

+ THE ECONOMIST: THE RISE OF ARGENTINA'S FIRST LADY

he Rubell Family Collection comprises well over 5,000 pieces and spans more than 30 years of art history, ranging from minimalism to the latest tendencies and experimental works. As Art Basel kicks off, Don and Mera Rubell are putting on a show of their own in their 40,000 square-foot warehouse in Miami's Wynwood district, where solo exhibits by avant-garde artists Hernan Bas and John Stezaker will be the highlight this year.

A special exhibit entitled "Euro-Centric Part 1: New European Art from the Rubell Family Collection" will showcase works from a wide range of European artists, while attempting to answer the question: "How do contemporary European artists deal with the weight of their own cultural history?" The

"Euro-Centric" exhibit is part of an ambitious series in the coming years to explore how an entire continent redefines itself.

Ambition is a word that characterizes the Rubells and their passion for art. The-couple began collecting art in 1964 on a monthly budget of only \$25. By the late '80s, they were deemed major collectors on the international art scene, having amassed what is considered to be the one of the most impressive contemporary art collections in the world. Their knack for discovering talent is a clear indicator of their vision, often leading them to buy pieces by formerly "unknown artists" such as Richard Prince, Paul McCarthy, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Jeff Koons early in their careers, before the price of their works sky-rocketed.

The Rubells take their art very seriously and feel a social responsibility for possessing so much of it. The privately owned collection is open to the public and managed like a museum, with a curator and professional staff, providing educational programs and a library.