

Iconic Visual Artist Teresita Fernández Takes Her Biggest Exhibition Back Home

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Returning home is never easy, especially if the journey has been as long and fruitful as that of visual artist Teresita Fernández.

Born in Miami in the late 1960s to Cuban parents, Fernández trained in Fine Arts at Florida International University in 1990 and earned her Master of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1992. Just four years later, she held her first solo exhibition in New York at Deitch Projects, and three years later she had her first solo museum show at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia.

Since 1997, she has been living and working in Brooklyn, New York.

Her artistic language is structured around the reflection of the structures and the essence of the elements of nature, often using large format sculptures and installations in public space.

After having lived in Japan during an artist residency, her work turned towards the exploration of light and darkness, a line that has accompanied her ever since, along with reflection on social issues.

Now, the conceptual artist will take her life's work back home, in her largest exhibition to date entitled *Elementary*, which can be visited at the Perez Art Museum until February 9.

Famous pieces such as *Fire* (United States of America 2017-2019) and *Viñales* (2015-2019) will be part of the [exhibition](#) and the artist's challenging discourse that invites reflection on political and social issues, especially for the Latino community in the country.

In a conversation with [FIU News](#), the news platform of her alma mater, Fernández commented on how her career has been different from that of other artists of color in the country.

"I've been fortunate to sustain a viable art practice for more than 20 years, but in general, people have a hard time perceiving an individual as both 'excellent' and Latinx. Artists of color experience very different challenges in the art world," she said. "We live in a country founded on deeply-rooted anti-Latinx, anti-immigrant, and anti-Black sentiments and practices. In my work, I'm interested in unraveling these complexities of place and identity through beauty, materiality and experiential, visual, immersive prompts."

Despite having been able to afford a life as an artist during the last few decades, her work dialogues with simultaneous realities like that of other Hispanics in the country, "from the specific and personal," rejecting "any simplistic stereotypes and preconceived notions."

"There are almost no models for being a U.S. Latinx contemporary woman artist with visibility in the mainstream art world — one who also claims her ethnicity, without having to choose either/or," she added. "The constant need to choose between one's artistic integrity and representing identity for others, coupled with the lack of examples of Latinx artists in American museum collections, points to larger issues of institutional racism, whitewashing and inequity in our museums and art history narratives, or what gets to be called 'American art.'"