



*PRIVATE MIAMI: THE MARGULIES, RUBELL, DE LA CRUZ,
FONTANALS-CISNEROS, AND SCHOLL COLLECTIONS*

BY MIA DIMEO

Switzerland's Art Basel instated its sister show in Miami Beach in 2002 for its obvious merits-- seasonless sunshine and a prime location as the "Gateway to the Americas"--but the bulging week of fairs, parties and art events that now surrounds Art Basel Miami Beach owes much to a community of ambitious private collectors and their publicly available exhibition spaces that have shaped the city into a contemporary art capital. This new type of cultural institution that has sprung up in the last few decades is the so-called "Miami model," where rotating, curated shows of private collections exist without any collaboration with public museums. These dedicated spaces for engaging public interest in contemporary art sends a very clear message, to me, that these collectors think of art as much more than investments, decorations or vanity purchases.

Like any proper art tourist (and a Miami virgin), on my visit this week I will split my time between two dozen or

so fairs, but while in Basel madness mode, I am set on also making it to some of the city's incredible private collections, most concentrated in Wynwood and the surrounding neighborhoods. The Wynwood Arts District was officially made such in 2003, and now is home to "over fifty galleries, four museums, numerous arts complexes and artist studios, as well as an increasing array of satellite fairs," according to their website, though several of Miami's best privately owned museums were already established in the area before the millenium. The story of Wynwood's flip from an industrial area of decaying warehouses to one of the country's most important creative districts is, according to the same text, one of "happenstance." More specifically, Wynwood owes a big part of its success to the forward-thinking mind and savvy real-estate investments of Tony Goldman, who also famously developed Soho and South Beach in a similar way, from grit to hip. Though he died in September, Goldman's commitment to the area can also be seen all over Wynwood Walls, an evolving display of street art that was co-curated by Jeffrey Deitch when it began in 2009.



Anselm Kiefer, *Sprache der Vögel*, 1989, 115 x 195 x 67 in.; Courtesy the Margulies Collection.

Another real-estate mogul, Marty Margulies, is known for collecting a variety of 20th- and 21st-century art, housing a curated selection of his contemporary and vintage photography, video, sculpture and installations in his 45,000-square-foot space in Wynwood, The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse. Considered a must-see in Miami, The Margulies Collection opened in 1998, and is currently exhibiting sculpture by Anselm Kiefer and Richard Long, video by Kader Attia and Leandro Erlich, installation by Doug Aitken, in addition to permanent exhibitions of Olafur Eliasson, Isamu Noguchi and Franz West. Also a vital asset to Wynwood and to Miami as a whole, World Class Boxing, formally an actual boxing gym, exhibits recent acquisitions and commissions from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, unveiling a new series during Art Basel week. We'll see if what's exhibited can top last year's "Love Trips: A Triptych on Love," an exhibit of multiple works by Jillian Mayer, where in the centerpiece video, the artist, posing as Venus de Milo in chalky white paint chews off her own arms in an act of mutilation with feminist overtones, appropriate to view in a city that I picture full of bikini-clad hard bodies.

I'm most anxious to visit the Donald and Mera Rubell Family Collection that has lived within a 45,000-square-foot repurposed Drug Enforcement Agency confiscated goods facility since long before Wynwood's current state, in 1993. With major holdings including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cindy Sherman, Kara Walker and Andy Warhol, The Rubell Collection's special exhibition on view next week is of multiple artworks by a single artist displayed individually in twenty-nine rooms, titled "Alone Together." The special exhibit will include diverse artists such as Peter Fischli & David Weiss, Karsten Födinger, Nate Lowman, R. H. Quaytman, Charles Ray, Ryan Trecartin and Paloma Varga Weisz, among others. South of Wynwood, The Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO) is celebrating its tenth year showcasing contemporary Latin American art from the collection of Ella Fontanals-Cisneros and her family. During Art Basel week, the space will open "Unsaid/Spoken, Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros and CIFO Collections," a show of work that revolves around the tension of language and the limits of communication, and will include work by Los Carpinteros, Francis Alÿs and Félix González-Torres.



Gabriel Orozco; Courtesy de la Cruz Collection.

Nearby Wynwood is the Design District: a slightly older and more luxurious warehouse-cum-arts-mecca, where extensive showrooms and architecture firms have spawned Design Miami/, ABMB's satellite design fair that began in the mid-2000s. The area has grown to include many galleries and the de la Cruz Collection / Contemporary Art Space a 30,000-square-foot exhibition space that opened to the public in 2009. Amazingly, for the twenty-five years prior to the new space opening, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz allowed visitors into their home to view their collection by appointment. Each year their collection is curated into a new show, and in its latest manifestation it will reconsider the John Marquette-designed building in sections: a spaces for a large, site-specific installation, an indoor sculpture garden, and a selection of quiet works about temporality. The vague description lists no artists, but the de la Cruz's have recently shown works from the collection by Gabriel Orozco, Seth Price and Christian Holstad. By choosing to exhibit their collections outside of traditional museums in their own spaces, Miami collectors have helped to form a unique aspect to the city's cultural fabric, though it has been argued that by staying independent these private collections will hurt museums in the long run. Regardless of my feelings about how this could affect the future of traditional museums if this model takes over, I'm eager to see what the collectors pick from their trove to put on view for Miami's mega art week.