



The New York Times **Art** Magazine

Art Basel Miami 2009 | Shepard Fairey Video

By Jauretsi Saizarbitoria
December 7, 2009



Of all the artists at Art Basel Miami this year, Shepard Fairey is arguably the most political. “My life is very public these days,” jokes Fairey about the high-profile lawsuit that the Associated Press filed against him for using an A.P. photograph as the basis for “Hope,” his red, white and blue poster that helped Obama get elected. Fairey is no stranger to vandalism. As a student at the Rhode Island School of Design, he got his kicks pasting mysterious stickers about the wrestler Andre the Giant around town. Gradually, the sticker became the 1990s equivalent of Kilroy Was Here.

In this video, directed by Crystal Moselle for our “Something Big Something Small” series, Fairey, who had several pieces at the fair (including two on canvas), shows the small sticker that started it all 20 years ago. In the eight-foot mural that he installed in a vacant lot on 27th Street and North Miami Avenue (under the auspices of the Country Club, the Miami Art Museum and the Fountainhead program), Fairey displays all the art that’s gotten him noticed.

No longer the renegade, Shepard, 39, is now able to recruit new provocateurs to his populist enterprise. Assisting him at Art Basel was a skate punk who goes by “Baby,” Spencer Elden, who was the infant on the cover of Nirvana’s “Nevermind” album. For Fairey, it was never about ascending the gallery heights — it was more about joining a larger movement. “I had no aspirations to be a successful fine artist,” he says. “I was more inspired by punk rock album covers and skateboard graphics and street-wear T-shirts.”



<http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/art-basel-miami-2009-shepard-fairey-video/>