



Art To Notice While Beating the Cold in South Florida

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by Sandra Hale Schulman

Beating the cold in South Florida? It's been a busy, beautiful season, with artists and exhibition spaces taking full advantage of the heaven-sent weather. New murals, blockbuster shows and trippy airstreams have sprung up in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. Following are a few gems to select after leaving the beach.

Michelle Weinberg Mural at the Wolfsonian

South Miami Beach's imposing Wolfsonian Museum, located in a 1927 Mediterranean style building that was formerly a windowless storage facility, was founded in 1986 to exhibit, document, and preserve the Mitchell Wolfson Jr. Collection of Decorative and Propaganda Arts, a vast assemblage of objects that includes furniture, paintings, books, prints, industrial and decorative art objects, and ephemera.

In 1997 the museum became a division of Florida International University (FIU), which received Wolfson's collection as a donation.

Since then a number of wonderful murals have taken over the exterior. The newest to be unveiled is by Miami artist Michelle Weinberg, measuring 168 by 24 feet, inspired by dazzle camouflage painting applied to warships during World War I and in conjunction with the exhibition, "[Myth and Machine: The First World War in Visual Culture](#)."

Weinberg updated the colors to zingy black and pink delineating deco-esque shapes to adorn the entire lower section of the museum running along Washington Avenue and around the corner onto 10th Street.

Weinberg is a visual artist living and working in Miami Beach and New York. In addition to painting, she creates collage, designs hooked rugs, painted tiles, colorful mosaic and painted murals, and produces art for architecture and public spaces. According to the artist, her imagery inhabits a "Pretend Dimension" in which "elastic perspectives, personalized geometries, and fictitious architectures elaborate stage-set like narratives."

Other large scale projects by Weinberg include a recent mural for the Miami offices of Facebook and a terrazzo floor for a newly constructed Fire Station commissioned by Miami-Dade County Art In Public Places.

The Wolfsonian, 1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach 33139; www.wolfsonian.org



Michelle Weinberg's mural at the Wolsonian in Miami Beach. Photo courtesy of the artist.



Michelle Weinberg's mural at the Wolsonian in Miami Beach. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera at NSU Museum of Fort Lauderdale

Now that the big—and big ego—paintings by Julian Schnabel have come down, an equally large in stature pair of painters is moving in to the [NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale](#). Paintings by Diego Rivera (1886–1957) and his wife Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) will be on view in a group exhibition of 75 works at from February 26 through May 31, 2015, in “Kahlo, Rivera and Mexican Modern Art.”

Works by Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera have been provided from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection and 20th century Mexican art is from the Stanley and Pearl Goodman Collection.

This is sure to be a blockbuster show, with outstanding paintings from the collection, including some of Kahlo's best-known self-portraits. One of these is *Diego on My Mind (Self-Portrait as A Tehuana)*, 1943, in which Kahlo stares at the viewer, enveloped in an elaborate lace and ribbon headdress with a portrait of Rivera literally inscribed on her forehead. Another is *Love Embrace of the Universe, Earth (Mexico), Myself, Diego and Señor Xolotl*, 1940, showing a mythical portrait of Kahlo cradling Rivera's naked body in her arms. Still another is *Self-Portrait with Monkeys*, 1943, a cult-worthy image of the artist surrounded by scrambling little capuchin monkeys.



“Diego on My Mind” by Frida Kahlo. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Rivera is represented by a portrait he did of one of his collectors, Natasha Gelman, a lovely reclining figure surrounded by white calla lilies. He presents the lily again in his sensual *Calla Lily*

Vendor, 1943, in which the erotic floral forms are bowed to by three faceless figures who kneel, immobilized in reverence.



“Portrait of Natasha Gelman” by Diego Rivera. Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Rivera was more well-known for his enormous public murals while Kahlo, his beleaguered and disfigured wife, painted small due to spending a great deal of her life in wheelchairs and beds. It will be interesting to see how this size/relationship dynamic plays out in the museum.

A 144-page, illustrated book, *Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera and Mexican Modern Art*, accompanies the exhibition. It features essays by art historian and curator Helga Prignitz-Poda and a foreword by NSU Museum of Art Director and Chief Curator Bonnie Clearwater.

NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, 1 East Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301; www.moafll.org

The Triumph of Love: Beth DeWoody Collects

The most beautiful, weird, and shiny new thing happening in West Palm Beach is at the Norton Museum of Art. “The Triumph of Love: Beth Rudin DeWoody Collects” is one of the best shows of the season, filled with the eye-popping, wild, very personal collection of New York City and West Palm Beach resident DeWoody’s stunning pieces.

The room-filling show is just a fraction of her collection, a different part of it was exhibited at the Parrish Museum in Southampton in 2012. Here, many of the selected sculptures are arrayed on pyramid-shaped white platforms and paintings are hung salon style, floor to ceiling on the surrounding walls. A humorous gilded shopping cart—the art of consumerism—revolves atop a pedestal...feeling like a reminder to visitors to exit through the gift shop.

The largest piece in the exhibition is located outside the museum, near the main doors. Randy Polumbo’s *Love Stream #2* is an actual Airstream mobile home trailer retrofitted with his trademark glass-blown, far out, erotic flora in sweet candy colors that glow from within. Silver floors, walls, ceilings and curvaceous silver leather couches shine in the inside. *Love Stream #2* is usually parked in DeWoody’s waterfront yard.



Randy Polumbo with his “Love Stream #2.”

"Beth's show is magnificent, like she is," Polumbo wrote in an email. "The greatest collections are in the end a portrait of who collected them. In this case, viewing the exhibition is like having a cup of coffee with Beth. You feel the exuberance and passion, the humor, the wisdom, and the seriousness. It takes a heroic vision and a very big heart to find all the oddball people and gallerists and venues, and get in on the ground floor as Beth so often does."

The exhibit is on display through May 3, 2015.

Norton Museum of Art, 1451 S. Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401. www.norton.org.

Izhar Patkin: The Wandering Veil

The sometimes overlooked Boca Raton Museum of Art has a dreamy, ethereal, cerebral show up through April 5 in "Izhar Patkin: The Wandering Veil." This survey of works by the Israeli-born, New York based artist fills the museum's gallery space with spectacular mural-size paintings on tulle fabric that were inspired by a series of poems by Agha Shahid Ali.

Grand in scale, these labyrinthine yet surprisingly intimate works cover the entire wall space, rife with personal narrative, political metaphor, and a myth that emphasizes memory, loss, love, and exile in times of war and peace. Patkin designed a special screening process to create this pleated sea of dreams.



"You Tell Us What To Do" by Izhar Patkin. Ink on tulle curtain, 14 x 22 x 28 feet.
Photo by Sandra Hale Schulman.

Also worth noting are "Surrealism and Magic" and "Abstraction on Paper". Running concurrently with "Izhar Patkin", the Surrealism show includes paintings and works on paper by the usual suspects: Kurt Seligmann, André Breton, Matta, Dalí, Marcel Duchamp, Yves Tanguy, Man Ray, Max Ernst, Masson, Dorothea Tanning, Leonora Carrington, Wilfredo Lam, and Magritte.

Expect to find a little bit of The Hamptons in the Abstraction show: Mary Abbott, Gertrude Green, Balcomb Green are represented in the exhibition, along with works by Franz Kline, Alexander Calder, Wassily Kandinsky, John Sennhauser and others. All works are pulled from the museum's collection.

Boca Raton Museum of Art, 501 Plaza Real, Boca Raton, FL 33432. www.bocamuseum.org