

Babylon Takes the Stage for Art Basel

Written by Anne Tschida - BT Contributor
November 2010

A new play about Miami artists asks: Can you sell without selling out?



The inaugural play from the newly formed Zoetic Stage will be performed during Art Basel Miami Beach, in early December, at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. The play, which follows five South Beach artists during the run-up to Art Basel, was written by a local, award-winning playwright who is part of a new repertory theater that hopes to become a driving force in the arts scene by producing homegrown productions and taking them national. What a neatly wrapped and timely cultural present.

South Beach Babylon was written by Michael McKeever and directed by Stuart Meltzer, the former artistic director of City Theatre, the company behind the popular Summer Shorts Festival. The two are the founders of Zoetic, a collaborative of local actors, designers, playwrights, and directors, which will emphasize developing new, South Florida-generated plays and musicals to tour or be performed elsewhere, something that has rarely happened in the past.

It all sounds pretty exciting, and even more so when talking with McKeever, whose energy and enthusiasm fly like sparks as he speaks, and also when he writes. McKeever has penned numerous plays, often heavy on humor and some, like *Melt*, very specific to culturally diverse Miami. But he has also plumbed darker realms, such as life in Germany during the rise of the Third Reich in *Hannah List* and *The Garden of*. He has won several of Florida's prestigious Carbonell Awards and is an actor and designer to boot.

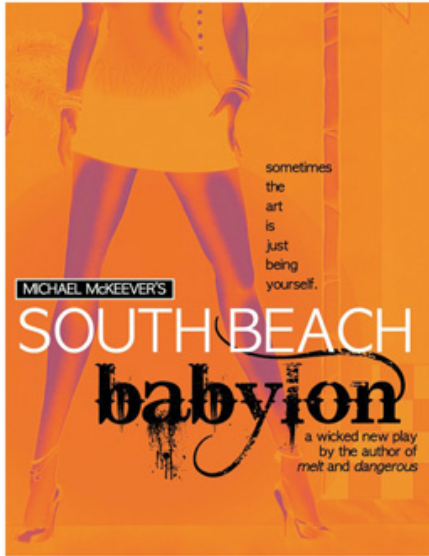
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~~Michael McKeever's 'South Beach Babylon' is a wicked new play by the author of 'Melt and Dangerous'. The play is set in a high-end Manhattan hotel and follows a woman who is a former model and is now a struggling artist. The play is a dark comedy that explores themes of identity, art, and the pursuit of fame. It is being performed at the New York Theatre Workshop from November 10 to 14, 2010.~~