



# Memo from Miami | Fun in the Sun

DESIGN | By MONICA KHEMSUROV | DECEMBER 10, 2012, 11:04 AM | 1 Comment



The artist Jorge Pardo's installation "Garden Lights" is on view at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, Florida through March 31, 2013.

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For the majority of sun-deprived northerners, Art Basel Miami and its complement, Design Miami, are all about using work as an excuse to migrate to more agreeable climes. Sure, the art is amazing, but what would the fair be without the pools, parties and palm trees? So it's fitting that three design attractions on view this week offer three different takes on the importance of setting.

The Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables, for example, has once again punctuated its 83 acres of foliage with bold works of contemporary art and design; this year it invited the New York dealer Cristina Grajales to curate "Sitting Naturally," a collection of 14 benches commissioned from her stable of designers. While Michele Oka Doner's benches of petrified Alaskan pine almost blend in with the background, Sebastian Errazuriz's Parisian-style street bench, hung with a crystal chandelier, looks cheekily out of place, and Pedro Barrail's series in marble and metal have insectlike legs that make them look ready to scurry off into the bushes. Also at the Fairchild, the Los Angeles artist Jorge Pardo has hung 100 of his laser-cut steel lamps from an oak tree that drips with Spanish moss, where the lights look like a cross between Chinese lanterns and pomegranates.

Back in South Beach, the Benetton store on Collins Avenue has been newly reimagined by its architects in Italy — along with a team from Fabrica, the company's communications research arm — to better reflect its tropical surroundings, complete with palm tree murals, a custom LED light fixture in the shape of a giant sunburst, and a "roof" of thatched bamboo over the dressing rooms. To celebrate the store's reopening during Design Miami, Sam Baron, the director of Fabrica's design department, and his team of young resident designers produced a series of glass objects for the Carmen Miranda-inspired installation, "Tutti Frutti." The objects display fruit in strange new ways, as in a stand by Daniela Mesina that's meant to show off a single skewered apple.

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Another Italian import in town for the fair is **Cassina's** full-scale recreation of Le Corbusier's Cabanon, which is making its American debut at the furniture company's Design District showroom; it will join the Le Corbusier retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in June. The Swiss architect built the diminutive dwelling in 1952 on a hillside in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France, where he summered until his death in 1965, and the design of its 160-square-foot interior was all about context — he affixed mirrors to the inside of the window shutters to maximize the stunning views of the coastline. With a cafe next door and a temporary studio down the road, the Cabanon basically served as an upscale beach shack. As the Corbusier scholar and Cassina collaborator Jean-Louis Cohen gave me a tour of the installation, I asked him if he had ever heard of glamping. "Maybe he was the founder," he said of the architect with a laugh.




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# Memo From Miami | Design Now

DESIGN | By MONICA KHEMSUROV | DECEMBER 6, 2012, 1:10 PM | Comment

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The tent that houses this year's Design Miami was designed by the New York studio Snarkitecture. Alexis Dahan

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"The French own this place," said an art dealer who attended the Design Miami collectors' preview on Tuesday. He used additional language that can't be printed here, but in some ways he was right: as was the case at previous shows, you couldn't turn a corner in the big white Snarkitecture-designed tent without bumping into a piece by Jean Prouvé or Jean Royère, not to mention all the Parisian galleries themselves. I did enjoy looking at the furniture that was part of Le Corbusier's design for the Indian city of Chandigarh at Patrick Seguin's booth, or a drab-looking metal screen, designed by Prouvé for a gymnasium, which was expected to fetch six figures at Jousse Entreprise. Suzanne Demisch of Demisch Danant made a case for her (New York) gallery's solo show of Pierre Guariche, whom she said was "a big part of French design history" but who had been "overshadowed commercially" by his aforementioned 1950s peers. Still, if the consensus was that this year's fair seemed stronger than the previous six, no one was giving the Gauls all the credit. It's likely that Design Miami owes a good bit of its increasing cool factor to all the contemporary work on view this year.

Three luxury brands are showcasing the talents of up-and-coming designers. At Fendi, "Transformations," by the Brussels-based Maarten de Ceulaer, proves that you can turn just about anything into furniture with his colorful leather cushion strips, which are nailed across a rudimentary picnic bench, a series of cut-wood blocks and a towering tree trunk that he'll fill as the week goes on, in an evocation of the company's signature Pequin pattern. "Historically, Fendi's taken a lot of inspiration from Modernist graphics, and I wanted to transform those 2-D patterns into something 3-D," said the designer, who is best known for his similarly modular leather-briefcase dresser for Nilufar Gallery in Milan. Perrier-Jouet commissioned Tim Simpson and Sarah van Gameren, of the London studio Glithero, for the brand's Design Miami debut; the duo's rings of nickel beads, which hang in perfect parabolas, are a conceptual tribute to the D.I.Y. engineering techniques that Antoni Gaudi used to design the Sagrada Família church in Barcelona. Asif Khan's ice halo for Swarovski was featured on The Moment last week, but it was fun to see it in person, and fun to see the poised, well-heeled visitors who were attempting to figure out how to get inside the "house" in which it was installed. (You have to duck underneath its frame and shinny towards the middle, but don't worry, it's worth it.)

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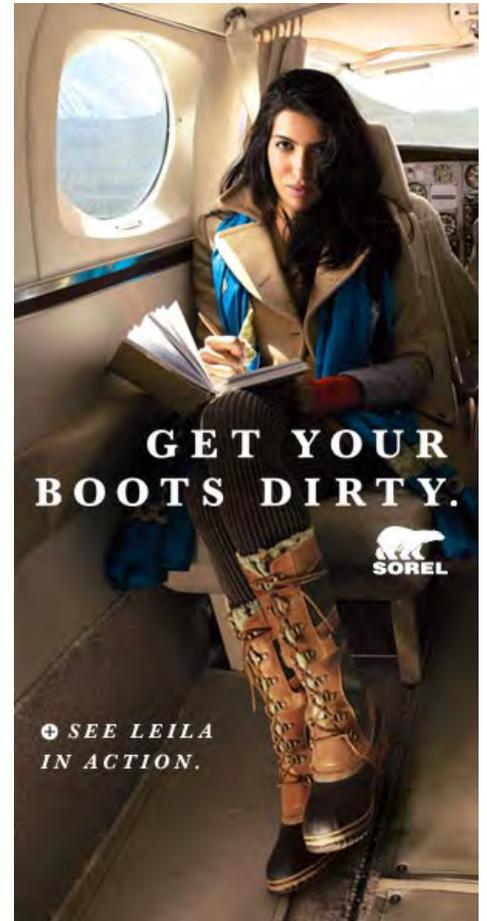


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Design Miami's **Design On/Site** program once again brought in less-established galleries that were working with young designers. While most of the pieces this year had been exhibited before, you have to hope that a daring collector or two was excited to be introduced to, say, the whimsically impractical, bubble-blowing Surface Tension Lamps by Front for the Dutch lighting brand **Booo**.

Other pieces around the tent that use innovative or unexpected materials include Glithero's photo-sensitive porcelain Silverware vases at Galerie VIVID, Francois Bauchet's resin-sandwiched felt shelves at Galerie Kreo or Suzanne Tick's excellent piece at Cristina Grajales's booth. The textile artist made a triptych of weavings from torn-up Mylar balloons found on the beach in Fire Island, N.Y., some of which she solicited from neighbors by way of signs posted around town. I never would have known this if I hadn't asked, but that's one of the best parts of a show like Design Miami: all the gallerists standing at the ready, eager to tell you the stories that make you forget the \$15 paninis and sacrificed sunshine, year after year.

*This post has been revised to reflect the following correction:*

**Correction: December 6, 2012**

*An earlier version of this post incorrectly identified the designer of the triptych made of Mylar balloons at Cristina Grajales gallery as Sheila Hicks. The designer is Suzanne Tick.*




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