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# LA art is here to stay

*High-profile shows drive reappraisal*

MIAMI BEACH. Los Angeles-based artists are now getting the sort of attention reserved in recent years for the YBAs, the Düsseldorf photographers and the Leipzig School painters—a fact borne out by major shows here in Miami and a recent exhibition at the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Not surprisingly, this is being reflected in sales in Miami.

Preparing for Art Basel/Miami Beach, young Los Angeles art dealer David Kordansky (N42) expected a strenuous week. His sculptor Thomas Houseago has been the subject of rising interest, but Kordansky knew that with Houseago's work dominating a huge solo gallery in the Rubell Collection's "Red Eye" show (until 31 May 2007), the temperature could only rise. "I knew demand would be high, but it's been bigger than I expected," says Kordansky. "I could have sold some of the sculptures 20 times over." But with the long-term in mind, he has focused on placing Houseago's sculptures—which sell in the \$10,000 to \$30,000 range—in prestigious collections. "It's been great for

him, because this is not easy work—it's gnarly and primitive, even if it also alludes to Brancusi and Rodin," says Kordansky. "Now more people are willing to take a look at it."

At Nada, Cherry Martin has work by sculptor Nathan Mabry—whose solo gallery adjoined

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**Thomas Houseago at Rubell**

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Houseago's in the Rubell Collection. It sold out rapidly, racking up what must have been well over \$300,000 in total sales. "I feel lucky to be involved, but it's all so surreal," says Mabry. "I'm two years out of grad school and I'm getting phenomenal feedback."

Although the Rubell show will not increase the market for, say, established artists such as John Baldessari or Doug Aitken, it can really boost careers for younger artists. "The attention toward LA artists had been building progressively, but the 'Red Eye' show widens the audience," says Michael Gillespie of New York

Foxy Production (currently at Nada), which shows both Sterling Ruby and Violet Hopkins. "It helped the international collectors connect the dots between the young LA artists and the older ones that they already knew." Throughout the week he says, visitors recognised the large Hopkins painting on his stand, because of its similarity to the one in "Red Eye". "You can tell the ones that just came from the Rubells," he points out.

The Rubell show dovetails almost perfectly with the Pompidou's recent "Los Angeles 1955-85: the Birth of an Artistic Capital," combining seminal figures such as Baldessari, Chris Burden, Mike Kelley and Charles Ray, with emerging artists such as Mabry, Karl Haendel, and Ry Rocklen. "The striking thing about Los Angeles is that the great LA artists also teach, so they have a direct effect on the scene there," points out Don Rubell. "Take Karl Haendel, for example, who studied under Kelley and McCarthy, but in the end I think was more influenced by Baldessari."

Given successive generations of such high-achieving artists,

*Gateway/Prostitute's Bolster*,  
2006, by Sterling Ruby



*A Very Touching Moment...*,  
2006, by Nathan Mabry

Angelenos tend to get rankled over the notion that LA is just the latest Leipzig or Mexico City, a city momentarily benefiting from the art world's relentless neophilia. Kordansky says the main difference now is that the international art world accepts that "LA culture" means something more than Hollywood. "What's interesting to me about the Rubell show is that it reveals how big the city's scene has become," says Philip Martin of Cherry Martin, which represents Mabry. "They were some artists in that exhibition whom I don't know personally—30 years ago, you could have fit the LA art scene in a single room."

**Marc Spiegel**

