

BAHKTI BAXTER

PRESS REVIEW



FEDERICA SCHIAVO GALLERY

# ARTINFO

## REVIEWS



### MIAMI

## Bhakti Baxter

Gallery Diet // October 7–November 12

IN HIS LATE COLLAGES, Henri Matisse reached a state of synthesis by, in the artist's own words, "drawing directly in color." A similar ambition marks the opening work in the Miami native Bhakti Baxter's first hometown show in four years, entitled "Rompelotas."

A small collage, reminiscent of Matisse's autumnal style, hangs in the gallery's office; in the front room, a re-created version of it using expanded polystyrene foam and plaster. *Root Beer*, 2011, stretches the collage's feminine arabesques to an impressive eight feet tall. The gallery walls are painted the same shade of green as the collage's ground, which effectively turns the entire space into an installation on a grand scale.

*Untitled (Swimmer)*, 2004, is a simple piece composed of a series of fluid ink strokes that represent a body of water and a man paddling through it. We imagine this figure, pushing against the current, to be drawing himself. This theme continues throughout the exhibition, including a series of photo-collages that pairs rivers and canyons—the cause of erosion and its index, respectively—with images of Henry Moore sculptures. The smooth contours and the stark opposition between positive and negative space in the Moore works connect to both Matisse's cropped edges and the crevasses of the riverbeds in Baxter's photographs.

Next to these are a series of prints inspired by Darcy's law, a mathematical relationship governing the flow of groundwater and other liquids through granular media, discovered in 1856 by the French engineer Henri Darcy. In Baxter's prints, a uniform pattern of lichenlike negative space set against a dark ground represents the natural process of liquid passing through a viscous medium. The swimmer, the collages, and these monoprints act as divining rods, fixating the viewer's attention on both water and its symbolic flow across various cultural periods.

In the back room, there is a postscript: a series of found plastic balls, flipped inside out to resemble Neolithic swim bladders, spewing forth a mixture of cement, resin, and paint. These balls perched atop pedestals—found objects such as file cabinets and shelving units—suggest lost monuments waiting for someone to push aside the undergrowth in an overgrown suburban future and discover them.

That final room raises larger questions about the retrospective mode, in that it somehow exists both in the past and the present. In her book, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, the critic Rosalind Krauss points out that as various media become indistinct, creative work must get at the essential in art. By doing exactly this, Baxter sets himself apart from the legions of small-town biennial artists—those who create a hit-or-miss practice out of varying media. While the pieces here are all more than capable of standing on their own, the fun lies in their unexpected yet easy union. In "Rompelotas," as in Matisse's late collages, the medium becomes something that just gets in the way.

—Hunter Braithwaite

# MODERN PAINTERS

FEBRUARY 2012 | ARTINFO.COM

ART / ARCHITECTURE / DESIGN / PERFORMANCE / FILM

## BHAKTI BAXTER. LO SPAZIO STRAVOLTO



1.

*Occupied*, prima personale in Italia dell'artista Bhakti Baxter alla Federica Schiavo Gallery. Una mostra fuori canone in cui realmente il pensiero dell'artista si svela a partire dalle opere e dalla disposizione/occupazione dello spazio. I lavori *Vessel 1-2-3* installati su tre pareti monocromatiche riprendono la riflessione sulla forma nello spazio, forma che è ritagliata a favore dell'essenzialità del vuoto<sup>1</sup>. In *Third Power*, Bhakti Baxter adopera cavi elettrici industriali

a tre snodi e crea un'infiorescenza illuminata dalle sole spie di connessione, un innesto che ricorda le scie del frattale da screensaver, un'avventura dentro la forma spirituale dell'icona digitale. Indagine sulla relazione tra ordinario e astrazione: *Pile of Possibility*, quasi 20 kg di pigmento edilizio blu, è la somma delle possibilità per le quali un pulviscolo forma un solido conico ed un alone atmosferico satellite. Il lavoro *Work Shift* manifesta il pensiero dell'artista americano:

con wallpaper a getto d'inchiostro, collage e interventi su parete, Baxter disorienta e sovverte i comuni limiti visivi e strutturali riferendosi ad oggetti comuni in *Uncomfortable Chair*, ad interni in *Misaligned Interior* e ad architetture severe in *Saarinen Twa* e *Stairways Metropolis*. Una complessa strategia visiva, una geniale chirurgia esercitata su immagini ruotate con allineamenti circolari che destabilizzano la vista liberandola dalla noia della monovisione. Si prosegue per slittamenti e l'iniziale punto casuale si rivela intuito nell'imprevedibile. *Occupied* si muove con agilità attraversando le riflessioni sulla possibilità di vedere e occupare lo spazio e Baxter lascia che gli elementi siano quello che sono all'interno di un processo creativo che li muove e li rende parti in movimento senza negarne lo spirito.

**Francesco Lucifora**

1. La mostra *Occupied* è ispirata ad alcuni versi attribuiti a Lao Tzu



2.

# OCEAN DRIVE

Personalities / Artist Bhakti Baxter Breaks Brand

## Artist Bhakti Baxter Breaks Brand

by brett sokol



Bhakti Baxter inside Wynwood's Gallery Diet with his new sculpture, Root Beer

If you want to tick Bhakti Baxter off, just tell him how much you love his artwork. Specifically, compliment the drawings and paintings he created during the middle of the last decade—from a darkly inked scene of young children blowing soap bubbles that warp and woof into a foreboding dreamscape, to a gorgeous portrait in oil of his late grandmother, so steeped in melancholy grace that its bluish hue practically envelops the viewer.

Yet nothing in that vein is on display at Baxter's exhibition at Wynwood's Gallery Diet. Instead, he's fashioned an array of abstract sculptures, paper collages, and most strikingly, 13 different Imploded Ball Barf assemblages—from soccer balls to basketballs, each split open to spew forth brightly colored "cosmic residue." If this stylistic shift confused anyone, Baxter says, so be it. "I still get e-mails from people interested in buying those older pieces," he explains with a grimace, sitting inside Gallery Diet. "That was five years ago—sorry!"

This is more than mere petulance on Baxter's part. Tossing aside one's established "brand" is potentially destructive to an artist's bankability. And it may explain Baxter's departure from the stable of prominent Miami gallerist Fredric Snitzer, a subject Baxter is loath to address beyond describing himself as a "free agent in Miami... They were a good seven years working with Fred. Things change and you move on." (Snitzer has previously declined to speak publicly on the split.) Baxter isn't exactly forsaking that earlier body of work—Gallery Diet has just published a lavish career monograph, XYZ 2001–2011. But extended talk about paintings conjures up a pained look once again.

"I'm not a firm believer in the point of view that says an artist should find a certain material or technique and invest themselves in it. Some people take a lot of comfort in that. I get bored. I would be really depressed if I was still making the same work as five years ago." He likens it to a popular band playing its big hit singles over and over. "Thank God the Beatles broke up! They said what they wanted and then went off to do their own things. The Rolling Stones are still playing the same [riffs]. They're still the 'kings of rock,' still making tons of money, still hooking up with hot girls. But in their peer group, who really has respect for them? They're so irrelevant, it's embarrassing."

It's telling that Baxter's concerns fly first to an artist's peers—not curators, critics, or collectors. But bucking an established path has worked out pretty well so far. Now 32, Baxter was part of the first generation of Miami-raised artists who chose to stay in South Florida rather than light out for commercially greener pastures. Indeed, prior to the late '90s milieu in which he graduated from the DASH magnet high school, most Miamians looking to make a living from their art had two options: land a teaching job or head north. The local art market was anemic at best.

"That decision was made for me," he explains of his enrolling in Miami's New World School of the Arts' BFA program. "I could move to New York, drown in school debt, and live in a [dingy] apartment with eight people I don't like. Or I could get a free ride here and start something fresh with my friends. In New York everyone's scrambling to push their way past bottlenecks. Here it's just 'do what you want.' It was an economic decision, but it was also about seeing the potential that Miami's affordability allowed."



Imploded Ball Barf, (cosmic yolk residue of transformation, mom's garage), 2011



Case in point: The House, a two-story 1930 Edgewater home that Baxter rented with fellow artists Martin Oppel and Tao Rey (as well as later roommate Daniel Arsham). "It was \$1,000 between three people. For a whole house with a big backyard! So we could afford to have a gallery downstairs." Subsequent shows at The House—and their accompanying over-the-top parties—not only established The House crew as some of Miami's most dynamic young talent, but they caught the eye of Museum of Contemporary Art director Bonnie Clearwater. By 2001, Baxter had yet to graduate college, but his work was already being exhibited at MOCA, while his face was smiling back from the front page of The New York Times' arts section. The arrival of Art Basel Miami Beach further accelerated his ascent.

If Baxter now seems a bit chastened by the expectations of that rapid rise, his artwork has come full circle. He's certainly become more technically accomplished, but his sculptures look back to themes from earlier in his career, before his mid-decade embrace of figuration. You can once again see his dueling fascinations with the precision underlying mathematical science as well as the weirdly unpredictable energy that seems to lurk just beneath the surface of so much of Miami's landscape. Even those Imploded Ball Barf pieces, for all their chaotic appearance, are constructed by a strict formula: only found objects from the streets and train tracks that abut Baxter's Little Haiti studio, and only as much colored concrete "barf" as would actually fit inside the pre-imploded ball. "Anything can be profound. Even trash found along the train tracks can embody huge questions in physics." The key is to avoid losing sight of the world beyond the galleries: "It's not 'I went to the show, so-and-so was there, I got the joke, did you get the joke? Haha, we're in this elite group called the art world.' It's more inspiring to me that objects can take on a new life. In art, one plus one can equal three any time—when two things come together, magic can happen." And if this intuitive approach doesn't yield the kind of immediate results of a drawing or painting? "You just need to keep digging, you need to have faith," Baxter says, before flashing a smile. "You drag some fresh trash into the studio!" To view artworks from Bhakti Baxter's Romplotas exhibition, contact Gallery Diet, 174 NW 23rd St., Miami, 305-571-2288

# ROMPELOTAS in Flavorpill

October, 2011

Shana Beth Mason, Flavorpill

Shana Beth Mason, "Bhakti Baxter:ROMPELOTAS"

# ROMPELOTAS in Flavorpill

October, 2011

Shana Beth Mason, Flavorpill



*A certain vibration — or an affinity for form and elegant motion — runs through local artist Bhakti Baxter's work. His newest solo exhibition at Gallery Diet, Rompelotas (a loose play on the Spanish term for "ball-breaker"), only further bolsters his internationally celebrated reputation. Baxter's busted soccer balls bursting with vibrant streams of paint, a bold, geometrically abstract wall sculpture entitled "Root Beer," and a splattered mass of green and sandy color against royal blue (resembling an aerial shot of an island) are all playful, highly self-aware insights he brings into the visual realm. Nonsense transforms into aesthetic lyricism for Baxter, immediately sensed by the viewer as you're greeted by a gallery space swathed in a pulsating, sexy green tone. This is Baxter's first solo show in four years and also his first at Gallery Diet.*

## Wynwood's October 8 art walk has bear Jews and street hookers

By Carlos Suarez De Jesus Thursday, Oct 6 2011

Around the corner at **Gallery Diet** (174 NW 23rd St., Miami), Bhakti Baxter's ball-busting exhibit is the locally based artist's first Miami solo show in four years.

The highly anticipated exhibit, which includes sculpture, painting, collage, and installation-based work, is called "Rompelotas," a play on the Spanish term *rompe pelotas*, which translates to "ball breaker."

Look for some adroit legerdemain from Baxter, whose exhibition juggles the laws of gravity, density, and the malleability of mass while striking a balance between play and placement.

You can also expect him to employ found objects — such as soccer balls and office desk drawers encrusted in concrete and enamel — to portray what the gallery calls "irrational models of natural phenomena."

If you need further convincing, don't miss Baxter's impressively titled *Imploded Volleyball Barf (Cosmic Yolk Residue of Transformation) Mom's Garage*, cobbled from Southern pine, a volleyball, concrete, enamel, metal, and screws. Call 305-571-2288 or visit [gallerydiet.com](http://gallerydiet.com).



## Ball Braker

By Carlos Suarez De Jesus Thursday, Oct 13 2011

Bhakti Baxter's highly anticipated exhibit, "**Rompelotas**", is the locally based artist's first Miami solo show in four years and includes sculpture, painting, collage, and installation-based work. The exhibit's name is a play on the Spanish term rompe pelotas, which translates to "ball breaker." Look for some ball-busting legerdemain from Baxter, whose exhibition aspires to "juggle the laws of gravity, density, and the malleability of mass while striking a balance between play and placement."

Tuesdays-Saturdays, 11 a.m. Starts: Oct. 8. Continues through Nov. 12, 2011



# ALTARTPROJECTS



## Profiles: Bhakti Baxter

Life can be a series of connections or missed chances, depending on the paths you take. Sometimes it feels like you are on a roll and one meaningful event leads to another, such is the case with how I met **Bhakti Baxter**. It was approximately 6 months ago when I began my interview with **Douglas Hoekzema** at his studio in the **Little River Arts District** that I was introduced to his studio-mate Bhakti Baxter. There I was able to see a wide array of Bhakti's work, demonstrating his many talents. His charisma & no holds barred attitude sparked my interest to learn more about him and share it with you. In the past several months, my encounters with Bhakti have proven that he is the type of person that follows a path connecting him from one exciting adventure to another, always with a smile on his face.

**Steve:** Can you tell me about the dome project?

**Bhakti:** It's an original **Buckminster Fuller** Geodesic Fly's Eye Dome (24' in diameter) and it was built in 1978 by Buckminster Fuller. It was restored to perfection and is being shown for its first time in history in its ideal state. I'm just proud to be part of the process of assembling and de-assembling this piece.

**S:** How did you get involved?

**B:** It turns out that they are assembling it directly in front of my studio and the landlord of my studio is the new owner of this incredible object. They knew that I love Bucky, so they asked me if I'd be interested in working on the project and if I could get a team together and I said of course. I gathered some friends that I knew appreciate his work as much as I do.

**S:** Cool. So this is your studio, I thought your studio was up on 71st?

**B:** That's true, this is a shared space that we've had for almost 7 or 8 years, and it will no longer be our studio starting the beginning of next year. So this is actually the last show we will have here, and to prepare for the show we've demolished walls and invited artists to participate in an exhibition. Again the studio is directly in front of this dome so that has already had an influence on what artists are deciding to create and present during Basel 2011.



*Inside the Bucky Dome*

**S:** Is the exhibition going to be related to the Bucky exhibit at all?

**B:** Yes and no, people are informed by 2 things. Number 1 that it's the last show that this space will ever see, the last anything this space will ever see because presumably it will be torn down. Then number 2, yeah **Buckminster Fuller**, how can you ignore it? It's this incredible white orb on a grass lot and people can't friggin' believe it. They pass by and have to ask, "What the hell is that?" So the artists that know about him are just that much more excited to be showing alongside of something as phenomenal as the Bucky Dome. So of course it influences them, but in no way is the show designed to be about Buckminster Fuller. The artists are welcome to respond to these factors and there's no curation, it's just: These are the circumstances, what are you gonna do?

**S:** How many artists are involved?

**B:** There's a big group of artists, I'd say maybe 15 confirmed. Some of them have a history with this space, they've worked here, in the shop, and they've occupied some of the space for a period of time. Others haven't, others are completely new and have seen the space for the first time, so I feel like it's a nice combination.

**S:** What is the space called? I don't think I've ever been here before.

**B:** It's called a lot of things; some people refer to it as the House Studio, because we used to have a space called The House. Other people call it American Donut, because that's what it says on the front door. But I just call it **3825**, which is the number of the building. So I think that might be the name of the show.

**S:** When are you guys going to have the show? When's the opening night and how long does it run?

**B:** Opening night is November 27th and it runs throughout the week of Basel so I figure by the 3rd or 4th we'll start tearing it down, or maybe just let it ride but we'll be open for like a week starting the 27th.



*Adam and Bhakti working on the Bucky Dome*

**S:** Great. Back to the dome again, is that the way it's supposed to be displayed- outdoors?

**B:** Absolutely, Buckminster Fuller thought about ways of sending a portable shelter to remote areas in a very short amount of time, very little money and with basic instructions that people can assemble it –say in the middle of the desert and have a shelter for a short period of time. These were some of his concerns so the design is guided, not only by natural mimicry but by practical efficiency and economic constraints. And yet it's so beautiful, it's absolutely breathtaking. It's a revolution to everything around it, everything around it is square and in a box and this thing just screams out. It feels like somebody puffed air into a tiny ball from the sea and it exploded out into this. It's very alive, it's

awesome.

**S:** Was the Epcot dome designed by him?

**B:** Well, any dome takes a direct knowledge from what Bucky explored and investigated in his lifetime, he was the pioneer of this kind of work. But architecture goes way back and if you look at early Islamic domes and their geometry, these concepts are nothing new. The way that he has interpreted these geometric forms did spin a sort of new generation of thinking in terms of again- efficiency, beauty, and economics.

**S:** I hadn't heard of him until Doug mentioned he was working on this with you.

**B:** A lot of people haven't heard of him, then you're presented to somebody that has and their eyes light up and they are like, "O my god". Then you tell them- and a *Dymaxion Car* is going to be there and they flip. But most people are like – "a dy what? " The guy is bad ass. I'd say he's more of a humanitarian than an architect. At the end of the day, he was a man that wanted to make the world a better place. He coined the term- Spaceship Earth. His notion was that these nationalistic ideas being completely fucked up, because he was like, "we are all on this one planet, forget the idea of nations, we are all here together, this is our home." Right there if you can understand that, that's the end of war in a way. We have to work together, there's no other place to go, and we're all breathing the same air and dealing with the same problems. He saw that and it was very simple for him to see that, he worked for the United Nations and wanted other nations to speak to the United States and negotiate on humanitarian terms. The Russians even loved the guy. He was the only guy the Russians would hang out with because they felt this guy isn't a box, he's a sphere. Bucky is the man. **Critical Path** is a book I've been reading, even before I learned I'd be working on this project. It's basically his life story that he wrote at the end of his life, it's an incredible book.

**S:** What was that event you put on at **Tomorrowland**, *Darcy's Law*, all about? I mean I know what you did because I witnessed it but what was it all inspired by?

**B:** Well *Darcy's Law* is an actual law of Hydro geological forces; it's the way water behaves in a porous substance, such as the earth. The way that canyons are formed; the way that mountains and rivers and these branching shapes and systems take place. There is actually this law where they have these variable formulas for x amount force, that's not even important. What interests me was that they were reoccurring on multiple scales in the observable universe. It was happening at my show Nina's at *Rompelotas*, both on the wallpaper piece and on the small stamp. So I wanted that to happen at **Tomorrowland**, it was all about those 4 hours- 8-12. Whoever was there during those 4 hours got a piece that was made while they were there. So again grabbing the same technique of squishing a viscous fluid between 2 planes, peeling it back to get this branching effect of *Darcy's Law* – stamping it and then giving it away, where the person would take it off the wall and sign their name in the place where the piece was. In a way the piece to me is about them, trying to follow the paths that they mimic in *Darcy's Law*, even just getting there on a Sunday night; all these

little branching pathways that made it there, and then branch back out into the world. I saw that again on this macro-micro level, here's this tiny little stamp but it's also a record of you being here tonight.

**S:** So we left something behind and took something with us – our signatures.

**B:** I see what you mean, in a way you acknowledged you. You were forced to write your name on the wall, so now it's not the artwork on the wall it's your name. To me that was a way of saying it's about you. It's not about me; I'm not here to do a performance with some skilled choreography, lighting, and theatrics. It was more like: you made it out on Sunday night and here you go, and this happened while you were there.

**S:** What were you doing with the projector?

**B:** That was a way to reinforce viscous fingering pattern, which is another way of calling *Darcy's Law*. What you do is you have 2 sheets of clear plexi on an overhead projector and you put some glycerin or something thick in there and screw a tiny hole in the top one and then you connect a copper tube through the top one that you could blow through. When you blow through it, the air pushes through the viscous fluid in a circular-coral like fashion and radiates outward and branches as a fractal, depending on the force of your breath. So it's another way of showing that phenomenon. But for me, I got it from old 60's psychedelic concerts where that's what they lit up their stages with. They were messing with gels and fluids and pushing it with the rhythm of the music. That ties right back into these patterns, because psychedelic art is all about fractals. I was trying to repeat that where I can find the observable *Darcy's Law* in all of these different moments of our time. I don't think it was very explicit, some people left. I still have pieces for the people that left.

There were people that took pictures like yourself and I could see o this guy didn't wait till I got him a piece, he left because he thought I was being a jackass or something. But I've got a piece for him.

**S:** Haa, cool so are you going to deliver them?

**B:** I've been calling them, tracking em down. But I've got them in my car in case I see them; I'll stop them on the side of the road and just give it to them.

**S:** What else have you got going on for **Basel**?

**B:** I also have a hard cover book called **XYZ** that was recently published and I look forward to giving them to strangers that come from out of town that may help further my career in other lands far away from Miami.

**S:** Do you have any targets for that?

**B:** No targets, I like the magic of meeting people during Basel, it's my favorite part. Meeting artists, curators, gallerists, and weird collectors and everything in between. It's a good journey, it's a fun adventure.

**S:** Are there any other exhibits or music you're looking forward to seeing?

**B:** We just saw **Tinariwen**, which was amazing, this band from Mali that was phenomenal. That just happened; it's one of the major gems I've been looking forward to. The people who didn't see this concert missed out so hard. Again they are another band that is huge in one part of the world but in another people may say, "Who the hell are these people?" They are amazing, they bring it and they have a real magic from the dessert and it controls the space as soon as they start to finish, they are a force. They are real generous, they came out to hang out with the audience when they were finished and took pictures with



*Psychedelic Projector*



*Making Prints at Darcy's Law*

all the ladies.

**S:** Nice. How long have you been living and working here in Miami in the art scene?

**B:** I've lived in Miami my whole life and I started showing my work seriously in 1997, '98. So what's that been 13, 14 years?

**S:** You work in so many different ways, what's your favorite medium?

**B:** I don't have a favorite medium, I like being able to express myself in different ways. If the process is guiding is the medium then it's determined by the process and not the medium, so it changes. It's always in flux; I like to be surprised sometimes in doing an experiment to see with what I could work with that was not a conventional option.

**S:** So is that a goal of yours when you're working to use something new to yourself and to everyone else?

**B:** Not to use something new but to use it in a different way. I guess the simple way of describing it would be the order or the arrangement of the composition, sort of like a song or like a pattern or a rhythm set in space that it intrigues and asks the question, "*Why is this interesting?*" Because if it's just based on technique or skill or solely on material, like

if it's gold because everybody likes gold so you'll get a reaction. But if it's really a pile of shit that looks awesome and you ask: "*Why is this amazing?*" That's more interesting than painting a pretty portrait of a pretty woman. So it's not so much what I'm working with but how I'm working with what I'm working with.

**S:** I see what you mean. It's interesting you related the process to making music, is music a big part of your life?

**B:** I think music is the highest art form in life, and if I would have known that when I was kid I probably would have stuck to that. I still play music, I have a drum set, a bass, a clarinet, I have a few guitars, so I'm surrounded by instruments and I play them, but I'm not a musician. Not at all, but music is so important because it's so abstract, it's so hard to define it in a way that you could the visual arts because it exists in space. There are standards and there are rules, and whole theories on music; but it still happens in time and in ways that we're not really responsible for like authors. I feel like music and art make us do what it wants us to do and in turn we're describing a larger picture of culture or society. We're not really creating that, we are just interpreting and articulating that experience.

**S:** Wow, I never thought of it that way but it's true, well put. What about your background, I know your family is from Argentina, how does your heritage influence you as a person or an artist?

**B:** As a person, I consider myself Latin. So even though I may look like a gringo or a European, at heart I'm just another Latin guy. And what does that mean? It just means I've got a little more sauce. It's definitely a part of who I am, but I don't consider myself Argentinean. I consider myself a person from Miami, which is not even really the United States, it's its own Bermuda Triangle/ warped zone. But yeah Miami, Argentina, it doesn't matter. I'm starting to care less about titles and identity codes and ways of presenting yourself to other people. I just want to be another human being and I think Bucky is somebody that's been reminding me about the importance of being kind and a human being, the best human being you can be, which is a lot to ask.

**S:** I hear you. Do you ever travel back to Argentina to see family?

**B:** Yeah, all the time, Argentina's the shit! The country side- Mendoza Cordova. But my family is from Buenos Aires, time flies when I go there. I'm there for 2 weeks and it feels like 3 days. So many friends, family members, places to go, and concerts that just spring up out of nowhere, cute little coffee shops. It's still an intense city, you can't be an idiot and walk down the streets, you've got to be on your tippy toes really sharp. But it's a cool place.

**S:** What's next for you for the new year, any new projects or music?

**B:** I don't have a favorite medium, I like being able to express myself in different ways. If the process is guiding is the medium then it's determined by the process and not the medium, so it changes. It's always in flux; I like to be surprised sometimes in doing an experiment to see with what I could work with that was not a conventional option.

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**B:** As a person, I consider myself Latin. So even though I may look like a gringo or a European, at heart I'm just another Latin guy. And what does that mean? It just means I've got a little more sauce. It's definitely a part of who I am, but I don't consider myself Argentinean. I consider myself a person from Miami, which is not even really the United States, it's its own Bermuda Triangle/ warped zone. But yeah Miami, Argentina, it doesn't matter. I'm starting to care less about titles and identity codes and ways of presenting yourself to other people. I just want to be another human being and I think Bucky is somebody that's been reminding me about the importance of being kind and a human being, the best human being you can be, which is a lot to ask.

**S:** I hear you. Do you ever travel back to Argentina to see family?

**B:** Yeah, all the time, Argentina's the shit! The country side- Mendoza Cordova. But my family is from Buenos Aires, time flies when I go there. I'm there for 2 weeks and it feels like 3 days. So many friends, family members, places to go, and concerts that just spring up out of nowhere, cute little coffee shops. It's still an intense city, you can't be an idiot and walk down the streets, you've got to be on your tippy toes really sharp. But it's a cool place.

**S:** What's next for you for the new year, any new projects or music?

**B:** That's the thing, music, I want to make more music and I really don't know how. I have to figure out how to make more music. Moving has been good, it's been me going through all my crap and throwing shit away and keeping certain things. I found out that my record collection has been an important addition to my understanding of culture.



*In the Studio*

So I want to do something with all of that, I'm not sure what. Next year is a pretty open book, there's a few things on the horizon but I don't like to talk about things that I'm not 100% about, but I'm looking forward to a lot of new directions again, another fork in the road. I work with a gallery in Rome, right now I have something with *Federica Schiavo*. She has some pictures of my work, I also work with **Nina Johnson** at *Gallery Diet* in Miami, she's the one that's published this *book*. She's been a wonderful supporter of my work. The book actually has an ISBN number, I'm a little bummed that to me it seems a little pricey, I'd like it to be 5 bucks but it's like 37. It's still a nice book it's hard cover, 120 page book. There's three different texts by different authors, I have an introduction by **Hugh Stockton**, an essay by **Gean Moreno**, and an interview with **Geir Heraldseth** from Norway. So there is a really diverse group of people that contributed to the book, I feel that that gives it a lot of strength. There's a discussion and the essay sort of brings it into context of art history and understanding where this fits in the history of making objects and processes and what's really at hand is it the object or is it the process and the experience that it brings us to better understanding what we're dealing with.

**S:** I want to thank you for taking the time to talk to me, is there anything else you want to say?

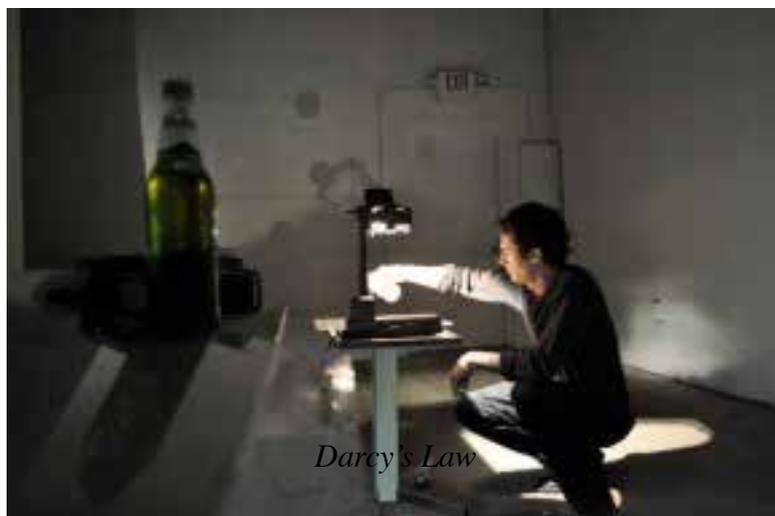
**B:** I don't know if I made any sense but I hope that people consider that art is not just something to look at or something to walk around but something that will help them to understand the irrational aspects of life in a more poetic and intuitive way. Art allows us to think in ways that logic, reason, and sciences don't really believe is very serious. I feel like art is that room in that space where things can be anything and 1 plus 1 equals 3 and you can make a song with some people you just met and that's ok. So I hope art starts to do that, art becomes a way to break stagnate patterns of thought.

**S:** That's a great finale, thanks again.

**B:** Thank you Steve



*Darcy's Law Event*





## Bhakti Baxter - visual artist

“Success is finding a way to consistently do what you love while providing some sort of service.”



**What is your take on Miami as a place to hone one's craft?**

Miami has space, room to experiment, and most of all it's a place to enjoy the outdoors while living in a city where art can be made and relationships between people strengthened.

**Where do you draw inspiration from?**

Everything. Seriously. Inter-connectivity is a major subject driving my investigations.

**What mediums do you work in?**

Mediums in my sculptural practice are currently arrived at through process and experimentation vs. conception/execution strategies. It's interesting to me how things make their way into a piece, be it a found or rearranged material that has been altered in some way. Quotidian objects such as furniture or mangled metal on the street can take on new dimensions and meanings and become more than their originally intended purpose when x object was manufactured.

**Which is your favorite medium?**

Light.

**What painters or artists excite you?**

John McAllister and Allison Shulnik are two contemporary painters I enjoy, but I'm more into the color play a Josef Albers' homage to the square paintings or the movement in one of Cezanne's landscapes.

**What is your definition of success?**

Success is finding a way to consistently do what you love while providing some sort of service.

**Where do you drink?**

Lesters or Mamushkas

**What do you do on Sundays?**

BBQ

**What do most people assume about you that is wrong?**

That I don't speak Spanish

**If you could choose another profession or career, what would it be?**

Archeologist

**In the past five years, what is a positive change you've seen around town?**

I admire the cyclists that have grown in number and taken over certain routes of our streets.

**Is there anything you would like to say?**

Every chance we have to go to a gallery, studio, or museum, it can be an opportunity (thanks to the hard working artist) to reflect upon things as a species. Art can be a chance to find meaning. Art has the power to engage and compel one another to consider or propose an alternative to formulaic, market driven use of images.

## THE HEAT LIGHTNING

# Bhakti Baxter and Jenna Balfe talk about the must-see-everyone-will-go art blowout tonight in the DD



It's Sunday already, and we're all taking fearful baby steps toward Basel. It's only days away and shit has already begun.

Tonight at 3825, Bhakti Baxter's space in the Design District, there will be a Miami style, art blow out. If you want a good taste of what we have to offer artistically as a city, this is the event you should attend. There will be performances and a Balance BBQ Sculpture by Baxter and Jason Hedges, presenting a medieval cooking device. The show is a collaboration with NDS shop and Diet Gallery's Hard Poems in Space.

We happened upon Baxter and Jenna Balfe who will be performing at the show and accosted them for a chat.

*Tell me about the show.*

Bhakti: The show is to celebrate the space that four or five artists have been working in in the last eight years and it's closing because it will be demolished the beginning of next year. We wanted to have one last throwdown at the space.

*Jenna, tell me, what are you going to do in abstract terms.*

Jenna: We're going to be playing with people. It's like grownups don't get to have enough fun, so we wanted to make a space where maybe they have a chance to do that. Especially within the whole farty context of Art Basel, we just want to be like: what is the object, why isn't it fun more often? We're using trash and then encouraging people to play with us in our beautifully assembled trash.

*Will people like you playing with them or resent you?*

Jenna: Hopefully like it. It's going to be very easy going and we're going to be very sensitive to people and respectful of their wishes or needs.

*So, it's not going to be obnoxious performance art?*

Jenna: No, I just wanna have a nice time. I don't want to be shocking people. I'm not going to invite people to rape me or anything.

*Good, cause that would make people uncomfortable. This is on Sunday night.*

Jenna: Sunday night, 6 to 11. There's going to be food and women.

*Women? Attractive women?*

Jenna: Very attractive women and attractive men. Metrosexuals.

*Everyone will go home with someone?*

Jenna: Everyone. Even if it's me going home with everyone. I'm kidding. Wait... rewind.

*No one really thinks you're going to go home with everybody. So, artistically. Tell me about the rest of the show.*

Jenna: From what I get, Bhakti just invited a lot of people, a lot of unusual characters and

some people that are more usual, I guess, and then mixed them all up to do this thing.

*Bhakti, can you tell us why you picked these people?*

Bhakti: Well, some of the people involved have had a personal working relationship with the space in the past and others are just friends that I felt were not getting the kind of exposure they should. Or maybe they didn't have anything going on. So, I offered it to them. Some of the people are really young. It was just to switch it up and not just make it, ok, these are the people that worked here. But include people like Jenna who I've known my whole life. I wasn't sure if she was an artist and she was like, yeah, I'm an artist. I'm like, OK, you're an artist, do something in the show.

*She's going to play with people. Are you OK with that?*

Bhakti: Perfect, that sounds awesome. Play with people.

*Why would people want to come out for art early when there's a week of Basel coming up?*

Bhakti: Well, beyond just being able to witness the beautiful fly's eye dome and the Dyma-xion car and the stuff in front, we'll be cooking food and it'll be the more unconventional kind of show. It's sort of a repurposed space, so it's not like a pristine white gallery or a fair cubicle. It has more of a raw feel, more of an artists put together show as opposed to a curated art gallery. It's another way to look at art. It will have everything ever. You miss it you miss it all.

Go to 3825 NE 1 Ct. from 6 to 11 p.m. to see work by Matthew Schreiber, Daniel Newman, Sarah Newberry, Emmett Moore, Jason Hedges, Natasha Velez, Jenna Balfe, Rasmus Høj Mygind, Oliver Sanchez, Misael Soto, OMG, Pete Kropotkin, Carlos Rigau Keneth Cohen, Nick Klein, Autumn Casey, and Mark Diamond.

# MOUSSE



*"Reality Show" at Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno  
October 26~2012*

"Reality Show", currently on view at Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, was conceived and developed by Stanislao di Giugno and brings together works of Bhakti Baxter, Raphael Danke, Stanislao di Giugno, Gabriel Hartley, Philipp Lachenmann, Nicola Pecoraro, Alfredo Pirri, Belén Rodríguez González, Caterina Silva, Ignacio Uriarte. A work from each artist was chosen having a specific relationship with reality, the true star of the exhibition. As noted by di Giugno, "Whatever the starting point of the artists, the idea is always to use materials easily found in everyday life, in order to implement a détournement of reality. The choice of the artists was very personal, with no intention of being exhaustive or indicating a general trend, but focused on a group of works selected on the basis of personal and subjective taste."

The title "Reality Show" is borrowed from TV language, and should be intended literally: an exhibition closely connected to the world around us, which is the subject of a phenomenological analysis, through a method meant to be descriptive, but not scientific. In the works selected it is possible to perceive "... a willingness to distort the data as they are submitted to us which I find great, a willingness that definitely does not want to accept anything that is seen as normal and set. This is a political attitude which does not declaim, does not intend to shock, but which silently worms its way into society, something maybe more difficult to eradicate..." [S. d.G. ]. The works presented are diverse: photographs, sculptures, collages, paintings, and the points of view from which they are treated are different too. Bhakti Baxter (Miami – USA, 1979) sets up a structure based on geometric codes which puzzle the viewer, who is dragged into a dimension on the border between reality and abstraction. Raphael Danke (Aachen – DE, 1972) analyzes the limit, apparently insurmountable, between everyday's apparent and its intangible dimension. Gabriel Hartley (London – UK, 1981) alters the spatial dimension, creating a short circuit between nature and artifice, while Philipp Lachenmann (Munich – DE, 1963) empirically surveys the everyday in order to explore the sense of images in relation to their symbolic meaning. Nicola Pecoraro (Roma – IT, 1978) transforms the appearance of the object, creating a transmutation of its very meaning. Alessandro Piangiamore (Enna – IT, 1976) associates a coral with a postcard. An object is used to complete a landscape in a precise balance between nature and artifice. Belén Rodríguez González (Valladolid – ES, 1981) collects coloured fragments of plastic from beaches. These become the subjects of her works, abstract images obtained through a process of scanning and printing, in a sort of cataloging at the same time unusual and scientific. Caterina Silva (Rome – IT, 1983) observes the world and replicates it through accidental gestures with signs which can be decoded. Ignacio Uriarte (Krefeld – DE, 1972) implements a variation of meaning using items taken directly from the reality of everyday life and changing their meaning. Stanislao di Giugno (Rome – IT, 1969) sets up a system which will destroy some of the universally recognizable symbols which belong to our culture and our civilization.

Courtesy: Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno. Photos: Mimmo Di Caro, Nicola Palma at Galleria Tiziana Di Caro, Salerno

until 7 December 2012