

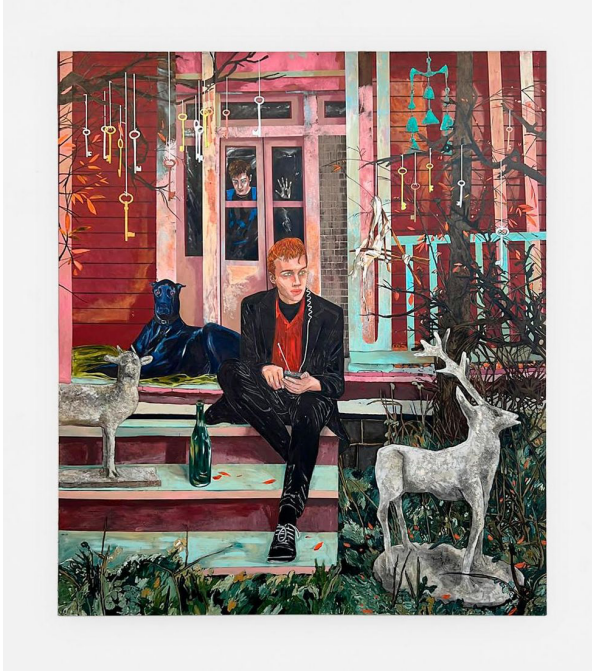
# TOWN&COUNTRY

## Art Basel Miami Beach at 20: Everything, Everywhere All at Once

More than 200 galleries, four art fairs, one swanky Madonna party and a \$7 million Agnes Martin painting. Ahead, 15 highlights from a very hectic week in South Florida.

BY ERIK MAZA - PUBLISHED: DEC 4, 2022

Miami is a lot of city to handle under normal circumstances. Everything is extra—the fashion, the lifestyle, the traffic. During Art Basel week, it's a Michelle Yeoh movie, with everything, everywhere happening all at once. The title fair that touched down in South Florida 20 years ago as an insular playground for the professional art elite and the billionaires they cater to has since mushroomed into a mind-bending, cacophonous vortex of branding, celebrity and decadence. Beyond the Miami Beach Convention Center—a vast ocean of some 280 galleries from 38 countries all competing to hook the same big fish collectors—there's satellite fairs, brand activations, A-list fundraisers, store and hotel openings, blockchain launches (even as crypto crashes) and parties, parties, parties popping off, furiously courting high-spenders and thirsty for everyone else's eyeballs. During the day, White Cube gallery might titillate with blue-chip artists—Michael Armitage, Günther Förg, and Georg Baselitz works sold for over \$1 million each, according to Artnews—but at night it stages a raucous annual party at Soho House (Kelis performed this year). One day, Leonardo DiCaprio helped raise \$1 million for CORE, a crisis relief non-profit, and then raged with every Italian in town at Stone Island's 40th anniversary rave in Wynwood. Madonna, no stranger to these parts, tore through like a one-day hurricane with an exhibit of some of the most provocative images of her career and a swanky beachfront soiree that recalled the wild days when she was queen bee at Liquid. Did the rubberneckers upstage the serious machers? That's always the perennial question here, but it doesn't seem to have been the case if sales reports are to be believed, from the selection of new Nate Lowman works that sold out of David Zwirner (pictured) between \$100,000 and \$350,000 to the Agnes Martin that went for \$7 million at Pace. Art, the conventional wisdom goes, is one hard asset that's recession-proof. Ahead, a suite of 15 highly subjective highlights from a very hectic Miami Art Week, four art fairs, and one extremely good Cuban cult cafe.



COURTESY OF PERROTIN

## Best in Show, ABMB: Hernan Bas

The Miami-born, second generation Cuban artist Hernan Bas has been enjoying a banner few years. In May, Christie's sold a painting in Hong Kong for \$1.2 million, a career high; his earlier record, notched at Phillips in March 2021, was \$352,800. At this year's Basel Miami, he showed at least two works, one at Fredric Snitzer, who launched his career at the inaugural fair, and at Perrotin (pictured), where it sold for \$450,000. A local boy makes good. An exhibition, "The Conceptualists," is on view at Victoria Miro in London through January 14.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZACHARY BALBER

## Best Pre-Fair Coup: Belkis Ayón

The Design District dealer David Castillo has also been a fixture at the fair since its earliest days, carrying the banner for a once burgeoning scene that has exploded over two decades. Its booth at ABMB this year included one major work (pictured, far left) by the late Cuban artist Belkis Ayón, who was prominently featured at the 2022 Venice Biennale, where her collographs anchored a room in the Arsenale and was selected for one of its four exhibition posters. The piece sold before the fair opened.



COURTESY, CRISTINA GRAJALES

## Best in Show, Design Miami/: Mark Grattan

At the Design Miami/ fair, the American furniture designer Mark Grattan, who splits his time between New York and Mexico City, fashioned a lush, high-gloss bedroom scene in tender lavender tones and hard-edge chrome surfaces at the booth by T&C O.G. Cristina Grajales, who set the tone by also featuring the provocative sculptures of Randy Palumbo. Last year, Grattan was featured on the cover of *Elle Decor*.



COURTESY SCAD

## Best Power Potters: Cerámica Suro

You've read we're living through The Glazed Age, yes? The renowned, Guadalajara studio Cerámica Suro has been ahead of the curve since the 1950s, and at this year's Design Miami/ fair had two stand-out moments: at Ago Projects, the Mexico City gallery founded in 2019 by the fair's former executive director Rodman Primack and his partner Rudy F. Weissenberg, and at the booth by the Savannah College of Art and Design (pictured), whose students collaborated with the studio on an installation of glazed tiles.





## Best in Show, Untitled: Richard-Jonathan Nelson

The New York gallerist Yossi Milo has a great eye for up-and-coming talent, and this year he showcased a pair of mixed media collages by the 35-year-old Oakland-based artist Richard-Jonathan Nelson alongside pieces by more established names from the gallery's roster, like Jeremy Jaspers and Shikeith, who was featured in *T&C*'s Creative Vanguard list. By the end of the fair, Nelson had won its 21c Museum Hotels Acquisition Prize. His debut solo exhibit, "A Lacquered Egress," opens at the gallery on December 15.



COURTESY, EL APARTAMENTO

## Best Party Scene: Rocío García

The most euphoric party snapshot of the week came not from Prada Extends at the Faena or Stone Island's 40th anniversary rave by Ladyfag. It was rendered on canvas by the Cuban artist Rocío García, whose work was shown by the Havana gallery El Apartamento, a longtime exhibitor at this fair. García uses her classic training—she studied at the famed San Alejandro Academy in Cuba and the St. Petersburg Repin Academy of Fine Arts in Russia—to animate an exuberant tableau celebrating queer life.





## Best in Show, NADA: Siena Smith

As we've written in this magazine, tapestries are enjoying a comeback. Only, now they're being re-interpreted by a new generation of artists, like Nelson, Myrlande Constant and Igshaan Adams, who scored a personal best showing at auction in March 2021 when a work sold for \$94,500; an exhibit is open through January 7 in New York at Casey Kaplan, which also sold a piece of his at ABMB. At the New Art Dealers Alliance fair, also in its 20th year in Miami, Chela Mitchell dedicated its booth to Siena Smith (pictured), a 26-year-old textile artist and assistant professor in residence at the Rhode Island School of Design whose ornate jacquard weavings exalt Black joy. NADA and TD Bank selected Smith to be part of its annual Curated Spotlight special section, this year organized by Joeonna Bellorado-Samuels, director of Jack Shainman gallery in New York.



PAVEL ACOSTA PROENZA

## Best Exhibition Space: Espacio 23

Many of Miami's most prominent collectors open their personal collections to the public. The real estate developer Jorge M. Pérez followed suit in 2019, founding Espacio 23 in the revitalized Allapattah neighborhood, also home to the new Rubell Family Collection. In 2016, Pérez gave a significant donation of Cuban work to the local museum that also bears his name, and Espacio 23's third exhibit, "You Know Who You Are," on view now, features work by Cuban artists collected since 2017. The breadth of the collection is remarkable, both historic and contemporary, by artists passed and alive, living in Cuba still and in exile. Pictured is one exemplary gallery, bookended by the seminal avant gardist Amelia Peláez (far left) and the future legend Diana Fonseca (far right).



## Best Remix: Madonna's Sex

Thirty years ago, Madonna caused a firestorm with the simultaneous publication of her underrated *Erotica* album and her coffee table book *Sex*. Photographed by Steven Meisel, it was groundbreaking, sex-positive release by a major pop artist that was decades ahead of its time. Though so hugely controversial then that it landed on the cover of *Newsweek*, it was also publishing sensation that has been out of print for years. Now, Saint Laurent's Rive Droite has issued a re-edition of the book—available for sale on its site for a cool \$2,200—and staged an exhibit of 25 of its images curated by creative director Anthony Vaccarello; it is open to the public, to anyone over 18, through Sunday. Several of the figures who made an appearance in the book, like model Tony

Ward (Madonna's boyfriend at the time) and cult actor Udo Kier, made appearances at a celebratory beachfront party, though this time more fully attired.



JOE SCHILDHORN/BFA.COM

## Best Doppelganger: Yayoi Kusama

The reclusive artist and Instagram fixation Yayoi Kusama was not herself at the Miami Beach Convention Center, but her likeness was—two Kusamas, in fact. The wax figures greeted guests at the Louis Vuitton lounge that marked a decade since the label's first tête-à-tête with Kusama and showcased other collaborations with popular artists like Richard Prince and Takashi Murakami.

## Most Fashionable OG: Gaetano Pesce



The resin chairs that graced the front row of Bottega Veneta's spring show in Milan—commissioned by creative director Matthew Blazy—by the master architect and industrial designer Gaetano Pesce traveled overseas to hold court at the Design Miami/fair to coincide with the publication of his new limited edition book, *Come Stai?* The chairs, which are now being promoted with an ad campaign starring Kate Moss, an OG herself, retail starting at \$6,500, but the book? That's available to pre-order for \$80.





VENJHAMIN REYES

## Molto Milanese Moment: Fendi Casa

Fendi Casa, the 30-year-old furnishings arm of the Italian fashion label, has been a presence at the Design Miami/ fair for over a decade (Its booth at this year's fair was conceived by Vienna-based artist Lukas Gschwandtner). Now, it's established a brick-and-mortar foothold in the city by opening its first flagship in the United States in the Design District. Want to customize a bookcase by Dimorestudio or try out the outdoor seating system by Piero Lissoni? This is where to do it.



## Best *Birdcage* Revival: The Pelican

Renzo Rosso, the Italian luxury mogul behind Diesel and OTB Group, bought The Pelican, a 1948 Art Deco hotel on Ocean Drive, in 1990. Thirty two years later, his son Andrea Rosso has given its 32 guest rooms a facelift and re-designed the in-house restaurant. The renovation is a throwback to the wild days of South Beach, when foam parties were the rage and Madonna was a regular at Liquid. Think *The Birdcage*—all'italiana. Incidentally, the hotel is a short walk away from Palace, the strip's most famous drag club.



TIFFANY & CO.

## Best Breakfast: Tiffany & Co.'s Holiday Residency

Technically speaking, the best breakfast in Miami is found at the Design District fixture Michael's Genuine Food. But a new spot has opened up through January 31 that has quite the pop culture claim to the title: you can now have breakfast at Tiffany's here, too! The label commissioned artists Kai & Sunny to transform the old OTL Café on the corner of Northeast 40th Street for a limited holiday residency and pop-up that serves the same menu you can find on Fifth Avenue. Pharrell and J Balvin turned up at the opening party, but more importantly, so did Johny.



## Best Canteen: Puerto Sagua

Some prefer Joe's Stone Crab or La Sandwicherie, a South Beach staple since 1988. But Cuban machers know to power lunch at the divey, old school cafe Puerto Sagua on Collins Avenue, which has been serving *croquetas* and *ropa vieja* for over 50 years. That can be a bit heavy for a day of art fair hopping or beaching. Order the *tamales*. Trust me.