

Confessions of a dealer: David Castillo

We speak to the established Miami dealer about life-affirming breakfasts, why dealers are taste-makers and his love for Leonora Carrington

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David Castillo. Photo by Mateo Zapata, courtesy of David Castillo.

My greatest achievement is...

My relationship with my nephew, godson and namesake.

The most underrated art movement is...

Not a movement at all. It is women in the arts.

The museum I'd like to lead is...

None [of them] but if I had to choose one, for me it would naturally be the Prado in Madrid.

The artist I should have signed is...

I signed every artist I wanted to sign. This is an organic process so when it's right for both sides, you simply know.

Things that keep me awake at 3am are...

Nothing other than family. I sleep well but if I get sleepless it's thinking about everything being in order for everyone.

I last cooked for...

My dear friend Mariela. It was breakfast in my home. There is something beautiful about quiet moments with someone you love. No goal, no assigned topic—just scrambled eggs and intimacy.

Dealers are misunderstood because...

It is generally assumed they are somehow not linked to much other than sales but in reality good dealers are on the front lines of taste-making and cultural conversations that happen later in other spaces.

Fairs are important because...

People with shared interests gather to see and discuss something most people in the room love: art and culture. Beyond this, we need human interaction and art fairs bring humans into close contact.

Small talk is...

fine when it flows both ways and it's not about the weather.

My biggest mistake...

As a younger dealer was assuming that all dealers acted a certain way (ethically, responsibly, with vision and passion) or that artists acted a certain way. I realised over time that every single person is a universe and you don't have time to figure out every constellation in it.

A recurring nightmare involves...

I rarely remember my dreams and it's been a good decade since I had a nightmare. Sounds awful!

I am happiest when...

I'm with art, having an intimate conversation at home, with my dogs Harry and Lucy, drifting away with my koi fish, or sitting so quietly with someone you love deeply, and all you can hear is the breeze reaching your ears.

The next big thing...

is not something you can ever publish or publicise. But there are many and each one energises me.

I wish I had met...

John Lennon and Leonora Carrington. I have been an admirer of both since I was a small boy. Lennon did things his way, filled with creativity and love, lyrics; he was a visionary, an imperfect person who acknowledged as much throughout his life. Few voices can carry you to specific emotions and moments but his certainly could. I was seven when he died so I missed my chance.

And Leonora Carrington has always been my all-time favourite artist. I remember a time when people used to ask me who was my favourite artist and I would say Leonora Carrington and get blank stares from “art people”. I’m happy to see her visionary work receiving so much market and international art-world attention now.

Travel broadens...

Everything: your mind, your horizons, your goals, your thoughts, your feelings, the ultimate life stimulant.

Life’s too short to...

Try to change everything. But you can change some things if you choose your path with a vision you love and have passion for. Just don’t follow. Life is too short to follow. Just do you.

My Art Basel Miami Beach dream is to...

Elevate artists in this important commercial platform and I feel I have done this.

My main priority post-pandemic...

Is long-term family and professional planning.