

8 Standout Design Moments from Miami Art Week

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Miami Art Week is a weeklong whirlwind of buzzy fairs, brand activations, and raging parties that often leaves the industry's head spinning long after the last Uber is called. There's always a trove of exemplary art and design to be seen across the Magic City in just a few short days, and sometimes it seems impossible to fully take in the mind-bending work with such a stacked itinerary. For those who may struggle with pausing and processing it all, *Galerie* selected eight standout design moments from across town that are still resonating.

1. "Roham Shamekh: Pharrell's Echoes" at Design Miami

At times, the creativity of Pharrell Williams can seem unbound—not only as one of the best-selling music producers out there, but as Louis Vuitton's menswear creative director, an auctioneer of chic baubles on Joopiter, and as the subject of a recent LEGO biopic. His master-of-all-trades approach has resonated with Roham Shamekh, the fast-rising Dubai designer whose delicate metallic candelabras—and the geometric chairs to which they're affixed—made a splash at Tuleste Factory in the spring. He arrived at Design Miami with Pharrell as his muse, presenting a series of heavenly white resin chairs whose torso-shaped forms are graced with sculptural angels and wings. Pharrell, Shamekh explains, became his guardian angel during a critical moment in his life: "We're all interconnected, and we all have the capacity to play a pivotal role in each other's lives, whether we realize it or not." Perhaps Rihanna will inspire the next one.



“Makers In Place: Kohler Celebrates 50 Years of Arts/Industry” in the Miami Design District. Photo: Courtesy of Kohler.

2. “Makers In Place: Kohler Celebrates 50 Years of Arts/Industry”

Kohler’s influence ventures far beyond its robust selection of next-gen bath products (and the eponymous Wisconsin town they’re manufactured in). The plumbing giant has been stewarding emerging artists since 1974, when late arts patron Ruth DeYoung Kohler launched Arts/Industry as a fully funded three-month residency for artists to experiment and make new work alongside Kohler’s skilled craftspeople. Hundreds of global talents—*Galerie Creative Minds* Woody De Othello and Theaster Gates among them—have benefited from the residency. A selection of their pieces, curated by Guggenheim fellow Michelle Grabner, starred in a pop-up exhibition in the Miami Design District that put the fellows’ creative heft on display. Highlights ranged from Lily Cox-Richard’s brass chandelier made of plumbing components to a life-size toilet that ceramicist Ann Agee emblazoned in cobalt-blue scenes of everyday life.



The Chubb Collector's Lounge by Sasha Bikoff at Art Basel Miami Beach. Photo: Nick Sargent

3. The Chubb Collector's Lounge at Art Basel Miami Beach

Navigating Art Basel's seemingly endless expanse of halls can exhaust even the most fervent collectors. When it's time for a bubbly break or calmer environs to negotiate a sale, there's always the Chubb Collector's Lounge. This year, the fair enlisted interior designer Sasha Bikoff to drench the hideaway in a groovy mix of zealous colors and clashing patterns inspired by the acid-soaked ambiance of Miami Beach and the eccentric salons kept by legendary collectors. Bikoff's own Memphis-inspired furniture for Abner Henry is sprinkled on top of a custom Stark rug, but the room centers on a soaring semi-transparent domed pendant inspired by the shapes and materiality of Isamu Noguchi and Achille Castiglioni, which Bikoff realized in collaboration with Studio M Lighting. The stakes were high, she explains: "Those who have access to the VIP area are top art collectors accustomed to surrounding themselves with blue-chip art." To that end, she sourced works by Chubb Fellowship recipients at the New York Academy of Art, perhaps introducing the fair's most well-heeled attendees to their next favorite artist.



Blunk Space at Design Miami. Photo: Chris Grunder.



Blunk Space at Design Miami. Photo: Chris Grunder.

4. Blunk Space at Design Miami

Design and craftsmanship run in Mariah Nielson's family—she's the daughter of JB Blunk, the pioneering American artist most famous for building a house in Inverness, California, and all its furniture by hand using salvaged materials. For the past several years, Nielson has been busy preserving and sharing his creative legacy with the world as the director of his estate. Her latest outing brought her father's work to Design Miami, where his wood furniture accompanied work by three emerging artists whose practices are inspired by Blunk's resourcefulness. Newly commissioned salvaged redwood shelves by Rio Kobayashi, for example, looked plucked from Blunk's residence. Ditto for Alana Burns's delicate shell-and-metal jewelry, which matched Blunk's bowls and trays. She collaborated on standing textile-and-metal lamp with Adam Pogue, who also produced floor cushions in his signature patchwork salvaged textiles. They all surrounded two sinuous wood Blunk stools sourced from private collections; each were created using offcuts from a single salvaged redwood root system. The booth scooped Design Miami's prestigious award for Best Curio Presentation.



Formafantasma founders Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin. Photo: Courtesy of Maison Perrier-Jouët.

“Banquet of Nature.” Photo: Courtesy of Maison Perrier-Jouët.

5. Maison Perrier-Jouët and Formafantasma: *Banquet of Nature*

Art, nature, and progressive ideals around viticulture have always been hallmarks of Maison Perrier-Jouët, so it's no surprise the champagne house recently teamed with Formafantasma to create an eye-catching installation that fosters biodiversity in its vineyard. The smattering of pink-hued terracotta totems certainly merits a visit to the Côte des Blancs, but a small group of Miami Art Week attendees were lucky enough to experience the installation from afar. Guests descended on La Côte at the Fontainebleau Miami Beach for an intimate cocktail and panel discussion featuring curator Glenn Adamson, Perrier-Jouët creative director Caroline Bianco, Formafantasma co-founder Simone Farresin, and three Michelin Star chef Pierre Gagnaire. The latter promptly served up an exquisite multi-course dinner paired with hand-selected vintages. After, diners donned headphones to listen to an eco-acoustic composition by David Monacchi, who over the summer recorded a chorus of locusts thriving in the vineyard. If you couldn't make it, a limited-edition bottle of Blanc de Blancs may do the trick.



“Primal Mysteries” at Ralph Pucci Miami. Photo: Juan Pablo Castro

6. Ralph Pucci: Primal Mysteries

Ralph Pucci made a splashy appearance at Art Basel last year when his eponymous gallery inaugurated its 10,000-square-foot outpost in a 1960s former warehouse in Wynwood, its facade festooned with a graphic floral mural by Elizabeth Garouste. This year, the beloved design dealer's showing was more understated but no less momentous—he presented the gallery's first standalone in-house furniture collection in more than a decade. Drawing inspiration from seminal art-history figures like Alberto Giacometti, Constantin Brâncuși, and Paul Klee that have long inspired the studio, the range of rough-hewn furnishings sports a sand-blasted appearance thanks to meticulous handiwork in clay and plaster. One major highlight is the eight-foot-tall *Visage* lighting sculpture, a one-of-a-kind feat of design and engineering that looks like it could've been unearthed from the ground.



“Invento Spirit: Collective Experiments in Adaptive Creativity” at Alcova Miami. Photo: Jean Lee

7. “Invento Spirit: Collective Experiments in Adaptive Creativity”

In Cuban culture, the term “invento” refers to the spontaneous, resourceful solutions arising from adaptive creativity, especially in the face of scarcity or hardship. An “invento” is typically crafted with found, repurposed, recycled, or scavenged items in lieu of conventional tools or products. That spirit of resourcefulness has long resonated with Havana-born designer Daniela Friedman, who collaborated with Ladies & Gentlemen Studio on an immersive ten-day workshop in the Cuban capital with fellow designers Lex Pott, Chris Wolston, and *Galerie* Creative Mind Tezontle to improvise with salvaged materials. It returned in full force at the roving design fair Alcova, which fittingly took over a former inn in Miami’s Little Havana neighborhood. Their group show not only presented results of the design workshop, but a curation of like-minded works by nearly two dozen international and Cuban creatives like Ernesto Oroza, Jonah Takagi, and Vy Voi who consider concepts of reuse. According to Ladies & Gentlemen Studio co-founder Jean Lee, the show is “a counter-balance to the excess of the contemporary Western design world”—and a reminder “to not take things for granted and show that design can be more accessible and responsive.”

8. Panerai: Submersible Elux LAB-ID

In 1966, Panerai invented electroluminescent panels composed of luminous surfaces—Elux for short—to improve the brightness of naval instruments it supplied to the Italian Navy. Though it was a game-changing feat of technology, the Italian luxury watchmaker hasn’t rested on its laurels. At Design Miami, it debuted a dazzling new timepiece that wields Elux technology to illuminate indicators on the dial, including the lighting power reserve and indexes, for up to half an hour thanks to a microgenerator that converts mechanical energy into electricity. It’s a perfect tool for deep-sea diving—the water-resistant watch is set within a lightweight titanium case that, through a complex plasma electrolytic oxidation process, achieves a striking blue hue inspired by the open seas. The wearable is 44 percent lighter than steel, ten times tougher than traditional ceramic, and limited to a run of 150 pieces.

Cover: The Chubb Collector’s Lounge by Sasha Bikoff at Art Basel Miami Beach.

Photo: Nick Sargent