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Art Fairs

The Class of 2022: Meet 6 Fast-Rising Artists Having Star Turns at This Year’s Art Basel Miami Beach

From an Ivorian-American who works with paper towels to a post-internet artist getting a posthumous spotlight, here's who to watch.

Artnet News, November 29, 2022



Didier William. Photo by Ryan Collerd, courtesy of the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

Ready or not, Art Basel Miami Beach is upon us and the 20th anniversary edition of the fair in the U.S. promises to be filled with star-studded events, as well as plenty of ascendent talent to scout.

At this year's Miami art week, there are plenty of artists who deserve your attention, but we narrowed it down to six upstarts whose careers we believe are primed to reach new heights. So whether you're in the throes of JOMO or already starting to feel the FOMO for Art Basel, here's a primer on the work you definitely can't miss out on.

Didier William (b. 1983)



Didier William, *Mosaic Pool, Miami* (2021). Courtesy of the collection of Reginald and Aliya Browne.

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Who: Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and raised in Miami, Didier William got his BFA at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, followed by an MFA at the Yale School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut. His mixed media paintings feature a dizzying profusion of tiny dots and other markings. The artist layers this acrylic paint over dark-skinned figures, who, upon closer inspection, are made up of relief carvings on wood panel of hundreds upon hundreds of eyes.

Based in: Philadelphia

Notable Resume Lines: William's impressive exhibition history includes a solo show at the Figge Museum Art Museum in Davenport, Iowa, as well as group outings at institutions including the Bronx Museum, the Museum of Latin American Art, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. He has also been an artist-in-residence at the Sharpe-Walentas Studio in Brooklyn, and received the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant, and a Pew Fellowship from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage in Philadelphia.

Where to See It: The artist's largest solo show to date, "Didier William: Nou Kite Tout Sa Dèyè," is on view through April 16 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami. At Art Basel Miami Beach, William's work will appear alongside of that of Geoffrey Holder, Juanita McNeely, and Oscar yi Hou at the booth of James Fuentes, who represents the artist in New York. (In Los Angeles, William shows with M and B Gallery.)

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What to Look Out for: William makes work that sits at the boundary of abstraction and figuration, delving into Afro-Caribbean history to retell stories of the Black diaspora through a potent mix of myth and memory. A common motif is the mango leaf, in a nod to Haiti's native tropical fruits. The MOCA North Miami show will feature 40 paintings as well as William's first monumental sculpture, a 12-foot-tall wooden form inspired by columns used in traditional Haitian religious rituals.

Prices: At the fair, William's work will top out at \$120,000.

Fun Fact: In addition to his thriving art career, William is also an educator. He is currently an assistant professor of expanded print at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Previous posts include stints at the Yale School of Art, Poughkeepsie's Vassar College, the University of Pennsylvania, SUNY Purchase, and Columbia University in New York.

Up Next: William is featured in the group show "Forecast Form: Art in the Caribbean Diaspora, 1990s–Today," which is at the MCA Chicago through April 23, 2023, and will travel to the ICA Boston from October 5, 2023, to February 24, 2024. He'll also inaugurate Fuentes's new Los Angeles gallery next year.

—Sarah Cascone