

Art Wynwood Is a Win

Enjoy the art and a breather from Basel bedlam

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

Over the years, the city of Miami has gotten lost in the hype of the frenetic week of Art Basel Miami Beach. And not just the city, but Miami artists, too, whose lack of representation at the major fairs has been a complaint for some time.

With the overwhelming plethora of events in early December, visitors and locals have focused on traffic, parking, and celebrity parties. Even the picture-perfect weather seems to have become an afterthought — there's been too much business and networking to bother with the surroundings.

The fair fatigue was also dampening enthusiasm for other events throughout the year — until Art Wynwood, a spawn

of Art Miami, decided to give it another go. Four years ago it instigated a February fair, and this year more than 70 galleries from across the globe will set up booths during a stretch that intentionally coincides with the Miami International Boat Show and Coconut Grove Art Festival, taking place on the same dates.

Set up in a tent in Midtown (the same used by Art Miami in December), Art Wynwood has found a niche, one that embraces internationalism, but with a high-profile emphasis on Miami.

Instead of worrying about the availability of taxis or the price of Uber or timing between fairs and happenings, Art Wynwood is turning out to be a one-stop alternative, where collectors and average art lovers can take their time and enjoy the surrounding neighborhoods and the still-perfect winter clime.



Farley Aguilar's *Mourning2*, oil on linen, from Miami's Spinello Projects.



Quentin Shih's *La Habana in Waiting*, from Miami-based Art Lexing Gallery.

Its growing “Special Exhibition” program also sets it apart, as is clear this year. A number of projects feature local artists, Miami-centric themes, or what has become a Miami specialty — street art.

“SOLO Miami” is one such project. Among the biggest criticisms of Art Basel week is that Miami art gets short shrift, and this is an intentional counterpoint that Art Wynwood is making. Five galleries were asked to feature one of their artists with solo exhibits showcasing new works made specifically for the project.

“SOLO” is spearheaded by the fair's assistant director, Grela Orihuela, who aims to put a spotlight on local artists. She asked Primary Projects, Spinello Projects, Snitzer Gallery, GucciVuitton, and Emerson Dorsch to select an artist. They chose, in order, Autumn Casey, Farley Aguilar, Mauricio Gonzalez, Peter Goodrich, and Brookhardt Jonquil.

Orihuela hopes that both locals and visitors will get a feel for the range of art being produced in Miami during a far less hectic time and atmosphere, and these gallery selections turn out to be nicely varied.

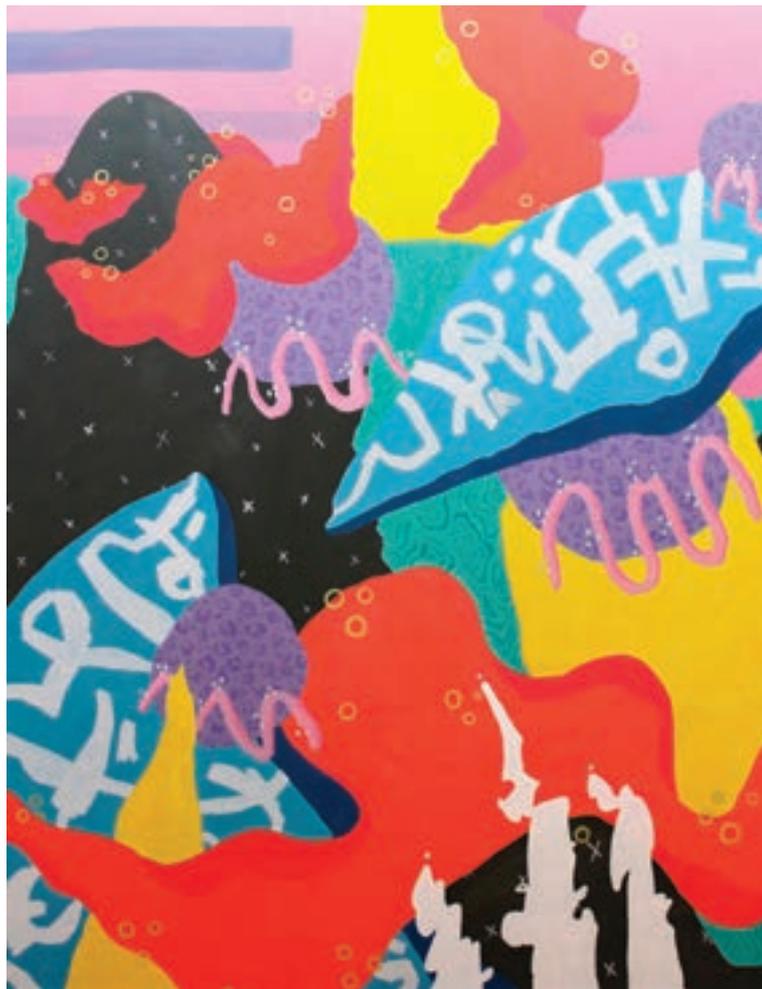
Casey, for instance, is a native of Dallas who uses “artifacts” from her own life and combines them with pop-culture ephemera to create her sculptures. Primary Projects, which represents her, has a street-art aesthetic and is run by local artists influenced by the urban landscape and underground.

Jonquil, on the other hand, creates his sculptures based on ideas of reflection and illusion, beautiful pieces crafted from mirrors, glass, and light. He’s had several solo shows at the Emerson Dorsch gallery, and has recently been featured at the de la Cruz Collection and the Miami airport gallery.

But painting is represented, too, in its diverse contemporary forms. Aguilar is a great representative for this — his dark, figurative paintings with vague German expressionist undertones, stand out. Anthony Spinello, director of Spinello Projects, says, “No one is painting like Farley. It’s definitely not what’s trending in painting right now.” And he says, “I thought it would be nice to share his new paintings with our Miami family.”

According to Art Wynwood’s Orihuela, the fair has nurtured a street art feel during its four-year existence. Tony Goldman, the developer credited with much of the Wynwood Art District’s growth and whose Wynwood Walls outdoor mural art has become a center point of the area, was instrumental in the fair’s inception, says Orihuela. Goldman died in 2012, but his daughter Jessica has continued to expand the Wynwood development and the urban-art brand. She was invited to create a pop-up shop for the fair, which will house objects and prints from the globally famous Walls artists.

Another special exhibit with a deliberate urban art theme is a collaboration with Cash, Cans & Candy, the Vienna street-art festival presented by the renowned Viennese gallery Ernst Hilger. In its inaugural festival, 50 artists, including those names now



Viennese artist BOICUT will be in residence at the fair, creating art from found objects.

covering Wynwood facades like Shepard Fairey and Retna, were exhibited, along with ongoing happenings throughout the summer.

Last year Katrin-Sophie Dworzak, the curator of the festival, began working with Art Wynwood and brought in several graffiti artists from Europe and South America, and included locals Brandon Opalka and Douglas Hoeksema, to cover the tent space.

This year Dworzak is returning with a single artist from Vienna, BOICUT. He will be covering skateboards and other objects with his unique markings during what is being called a “residency” at the fair. In this temporary studio, BOICUT will be painting items he has found in Miami.

“He will be searching out used and discarded items, and breathing new life into them,” says

Dworzak. “By painting on everyday items that everyone is familiar with but that would frequently be gathering dust in some corner, he gives them an entirely new appearance through his distinctive style.”

Another solo project that connects our worlds in a unique way is titled “La Habana in Waiting,” from Miami-based Art Lexing Gallery. This is a series of photographs from Chinese artist Quentin Shih, who crafts large-scale, staged images that resemble film stills. A product of one communist regime, he took his camera to another authoritarian country and found a similarity in the tension between state-imposed perception and everyday living.

“Is the Cuba of propaganda photographs more authentic?” asks the artist, now based in New York. “Or are the waiting and restless teens who grew up after the revolution more representative of reality? Both of these exist in my experience.”

As relations with Cuba ease, it’s a timely artistic commentary on contemporary life on the island so close and still so far from Miami.

Art Wynwood runs from February 12 through 16 in a tent at 3101 NE 1st Ave., Midtown Miami, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; tickets \$25; www.artwynwood.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Autumn Casey’s *Agalma*, from Miami’s Primary Projects.