

100+ DEGREES IN THE SHADE

A Survey of South Florida Art

An illustrated survey of
over 150 South Florida
artists working in a
variety of media with
texts by Jane Hart, Erica
Ando and Sandra
Schulman.

hard cover book
Publisher: [NAME]
publications
Dimensions: 9 x 6 x 1 in.
Pages: 95

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank several individuals without whom this exhibition and accompanying book would not have been possible. My esteemed colleagues and dear friends Chris Ingalls and Nina Arias, whose longtime participation in the art scene in South Florida helped them provide me with introductions to artists for consideration.

My deepest gratitude is extended to the founders of each of the participating venues hosting the exhibition; Francie Bishop Good, of Girls' Club Ft. Lauderdale, Tiffany Chestler, liaison for the DACRA space in the Design District, Carol Jazzar, David McCauley and all the artists at The Laundromat Artist Space, Karina Rasmussen of design sublime, Oliver Sanchez of Swampspace, Fredric Snitzer of Fredric Snitzer Gallery (participating with a solo show of Kenny Scharf's work), and Kristen Thiele of Bridge Red Studios. I would especially like to thank Craig Robins for his benevolence and generosity, in allowing us to utilize the space at 3900 North Miami Avenue in the Design District, functioning as a key venue of the exhibition, especially during Miami Art Fair Week.

This publication would not be possible without the expertise and vision of artist, critic, curator, arts administrator and founder of [NAME] Publications, Gean Moreno. Additionally, I would like to thank Misael Soto for his outstanding effort designing this book, and to all of the participating artists for providing images for use herein.

The significance of this volume is, without question, greatly enhanced by the two essays included. The first, by critic and art historian Erica Ando, whose thorough research on the history of South Florida's art scene, evolving since post-World War II in the 1950s up to the current moment, paints a detailed portrait of the region's unconventional rise to becoming a bonafide international art capital. Arts and entertainment writer Sandra Schulman brings her world-wise eye to gaze upon the scene over the past 30 or so years, as it has become shaped in ways similar to other burgeoning metropolitan areas where artists set the stage for gentrification.

I am also deeply grateful to all of the event sponsors, including MBI, LLC providing top notch fine art services; L'Edito Restaurant owners Christophe and Hanane Bibard; Randeli Rivera and the team at Bombay Sapphire; and Sebastien Verrier of From Vineyards to Table, for providing superb wines.

My sincerest gratitude to a number of individuals who have provided ongoing support on my behalf in a variety of capacities, including; Beth and Bob Ader, Paul and Estelle Berg, Francie Bishop Good and David Horvitz; Lou Anne and Mike Colodny; Jim Chanos; Larry Clemons; Ivan and Teela Depeña; Gina Cunningham and Peter Eves; Dana Donaty; Dan Fauci, Virginia Fifield and Robert Perroti; Dale Gomez (who donated funds towards publishing this book); Cristina Gonzalez and Books Bischof; Maggie Hernandez; Monica and Natasha Lopez de Victoria; Kathryn and Dan Mikesell; Dr. Arturo F. and Liza Mosquera; Megan Riley; Debra and Dennis Scholl; Jacquelyn and John Stengel, Cat Taylor of Strategic Allies; Michelle Weinberg; Misty Weinger; and my family.

Jane Hart

Beyond Pink Flamingos and Art Fairs: a brief history

By Erica Ando

History in South Florida, the saying goes, starts when you get off the plane. So it might be surprising to find that art has been here a long time, and not just since Art Basel Miami Beach landed. Though South Florida notoriously loves the new and shiny, its artists know there's something behind the quick-and-easy façade of sultry vacations. The year-round, day-to-day grittiness of living and making art in South Florida has been around for decades, creating an art story of breakthroughs, evolutions, and constant surprises.

Artists have been visiting the region and marveling at its unique land since the 18th century. The current South Florida art scene was built, though, on booming post-World War II real estate development, making it possible to live here full-time, and not just in hotels. In the 1950s, landscape artists like Franz Joseph Bolinger and Beanie Backus were considered the area's preeminent painters. Today, Backus is best remembered as teacher to the Florida Highwaymen, a group of 26 African-American landscape artists who have been called the "last great American art movement of the 20th century." Self-taught and self-mentoring, they created a body of work of over 200,000 paintings despite facing many racial and cultural barriers. Florida landscape painting, once derided as kitsch, added to the area's tropical image (and real estate values) but also contrasted with dominant, New York School abstract painting of the time.

With so few places to experience visual art, there's no wonder tourists returned home to claim South Florida a cultural wasteland. Two early venues, however, were the Miami Beach Library and Art Center (today, the older portion of the Bass Museum of Art), established in 1935, and the Washington Art Galleries (at today's Wolfsonian/FIU), established in 1940, which both exhibited local art from Miami's artist organizations. In West Palm Beach, the Norton Museum of Art opened in 1940 as one of the area's first private collector-owned museums.

Starting in the 1950s, the University of Miami enjoyed a reputation as the center of "real" culture—as opposed to Miami Beach tourist entertainment. In 1950, art professor Virgil Barker established the University's gallery, later to become the Lowe Art Museum. The Lowe attracted national attention for its programs that included exhibitions of French Impressionism and Renaissance painting, borrowed from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. Eugene Massin was the influential head of the art department, educating generations of future South Florida artists.

Around that time, Coconut Grove, a South Florida enclave akin to NYC's Greenwich Village, attracted an art community of famed folk singers and well-regarded visual artists like Tony Scornavacca, Jack Amoroso, Gigi Aramescu, Klara Farkas, and Leonard King. Grove House (1960-81), the cooperative artists' marketplace, gave artists a place to show and sell their work.

According to artist Robert Thiele, who moved to South Florida in 1966, artists in the early years simply aimed to do their work. They had few aspirations to exhibit in local institutions, which "generally had a hands-off policy in terms of the

South Florida Art: a brief slanted history since the 80s

By Sandra Schulman

Follow the artists.

That is the mantra to find any new up and coming hood, scene, movement, money and ultimately, art history. After the crash and burn of NYC's East Village gallery scene, where I had a gallery that showed some heavy hitters 20 years too soon, I, like many of my restless fellow gentrified outta town art heathens, fled the brutal winters of Avenues A through D and Streets 1st through 14th, and landed in surreal, sunshiny South Beach. A place we had only seen sitting huddled in front of TVs in our tenements on the neon, sockless show *Miami Vice*, it looked like paradise – Art Deco buildings on the ocean with rents as low as a few hundred dollars. An empty beach with warm, wavy water. Cheap Cuban joints with hearty rice and bean meals that replaced the pirogues and bagels of Alphabet City. Storefronts begging for a new start. A closed road mall that was retro and ripe, so deserted you could roll a bowling ball down it and not hit a soul.

It was Heaven.

It was Hell.

Crime and Marielitos. No air-conditioning. Crack and dope and shadows in the alleys. Scarface in the streets.

But... follow the artists. This is where they went. Filling up Espanola Way, taking over space on Washington Avenue, squatting in abandoned Mediterranean mansions on Biscayne Bay. It was a wild west for art and artists, show downs and shoot 'em ups were nightly Kimosabee.

Howard Davis' Artifacts Art Group had already staked their turf, mounting multimedia, fly by night installations at the club Fire & Ice, the Wet Paint House, Warsaw and Club Nu. They made parade floats out of sawed off trucks, lit houses on fire, decorated the discos and threw endless parties in parking garages. Their commotion landed them in *Andy Warhol's Interview Magazine* by the mid-80s with a multi-page spread that touted this burgeoning art paradise and its heat crazed, paint brush wielding inhabitants.

Lincoln Road opened their own Art Center, giving artists both communal exhibition space and individual studios. Some branched out into their own larger spaces like Carlos Betancourt's Imperfect Utopia that found the stupidly handsome, budding painter painting in the front, living in the back, and entertaining the rich, powerful and merely curious that braved the early semi-mean street days of Miami Beach. Betancourt, represented in this survey and book, has become a world class artist whose colorful, surreal, unclassifiable mashup of slick photography, installations and self portraiture is collected and exhibited worldwide.

Kevin Arrow, a *New Times Mastermind Award* winner, started in the Espanola Way Art Center painting mandalas, working with Artifacts and curating space



Psychedelic Rodeo, 2015, Acrylic and mixed media

Hybrids Constructing New Harvest Moon, 2012

