

## Adler Guerrier: Miami artist and advocate

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*Artist Adler Guerrier in his studio at Dimensions Variable in downtown Miami. Artist Adler Guerrier is one of Miami's up-and-coming stars. Behind him is one of his paintings used for the background. C.W. Griffin / Miami Herald Staff*

Dimensions Variable (DV), a noncommercial outlet for local and international artists to show experimental work. The alternative space, funded in part by a Knight Arts grant, showcases works and hosts lectures and cultural dialogue.

At first glance, the art of Adler Guerrier can seem simple. Look again. Sums up South Florida museum director Bonnie Clearwater, who has been familiar with Guerrier's art since he first hit the Miami scene more than a decade ago, both the artist and his work are "just so smart."

Since graduating from the New World School of the Arts in 2000, the 38-year-old Haiti-born artist has been a force in Miami. That year, Clearwater included him in the ground-breaking exhibit "Making Art in Miami: Travels Through Hyperreality" at North Miami's MOCA, the first museum show to highlight local emerging contemporary art. Eight years later, Guerrier was included in the prestigious Whitney Biennial in New York, which helped cement his reputation as a well-respected artist. But Guerrier has also emerged as a social activist of sorts in this complex, diverse town.

"His work is very layered, with an elegant quality that just stands out," says Jane Hart, curator of exhibitions at the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, where Guerrier had a solo show in 2010. "But there are many talented artists out there — he has that extra quality, such an intelligent person really involved in the community."

Working with fellow artists Leyden Rodriguez Casanova and Frances Trombly, Guerrier co-directs

It's an important mission in Guerrier's life. Both his artistic vision and his interaction with the arts community are grounded in the desire for discussion about racial dynamics, environment and development in Miami — and beyond. In Guerrier's view, societal structure and individual interaction are profoundly shaped by surroundings. And though he calls himself an urban wanderer, he makes appearances at panels and art events with determined purpose. Miami needs to look inside the mirror, not at its surface.

The nexus for this exploration is the downtown club-district building that once housed Capt. Harry's fishing goods. Here, DV acts as workspace for a half-dozen artists, Guerrier among them. In his sprawling upstairs studio, Guerrier discusses his art-making journey. In essence, he documents the world around him, but on a road that is relatively mundane: In photography, he captures lonely, cropped street scenes, and bits and pieces of everyday debris. His more abstract graphite and watercolor collages also hint at the landscapes that make up our ordinary, urban life. Other works include very brief text, several words at most. Like his artwork, Guerrier comes across as smart and understated. He'd like to avoid labels, he says, in describing his art. In the end, his artwork is derived from the world that we all inhabit. "All I have to do is get up in the morning and look."

Other people, apparently, like to look through his eyes as well. A survey show of his early and current work will appear in the new Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) in October 2014. "Adler's language and production are incredibly solid and mature at this point," says Diana Nawi, associate curator at PAMM.

Nawi, who will curate the exhibit, first encountered Guerrier's work at the Whitney and fell for it. His art "has an incredible intimacy and poetry to it," she says. "The layering of image and text, the implication of temporality that this process suggests, and the combination of found and original imagery creates a universe of meanings within small, modest works."

In an era that feels driven by market and spectacle, she concludes, it's a sophisticated, quiet way to look at life.