

MIAMI'S EYE ON VENICE



A look at the highlights of this year's event through the lens of some of Miami's most prominent art figures

BY CLAIRE BREUKEL

Opening in April and on view through November 2022, the long-awaited 59th Venice Biennale is the international event that art professionals do not want to miss. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the decadelong director and chief curator of the High Line public art program in New York, this year's Venice Biennale is provocatively themed *The Milk of Dreams*, intending to question humanity's relationship to its planetary existence. At the biennale's epicenter, the Giardini Parkland is home to a curated exhibition on this theme, as well as national pavilions built and maintained by the world's more art-lucrative countries, seconded by art interventions within buildings in the Arsenale neighborhood on its doorstep. Further sprinkled through Venice are more national pavilion exhibitions, as well as private collections, art foundations and many idyllic trattorias for a signature Aperol spritz. The historic Venetian city provides an illuminating backdrop to contemporary artistic proclamations that serve as a barometer for creative practice, while highlighting the idiosyncrasies of world socioeconomic structures. Miami Magazine speaks to five of Miami's art professionals on their personal Venice Biennale highlights.

THE ARTIST: PEPE MAR

Art Highlight: Belkis Ayón, "Abasí, Sálvamos! (Abasi, Save Us)" (1989)

Curated by: Cecilia Alemani

Location: Arsenale Corderie as part of the exhibition *The Milk of Dreams*



"I was mesmerized by Belkis Ayón's 'Abasí, Sálvamos!,' one of the single-sheet iconic collagraphs by this late Cuban artist. The artwork is modest in size yet has strong impact, and was placed to introduce the exhibition along with her multipanel monumental works. 'Abasí, Sálvamos!' depicts a portrait of Sikan, the only female character in the Abakua pantheon and a character which the artist greatly identifies with. In this work, the figure has a glowing halo and a snake around her neck, holding a young calf in her arms. Her gaze is directed at the viewer in a manner that is both confronting and engaging. In this otherworldly narrative, Ayón draws on Afro-Cuban traditions to create her mythology. The eyes are so impactful and resonated with me as eyes are also an inspiration in my own mythology and the focal point in the collaged creatures I make."

¹ Belkis Ayón, "Abasí, Sálvamos!" (1989); portrait of Pepe Mar.