

SEAN KELLY

Crow, Kelly. "Five Artists to Watch at This Week's Art Basel Miami Beach," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 2015.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Five Artists to Watch at This Week's Art Basel Miami Beach



Galleri Nicolai Wallner is asking \$60,000 for Jose Dávila's 'Joint Effort,' a trio of stone slabs joined by ratchet straps. The Mexican artist said he is exploring ideas involving gravity and tension using ordinary materials. © JOSE DÁVILA/GALLERI NICOLAI WALLNER

At Art Basel Miami Beach this week, jet-set collectors like Abdullah Al-Turki from Saudi Arabia and Alia Al-Senussi from Libya commingled with celebrities like singer Alicia Keys, director Brett Ratner and actress Hilary Swank.

The arty, casual environment, which serves as a counterpoint to New York's high-stakes fall auctions, provides collectors an opportunity to spot fresh art trends and discover up-and-coming artists—including the five listed below—who could potentially turn blue chip one day.

Although prices for works at the main fair, which runs through Sunday, stretch to \$18 million for an Andy Warhol portrait of starlet Marilyn Monroe, the majority of offerings hover below seven figures. Some artworks in the roughly 20 satellite fairs fanning across the city can be bought for as little as \$1,000.

That's good news for collectors keeping a wary eye on the art market overall, which appears to be hitting a plateau after several seasons of skyrocketing prices. During Wednesday's VIP preview, dealers said collectors felt comfortable splurging on pieces under \$500,000, but booths weren't selling out in a blur like they were several years ago. One dealer said she was "freaking out" after failing to sell a single piece on the first day.

Some dealers braced for a slowdown by offering artists who seem like safe bets: The mangled sculptures and rainbow-color canvases of Frank Stella, who has a current retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, popped up in at least five booths, as did Mel Bochner's cheery word paintings. New York's Pace Gallery had a hit with Louise Nevelson, a sculptor it has represented since

1963. The gallery sold 16 of her black assemblages for between \$75,000 and \$1 million apiece on Wednesday.

New York's David Zwirner Gallery also sold mainstay artist Sherrie Levine's new bronze sculpture of a "Beach Ball after Lichtenstein" for \$450,000, and Swiss gallery Hauser & Wirth sold Paul McCarthy's black walnut sculpture, "White Snow, Dopey, Black Red White," for \$1.5 million.

Dealer Peter Freeman said a U.S. museum had also put a hold on artist Jimmie Durham's \$1 million "Still Life with Xitle and Spirit" from 2007, a 9.5-ton volcanic rock sitting atop a crushed Chrysler sedan. (The artist painted googly eyes and a grin on one section of the boulder.)

Popular themes this time around included natural history—with specimen-like works featuring feathers, bones, stingrays and painted rocks—as well as works that rely on digital gadgets like 3-D printers.

Germano Celant, a curator who helped select pieces for Swiss gallery Gmurzynska's salon-style booth, said it's difficult—but still possible—to make artistic discoveries in this saturated marketplace. His litmus test? "If it bothers me or it disturbs me, I stop. Then it becomes interesting," he said.

Here's a closer look at five younger artists who drew raves from collectors and curators at the main fair.

JOSE DÁVILA

Fifteen minutes. That's all the time it took Wednesday for Mexico's Galeria OMR to sell four pieces by Guadalajara-based artist Jose Dávila, known for his wry reinterpretations of his artistic heroes like Roy Lichtenstein. In "Untitled (M-maybe)," Mr. Dávila recreated one of the Pop master's comic-style paintings of a woman—but then Mr. Dávila cut out the woman's face, thereby making her absence more intriguing. It sold for \$35,000. New York's Sean Kelly Gallery and Copenhagen's Galleri Nicolai Wallner also sold two of Mr. Dávila's \$45,000 sculptures of tilted marble slabs held upright by ratchet straps, a configuration that evokes Richard Serra on the fly.