

# HYPERALLERGIC

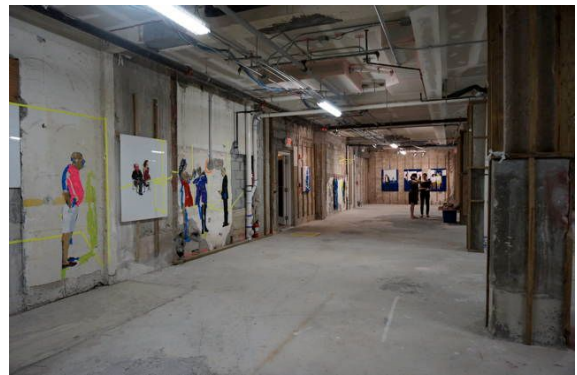
## The Miami Art Fairs, Rendered in Duct Tape

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all photos by the author for Hyperallergic

MIAMI BEACH — Duct tape is an unlikely artistic medium, but Tirtzah Bassel makes it work. Down the street from Art Basel Miami Beach, Bassel has begun creating “[Duct Tape Miami](#)” an installation that uses duct tape to replicate the people and environments of this week’s Miami’s art fairs.



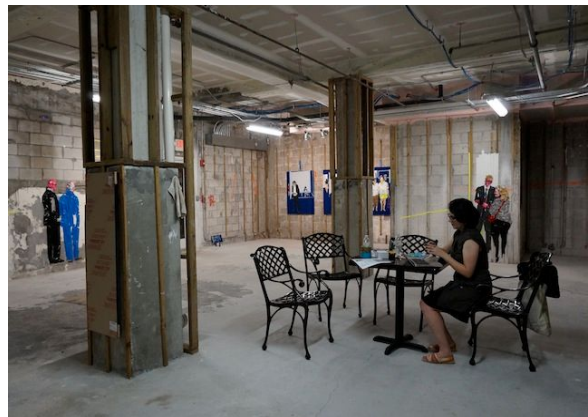
The space where she’s working is grungy — an unpolished corner storefront on Española Way with exposed walls and piping. When Bassel arrived, there was a hole in the floor, which she covered up with a board surrounded by her own version of “caution” tape, neon yellow duct tape. The ramshackle space is actually a welcome sight for eyes that have been looking at art in the glare of pristine whiteness all day.



Bassel isn’t interested in that art; she’s interested in the whiteness, the environments of the fairs and the people who fill them. None of her duct tape work replicates artworks from any of the fairs; rather, she takes photographs and uses her memory to re-create floor plans, booths, patrons, visitors, and dealers — in surprising amounts of detail. From a woman’s leopard-print high heels to a

man's colorful striped tie, she handles the tape in a painterly way, using small pieces to make patterns and giving texture to hair, clothing, and furniture. (I overheard Bassel, who's trained as a painter, telling two visitors that she likes duct tape because it's sculptural.)

When I visited last night, Bassel had just finished her first day of work, after sneaking into the Art Basel Miami Beach preview in the morning. The walls were somewhat bare compared to what's likely to come in the next few days (she'll continue adding through Sunday), but I was impressed with the start she'd made. Other people seemed to be, too; two women excitedly recognized one of the men in the installation, asking Bassel, "Is he Swiss?!" She declined to answer. It remains to be seen if "Duct Tape Miami" will offer an in-depth exploration of the psychology of fair going, as the press release promises, but it does send up us highly washed masses, and the art world could always use another laugh.



[the-miami-art-fairs-rendered-in-duct-tape](#)