

FIAC, the MoMA in Paris and no to be missed, Chateau de Versailles

By Caroline von Krockow

The 44th edition of FIAC, which took place from the 19th to the 22nd of October attracted countless visitors to the city of lights and Jennifer Flay, the director, did a marvellous job once again!

The art world has been changing a lot since I wrote about the FIAC for Cercle Magazine last year. Hong Kong, Dubai, Beirut, Vienna and Cologne all host art fairs that have been growing rapidly with local contemporary art fairs popping up all over the world. I still believe, however, that FIAC in Paris - even compared to Frieze, Art Basel and Art Basel Miami - is still the best and the following article will tell you why.

We are in Paris, which is an art piece in itself. The fair is not in a purpose built hall, but in the 1900 Belle Époque building, the Grand Palais and the city transforms into an open-air museum. During the FIAC there is exceptional art in the Petit Palais, Hors des Murs, in all museums of the city and in the Chateau de Versailles.

The sun accompanied the FIAC this year and the 193 galleries from 30 countries could set up their stands with rays of light entering the glass roof. I could hear jokes about being on holidays as I strolled through the aisles on Wednesday morning. Some of the most exquisite pieces this year

were to be found at Thaddeus Ropac's stand. **Georg Baselitz Trauerseeschwalbe**, 1972 is his first finger painting and upside down composition. The image of the bird, historically charged, also reminds us of his experience as an animal photographer during his youth. There is also **Brahmanda** by **Wolfgang Laib**, **Yan Pei-Ming's Déjeuner sur l'herbe** and **Imi Knoebel's Schnitt**.

At **Tornabouni Art Günther Ücker's Riss III**, a horizontal rectangular nail composition in the form of a tree is a must have. Then the red **Lucio Fontana Concetto spaziale**, 1965 mesmerized me. **Mikayel Ohanjanyan's Materialita** dell'invisible square marble piece was equally exceptional.

Kamel Menour's Christodoulos Panayiotou's pulp painting made of bills with the soft colors would look great in a house in Mykonos. **Daniel Buren**, **Camille Henrot** and **Baldessari's** image of a man thinking with the lamp next to him was inspiring.



More edgy was my experience at the Paris Internationale. Never before had I looked at art in five floors of a parking lot. "Too much of nothing" a solo show by **Robert Brambora**, is where I discovered two very cool lamp shades. The nomad gallery continues their show during the FIAC in the gorgeous Hotel Particulier on 28, rue de Bourgogne.

Do not miss Être Moderne: Le MoMA à Paris, which is a remarkable exhibition in the LVMH foundation a taxi ride away in the **Bois de Boulogne**. Go for a walk in the woods before you take in the very American art. Amongst the pieces are **Andy Warhol's** hand-painted, not-quite-identikit, 32-canvas "**Campbell's Soup Cans**" (1962) and Felix **González-Torres's** Aids memorial "**Untitled (USA Today)**" from 1990. Many of these works have not yet come to Paris before. Overwhelmingly US is **Yayoi Kusama's** chair overlaid with fabric phallic shapes "**Accumulation No 1**", made in the US in 1962 and **Romare Bearden's** collage "**Patchwork Quilt**" (1970), the first dark-skinned reclining nude to enter MoMA's collection. There follows, among many others, **Lynn Hershman Leeson's** videos exploring gender and performance through the alter ego of a blonde divorcee ("**Lynn Turning Herself into Roberta**", 1974) and **Barbara Kruger's** feminist collages of found images and text. **David Hammons' "African-American Flag"** (1990) and **Sherrie Levine's** black glass "**Black Newborn**" (1994) are also interesting. My personal favorite **Cindy Sherman** gets a room of her own for an overview of "**Untitled Film Stills**" (1977-80), her deconstruction of our media-saturated identity. The exhibition is a brutal expression of American power and certainly worth a visit.

Saturday, the 21st of October is not a time to be sad that the FIAC is almost over, instead throw on a lavish gown and jump into a limousine to Versailles. The reason for the party is that Palais de Tokyo was invited to create **Voyage d'Hiver** in collaboration with **Alfred Pacquement**, the curator of contemporary art at the Chateau de Versailles. The poetic gardens have just been embellished and ruffled by 17 contemporary artists, which added their creations amongst the perfectly trimmed greenery and fountains. Among them are **Tomás Saraceno**, who takes inspiration from spiders' webs to create floating utopian architecture, **Sheila Hicks** inspired by weaving techniques and **Ugo Rondinone** who says that "**Nature is my religion and best friend.**"

Ultimately, there is nothing better than sipping cold champagne in the Queen's Garden, transformed by fashion designer **Rick Owens**. He describes his work as "**the meeting between Frankenstein and Greta Garbo falling in love in an S&M bar.**" As part of the Voyage d'Hiver he has clothed the statues in a white veil, revealing more than concealing. Four presents are their presence in front of us. ©

