

Marc Séguin and Eric Charest-Weinberg



Artist Marc Séguin, represented by Charest-Weinberg Gallery, Miami

Marc Séguin's "La Pinata" (2009), a stuffed bald eagle tarred and feathered soaring over the entrance to SCOPE, has caused quite a stir this week. Whitewall spoke with the artist and his gallerist Eric Charest-Weinberg to discuss the work and a return to conceptual art.

WHITEWALL: "I Love American and America Loves Me Part III" is on SCOPE's homepage and "La Pinata" is the first thing you see when you walk into the fair. What's that like for you as an artist?

MARC SEGUIN: It is very flattering. I think that there are proper places to show work and this is a proper place to show my work. Things have come together naturally, Eric [Charest-Weinberg] fell in love with the work and Alexis [Hubshman] fell in love with the work.

WW: Some of the material is controversial, especially the American bald eagle tarred and feathered. How have people been reacting?

MS: I think people are addressing it by themselves. I like that, I'll probably have to go and face the music at some point but until now it's a lot and I think people are processing it.

WW: You obviously came to the work with an idea in mind. In your words what were you trying to convey?

MS: It's a very strong symbol. It's a symbol of freedom. Being tarred and feathered is something very shameful. The economy is not great and as I understand the epicenter of this whole crisis is New York. I don't think it's a cheap and tasteless provocation. The bird is still flying although it's tarred.

ERIC CHAREST-WEINBERG: The conceptual part of the piece is that it's flying.

WW: The criticism in the work, as opposed to your other work here, "Skulls #2" and "I love America and America Loves Me Part III," is wildly apparent. What compelled you to be so overtly critical in your work?

MS: I don't think that you should be making art today in 2009 if you are going to make boring aesthetic stuff. You're an artist and you have a social responsibility to be a witness of your time and these are not fun times.

ECW: And also being the ones documenting it from their perspective, taking in part of what the general pictures is. An artist, as Marc is saying, has a responsibility to take into play what the current status of the world.

MS: And we forgot about it in that robust market. The situation now commands artists to propose something intelligent and articulate.

ECW: There is a difference between cutting edge contemporary art and objects that look nice. There are thousands of beautiful objects and they fill a void. But there are so few objects that make you feel something, disconnect you from your ordinary life and make you stop to think. If the artist is doing their job properly then you should feel that. You should look at something and get goosebumps. It should make you feel.

WW: Artists in general tend to stay away from fairs. Marc, do you feel more comfortable?

MS: It's part of the job. I'm alive and people want to talk to me. It can be deceiving going to all the fairs, especially the other years. You saw these MFA guys coming out of school and selling things for \$20,000. That was deceiving. But now its gone due to the crisis.

ECW: And I think it's really an amazing time now. This has made people aware of what has happened. Things just got out of control. And we've press the reset button. Great artists will continue being great. I think there's going to be a whole new generation of artists that will come about because of this time.

