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Miami in the pink

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"It's such a utopian setting. It's about excess, lots of pleasure and the capitalistic art world, as well as an undercurrent of creativity and compassion." This is Spencer Tunick — the artist renowned for his multiple nude figure installations and fresh from his 18,000-person naked extravaganza at the Zócalo in Mexico City — on Miami and its predilections, art and otherwise.

Miami, of course, has always had a reputation for flashing the flesh: real and, occasionally, a little more Nip/Tuck-ed. Now, it is also something of an art world mecca — for at least four days a year anyway. That's thanks to Art Basel Miami Beach, which kicks off on Thursday (December 6-9), and the 20 plus other art fairs that ride its coattails and pull in hundreds of thousands of collectors, gallerists and artists.

But, when all the great and the good head back home to their four white walls, some of the best contemporary art in the world can still be seen in the city's museums, private collections and hotels, only minus the crowds.

And aptly, one of this year's must see shows, at the famous contemporary art hotel, the Sagamore, is by Tunick himself, and is as much about flesh as it is about art. The series of six photographs and two video art works from his latest installation, created at the hotel with the help of 500 Miami volunteers, and guest curated by Kimberly Marrero, is there in its full glory.

"It is celebrating excess and commenting on it," says Tunick, who led the participants through a series of staged installation photographs using props and elements commonly found at the hotel. The results are a set of stunning tableaux inspired by Miami living, with the birthday-suited volunteers lined up on the balconies of the post-modern facade, popping champagne bottles, floating on rafts in the pool.

"The rafts are like a floating Ellsworth Kelly," says Tunick. "The men are on toxic green ones and the women on hot pink



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