

EYE ON FIVE

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With thirty years of art dealing and two decades of gallery owning under his belt, David Castillo has earned the loyalty and trust of some of America's most influential collectors and institutions. The artists he represents have been with him since the beginning of their careers; their success can be attributed to his distinctive approach to management. Whether that be of the artists or the collector's roster, which includes Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz, Mera and Don Rubell, Craig Robins, Ernesto and Cecilia Poma, and Paul and Trudy Cejas. "All of them are great supporters of my program," he shares, "as are museums which include the Bass, ICA, the Perez Art Museum, MoMA in New York City and the Guggenheim."

David, who is of Cuban descent, was born in Madrid, Spain. Having grown up in Miami in the 1970s, his early memories date back to the Gusman Center for Fine Arts (currently the Olympia Theater) when it used to host exhibitions. The definition of the American Dream, indeed, this Hialeah High graduate was the Valedictorian of his class and a recipient of the Silver Knight award. “I was that kid with over three thousand hours of community service who was also in all of the Advanced Placement classes,” he says.

In 2005, he opened his first gallery in Wynwood. “At the time,” he explains, “there were no businesses in a three-mile radius, and this was a turning point for me as I shifted my operation from secondary market dealings to primary market.”

What differentiates him from a saturated art market rests on intuition and loyalty. “I have remained true to my vision and the artists I was interested in,” Castillo explains. “I was never looking at a trend or a market; I never looked at it from a business perspective, solely about interest.” Many of the organic relationships he has forged with his artists yielded, for many, world recognition and success.

Some of those success stories include Sanford Biggers, the late Belkis Ayon, who was in the last Venice Biennale, Lyle Ashton Harris, Pepe Mar, Xaviera Simmons, Shinique Smith, and Vaughn Spann. Castillo represents Belkis Ayon’s estate and is working on releasing a book on her works as well as a solo show in the gallery in January.

Eye on art

Susu. This painter from China, who I saw in a group show, came to the gallery during a solo show I was having, and we started discussing Chinese opera. After we did a studio visit, I included her last year in a group show for Basel; the previous month, she was my solo show. Based between Pittsburgh and Brooklyn, Susu created a method of painting by pushing oil paint through silk, and what emerged was figurative.

Rachael Anderson. Based in New Haven, she is fascinating as she paints thematically relating to nature. It’s fresh and new, and she’s a Yale grad, too!

Se Jong Cho. She is a Baltimore-based floral painter from South Korea who offers distinctive and realistic works that are pure fantasy.

Nadir Souirgi. A Yale graduate from Miami. He is very interesting to watch and develops fresh abstractions about his narrative.