

In Turbulent Times, Florida Puts Best Face Forward for Miami Art Week

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by Elisa Turner

Although the international cultural extravaganza of Miami Art Week reflects months of planning, this year there was a bizarre coincidence: the week's coveted international spotlight began with a news flash heard 'round the world: Castro Dies.

In the dark, early morning hours on Nov. 26, 2016 crowds of Cuban exiles celebrated, honking horns and banging pots in Little Havana soon after the long awaited death of 90-year old Cuban leader Fidel Castro was announced. The celebration continued for hours as a cheering crowd danced in the streets. They paraded in front of iconic Cafe Versailles restaurant on 8th Street. The cafe is the passionate heart of Cuban Miami, a place where for more than five decades hundreds of thousands have landed or settled after fleeing Castro's brutal regime.

The reveling had a bittersweet side in the form of regret that friends and relatives who suffered untold hardships from the Castro regime did not live to witness this historic moment.

One day later an abrupt transition overtook the city famed for its love of over-the-top parties: Miami Art Week began in earnest with a different type of noisy, crowded parade titled "Tide by Side." There was more dancing in the streets, courtesy of the Cuban visual artist collective Los Carpinteros' conga group. They clattered down Collins Avenue in Miami Beach with energetic performances by musicians and dancers, along with creations by artists Miralda, Carlos Betancourt, Damian Rojo, and others. "Tide by Side" marked the official opening of the widely anticipated Faena Arts District in Miami Beach, initiated by Argentine developer Alan Faena.

Miami Art Week is a wildly-hyped bonanza for art galleries and art fairs. But for art lovers there are many gems to discover among South Florida institutions, which put their best face forward during this annual spectacle of glitz and culture, with exhibits, parties, brunches, talks and other events. Check the institutions' websites for special hours and events during Miami Art Week.

As a longtime Miami resident and art critic, I've been asked to share with Hamptons Art Hub some of those gems shining throughout Miami Art Week. Except for the pop-up exhibit "[Ping Pong](#)," their luster continues long after the fairs pack up their tents.

Fort Lauderdale Area

A short drive to the north of Miami, [NSU Art Museum](#) of Fort Lauderdale is offering a show promising

stunning breadth and depth. It's dedicated to one of the most prominent artists of our era: "Regeneration Series: Anselm Kiefer from the Hall Collection." The show brings together books, paintings, works on paper and sculpture from the late 1960s to 2013 by Germany's peerless witness to world history.



"Die Schechina" by Anselm Kiefer, 2010 (detail). Painted resin dress, glass shards, steel, numbered glass discs, and wire in inscribed glass and steel vitrine, 179 x 82.5 x 82.5 inches. Hall Collection, Courtesy Hall Art Foundation. Photography: Charles Duprat. © Anselm Kiefer. Image courtesy of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.

[Art and Culture Center/Hollywood](#) in Hollywood, Florida, features a unique look at four generations of South Florida artists, curated by the Miami-based, internationally exhibited artist and indefatigable independent curator William Cordova, with emphasis on the region's distinctive geography and cultural diversity. Among the artists: Lou Anne Colodny, Rosemarie Chiarlone,

Robert Huff (reviewed [here](#) for Hamptons Art Hub), Charo Oquet, Glexis Novoa (reviewed [here](#) for Hamptons Art Hub), Ernesto Oroza, and Purvis Young.

North Miami

Enterprising, ever-creative [Bridge Red Studios](#) in North Miami is a not-to-be-missed artists' complex with exhibition spaces and studios. It recently won a Knight Challenge Grant to support its advocacy for talented artists working in Miami who merit more attention. Current exhibitions feature Yanira Collado, Kathleen Hudspeth, Raoul Sentenat. Art Basel Miami Beach studio visits take place at Bridge Red on Dec. 3, 9 a.m. to noon, free and open to the public. www.bridgeredstudios.com



“Original Condition (El Viento Trae un Extrano Lamento)” by Yanira Collado. Installed at Bridge Red Studios. Courtesy of the artist.

Near Bridge Red is [North Miami's Museum of Contemporary Art](#), which has faced daunting challenges following its entanglement with Miami's Institute of Contemporary Art. It's showing “Antuan Rodriguez: The Other Dimension,” curated by Jorge Luis Gutiérrez.

Wynwood & Design District

At one of Miami's most enduring private collections, [Margulies Collection at the Warehouse](#), there is a new installation by Anselm Kiefer and “sculptural paintings” by Arte Povera artist Jannis Kounellis; also work by Radcliffe Bailey, Mark Dion, Will Ryman, and others. So much attention to Kiefer here and at NSU Art Museum may very well set the stage for the first American museum look at German

artist Thomas Bayrle in “One Day on Success Street” at [Miami’s Institute of Contemporary Art](#), located temporarily in the Design District’s Moore Building. Known for his interest in how machines and technology can transform our views of the human body, Bayrle has created *Wire Madonna*, a site-specific installation for the ICA’s distinctive but sometimes rather claustrophobic atrium.

The [de la Cruz Collection](#) presents “Progressive Praxis,” which explores the shifting nature of current visual culture, according to the website’s rather confusing description. Among the impressive list of artists: Tauba Auerbach, Martin Creed, Félix González-Torres, Ana Mendieta, Christopher Wool. This collection’s rich presentation of Mendieta is always a highlight.

The non-profit space [Locust Projects](#), one of Wynwood’s early pioneers now moved to the Design District, layers opera, video and the visual arts to offer “The Comet and the Glacier” by Alexis Gideon.

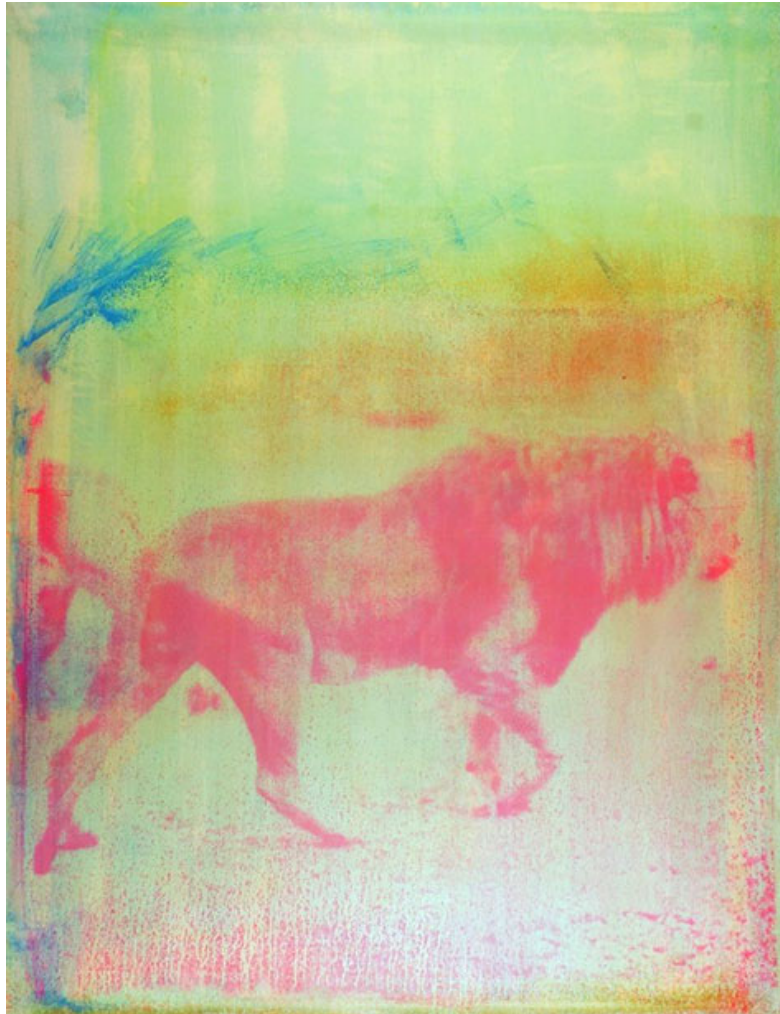


“The Comet and the Glacier” by Alexis Gideon, Installed at Locust Projects.
Courtesy of Locust Projects.

As gentrification transforms Wynwood and many of its galleries move north to Little Haiti and Little River, the pioneering private collection that helped put Wynwood on the art world map is moving, too. This week the [Rubell Family Collection](#) announced plans to move in 2018 to a new 100,000 square foot museum in Miami’s Allapattah District—more than doubling its current space. Here, exhibits feature the collection’s contemporary Brazilian art (Paulo Nazareth, Erika Versuti and others) and new acquisitions (Andra Ursuta, John Waters and others) in the show “High Anxiety.”

Downtown Miami

A pop-up exhibition just for Miami Art Week is “[Ping Pong](http://www.ping-pong-miami.us),” a lively nomadic exhibition project that’s been going strong since 2007, fostering creative urban exchanges across the map. This year it presents artists from Basel, Miami and Los Angeles, including Robert Chambers (Miami), Diane Silver (Los Angeles), and Sue Irion (Basel). Location: Alfred I. Dupont Building, 169 East Flagler Street, Miami. www.ping-pong-miami.us and www.ping-pong-basel.ch



“Naked Lion” by Sue Irion, 2016. Fotoemulsion on cotton.
On view in “Ping Pong.” Courtesy of the artist.

On Miami’s Biscayne Boulevard, iconic buildings once owned by Bacardi Company now house [National YoungArts Foundation](#), including the dazzling Jewel Box, sheathed in stained glass. Its magical interior has inspired numerous artists with site-specific installations. This year, look for José Parla’s mural-scaled mix of abstraction, calligraphy and graffiti.



“Hatuey Patria 24 de Febrero” by José Parlá, 2016. Photo: Parlá Studios. On view at National YoungArts Foundation.

Operating locations in Miami Beach and downtown Miami, the always surprising [ArtCenter/South Florida](#) has prepared for Basel in a big way, launching the multi-faceted exhibit “An Image.”

With a signature facade of exuberant green foliage rendered in glass Bisazza tiles, the [CIFO/Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation](#) has for years been a welcome addition to a neighborhood still rough around the edges. It’s showing “Toda percepción as una interpretación: You are part of it,” selections from Ella Fontanals-Cisneros and CIFO Collections, also a recreation of Argentine-born Liliana Porter’s 1969 “Wrinkle Environment,” a site-specific and interactive installation.

Don’t miss the radiant collision of Op Art with Kinetic Art: “Julio Le Parc: Form Into Action” at [Pérez Art Museum Miami](#). It spotlights this seminal Argentine artist’s innovative experiments with perceptions of light and movement, too little known in this country until now. It’s curated by Estrellita B. Brodsky, New York philanthropist and scholar, hailed as an astute champion of Latin American art.



“Continuel-lumière cylindre(Continuous Light Cylinder)” by Julio Le Parc, 1962/2013. Painted wood, stainless steel, motor, metal disk, and light, Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Galeria Nara Roesler. Julio Le Parc © 2016 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Photo: Everton Ballardin © Galeria Nara Roesler.

The [New York Times reported](#) on November 30, 2016, that Jorge M. Pérez—who donated \$40 million in cash to fund construction of the museum that bears his name—is giving \$10 million in cash and a collection of more than 200 works by Cuban artists valued at some \$5 million to the Pérez Art Museum Miami. The donated art includes works by the painter Hernan Bas, the installation specialist Carlos Garaicoa and the conceptual collective Los Carpinteros. According to the Times, the gift includes a stipulation that \$5 million will go to the museum’s endowment, \$1 million toward Cuban art and \$4 million to Latin-American art generally.

Perez—who is of of Cuban descent, although he was raised in Argentina and Colombia—was quoted by the Times as saying: “I think if one place should have a strong Cuban collection, it should be Miami.”

Visitors should make time for the nearby [MDC Museum of Art & Design](#). More timely than anyone could have anticipated, it’s showing “Q & A, Nine Contemporary Cuban Artists,” selected by Havana-based curator Cristina Vives. Most of the artists live and work in Cuba. In various media, they’ve produced work that looks at their country through the lens of myth and history. They include Alexandre Arrechea, Lorena Gutiérrez, and Tony Labat.

South of Downtown Miami

Dating back to 1916, [Vizcaya Museum and Gardens](#) offers a true “only in Miami” blend of present and past. This grandly Italianate treasure, once home to Gilded Age industrialist James Deering, is annually transformed during Miami Art Week with performances and site-specific projects by Miami-based artists. It’s usually a glorious, adventurous melding of art, architecture and landscape. Among the artists this year: Leyden Rodriguez Casanova, [Mira Lehr](#) and Yara Travieso.

In Coral Gables, [Lowe Art Museum of University of Miami](#) welcomes Basel with several exhibits including “Unconscious Thoughts Animate the World,” a look at prominent Cuban women artists and “Titus Kaphar: The Vesper Project” (reviewed [here](#) for Hamptons Art Hub). At Florida International University, [Frost Art Museum](#) offers several choices, including “Narciso Rodriguez: An Exercise in Minimalism,” merging fashion with art and design. On Sunday morning, Dec. 4 of Miami Art Week 2016 there’s a tour of the Frost’s Sculpture Park with a lecture by Judy Pfaff, free and open to the public.

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