chaves and Mira Dancy, to a politically pointed installation from Terence Koh, to the spellbinding works of self-taught artists Derrick Alexis Coard and Karen May, which could be taken home for a little as \$200.

Just an hour after the fair kicked off, the owner and director of Martos Gallery rubbed elbows with exhibiting artists Alex Chaves and JPW3, along with a throng of collectors. By that point, all four of Chaves's paintings in the booth—which ranged from \$5,000 to \$14,000—had sold or were on hold. And while the young, Los Angeles-based artist's canvases could certainly be considered part of the thriving figuration trend, they're also loaded with weighty social and art historical content.

“His work really responds to his community,” said the gallery's Ebony Haynes, as she looked at the booth's centerpiece, a painting brimming with fractured figures—several nudes, a prince, and a classical bust. She went on to explain that the piece fused likenesses of Chaves's friends with his interest in the late downtown New York artist Dan Asher's work, which also hung in booth. “They both approach portraiture almost anthropologically, through close interaction with the people that surround them,” she continued. “And people really seem to be responding to that sense of human connection right now.” Asher's series of loose, gestural portraits on paper, made with heavy scribbles, were a talk of the fair. Priced from \$7,000 to \$15,000, several had sold by the afternoon.