

ART FAIRS | TRENDS

## PULSE NY 2009

By Lily Alexander | March 16, 2009 | 1:32 am



Going to PULSE NY 2009 was a refreshing event after the overwhelmingly vast and more formal Armory Show. Although art exhibited by some of the galleries was slightly tedious in lack of depth and innovative thought, the mood was friendly, positive, and relaxed. And of course, amongst the more monotonous booths, there were galleries mixed in which had brilliantly inspired work.

Aside from the booths, PULSE added to the quality of the fair through their own programming: a variety of installations from some of the more exceptional artists shown in the gallery booths; the video lounge, PULSE PLAY; and the tranquil, almost meditative, VIP lounge designed by the Brad Ascalon Studio.

The sales were going strong on Sunday, the final day of the fair. Some galleries had already sold out. Buyers were interested in work that involved laborious artistic efforts, such as heavily worked-over paintings, or minutely detailed drawings. According to Andy Cushman of Blue Medium, the minimal aesthetic, slick sculpture, or snapshot art of artists such as Dash Snow, was just not selling.

In the new market, people seem to be attracted to time-intensive art, as if the value of the work must be based upon the actual hours and effort expended on its creation. This type of exhaustive workmanship was highlighted at its best in the miniatures of artist Paul Chiappe shown in the Madder 139 booth.

On the wall, resting near the diminutive drawings, were microscopes. These helped viewers look at the details of the intricately worked portraits, which were strangely haunting – strange in part because one had no idea how any emotion could be created in an expression on a face so small.

Some of the more remarkable work came from a number of galleries who were exhibiting for the first time, as well as a few galleries from less commonly represented regions. Politically-minded and socially-relevant work was a welcome addition at AICON Gallery, one of the first-time exhibitors.

They had some striking lenticular prints by Pakistani artist Farida Batool, who deals with political issues between India and Pakistan through her visualization of bodily relationships. Across the aisle from them was Habana, a gallery from Havana City, Cuba. SPACE gallery from Bratislava, Slovakia showed some engaging Conceptual works.

The lack of installation, and the focus on more traditional media could be a sign of artistic trends. Yet, it also indicated careful budget planning by galleries who were hesitant to spend money on the more costly transportation of work like large installation. Paintings and drawings are not only cheaper to ship, they are often more easily saleable to those interested in putting the work on their walls.