

ARTLURKER

A MIAMI BASED CONTEMPORARY ART NEWSLETTER / BLOG

The Collabo Show

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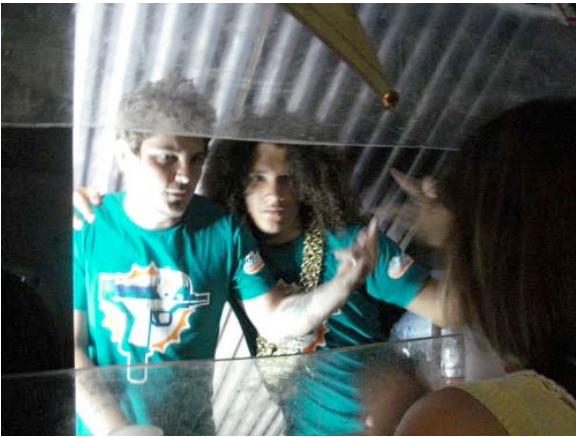
Organized by Miami artists Bhakti Baxter and Jason Hedges, The Collabo Show, the third in a series of biannual collaboration themed group shows that began in 2005 – the first being *Co Operate* at Bas Fisher Invitational, the last being *Confluence* at Fredric Snitzer Gallery – is divergent from its predecessors in the respect that this highly anticipated labor intensive smorgasbord is, at least this time around, a one-night-only event. Notwithstanding the parochial airs surrounding a city that on one hand boasts status as a burgeoning art center and on the other manages to show a not insignificant portion of its artists under one roof, much less for one night only, we proceed to review this exhibition with the assumption that such events are a rarefied privilege of, if not an outwardly progressive community, then at the very least a diverse and tightly knit one.



As with previous collaborative shows from the Baxter/Hedges think tank last night's exhibition held at 85 NW 71st street in a warehouse owned by Miami Spaces demonstrated Miami's artistic virility. However, unlike previous collaborative shows, specifically *Confluence* (2007) at Fredric Snitzer Gallery where works by Miami luminaries were expediently hawked by the copious benefactors and would-be profiteers that breezed around aghast at the presence of Bert Rodriguez raw penis, this years show, located in a warehouse space as opposed to a commercial gallery, drew a comparatively low-brow crowd and by association appeared to turn very little if any profit. But from what we understand of these collaboration shows they are not about making money – so much is abundantly clear – so what then is affected and what does last night's event suggest of Miami arts and future such happenings?



Unexpectedly, whilst *The Collabo Show* was almost certainly more about spectacle and festivity than art work, it inadvertently revealed a pervasive and, depending on which side your bread is buttered, a sad truth that would seem to be an unavoidable stigma of geography. For as much as we strive to counterbalance the commonly held view that Miami is a party destination with the propagation of culture, the overwhelming and in certain circumstances suffocating enthusiasm that Miami's art crowd has for revelry is indicative of a mob hopelessly fixated on good times.



The fact that art is now the excuse, that high culture has, at least in some parts of town, supplanted club culture or even volleyball is largely irrelevant. At openings there are Dj's and bars and throngs of people who whether invested in the arts or not are too busy socializing to pay attention to the work. Usually this is not so much of an issue as one can always go back to a show after an opening, but when a show is open for one night only and filled with work made with that in mind then the event overshadows the notion of exhibition and we would do well to question whether something is being overlooked or what set of priorities are predominant. In this respect the art work, save for evidencing the wonderful camaraderie of Miami's art community, is rendered irrelevant, the event itself is the statement, a new business model. It is presumed that Art Basel did wonders for this city, but in reality, in addition to making art more about money and less about art, the fair served to galvanized the party destination status that anyone who is seriously trying make work is currently trapped under, silently drowning like a seal beneath ice.



Whatever you thought of the show, and whatever parts of this text are accentuated by your biases, the simple fact remains that when left to its devices this is what Miami art can be. By being honest, by allowing artists to develop their methodologies and by existing beyond the confines of an institution this collaboration show succeeded in encapsulating the authentic, yet ever changing essence of Miami's art community, which apart from developing its own brand of exhibition is currently finding fertile ground beyond Wynwood.