



WHEN MOST PEOPLE ENVISION Miami, images of beautiful beaches, beautiful people in skimpy clothing and a crazy nightlife come to mind. The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau wants to change that perception. After all, the Art Basel festival invades the city's Art Deco district each year, combining the allure of fine galleries and local artists with special exhibitions, parties and events in music, film, architecture and design to draw collectors and dealers from around the world. Last year, Miami-based ad agency Turkel hired advertising photographer Peter Barrett to shoot a campaign designed to re-brand Miami as an arts and cultural destination.

Centered on the tagline "Miami: Express Yourself," Barrett's assignment was to create surreal interpretations of Miami-Dade locales using elements of artwork and objects crafted by local artists. "We worked together with artists from all different genres—a sculptor, a painter, a chef, a DJ, a dancer, a graffiti artist, etc.—and each of them were asked how Miami has influenced them and their artwork," Barrett explains. "We then had to interpret their artwork and mix it with a location that was easily recognizable and identifiable as Miami and its surrounding areas." One ad, for instance, inspired by well-known pastry chef Hedy Goldsmith, shows a giant strawberry being dipped into a large pink fondue at the

Miami gets a makeover. Left: A local furniture maker's unique benches were photographed repeatedly to simulate waves, then composited with a shot of a diver, the sky and the skyline to make the final image.

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WHEN ONE ART FORM BECOMES ANOTHER

An ad campaign photographed by Peter Barrett uses images and objects by local artists to portray Miami as a city holding its own in the area of high art. **By Jacqueline Tobin**



"Real life meets the art and art meets real life," says Barrett about this image of two people jumping into what looks like a mural painted on the side of a cafe.

pool of the historic Raleigh Hotel on South Beach.

The general concept of each shot—eight in all—was created by the ad agency, says Barrett, but he had creative freedom to run with it visually both in camera and in post production. For most of the shots, Barrett either used a Canon 1DS Mark III or a Phase Back and a Hasselblad to photograph each artist's creation. Once all the elements were shot, he handed his image files to retoucher Michael Kerbow from Skeleton Studios, who created composites. Then the images came back to Barrett so he could work the color palette and add other effects in Photoshop.

For example, one ad features an image that resembles waves on a beach but is really centered on the whimsical creations of local furniture designer Avner Zabari. Barrett had to combine shots of Zabari's wave-shaped benches (to create a sea of waves) with a model diving, the Art Deco skyline view of South Beach and the sky. Barrett says the artist only had eight benches in his studio where the shot was being taken but the ad required well over 100. "We

set up the eight benches and shot them repeatedly at different positions and perspectives to give ourselves plenty of originals to use in composition. This allowed for proper placement in the final composition where the perspective has to match and look as if it is really receding into the background."

Getting a shot of the skyline, as seen from the ocean, was a challenge. "Creating the classic skyline view of South Beach turned out to be much more demanding than one might think," Barrett explains. "In recent years, the city has planted a zillion palm trees between Ocean Drive and the beach so you no longer can see the Art Deco buildings from an aerial perspective over the water like you once could [or as the client wanted featured in the image]. Ultimately, the client purchased the rights to an old stock shot that had the basic angle and look of the scene we wanted."

The stock shot, says Barrett, served as visual reference. However, the proportions were all wrong so Barrett went to South Beach, got on a ladder and

shot many of the buildings straight on and at slight angles to get a myriad of "puzzle pieces" so that he could add buildings to extend the canvas to the proper proportions. "Special care was taken to ensure we got the correct approximate time of day so that the lighting would match the overall scene and the bits of the stock shot that would be used alongside my original artwork."

Finally, he had to shoot the diver, diving into the sea of bench waves: Barrett had a model in the studio jump on a trampoline against a white seamless background and lit him from below so that "when I inverted him in the computer to the correct diving position, he would be lit from the correct angle by the 'sun.'"

After each of these subjects was photographed, the next task was to assemble everything into one composite image. Kerbow put together the benches and Barrett knocked out the diver and sent it to Kerbow masked. Then another retoucher put together the building shots to form the background

plate. Once all of the ocean waves had been created using Barrett's image of a sea of benches, Kerbow finished the composition of the final shot and sent it back to Barrett to apply "final color palette exploration, illustration and painterly looks. When viewed closely at 50 percent or larger on the master files," he says, "you can begin to see how the image was transformed into more of a painterly look where the pixels actually flow more like fluid paint than photo pixels."

In another ad, featuring a painting by Miami artist Danny Fila that appears to be a mural on the side of an outdoor café in the Coconut Grove neighborhood, two people are shown running on the sidewalk and actually jumping into the mural. Or so it appears. "In this situation, real life meets the art and art meets real life," states Barrett. "This is repeated with the city skyline in the mural itself where it blends with the real setting's buildings and trees."

Barrett says he shot the models running and jumping separately on white seamless at a different location on another day to simplify the on-location shooting. "To the right of the frame was actually a driveway of brick pavers that led to a parking garage that started right where the girl's rear foot touches the ground. We shot a side of a building elsewhere that would match the perspective and texture of the wall that we wanted to lay the mural on in post. This would make the mural painting look like it was actually painted on a real wall not just stripped in." He also shot multiple condo buildings and trees to have them peeking over the building and melding with the mural.

Artist Fila provided Barrett with several pieces of artwork from an album cover he had done that Kerbow then pieced together to create the mural. "Careful attention had to be paid to create enough space for the models that were to jump into the painting. Danny painted additional art for us that could be incorporated into the frame as well, such as the girl's painted arm, torso and leg, extra musical notes and a custom city skyline that we could match with the condo buildings and trees we shot." Barrett says that once Kerbow had composed the scene in post, he asked him to darken it slightly overall to add to the late afternoon mood and also to add one extra ceiling fan in the



The pool at South Beach's Raleigh Hotel on was digitally altered to highlight a pastry chef's talents.

café and turn on the lights digitally since they were off when Barrett initially took the shot.

Additional ads include an image of the mangroves in the Everglades National Park where local dance artist Zedric Bemby's twirling body and clothing bloom into a purple orchid, and an image of children playing in the Key Biscayne sand around giant wooden letters designed by local graffiti artist Tao Rey. □