

Expert Eye: Isaac Julien shares his favourite works at Art Basel in Miami Beach

Written by Gabriella Angeletti
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As we traverse Art Basel in Miami Beach, Isaac Julien is mobbed and praised by collectors and fans at every other step. The London-based artist and film-maker is best-known for his poetic and visionary documentaries such as the film installation *Lessons of the Hour: Frederick Douglass* (2019), which is being shown at Metro Pictures. In the fair's new Meridians section is the US premiere of Julien's *Lina Bo Bardi—A Marvellous Entanglement* (2019), a tribute to the late Brazilian artist and architect. Here, he shares with us his favourite works at the fair.



David Owens

Frank Bowling, *Africa to Australia* (1971), Hales Gallery: (Meridians) "Can you believe this work was painted in 1971? It looks like it was done yesterday. That's the wickedness of the neglect that some artists have received. It's mind-boggling."



David Owens

Cindy Sherman's tapestries at Metro Pictures: "Cindy Sherman is at the forefront of all digital photographic innovation. I believe these new works began as Instagram posts. I think this translation of photography into tapestry is a nod to her relationship to painting. I also love the juxtaposition of these two beautiful pieces. They're amazing."

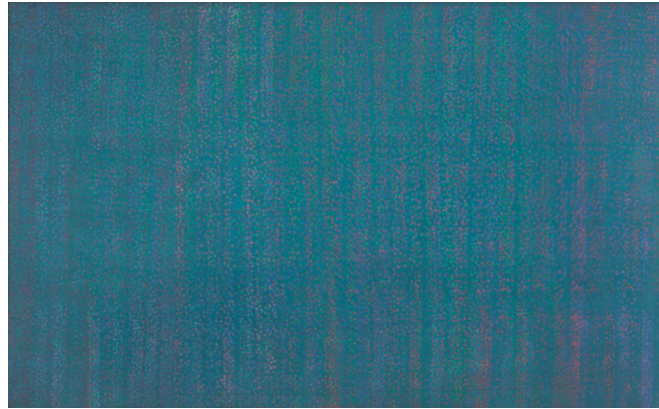


Photo courtesy of Victoria Miro

Howardena Pindell, Untitled (1972) Victoria Miro: "Howardena Pindell is close to my heart. She did abstraction during an era when it wasn't necessarily the type of work she was 'meant' to produce as an African American woman. Like Frank Bowling, there has been a belated recognition of her work. It's wonderful that it is being championed now, even if it's overdue."



David Owens

Sam Gilliam, Untitled (2011), David Kordansky: "Sam Gilliam, like Bowling, is one of those artists who is just a master of their medium. There is something about his work that is astonishing. What is also amazing is how contemporaneous the work is—it doesn't look like it was made by someone in their 80s. It's so fresh that you assume it was made by quite a young artist. I also love how it's positioned next to a beautiful sculpture by Simone Leigh."



David Owens

Tomie Ohtake's works at Galeria Nara Roesler: "Tomie Ohtake is incredibly well-known in Brazil but I didn't know much about her until I began to understand Brazilian culture through art. She's an incredible Modernist artist. I hate this idea that has befallen Modernist artists from the South, where their form of Modernism is somehow viewed as imitating the West. There have always been various Modernisms. Internationalism is something we're just beginning to embrace, in some ways."



David Owens

Sally Mann's photographs, Edwynn Houk: "I had a conversation with Sally Mann when I was doing conservation work for the film Looking for Langston (1989). She was the one who told me about this amazing black-and-white photography conservation specialist who could reconstruct negatives from digital files. It was that conversation that started the series of work I did on Langston [Hughes]. Mann is a master of photography, and she was very instructional for me."



David Owens

Faith Ringgold, Slave Rape thangka paintings (1972), Pippy Houldsworth: "There is something about the neglect that Faith Ringgold's work has received that is so interesting. She discarded so much of her work and most pieces are just now seeing the light of day. Maybe because of that, these look like they were made yesterday. There is something ironic about the fact that people didn't look at these works back then, that they were hidden away and now they are being appreciated. There is something wicked and bittersweet about it."



David Owens

Rose B. Simpson's works at Jessica Silverman: "Rose B. Simpson can trace her lineage back nearly 1,000 years. She's from the Santa Clara Pueblo in New Mexico and comes from 11 generations of ceramicists and object makers on her mother's side. Indigenous artists are still under-recognised. It's almost as if it is the last area to be recognised. I don't want to sound too folkloric but there is something striking about her work that echoes her heritage."



Photo: Graeme Robertson

Our expert eye: Isaac Julien