

**Art | Basel | Miami Beach**

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DESIRE

# Rising Stars

Drawing on everything from history to nostalgia to sheer whimsy, this year's Art Positions participants make an indelible mark on Art Basel Miami Beach. *By James Servin*

**A**rt Positions places a spotlight on the innovators who are gaining notoriety and a prominent place on gallerists' and collectors' must-have lists. Already they have fast-tracked their way into a tightly edited representation at Art Basel Miami Beach from 16 galleries worldwide.

New York's Fitzroy Gallery, open since December 2010, first showed Colby Bird in a solo exhibition in March 2012. For ABMB, Bird offers a commentary on commercial versus artistic creative work by juxtaposing seven preexisting commercial photographs of flora, fauna, and landscapes against another version of the same images that the artist has reworked in a style that suggests trompe l'oeil painting. A diagonal wall will separate the booth into two triangles. The paired photographs will be displayed on one side of the diagonal, while two sculptures, a hand-hewn chair, and a chandelier will be exhibited on the other. "Both groupings of works are about process, the element of the hand, and the presence of labor," says Fitzroy Gallery owner Maureen Sarro.

RaebervonStenglin gallery of Zurich presents the boldly insouciant work of British-born, Berlin-based Ivan Seal. Seal's entry, *Myame Memorimodulic*, focuses on a Miami-related incident he experienced growing up in the factory town of Stockport, England. As a teenager, Seal was enamored of Don Johnson, the television series *Miami Vice*, and the star's pastel T-shirts and white jeans. Seal recalls wearing a similar ensemble one night and getting caught in a rainstorm, which rendered his white trousers transparent, revealing his red underwear. A series of paintings associated with this memory will be displayed in linear fashion, "resembling a sentence or code," says Matthias von Stenglin, co-owner of the gallery. "The paintings—everything from abstract car crashes to over-the-top flower still-lives—function as a series and generate new opportunities for personal meanings from their juxtapositions to each other."

Making its debut at ABMB, Dublin's Mother's Tankstation presents Japanese-born artist Atsushi Kaga. Currently based in New York, Kaga has created *Nerd Bag Factory*, a durational, crafty installation, "a kind of endurance performance," says Mother's Tankstation

gallery founder and director Finola Jones. The piece re-creates a childhood memory of a mother who obsessively sewed colorful quilted fabric bags and insisted, to the embarrassment of her children, that they use them for school. In a booth hung with Kaga's large-scale colored pencil drawings, small-panel paintings inspired by manga comics and animation, and tapestries, the artist's mother, Kazuko Kaga, will be on hand to create bags for viewers. During the opening days of the fair, limited orders can be placed—the bags cut and stitched by Kazuko, then painted and collaged by her son. "We chose Atsushi Kaga for Positions because a considerable amount of his career to date has eventuated in Miami, and his work has a real following there," says Jones. "Also, there is something very upbeat and optimistic about his work that masks a darker meaning."

Another newcomer, Naples's Fonti gallery, shows artist Christian Flamm, born in Stuttgart and currently

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living in London, whose *An Alphabet* installation will incorporate a local material that the area has in abundance—the sands of Miami Beach—into a sculptural rendering of a new letter system. A glossary directly behind the arrangement of symbols will allow visitors to decode its message. Ink and gouache drawings of the alphabet depicting scenes relating to each letter, much like a child's alphabet book, will be displayed on the right wall, while a remaining blank wall will serve as a tabula rasa for visitors' own projections.

Based in Istanbul, Non makes its debut this year at Art Basel Miami Beach. For Art Positions, it presents the work of Istanbul artist Asli Çavuşoğlu, whose



Women, by Matt Keegan, 2012.

*Archival Digest* installation comments on the Turkish modernization period beginning in the late 19th century, when Western influences hastened the creation of the Turkish republic in the 20th century and a rejection of the prior alphabet and customs. Interrelated works include the distillation of history textbooks currently used in Turkish high schools into pedagogical diagrams (framed on the back wall of the booth) and the recycling of textbooks into nesting tables. "The layers of these tables are like the layers of history, which have been consistently altered and repurposed to suit a certain need," says gallery coordinator Ela Perşembe.

For its third Art Positions run, Mexico's Labor exhibits Irene Kopelman, whose Argentine heritage makes her an appropriate choice for the show, says Labor communications and press associate Debora Delmar. Kopelman's *The Challenger's Report*, a two-part installation examining direct and mediated contact with nature, features paintings and drawings of microfossils, and drawings and a clay bas-relief of canyons in Southern Brazil. The installation made its debut earlier this year at Gasworks, London, but "it isn't site-specific, and can be produced in many different variations," says Delmar. "It fits in very well with Miami and its beautiful natural landscapes." **ABMB**