

SCENE & HERD

RECENT | ARCHIVE

- Ann Binlot at Papo Colo's *Procesión-Migración*
- Cristina Sanchez-Kozyreva at "Ritiro" in Bali
- Beth Citron at the 3rd Kochi-Muziris Biennale
- Kate Sutton at "What Art History?" at the Moderna galerija
- Louisa Elderton at the 25th anniversary of the Kunst-Werke
- Linda Yablonsky at the 15th Art Basel Miami Beach



NEWS | PICKS | FILM | SLANT

Newest Headlines

- Russian Artist Pyotr Pavlensky Seeks Asylum in France Following Rape Allegations

Walk the Talk

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 01.11.17



Artist Papo Colo leads *Procesión-Migración*.

EARLY LAST SATURDAY MORNING an audience of international guests gathered in a room off the courtyard of the Liga de Arte in Old San Juan to hear about Puerto Rico's thriving art scene. "It's important to understand the background—economic, ecological, political background—why this is such a fascinating place and why this space needs a lot of attention and support right now," MoMA PS1 director and MoMA chief-curator-at-large Klaus Biesenbach told those of us who had jetted in for "Puerto Ricos: A Festival of Arts and Natures," a series of events and exhibitions that would culminate with *Procesión-Migración*, a performance in the El Yunque rainforest by Puerto Rican artist and Exit Art cofounder Papo Colo, who planned to disappear into the jungle and practice four-hundred days of silence while creating new work.

Days before, the US territory swore in its twelfth governor, Ricardo Rosselló, who is pushing to make the Caribbean archipelago the fifty-first state. He promised a new Puerto Rico, which is in the middle of a debt crisis that has brought unprecedented tax increases, angering its middle-class citizens.

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

CARDI GALLERY

HAINES GALLERY

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

David Zwirner
New York
London

DAVID NOLAN
NEW YORK

Anton Kern Gallery

team

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

Xavier Hufkens

Center Employs
Announces \$108
Million Renovation
for Its 40th
Anniversary

- Portland's Disjecta Contemporary Art Center Dismisses Founder Bryan Suereth
- Lord Snowdon (1930–2017)
- Guy Wildenstein Cleared of Tax Fraud Charges
- Walker Art Center's Artistic Director Resigns
- Martha Swope (1928–2017)
- Outsider Art Fairgoers to Recite Obama's Speeches Inauguration Weekend
- Artist Aye Ko Wins 2017 Joseph Balesier Award for the Freedom of Art
- Manchester's \$134 Million "Factory" Arts Center Gets Green Light

Ever the trailblazer, MoMA PS1 founder Alanna Heiss, who is also an old friend of Colo's, moved to Puerto Rico about four years ago, purchasing a waterfront property in San Juan. "I looked all over. I was really excited about Puerto Rico because of the artists and the fact that it's urban, and there are empty buildings here just like there were in New York in the 1970s," she said. Biesenbach had visited the commonwealth often over the past seven years, and he soon followed Heiss's lead, buying a farm in El Yunque nearly a year back. "Alanna of course was first," he said. "She was always first." They decided together that the first full weekend in January was a good time for the rest of the art world to learn why they love these islands.



Left: MoMA PS1 chairwoman Agnes Gund, MoMA PS1 director and MoMA chief curator-at-large Klaus Biesenbach, and Metropolitan Museum of Art trustee Marina Kellen French. Right: MoMA associate curator Yasmil Raymond.

Heiss hosted a cocktail party and welcome dinner in her Condado home Friday night for the Puerto Rican art world, including artists Charles Juhasz-Alvarado and Jesús "Bubu" Negrón, collectors César and Mima Reyes, and dealer Agustina Ferreyra, as well as international guests like MoMA's president emerita Agnes Gund; MoMA PS1's development director Angela Goding; and collectors Anita, Poju, and Tiffany Zabudowicz. (Tiffany was cocurator of *Procesión-Migración*.) They gathered on Heiss's sprawling terrace that featured an outdoor living room, bar, and illuminated palm-tree sculptures by Juhasz-Alvarado that aligned with the actual palm trees swaying against the water.

Saturday morning began with a performance of the Puerto Rican national anthem by Eduardo Alegría under a tree near the gate of the Fort in Old San Juan. The audience walked up the cobblestoned streets and into the home of Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, representatives for the US at the 2011 Venice Biennale, who fed the group breakfast in their charming Spanish-style residence.

From there we walked along under the bright sun to the Liga de Arte for an opening of Colo's works on paper and poetry organized by Heiss and Béatrice Johnson, where curators Marina Reyes Franco and Yasmil Raymond, Beta-Local codirector Sofía Gallisá Muriente, and nonagenarian artist Zilia Sánchez Domínguez filled us in on the Puerto Rican art scene. Then Colo's partner, Laura Rivera, donned a mustache and did a reading, and it was time for the thirty-minute drive to El Yunque.

Colo's *Procesión-Migración* was inspired by Puerto Rican playwright René Marqués's 1953 *La Carreta*—which follows a family who leaves the countryside for San Juan, and then the Bronx, in search of a better life—as well as his own incredible story, which included a forty-year-long sojourn to New York before he returned to the island several years ago.

"In Puerto Rico, migration happens every day. Just look at the airport," said Colo. The artist led the five hundred participants in a two-hour procession that began at Biesenbach's farm, marching downhill with goats, oxen, and horse-drawn carriages along the road that runs through El Yunque's verdant landscapes and cascading waterfalls. Down the hill, the group stopped for one of the myriad performances. Two men, one in drag, made out passionately against a tree before walking onto the road. "*Esto es amor!*" (This is love!) Colo declared.

"*Vive al Amor!*" shouted the crowd, following along.

team

MARIANNE
BOESKY
GALLERY

Xavier
Hufkens

Galerie
Buchholz

hosfelt
gallery

CATRIONA
JEFFRIES

Andrea
Rosen
Gallery

VAN DOREN
WAXTER



Susan
Hobbs

"Vive al Amor!" shouted the crowd, following along.



Papo Colo, *Procesión-Migración*, January 7, 2017.

The group eventually reached Colo's foundation, where the artist will spend his four-hundred-day residency, walking gingerly on a winding, cinder-block-strewn path through his lush garden, passing by its wooden treehouse before heading down to the banks of the Río Espíritu Santo. The dozen or so performers descended into the river, stripping their clothes so that the artist could perform a ritual cleansing. The procession ended with a celebratory feast of chicken and *arroz con glandules*.

"It represents the idea of connecting and solitude, but also the difference between people who are connected through social media, and that everything is so fast," said the artist Carlos Rolón/Dzine. "This actually goes back, and it digresses in a positive way."

Those who still had the energy returned to San Juan and Embajada, a gallery started by NADA membership director Manuela Paz and artist Christopher Rivera, for the opening of Jorge González's "*359 Dias in 19 Meses*." Just over a year old, the space, which focuses on established and emerging Puerto Rican and international talent, already has one artist—Chemi Rosado-Seijo—in the upcoming Whitney Biennial. "These artists have always been around," said the San Juan born-and-raised Rivera. "This is putting us on a more international platform." Or as Heiss had said about Puerto Rico's artists earlier in the day: "They're ferocious, they're terrifying, and they're real revolutionaries."



Left: Artist Jennifer Allora, artist Zilia Sánchez Doméínguez, and artist Guillermo Calzadilla.
Right: Dealer Francisco Javier Rovira and artist Carlos Rolón/Dzine.

Sunday morning a group hiked through the jungle to Cueva Vientos, a bat-filled limestone cave where Allora & Calzadilla perched Dan Flavin's eight-foot sculpture *Puerto Rican Light* (to *Jeanie Blake*)—named for Blake's observation about the way red-orange, pink, and yellow neon tubes emulate the commonwealth's light—some eighty feet above the ground. The project is Dia's first offsite work since they installed Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* in Documenta in 1982. Guests were asked not to post images on social media—or risk being sued by Flavin's estate. "The work resists being photographed anyway. It's not meant to be captured," said Allora. "Listen to the sound," whispered Raymond, who curated the project while she was at Dia. "It's more spiritual than any church," said MoMA PS1 trustee Sarah Arison. Dylan Brant called it the "show of the year."

After, we were off to the Museo de Arte de Ponce, where its president and director—María Luisa Ferré Rangel and Alejandra Peña-Gutiérrez, respectively—hosted a lunch in its Edward Durell Stone-designed building and gave a tour of its permanent collection, rife with old masterworks, and its temporary exhibitions by Colo and Rolón/Dzine. (Ferré Rangel's grandfather founded the museum, and her generosity made the weekend possible.) "I hope you will come back to Puerto Rico soon," said architect and MoMA board member Warren James, referencing a quote from the de Ponce's founder, Luis A. Ferré: "When you have a divide you make that bridge, and that bridge is art."

— Ann Binlot



Left: *Visionaire* founder and editor Cecilia Dean and restaurateur David Selig. Right: Architect and MoMA trustee Warren James and Si Shang Museum director Linyao Kiki Liu.



Left: Eduardo Alegría sings the Puerto Rican national anthem. Right: Sofia Gallisá Muriente, editor of *Data Local*



Left: Clocktower Productions founder and director Alanna Heiss and curator Béatrice Johnson. Right: Museo de Arte de Ponce president María Luisa Ferré Rangel, artist Carlos Betancourt, and MoMA PS1 trustee Sarah Arison.



Left: Sarah Arison, Klaus Biesenbach, María Luisa Ferré Rangel, and Museo de Arte de Ponce director Alejandra Peña-Gutiérrez. Right: Dealer and artist Christopher Rivera, artist Jorge González, and dealer Manuela Paz.



Left: MoMA PS1 trustee Diana Widmaier Picasso, curator Roya Sachs, and Vito Leccese. Right: Dealer Agustina Ferreyra.



Left: Collectors Mima and César Reyes. Right: Manuela Paz, Béatrice Johnson, Christopher Rivera, and MoMA PS1 director of development Angela Goding.