

ARTnews

Collector to Watch: Elizabeth Dascal Is at the Core of Miami's Vibrant Art Scene

BY KATE DWYER

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Elizabeth Dascal.

COURTESY ELIZABETH DASCAL

Over the last 20 years, Miami has become a bona fide art capital, but collector Elizabeth Dascal remembers growing up in the city in the 1980s, when the art scene was much less developed. Dascal hails from a prominent Miami family with businesses in banking and automobiles. After college, she and her friends, sisters Dina and Rhonda Mitrani, converted a warehouse the

Mitransis owned in Wynwood into studio spaces for artists, long before the neighborhood's iconic Wynwood Walls murals opened in 2009. "It was a flourishing time," she said.

Dascal started collecting in her early 20s, and helped shape her family's art collection. Her first purchase, a Miranda Lichtenstein photograph, hangs over her bed to this day. "It was a woman, and you could see that there was a lot of contemplation in her face—that's what drew me to it at the time," she said. Over the years, the interior design consultant has traveled to some of the world's top art fairs—Art Basel in Switzerland, Frieze London, the Armory Show in New York—acquiring work by Vaughn Spann, Josh Smith, Christina Quarles, Donna Huanca, Katherine Bernhardt, and Chloe Wise.



Vaughn Spann's 15-foot 2020 painting Goliath will be the centerpiece of Elizabeth Dascal's under-construction Miami home.

PHOTO EG SCHEMPF/COURTESY DAVID CASTILLO, MIAMI

Nearly two decades later, art has turned into a family passion, Dascal said. Her first date with husband Vladimir Spector was a visit to Dia:Beacon, and now, the couple brings their four-year-

old son Charles to art fairs and studio visits. “Our life is not just collecting art, but a lot of my friends are artists. It’s all-encompassing.”

A recent acquisition is a 15-foot painting by Spann that will be the centerpiece of the family’s new house, currently under construction. “We loved it so much and we wanted to live with the work in the size and in the grandeur that it needs, so we’re building a house that will fit it,” she said.

As Miami continues to be an important center for art in the United States, Dascal said it’s important to note that pioneering gallerists in the city, like David Castillo, Kevin Bruk, and Fredric Snitzer, started out small, though they now represent some of the world’s top artists. “A big part of my story is really about relationships and about friendships,” she said. “As I’ve grown, my relationships with the galleries have grown. That’s how you build collections: through relationships.”