

# A GUIDE TO MIAMI'S ART SCENE

*With galleries popping up all over town, Miami is about more than just Art Basel*

*Text by SHAYNE BENOWITZ*

"Miami has its own rhythm and energy," says Ellen F. Salpeter, director of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, which opens the doors to its newly built permanent space in the Miami Design District on December 1. Designed by Spanish architecture firm Aranguren + Gallegos with a contemporary façade with overlapping metal forms and illuminated inset panels, it's a new addition to Miami's ever-expanding, shape-shifting cultural landscape. Since its inception in 2014, the museum had been housed inside a temporary space at the historic Moore Building in the same neighborhood.

Salpeter made the leap from the New York City art world, most recently as deputy director at the Jewish Museum, to join the Miami institution. "The opportunity to get in on the ground floor of something new, and help shape the ICA Miami and grow the cultural ecology and landscape of the city, was intoxicating," Salpeter says.

With an impressive contemporary art scene, the emergence of Wynwood's kaleidoscopic street art, and Art Basel Miami Beach ever present in December since 2002, Miami has chiseled a unique identity on the international art stage.

"What's great about Miami is that it is a relatively young city. There's all this energy and youth and cultural diversity. It's multilingual. It's a portal to South America, Latin America, the Caribbean; all of those things add to the mix of Miami," Salpeter says. "It's very different from long-standing or more established cities. It's also very different from cities that sprung up quickly in, say, China or the Middle East. Miami has its history, and it's constantly reinventing itself as it moves forward. For me, what that adds to the international art world is a flavor and a point of view."

## Design District

For a snapshot of Miami's art scene, Salpeter recommends starting with a morning in the Design District. ICA Miami's inaugural program inside its new 37,500-square-foot space includes the thematic group exhibition "The Everywhere Studio," spanning the early 1960s, with works by Picasso, to the present day, with a new commission by Margaret Honda featuring 50 artists and over 100 works that explore the organizing principle of artists and their sites of production.

Nearby, the de la Cruz Collection stages annual exhibitions as one of Miami's long-standing, world-class private art collections. Admission is

always free at both institutions, so Salpeter recommends "spending your dollars on a great coffee at Blue Bottle," which is slated to open a few blocks away by year's end.

The Design District is also home to the Haitian Heritage Museum and Locust Projects exhibition space, as well as a new public sculpture program in collaboration with the ICA Miami that will feature two monumental Sol LeWitt sculptures at the eastern entrance to the area and Thomas Bayle's *Wire Madonna* in the atrium of the Moore Building.

## Wynwood Walls

Just south of the Design District, Wynwood is home to a concentrated collection of street art by local artists such as Magnus Sodamin, Typoe, and Jessy Nite as well as international superstars like Shepard Fairey, RETNA, Swoon, OSGEMEOS, and Maya Hayuk, in large part thanks to the Wynwood Walls outdoor project conceived by the late developer Tony Goldman in 2009.



## Museum Hop

Continuing south, the game-changing Pérez Art Museum Miami, dedicated to modern and contemporary art, moved to its present home downtown in 2013. Designed by Pritzker Architecture Prize-winning firm Herzog & de Meuron, the building overlooks Biscayne Bay.

Similar to ICA, the Bass museum on South Beach, established in 1964, has new digs to flaunt after a two-year-plus renovation to its original art deco building, which created 50 percent more usable space for the contemporary institution. The adjacent Collins Park is home to Art Basel's Public sector, exhibiting site-specific installations and sculptures, under new curator Philipp Kaiser, for the annual fair.

## Gallery Crawl

Once concentrated in Wynwood, Miami's galleries have dispersed to new neighborhoods, like downtown and Little River, and returned to South Beach. Salpeter's go-tos include Nina Johnson, Spinello Projects, Emerson Dorsch, and Fredric Snitzer. She finds the presence of a local gallery scene to be absolutely essential. "The notion that you would be a city just of presenting work is not sustainable," she says. "You need to have the artists here." And if she has anything to do with it, Miami will continue its ascendancy as a thriving, singular destination for contemporary art and emerging artists.

*Left: A section of a mural by Fafi at the Wynwood Walls, which spotlights graffiti and street art. Right: Juliana, a sculpture by Frank Benson, at the Rubell Family Collection, one of the largest private contemporary art collections in North America.*

PHOTOGRAPHS, INSET AND OPPOSITE PAGE: JESSICA ATHANASIOU. THIS PAGE, UNTITLED, MURAL BY FAFI, IN THE WYNWOOD WALLS, 2015. OPPOSITE PAGE: JULIANA SCULPTURE BY FRANK BENSON, 2016, PAINTED ACCURAX XTREME PLASTIC RAPID PROTOTYPE, 54 X 48 X 24 IN (137.2 X 121.9 X 61 CM). PART OF THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION, MIAMI. FROM THE EXHIBITION "HIGH ANXIETY"

