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Davidov, Shelly. "Piston Head - Art Basel Exhibit: *Playboy*, Ferrari, and Crushed Cars Collide."

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"Piston Head" Art Basel Exhibit: *Playboy*, Ferrari, and Crushed Cars Collide.



"Piston Head: Artists Engage the Automobile," powered by Ferrari, brought the big guns to Miami Beach this week. And by big guns, we mean large-scale art, powerful cars, and Playboy Bunnies.

Venus over Manhattan's opening gave VIPs a first glimpse at the exhibit, which featured automobiles transformed into sculptures by leading modern and contemporary artists including Keith Haring, Damien Hirst, Ron Arad, César, Dan Colen, and Nate Lowman, among others.

See also: Piston Head: Venus Over Manhattan Brings Auto Art to Basel Week



Though Richard Phillips' Playboy Charger and Ferrari's LaFerrari state-of-the-art hybrid supercar got a lot of glamorous photo ops, the exhibit's recurring theme of destruction cut through the luxurious bullshit like an ax.

"My favorite piece is the car compression by César, the French artist," said Adam Lindemann, curator of "Piston Head." "... I just love the idea that in the middle of a car show, we have a crushed car, a destroyed car."



Destruction and violence influenced several pieces in the show, like Ron Arad's flattened Fiat 600 and Lucien Smith's rust-ravaged, bullet hole-filled truck. But Bruce High Quality Foundation's recently completed work -- a pair of entangled Volkswagen Beetles - kept guests glued to one corner of the 1111 Lincoln Road garage.



The 2013 Foundation piece Art History with Passion features video installation in the dashboards of the colliding vehicles. Clips from iconic car movies like "Mad Max" and David Cronenberg's "Crash" mingled with video of notorious couples, from Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, to Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, to Eva Braun and Adolf Hitler. Passion and suffering merged in much of the footage: Holly Golightly rejecting Paul Varjack's declarations in "Breakfast at Tiffany's"; Cher weeping during Sony Bono's eulogy.

Viewers found themselves transfixed by the televised emotional wreckage inside the ruined metal frames. As one patron said, "it gives a whole new meaning to drive-in movies."

"Piston Head: Artist Engage the Automobile" at the top of 1111 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach, is open to the public Dec. 5 through Dec. 8 from 1 to 8 p.m.