



*Rooftop*, John Sanchez, 2011

# tropic thunder

JOHN SANCHEZ CHANNELS THE QUIET POWER OF MIAMI'S URBAN LANDSCAPE IN *ROOFTOP*, ON VIEW AT WYNWOOD'S DORSCH GALLERY. BY BRETT SOKOL

Beyond the postcard-friendly, pink-hued Deco buildings and sky-piercing condos of South Beach, there's a visual palette to mainland Miami that's full of gritty tropical beauty. Think rain-slicked highways, downtown traffic lights winking yellow as they sway in the wind, and warehouse districts full of all manner of strange possibilities. No one in South Florida paints this flamingo-free landscape better than John Sanchez, and the recent *Rooftop* is a gorgeous example of his atmospheric brushwork. If you've ever gazed at Edward Hopper's classic *Nighthawks* and marveled at the hidden world lurking within its seemingly placid diner setting, expect the same invocations of mystery from Sanchez. Indeed, devotees of Wynwood's Art Walks

may recognize the puddle-strewn rooftop in question as belonging to the Dorsch Gallery (which reps Sanchez): The surrounding terrain may seem barren, but a hopeful spirit prevails—from the dynamic sky dreamily reflected in the roof's pools of standing water, to the ad hoc spotlights jury-rigged with plywood beams and weighted buckets, attesting to culture amid the concrete. "We're so used to seeing Wynwood from the ground up," Sanchez explains. He was after a different perspective, one he marveled at after clambering up onto the gallery's roof between passing cloudbursts. "There's a feeling of awe I was going for," he adds. "I wish I could do a painting you could actually walk into." *Dorsch Gallery, 151 NW 124th St., Miami, 305-576-1278; dorschgallery.com* **OD**