

Last-minute holiday shoppers abound in South Florida

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Nate Paulding, a Britto Central inventory supervisor, carries a large painting, titled 'The Hug,' along Lincoln Road for customer Steve Yucht. Yucht, of Gainesville, bought the large painting as a surprise for his wife for the holidays. Shoppers were out along Lincoln Road Tuesday morning, Dec. 23, 2014, getting their last-minute Christmas gifts. EMILY MICHOT MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Steve Yucht scurried along Miami Beach's Lincoln Road Tuesday morning, as Nate Paulding lugged a 7-foot Romero Britto painting, called *The Hug*, to Yucht's van.

The bright \$1,500 artwork, a Christmas gift for Yucht's wife Nicole, would be a surprise "for about another 10 minutes" while his wife shopped at nearby Lululemon Athletica, Yucht said.

"I know she loved it, and I know she wanted it, but I had to break away somehow to get it," said Yucht, 48, of Gainesville, who was in Miami Beach on vacation. "We saw it several days ago, and I told her we had to come back, but I didn't tell her why."

For last-minute holiday shoppers like Yucht, it's crunch time.