

## DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

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### INDETAIL

For Argentina-born artist Victoria Gitman, a handbag is more than just a fashion statement. The accessory is an archaeological specimen worthy of meticulous reproduction in her astonishingly lifelike paintings.

"I'm attracted to vintage purses and jewelry," the 35-year-old artist explains, "because they are artifacts laden with personal history, social significance and aesthetic values."

She finds her subjects on frequent sojourns to flea markets and antique stores in and around Miami, where she lives and works. Her process is painstaking: She paints each purse bead by bead—without a magnifying glass—and covers "only a few square centimeters a day." The resulting works are smaller than a standard sheet of paper and as breathtakingly detailed as a high-definition photograph.

"Specificity is very important to me," says Gitman, whose

**Victoria Gitman**  
Feb. 2–April 27  
Las Vegas Art Museum  
9600 West Sahara Avenue  
Las Vegas  
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[lasvegasartmuseum.org](http://lasvegasartmuseum.org)

work will be on display at next month's Art Basel Miami Beach, with the David Nolan Gallery, and in a solo exhibit at the Las Vegas Art Museum opening February 2.

Her formal training in painting and art history at Yale and Florida International University has given her a dualistic approach to her subject matter: equal parts fine artist and cultural historian. Her current work focuses on the intricate technical and formal qualities—the shape, color, texture and beadwork—of the vintage bags, while simultaneously offering a commentary on restrictive notions of femininity and traditional gender roles.

With a rapidly increasing collector base, not to mention works in the permanent collections of MoMA and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gitman is riding the contemporary art wave.

And there's a game of hide-and-seek for viewers of her works: Gitman often conceals a self-portrait in the reflection of a single bead or metallic clasp. —NICK AXELROD