



Artsy Miami

For a flurry of arts, culture, music — and yes, fun —
make your way to Miami Art Week.

By Christine Borges

The first week in December has become a holiday of sorts for South Floridians and visitors alike. Celebrities, art aficionados and then some flock to the Magic City this time of year to collect, network and — best of all — rub elbows with the artfully minded.

This marks the 12th year that Art Basel takes over Miami Beach. With events also taking place in Switzerland and Hong Kong, Miami Beach serves as the fair's winter home. And with 258 galleries from 31 countries displaying pieces of all sorts within the

Miami Beach Convention Center, it's no wonder the art world is excited.

But there's more to the Basel beast than meets the eye. At least 20 satellite fairs are slated to return this year, so there's plenty popping up in South Beach and beyond to tickle your fancy — whether you're an art buff or a newbie. Now dubbed Miami Art Week, the all-encompassing festivities range from open-air food truck festivals featuring light installations on the beach and public art sculpture displays to creatively decorated pianos positioned all over Miami.

Stumbling on the latest and greatest in street art becomes a veritable *Where's Waldo*-type scavenger hunt. Admirers flock to Wynwood and the Design District neighbourhoods, looking for un-commissioned works from Invader, Shepard Fairey, Retna and the like, created by the artists during their spare time. Usually in plain view, you don't need to pay an admission fee to walk along the bustling sidewalks and peep at the work of these legends in their own right — some are even prominently displayed at the oft-celebrated Wynwood Walls.

Satellite fair giants like Art Miami and Scope have been around for more than 10 years, luring growing numbers of experimental artists to the Magic City, along with modern, contemporary and classic artists, too. Art Miami alone drew in more than 65,000 collectors, curators and onlookers in 2012, and added a sibling fair, Context, to its roster. One of the fair's main exhibits, "Out of Context," carefully salvaged five original works from world-renowned street artist Banksy — ripped from walls, concrete and the like — and displayed them for fans.

And it's these very art fans that are helping to further cement Miami as an art and culture destination. Miami's Independent Thinkers, a homegrown organisation dedicated to developing and promoting the city's flourishing art community, hosts a satellite fair brimming with local talent during Miami Art Week. "What started off as one art show turned into this phenomenal monster that has propelled us to produce art and music events throughout the year," says the organisation's creative director, Kerry McLaney. "Miami is consistently evolving and reinventing itself."

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