

An Acid Dream in Wynwood: A Day in Miami's Rubell Family Collection By Kathryn Cassibry

Walking into The Rubell Family Collection in Miami's Wynwood Art District is like walking into an acid-fueled dream- at times absolutely terrifying and, at others, completely fucking beautiful. In one room I sat in a flesh-colored chair that appeared to be melting into the ground while watching a video of the animated innards of a human body. I walked into another room and got to crack a walnut with a lifesize mannequin's pussy. Even the pieces that aren't interactive promise to transport you to a completely different universe as soon as you enter their world.



"Unemployment" Josh Kline

The Rubell Family Collection moved to Miami from New York City in 1993 when Wynwood was still just warehouses and abandoned lots. It was first established in 1964 by Mera and Don Rubell, a couple who I can only imagine threw some pretty badass parties back in the day, especially considering Don's brother Steve co-founded Studio 54. Oh, and Keith Haring designed their son Jason's bar mitzvah invitation. The Rubells are also notable for attracting Art Basel to the Wynwood Arts District, making Miami the art hotspot that it is today.

The collection is housed inside a former DEA confiscated goods facility (lol) and boasts about 6,800 works by 831 artists. The collection is constantly expanding and evolving, and has featured such well-known artists as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Jeff Koons, Cady Noland, Yayoi Kusama, Cindy Sherman, Kara Walker, and, of course, Keith Haring.



"Unemployment" Josh Kline

One of their current exhibits, *Still Human*, is particularly striking. In the exhibit, twenty-five artists spanning multiple medias examine the extent to which humanity can still exist in our data-driven world. Some of the pieces made me want to crawl into a ball thinking about how all of us in the office space are really just fingers for typing and brains for simple addition and mouths for saying, "My weekend was great, Craig. How are the kids?" (as embodied in the piece above, entitled *Thank you for your years of service* by NYC-based artist Josh Kline), while others just scared the shit out of me.

As I was walking through the first floor of the collection, I encountered a huge, silent room with nothing in it but bubblegum pink carpet and a human figure suspended a few inches from the ground and supported under her neck with nothing but a plane of glass. My inner monologue went as such: "Wait, is this blonde woman real? She looks sooo lifelike. No, can't be, look at how she's hanging! Totally fake. But wait... ahhh!... her finger just moved! What the actual fuck! Ohh ok, calm down, she's animatronic. Ok, phew." This momentary freakout was brought to you by the Georgian artist Andro Wekua. Thanks for the memories, Andro.



Allison Zuckerman

The other current exhibit is *Strangers in Paradise* by the RFC's artist in residence Allison Zuckerman, and it is stunning. Over the course of eight weeks in the summer of 2017, the 27-year-old created 10 large-format (and I mean HUGE) mixed media pieces that take famous paintings from history and mix them with elements of internet culture. Straight from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she grew her notoriety via [Instagram](#), which makes sense because her paintings are essentially designed to look good online. She starts with a digital collage and then utilizes paint and digitally manipulated printed images to create hybridized portraits suffused with cultural and societal critiques. The piece below, entitled *Women at Her Toilette*, is her riff on a bathroom selfie.



Allison Zucker

Sometime in 2018, The Rubell Family Collection plans to move out of the DEA warehouse and into a 2.5-acre campus somewhere in Miami's Allapattah neighborhood (they are apparently being pretty secretive about the details). It's rumored to be incredibly beautiful, but experiencing these pieces right in the heart of Miami's art scene is an experience all in itself. Go soon, if you can!