

DESIGN COMES OF AGE

By Beth Dunlop

Miami is both first-adopter and late bloomer. The city has always had style, its own style at least. But what about design? The recent building boom has brought some very good buildings including Frank Gehry's New World Symphony and the Perez Art Museum Miami. Craig Robins, president of Dacra and founder of Design Miami, is transforming the Design District with large-scale works Marc Newson, Buckminster Fuller, and Constantine Grcich. Both the Museum of Art + Design and the Miami Architecture Center add to the mix. Art Circuits sought more, so we asked a group of design-oriented Miamians (in fields ranging from furniture to buildings to fashion) to speak to their own work or that of others. Following are excerpts from what they said. -Beth Dunlop

Nina Johnson, Nina Johnson Gallery (formerly Gallery Diet)

I have had tremendous success in exploring the world of design, showing Katie Stout, Aranda/Lasch, and of course, Emmett Moore's name has become synonymous with collectible design here. I am also interested in wood workers who are now creating quite interesting responses to design problems. Very close to home, I see this exemplified in the work my husband, Daniel Milewski, has been creating in partnership with Brian Booth, or even via fabricators such as Deft Union who are now producing their own furniture line.

Nisi Berryman, designer and owner of Niba Home

Luis Pons explores design with the mind of an artist, putting ordinary materials to unexpected uses while under the influence of

an unconventional and elegant aesthetic and large doses of humor. Vivian Carbonell - Artist/sculptress living and working in Miami. I am a huge fan of her work and admire her rigorous yet warm industrial take on practical furniture.

Veruska Vasconez, co-founder of the art collaborative, Meetinghouse

Meetinghouse, located in Downtown Miami's historic Huntington Building, features cross-disciplinary exhibitions, including art, architecture, performance and design, linked by a philosophical need for material and process. We've been privileged to work with artists such as architecturally focused painter Karen Rifas, sculptor and designer Emmett Moore, Rita Motta, and architects such as Rocco Ceo and Rene Gonzalez.

Rene Gonzalez, architect The lush tropical façade of CIFO,

an image created with millions of glass Bisazza tiles, was conceived to create a striking contrast - both in visual subject and scale - with the grittiness of the surrounding neighborhood and appears as a tropical oasis within the urban setting of downtown Miami

Thais Fontanelle, showroom director Minotti and founder-director of the South Florida design showcase, Inventory

Michelle Weinberg's work is fixture on many important publications all over the US-in large scale as murals and in sidewalks but also in more intimate expressions like ceramic tiles, hand-knotted rugs, textiles, wallpaper and more. Rita Motta's Mr.O Design studio creates objects and spaces



Nina Johnson cited Emmett Moore, Sway, 2014, Ebonized ash, Natural Ash, Lacquer, hardware. 108 x 120 x 18 in.



Luis Pons Design Lab, Illusion collection brought up by Nisi Berryman.



The Meetinghouse at the Huntington Building downtown Miami revealed by Verushka Vasconez.

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that reflect her love of colors and imaginary characters. Her collections of carpets, furniture, and jewelry are wonderful and unexpected.

Terence Riley, architect, former chief curator of architecture and design Museum of Modern Art, New York, and former director of the Perez Art Museum Miami

The Perez Art Museum Miami has been considered an architectural gem since its opening. I think it is fair to say that Herzog + deMeuron's incredible design is no more fleshed out: the curators have more experience in how to use the spaces to greater effect, the quality of the galleries has attracted more gifts of more impressive works of art, the landscape has matured in a spectacular way. Patrick Blanc's hanging gardens are both sculpture and living tropical environments.

Cathy Leff, founder of The Fashion Project, former director of the Wolfsonian Miami is rooted in an exhibitionist culture dictated by weather and

youth culture. Today one can even commission wonderful unique pieces from talented international designers whomake Miami their home or part time home: among them, Naeem Khan and Oscar Carvalho. I would say Miami's fashion statement is a non-judgmental, anything goes. The good news is Miami has always been a place for people watching and is a constant runway show of its own creation.

Peter Menendez

A trip to Miami in the late seventies to visit my parents provided an opportunity to see the Pink House in Miami Shores. The visit provided a unique opportunity for a sneak preview, literally, to what was going to become a signature spot in the city. The vocabulary of the house was fresh and now, with several hues of pink suggestive of a Miami story, real or apocryphal. My reaction: if this is Miami, I want to live here. The house was slick but honest, on a prime spot but "modest," with hints of the nautical, and a practicality manifested clearly in layout and circulation. Romance achievable and not just aspirational.



As suggested by Peter Menendez: Laurinda Spear and Bernardo Fort-Brescia (Arquitectonica), The Pink House, Miami Shores, 1976-9. On view as part of An Image at the ArtCenter / South Florida.

Clockwise from top left: Marianne Russell from Arango contributed with this Talkie Necklace by Rita Motta, handmade in polymer clay with gold leaf. Oscar Carvalho, chosen by Cathy Leff, Paris Electric Blossom Couture Collection 2016. Architects Herzog + deMeuron's Perez Art Museum Miami / PAMM, Patrick Blanc's gardens. Photography by Robin Hill (c) CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Foundation) façade, Rene Gonzalez, architect. Photo by Oriol Tarridas. Highlighted by Thais Fontanelle, Michelle Weinberg, Chocolate/Strawberry rug, hand-knotted silk, 4' x 6'.