

# KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

## ARTFORUM

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UPSTATE, DOWNSTATE

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Left: Artist Marilyn Minter, Bill Miller, and Gypsy. Right: Dealer Jack Hanley. (All photos: Jude Broughan)

The time upstate burg of Hudson, New York, is a mere two hours from Manhattan via Amtrak, but still holds out the promise of escape from the stresses and strains of the city's always-"on" gallery circuit. Hudson's days as a center of vice—prior to a 1951 cleanup, its two square miles were apparently chockablock with gambling dens and brothels—are long gone, and the main drag now sprouts antique stores and stylish cafes where once there were seedy gin joints. Last weekend, however, wasn't one for a low-key break; NADA was staging an event at the Hudson Basilica, and within five minutes of taking our seats on the Saturday lunchtime train from Penn Station, my companion and I were suffering art-biz posturing and point-scoring from busy-busy neighbors.

Our shared destination, NADA Hudson, was trailed not as an art fair but rather a site-specific endeavor conceived with its nineteenth-century waterfront venue in mind. Built as a foundry and forge for the manufacture of railway wheels, the Hudson Basilica is now an 8,000 square-foot space for hire, and on this occasion housed fifty one presentations by dealers from New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Milan, and Istanbul, as well as from Hudson itself. Taking place over a summer weekend, the event had a relaxed appearance even if its lineup connoted serious business, bypassing booths in favor of an intermingled set of displays that—sensibly, given the airy, distressed interior—leaned toward sculpture. There was some outdoor fun too, including Jennifer Catron and Paul Outlaw's fish fry truck and a bouncy castle perpetually on the verge of collapse, though a program of performances was too sparse and scattershot to generate much excitement.

"We're dealing arms!" grinned dealer Irena Popiashvili, brandishing one of Artemio's decoratively beaded machine guns. "People always assume I find his Kalashnikovs for him," she laughed, a reference to her Romanian origins. Bureau Gallery, staked out nearby, weren't selling arms but legs; a sculpture by Tom Holmes featured a human thigh bone, veiled only by a tricolor coating of ink. Things got even more intimately anatomical at the Invisible-Exports stand, where Philip von Zweck was offering to make photocopies of any or all of an array of small works that included Genesis Breyer P-Orridge's *n*th-generation image of his own tattooed crotch. "I said to Gen 'What about that photo of your ass?,' " the gallery's Benjamin Tischer told me. "But he replied, 'No, this is much better,' and pulled out an envelope with "DOG PENIS" written on it...."

For completism's sake, my companion and I had pre-registered for the event's VIP area. Anticipating a corporate-sponsored hutch with shades of the Armory Show and its humdrum ilk, we were tickled to discover that the Dynasty VIP Lounge was located *inside* a white stretch limo parked close to the Basilica's entrance. An oh-so-exclusive presentation by artists **Justin Rancourt and Chuck Yatsuk**, the mobile club boasted a full bar, "twenty-four-hour security," and live music. We bundled in and were instantly cheek-by-

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jowl with dealers Jack Hanley, Joel Mesler, Dan Hug, and Shirley Morales. As the champagne flowed, lasers, video monitors, and a color-changing illuminated ceiling all contributed to the classy atmosphere. No dusty old factory for this privileged crew.

As to evening entertainment, there were three options: the official, the alternative, and the entirely separate. The official was a NADA reception at local joint Club Helsinki. The alternative was a performance event curated by Brooklyn gallery Cleopatra's that everyone I asked was planning on attending, though none could tell me what it would consist of or where it was supposed to be. The separate was the launch of a swimming-pool mural by Andy Ness and Matt Philips in the garden at Denniston Hill, a residency founded by the formidable collective of Lawrence Chua, John Letourneau, Kara Lynch, Julie Mehretu, Paul Pfeiffer, Jessica Rankin, Beth Stryker, and Robin Vachal. Prompted by artist Dushko Petrovich, we abandoned the alternative and postponed the official, but on finding that the separate was two hours distant, we revised our plans. (Petrovich made the trip anyway, later reporting a "wild ride" through the "orthodox summer camp region.")

After Googling "Helsinki" and learning some fun facts about the Finnish capital, we found the club's address and arrived in time to catch an atmospheric set by Brooklyn-Ecuadorian electro-folkies Helado Negro (the Spanish name translates as "Black Ice Cream") that had the crowd throwing some distinctly awkward shapes. As we paused outside to pinpoint our accommodation—having been made a little nervous by stern warnings about Hudson's dark side (the center may be fancy but the rest of the town is still somewhat down-at-heel)—Hanley popped up proffering a quarter. "I thought you guys were panhandling," he grinned. In these "austere" times, know that charity is alive and well in Hudson.

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