

## The New York Times



DAVID GOLDMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Clifton Childree's installation "Miami Swamp Adventure," a rickety installation resembling a rotting silent-movie theater, at Pulse on Pier 40.

## Toplessness and Taxidermy in a Bottoming Market

As a newly sobered art world sizes up this weekend's Armory Show, many are wondering about the fates of smaller fairs with catchier names. What prospects do they have in a crippled economy? A winnowing has already occurred: at least three of last year's Armory-week fairs have opted out of the festivities.

**ART**
**KAREN ROSENBERG**

Those that remain are trying out some new strategies. Volta, which shares a parent company with the Armory, strives to be seen as its younger, hipper sibling (something like the Art State-

ments section of solo-artist booths at Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach). Pulse, in its most diverse incarnation yet, is banking on globalization. And Scope supplements its accessible, pop-kitschy wares with a packed special-events calendar of music, screenings and parties.

Everywhere artists were mindful of recession economics. At Volta, Alejandro Diaz's black-marker epigrams on cardboard could be had for \$99.99. At Scope, artists hawked T-shirts and other multiples priced from \$5 to \$250 in a separate pavilion marked "Cheap, Fast and Out of Control."

In previous seasons wry deconstructions of the fair environment, taking a buzz saw to the walls of the booth, for example, or leaving it mostly empty, were common sights. This time dealers showed tidy installations of paintings and photographs, mostly of modest proportions. "Small is the new big," a wall text at Scope proclaimed.

The solo projects at Volta, in particular, exhibited a slightly queasy self-consciousness of art as a commodity. "Age of Anxiety" is the pre-emptively clever

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theme of this year's fair, which was organized by the returning team of Amanda Coulson and Christian Viveros-Faune.

One piece raising eyebrows was a sculpture by Fernando Mastrangelo, at the booth of the Los Angeles gallery Rhys Mendes. A white figure of a Colombian coca farmer resting on a mirror-tiled floor in an all-black setting, it was said to be made of cocaine.

At the Belgian gallery Hoet Bekaert, a topless woman enticed browsers to dig for buried treasure — hidden necklaces — in an installation of brightly colored thread clusters by the Thai artist Surasi Kusolwong. Nearby at Haas & Fischer, Joshua Callaghan's Model-T Ford, wrought from brass lamps and bedposts, competed for attention.

Some booths didn't need a gimmick to stand out. In this category were paintings of women with nimbuses of dark hair and the stylized features of figures in Persian miniature painting, by the Iranian artist Hayv Kahraman, at Thierry Goldberg.

Continuing through Sunday are the Pulse Art Fair New York, Pier 40, 353 West Street, at West Houston Street, West Village, pulse-art.com; Scope New York, Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center, scope-art.com; and Volta NY, 7 West 34th Street, Manhattan, voltashow.com; and the Armory Show itself, at Piers 92 and 94, 12th Avenue at 55th Street, Clinton; thearmoryshow.com.

ONLINE: SLIDE SHOW

Images from three of the ancillary exhibitions organized around this weekend's Armory Show: nytimes.com/design

Celebrities were another marketing ploy. Galerie Brigitte Schenk showed watercolors of creepy figures with gas masks and guns capably painted by the musician Marilyn Manson. At Scope a painting signed Yu Ling, at Eli Klein Fine Art, was revealed to be the work of the actress Lucy Liu. Intentionally or not, Ms Liu's prank mocked the

Fairs with gimmicks, including bare breasts and antlers.

demand, in recent seasons, for undiscovered Chinese contemporary artists.

(Fledgling fairs dot the perimeter: Bridge, in the Tunnel nightclub space on 27th Street; Pool, in the Wyndham Hotel on 24th Street; and Fountain, on a boat docked at Pier 66. Although the art is strictly entry level, these fairs have the benefit of proximity to Chelsea galleries.)

Scattered throughout Pulse are galleries from Beijing and Shanghai, but other urban centers also vie for attention: Moscow, Manila, Montreal. Most are fluent in

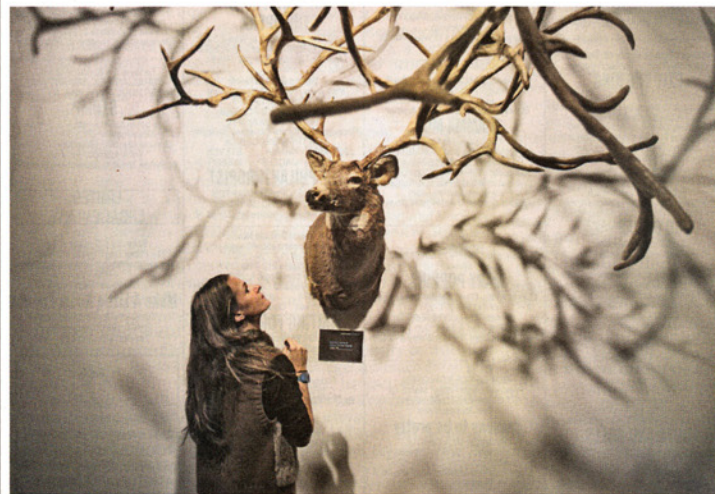
the language of international contemporary art: blurry Photo Realist painting, staged and digitally enhanced photography, crafty crocheted sculptures festooned with sequins and bric-a-brac.

There are also special Pulse-commissioned projects like the Miami artist Clifton Childree's "Miami Swamp Adventure," a rickety installation resembling a rotting silent-movie theater. Inside is a film about Miami real-estate scams at the end of the 19th century.

Solo-artist booths, a trend that clearly extended beyond Volta, stood out at both Pulse and Scope. At Pulse, Mark Moore of Santa Monica, Calif., devoted a large booth to Alison Schulnik's heavily impastoed paintings of hobos and clowns. At Scope, the Brooklyn gallery Jonathan Levine had a winning installation by Camille Rose Garcia: wallpaper, paintings and pillows all adorned with a street-art version of the Disney character Cruella de Vil.

Scope seemed to be in the grip of the dubious urban-frontier trend in décor. Specially commissioned installations at the entrances to both tents, by Maya Hayuk and Kristin Schiele, evoked cabins and shanties. Inside the main tent two pieces of taxidermy art were prominent: Marc Séguin's bald eagle and a deer head with exaggerated, resin-sculpted antlers by Carolyn Salas and Adam Parker Smith.

In the design world this stuff is old news — but in the art world, it's evidence of a new survivalism.



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"Trophy," an installation by Carolyn Salas and Adam Parker Smith at Scope in Damrosch Park.