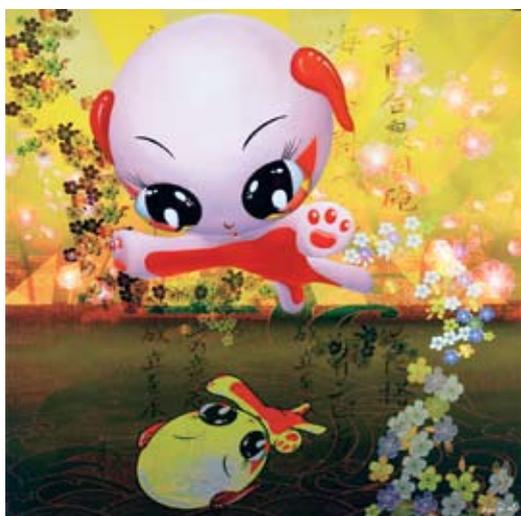


Clockwise from top left: Mickey Rising, Clowning, Pulgha Flight in Oil, Miguel Paredes with signature characters from his animated cartoon series, Pulgha.



AMERICAN GRAFFITI

Miguel Paredes sees a red wall and he wants to paint it.

Miguel Paredes doesn't get much shut-eye. The New York City-raised, Miami Beach-based artist is a father of four, gallery owner, and boss to more than 120 employees, yet he still manages to find time to paint. "I'm always putting too much on my plate," he admits. Paredes's work—mixed media pieces using bright, vibrant hues—has gained international notice. In 2011 he was named the official artist of the Latin Grammy Awards, the William Morris Endeavor Agency signed on to represent *Pulgha*, his Japanese anime-inspired collection, and he joined the Disney Underground Art Collection by Acme Archives.

As a kid growing up on New York City's Upper West Side, Paredes was surrounded by graffiti. He attended Junior High School 44 and became fast friends with a few taggers. "My friend Rook, one of the top graffiti artists who has since passed, gave me my tag, 'Mist,'" he explains. His interest in graffiti eventually led to a fascination with the pop art movement, and Paredes studied the work of artists Keith Haring and Andy Warhol. He then moved to Miami Beach and focused on mixed media and conceptual art at ArtCenter/South Florida.

The late '90s brought two big

changes for Paredes: He opened his own studio and gallery space, and he met his mentor, Ronnie Cutrone, a successful pop artist (and Andy Warhol's assistant at the Factory during some of his biggest years) whom Paredes still catches up with regularly for dinner and discussion.

These days, Paredes's multi-million-dollar national printing company, P.K. Graphics, gives him the financial freedom to create on his own terms. "I promised myself two things," he says of becoming successful. "That I would hire young graphic designers and give them real world experience, and that I would always give back to my community." He's made good on his word, creating and donating multiple public art pieces around Miami Beach.

As for his ink, he also keeps things local. Little Jeff from AAA Tattooing does most of his work. He's also collaborated with Darren Brass and Jimmy Coffin—both from *Miami Ink*—and adorned himself with everything from his wife's name to Buddha to his graffiti tag. However, with his busy schedule, he admits there's at least one project he hasn't completed: "That's the one thing I can't seem to find time to do ... I just can't seem to find time to finish my tattoos." —Kara Pound