

JOHANNES VOGT

HYPERALLERGIC

In Mexico City, an Alternative Art Fair Builds a Community

by Matt Stromberg on February 9, 2015

MEXICO CITY — As blue chip galleries courted international collectors at the city's biggest art fair on the fringes of the tony neighborhood of Polanco, a smaller and more intimate fair opened on Thursday night across town. Now in its second year, the Material Art Fair featured 40 galleries and project spaces from the Americas and Europe. Founded by Daniela Elbahara and Brett W. Schultz of Yauatepec Gallery and art advisor Isa Natalia Castilla of Incontemporary, it bills itself as "Mexico City's first and only contemporary art fair dedicated to emerging practices." Last year the balance between Mexican and foreign galleries was more even, whereas this year the exhibitors were primarily from abroad, with only four hailing from Mexico City.

On opening night, the atmosphere was festive and friendly, as visitors were greeted by a SpongeBob SquarePants performance by Puppies Puppies in the Queer Thoughts booth. Although selling work was certainly on everyone's minds, it didn't seem to be the sole reason for attending. Many gallerists I spoke with had little knowledge of the collecting scene in Mexico, and instead expressed their enthusiasm over being part of a close community of like-minded galleries and artists.

"Last year we didn't sell a thing, but we had an amazing time. There was great energy, it just felt like a really good community," said Michael Clifton of New York's Clifton Benevento, adding that he did sell work after the fair. "I wasn't familiar with a lot of the galleries that were showing here, but the quality was really good. It just seems like there's a lot of potential here, a lot of people coming from South America as well." His gallery was showing work by Gina Beavers, a New York-based painter who had never exhibited outside the US. The gallery also works with Mexican artist Martin Soto Climent, who runs local project space Lulu, another sign of the supportive spirit that many gallerists I spoke with cited as one of Material's greatest strengths.

Another New York gallery, Regina Rex, was thrilled to be back at Material for its second year. "This is a really incredible community-building experience," said Craig Monteith. "Even though we already have this kind of community in New York, when we come here we're kind of pulled together, you really get to know a lot of people." Some of the work the gallery brought showed a connection to Mexico, such as Michael Assiff's paintings that combine Chipotle bag designs with Aztec glyphs, and a tattooed cactus by There There.



Hadley Vogel of East Hampton Shed with work by Larissa Lockshin

Many of the dealers who were here for the first time said they were drawn by the experiences of friends and colleagues who had participated last year and gave the impression of a big family or at least a small club. "We are really close with Regina Rex and we had heard about the experience they had last year and we were eager to be involved," said Zerek Kempf of Brooklyn's Helper. They were showing Gavin Kenyon and Jeff Williams's "Microwave Mint" (2014) — a sculpture that melts metal — paintings by Ben Dowell, and hosted a meditation performance by Berlin-based artist Marco Schmitt.

Hadley Vogel of East Hampton Shed — housed in an actual shed behind her parent's book bindery — said she heard about the fair after subletting an apartment from Schultz, one of its co-founders, last year. She spoke about being drawn to the art scene in Mexico City by the influential Preteen Gallery, a sentiment echoed by others with whom I spoke. Vogel was showing horse-racing themed work by Larissa Lockshin.

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"I wish I had done it last year, but for a gallery outside of the market of New York and Los Angeles a fair is always risky, and because it was their first year I wasn't sure," Jeanine Jablonski of Fourteen30 Contemporary in Portland, Oregon, told me. "I emailed colleagues, like John from Green Gallery, and Michael Clifton and Simon from Cooper Cole and everyone adamantly was like, 'it was amazing. I've sold work since I've been here and it's been open two hours. It's really well organized, aesthetically it's on par with my program."

Mieke Marple of LA's Night Gallery cited the intimate nature of the fair, as opposed to the larger Zona MACO, as part of her motivation to participate. "I've been to MACO and even though there's great galleries there, it's pretty big and it seems like it would be pretty easy to get lost," she said. "Here, the company seemed more in line with where we are, François (Ghebaly) is our neighbor, Michael Jon, we share a lot of artists with him, Shane Campbell is a friend, and a lot of the other galleries we identify with are here."

Tyler Park of François Ghebaly, one of the most established galleries here, also said that sharing the space with colleagues like Milwaukee's Green Gallery and Michael Jon from Miami and Detroit was a big motivation. He said the gallery was also drawn to Mexico City by the strong institutional presence, especially the Colección Jumex. François Ghebaly had brought work by a selection of artists from the gallery's program including a Joel Kyack video, Sayre Gomez

paintings, Patrick Jackson mugs, and a delicate flower of carved wood by Yoshihiro Suda.

"With the exhibitions at the gallery, the artists don't have to make market-driven work, they're allowed to do whatever they want," said Chadwick Gibson, who runs LA's Smart Objects, which straddles the line between project space and gallery. "Coming to a fair to me is an opportunity to kind of leverage the market to give artists more freedom." He was showing paintings by Keith Varadi, whose had painted words related to Mexico on canvas and then obscured them by sandwiching them against another canvas.

Adding to the festive atmosphere was the inclusion of Beverly's, the bar and project space run by Leah Dixon on Manhattan's Lower East Side. She had turned a subterranean space below the main floor into a mash-up of a club, performance space, and exhibition area including work by 14 artists. Dixon said that friends from Yauhtepec had asked Beverly's to join the fair. It was beginning to seem like everyone at Material knew each other, or if they didn't yet, they would by the end of the weekend.

The Material Art Fair took place at the Auditorio Blackberry (Insurgentes Sur No. 453, Col. Hipódromo Condesa, Mexico City) February 5–8.

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My Miami Art Week Goes Limp
By Tony Mangle | Sunday, January 4, 2015



A Larissa Lockshin moment -- All sold!

Larissa Lockshin moment -- silk

UNTITLED. 2014 wrapped up its last hours on the beach at 12th Street and Ocean Drive in Miami and reported an enthusiastic response from both exhibitors and the over 32,000 visitors who attended throughout the run of the fair.

UNTITLED. expanded not only its team of curators in 2014 and list of international exhibitors, but also the square footage of its pavilion on the beach to 70,000 square feet, designed for the third time by John Keenen of K/R Architects.

In its third edition, UNTITLED. featured over

200 emerging and established contemporary artists represented in 110 galleries and non-profit art spaces from 16 U.S. cities and 18 countries. Led by Artistic Director Omar López-Chahoud with Curators Christophe Boutin and Mélanie Scarciglia, co-founders of the distinguished publishing houses onestart press and Three Star Books in Paris,

UNTITLED. continued its mission to innovate the art fair experience with a carefully curated program, including special projects, talks and performances.

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SHARON BUTLER
TWO COATS OF PAINT

Miami, Part III: Heather Leigh McPherson attends a Bomb discussion, Untitled

By Heather Leigh Mcpherson, December 11, 2014

Guest Contributor Heather Leigh McPherson / After a Saturday filled with manic art-spectating energy, I went to Untitled and attended a late afternoon panel at Select Art Fair, which presented a moment of reflection and listening. Moderated by artist, curator, and BOMB contributing editor Legacy Russell, The Artist, The Writer: A Conversation Between Creative Identities included my art-fair companion Amy Beecher as well as Bibi Deitz, Carla Gannis, and Marisa Olson. It was occasioned by the recent publication of the anthology BOMB: The Author Interviews.

The panelists read excerpts from the book, considered the relationship between visual art and writing practices, and discussed artistic identity generally; specifically, Russell was interested in the deflated trope of the tortured artist and whether artists today can plausibly work from a position of happiness while skirting emptiness.



Panelists recounted their own experiences of our shared, inherited artistic postures, with Beecher incisively noting that if we tell ourselves we can only create substantive work from a single emotional condition, we are kind of screwing ourselves. Rather, Beecher said, she finds she works best when she's comfortable being alone with her own psychic contents, whatever they may be. I find this is true for sure: outright depression can make one's brain a hostile place to spend time, and the elation produced by new relationships or happy Life Events can make it hard to concentrate on the dogged work of one's own familiar project.

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I liked that this panel consisted entirely of women, was organized by a woman, but was not “about” women and made no claims to report on gendered art-world dynamics. I am a proponent of women or trans people or otherwise non-majority-identifying artists publicly addressing bias in the art world; but it is refreshing to see a women-only panel simply addressing art. Women represent a full range of artistic voices, not a class that is mostly useful for bias-checking. Cheers to the multi-talented Russell.

And then I went to Untitled.

I ran through Untitled late in the day, so I used a fast-acting, intuitive metric when selecting what to photograph (with, I should say, a camera lens that was fogging a bit from Miami steaminess and generalized excitement). I was drawn to a lot of rhythmic abstraction with tight facture, plus a couple of representational projects with a documentary vibe: Deb Sokolow’s fervent drawings at Western Exhibitions and selections from Peter Dreher’s “Tag um Guter Tag” series at Koenig & Clinton.

Dreher has painted the same type of glass on the same table since 1974, adding exactly one piece per year to the series. The numbers at the top of the piece indicate the serial number of that particular specimen of glass.

Dreher’s insistent focus reminds me how hard it is to look at a lot of art at once. Everybody reaches a saturation point, when the sponge of the brain is sopping and the visual apparatus can take no more. This is why a lot of us Instagram artwork as we move through fairs and biennials -- in a kind of physical scanning motion -- capturing things photographically with the intention of looking later. While I’m as guilty as anyone of this, I’ve been trying to slow down and to give work a good-faith gander. I missed more than I didn’t miss in Miami, but what I saw, I tried to look at for real and in person. My effort was totally rewarded.

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BLOUINARTINFO

Afros, Abstraction, and Photographic Experimentation at Untitled

BY SCOTT INDRISEK | DECEMBER 03, 2014

MIAMI BEACH — Untitled pitches its tent on the South Beach sand from December 3 through 7, bringing a roster of galleries that, while admittedly a bit heavy on New York representation, also includes venues from Helsinki, Mexico City, Bogota, and beyond. Despite lacking the flash and big-dollar bluster of Art Basel Miami Beach — one of Untitled's advertising partners during Tuesday morning's preview hours was Sabra hummus, which is adorable — sales seemed to be fairly brisk following the opening night vernissage on December 2. (Johannes Vogt Gallery, for instance, sold out a solo booth of playfully refined oilstick-on-satin paintings by Larissa Lockshin.)

The expanded field of photography is especially prevalent at this year's fair. That includes one of the standout booths: Kansas's solo presentation of sculptural-photographic works by Ethan Greenbaum capturing the common markings and surfaces of the urban environment. (They're direct-to-substrate prints on vacuum-formed PETG, if you want to get technical about it.) Over at the booth of Chicago's Threewalls, Windy City artist (and 2014 Whitney Biennial participant) Carol Jackson has a series of sculptures that incorporate degraded surveillance images in assemblages of paper mache and epoxy. They jut out from the wall like lumpy, bodily appendages, their surfaces ornately inscribed, using leatherworking tools, with imagery drawn from 19th-century sheet music, among other sources. Dittrich & Schlechtriem of Berlin have also brought slightly skewed photography to the fair, from Asger Carlsen's grotesque, anatomical Photoshop monstrosities to Julian Charriere's "Future Fossil Spaces," 2014, an arrangement of abstract photos whose framing and hanging is as important as its content.

London's Ronchini Gallery has one of Untitled's most poised, cohesive presentations: a series of quasi-paintings by Rebecca Ward, many of which treat canvas like a textile meant to be plucked apart and deconstructed. Some of the delicate, tactile works are as flimsy and transparent as gauze, while others lay thick lines of paint into a bed of white wool; a minimalist wood sculpture jutting from one of the booth's walls adds a dissonant note while reflecting on the basic geometries of the paintings.

Other highlights include Denny Gallery, with crumpled graphite-on-paper and graphite-on-Mylar works by Lauren Seiden that trick the eye into thinking they might be rock or tortured metal.

Chicago's Andrew Rafacz Gallery has a delightful series of bite-sized Wendy Whites — square paintings bordered with gold-mirrored MDF — paired nicely with acrylic-on-handwoven-textile works by Samantha Bittman, their lines lovably imperfect and slightly askew. East Hampton gallery Halsey McKay has texturally complex abstract paintings by Steven Cox (one of the Artists to Watch in this month's issue of *Modern Painters*), as well as a massive painting (made using sunlight on fabric) at the fair's entrance by Chris Duncan, which recalls both the nature-based process of Sam Falls and the self-consciously hippy-dippy tie-dye vibe of Piotr Uklanski. And Los Angeles's Richard Heller Gallery has one of Untitled's most unexpected juxtapositions: works by Michelle Grabner paired with a large sculpture of an Afro-sporting woman in a glitter-dress by Devin Troy Strother, as well as two Strother paintings featuring hundreds of tiny faces floating in space. The circular bulk of the Strotherian Afro mirrors Grabner's tondos, and both artists are playing with notions of labor and hyper-repetitive markmaking.

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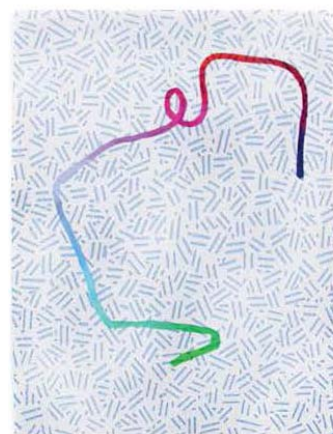
TUNICA Larissa Lockshin

BY: Antonia Marsh
April, 2014

LARISSA
LOCKSHIN



Arriving at recent Parson-graduate Larissa Lockshin's live-work studio, little abstract paintings are stacked by size from right-to-left along a white wall-edge. While Lockshin's practice might be restricted to painting, her choice of medium resists limitation. From colorful outbursts of wholesale printer ink, to crushed Micah, acrylic, oil stick, latex paint, enamel and chalk, her canvases contain a cacophony of sugary color. Incorporating a multitude of materials, she sheds the dated connotation that might accompany one material or another, allowing Lockshin to reach closer to her abstract objectives.



By framing her paintings either only on two opposite sides of the canvas, or with painted wood, Lockshin furthers her attempts to separate her artwork from sustaining what she believes to be a limiting categorization as purely painting. Founded out of a frustration with the emphasis in her undergraduate years at art school on performance and conceptual art, Lockshin insists that creating objects remains a prodigious priority. Not just images hung onto a wall, Lockshin's canvases reach outward and exist in the liminal space situated between painting and sculpture. Lockshin maintains her concern to create paintings that can exist as objects, and not just vessels for pictorial content. If, therefore, a wall-based artwork is to exist as an object in this way, does this collapse a distinction between painting and sculpture, or even suggest its ultimate futility? When asked to what extent she feels this distinction remains valid, Lockshin responds that while the art market still demands a distinction, perhaps brought about by a loss of the context in which an artwork exists brought on by image-sharing platforms; in relation to her practice, the distinction remains defunct.

Freeing her work from the pictorial constraints of painting, exhibition in the gallery space emphasizes the object-hood of Lockshin's artworks; separated from the walls either suspended from the ceiling or

freestanding. Deliberately devoid of particular content, Lockshin's abstractions therefore exist in their own context as their own individual units of display. The decision to delve into abstraction stems from a conviction that the extreme over-abundance of images we are confronted with in quotidian visual culture drains any value from the image itself. Consequently, in her attempts to raise the object value of her paintings, Lockshin chose to distance her works as far from a recognizable image as possible. Replacing image content with object-hood as her major priority signifies an attempt to frustrate the viewer, a response reflected in Lockshin's dissatisfaction with the perpetual conundrum for artists working since the Internet: how can artworks maintain value as physical objects rather than through their image content when they are most often viewed online? As if by mirroring the behavioral tropes of an image online might provide some kind of catharsis towards this problem, Lockshin insists that she seeks to create works outside of any context whatsoever.

Aside from these object-paintings, Lockshin continually collaborates with artist and friend Georgia Cronin on a series of latch-hook rugs. Varying in size and suspended on the wall either framed or unframed, these furry entities are the result of extended, almost torturous twenty-hour-plus sessions over numerous months,

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of hooking wool thread through netting. While this endurance denotes a feeling of discomfort in any viewer, the contrast of this emotion with the irresistible desire to stroke each tactile achievement is perplexing to say the least. As if through naïve wonder when faced with the largest rug piece, I instinctively turn a corner over to reveal the side flush with the wall, a state that apparently was considered a potential method of display. Accompanied by a list of sentences the artists composed together while working, when read aloud alongside these rugs, it becomes easy to enter into a not dissimilar trance-like state to that Lockshin and Cronin found themselves in:

“The rugs are about silence. The rugs are about time. The rugs are about intersections. The rugs are about connections. The rugs are about softness. The rugs are about hooking with purpose. The rugs are about sitting for an extended period of time. The rugs are about craft. The rugs are about journeys. The rugs are about learning... The rugs are about cutting strips, controlling your physical movement. The rugs are about reaching down and smoothing over. The rugs are about aging. The rugs are about making your eyes hurt.”

The repetitive nature of this text, twinned with the recurring action of hooking each piece of thread through becomes almost performative, as if chanting a mantra or manifesto qualifying their draining labor. As well as denoting the core aims of creating these rugs, The List equally makes evident precisely what the works are not about. Through the absence of engagement with certain discourses, namely theories of domesticity and

female labor, it becomes clear that Lockshin and Cronin are deliberately avoiding association with the dated connotations that link craft and womanhood. When asked about these potential implications, Lockshin agrees that weaving can unfortunately prevail as an inherently female activity in the popular mindset, however the rug works enabled her to cathartically draw attention to this discrepancy precisely through their lack of engagement with it. The List chimes in: “The rugs are a question of artist or artisan, ” and this point remains crucial to Lockshin: what might be considered painting or sculpture for a male artist, might still be considered craft for a female artist. For Lockshin and Cronin, the difference between the art object and this craft object definitely lies in gender historically: an associative trope that requires imminent redefinition.

This desire to articulate her concerns through a definite clarity in what she rejects, ignores and abandons, almost as if a conceptual process of elimination, recurs in the impetus behind Lockshin’s individual practice. Often beginning from a lucid awareness of how she does not intend her paintings (or objects) to exist, Lockshin seems to work backwards, where what began as limitations, become opportunities, and vice versa. What lingers after our visit is particularly clear: for Lockshin, exploring a balance between the material and technological limitations - whether related to the object-hood of a painting or the context in which it exists – propels her practice forward and into a realm where dated associations and categorizations are no longer useful or productive in defining an artist’s work. III