



The Sunshine Economy: Art And The Business At Art Basel

By [Tom Hudson](#) • December 6, 2016



Invitation-only visitors await the opening of the 15th Art Basel Miami Beach on Wednesday, Nov. 30. Organizers say 77,000 people attended the five day art fair, the same as a year earlier.

If you walk through the right breezeway on Worth Avenue in Palm Beach and into a small courtyard, you'll see on your right a spiral concrete staircase. It's painted pink. You can't miss it. It leads to a single doorway. Inside is about 2,000 square feet split into four rooms. This is home the Gavlak Gallery.

Sarah Gavlak began her gallery in 2005 and was chosen to show works at the next Art Basel (2006) in a shipping container on the beach. She has been back every year since, including the fair that wrapped up this past Sunday.

On Lincoln Road, in the building that houses Zara and a Starbucks, is the home of the David Castillo Gallery. You won't see it among the storefronts though. You have to enter the historic building, check in with a security guard and take an elevator to the second floor. Castillo moved his gallery here after 10 years in Wynwood. He says he moved because while his art openings in Wynwood were well-attended, there were few buyers. That hasn't been the case since moving to this building designed by Art Deco master architect Albert Anis.

Castillo returned to Art Basel Miami Beach this year for the first time since 2011, marking his fourth appearance at the art fair.

Castillo and Gavlak are two of the three South Florida-based art galleries that showed their artists' work at 15th annual Art Basel Miami Beach. We spoke with them about their galleries and the business they do at Basel. You can listen to what they have to say here:



Listen to the entire episode: <http://wlrn.org/post/sunshine-economy-art-and-business-art-basel>

Sarah Gavlak, Gavlak Gallery



Sarah Gavlak in front of artist Lisa Anne Auerbach "Living Loving Party Going" at Art Basel Miami Beach. Gavlak's Palm Beach-based gallery was one of three South Florida galleries selling at the fair. Credit Tom Hudson

Locations: Palm Beach and Los Angeles

Focus of gallery: Women and LGBT artists

of Art Basels: 11

Art Basel investment: about \$80,000

value of artwork displayed: \$800,000

How business began at Basel: sold two Lisa Ann Auerbach pieces (see photo) for \$40,000 each on the first day.



"These young art galleries that just started because they believe in art aren't able to make a go of it in this climate. It is so much more about business and money than it has ever been."

—Sarah Gavlak, Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach



David Castillo, David Castillo Gallery



David Castillo stands in front of "Banneker" by artist Sanford Biggers at his Art Basel Miami Beach booth. Castillo is one of three South Florida art gallerists to show at the fair this year.

Credit Tom Hudson

Location: Miami Beach

Focus of gallery: art of identity

of Basels: 4

Art Basel investment: over \$100,000

Value of art on display: \$1.15 million

How business began at Basel: Sold the Sanford Biggers (see photo) three dimensional piece for \$40,000 and a 3-piece furniture set by Xaviera Simmons for \$110,000 on the first day of the fair.



"(Art Basel) is an expensive endeavor, but it is the only art fair that I've ever done where you do sell. You always sell."

—David Castillo, David Castillo Gallery, Miami Beach



Credit Courtesy of David Castillo. Photo Credit: Chris Hernandez