

Art Basel Miami Beach

Booth H7, 6–9 December 2018



Milton Avery, *Seaside*, 1931
Oil on canvas. 81.3 x 101.6 cm, 32 x 40 in
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Victoria Miro is delighted to participate in Art Basel Miami Beach (Booth H7) with works by Doug Aitken, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Milton Avery, Ilse D'Hollander, Yayoi Kusama, Alice Neel, Jorge Pardo, Tal R, Do Ho Suh, Sarah Sze, and Adriana Varejão.

In his iconic text works such as *Vision*, 2016, **Doug Aitken** reclaims the commercial landscape of signage in order to underscore the cultural potency of language. The artist has described his sculptural text pieces as possessing a 'toughness' that echoes the abbreviated nature of much contemporary communication. At the same time, these works move beyond language, breaking down into abstraction – in the case of *Vision* its mirrored surface causes a fractured, endlessly changing viewing experience. Terse, yet slippery in meaning, *Vision* functions as a provocative statement. As Aitken says, 'I wanted the viewer to be the subject of the work, but I also wanted a kind of disrupted vision of yourself.'

Drawing on her Nigerian upbringing and her immigration to America, where she now lives with her American husband, **Njideka Akunyili Crosby** conjures the complexity of contemporary experience and offers a powerful perspective on the African diaspora. In *Tea Time in New Haven, Enugu*, 2013, ideas of home, hospitality and generosity mingle with thoughts about cultural connections in a broader sense. Indeed, New Haven is both a district of the artist's birthplace of Enugu, Nigeria – where she was born in 1983 – and the town in Connecticut in which her alma mater, Yale University, is located. For the artist, the table top laden with familial and other possessions, products, and foodstuffs, plays host to a range of visual cues about shifting cultural, geographical and socio-economic circumstances, whereby vessels and other objects carry meaning and significance and become a form of surrogate portraiture. There are references to a tea culture derived from British colonialism. Christianity, another colonial import, is alluded to in the loaf of Will of God Special Bread in the foreground of the image. The table is set as if awaiting guests, yet the room is consciously – palpably – empty.

The presentation features a number of works from the 1930s and 1950s by **Milton Avery** (1885–1965) united by the theme of water. Throughout his career, water held an intense attraction and served as a source of creative inspiration for Avery, who was drawn to the challenge of capturing the ever-changing effects of light on rivers, lakes and seas – in drawings and watercolours completed before the

subject during the spring and summer months, and canvases, many of which were worked on in his studio during winters back in New York. A number of works were created in the 1930s, a period in which Avery spent numerous summers in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in the company of Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, for whom he was a decisive influence and a guiding light. Other works were completed during the 1950s, a period in which Avery, Rothko and Gottlieb rekindled their friendship in Provincetown, on Cape Cod, and where Avery further refined his visual vocabulary while pushing his imagery to the edge of abstraction. Many consider Avery's paintings of water to be among his finest works; indeed, Clement Greenberg wrote in 1957 that 'I do see him far more often at his highest, broadest, strongest in his landscapes and seascapes.' Of special relevance to the presentation at Miami is *Grazing Brahmins*, 1952, a Florida motif inspired by Avery's winters as a fellow at the Research Studio in Maitland in 1949 and 1950. While Avery delighted in much of Florida's flora and fauna, as well as its lakes, rivers and swamps, its majestic white Brahmin cows and bulls were a favourite subject.

In her short life, **Ilse D'Hollander** (1968–1997) created an intelligent, sensual and highly resonant body of work that continues to find receptive new audiences in the decades since her death. Among her more abstract – and high-key – paintings, the works on view nonetheless display a signature approach to medium and process. D'Hollander drew on her impressions of place, particularly the Flemish countryside where she spent the last, highly productive years of her life, to produce paintings and works on paper that reveal a masterful command of graphic and painterly touch. D'Hollander's work can be read as a series of accumulated impressions, adjustments and layerings – visual records of the artist's thought processes that capture, hold and, often, divert attention. Monochrome or near monochrome fields might be interrupted by blocks of colour; geometric volumes that read as natural or manmade interventions. These in turn might be punctuated by streaks or strokes of paint – applied with a brush or sometimes the artist's hands. It is this sense of crossing and re-crossing the border between outer and inner, actual and symbolic worlds, the eye and the mind, that gives D'Hollander's work its unique presence and invites prolonged consideration. It stands as a testament to the concentrated act of painting and the equally concentrated act of looking.

Yayoi Kusama's *DREAM I DREAMED LAST NIGHT*, 2010, is an important work from her *My Eternal Soul* series, a magnum opus of paintings which the artist has worked on with characteristic energy over the past decade. This painting featured prominently in the artist's 2012 retrospective, which was held at Tate Modern in London and subsequently toured to the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. *DREAM I DREAMED LAST NIGHT* is at once startlingly innovative and classically Kusama, its monochrome field abounding with imagery including eyes, faces in profile and other more indeterminate forms, including the dots with which the artist is synonymous, contained within cell-like circular forms. It evokes worlds at once microscopic and macroscopic. Also on view is *FLOWERS THAT BLOOM NOW*, 2017, a stainless steel sculpture painted to glossy perfection with urethane paint. Straddling a line between nature and exuberant artifice, flowers have long been an important part of Kusama's art. At once simplified and fantastical, these forms, their surfaces covered with polka-dotted planes of vivid colour, are designed to be viewed from multiple angles, encouraging audiences to move around them.

Alice Neel (1900–1984) is represented by two works: *Sabrina*, 1976, and *Mary Beebe*, 1975, both important examples of her mature style from the mid-1970s when, coinciding with her growing reputation in the art world, Neel's work grew more luminous and experimental. While candour and empathy are hallmarks of Neel's art throughout her career her portraits of children, such as *Sabrina*, are especially expressive of intimacy and compassion, as seen through the prism of her own experience as a mother. *Mary Beebe* depicts the curator Mary L. Beebe, who organised an exhibition of Neel's work at Portland Art Museum, Oregon, the year the portrait was painted and has, since 1981, been the Director of the Stuart Collection at the University of California, San Diego. The painting conveys an especially lively encounter between two strong, creative women.

Celebrated for his use of vibrant colours, eclectic patterns and natural and industrial materials, **Jorge Pardo** has since the 1990s drawn on the historical intersections of fine art, architecture and design to create highly intricate and hybridised objects that fuse aspects of painting and sculpture. The presentation includes a new work which incorporates hand painting, laser engraving, LED light, figurative imagery and complex abstract patterning. Also on view are a number of recent, unique *Untitled* chandeliers by the artist that offer an extended consideration of physicality and immateriality, the visible and invisible. While each lamp possesses sculptural form, sometimes

recalling natural phenomena such as animal and plant life, the light they emit, variously controlled and directed, is less tangible. This is experienced in the spaces between each work and the surrounding architecture – an irregular play of light and shadow which itself might be altered by viewer’s movements through the space.

Tal R’s *Bar Farao*, 2017, is from his ongoing *Sexshops* series of canvases, in which the artist brings a quizzical eye to the unconscious actions of seduction, desire and gratification. Largely devoid of people, the paintings imply meetings – perhaps between viewer and a potential object of desire – that take place beyond the façade, and beyond the surface of the canvas. Each doorway in these intoxicating paintings functions as both a physical and metaphorical threshold.

Meticulously replicating the architecture, fixtures and appliances of the places in which he has lived and worked, **Do Ho Suh’s** one-to-one scale translucent fabric structures, of which *Specimen Series: Refrigerator, Unit 2, 348 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011, USA*, 2015, and *Boiler Room: London Studio*, 2015, are resonant examples, give form to ideas about migration, transience and shifting identities. For Suh, home is not only a physical domain but also a metaphorical and psychological space. The display also includes a number of *Rubbing/Loving* works created at the STPI Creative Workshop in Singapore, in which rubbings of interior spaces and everyday objects are created in a process that discloses and memorialises details of the artist’s surroundings. Suh has visited the STPI Creative Workshop, an internationally renowned resource for artists working with print and paper, several times a year over the past ten years. Focusing on objects, fixtures and fittings attached to the walls, the works in this presentation attest to Suh’s close relationship with STPI and commemorate his time there. Touch and its repetition is a key aspect of Suh’s *Rubbing/Loving* works. The artist has often drawn parallels between architectural space and the body, and in these works the paper functions as an epidermis – a second or surrogate skin – that bears the impression of his own touch: pastel, applied with the fingertips in a gesture the artist describes as a ‘caress’.

Sarah Sze’s *Afterimage* works consist of paintings integrated within and amongst a constellation of their own archival references and materials, revealing the processes of their making and questioning how meaning is ascribed to individual works of art. The title, referring to the effect where an image continues to appear in our vision after exposure to the original image has ceased, alludes to the filmic idea of the persistence of vision, where the afterimage fills in the gaps between film frames, setting still images into motion in our perception and memory.

Since the mid-1990s, **Adriana Varejão** has explored two juxtaposing motifs – flesh and tiles (*azulejos*) – drawing on the decorative tradition of her native Brazil to examine the confluence of cultures and underlying tensions: between beauty and violence, geometric order and the visceral body. Blurring the boundaries between painting and sculpture, the artist’s *Meat Ruins*, such as the recent works *Ruína de Charque Brasília*, 2018, and *Ruína Modernista I*, 2018, incorporate sections of trompe-l’oeil tilework that contain masses of material applied and painted to evoke bloodied meat. For Varejão, flesh occupies a symbolic position as a mediator of history, and in its ability to stir both seduction and repulsion. Resembling marble, the veins of fat and flesh in these new *Ruins* make explicit the parallels in Varejão’s art between architecture and the body, these fleshy, architectonic ruins laying bare the vulnerability of bodies, buildings and even entire cultures.

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