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Nina Johnson-Milewski Talks Rogue Monkeys, The Miami Rail, And Her 10 P.M. Bedtime (MY MIAMI)

The Huffington Post | By Vanessa Martin

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Nina Johnson-Milewski lives the Miami art fairytale.

As the owner and director of Gallery Diet -- a Wynwood gallery ranked amongst the top galleries in North America -- she is regarded as one of Miami's most influential creatives.

She's also married to Dan Milewski, an artist who owns Lester's, a cafe and wine bar located just a few blocks down from her gallery.

The art power couple's striking nuptials at 1111 Lincoln Road, a Herzog and de Meuron-designed parking garage, were featured in *The New York Times*. The *Times* also featured the renovation of their charming Shorecrest bungalow that could double as an art gallery on its own.

Johnson-Milewski's latest creative endeavor is the *The Miami Rail*, an independent editorial expansion of *The Brooklyn Rail*, a New York City literary journal dedicated to intellectual and critical coverage of local art and culture.

As the *The Miami Rail* celebrates its first year, HuffPost Miami spoke with Johnson-Milewski about prowling monkeys, Miami's best gyros, and what she has in store for this year's Art Basel Miami Beach.

Who you are:

Nina Johnson-Milewski, director of Gallery Diet

Years in Miami:

I was born here

First memory of Miami?

Watching the monkeys on my family room couch with my big brother at our house in the Crossings

Current neighborhood:

Shorecrest

Current gig:

Director of Gallery Diet, publisher of *The Miami Rail*, and then some.

Favorite 'Only in Miami' moment?

Reading about the rogue monkey that's been troweling our neighborhood in the Biscayne Times.

What's your idea of a perfect day in Miami?

Visitors at the gallery, drinks with friends at Lester's, in bed by 10 p.m.

I-395 or I-195?

I-195

Where do you take out-of-towners?

Mandolin, Soho Beach House, and The Standard hotel.

What are three local meals you can't live without?

Mandolin gyros, Lester's espresso and a Dogma hot dog

What are your favorite places to see art in Miami?

Gallery Diet, The Perez Art Museum Miami, MOCA North Miami and the Bas Fischer Invitational.

How did you connect with Brooklyn Rail?

Dan brought the publisher and founder of the Brooklyn Rail, Phong Bui down to Miami to give the inaugural talk at Lester's and he suggested it to him. I went to Miami's version of the great and powerful Oz, the Knight Foundation and received seed money to get help launch it and now here we are working into half way through our second year and putting together our first fundraiser, THE FUNraiser for October.

What has been the most surprising thing you've learned in your first year with The Miami Rail?

That there are people interested in culture even in Miami's farthest reaches, homestead, Aventura, Doral--our readership lives and works all over this town.

What has been your favorite exhibit to date at Gallery Diet?

That's like picking a favorite child. Right now we're exhibiting Toadhouse AKA Allan Graham; he's brilliant.

What misconception about Miami's intellectual and cultural community are you most tired of fighting?

I just try to not make comparisons to other cities. We are doing Miami and that's a constant push forward.

Last big project you did:

Issue 5 of The Miami Rail, released September 12th, 2013.

Upcoming projects you're working on:

Another solo show of works by Betty Woodman to open during Art Basel 2013.

Why do you hate Miami?

Traffic! 836, you are the worst!

Why do you love Miami?

Why not?

In a word or two or three, Miami is...

Hectic, inspiring, and fun.