

Art Basel Miami Beach: the “Made in Italy” Seduces

Mila Tenaglia (December 30, 2013)



It ended successfully the annual appointment of one of the most important fairs of modern and contemporary art: Art Basel Miami Beach and Miami Design. More than 200 galleries and 4000 artists from all continents: Europe, United States, Africa, Asia, Oceania. The Italian galleries, Street Artists and the Made in Italy in the fields of art, design, fashion and much more were very well represented

From December 5th to December 8th, the capital city of Florida hosted the 12th Edition of [Art Basel Miami Beach](#) [2]. Once again the fair confirms itself as one of the most awaited events amongst art lovers, collectors, critics but also among those who were participating for the first time. Indeed, a great space was reserved to young emergent talents and to Street Art.

Miami, with its amazing climate, and recognized meeting point as well as an important international cultural junction, embraced the world of the arts, which actually is a melting pot of manifestations linked together.

The art Fair became through the years a very good display for Italian Design. [Cappellini](#) [3], [Kartell](#) [4], [Molteni & C](#) [5], [Calligaris](#) [6] are only some of the Made in Italy brands that have achieved resounding success. But also the unavoidable presence of Fiat Group, which was there with Maserati,



whose cars are the dream of entire generations all over the world. Also Lavazza, with its very original stands, was there with its Gold Line of Italian Coffee, a landmark of the sector.

Among the multitude of galleries selected this year, the Italian ones were 11. Just to mention some of them, there were: Alfonso Artiaco, historical Neapolitan gallerist, with works by masters of the lowly, conceptual and minimalist American art; Lia Rumma, another historical gallery with headquarters in both Naples and Milan that has a roster of outstanding artists (Marina Abramovic, Vanessa Beecroft, Alberto Burri, Enrico Castellani, Gino De Dominicis, William Kentridge, Joseph Kosuth, Thomas Ruff, Ettore Spalletti and many others).

But this is not all. You just have to move a few kilometers from the South Beach island to find yourself in a completely different scenario, suitable for all: the Wynwood District. Walking around this neighborhood in the heart of Miami is a unique experience: artists from all over the world painting gigantic walls and even using cranes in order to paint them with brushes and colors and shades of any kind. The other side of the show are the exhibitors who admire and get to know Miami and its warmth.

Everyone shows their own culture and ideas, bringing a piece from their country or a homage. Just think of Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa and Nobel Prize winner who died on Thursday December 5th, which was the opening day of Art Basel. Indeed, there were murals dedicated to this man, who left an indelible mark within politics and within the popular American culture, especially because of his battles for the rights and the liberation of his people. From morning to evening this forge of new styles and cultural junctions were mixed between private collections, artists' studies, galleries, show rooms and boutiques, staying opened until late in the blocks between NW 20 and NW 36th Street.

One of the artists that I had the chance to interview was [Federico Massa AKA Cruz](#) [7], an artist from Milan who has been living in New York for several years. Set designer and Mural artist, he was sent to Miami by two organizations of the Big Apple to bring and project his artistic vision on the walls of Miami.

He tells his personal growth. “I was tired of the static situation I was experiencing in my city, I was trying to find my own path. I did exhibitions in Milan and in Europe in general. After a while I felt I was ready for a different international feedback. At least I had to try.”

Always having been interested in the international context and in the art of New York, he was able to express and create a non indifferent space that brought him to realize last summer a wall of epic dimensions in the heart of Williamsburg.

“This spring, for example, I created an installation inside a container for the launch of the new bottle of Heineken at the Brooklyn Navyyard of New York. They selected five artists for each borough and I represented BK. I was the only Italian so it was a great satisfaction for me.”

Fede Cruz with his art brings back an image of a society under the appearance of animals using bright colors inspired by Mexican culture. “Besides the fact that Street Art has a larger market in New York, here it is considered a real form of contemporary art and in my opinion, the difference between Italy and New York lies in the meritocracy. There are opportunities and if you demonstrate that you are valid in what you do people will give you credit. This is New York.”

Il [Centre-fuge Public Art Project](#) [8], a project of urban art in the Lower East Side, invited him to paint a wall at Little Havana, a historical neighborhood near Wynwood: from sprays to paint brushes, Fede Cruz gives to the wall, previously gray, a strong symbolic meaning: a whale eats a squid on a background representing a “bombing” of darts, also with a revisited representation of the logo of a big oil company, while one of his characters puts fuel on the squid. This is a recall of one of the most severe environmental disasters that happened in the Gulf of Mexico.

The second wall, before going back to New York, was sponsored by the [New York Street Gallery](#) [9], a little reality recently born in Brooklyn. The project, created by Dariel Martinez and the Italian video maker [Daniela Croci AKA Zoe](#) [10], have just evolved within a gallery with the objective of promoting and giving exposure to artists and musicians.



Two big eyes, as if they were embroidered by Federico Cruz, painted using sprays and brushes on a big canvas, look at you and they have a jaunty gaze, that makes you smile, that enchant you. The colors used are very bright and perfectly mixed up with the limpid sky of the warm winter of Miami.

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