



Ugo Rondinone's "Miami Mountain" Acquired by The Bass, Launches Commitment to Contemporary Art

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by Pat Rogers

The Bass Museum of Art has acquired Ugo Rondinone's *Miami Mountain* as its first art work in a new acquisition commitment to add contemporary art to its collection, announced the Miami Beach museum. *Miami Mountain* follows Rondinone's iconic "Mountain" series, currently on view in New York at [Gladstone Gallery](#) in the solo exhibition "[Ugo Rondinone: the sun at 4pm.](#)" The series is recognizable for their brightly colored fluorescent contrasting palates.

Miami Mountain, towering 41 feet tall, will be permanently installed in Collins Park, according to [The Bass](#). It is the first of its kind to be acquired by a museum and also signifies the launch of The Bass' new acquisitions initiative, a 10 year program to acquire contemporary works into the permanent collection, according to the art museum. The Bass is currently undergoing a renovation and expects to reopen the museum located at [Collins Park](#) in the spring 2017.

Miami Mountain is a singular column and consists of five boulders in fluorescent colors. It is considered to be one of the most important works of land art in the past 40 years, according to The Bass.

Mediating between geological formations and abstract compositions, Rondinone's *Miami Mountain* will travel from Las Vegas to Miami Beach this fall. The work finds its geological inspiration in the "hoodoo" rock formations of the North American Badlands. Hoodoos are naturally occurring stacks of rock which form as the silt and sediment at the edge of plateaus washes away over time, leaving only the densest earth behind.



Rendering of "Miami Mountain" by Ugo Rondinone. Rendering © Ugo Rondinone, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and The Bass, Miami Beach.

Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone's first foray into monumentalizing the mountain series came in May 2016 when he unveiled [Seven Magic Mountains](#), a site specific installation composed of seven 35 foot high dayglow boulders, located in the desert outside of Las Vegas, Nevada.

Visible across the desert along Interstate 15, *Seven Magic Mountains* was sited specifically to be physically and symbolically mid-way between the natural and the artificial, [Rondinone explained](#) about the public art piece. “The natural is expressed by the mountain ranges, desert, and Jean Dry Lake backdrop, and the artificial is expressed by the highway and the constant flow of traffic between Los Angeles and Las Vegas,” according a website for Seven Magic Mountains. The public art work opened in May 2016 and will remain on view for two years.

The tradition of stacking stones atop one another has existed across cultures for thousands of years. Cairns, or stone piles, carry diverse and dynamic cultural significance with a common thread is their use as a designation of time and place. *Miami Mountain* follows in this tradition as a lone demarcation, a moment in time frozen forever, according to The Bass.

The sublime forces of time and nature are a recurring motif within Rondinone’s practice. His work often evokes the tensions between the immediate present and the inconceivable eventual. His interest in what he calls “primitive materials” such as the boulders in the case of *Miami Mountain*, stems from contemplation, stillness and inaction. The materials at their core are ancient

Miami Mountain extends Rondinone’s long-running interest in natural phenomena and their reformulation in art. The titles and forms of his paintings and sculptures have frequently evoked primordial phenomena such air, moons, the sun, and the cosmos. Referring concurrently to the natural world, romanticism, and existentialism, *Miami Mountain* encapsulates a sort of mental trinity that has underpinned the artist’s work for more than two decades. In a new iteration of themes and materials, *Miami Mountain* creates a sense of romantic minimalism.

The exhibition at Gladstone Gallery of Ugo Rondinone’s art features four distinct bodies of work: “mountain,” “sun,” “waterfall” and “cloud,” presenting a setting where the everyday can connect to the sublime evoked by environmental phenomena, [according to the gallery](#). The exhibition continues Ugo Rondinone’s examination of the link between the natural world and the human condition as well as extends the artist’s mining of the German Romantic movement as a primary source of reference, according to the exhibition announcement.

BASIC FACTS: The Bass Museum of Art is located at 2100 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139. www.thebass.org.

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