

## CONVERSATION STARTER

ART BASEL IN MIAMI BEACH MADE THE MAGIC CITY A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE ART WORLD, BUT SARAH GAVLAK AND THE INSPIRED FORCES BEHIND NEW WAVE ART WKND ARE MAKING PALM BEACH PART OF THE DIALOGUE.

By Jesse Bratter

**FIFTEEN YEARS AGO**, art dealer Sarah Gavlak flew down to Palm Beach from New York City on a whim and couldn't find a contemporary gallery anywhere in sight. "Initially, there were many naysayers who said a contemporary program wasn't possible in Palm Beach," she recalls. "In 2004, I had people trying to steer me away from showing women artists! I'm glad that I stayed true to my convictions. If it weren't for the support of my fairy godmothers Beth Rudin DeWoody, Ann Tenenbaum and Jane Holzer, I don't know if I would have been successful in those early shows by Marilyn Minter, Betty Tompkins, Wade Guyton and Simone Leigh. But they brought their friends and their friends of friends, and we developed a strong foothold." For the next decade, Gavlak showed at Art Basel in Miami Beach, gaining exposure for her artists to both an international audience as well as locals. "I have received unwavering support from Art Basel since the beginning and continue to be amazed at the way they keep growing the industry and allow galleries of all sizes to thrive," she says.

And so, after opening her eponymous Palm Beach gallery in 2005 and after years of proven success in all its contemporary glory, she decided it was time to show the rest of the world just how *au courant* the multigenerational coastal town could be. And she would enlist some of her old friends to help her do it.

The idea was simple: Provide access to some of the best private collections in the country while offering programming dedicated to provocative conversation about the future of culture. That concept has become New Wave Art Wknd, a three-day event in Palm Beach that piggybacks on the creative energy that the fair in Miami Beach brings to South Florida in December. Emerging, midcareer and established artists will be on hand in Palm Beach to participate in panel discussions, talks and performances, creating an intimate forum within the local community. This year, the event will take place from December 6 to 8.

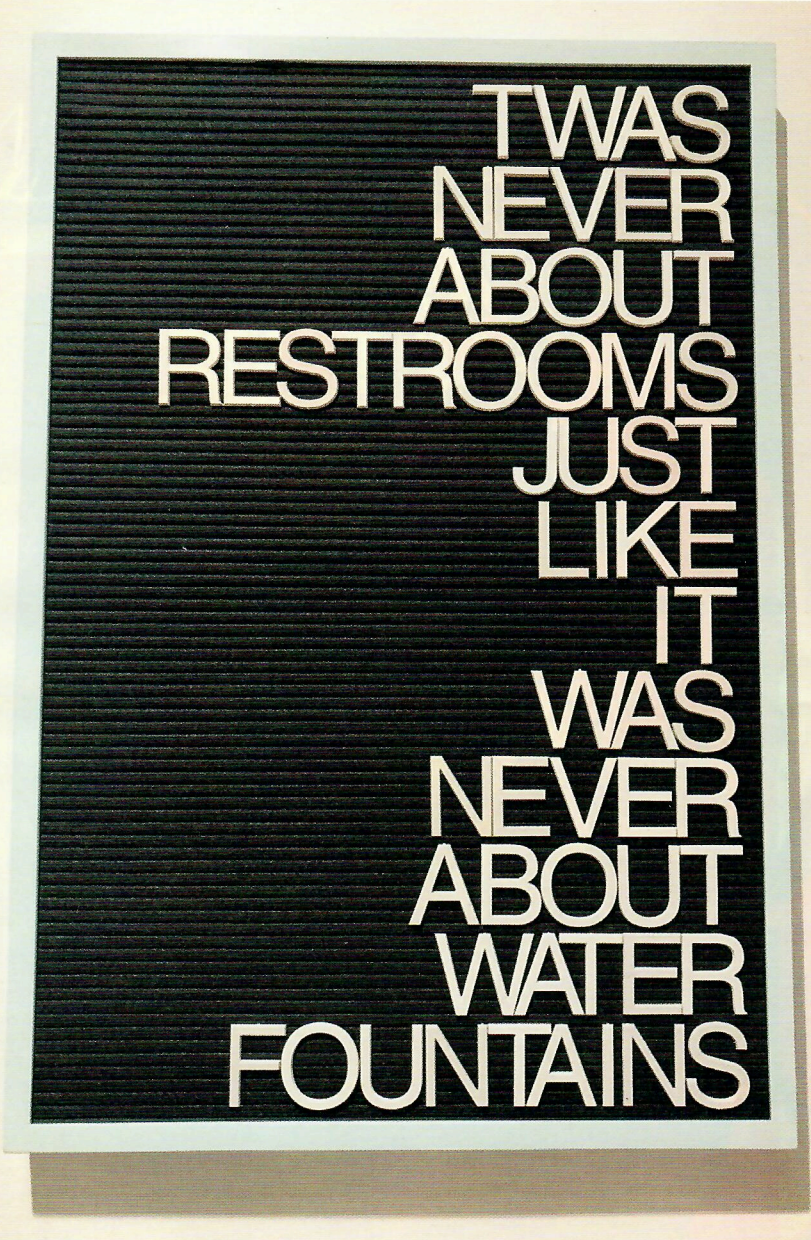


Clockwise from top: 'Food Room,' co-curated by Laura Dvorkin, Phillip Estlund and Maynard Monrow; Beth Rudin DeWoody; Sarah Gavlak.



Isolde Brielmaier—curator and cultural strategist, and professor of critical studies at New York University—has, in conversation with Gavlak and Bettina Prentice (an art world PR and media strategist), crafted the weekend's public programming around the topic of immigration and the sociopolitical landscape, including talks like "Place & Space: Negotiating Displacement Through a Cultural Lens" and "America Now: Through the Eyes of Artists." New Wave is partnering with Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based nonprofit City of Asylum, a residency program for writers exiled under threat of persecution. "They have been instrumental in helping us to establish an immigrant artist residency in Palm Beach to bring more diversity and cultural exchange to the region," says Gavlak, who also has a gallery in Los Angeles. Peruvian immigrant Renzo Ortega is the inaugural recipient and will receive a live-work space in Palm Beach as well as a stipend and mentorship through the New Wave advisory board. "Part of the answer for New Wave Art Wknd is that we bring artists, curators and outside collectors here and that we have really serious and sometimes difficult conversations about all things related to art and culture. There is no commercial aspect to the weekend—our only driver is to have essential dialogue on critical issues in an intimate setting."

Other public programming includes an exhibition at Rudin DeWoody's collection space The Bunker curated by Simon Watson titled 'Inner Space / Outer Space.' "Of DeWoody's 14,000 artworks and objects," Gavlak says, "two works in particular inspired the exhibition: Adolph Gottlieb's *Yellow Aura* from 1963 and local immigrant artist Jose Alvarez's *The Promised Land*." Rudin DeWoody, who has been actively collecting art since the '70s, notes that the art world has changed and become a whole different thing than it was years ago, and that Palm Beach has been transformed by an influx of serious collectors making it their home. "And the Norton has a fabulous new building designed by Norman Foster and is receiving significant gifts of art, so that's a big game changer," she offers. Of note, the Norton's new director, Elliot Bostwick Davis, wanted to expand the



From top: Maynard Monrow, *Twas Never About Restrooms Just Like It Was Never About Water Fountains*, 2016; Bettina Prentice and Isolde Brielmaier.



Norton's presence during Art Basel in Miami Beach. So while the museum generally opens an exhibition during this time and offers curator-led tours of the fair for its upper-level members, this year the museum will also host a series of panels and discussions about the practice and collection of contemporary art on December 1 before the fair opens.

Tenenbaum, part-time Palm Beacher and board member at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Studio Museum in Harlem, sits on New Wave's advisory board and says, "The most important

thing about this weekend is bringing in new voices, including people who have been left out of the conversation in many places and specifically Palm Beach. That's critical."

Brielmaier adds, "The proximity to Art Basel in Miami Beach is incredible for Palm Beach residents. It has revitalized the entire cultural ecosystem in southern Florida." •

For more information, visit [newwaveartwknd.com](http://newwaveartwknd.com).