



Pérez Art Museum Miami Presents
Elliot and Erick Jiménez: *El Monte*

*Twin Photography Duo's First Solo Museum Exhibition Weaves Afro-Cuban Spirituality
with Painterly Explorations of their Cultural Heritage*

—Opening August 28, 2025—



Elliot and Erick Jiménez. Image courtesy of the artists.

(MIAMI, FL — June 25, 2025) — **Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM)** is pleased to present ***El Monte***, a solo exhibition of new work by Miami-born twins and photographers **Elliot and Erick Jiménez**, opening **August 28, 2025**. Borrowing its name from Cuban ethnographer Lydia Cabrera's seminal book on Afro-Cuban spirituality, the exhibition immerses viewers into the world of Lucumí, its sacred cosmologies, the twins' lived experiences, and the complicated history of Western art. *El Monte* marks the brothers' debut solo museum exhibition and their first foray into installation, sculpture, and mixed media elements in addition to their signature photographic techniques.

As identical twins and first-generation Cuban Americans, the lives of Elliot and Erick Jiménez are permeated with a sense of duality. Early on, their upbringing was shaped by a blending of influences, including Lucumí diasporic beliefs, also known as Santería or Regla de Ocha—a syncretic Afro-Caribbean religion that emerged in Cuba in the late 18th and 19th centuries, melding elements of colonial Spanish Catholicism with West African Yoruba traditions. A unique and diverse cultural narrative emerges from this interweaving

of two unlikely theologies; a transcultural dialogue that has become central to the artists' visual interpretations of the folklore, cosmologies, mysticism, and deities of their diasporic heritage.



Elliot and Erick Jiménez, *El Monte (Ibeji)*, 2024. Archival pigment print. Image courtesy of the artists and Spinello Projects.

These Lucumí divinities are the protagonists in the twins' regal and surreal photographs. Referred to as “shadow figures,” the subjects' bodies are covered in paint, suits, or masks, rendering them anonymous, mirroring the ways in which followers and practices of Santería have long existed in hiding due to fear of persecution. The artists subvert the darkness often associated with shadows into a commanding presence. Devoid of defined identities, the faceless figures are stripped down to a pure and enigmatic essence, embodying a universal power in their namelessness, relatable to all.

Using in-camera techniques, costuming, and set design—including garments by award-winning fashion designer Willy Chavarria—the Jiménez twins draw from Western art movements and incorporate impressionistic approaches to light, texture, and atmosphere. The resulting images occupy an ambiguous space between painting and photography, much like how the shadow figures appear caught in a state of hybridization, somewhere between the sacred and the contemporary. This dreamlike visual language draws viewers into a fantasy world that reflects the transculturation of the artists' childhoods, offering new ways of seeing and understanding the layered complexities of cultural duality.

“Our work is rooted in our experiences as Cuban Americans, but it's also about broader questions of identity, belonging, and the power of duality,” said **Elliot and Erick Jiménez**. “This show offers a view of Caribbean history shaped by that very complexity—one of dual identity, of being neither fully from here nor there, but navigating the space in between.”

Taking its name from Lydia Cabrera's 1954 foundational text—often referred to as “the Santería bible” and only translated into English as recently as 2023—the exhibition invites visitors to journey into a *monte*, or forest, in the middle of the night. Along the way, visitors encounter the shadow figures within their natural environment alongside reappropriated 17th century furniture, antiques, found materials, and sculptural

elements. At the heart of *El Monte* sits a large-scale Ceiba tree trunk structure, prompting visitors to choose their own path—left or right—revealing hidden entry points that lead into a two-room chamber, part forest, part chapel. The dimly lit installation becomes a symbolic twin womb; a sanctuary where wonder, ritual, and personal history are interwoven, while grounded in a larger cultural legacy that has, thus far, remained largely untold.

“This exhibition has the capacity to speak to our community in a way that we haven’t communicated before. Elliot and Erick’s work builds a bridge between Miami’s Caribbean communities, its religious and spiritual practices, and those of their ancestors. The gallery is transformed into something mysterious and whimsical, giving the viewer a chance to experience photography in a new and unique way,” said **PAMM Associate Curator Maritza M. Lacayo**.

Elliot & Erick Jiménez: El Monte is organized by Maritza M. Lacayo, Associate Curator, with supporting sponsorship from Goya Foods. Additional support from María C. Bechily and Scott Hodes, CINTAS Foundation, Clara and Juan Toro, Basil Chidi Funk, Chris and Suzanne Armstrong, Andres Gil, Celso Gonzalez-Falla, ArtesMiami, Aida Levitan, and Marijean and Rafael Miyar is gratefully acknowledged.



ABOUT ELLIOT & ERICK JIMÉNEZ

Elliot & Erick Jiménez (b. 1989, Miami, FL) are identical twins and first-generation Cuban Americans, raised in Miami by Cuban immigrants and now based between New York and Miami. Growing up in a biracial family, they inherited Lucumí customs, an influence that continues to shape their work.

Their multidisciplinary practice draws from art history, mythology, Yoruba cosmology, and Catholic syncretism, blurring the boundaries between photography, painting, and sculpture. Through experimental techniques, mixed media, and staged photographs, their work reinterprets Lucumí spirituality within the context of the Western art canon, creating a distinct and evolving visual language.

Their work has been exhibited in the U.S. and Europe, with solo and group shows at Spinello Projects, Paris Photo, Bass Museum, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the Orlando Museum of Art. They are recipients of the CINTAS Foundation Sondra Gilman González-Falla Fellowship in Photography, South Arts Fellowship, Oolite’s Ellies Creator Award, the Florida Prize People’s Choice Award, and the CHANEL Artist Award Program with the Tribeca Film Festival. In 2023, they were commissioned to photograph Bad Bunny for TIME’s first-ever all-Spanish cover in its 100 year history.

Their work is held in the permanent collections of the Pérez Art Museum Miami, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Bunker Artspace, and the Orlando Museum of Art. In 2025, they will present their first solo museum exhibition at the Pérez Art Museum Miami.

ABOUT PAMM

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), led by Franklin Sirmans, Sandra and Tony Tamer Director, promotes artistic expression and the exchange of ideas, advancing public knowledge and appreciation of art, architecture, and design, and reflecting the diverse community of its pivotal geographic location at the crossroads of the Americas. The 41-year-old South Florida institution, formerly known as Miami Art Museum

(MAM), opened a new building, designed by world-renowned architects Herzog & de Meuron, on December 4, 2013, in Downtown Miami's Maurice A. Ferré Park. The facility is a state-of-the-art model for sustainable museum design and progressive programming and features 200,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor program space with flexible galleries; shaded outdoor verandas; a waterfront restaurant and bar; a museum shop; and an education center with a library, media lab, and classroom spaces.

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pamm@culturalcounsel.com