



Outside the AIPAD Photography Show 2011 at the Park Avenue Armory

AIPAD PHOTO SHOW: LOOK SMART by Walter Robinson

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New York City, March 17, 2011 -- a beautiful spring day, sunny and fresh. But nice weather is a commonplace. The **AIPAD Photography Show** comes to town but once a year.



Weegee, The Beatles, Paul McCartney and George Harrison, 1964, at Henry Feldstein, Forest Hills, at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

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Katarzyna Minczak, The Special Signs, 2010, at Frank Fine Art, London, at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

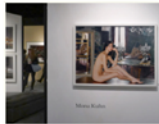
At first glance, the gray-carpeted grid of booths at the **Park Avenue Armory**, filled to the brim with photos both black-and-white and color (a few even move, digitally), is not all that exciting. Photography by definition mirrors the physical world, and it's easy to fill your eyes with the familiar.



Todd Selby, Jacques' Marilyn Monroe Pill Bottle, at Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta

But art gives back in proportion to what you put in, and if you take a second look, it's well worth it. Trailing around at the press preview after *Paper Magazine* senior editor **Carlo McCormick**, who has lately co-organized a show of Outsider and Graffiti artists for the **Venice Biennale**, is likely to draw your attention to photos of graffiti, tattoos and general distortion, figurative and literal.

He was amused by **Weegee's** 1964 double portrait of **Paul McCartney** and **George Harrison** done with the tabloid master's patented distortion lens. All news photos should be photographed this way, by law; it would mean the end of demagoguery. The vintage print, stamped on the back, is \$5,000 at the booth of veteran dealer **Henry Feldstein** from Forest Hills, N.Y.



Mona Kuhn, Morgane, 2009, at Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta, at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

Carlo also stopped at the grid of 16 color photos by the young Polish artist **Katarzyna Minczak** at the booth of **Eric Franck Fine Art** from London. Titled *The Special Signs* these straightforward photos are close-ups of sections of tattooed skin -- a skull and snake, a crucifix, a pornographic scene, all done with the simplest of means, by prisoners -- sliced from their corpses, floated in jars and now held in a forensic museum.

"Probably supposed to be a study of gang signs or something," McCormick said. "Though you know they were just being mean motherfuckers." The suite of 16 prints is priced at \$15,000.



Donata Wenders, Screenshot, 1999, at the Galerie F5.6 booth at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

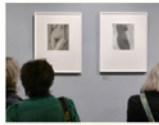
On his list of interesting things he'd seen, Carlo also had a note about a photograph of a **Marilyn Monroe** pill bottle, but he neglected to record the booth number, and when we went looking for it, we couldn't find it. It turns out the picture -- a plain, frieze-like image of the prescription bottle -- now, that's a contemporary still life -- is at the booth of **Jackson Fine Art**, Atlanta, the work of New York cult photographer **Todd Selby**, whose website, theselby.com, has become famous as a chronicle of the home life of his hipster friends.



Photos by Olaf Martens at the Galerie F5.6 booth at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

Jackson Fine Art also had a large photograph of a **Mona Kuhn** nude, *Morgane*, 2009, which caught the eye of my other companion at the press preview, the painter **Duncan Hannah**, who has been known to do a nude on occasion himself. A beautiful girl, beautifully photographed in a classic softcore way -- posed naked but almost chastely (never mind that she's sitting on a table in a fancy dining room), it's like you can't lose.

The photo, done in an edition of 8 with 3 APs, started out at \$6,000 -- but this example, one of the APs, is \$12,000 (plus \$780 for mounting and framing). It's got its appreciation built in, you could say.



Alfred Stieglitz photos of Georgia O'Keeffe at Andrew Smith Gallery, Santa Fe, at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

Next stop was the booth of the eight-year-old **Galerie F5.6** from Munich, participating in AIPAD for the first time. The offerings include *Screenshot* (1999) by **Donata Wenders**, the wife of **Wim Wenders**, showing the filmmaker with a large projected image of **Milla Jovovich** from *The Million Dollar Hotel* (2000). The price is only \$1,900.

The nearby wall of the booth is filled with color erotica by **Olaf Martens**, including four prints made in the DDR in 1989 -- Iron Curtain erotica, so to speak. Can you tell the difference? Both the settings and the color of these vintage prints say yes, though from the models it's hard to tell. They're priced at \$4,000 each.



The booth of Alex Winter Works on Paper at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

Possibly the most expensive work at the fair is a photo by **Alfred Stieglitz** of **Georgia O'Keeffe's** nude torso at the booth of **Andrew Smith Gallery** from Santa Fe. Two prints, actually, one priced at \$1 million, the other at \$1.2 million. Neither are signed -- Stieglitz didn't always sign his prints -- but their provenance is assured, coming from O'Keeffe herself via **Juan Hamilton**, the artist who was her companion at the end of her life. "It's a good price," said one of the gallery directors. "Signed, they would be twice or three times as much."



An anonymous photo of Jimmy Stewart with a parrot, at the booth of Alex Winter Works on Paper at the AIPAD Photography Show 2011

For budget buyers, there's always the booth of Brooklyn dealer **David Winter**, otherwise known as **Winter Works on Paper**, which is jammed with all kinds of anonymous photographs, some priced as low as \$100. The most cursory look found a small black-and-white of **Jimmy Stewart** holding a parrot (\$150) and riotous color shot of a nude brunette surrounded by stuffed animals (\$200). In this context, these jewels are near-irresistible.

WALTER ROBINSON is editor of *Artnet Magazine*.