

MIAMI New Times

ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH 2015 BRINGS THE PARTY BIGGER THAN EVER

By: [Liz Tracy](#)



Nari Ward's Airplane Tears, on display at PAMM.

Oct 7, 2015-Miami's art climate is changing rapidly, fueled not by hydrocarbons but by an ever-expanding global market hungry for the Magic City's scene. With last year's messy birth of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) — which acrimoniously broke away from the Museum of

Contemporary Art North Miami — Miami now has three major contemporary art museums in a city of 2.6 million. It seems it's in the midst of an awkward adolescence, charging into adulthood as a global art player.

That's why this year's Art Basel Miami Beach at the Miami Beach Convention Center is arguably the most important yet. The nonstop week of art partying may just end up determining whether this town will weather these terrible teens and blossom into quality grownups. And there's a new visionary at the helm of the main show: Basel's director of the Americas, Noah Horowitz, hired away earlier this year from New York's Armory Show.

Basel looks bigger than ever in 2015, with 267 exhibitors from 32 countries headed to South Beach December 3 through 6 to show off the works of around 4,000 modern and contemporary artists. Two local galleries made the cut this year: Fredric Snitzer — the veteran now based downtown — and Michael Jon, a young dealer working out of Little Haiti. Both also exhibited at last year's Basel.

But the main fair in Miami Beach is just the gravitational center of an ever-spinning universe of satellite fairs, parties, and major gallery shows all over Miami-Dade County.

At least 18 other fairs are confirmed to coincide with ABMB this year, and there will likely be more to come. Continuing a trend that began last year, Miami Beach is set to keep dominating the side-fair scene.

Scope, which left midtown for SoBe two years ago, is setting up shop on Ocean Drive for its 15th-anniversary show. Pulse followed Scope east last year, and this fall it will be situated farther north, on 46th Street and Collins Avenue. That staple fair will feature three Miami galleries: Emerson Dorsch, which recently closed its doors in Wynwood, a neighborhood it helped establish; Art Lexing, which concentrates on contemporary Chinese art; and Mindy Solomon Gallery, soon to leave Wynwood for the newest art hot spot, Little River. NADA, meanwhile, will celebrate its 13th edition by glamming it up at the classic Fontainebleau.

Design Miami, which sits steps from the convention center, will bring only the poshest out to suck down flutes of champagne while peeping P. Diddy. Every year, spectators flock to see its signature entrance designed by world-class talent. In 2012, artfully arranged inflatable tubes titled Drift, by Miami native Daniel Arsham's Snarkitecture, decorated the pavilion like giant plastic lady fingers. The next year brought a sand pyramid by Formlessfinder, a New York-based firm. This year, Design Miami's entrance will be created by the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. The plan is a tightly guarded secret, but it's a good bet it'll be large and captivating.

Other fairs that have found homes on la playa include Aqua, Art on Paper, Fridge Art Fair, Ink Miami, Miami Project, and Untitled. Farther north, at beachfront spots between 73rd and 75th streets, will be Satellite, which will present works of art, music, new media, and "technology

activations" by progressive orgs such as White Box and artists like Pussy Riot and Clifford Owens.

Though the number of fairs has diminished across Biscayne Bay, the mainland lineup still packs a punch, with the classic Art Miami, Context, Miami River Art Fair, Pinta Miami, Red Dot Art Fair, Spectrum Miami, and X Contemporary all set to return in 2015. Wynwood, which has finally come into its own as an entertainment and arts district, will burst at the seams with shows at galleries and pop-ups.

Museums around town also save their biggest exhibits for this time of year. ICA promises to keep the city on the bay hip by showing the work of two female contemporary artists. Iconic video artist Alex Bag — who has shown everywhere, including the Whitney, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the Museum of Modern Art — will again take aim at the world of pop culture. So will the solo exhibition of photographer Shannon Ebner, who'll bring her series Black Box Collision A, in which she presents large-scale photographs of the letter "A" isolated from different ads, calling it an "anemic ad campaign."

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) will celebrate African cultural diasporas of the Caribbean with Jamaican artist Nari Ward's important midcareer exhibition, "Sun Splashed." He will present humongous sculptures, which are rarely shown because of their scale, including one that is actually room-size. Also on display will be "Bloodlines," by his former student emerging Dominican artist Firelei Báez, who creates arresting, lovely, and delicate large-scale drawings.

PAMM's recently announced new director, Franklin Sirmans — a former Los Angeles County Museum of Art curator — will take his skills around town during Basel. He'll bring Daniel Arsham to YoungArts with an interactive exhibition involving chalk shaped like various objects — phones, cameras, Mickey Mouse — that visitors will use to create their own drawings. He's also curating "Art on the Move: Martine Syms" at Locust Projects. The established art space will also show work by Martha Friedman via "Pore." Holly Hunt drummer and artist Beatriz Monteavaro will exhibit in the project room.

FIU's Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum will present Hans Hofmann's literal "Walls of Color" and three other shows: "Weird, Wild and Wonderful: The Second New York Botanical Garden Triennial Exhibition" will include works by botanical artists who turn ugly plants into pretty pictures; "Blurred Borders," a video by Carola Bravo; and the pointillism of Ramon Espantaleon in "The Temptation."

Miami Beach's Wolfsonian will exhibit Polish-born Feliks Topolski's "An Artist on the Eastern Front," his take on 1941 USSR. "Margin of Error" will offer visuals of modern engineered catastrophes, while the immensely interesting "Philodendron: From Pan-Latin Exotic to Modern American" will track the migration of tropical plants from Central and South America to U.S. and European gardens.

Miami-Dade College Museum of Art + Design focuses on family and la patria with photos by Eduardo del Valle, who collaborated with wife Mirta Gómez to create "Cuban Childhood Memories From the Other Side of the Water." Brothers Steven and William Ladd will mix up fashion and fine art with "Mary Queen of the Universe."

However, the best part about ABMB is exploring the subjects that Miami artists and gallerists think are important. Local studio/gallery Swampspace offers "Miami Quintessence," a thus far mysterious show by Oliver Sanchez, whose creative parties celebrate the enchantments of the Magic City. Along those same lines, visitors should check out the experimental archival project by Kevin Arrow and Barron Sherer, Obsolete Media Miami (O.M.M.), for a taste of old and weird Miami. Backed by everyone from DACRA to Cannonball Miami to the Andy Warhol Foundation, these guys have enough 35mm slides and other A/V nerdiness to keep spectators mesmerized for years. Etra Fine Art will showcase "Highlights 2016," featuring artists like Nadín Ospina, who makes Mickey Mouse look like an ancient artifact from the artist's homeland, Colombia.

With the art world arriving soon to romance our young city, there's no doubt we'll be sailing into early art adulthood soon — and doing it in style.

Art Basel Miami Beach

December 3 Through 6 at the Miami Beach Convention Center, 1901 Convention Center Dr., Miami Beach, and various other locations; artbasel.com. One-day tickets cost \$47; permanent tickets cost \$100.