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whitehot | August 2012: NADA Hudson



NADA Hudson, July 28th-July 29th, 2012

by Katy Hamer

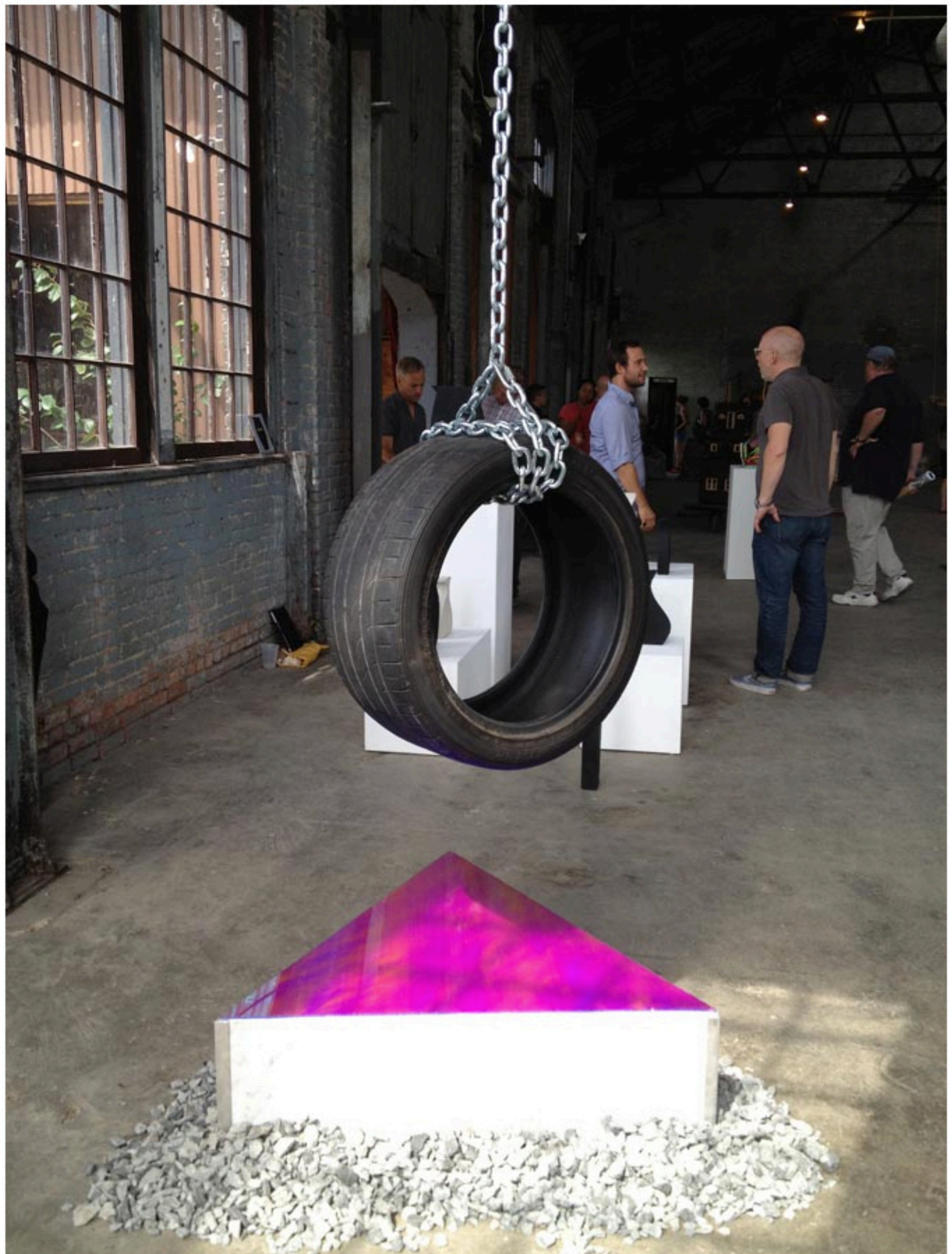
In it's second year in the small town of Hudson, New York, 2 1/2 hours outside of Manhattan. the New Art Dealers Alliance set up shop at Basilica Hudson. NADA is a fair that was founded by several New York based art dealers and takes place in Miami, Hudson, and most recently Manhattan, NADA New York, which coincided with the Frieze Fair, May 4th-May 7th, 2012 and took place in Chelsea. For NADA Hudson, the founders decided to create a site-specific exhibition project focusing on contemporary sculpture, installation and video by galleries that are NADA members as well as affiliates. Admission was free and the exhibition venue was open from 11am-7pm, Saturday and Sunday. The venue, Basilica Hudson, is a large brick building with one large Main Hall and three smaller off-shoot rooms. The Main Hall hosted the majority of artist projects and each gallery presented one artist. Visually, the installation in the Main Hall was very appealing because it was open, there weren't any labels, and each gallery had a representative who was available to talk about the work they were showing along with the artist and upcoming exhibitions. A steady flow of individuals along with lovely afternoon sunshine, streamed in and out of the venue. Saturday the weather was less agreeable, but as overheard, there were still many visitors to the show. Arriving Sunday early afternoon, I enjoyed the rustic location, green surroundings and familiar faces from the New York art scene. My first stop was at Dumbo Arts Center's outdoor booth to have a chat with gallery director and artist Karl Erickson. The Brooklyn based Not-For-Profit had set up a number of Photo Stand-Ins and offered to let passersby have their photograph taken with the work of his/her choice for a minimal cost. The pieces were by James Leonard, Barbara Weissberg, Michelle Vaughan, and Torsten Zenas Burns & Darrin Martin. I took a photo with "Bounty" by Barbara Weissberg. Next up was a small structure separate from the Main Hall and a performance by Eloise Fornieles, representing Paradise Row, London. Fornieles was present sitting in a chair and inviting people to sit and take part. If agreed, she gave the participant an option to share a hope or fear with her, or to accept the gift of \$1.00. I decided to sit down and share a fear. We discussed the fear and then she offered to share a hope or fear in return. I let her choose and she decided to share a hope for me which was in direct response to my personal fear and then stretched into the hope she has for her own future. The experience was quite lovely and a perfect way to start the day. Also in the installation, coinciding with the performance, were several free-standing and hanging sculptures. The artists said she thinks of the works as talisman and energy absorbers, right up my alley!

After making the rounds outside of the Main Hall, I entered the central space running into several friends, including artist Lauren Seiden, along the way. The Main Hall is not a huge space, but just big enough to not feel rushed and be able to take everything in with a panoramic swoop. Many of the galleries offered sculptural installation. First up was Jerry Blackman at Toomer Labzda, a gallery located in the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan. The piece, titled "Mustache", 2011, is a clear, thin, sculpture with a chain that functions as the 'stache. Next up was James Fuentes and Bill Stone's "Buddha Booth". The work is a replication of a telephone booth and instead of a phone one will find a Buddha sculpture. Clever in offering a direct line that is based on faith communication versus telecommunications. Moving through the hall I was then drawn to Jesse A. Greenberg's work at Kansas Gallery and chatted briefly with gallery director Steven Stewart who spoke a bit on their current exhibition and the show that will follow. Jesse's piece is yet another free-standing sculpture that is lit from behind in what could be an urban building with teeny windows, a relic from outer-space or the interior workings of an enlarged iPhone after it has been busted open, all of the internal workings exposed. My forth stop was the tall, thin, iridescent sculpture by Amy Brener, showing with Marlborough Chelsea. From a distance, Brener's sculpture appeared to be wrapped in Saran wrap. It felt impermanent and flimsy, but upon closer inspection, the materials give way to weight. She uses various substance including cement and most of the sculpture is covered in a glossy resin which was glistening in the few rays of sunshine beaming through the South facing door of the Main Hall.

Along the way, I spoke to almost each gallery present. I paused in moments that most "fairs" do not allow. A different energy hung in the air, and I found myself contemplating, was it due to the simple mileage between Hudson and Manhattan? Still sparked by my first encounter with Eloise Fornieles from Paradise Row, I decided to bite the bullet and take part in an art "healing" being conducted by (Art)AMALGAMATED and Alexander Melamid. (Art)AMALGAMATED is a fairly new space in Chelsea on 10th Avenue, founded and run by Gary Krimersmoys. Soon after signing up for an appointment, I found myself sitting in a chair that reminded me of the type used when going to the dentist. Mr. Melamid commenced upon a series of questions about my life, my career, the problems and the blessings. We spoke about contemporary art, the act of looking and the importance of being aware of the past. Melamid had a few suggestions for me regarding art reviews and suggested I "close my mind, in order to look and see". Advice that I have taken, shared and contemplated before. It was a focal point of the curating team behind the 2007 African Pavilion in Venice and carries a resonance that is much larger than a moment, filled with truth and relevance for all who are interested in art, whether contemporary or historic. Not "new" news for me but an adage that was a refreshing and an unexpected reminder in an unlikely setting/situation.

Then he asked me to close my eyes and proceeded to project art (Vermeer's *The Girl With the Pearl Earring*, c.1667) onto my chest.

'Nuff said.



Envoy Enterprises, photo by Katy Diamond Hamer, courtesy NADA Hudson



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