

BLOUIN ARTINFO FAIRS

Pulse Beats on With Strong Sales at the Middle-Market Satellite Fair

by [Sarah P. Hanson](#)

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Yigal Ozeri's Untitled; Olya
(Courtesy Yigal Ozeri)

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Pulse Miami, now in its ninth year, unveiled its 2013 edition at the Ice Palace near Miami's Wynwood arts district on December 5. The brunch preview welcomed 3,000 visitors, including international collectors, advisers, and curators from the Carnegie Museum, the Peabody Essex, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the San Antonio Museum. Within the first few hours, a handful of galleries were reporting six-figure sales.

Stalwarts like Galerie Stefan Roepke, Von Lintel Gallery, and Staley-Wise were joined by new exhibitors including Maserre (+R) Galeria, of Barcelona; Vertice Gallery, from Lima; Sanatorium, of Istanbul; and Contemporary by Angela Li, of Hong Kong, reflecting Pulse's roughly 50/50 split between international and domestic galleries.

This year's fair comes with a few notable changes: first to the layout, which offers slightly wider aisles and more circulation, and also to a streamlined schedule, with the organizers deciding to forgo events earlier in the week in favor of a VIP brunch preview. "Thursday brunch has always worked well for us, so we just went with that," said fair director **Cornell DeWitt**. But he dismissed the notion that the mushrooming array of satellite fairs this year might detract from Pulse's core audience. "We essentially invented this market segment when the fair was founded in 2005," he said.

That middle-market segment proved a sweet spot for bargain-hunting established collectors and newbies alike, with works under \$100,000 moving briskly in the fair's first hours. Amid a champagne toast, newcomer Zemack Contemporary, of Tel Aviv, sold "Untitled; Olya," an arresting portrait fresh from the studio of photorealist painter **Yigal Ozeri**, for \$50,000.

At Jerome Zodo Contemporary of Milan, **Alexander Brighetti's** shiny black bone sculptures covered in a ferrous liquid and animated by magnets — such as "Shiver," 2013, where the liquid coursed up and down a spinal column laid in a vitrine — drew many curious onlookers; a skull sold at \$20,000.

Other fair favorites included a deeply discomfiting sculpture by **Patricia Piccinini** at Hosfelt Gallery's booth — owner **Todd Hosfelt** pointed out that each of the lifelike hairs on the fleshy wad had been applied by hand. He was one of several dealers to feature secondary-market material alongside gallery artists; he also placed a **David Hammons** basketball drawing for an undisclosed price in the six-figure range.

Dealers seemed upbeat about the harvest from the preview. New York photography dealer **James Danziger** said sales had been "more than good," and that he had placed several C-prints by **Hendrik Kerstens**, inspired by 17th-century Dutch portraiture, in the \$15,000 to \$36,000 range.

New media art specialist **Bryce Wolkowitz** had sold six from an edition of eight digital pieces depicting rolling waves by **Yorgo Alexopolous** at \$11,000 each, as well as a graffiti-inspired **José Parla** collage for \$25,000 and a handful of lit-up book sculptures by **Aaron Kang** for \$5,500. "We've had incredibly active, great collectors come through," Wolkowitz said.

As a rule, the art at Pulse tends more to the beautiful than the challenging, but even so, there were few overtly political pieces this year. One exception was the Malay artist **Yee I-Lann's** giclee prints combining postcolonial theory with visual panache at Tyler Rollins. Another was South African "visual activist" **Zanele Muholi's** arresting gelatin-silver portraits of African women and transgender youth, flying off the wall of Yancey Richardson's booth at \$5,000 a pop (Muholi will have a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 2015.)

Fresh finds included C-prints of junkyards and industrial worktables by Argentine photographer **Guillermo Srodek-Hart**, which displayed a surefooted sense of the tension between order and chaos, and sold for \$4,500 each at Kuckei + Kuckei, Berlin; and neo-constructivist paintings and sculptures by **Oscar Rodriguez-Graham** at Arroniz Arte Contemporaneo, of Mexico City.

The third Pulse Prize, awarded to an artist exhibited in the solo-presentation Impulse section of the fair, went to **Cristina De Middel**, for her "Afronauts" photo series. The exhibiting gallery, Black Ship in New York, had sold more than two-dozen of the prints by Friday afternoon.

Cristina De Middel, "Botonguru," 2012 / Courtesy the artist and PULSE Contemporary Art Fair

