

Monday, December 01, 2008

[New York Art Fair Review: Pinta](#)

written by Nikki Schiro in New York

Pinta is a new Latin American Art Fair, claiming to exhibit the best of Latin American Modern and Contemporary Art. A selection of galleries from the US, Latin America and Europe are chosen to exhibit "museum-quality" works. Yes Ashley, referring to your piece on "A Turn in Taste, Part I" things are, with out a doubt, defiantly shifting towards a safer sale, and "quality" work. Everything here seemed to be quite finished, polished, framed and/or object-like ready-to-sell. This kind of presentation, was reminiscent of a museum, adding to that affect was an unusual abundance of Opp-art, which I don't recall seeing recently anywhere but museums.

There was plenty of art from the 60's-80's as well as some Contemporary work. I realize this fair was created for, with a double emphasis, the sale, not for the benefit of us artist and art-loving looky-loos, however, to tell me that this is the "best" of Latin American contemporary and modern art and expect me to believe that is just offensive! It's speculated that collectors are going "safe", and safe is what this fair, overall, was.

There were some goodies, however, as in any case.

Ana de la Cueva's piece, titled Billings, was funny and interesting piece using silk embroideries on cotton undies, attached to canvas using traditional embroidery hoops. As you approach the piece, you will find tiny embroidered traces on some that depict either menstruation or discharge, along with the corresponding lunar phase for each of the 28 undies. The lunar phase is detailed in the top right corner of each pair of undies, kind of reminiscent of "days of the week" underwear for kids. This piece talks about the most natural method of birth control identified by Dr. Billings, a method that uses body temperature and the appearance of vaginal discharge to monitor a woman's fertility. The four sexy undies are to illustrate the four days a woman ovulates and gets higher libido levels. This method is strongly used by observant Catholic women. Ana's work usually has a political drive and an autobiographical undertone. This piece supposedly was inspired by the Palin nomination, and the related propaganda that surfaced in the media.

Nicola Castantino, exhibiting at Galeria Sicart, Barcelona, showed some seriously psychologically charged photographs, films and sculptural objects. The work for me married Cindy Sherman and Caravaggio and birthed something of its own, that was especially intriguing for me. Castantino photographs herself in scenarios. Her backdrops, props and vignette stages are completely seductive; lush colors, materials, fabrics, blood; dramatic lighting spills onto bodies. We could be looking at a madd-scientist's work space, something more disturbing like murder or crime scenes--but surreal, at times sociopathic. Or perhaps it's set to be in the darker side of the mind. Nicola sets herself up as the subject in the experiential narratives; embracing, duplicating, submerged; she is the dead, the grieving, the patient, the doctor, creepy and strikingly beautiful in that Caravaggio-esc way. There was some Opp-art that was lovely to look, even ones are in actuality difficult to look at. It was fun to be lured over in an effort to decipher what was creating the effects, be it just the effects of color and line, or at times three dimensional attributes. One great piece was by Jesus Rafael Soto, a painting with three dimensional effects, pin stripes and colored squares came to life and fluttered and warped in your eyes.

Gererd Ellis at the Lyle O. Reitzel Gallery, Santo Domingo, had some beautiful mixed media works on canvas. I particularly liked *Haunted Boy*, where there is a composition of a boy and a fish on background meticulously mimicking the lines a notebook pad. The guts of the boy and fish emerge and retract into hauntingly painted bodies. I like the way he's handled and merged the materials and rendering.

Posted by Pete Duhon at [Monday, December 01, 2008 3 comments](#)