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EL ESPACIO 23 BRINGS MORE CHANGE TO MIAMI



EXTERIOR VIEW OF EL ESPACIO 23. PHOTO BY NICK GARCIA PHOTOGRAPHY.

JORGE M. PÉREZ'S ART CENTER OPENS TO THE PUBLIC WITH THE EXHIBITION "TIME FOR CHANGE: ART AND SOCIAL UNREST."

El Espacio 23 began as a storage space for Jorge M. Pérez's personal collection of over 1,500 pieces. Designs for a public gallery space and exhibition were drawn up as he, along with his art director Patricia Hanna, started to notice a cogent discourse of narratives of exile, social upheaval and economic inequality float to the surface of all that work. "I've always had an interest in the way artists portray the world, and conflicts, in which we live—especially in Latin America," Pérez says, "as a result of having grown up there."

"Time for Change: Art and Social Unrest," the inaugural exhibition at El Espacio 23, which opens to the public this week, includes more than 100 works from 80 artists. The show is displayed in six parts arranged around themes, or "nuclei," such as "State Terror" and "Emancipatory Calls," presenting the artists as agents of social change and urging us to rethink the role of contemporary art in framing historical events. "You see the topics of racism, immigration, climate change, political turmoil, drug addiction—a reflection of what we are living through today," Pérez says.

CULTURED

December 3, 2019

Unique Monthly Visitors: 15,131



INTERIOR VIEW OF EL ESPACIO 23'S
INAUGURAL EXHIBITION. PHOTO BY
NICK GARCIA PHOTOGRAPHY.

However he also considers this show to be an intimate experience, and a reflection of his own tastes and the personal relationships he's cultivated over several decades with these artists: "I have been involved in the selection of every one of the pieces that you see here and each of them has a personal story."

Ultimately, El Espacio 23 is intended to appeal to Miami residents, not just itinerant collectors who come once a year for Art Week. "We want artists who are presenting here to engage with the community," says Pérez. His space can't be viewed in isolation from the newly opened Rubell Museum in Allapattah, less than two miles away, which had a similar inception. Both museums likely prefigure the shape of things to come for Miami and the prominent role that art will play.

In the meantime, Pérez is scanning the horizon for new projects. "Now we have to find more storage space," he says. "When we find it, you never know what's going to happen."