

Parthenogenesis

Nikki Beach hosts Angelo Musco's stylish human installation in tandem with Art Basel Miami Beach

by **Lori Conner**





Like the great cities of Europe, Miami is bursting with youth, passion, and creativity.

Since 2002, it has been a natural destination for the winter home of Art Basel, founded 37 years ago in Basel, Switzerland, as the show where the art world converges to talk, buy, sell and celebrate international, modern, and contemporary art and design.

For those whose lives revolve around art, it is a centerpiece of the year's social and cultural calendar. Easy to see why: relax in the sun in the morning, and in the afternoon, soak up museum-quality art plus speakers, exhibitions and symposiums in the beautiful Art Deco District. Explore the plaza's two-dozen shipping containers plunked down as space for young galleries to showcase their up-and-coming artists. At night, revel in scores of receptions and performances, open-air cinema and related independent events at clubs, restaurants, galleries, museums, design studios and retailers. Art Basel Miami has quantity for sure, but its twin calling cards are quality and diversity. It is known for encouraging emerging talent as much as for attracting established artists.

Enthusiasts, collectors, curators, designers, critics, publishers, sponsors, and exhibitors all descend on Miami for the huge four-day art slam. The event has grown so popular (and lucrative for the galleries and artists participating in the tightly juried show) that hotels in and around Miami get booked months in advance.

All this mixing, mingling, and connecting is music to the ears of performance artist Angelo Musco, who has dedicated his art and life to exploring the biological and social connections that nurture us. The Naples, Italy born-and-raised artist has studied, worked and traveled around the world but also draws from a deeper well. Born after his mother's stressful 11th month pregnancy, he's compelled to explore all that has entailed biologically, physically, and emotionally, sharing this journey through art.

His human installation Parthenogenesis, to be shown at Nikki Beach Miami Beach beginning at 9:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 8, premiered last winter in New York City at the prestigious Armory Show. (An entirely different climate than Miami, so he's eager to see how this difference effects his audience's reaction.) In biological terms, Parthenogenesis denotes a form of reproduction where a new individual develops without fertilization.

That may sound clinical, but Musco's interpretation reveals a sensitive soul.

Hypnotizing in its simplicity, eleven statuesque pregnant women with white hair, eyes, and makeup are frozen in place, enveloped in a dress with 11 bodices individually created by Japanese designer May Kosaka. All share one large, smooth skirt that mimics a giant drop of milk, or as Musco suggests, the nipple of a breast.

People can lose themselves for hours in the expression of the women's faces alone.

"I say to the models 'imagine a giant mirror,'" says Musco. "Just you with your baby, and your intense relationship with your baby. Silence, peace and happiness.' They're not looking at the crowd. They're in a different time, a different zone, touching their belly in slow motion. These states where they find themselves puts the audience into a peaceful mood. At the last event we had 500 people in about two hours, but it was so silent."

Models are selected based on particular projects, but Musco (who sometimes needs over 100 models at a time to fulfill a work), never hires them from agencies. Instead he chooses friends, collectors who buy his work, and nudists who love to show their bodies. "I don't care if they're 'perfect' models or regular people," he says. "It's what's inside. I feel that's stronger. Whoever is willing to pose for me and believes in me is perfect for my work."

"I hope to be the one who inspires fashion," adds Musco, who hired Kosaka to add a fashion element to the work. "It is important today to open all possible doors, so there is no barrier to artistic aspects. Art is fashion, fashion is art."

While Musco spends a lot of time contemplating profound topics like eternity, mortality, and the nature of life, he's also the first to enjoy a good party and can't wait to return to Art Basel Miami in December, this time as a participating artist. "This year there are 13 art fairs, and 1,500 artists in four days," he says. "It's insane! Parties, cocktails in the evening, major magazines and museums... It's a fantastic mood—and everybody's there."

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Angelo Musco's one-night performance of Parthenogenesis at Nikki Beach Miami is organized by Agro-Glickman STEP (1). Founders Ombretta Agro Andruff and Rena Glickman have formed a dynamic partnership that provides representation to Angelo Musco and other artists. For more information, visit step1art.com. The event is sponsored by: Fondazione Borsalino, illy caffè, Blink Management, Coronation Khukri Rum and Beth Rudin DeWoody.

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