

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miguel Paredes." The signature is written in a fluid, cursive style with a period at the end.

MIGUEL PAREDES

Miguel Paredes was born in New York in 1966. He is an artist and urban realist who combines the exhilarating sense of New York graffiti art with the skill and perceptiveness of a truly exceptional artist.

Growing up on 72nd Street in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, Paredes exuded early signs of artistic ability and accepted an invitation to New York City's prestigious Fiorello La Guardia High School of Music and Art – immortalized in the musical and movie *Fame* – in the early 1980s. His studies at Fiorello coincided with the explosion of street culture in the city. Paredes drew inspiration from notorious pop artists like Andy Warhol and Keith Haring and plunged headlong into the world of graffiti and pop art taking the name "Mist" as his moniker.

Another influential figure in Paredes' artistic career is his mentor, Ronnie Cutrone. Cutrone was Andy Warhol's immediate assistant at the Factory during the notorious pop artist's most productive and prestigious years. To Paredes, his mentor's paintings are the essence of pop: colorful, lively and highly accessible. Cutrone's constant use of bright and fluorescent colors not only influenced Warhol's return to such hues, but shaped Paredes' color palette choices as well. Paredes' piece "Ronnie, is that you?" pays homage to Cutrone and features one of Paredes' sons painted on a vintage Mickey Mouse bed cover. The child represents the artist looking for Ronnie.

In 1986, Paredes left New York to come to burgeoning Miami Beach, FL. Soon after, Paredes began apprenticing for Paul Kus, a former FBI art forgery expert who made his mark on the art world by meticulously replicating, and then giving his own twist, to master works. Working on these legal replicas gave Paredes a newfound respect for fine art and afforded him a fertile ground to practice painting techniques as the most accomplished artists before him had done.

At the age of 27, Paredes took a studio at the Art Center of South Florida, where he became one of their most prosperous artists, focusing on mixed media and conceptual art. At one of his first showings he sold every piece in the exhibit and broke solidly into the Miami Beach art scene. His artistic success caught the attention of several local venues and they often offered their space to showcase Paredes' work. He ultimately opened his own gallery, Miguel Paredes Fine Art Gallery, in the Wynwood Arts District in August 2010. That same year, Paredes created an 18x26 foot mural titled "Pulgha World" in the heart of the Wynwood Arts District as a donation to the neighborhood.

In February 2011, the artist relocated Miguel Paredes Fine Art Gallery to a larger Wynwood space and unveiled his first 3D interior mural entitled "Brownstone Lounge" – a collaborative project with Miami-based interior designer, 3D specialist Jeff Vaughan and celebrated Broadway scenic designer and producer Antonio Marion, CEO of Marion Theatrical Productions in New York City. A month later, Paredes donated a mosaic mural entitled "The New Yorker/Senator" to the Miami Design Preservation League's Art Deco Welcome Center located in the heart of South Beach. The artist became the first Miami-Dade resident to ever receive

simultaneous proclamations from the City of Miami Beach and Village of Pinecrest honoring his support of historic preservation, devotion to the city and positive impact on the community.

Paredes is well known for his iconic, Japanese anime-inspired digital series Pulgha™ & Birds. In this delightful collection Pulgha™, a magical flea, and her friends the spirited Birds, Yori & Kosue, join forces for good. An original, branded cartoon series based on these creations, as well as an array of Paredes' designs and products, are being represented by the William Morris Endeavor Agency for licensing.

As a judge in this year's BOMBAY SAPPHIRE® Artisan Series, Paredes is supporting BOMBAY SAPPHIRE®, Russell & Danny Simmons' Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation and Complex Media launch a nationwide search to identify the finest undiscovered talent in the field of visual arts. Paredes will judge South Florida's regional competition at his gallery during a semi-finals event on October 22, 2011. Finalists will then exhibit at a blockbuster Art Basel Miami Beach finale, co-hosted by Russell Simmons, and two grand prizewinners will have their work installed at Rush Arts Gallery and Resource Center in New York City for the month of February 2012. Moreover, Paredes continues to make his mark by further expanding his inspirational environment while simultaneously showcasing his works at local, national and international shows, including Artist-In-Residence at the iconic National Hotel during Art Basel Miami Beach, 2010.

Paredes' pieces and sculptures come from a series of collections that reflect the artist's different stages in life. Utilizing urban imagery, elements from nature, graffiti, anime and his children, Paredes has created multiple masterpieces that resonate to a broad audience. Notable collections include, *Los Niños*, *Boroughs*, *Pulgha™ & Birds* and *Urban Dreams*.

Los Niños is a combined reflection of Paredes' urban roots and his children. While street art is omnipresent in his works, the *Los Niños* collection is about his children and even more so, what they represent. These works aim to make people look beyond the image of a child and connect with their past, hopefully reverting to a childish, innocent or malicious moment they had in their youth.

In the **Boroughs** series of paintings, Paredes combines the four compass points of his childhood: Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx with white line work on blackened surfaces with hints of colors glowing like bright neon lights. This series combines familiar images, inverted in places while keeping the darkness of the city intact.

The **Pulgha™ & Birds** series showcases main character Pulgha™. Pulgha™ means flea in Spanish. This character is a cross between a flea and a Japanese anime character. Pulgha lives in a world of Birds, Geishas and tricksters. The series creates a storyline for Pulgha as she travels through lands of digital mysticism.

The **Urban Dreams** series explores urban landscape through the combination of photographic realism with graphic elements of floating vines, flowers and leaves. Over the distorted buildings, Paredes added his colorful signature floral creations and other vibrant elements from nature to balance out the extremes and bring his own form of balance to the piece.

As an extension of his artistic career, in 1998 Paredes noticed a trend of nightclubs distributing flashy flyers and, drawing from his extensive knowledge of Japanese animation and comic book characters, he decided to overcome his fear of computers and purchased a Macintosh. The very first flyer he produced was such a hit among management and patrons of the trend-setting nightclub, Groove Jet, that the club immediately designated him as their sole designer. Other clubs caught on and from this grew his multi-million dollar, nationwide graphic design and printing company, **PK Graphics**. The company now services printing needs for 75,000 clubs nationwide and numerous corporate accounts. PK Graphics is the largest postcard printer in the United States and is an industry leader for printing affordable, fast and high impact material.