

## RL Magazine

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Works by Nate Lowman and Dan Coen at the de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space

*A select group of patrons has put a spell on the Magic City's art scene*

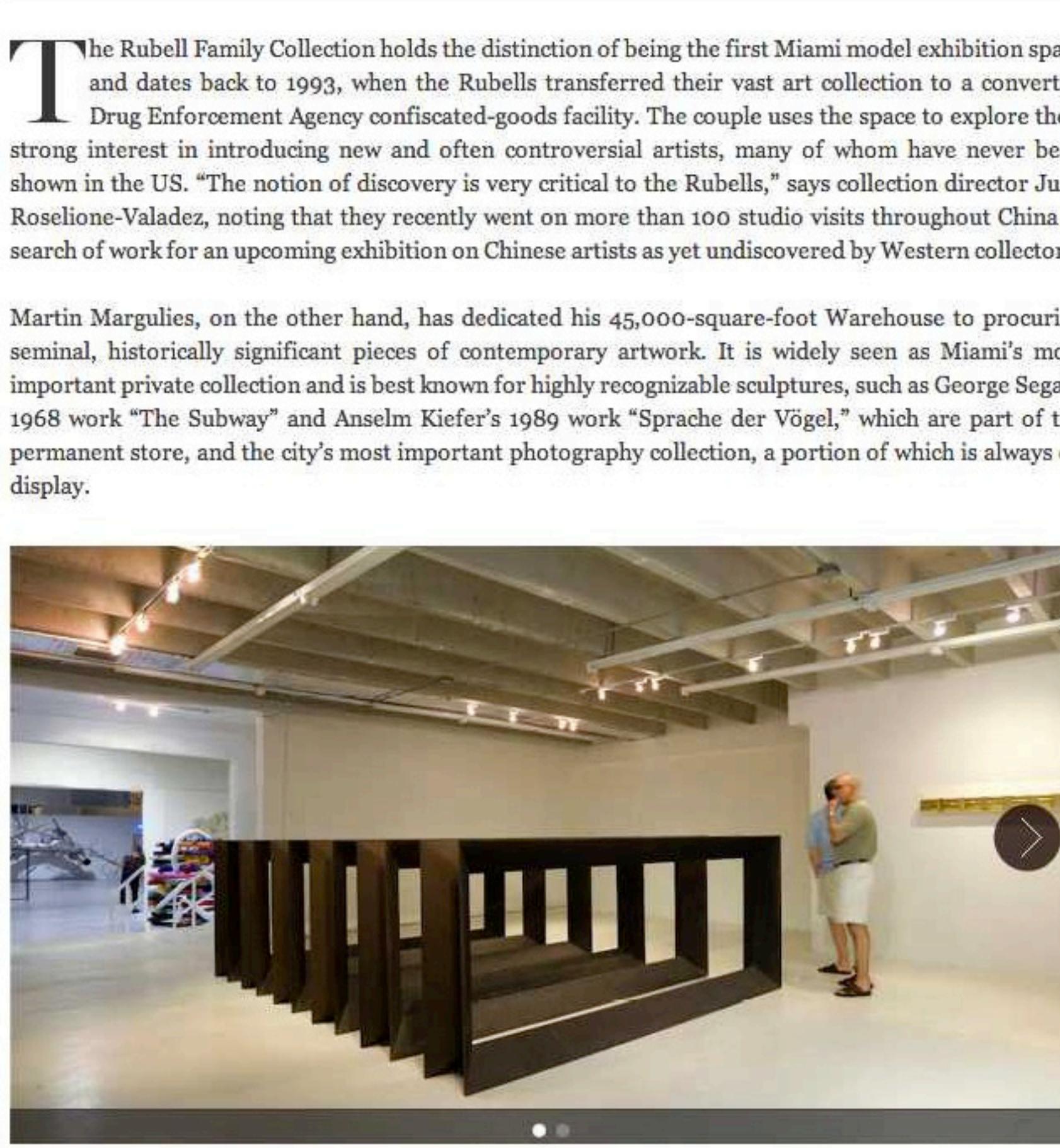
One of Florida's biggest cities is in the midst of its latest renaissance, but this time, pastel architecture, gambling and Frank Sinatra have nothing to do with it. Thanks in large part to Art Basel Miami Beach—the world's premier international art show, which launched a little more than a decade ago—Miami has become a capital of all things artistic and draws fans, dealers and artists alike to mingle among the beachcombers, trading money and masterpieces. But before Art Basel brought international attention, there was a small group of private museums specializing in contemporary art that collectively came to be known worldwide as the Miami model, and their influence is reaching far beyond the famed art show's walls.

"These are public exhibition spaces for private collections," says collector Dennis Scholl, whose space, called World Class Boxing, is open to the public during Art Basel but accessed largely by appointment during the rest of the year. "While this is not the only place where such spaces exist, Miami is the only place where there are a significant number."

Critic Tyler Green, who is credited with coining the term Miami model, concurs: "There aren't many cities where this concentration of private museums is possible. Miami's rare nexus of wealth, warehouse space and permissive zoning allows these folks to do what they want to do."

And what they want to do is collect and exhibit art in their own way without the restrictions of a board of directors or public financing. But Miami didn't always have great traditional museums in which collectors could display their art. Rather than wait for the next MoCA or MoMA to be built, starting about 15 years ago, these benefactors simply built their own institutions.

"The collectors have total control," explains Carol Damian, director of the Frost Art Museum at Florida International University. "It's their curatorial vision, it's their collection and it's their money, so they can do what they want, whereas a traditional museum is constrained by factors like money and a board. If you have a private museum, it's entirely that collector's point of view."



Four exhibition spaces in particular stand out: Mera and Donald Rubell's Family Collection, Martin Margulies' Warehouse, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz's Collection Contemporary Art Space and Ella Fontanals-Cisneros' CIFO Art Space. Although there are others with quasi-public gallery spaces, these four have grown to the point of truly functioning like museums, complete with formal hours, education programs, extensive libraries and a variety of grants for financing the work of emerging artists and curators.

The shared focus of these four is almost entirely on contemporary art, further distinguishing them and other Miami model organizations from private museums. "The pure square footage in these spaces devoted to art from the last five or 10 years is very large, particularly for a city of Miami's size," says Green. Together, they boast nearly 125,000 feet of exhibition space, roughly half of which houses "very recent" work, with the vast majority of the rest of the art being from the past 40 years.

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For example, on view until August 2, 2013, at the Rubell Family Collection is *Alone Together*, a show that explores contemporary artists stripped of context, with each being given his or her own room. The pieces on display include influential works of installation art, such as the sexually explicit "Oh! Charley, Charley, Charley..." by Charles Ray and Cady Noland's "This Piece Has No Title Yet," a room-filling opus made from beer cans, American flags, scaffolding and mixed media. Also on view is Oscar Murillo: Work, the artist's first solo exhibition following a five-week residency at the Rubells' museum—a Yaddo-like experiment—during which time Murillo produced hundreds of works.

The Rubell Family Collection holds the distinction of being the first Miami model exhibition space and dates back to 1993, when the Rubells transferred their vast art collection to a converted Drug Enforcement Agency confiscated-goods facility. The couple uses the space to explore their strong interest in introducing new and often controversial artists, many of whom have never been shown in the U.S. "The notion of discovery is very critical to the Rubells," says collection director Juan Roselino-Valadez, noting that they recently went on more than 100 studio visits throughout China in search of work for an upcoming exhibition on Chinese artists as yet undiscovered by Western collectors.

Martin Margulies, on the other hand, has dedicated his 45,000-square-foot Warehouse to procuring seminal, historically significant pieces of contemporary artwork. It is widely seen as Miami's most important private collection and is best known for highly recognizable sculptures, such as George Segal's 1968 work "The Subway" and Anselm Kiefer's 1989 work "Sprache der Vögel," which are part of the permanent store, and the city's most important photography collection, a portion of which is always on display.

The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse

*Untitled*, by Donald Judd (1978), at the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse

Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m.–4 p.m. with extended hours during Art Basel and Art Miami

Admission: \$10; Miami-Dade County students (with valid ID): free

The Rubell Family Collection

55 NW 29th Street, Miami, FL 33127

305-573-6000; [www.rfc.museum](http://www.rfc.museum)

Open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Admission: \$10; Children under 18 and students with ID: \$5

SUZANNE WEINSTOCK KLEIN is the executive editor of *Caviar Affair*. Her work has also appeared in *Departures*, *BlackBook* and *Art Avenue*, among others, and on *Elle.com*.

COURTESY RALPH LAUREN CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

COURTESY RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION (3)

COURTESY RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION (4)

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