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by AiA Staff_12/01/09

Having weathered a brutal economic year, the art world heads to Miami this month for some sun, sand and, hopefully, sales. Some fairs are offering premium booths at last year's prices, or have rejiggered fees, downsized or relocated to offset costs, while others, bucking the trend, have expanded. And as usual, the city's cultural institutions are rallying to present a number of noncommercial offerings.

THE MAIN EVENT

Art Basel Miami Beach [Dec. 2-6] has 275 exhibitors-up from last year-showing the work of more than 2,000 artists. Larger booths and a redesigned layout promise to make for a less rat-in-a-maze experience in the Miami Beach Convention Center.

The former beachy component of the fair, Art Positions, for which select young dealers installed works in shipping containers, has been brought indoors this year and given standard booths in a special section. Among the 23 galleries (and artists) are New York's Sara Meltzer (Sarah Cain) and James Fuentes (Agathe Snow), London's Sutton Lane (Reena Spaulings, Marcel Broodthaers) and Tokyo's Mizuma Art Gallery (Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba).

Sun worshippers looking for a professional excuse to leave the convention center can visit the oceanfront environment commissioned by Creative Time and designed by artist Pae White. The pavilion will host daily panel discussions, performances, and film and video programs. In conjunction with ABMB, Miami's top private collectors-Craig Robins, Martin Margulies, Don and Mera Rubell, Ella Cisneros, Debra and Dennis Scholl, and Monica and Javier Mora, among others-are continuing the tradition of offering tours of their homes and viewing spaces.