

Palm Beach Daily News

THE SHINY SHEET®



Damian ELWES
Picasso's Painting Studio in Cannes, 2015
acrylic on canvas
66 x 66 inches



Damian ELWES
Matisse's Studio, Collioure, 2005-2015
acrylic on canvas
66 x 66 inches

Art Miami and Context entice visitors with 179 international galleries

By Jan Sjostrom, Daily News Arts Editor
December 3, 2015

Stepping into the Art Miami and Context art fairs is a little like falling into one of Chul Hyun Ahn's LED light-box sculptures. The sculptures, displayed at C. Grimaldis Gallery in Art Miami, create three-dimensional spaces with abstract geometric shapes that seem to extend into infinity.

Art Miami's 123 galleries and the 56 booths in its more cutting edge sister fair Context don't quite add up to infinity, but it might seem so if you try to take in all the art. Chul Hyun Ahn's work, which was displayed in a darkened section of Grimaldis' booth, offered a soothing break from the bright lights and crowded aisles at the preview Tuesday in Miami.

In recent years, the South Korean-born, Baltimore-based artist has branched out from white lights into color. Among the color works was *Two Circles*, in which shifting colors enlivened two tunnel shapes receding into darkness.

At Modernism Gallery, Damian Elwes takes viewers on a different kind of journey. He extensively researched the studios of modernist icons, such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, to create homage paintings to pivotal periods in their careers. The cheerful, colorful paintings faithfully include details of the actual studios, which are decorated with art the artists were creating at the time.

For his painting *Matisse's Studio, Collioure*, Elwes traveled to Collioure to visit the studio where Matisse created Fauvism in 1905. When he arrived, he discovered that although the town had become a tourist trap catering to Matisse pilgrims, nobody knew exactly where the studio had been. He tracked it down by asking locals to identify the building from which views in photographs of Matisse's studio were shot.

Splashes of silver waves seemed to be frozen in mid-air at Sundaram Tagore Gallery, where Chinese artist Zheng Lu's sculpture *Water Dripping - Splashing* was on view. The hollow stainless steel pieces are made up of hundreds of interlocking Chinese characters from an ancient Chinese script.

The artist comes from a long line of calligraphers and literary scholars. "Traditional forms come naturally to him, but he doesn't want his work to be just about China, so he incorporates free-form, totally abstract shapes in his work," gallery consultant Addison Ying said.

At Bau-Xi Gallery in the Context fair, Canadian photographer David Burdeny looked at water from a different perspective - a helicopter hovering over salt farms near Salt Lake City.

With their geometric shapes, soft light and muted colors, the photographs resemble color field paintings. The painterly look is a signature of the artist's work, gallery representative Julie Watt said. The artist typically works in series, using long exposures and dim light to capture architecture and nature.

Those looking for comic relief might think they've found it in Rafa Macarron's paintings on crumpled aluminum at the booth Galeria Casa Cuadrada and Galeria Juan Silio share in Context. The works feature children's playroom-like colors and spindly figures with big heads.

On closer inspection, it's apparent the figures are not very happy. For example, each panel in the 16-part *Poliptico* portrays figures confined in little rooms. Here and there, ladders rise into dead-end spaces.

They don't have much to smile about, but the galleries might. Last year, Galeria Casa Cuadrada sold every one of the artist's works at the fair.

See more at: <http://www.palmbeachdailynews.com/news/entertainment/arts-theater/art-miami-and-context-entice-visitors-with-179-int/npbDG/#sthash.Alc58k86.dpuf>