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artillery

Miami Art Week Report: Day 2

Elevate Española highlights the importance of public art, and the fairs begin

by Annabel Keenan | Dec 6, 2023

After a weekend filled with art and philanthropy in [Palm Beach](#), we're officially ready for the parties, fairs, and people-watching of Miami Art Week. Yesterday, [Untitled Art](#) and the [New Art Dealers Alliance](#) fairs opened to VIPs, and the heavy-hitting Art Basel Miami Beach and Design Miami/ open today. To kick off my week, rather than dive straight into the fair tents and convention center, I started this year off in the best part of Miami: the city itself.

The City of Miami Beach is full of vibrant culture, iconic Art Deco hotels, public art, and, of course, the beach. As I made my way to Untitled Art, my first stop was for the unveiling of a project that I was excited not only to see, but also to highlight. Suspended above Española Way is *Adora Vanessa Athena Fantasia*, a public installation by the Brazilian art collective [assume vivid astro focus](#) (avaf). Commissioned as part of The City of Miami Beach's Art in Public Places Program, the project is the third edition of [Elevate Española](#).

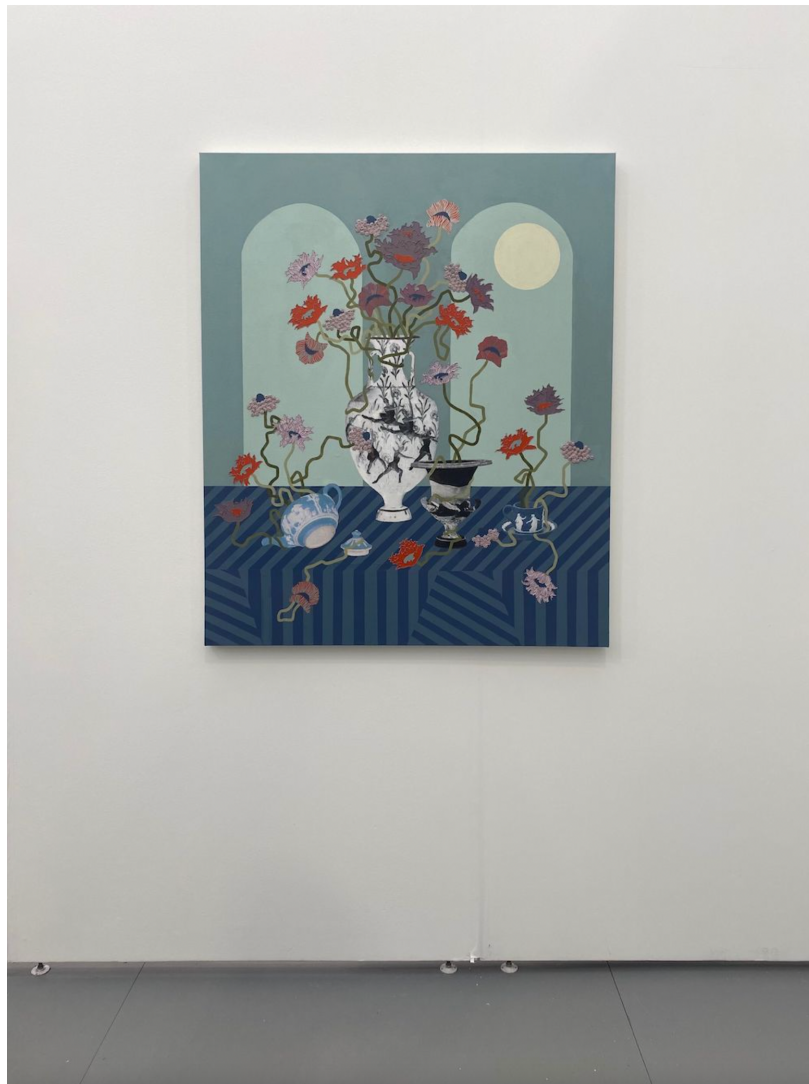
Celebrating the legacy of drag in Miami Beach, *Adora Vanessa Athena Fantasia* features five large-scale aluminum portraits referencing the local drag royalty who inspire avaf, including the installation's namesakes Adora, Athena Dion, Fantasia Royale, Tiffany Fantasia, and The Regina Black, among others. Hanging above the street, the installation features a kaleidoscope of colorful imagery, such as figures in drag, some of which appear to be screaming with their mouths wide open and emitting a starburst with the colors of the LGBTQ+ flag. "Our intention is to honor the talented and skilled artists of drag, and support its continued existence in a city that has embraced the community for decades despite legislative resistance. We must defend drag," said avaf member Eli Sudbrack at the unveiling. As the artist noted, avaf claims space for drag in a bold, public way at a time when Florida's

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administration is threatening drag performances, and LGBTQ+ rights are at risk of being taken away.

On site for the celebration, drag performer Tiffany Fantasia, whose likeness is featured in the work, shared their own thoughts, saying, "Without art, the world is boring. Art helps us through struggles, helps us feel joy, helps us understand each other. Drag is a form of art and we must protect and support all art." I highly recommend adding this to your itinerary this week. Elevate Española can be seen along Española Way between Washington Avenue and Collins Avenue, a short walk from where many events are taking place.



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Lizzie Gill in Geary's booth.

Exhibiting an exciting artist on the rise is Geary, whose solo booth features the mixed media work of [Lizzie Gill](#). Reflecting the fair's theme of "Gender Equality in the Arts," Gill's work blends subtle humor and nostalgia to examine domesticity and patriarchy, specifically the onus of inheritance and heirlooms. Pulling images from early 20th century magazines and museum catalogs, Gill uses a transfer method to apply these to her paintings and then sands away the paper pulp. To this, she adds acrylic paint and marble dust emulsion applied in raised lines with a cake piping tool, creating an image that is at once flat and textured depending on the viewpoint.