

VISUAL ARTS

Miami galleries are jammed with noteworthy exhibitions

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SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD

BIGGERS AT CASTILLO: At David Castillo, the gallery is closing out its time in Wynwood (it is moving to South Beach in the fall) with one of its best exhibits in years, the solo from New York-based Sanford Biggers. He is a hot name in the art world these days, and deservedly so. That he has an exhibit with new works specifically for this Miami show is a statement in itself.

Biggers mines African-American culture and history for his colorful, complex pieces, expressed for instance in the title of the exhibit itself, “3 Dollars and 6 Dimes.” It’s an obscure reference to the splinter Nation of Islam group the Five Percenters and lyrics of the singer Erykah Badu; and to the circular nature of life (360 degrees). But you don’t need to know that to enjoy his rich, collaged quilts.

Quilting has been part of African-American tradition since slave times, a form of artistic expression that could be both decorative and tell tales. Biggers transforms that traditional form into his own by adding and mixing materials, while remaining true to the original intent of the craft. And 360 degrees plays a part too, as the patterning in quilting is geometric; there is a sense of a mathematical grid underlying the pieces. The Mandela-shaped dance floor that Biggers designed as the introduction to the gallery reflects that geometry as well. One can read much into this exhibit, or just get lost in the fantastic, intricate contemporary tapestries.