



# COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Since the first year of Art Basel Miami Beach, in 2002, the fair has been regarded as something of a litmus test for the current creative and market climate, and a harbinger for the year to come. What does 2010 have in store for the art world? Here we present Miami's preeminent collectors—Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz, Martin Margulies, Mera and Don Rubell and Dennis and Debra Scholl—and their thoughts on the fair and beyond.

BY CAROL KINO

**What are you most looking forward to at Art Basel Miami Beach this year?**

**Rosa de la Cruz:** I look forward to opening our new exhibition space in the Design District. We started construction almost two years ago.

**Mera Rubell:** Our daughter Jennifer's breakfast opening at the Rubell Family Collection for our show "Beg Borrow and Steal." She uses food installations as a medium to continue a kind of art conversation. Every year she outdoes herself.

**Ella Fontanals-Cisneros:** I am hoping there is less focus on social activities and a returned focus on the art. I am also looking forward to discovering some new alternative young galleries.

**Dennis Scholl:** We are very excited that Art Positions has returned from its exile and will be located in the Convention Center this year. Talk about one-stop shopping! I think the cutting-edge nature of those gallerists will add a lot to the fair.

**Martin Margulies:** I'm looking forward to when it's over.

**What sort of art is turning you on at the moment?**

**MR:** We are excited by art that acknowledges its references, like the work of Kelley Walker and Wade Guyton. The artists once told us they felt they'd been able to build on the legacies of older artists, like Andy Warhol, Marcel

Duchamp and Richard Prince. We were amazed by their honesty. The conversation inspired the idea for our current show, "Beg Borrow and Steal."

**EFC:** I am studying the conceptual movement in Latin America, as well as doing more research on European artists working with video.

**MM:** I've noticed a tremendous sensitivity and enthusiasm in performance art. That seems to be a new area for me to explore. I don't know yet where it's going to take me.

**RDLC:** I have never thought about art in those terms. When we install works from the collection, we are thinking about the experience of traveling through a space and enjoying that moment, not about a particular trend.

**DS:** We are feeling that a lot of younger artists are emerging making work that is not market-driven. With the diminished expectations, all artists have a willingness to get back to the studio and dig deep into the heart of their practice. We are finding that an exciting moment has emerged from the recent downturn in the art market.

**What's the last piece of art you purchased?**

**MR:** A photo-collage by Hans-Peter Feldmann and an incredible video by William E. Jones made from censored photographs that he discovered in the archives of the Farm Security Administration. Both pieces will be in "Beg



Dennis and Debra Scholl



Martin Margulies



Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz

Borrow and Steal.”

**RDLC:** This is difficult to answer since we are doing several site-specific installations for our new space in the Design District. But at Frieze this year, we acquired a beautiful painting by Rudolf Stingel.

**DS:** We commissioned a new young British artist named Jack Strange to make a work for World Class Boxing in February. We have no idea what it will be. And I can't resist telling you about Ben Berlow, a new young painter who paints lush abstract works on small found sheets of paper. We discovered his work at Jack Hanley Gallery and bought 20 pieces right away.

**EFC:** A video installation by the Mexican artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer. Paintings from 1946 by a new discovery of mine, Esteban Lisa, an Argentinean artist who was one of the first abstract painters in Latin America. And work from the 1950s to the 1970s by Antonio Asis, also Argentinean and known for geometric abstraction.

**MM:** Two photographs by Justine Kurland, from her new show at Mitchell-Innes & Nash. I've been collecting Justine's work for a long time—it's wonderful. It combines a view of humanity in rural America with the landscape of an Eakins painting.

**How has the economy changed what you're buying?**

“As collectors of young work, we are finding that we no longer have to pay \$10,000 for a \$2,000 artist. This allows us to pursue more projects and encourage more up-and-coming artists.”

—Dennis Scholl

**MR:** Nothing has changed. We love visiting the studios of younger artists and supporting their work.

**RDLC:** We have continued to attend the art fairs and think it is important to continue supporting the art institutions.

**EFC:** I am more conscious of spending the right amount for the works I am interested in. I am also trying to focus on artists whose work has really maintained its value.

**DS:** As collectors of young work, we are finding that we no longer have to pay \$10,000 for a \$2,000 artist. This allows us to pursue more projects and encourage more up-and-coming artists.

**MM:** My heart still goes pitter-patter when I see something that would add to the collection, and when I know I can't afford it I say, Nuts! But this too shall pass. I'm primarily buying work that supports younger artists, like Shinique Smith and Justine Kurland, but I'm also scheduled to have a delivery of an Ellsworth Kelly and a Pistoletto. I may be collecting less, but I'm still very mindful of buying something that fits into the collection.

**What will the biggest issue be in 2010 for the Miami art world?**

**EFC:** I think we are going to see a decrease in the quality of exhibitions coming to Miami due to so many institutional budget constraints. For collectors, it will also be a challenge to maintain all the private collections open to the general public.

**MM:** Dade County has cut its art budget, as most governments around the country have, and of course private money has also gone down significantly. The big issue is going to be how to deal with these cuts. It's very tough.

**DS:** The Miami art world's 15 minutes of fame is now in its sixth year. While Art Basel Miami Beach had a lot to do with the international recognition that has come our way, there are a lot of other reasons for it. Our magnet high schools give us a steady supply of incredibly talented artists. Our collector base is deep and strong and still buying lots of art. Our artists have been ahead of the curve in creating collaboratives and nontraditional exhibition opportunities. Our museums continue to grow and strengthen. But the biggest issue this year will be to pull all this together and unite to build on the momentum that has made Miami such a wonderful art town. Collaboration is the key.

**MR:** What issue?! Miami is a great place to visit and a great place to see art. **ABMB**