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ARTslant **Chicago**

EXPO CHICAGO/2015

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Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611

September 17, 2015 - September 20, 2015



Dan Sullivan and Edra Soto, *DominoDomino*, 2014. Inlaid Corian on Jatoba Wood, 30 x 30 x 30 in. Installation View. Courtesy of Morgan Lehman Gallery

Highlights and Surprises: A First Look at EXPO Chicago 2015 by Ionit Behar

In its fourth edition, EXPO Chicago has shown considerable institutional growth, adding new programs and publications, and expanding from 125 galleries in 2012 to 140 from 16 countries in 2015. A few months ago, signs promoting the fair popped up all around

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the city, boosting expectations for art lovers. Although EXPO is open to the public for just three days, the week of September 14-20—now referred as the EXPO Art Week—is one of the Chicago art scene's busiest times of the year. Collectors, artists, and curators from around the world meet in the Second City for scores of events built up around the EXPO centerpiece, among them: gallery openings, gala benefits, lectures, curator-led private tours, and performances.

A real highlight of this year's fair is the site-specific installations, with large and performative works located in and around the Navy Pier. These curated projects are part of the IN/SITU and EXPO PROJECTS initiatives including works by emerging and established artists represented by 2015 exhibitors: Daniel Buren, Amalia Pica, Hunter Reynolds, Jason Salavon, Dan Sullivan and Edra Soto, Hank Willis Thomas, Jim Rick and Ryan Alexiev, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Jessica Stockholder, among many others. In the overwhelming environment of this and any art fair, with a majority of abstract and geometric art, Hunter Reynolds' project *Survival AIDS – ACT UP Chicago – A Revolution* caught my attention. Located on one the side hallways, next to the restrooms, this project is hypnotizing and harsh. Reynolds, a visual artists and AIDS activist, created three wall-sized panels made of photo collages of scanned newsprint of articles on AIDS and material from Positively Aware, a not-for-profit HIV/AIDS treatment journal published by Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) in Chicago. Here, Reynolds uses archival material from the ACT UP collection at the University of Chicago and the private collection of Chicago HIV specialist D. Daniel S. Berger. One panel features a photo of the artist dressed up as his alter ego, wearing his AIDS Memorial Dress with 25,000 names of people who have died from HIV/AIDS. There will be a performance by the artist on Sunday, September 20.

Another EXPO PROJECT of note is Dan Sullivan and Edra Soto's *DominoDomino* where the couple, also founders of The Franklin, meticulously crafted a jatoba wood table with corian inlay, inspired by the cement domino table common to Puerto Rico. Interested in building relationships and friendly environments, Sullivan and Soto's installation evokes a game room where friends and strangers are both invited to interact.