

Serious Business at the Miami Project

by Ashton Cooper

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Fredericks & Freiser booth at The Miami Project
(Photo by Ashton Cooper)

The sophomore edition of the **Miami Project**, which is situated right next door to the behemoth **Art Miami** tent complex in the city's Wynwood District, kicked off with a throng of collectors crowding to get into the VIP preview on Tuesday night. Created by the teams behind **Texas Contemporary** and the **artMRKTs** of San Francisco and the Hamptons, the relatively small fair provided a welcome respite for many from the maze-like fair nearby.

The Miami Project is host to 60 galleries, including first timers **Freight+Volume**, **Yossi Milo Gallery**, and **Ryan Lee Gallery** from New York and **Western Project** from Los Angeles. And a large number of exhibitors from last year have returned, including New Yorkers **Morgan Lehman Gallery**, **Fredericks & Freiser**, and **Lesley Heller Workspace**. "We like the layout," said Lesley Heller. "It's more open, less claustrophobic than a lot of the other fairs."

Fredericks & Freiser, which also has a booth at **Untitled** this year, positioned its presentation here as a showcase for several of its artists, including fair favorite **John Wesley** and a few up-and-comers. “One of the nice things about this fair is that we can take a young artist like **Lucas Foglia**, who hasn’t really shown very much before, and debut him at the fair,” said Andrew Freiser.

San Francisco’s **Catharine Clark Gallery** focused its booth around the theme of portraiture, with **Nina Katchadourian**’s oddball video “In a Room Full of Strangers,” in which she sings the Bee Gees’ “Nights on Broadway”) in an airplane bathroom, as the centerpiece. “I like the degree to which the gallerists in this fair curate their booths,” said Clark. “I feel like I’m working adjacent to galleries that are my peers. Everybody’s really careful about how they’re presenting work and it feels thoughtful in a way that is often missing from a lot of fairs. Commerce, we all need it, but at the end of the day it’s really about the ideas and how they’re manifest in the work.”

Fair co-founder **Max Fishko** said a focus on content is what sets the fair apart. “A lot of people fall into the trap of trying to make fancier bells and whistles,” said Fishko who runs the fair with co-founder **Jeffrey Wainhouse**. “There’s a tendency, particularly in this marketplace, to try to do these tie-ins. The reality is, this *is* a marketplace. We are here to do business and there’s a seriousness about this particular fair that comes from the fact that we leave out a lot of that stuff. We’re here to work.”