

# The Creators Project

## Here's How Post-Election Anxiety Took Over Art Week Miami

Nadia Palon — Dec 4 2016

More than half of American adults had to cope with unprecedented levels of stress, anger and anxiety caused by the presidential election, according to The American Psychological Association.

Every year, more than 77,000 people come to Art Week Miami for inspiration and art. This time around, many of them were in need of consolation, too.

This election's ability to induce anxiety was record-breaking, as it made us more aware of the issues we avoid thinking about: national security, gun violence, terrorism, sexual assault, immigration. For many, these topics trigger traumatic memories, and many now worry about how election results will affect their friends and family.

Unsurprisingly, this year's fairs had the bitter taste of post-election anxiety.

At the Miami Beach Convention Center, Art Basel attendees were greeted by Sam Durant's work at Blum & Poe's booth: *End White Supremacy* screamed the words on a bright orange light box. While the piece was created in 2008 and Blum & Poe chose to showcase it before the election, its newly found context is making it glow brighter: without doubt, it was one of the most photographed pieces at Art Basel.

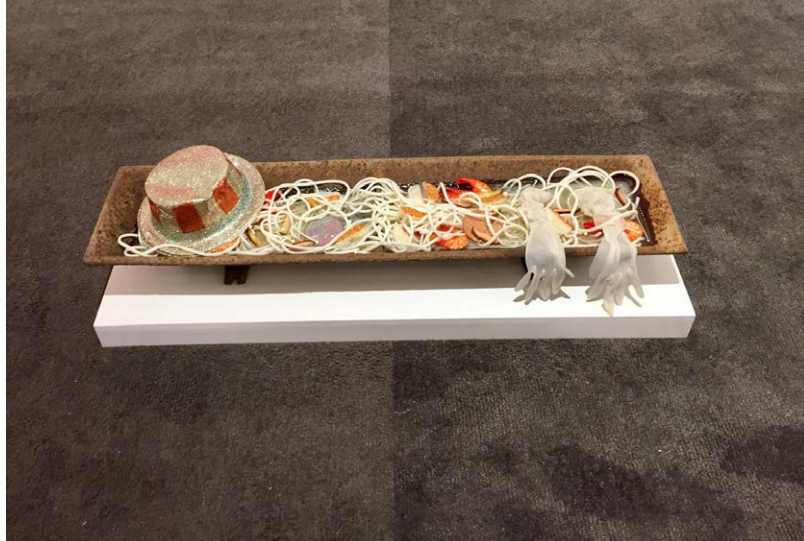
NADA Art Fair was no exception—it had its own prophetic piece as well. Paul Yore created his Osama Bin Laden tapestry, which showed Donald Trump uncomfortably intertwined with the terrorist before the election results were known.

At the same time, a flag-as-carpet work by Puppies Puppies had uncomfortable looking visitors step over it. Just a few days prior, President-elect Donald Trump proposed that those who burn the American flag be faced with jail time or loss of citizenship, completely disregarding First Amendment protections for the act.



*Puppies Puppies, American Flag, 2016. Queer Thoughts gallery*

Just a few feet away from Puppies Puppies' work, Hayley Silverman dissected the mutilated American Dream. Her work, *Professionalism*, showed a questionable feast out of udon noodles, hat, gloves and coins. Back in April, Donald Trump declared that American Dream is dead, but that he would make it "bigger and better."



*Hayley Silverman, Professionalism (2016). Bodega Gallery*

Gun violence and gun safety, cornerstones of post-election anxiety, manifested in many Art Basel works. While conservatives feared that Hillary Clinton would take away their right to bear arms and therefore their safety, liberals were afraid as well—of gun owners becoming public shooters. A captivating work by Yinka Shonibare reflected on that subject: hand-sewn Dutch cotton flowers blossoming out of a replica gun.

Finally, the topic of surveillance, one of the more recent American fears, was raised in many Art Basel pieces, the most popular of them being Fidia Falaschetti's eerie cheerfully branded security cameras.

In many ways, art has always provided much needed relief for our exhausted minds and worked as universal common ground—especially when many of us were avoiding heated political conversations this holiday season. As candidates slowly turned into combatants and unrelenting negativity took over the media, the art world started to mirror the trend as well.

We're now advised to turn our neverending worry and uncertainty about the future into productive actions, and Art Week definitely allowed many to spill the negativity out. As the election results slowly sink in, it's only a matter of time before the anxiety turns into action.

Stay tuned to [The Creators Project's Instagram feed](#) for more Art Week Miami coverage.