

ARTS & POWER

| By Saxon Henry |
| Photography by Nick Garcia |
| Location: Miami Art Space |

Although Miami was far from a *tabula rasa* when Art Basel gave it the nod a decade ago, the art world has indeed taken the canvas upon which this tropical town was painted and altered the composition in ways no one could have predicted... or even imagined. The arts have become power, all right, but the individuals through which it finds expression within the Miami milieu are as eclectic and inspiring as the city itself.

The Leader of the Pack

As the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in North Miami celebrates its 15th anniversary, its director, **Bonnie Clearwater**, has proven that a steady hand combined with a futuristic vision goes a long way in creating global significance. The world that Clearwater moves within is sustained by some pretty rarified air, and she is often head and shoulders above the fray, staging cutting-edge exhibitions, and penning books and catalogues that are likely to become historical documents. The passionate art

advocate is overseeing the expansion of the museum's original building, designed by the late Charles Gwathmey, one of modernism's renowned architects. In a word, she describes Miami's art scene as "energized," and sees a growing commitment of young patrons taking leadership roles in the arts community in Miami as a shift that's taking place. What's on her wish list? "The establishment of a major art school that would be international in scope and [have] an art history Ph.D. program," she answers. Given her current track record for making things happen that may come our way sooner than we think.

The Idealist

Locust Projects, now in its 10th year, has made an impact on the cultural climate of Miami that nears biblical proportions, a fact that makes its name rather ironic. The current director of the alternative not-for-profit exhibition space, **Chana Budgazad Sheldon**, is leading the organization into its next level of amplitude, all the while making it clear that it will remain an organization founded by artists for artists. Sheldon has noticed a shift toward more sophisticated programming among Miami's art venues of late, and celebrates her organization's contribution to this and to artistic diversity. "Fostering experimentation in the visual arts is one of our primary purposes," she remarks, noting that artists from New York and Los Angeles exhibited at Locust Projects last year. "Their thought-provoking projects operate within the global discourse of contemporary art while exploring topics specific to Miami, including our architecture, ecology and culture." Expanded programming by the organization has brought Locust Projects support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. No wonder she describes Miami's art dominion as "vibrant."



The Activist

Ticking off the list of accomplishments **Constance Collins Margulies** has achieved is an extravagant affair: she's co-founder of the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse with her husband Martin Margulies; founder of Lotus House, a resource center and residential facility in Overtown serving homeless women and infants; and founder of the Wynwood Art Fair, which had its debut this past October. The gift-giver to Miami's melange celebrates the rewards she's receiving in return. "Coming off the Wynwood Art Fair, I am in love with the extraordinary generosity of spirit, heartfelt collaboration and deep commitment to community this event generated," she explains. The grassroots diversity she sees blossoming in the city inspires her, and she credits Art Basel and the other fairs with turning a spotlight on the town. "Our challenge is to nurture and grow our local contemporary art community so that Miami offers its unique imprint and contribution to the contemporary art world in substantive ways," she says. How? Her short list includes education, support for artists and creating diverse venues for art to be discovered.






The Urban Pioneers

Transformation is a word that **Daniel Milewski** and **Nina Johnson-Milewski** take quite seriously; so much so that they've lavished the Wynwood neighborhood, where they play and work, with a giddy sort of energy that's leading the metamorphosis everyone envisions for the area. Nina owns Gallery Diet, making her one of the nabe's longest-standing "It girls." Daniel brought Lester's, a Wynwood café where art and culture is tops on the menu, to the 'hood. Though their businesses are Wynwood-centric, their outlooks couldn't be more far-flung. "For four years, I've been producing exhibitions at Diet that are internationally relevant and would hold their own in any city," says Nina. "Miami has pushed to make itself one of the big cultural capitals of this country. People talk about New York, Los Angeles and Miami in a single breath." For his part, Daniel believes the new Miami Art Museum is going to up the ante: "I think the impact of that building will be huge on this community," he says. "It will help propel Miami into a much more global conversation about art."





The Benefactors

Dan and Kathryn Mikesell put their attitude where their art is. One of the most respected collecting couples in Miami, they bring 30 artists from around the globe each year to Miami, allowing them to create and connect. Housing the artists at their Fountainhead Residency is but one perk they offer; working studio space and introductions to art collectors and gallerists are also a part of the dynamic package. Proof that connections count is that most of the artists they bring to town go on to be represented by major U.S. galleries. The New World Symphony, the Miami Art Museum's new building and Primary Flight's/Wynwood Walls' murals projects are among sources of pride for the couple, as is the fact that Fountainhead has enabled artists and institutions to bring projects to fruition that would likely have remained unrealized concepts. "Fervent," is one of the words they use to describe the Miami art scene. As Kathryn puts it: "Whether you concur with a person's perspective or not, everyone would agree that the Miami art community is one passionate group!"

The Scholar

The hulking halls of the Miami Beach Convention Center all but levitate from the influx of art-world power that inhabits its labyrinth of booths when Art Basel comes to town, and no one knows this more succinctly than **David Castillo**, owner of his eponymous gallery, which happens to be amongst the global art aristocracy showing in this year's installment of the fair. Known as a hipster-cum-power broker, Castillo's eye for avant-garde art is legendary within Miami's collector set; and his Wynwood gallery houses exhibits by an inordinately significant number of local artists compared to others. The native Miamian, who finds the growth of the city's museums particularly exciting, is appreciative that he can contribute to the current climate: "I am most proud of having placed the majority of my artists in museum collections," he explains. His ultimate wish for Miami's art scene? "That there be permanent and ongoing affordable spaces for artists to work," he says. "This is an issue not just in Miami but all over."





The Globetrotter

Those who have followed **Anthony Spinello** since he splashed onto the Miami art scene in 2005 have always known that Miami wasn't big enough to contain his edgy creative energy. Drumroll, please! He's now proving them right by banding with a group of fellow art lovers to turn an abandoned theme park, Treptower Park in Berlin, into an art utopia called *Kulturpark* for the Seventh annual Berlin Biennale in 2012. But getting the gallerist and owner of Spinello Projects to make it "all about him" is a tough proposition as the element of Miami's artistic flourish that excites him the most is seeing how the city's art elite are "taking it elsewhere"—citing New York, Paris, Chicago and Los Angeles as capitals where his compatriots are creating a stir. His one word to describe Miami's art scene of late? "Malleable." Be sure to catch his curatorial masterpiece *Trisection* at SCOPE Miami, and don't mess with his hometown: "From a distance, Miami appears to be a 'one-trick pony,'" says Spinello. "That's unfortunate when there are so many stunners galloping."



The Educator

If you're the type of person who hits the snooze button when you hear the word community activist, you might want to stay dialed in for a bit: **Agustina Woodgate** is putting the cool back in school with her efforts to bring the arts to low-income communities and develop a program to engage middle school girls in the sciences through the arts. Her aim is to create art that fosters exchanges between people rather than encounters between a viewer and an object. "I am happy to be a community builder in this town," says the Argentine-born visual artist and teacher. "I like working in collaboration and art happens to be a great platform." She's taking the arts to the streets (literally) with this month's *Billboard Project* initiative, for which she created a series of metallic artwork for display on billboards and bus shelters all over the city. The purpose? Creating surreal inversions of exterior and interior spaces—something Woodgate knows a thing or two about. "The Miami arts community is getting tighter," she says. "We are growing more serious and it is showing."



Contributors

December 2011

1. For **Saxon Henry**, writing about design and art is tantamount to being given the keys to the kingdom. For her, events like Design Miami/ and Art Basel amount to watershed moments in art and design because the world comes to town to worship the normally disparate subjects in tandem. As she tackled this issue's "Arts & Power" feature, Henry took notice of Miami's visionary turn where collaborating and community activism is concerned. "I can't wait to see what the movers and shakers of the city manifest next," she says. And neither can we.

2. The nuanced and captivating portraits in our "Arts & Power" feature this month are all the work of photographer **Nick Garcia**, who had his hands quite full trying to coordinate the schedule of 10 very busy individuals over just two days of shooting. "The concept for the shoot was a '60s film noir look," says Garcia, a frequent *Miami* contributor. "Everyone was open-minded and willing to work with me to make it come together." Garcia's portfolio is as prolific as they come with subjects that include fashion, portraiture and travel.

3. For this month's Radar Nightlife, contributing writer **Nicole Berrie** caught up with legendary Miami scene-maker Alan Roth to discuss his latest venture, Ricochet, where art is a big part of the equation. "The Basel crowds are always looking for that great after-party destination," says Berrie, "and based on Roth's collaborators at the venue, which include everyone from Kehinde Wiley to Mickalene Thomas, I think this year that place is definitely going to be Ricochet." Berrie contributes regularly to *The Wall Street Journal*, *Departures*, *style.com* and *Manhattan*.

4. Unabashed explorer **Paul Rubio** took a break from foreign travel this month to check out the latest happenings and trends closer to home. In this volume's Radar Now! section, he shares some insider tidbits on the city's hottest soon-to-open hotels. "The things planned for the St. Regis in Bal Harbour and the SLS in South Beach are particularly exciting," says Rubio. "We're talking A-list all the way." A Harvard graduate, Rubio has won numerous awards for his travel writing. He also contributes to *Ocean Home Magazine* and *Palm Beach Illustrated*.

5. "Visiting Whale and Star, Enrique Martinez Celaya's studio in Wynwood [for Look Who's Talking], was like a creative wake-up call," says contributor **Rebecca Wallwork**. "The space is a reflection of the artist's seriousness, but also revealed a streak of childlike wonder. It felt like a grown-up clubhouse—albeit one where serious work is being done." A former editor at *Interview*, Wallwork is a former New Yorker now living in Miami Beach who writes extensively on hospitality for Condé Nast's *hotelchatter.com*.

6. We sent Senior Contributing Editor **Riki Altman** back to school for this issue of *Miami*. Altman roamed the halls of New World School of the Arts (one of the leading arts schools in the country), speaking to both students and faculty, for her article on the institution's 25th anniversary and its talented pupils (both past and present) for Radar Culture. "It's obvious they've got their curriculum down over there," says Altman. "And all the students really want to be there. It's inspiring to think I might have interviewed a future Oscar winner."