

david castillo gallery

By Mia Opalka

David Castillo has been in the art business for over a decade. With degrees in History and Art History from Yale University, as well as the Vatican, Castillo's background is primarily in secondary market art sales. Castillo opened his namesake gallery in Wynwood three years ago, and now it has become one of the must-see galleries each second Saturday for Gallery Walk. "I always wanted to have a gallery that exhibited work by young and mid-career artists", explains Castillo. "I had always pictured in my mind exactly how I wanted my gallery to be - it just took me a decade to get there", he adds.

This December, David Castillo Gallery will have four solo exhibits in the main space. Included in this show are the light-infused works of Wendy Wischer, Aramis Gutierrez' surreal and comedic oil paintings, Glexis Novoa's graphite drawings on marble and other surfaces, as well as the collaborative work of Leyden Rodriguez-Cassanova and Frances Trombly. Wischer's **Turning Towards the Sun**, for example, is a surreal garden installation piece that will incorporate the artist's balance between nature and man-made materials. The installation will be composed of two parts, one of which will consist of silver wire trees suspended from the ceiling. The other will be a series of plants covered in green crystals, to be installed on a gallery wall. The plants are inspired by the overgrowth of shrubbery underneath highway overpasses, where wild grass and brush grow at will. Each component of the installation will be dramatically lit, so as to incorporate light and shadow within the work. "The idea of something being uprooted and turned on itself makes this a familiar yet unfamiliar garden", explains Wischer. "It's the strangeness in the un-natural way of things that is interesting", she adds. Castillo will also unveil the David Castillo Annex, a 1,500 square foot space situated immediately adjacent to the gallery. He has spent this summer renovating the otherwise dilapidated section of the building he's currently occupying in order to have it ready by Art Basel Miami Beach. Artists Pepe Mar and Andrew Guenther will curate a group show of local as well as national artists. The annex will not only be a space to exhibit special projects, but also a place to showcase secondary market works.

Castillo deliberately represents a handful of artists, so that he can give each equal exhibition time. "Because I show a small roster of artists, I can make sure that all the artists get exposed to as many eyes as possible", Castillo explains. "Traditionally I have done a group show during Art Basel. One year it's been gallery artists, another year it was a show produced by an outside

David Castillo Gallery participates in this year's Art Positions as part of Art Basel Miami Beach. Art Positions, located at Collins Avenue and 23rd Street, is an extension of the fair where emerging galleries show work within large shipping containers.



Aramis Gutierrez. *Lazy Sunbathers.* 2007. Oil on Canvas

curator." Castillo represents a total of eight artists, so by having four solo shows and two gallery artists curating the exhibit in the Annex, seven of his artists have the opportunity to show their work at the gallery during the most important time of the year in the Miami art world. Castillo's eighth artist will participate in this year's Art Positions as part of Art Basel Miami Beach. Art Positions, located at Collins Avenue and 23rd Street, is an extension of the fair where emerging galleries show work within large shipping containers. The David Castillo Gallery container will hold a site-specific installation by Quisqueya Henriquez, whose work is known for creating dialogues centering on stereotypes, authority, and identity. Henriquez' exhibit will draw on baseball imagery to create a series of collages. Using images from newspapers, these figures call attention to cultural stereotypes - in this case the roles of Hispanics within the greatest of American pastimes. This is the first year that David Castillo Gallery will participate in the Art Basel Miami

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Pepe Mar. Untitled (detail). 2008. Collage sculpture. Photo courtesy of David Castillo Gallery

Beach fair. When asked why he chose Henriquez as the sole artist to exhibit at Art Positions, it was for the gallerist simply a matter of seniority. “Quisqueya was one of the first two artists to show with me”, he says, “and her work dialogues with modern art, conceptual art, as well as stereotypes of Latin American art”, Castillo adds. Henriquez has recently exhibited a mid-career retrospective at the Bronx Museum of the Arts.

Talking about the fair brings up two issues: the issue of art sales and collectors’ buying power, as well as the future of Art Basel in Miami. From an economic perspective, how many people are currently out there buying art? “Collectors that buy within a certain price range will always

buy art", Castillo says. "What's happening now may actually work in an artist's favor, meaning there is a potential for unusual opportunities that are not readily available in other sectors", he explains. "There will always be buyers for works of art. Although collectors are more cautious of what they buy, they do buy something".

For a city whose arts scene is still growing, a shaky economy is a threatening prospect. "Wynwood is continuing to grow", says Castillo, "even in the current economic climate. For the galleries and cultural institutions that are already here, there needs to be a continuing of a Wynwood Art District so that it doesn't unravel, and that takes a conscious group effort. Just like cities such as New York or Berlin - both places saw a concerted effort from the beginning. Everyone involved, artists, galleries, and cultural institutions had a serious commitment to art."

In addition, the idea that Art Basel Miami Beach might not last forever adds another element of uncertainty. "Art Basel Miami Beach has obviously been a huge success", continues Castillo. "Miami has the advantage of geography, as well as a good amount of international collectors and the growth of contemporary art."

When thinking about where else an American - based Art Basel would go, its hard to come up with another city that would even be pleasant to visit in December. "Miami has the advantage that it's a tourist destination, not just an arts destination, so people are happy to come here", says Castillo. "The West Coast would be another logical place, but it just doesn't have the convenience of traveling to Miami", he adds. Whether Art Basel stays or not, the fact is that David Castillo Gallery has made an impact in the 3 years it's been in existence. What the future holds is anyone's guess, but Castillo has staying power to weather the storm.

Quisqueya Henriquez. Collage Made According to the Laws of Change. 2008. Collage on paper.
Photo courtesy of David Castillo Gallery

