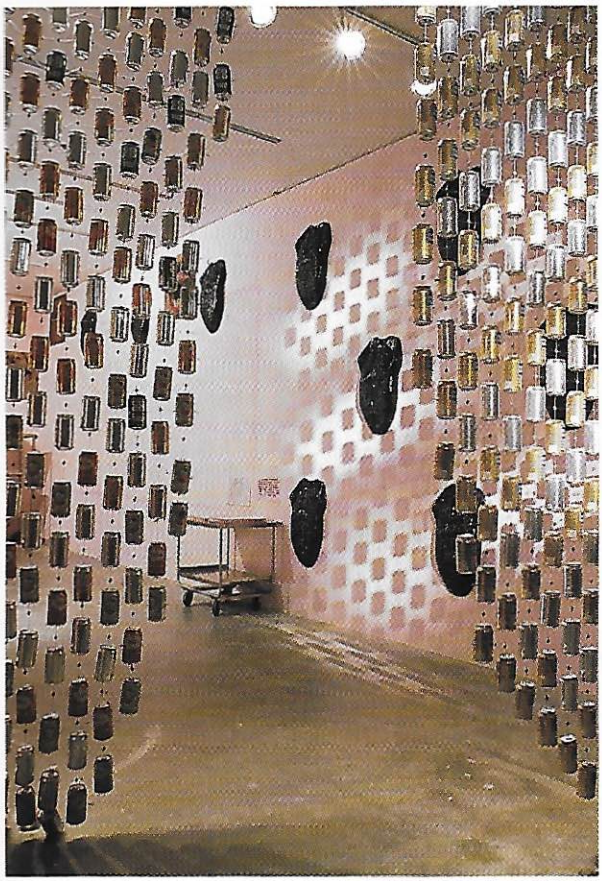


Left, Antoni Miralda's installation Grandma's Recipes—Miami Bureau, *1998, cast plastic tongues, cans, photos, text and slide projection; part of the New Work series at the Miami Art Museum.*

Below, Robert Chambers: Bigma, *1998, black lights, tracer dye; in the "New Art: South Florida" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami.*

Above, José Bedia's Mi Coballende (My Saint Lazarus), *1999, bamboo, diver's shoes, clothing, rope, burlap, brandy, cigar; at the Art Museum at Florida International University.*

Right, Eudora Welty: Pageant of Birds, *1930, toned gelatin silver print, 17 by 10 inches; from the exhibition "Contemporary Photography from the Martin Z. Margulies Collection," in the American Art Today series at the Art Museum, FIU.*

REPORT FROM MIAMI: PART I

Museum Salsa

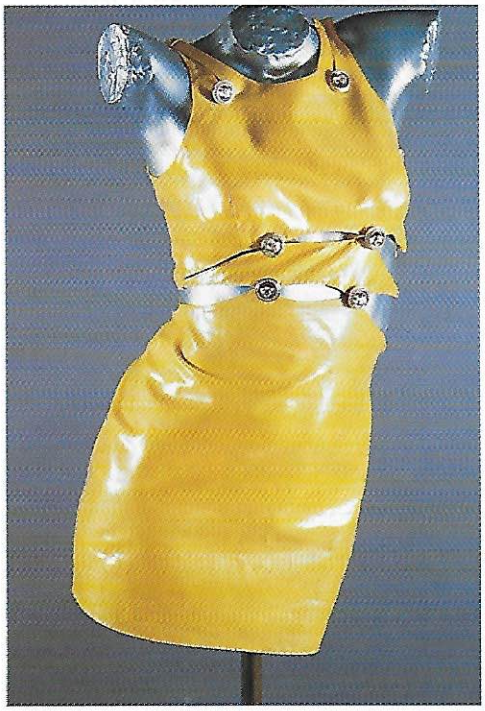
In the first of two articles on Miami's rapidly expanding art scene, the author looks at the ways in which area museums now bid for international stature.

BY RONI FEINSTEIN

The last time an extended article on the Miami art scene appeared in the pages of this magazine was November 1986 with Peter Plagens's "Report from Florida: Miami Spice." While noting that Miami was in the midst of a massive growth spurt, with "real estate development up the wazoo" and an expanding, rapidly changing demographic profile, Plagens described Miami as a cultural backwater, its art world amorphous in structure and problematic in nature. Plagens considered certain aspects of the Miami art scene worthy of praise: its "unusually vigorous public art program"; the outdoor sculpture collection of real-estate developer Martin Z. Margulies; a few "MFA type" artists (Lynne Golub Gelfman, Carol K. Brown and Barbara Neijna); and a contingent of Cuban-American artists (among those he mentioned were Carlos Alfonzo, César Trasobares, Mario Bencomo, María Brito-Avellana and Arturo Rodríguez) who were bringing a potent Latin ingredient and some measure of vigor to Miami's contemporary-art scene.

On the whole, however, Plagens found Miami's gallery scene "tepid" and its corporate collections uninspired. One of the city's biggest problems, he felt, was the absence of a single, sizable collecting institution. He found four small institutions lacking in distinction or "any real clout," at their "wit's end," competing against one another for audience and support. Plagens concluded his article with the distinctly tourist's-view observation that life in Miami was too much a day at the beach (no competition or angst) for the city to produce great art. His final statement read: "Hothousing a major art culture in Miami may be possible, as, no doubt, is growing grapefruit in Alaska—but at what cost?"

A Gianni Versace dress from his High Technology line, fall/winter 1994-95; in "Gianni Versace: The Reinvention of Material" at the Museum of Contemporary Art.



While Alaskan citrus remains a dubious concept, there can be no question that today, some 13 years later, Miami has entered the mainstream. Its rise in stature owes in large part to the fact that it has become a major center for Latin American art. At the same time, albeit on a much smaller scale, Miami has begun to take part in the international contemporary-art world. The contemporary and Latin American art scenes, each with its own artists, galleries and collectors, may be distinguished from one another in that the latter tends to be more conservative, based in painting and sculpture rather than in alternative media (installation work, video, photography, etc.) and it tends to reference (and be influenced by) either modern or folk traditions rather than being conceptually oriented or involved with cultural critique. While the culture of cutting-edge contemporary art is still in its infancy, systems are in place to nurture it and help it grow. It is being shaped by perhaps a few dozen individuals, most of whom came to the city from elsewhere, who have dedicated themselves to making Miami a major center for contemporary art. Their efforts are paying off. Increasingly, Miami's museums, collectors and artists are drawing national and international attention. The scene is lively, the mood optimistic, and increasing numbers of younger artists who in the past would have left the city for bitter climes more hospitable to art are choosing to remain, hopeful that viable artistic careers can be formed beneath the hot South Florida sun.

It is today evident that the decentralized nature of Miami's art world, seen by Plagens as a weakness, has worked to the city's advantage, providing variety for Miami audiences and support and exposure for larger numbers of artists. Although Miami has a distinct downtown, like Los Angeles, it is a metropolitan area of extreme lateral sprawl that comprises 30 cities as well as a large unincorporated area. Greater Miami now accommodates five (as against Plagens's four) primary art institutions: the Bass Art Museum in Miami Beach, the Miami Art Museum in the heart of downtown, the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami in Coral Gables and the Art Museum at Florida International University, situated west of downtown. (The Wolfsonian-FIU, which is dedicated to the decorative arts and graphic design of the period 1885-1945, is in Miami Beach [see *A.i.A.*, Jan. '96].) Each museum is in a different neighborhood and has its own constituency, while at the same time attracting the small but growing mobile art audience (no museum is more than 20 minutes by car from any other). That Miami is capable of sustaining multiple art centers is evidenced by the fact that four of the five (the exception being the already sizable Miami Art Museum or MAM) have recently undergone major expansion and reconstruction projects or are about to do so.

All five of Miami's art museums exhibit and collect contemporary art. While the Bass, the Lowe and the Art Museum at FIU all have ethnographic collections and modest holdings of historical material (Renaissance and Baroque painting, for example), Miami is too young a city (its development dates to the 1920s and '30s) to have had major historical collections of the sort that grew in private hands elsewhere in the U.S. in the early years of the century and formed the basis of the country's leading museum collections. Further, Miami's art museums came into existence too late in the game to build major—or even minor—modern collections, and once again there were few local collections from which to draw. This left contemporary art and, for most of the museums, Latin American art as well, Latin culture being an essential part of the Miami milieu. The shared focus on contemporary and Latin American art often results in museum programs duplicating or running parallel to one another. An example is the plethora of exhibitions of contemporary American beadwork and that of other cultures on the 1998-99 exhibition schedules of the Miami, Bass and Lowe Art Museums; together, these exhibitions threaten to give observers of the Miami scene the erroneous impression that beadwork is the world's primary artistic medium.

Only one of the galleries and artist-run spaces mentioned by Plagens still exists. Galleries devoted to international contemporary art, in particular, have tended to open and close in rapid succession, largely because interested collectors generally prefer to conduct business in cities with more established art markets (such as New York, Los Angeles and Basel). Currently, however, four spaces that feature contemporary art are having an impact on the Miami art scene and its emerging profile: the commercial galleries of Fredric Snitzer and Genaro Ambrosino, located around the block from one another in a warehouse district in the Coral Gables section of Miami, and the nonprofit Wolfson Galleries at Miami-Dade Community College's downtown campus and the ArtCenter/South Florida on South Beach's Lincoln Road.

On and around Ponce de León Boulevard in Coral Gables are dozens of elegantly appointed galleries specializing in Latin American art. Tending to financial stability and commercial success, they attract collectors from all over the world. The Miami offices of Sotheby's and Christie's, whose South Florida business is devoted largely to Latin American art, are nearby. Among the most prominent of these galleries are Meza Fine Art, Elite Fine Art, Gary Nader Fine Arts, Quintana Gallery and the Americas Collection. They feature work by established masters such as Botero,

Architectural rendering of Arata Isozaki's design for the new Bass Museum of Art; scheduled for completion in late 1999.

Lam, Tamayo, Matta and Torres-García, as well as work by contemporary artists from South and Central America and parts of the Caribbean.

While many of Miami's leading contemporary-art galleries like Snitzer and Ambrosino also show Latin American artists (predominantly Cuban-American), the two sets of galleries occupy distinct, if parallel, worlds, as has been reflected in Miami art fairs of the recent past. The Miami Art Fair, held every January at the Miami Beach Convention Center, has traditionally been a showplace for Latin American art. (While Latin American dealers make up only about 20 percent of the exhibitors, dealers from London, Paris, New York and elsewhere often choose to display work by Latin American artists at the fair.) In 1997 and 1998, an alternative art fair was held simultaneously at the Raleigh Hotel in South Beach; organized by a contingent of New York art dealers (Pat Hearn, Matthew Marks, Tom Healy, Paul Morris and others) who had also organized New York's Gramercy Art Fair, its intention was to showcase cutting-edge contemporary art. While it was quite successful, it was discontinued in 1999. This year's 9th Annual Miami Art Fair featured more dealers of international contemporary art than in previous years. Among those making their first appearance were Annina Nosei (New York), Numark (Washington, D.C.), Nahan/Van Der Straeten, Ridgefield (Amsterdam), Lutz Teutloff (Bielefeld) and Bineth (Tel Aviv).

Collectors have been instrumental in making Miami a highly visible and significant participant in the international contemporary-art scene. Four—Irma and Norman Braman, Rosa and Carlos de La Cruz, Martin Z. Margulies, and Donald and Mera Rubell—were included on the 1998 *ArtNews* list of the world's top 200 collectors. They and other Miami-based collectors not only extensively purchase contemporary art works (thereby making dealers around the world aware of Miami as an art center), but personally invest themselves in efforts to enhance and expand the city's art culture. Some chair or serve on museum boards, others loan works from their collection to museums, and still others bring art professionals from around the world to Miami and expose them to the local scene. The Rubell Family Collection, which opened to the public in 1994, is internationally known.

While the corporate collections visited by Plagens have since been dispersed, banks and corporations still play a vital role in Miami's art world through their support of museum exhibitions and programs. The state and local governments, however, are the area's most important art patrons. Miami's Art in Public Places program continues to be among the nation's most active. According to figures compiled by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, for the past 10 years Florida has consistently been among the top three (with New York and California) in state arts funding.

The developments in Miami's art world during the past decade and a half reflect changes within the city itself, most of which owe to its geography: Miami, located in the Sunbelt a mere 90 miles north of Cuba, is perfectly situated to serve as the world's gateway to Central and South America and the Caribbean. During the 1980s, banks and corporations from around the world, choosing to take advantage of the relative political and economic stability found in much of Latin America, began to move their headquarters for Caribbean and Latin American business dealings to Miami, a city with a major international airport providing easy access to the Americas. Once a mecca for retirees, Miami has become also a city of choice for young and middle-aged people from across the U.S. and around the world, some of them considerably moneyed, who were seeking a blend of financial opportunity and quasi-tropical lifestyle.

An explosion of building produced a downtown skyline of modern and postmodern office towers (the latter often multicolored, with broken and irregular silhouettes) which rise above the glimmering expanse of Biscayne Bay [see *A.i.A.*, Sept. '88]. Many of the buildings were designed by the world's leading architects and architectural firms (I.M. Pei, Hugh Stubbins, Charles E. Bassett and Paul DeArmas of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, and Miami's own Carlos Zapata and Arquitectonica). The economic slump experienced in New York, California and elsewhere in the U.S. in the late '80s and early '90s was not felt in Miami, where real-estate and business development continued at a fantastic pace. (A number of Miami's major art collectors—among them Margulies, the Rubells and Craig Robins—are involved in the real-estate industry.) During this period the revival of Miami Beach's Art Deco District of South Beach escalated [see *A.i.A.*, Oct. '81]. Initially, relatively low-cost, high-style oceanfront properties were settled by artists, art dealers and designers. Celebrities and a more heterogeneous but predominantly youthful population followed. Today South Beach remains a major center for up-to-the-minute fashion and home design as well as for restaurants, hotels and tourism. Redevelopment continues, extending northward into North Beach and elsewhere.

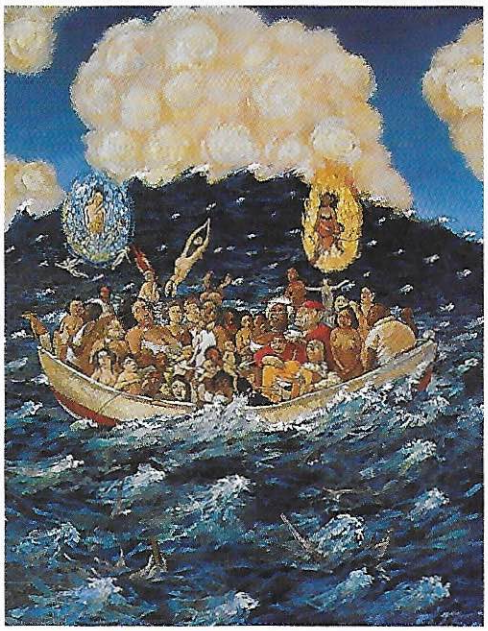
Also significant factors in the changing face and character of Miami were the successive waves of immigrants from the Caribbean and Latin America, particularly Cuba (beginning in the early '60s), who have made the city their home. These immigrants, many of whom are now second- and even third-generation Americans, make up roughly half the city's population. They have affected every aspect of Miami life—from politics, finance and education to language, cuisine and the arts. From their ranks have emerged a high proportion of the city's leading writers, musicians, architects, artists and art patrons. Cuba's rich artistic heritage was carried to Miami's shores and celebrated by Cuban-Americans as a means of maintaining identity and contact with the homeland. A number of prominent artists, among them José Bedia, Rubén Torres Llorca, Quisqueya Henríquez, Jorge Pantoja and Glexis Novoa, came to the city from Cuba (often via Mexico City) as recently as five or six years ago.

This article is divided into two parts. The first will examine Miami's public art institutions, with a focus on their recent growth as well as on their exhibition programs. It will be demonstrated that the adage "strength in numbers" rings true for Miami's museums, as together they form the roots of an active, thriving art culture. The article's second part, which will appear in a later issue, will be devoted to the small number of commercial galleries and alternative spaces that are helping shape and define Miami's contemporary-art scene. It will also focus on collectors and the pivotal role they play both in Miami and in the international art world. As artists' reputations are formed by the inclusion of their work in local museum and gallery exhibitions and in local private and public collections, discussions of the work of individual artists will be integrated with those of the places where their art has recently been displayed.

Bass Museum of Art

When the Norton Museum in Palm Beach (a city about 1½ hours north of Miami) recently decided to expand, the museum (under the directorship of Cristina Orr-Cahall) easily raised $23 million, most of the money coming from private funds and foundations. In Miami, the four recent (or upcoming) museum expansions were carried out with public monies for considerably smaller sums. Among the residents of Palm Beach are a multitude of older, retired individuals of considerable wealth who hail from northern cities—New York,

Brooke Alfaro:* Between Heaven and Hell, *1992, oil on canvas, 40 by 30 inches; in "Cross-Currents: Contemporary Painting from Panama 1968-98" at the Bass Museum of Art.



View of the exhibition "David Smith: Stop /Action"; at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The decentralized nature of Miami's art world, once seen as a weakness, has worked to the city's advantage, providing variety for audiences and support and exposure for a large number of artists.

Chicago, Boston, Detroit—with well-established museums and long-standing traditions of arts support. The native Miami art community tends to be younger and unaccustomed to such traditions of giving. In Latin America, moreover, support for the arts is generally state- or church-sponsored. Miami institutions are therefore dependent upon grants from a host of state and civic agencies which, with the city's boom in finance and tourism, have been given in recent years with unprecedented generosity.

Almost three-quarters of the $8 million required for the first two phases of the Bass Museum of Art's reconstruction and expansion project, for example, which is currently under way, was received from public funds. The Bass was able to commandeer the funds for this most costly of Miami museum projects because of its strategic location one block off Collins Avenue at the north end of South Beach, near numerous hotels. About 70 percent of its visitors are tourists. The first phase in the reconstruction plan, to be completed at the end of 1999, will include the renovation of the present, decidedly worn, facility, adding 5,500 square feet of exhibition space to the existing 11,000 square feet, plus space for a revenue-producing shop and café. The museum will thus be able to display its permanent collection while serving as a venue for traveling shows. The project's second phase will add 25,000 square feet for classrooms, an auditorium, more exhibition areas and on-site storage.

The plan, designed by Tokyo-based architect Arata Isozaki, is for the construction of what appears to be an El Lissitzky "Proun": an asymmetric structure composed of geometric forms and linear elements, each of a different color or material. The 1930s Art Deco building of native coral rock that was part of the original museum is incorporated into the design. Isozaki's building will, in turn, be part of a cultural complex currently bearing the name "Cultural Campus on Collins Park." It will include a new regional library designed by Robert Stern and a rehearsal hall for the Miami City Ballet (directed by Edward Villella) designed by the celebrated Miami-based firm Arquitectonica, which since its founding in 1977 has been responsible for numerous large-scale projects, often characterized by unusual forms and colors. A nine-acre sculpture park will extend from the Bass to Collins Avenue, and a parade of palms bisecting the plan and extending one block further east will connect the museum to the sandy shores of Miami Beach.

This grand scheme carries great potential: it seems destined to enhance the Bass's visibility on national and international levels (via the traveling exhibitions) and its presence in the city's cultural life. At present, the Bass plays a modest, though occasionally significant, role. The museum, which began as the Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center in the 1930s, was inaugurated as the Bass Museum of Art in 1963 when John and Johanna Bass offered the City of Miami Beach their art collection of more than 500 European works—paintings, sculptures, works on paper and textiles—as well as money to expand the existing building. This collection, which included few truly stellar pieces, has since increased to over 2,000 objects of a highly diverse nature: European art and decorative arts; American, Latin American, Asian and contemporary art; textiles, tapestries and ecclesiastical vestments; and architectural photographs and drawings documenting the history of Miami Beach. Collecting local historical material is a pet project of Diane Camber, the director of the Bass since 1980 and a Miami native, who, before coming to the museum, played a pivotal role in the preservation of the Art Deco buildings of South Beach.

Rather than reflecting its broad-based collections, the Bass's exhibition program, like that of Miami's other museums, focuses largely upon cutting-edge contemporary art and Latin American art, as is well demonstrated by its fall 1998-spring 1999 schedule. In September, the museum presented "Crosscurrents: Contemporary Painting from Panama, 1968-1998" (organized by the Americas Society) and "Mestre Didi: Sacred Afro-Brazilian Sculpture" (organized by the Bass); the latter was the first North American solo exhibition of intricately realized objects of ritual by a high priest of the *candomble* religion that was brought to Brazil by African slaves. These exhibitions were followed in December by a presentation of the work of the Expressionist Maxim Kantor, who represented Russia at the 1997 Venice Biennale (organized by the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt), and "Liza Lou's America" (through May 15), the largest exhibition to date of beaded installations by the remarkable California artist (organized at the Bass by Camber, it includes *The Backyard*, *The Kitchen* and *The Portrait Gallery*; see *A.i.A.*, June '98). An exhibition of drawings by Roy Lichtenstein (organized by Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati) is on view through May 9.

Two traveling exhibitions organized by the Bass during the past two years are worthy of mention. The first, "Desert Cliché: Israel Now-Local Images," guest-curated by Tami Katz-Freiman and Amy Cappellazzo (who was then director of the Wolfson Galleries at Miami-Dade Community College) presented work by contemporary Israeli (including a few Arab) artists that exploited stereotyped notions and images of their native land. The exhibition was also shown at two museums in Israel and at the Grey Art Gallery in New York. The second, "Fashion at the Beach," an exhibition of contemporary fashion photography guest-curated by Charles Cowles and Dennis Christie, is one of several exhibitions (another focused on cocktail shakers) specifically geared to attracting the South Beach fashion and design audience to the Bass.

Miami Art Museum

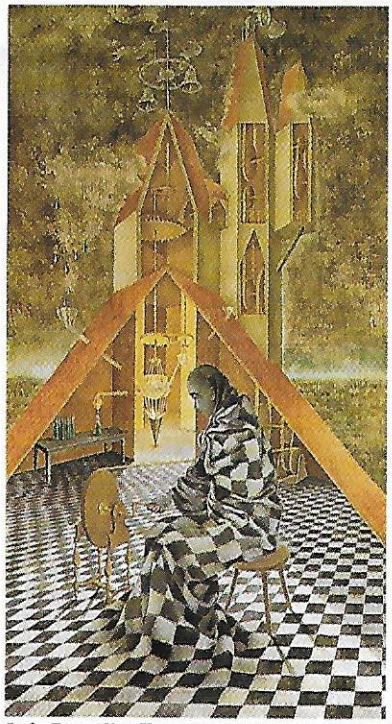
While the Miami Art Museum dreams of moving to a waterfront location, it is presently situated in the middle of downtown Miami, surrounded by banks and corporate headquarters. The result of a municipal project in the late '70s, the museum, together with the main branch of the Miami-Dade Library and the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, formed the Miami-Dade Cultural Center. Conceived as Mediterranean-style palaces by architect Philip Johnson, the three arcaded buildings flank a large, rather barren plaza, which is elevated above street level like a fortress. At the recommendation of Thomas Hoving, whom the city had called in as an advisor, the museum, which was then named the Center for the Fine Arts, served as a *kunsthalle*, an exhibition hall for such large-scale traveling shows as "Treasures of Fabergé," "American Impressionism," "Dutch Watercolors" and "Caribbean Visions." Small solo shows of work by contemporary artists (among them Nancy Burson, Philip Taaffe, Carrie Mae Weems and Bill Viola) were presented as well. It seems, however, that Hoving's idea came too early in Miami's redevelopment to be successful. The institution had an extremely shaky start, going through three directors (and two interim directors) in a little more than a decade.

The Miami Art Museum attained greater stability, a new mission and its new name shortly after Suzanne Delehanty assumed directorship in 1995. Delehanty is

a veteran museum director, having previously been at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1989-93) and at the Neuberger Museum in Purchase, N.Y. (1978-88). On the basis of input from an extensive community survey, Delehanty transformed the Miami Art Museum into a collecting institution with a focus on art of the western hemisphere produced from World War II to the present. In October 1996 she opened the first of an ongoing series of exhibitions of gifts and loans coyly entitled "Dream Collection: A Few Wishes and Desires." While to date the collection remains small (less than 70 works), it is the quintessential Miami collection, consisting of a judiciously balanced representation of work by modern and contemporary Anglo and Latin American artists. (Non-Hispanic Caribbean cultures are represented as well in the fabulously inventive sculpture series "The Voodoo Deity Heads" [1996] by Haitian-born Miami artist Edouard Duval-Carrié.) Among the Anglos one finds such well-established masters as Gottlieb, Rauschenberg, Rosenquist, Warhol, Cornell and Stella, as well as more contemporary, Miami-based artists such as Kenny Scharf, Lynne Golub Gelfman and Barbara Neijna. In similar fashion, paintings by modern Latin masters Lam, Matta, Tamayo and Torres-García are joined by works by Bedia, Alfonzo, Torres Llorca, María Martínez-Cañas, Consuelo Castañeda and Quisqueya Henríquez, all of whom are prominent on the Miami art scene and have growing reputations elsewhere. Martínez-Cañas, for example, whose intricately worked photographic collages combine hand-cut graphic (organic) motifs with photographs evocative of a Cuban homeland she never knew, is represented in public collections in France, Mexico, Germany, Puerto Rico and the U.S. (The Museum of Modern Art purchased a work out of her show at New York's Julie Saul Gallery in 1997.) MAM's fourth Dream Collection exhibition, presented Nov. 11, 1998-May 2, 1999, consisted of 180 photographs by 136 artists drawn from the collection of New York art dealer Charles Cowles, who grew up in Miami.

Although the 1997 traveling exhibition "Triumph of the Spirit: Carlos Alfonzo, A Survey 1976-1991," guest-curated by Olga Viso (assistant curator, Hirshhorn Museum), originated at MAM [see *A.i.A.*, Dec. '98], virtually all the other large-scale exhibitions shown at the museum in recent years have been organized elsewhere, demonstrating that the museum has not yet left behind its *kunsthalle* beginnings. The mid-1997 hiring of Sue Graze as assistant director of programs/senior curator was intended to bring changes, but Graze resigned her post late in 1998 (to become executive director of the Texas Fine Arts Association in Austin) with no major exhibitions planned. However, in conjunction with the traveling retrospective "the body and the object: Ann Hamilton 1984-1996" (organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts and presented at MAM in the spring of 1998), the museum commissioned the artist to create a new installation. Titled *mantle*, the work consisted of an immense, 50-foot-long table upon which were piled thousands of flowers in various states of bloom and decomposition. A large collection of short-wave radios produced muffled sounds, while a lone attendant sat facing a window, stitching wool coats.

In the fall of 1998, MAM presented "Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation," organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center, followed by the George Segal retrospective circulated by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. "Re-Aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South-American Drawing" (organized by the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin), and "Beads, Body and Soul: Art and Light in the Yoruba Universe" (originating at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History) will be shown June 25-Aug. 29. It is a lineup that demonstrates the cultural mix, and particularly the focus on art produced in Latin America, typical of Miami institutions. "Mirror Images" was a particularly well-chosen exhibition for the museum, as it included the work of numerous Latin American women artists, among them the British-born Leonora Carrington, who became a Mexican citizen in 1942, and Ana Mendieta—both of whose work is in the permanent collection—as well as Frida Kahlo, Marta María Peréz Bravo and Paula Santiago. Santiago, who lives in Guadalajara, creates extraordinary, moving works: using wax, tissue-thin layers of rice paper, and her own hair and blood, she produces sculptures in the form of children's clothing—delicate forms that serve as monuments to a mother's love.



Left, Remedios Varo:* The Alchemist, *1955, oil on masonite, 41⅜ by 20¾ inches. Private collection, Mexico City; in the exhibition "Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation" at the Miami Art Museum.

Right, Horst P. Horst:* Model in Surreal Setting, *1939, gelatin silver print, 10 by 8 inches; in the fourth Dream Collection exhibition, "Collection of Charles Cowles," at the Miami Art Museum.

Among the most vital programs at the museum is the New Work series, which was inaugurated in 1993 (it is another remnant of the museum's earlier incarnation). Committed to presenting cutting-edge contemporary art, the project-room type exhibitions, which are generally organized by MAM, offer solo and small group shows of work by an international array of artists. "La casa del nomada" (The Nomad's House), the first solo exhibition in the U.S. of the Dominican-born, Amsterdam-based artist Marcos Lora Read, was presented in the summer of 1998. Read conceives of himself as a nomad: he sets up residence in cities around the world where he is invited to show his art. The large yellow crate he used to transport his belongings to Miami sat on the plaza outside the museum. Inside, a gallery was filled with paintings, assemblages and video and installation pieces, some with magical overtones, which took as their subjects travel, immigration, racism and political oppression.

The next exhibition in the series, "Miralda: Grandma's Recipes—Miami Bureau," opened in November 1998, curated by Sue Graze. Miralda, who divides his time between Miami Beach and Barcelona, and who owns and operates The Big Fish, a restaurant and popular art hangout on Miami's riverfront, produced an interactive installation that explored the relationship between food traditions and cultural and social history. Gallery walls were lined with large, cast-plastic tongues which were interspersed with photographic representations of the tongues of dozens of Miami art-world notables (as well as of the mayor of Miami Beach). Visitors were asked to inscribe their favorite family recipes on provided plates and placemats. Other artists on the 1998-99 New Works schedule are California-based assemblagist Nancy Rubins, New York-based Liisa Roberts (in a 16mm-film installation project commissioned by MAM in collaboration with the Whitney Museum) and British artist Steven Pippin.

Museum of Contemporary Art

International cutting-edge art is the province of the Museum of Contemporary Art, which is situated in an old residential and commercial section of North Miami. Founded in 1981 as the Center of Contemporary Art, the museum was renamed and moved to a new, 23,000-square-foot structure designed by Charles Gwathmey in 1996. At the same time, like MAM, MOCA became a collecting institution. The $3.75-million museum, built entirely with public funds, was part of an urban revitalization project. Set at the back of a broad plaza featuring a grid of palm trees and a large, round reflecting pool, Gwathmey's building presents a Cubist collage of straight and curved elements painted in

close to a dozen different earth tones. The museum's name is inscribed in 11-foot-high block letters across one plane of the facade. A freestanding pavilion with a butterfly roof (a space for performances, film screenings, installations and art education programs) stands directly in front of the museum. Bonnie Clearwater, the museum's director since 1997, likes to call it "the most accessible museum with the least accessible art," and, indeed, the casual elegance of Gwathmey's building and the low-key, inviting atmosphere of the museum's interior (this, despite the main exhibition hall's 21-foot-high, metal barrel-vaulted ceiling) combine to make MOCA a particularly user-friendly contemporary art space.

MOCA's visibility and success extend well beyond the Miami community, its growing international reputation as a major center for advanced art owing to Clearwater's tireless efforts. She moved to Miami in 1990 from Los Angeles, where she had been executive director of art programs at the Lannan Foundation after having worked in South Florida from 1985 to '88 with the Foundation and its museum. She came to COCA as a curator in 1994 and organized a number of interesting contemporary shows (such as "Arrested Childhood," spring 1994, which included work by Taro Chiezo, Nicole Eisenman, Guillermo Kuitca and Annette Messager) in its extremely modest gallery space. In contrast to Suzanne Delehanty, who became director of a large municipal institution fraught with problems and a preexisting governing board, Clearwater was in many ways able to start from scratch at MOCA. By personally wearing many hats (director, curator, public relations officer, fund-raiser and others) she has been able to shape museum policy and programs, and form a museum board responsive to her spirit of adventure.

The exhibition that Clearwater mounted for the Gwathmey building's opening in February 1997 clearly revealed her high ambitions for the museum and for the Miami art world as a whole. Titled "Defining the Nineties: Consensus Making in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles," the exhibition explored how opinions on new art are formed, by looking at work by 25 artists endorsed by consensus-making collectors, artists and art professionals in the three cities. Clearwater, thus, boldly declared a coterie of Miami artists—Bedia, Torres Llorca, Henríquez, Robert Chambers and Teresita Fernández—to be on par with artists of more far-reaching international reputation, while at the same time highlighting Miami collectors.

By now, the museum has assembled an impressive collection of approximately 300 contemporary works, some of which were included in the fall 1998 exhibition "Selection from the Permanent Collection." Among the featured works were Dennis Oppenheim's installation *Gut Birthdays*, last seen in his 1997 Venice retrospective, donated by the artist; a Milton Resnick painting of 1959, the earliest work in the collection, donated by New York dealers and part-time Miami residents Robert Miller and Betsy Wittenborn Miller; and an Anna Gaskell photograph, a recent purchase from an emerging New York artist.

MOCA likes to bill itself as "the museum where new art is discovered," and Gaskell's first solo museum exhibition, curated by Clearwater, opened at MOCA in October 1998. It featured "override," the artist's newest series of surrealistic photographs loosely inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and her first film, *floater*. In this continuous film loop projected on the gallery floor, a girl floats facedown in a shimmering body of water; as she turns her beautiful face to gasp for air, the camera closes in on her mouth until it occupies the entire floor. Clearwater has also given numerous Miami-based artists their first museum solos, such as the May-August 1998 exhibition "Jorge Pantoja: One Hundred Haiku," which consisted of postcard-sized drawings (a magnifying glass was provided for visitors) by a young Cuban-American artist who had previously shown at two now-defunct Miami galleries (Gutierrez Fine Arts and Emilio Navarro). Other Miami-based artists whose work has been featured in solo shows are Kenny Scharf, David Rohn, Pablo Cano and Castañeda, and "Defining the Nineties" participants Fernández, Chambers and Henríquez, among many others. Solo shows that originated elsewhere of work by Haring, Basquiat, Messager and Tunga [see *A.i.A.*, June '98] have also appeared at the museum. Clearwater's "Tableaux" (May 8-July 27, 1998), an exhibition of installation works by an international group of artists including Barbara Bloom, Paul McCarthy, Robert Wilson, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Juan Muñoz, traveled to the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.

Miami's art museums often mix traditional European work with examples of African-American, Caribbean and Latin American art that reflect the city's thriving diversity.

Partial view of the Samuel H. Kress collection of Baroque and Renaissance art at the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables. Photo Don Queralto.

In point of fact, however, MOCA's exhibition program is not exclusively devoted to contemporary art, as was demonstrated by the fall 1996 presentation of "Mexican Modernism from the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection," which included work by Rivera, Kahlo, Tamayo and others. From Dec. 19, 1998 to Feb. 24, 1999, "David Smith: Stop/Action" was shown at the museum. Curated by Clearwater, the exhibition consisted of a selection of sculptures and works on paper, dating from the 1930s to the 1960s, which suggest movement. Opening in January at the museum were two artists' projects: Canadian Rodney Graham's film *Vexation Island*, which was shown at the 1997 Venice Biennale, and a new light installation using holograms executed by Arizona-based artist James Turrell. (Turrell's piece was made in collaboration with C Project, a South Beach-based project through which limited-edition holographic images have been created during the 1990s by such major artists as Chuck Close, Robert Ryman, Louise Bourgeois and John Baldessari.) The exhibition "Gianni Versace: The Reinvention of Materials," organized by the Fondazione Antoni Ratti in Como, Italy, and larger and more comprehensive than the Versace show the foundation organized for New York's Metropolitan Museum, is on view at MOCA through June 13.

Last summer MOCA presented "New Art: South Florida," an exhibition of work by recipients of the South Florida Cultural Consortium Visual and Media Artists Fellowships, which each year is presented at a different regional museum. Among this year's

Collectors have been instrumental in making Miami a highly visible and significant locale on the international art circuit. Four were recently listed among the world's top 200 patrons.

prizewinners are three artists of particular prominence on the Miami art scene: Robert Chambers, Mark Handforth and Dara Friedman. Chambers, a Miami native who also has a studio at the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, served as chair of the University of Miami's Sculpture Department from 1994 to '98. His work has been presented in solo shows at New York's Sculpture Center and at MOCA. In 1998 he created site-specific installations for museums or galleries in Caracas, Mexico City, Paris and Kansas City. *Bigma* (1998), presented in "New Art: South Florida," consisted of a black-lit room filled with biomorphic-shaped tubs containing glowing liquid. Viewers could circulate among the tubs or observe them while standing on a raised, vibrating platform. A literally dark and mysterious work, it seemed to offer an estheticized view of ecological disaster.

Mark Handforth is a Hong Kong-born British artist who has lived in Miami since 1992. In the mid-'90s he served as manager of the Rubell Collection and in 1993 and 1994 had solo shows in Jason Rubell's short-lived Miami Beach gallery on Lincoln Road. Among the works Handforth presented in the MOCA exhibition was the room-size, freestanding assemblage *Le Coq Sportif,* whose seeming casualness both in its open, dispersed form and inclusive use of found materials masked a keen organizing intelligence and eye. Metal platforms mounted on tubular legs, a Le Coq Sportif windbreaker, a *Vanity Fair* cover in a Ziploc bag, a Ritter Sport candy wrapper, a bundle of bungee cords in various colors, a *National Geographic* cover, a gridded yellow panel and a tall red plastic bucket inscribed "Property of the City of Hialeah," among many other things, came together with harmonic rightness.

In 1998, Dara Friedman shared a two-person exhibition with Handforth at Gavin Brown's Enterprise in New York and had a solo show at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. The German-born, internationally schooled filmmaker and installation artist has lived in Miami since the early '90s. Her film *Talk Show*, shown in the "New Art: South Florida" exhibition, features a series of women offering advice to artists and filmmakers in a broadcast-news-type format. The same pronouncements are made by different women and include such gems as the following: "You can't always hold your coat; that's why you have a coat rack. You can't always hold ideas in your head; that's why you make a work of art." While all the women are attractive (glossy-haired, glossy-lipped), some appear more "professionally polished" (hence, more intelligent) than others. One of Friedman's interests is exploring the relationship between conventions of appearance and substance.

Lowe Art Museum

Although the Lowe Art Museum of the University of Miami was at one time known for its involvement with contemporary art (Plagens made note of the "toothy shows" produced under the direction of Ira Licht), its focus today is broader, reflecting its encyclopedic collection. Founded in 1950, the Lowe is located on the university's main campus in Coral Gables, about 15 minutes by car from downtown Miami. Its permanent collection (more than 9,000 objects) is larger and more diverse than those of Miami's other museums and includes antiquities and Renaissance and Baroque, 17th-20th century American and European, Asian, African, pre-Columbian and Native American art, making it an ideal teaching collection. The museum has great depth in non-Western art. Brian A. Dursum, director since 1990 (he has been on staff since 1975), is a specialist in Asian art; he recently curated the exhibition "Gods and Goddesses, Myths and Legends in Asian Art from the Permanent Collection." While the Lowe's collection of Western art is more limited, it tends to be of extremely high quality, a good deal of the Renaissance and Baroque material deriving from a sizable donation from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in 1961. The contemporary collection, formed by a combination of gifts and purchases, is spotty, but contains a number of interesting works, among them a small group of American paintings from 1945-60 by Adolph Gottlieb, David Park, Joan Brown and others.

Thanks to a $3.4-million expansion and renovation plan completed late in 1996 (designed by Miami architect Charles Harrison Pawles) which added 36,000 square feet of exhibition space (and a new entrance and unifying facade), 40 percent of the museum's holdings are on view at any given time. The State of Florida and the University of Miami contributed to this project, but most of the funding came from private foundations (Kresge, Kress, Lowe) and donors.

Shows presented in the museum's two new temporary-exhibition galleries reflect the collection: Western and non-Western, contemporary and historical, art and craft. As is typical of Miami's museums, considerable attention is paid to African-American, Caribbean and Latin art, although the Lowe's focus is often historical rather than contemporary, i.e. pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial art. Most of the traveling shows presented at the museum feature work drawn from other public and private collections, such as "The West in American Art from the Bill and Dorothy Harnsen Collection," seen in the fall of 1998 and "Walter O. Evans Collection of African-American Art," presented in the winter of 1999. Exhibitions of this type are often supplemented with smaller shows of similar work from the permanent collection, as will be the case with the upcoming exhibition of work by 28 contemporary beaders titled "Pure Vision: American Bead Artists" (June 10-July 31), organized by Exhibits U.S.A. of Kansas City, and the concurrent "The Venerable Bead: Beaded Objects from the Permanent Collection." An exhibition of the work of Florida artist Jerry Winter, a painter-turned-bead-artist, will open in August.

The American Federation of the Arts's "Artist/Author: The Book as Art since 1980," shown at the Lowe from February to April, served as a draw for both the university and the Miami art community at large. As a university-affiliated gallery, the Lowe also presents yearly exhibitions of work by faculty and students. An annual Florida Artists series (the Jerry Winter exhibition just mentioned will be the fourth) gives exposure to midcareer Florida-based artists not necessarily associated with the school. As yet, few of these exhibitions have attracted more than local attention.

FIU Museums

International attention, however, has been paid to exhibitions organized and circulated by the Wolfsonian Museum-Florida International University (not to be confused with the Wolfson Galleries at Miami-Dade Community College, which will be discussed later). In 1997, the Wolfsonian, founded by Mitchell (Micky) Wolfson, Jr. in 1986 to house and dis-

Photo showing a patented Kress candy counter, 1926, Third Avenue store, New York City; in "Main Street Five-and-Dimes: The Architectural Heritage of S.H. Kress & Co." at the Wolfsonian Museum-Florida International University.

play his personal collection of more than 70,000 objects and to serve as a research and exhibition center, became part of FIU, the newest branch of the state university system (founded in 1972). The museum, directed by Catherine Leff, occupies a Mediterranean Revival building, a former warehouse, in the heart of the Miami Beach Art Deco District. With over 84,000 square feet of space (56,000 in the main building and 28,000 in an annex) devoted to exhibition galleries, auditorium, library, administrative offices, conservation lab, museum store and storage facilities, it is Miami's largest and most state-of-the-art art institution. The collection consists of furniture, decorative arts, industrial design, paintings, sculptures, architecture models, works on paper, books and ephemera, largely from North America and Europe, dating from 1885 to1945. Museum programs include exhibitions, lectures, scholars in residence and research. The exhibition "The Arts of Reform and Persuasion, 1885-1945," inaugurated in November 1995, presented 256 objects from the permanent collection; it traveled to Los Angeles, Seattle, Pittsburgh and Indianapolis [see *A.i.A.*, Jan. '96]. More recent exhibitions include "The Talk of the Town: Rea Irvin of *The New Yorker*" (organized by the Museum of the City of New York) and "Main Street Five-and-Dimes: The Architectural Heritage of S.H. Kress & Co." (circulated by the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.), both of which opened in November 1998. The upcoming "Depero Futurista Rome-Paris-New York, 1915-1932," an exhibition of the work of Italian Futurist Fortunato Depero (1892-1960), organized by Wolfsonian curator Marianne Lamonaca working with the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto, is currently on view.

Located on the main campus of FIU, about 20 minutes west of downtown Miami, is the Art Museum at FIU. At present, the museum occupies a 5,000-square-foot space which is used for temporary exhibitions. Dahlia Morgan, who has been director since 1980 (the museum was established in 1975), has already raised the greater portion of the $10 million needed for the construction of a new 40,000-square-foot facility, which will permit the museum to mount larger shows and to display its extensive storage-bound collection (reportedly including 6,000-7,000 objects). Part of the collection came from the Coral Gables Metropolitan Museum of Art, which closed in 1989; it includes African, Oriental, pre-Columbian, 18th-20th century American and Latin American art. In 1989 the museum received a long-term loan of approximately 400 paintings, sculptures and photographs from the Manhattan-based Cintas Fellowship Foundation Collection of Hispanic Art.

Also on long-term loan (since 1994) is the Martin Z. Margulies Sculpture Collection, consisting of 54 large-scale contemporary sculptures that are distributed around the lawns, ponds, plazas and walkways of the university's landscaped grounds. The sculptures—by Dubuffet, de Kooning, Borofsky, Judd, LeWitt, Heizer, Barry Flanagan, di Suvero, Caro, Calder, Noguchi, Serra and many others—bring FIU into the ranks of the nation's most prestigious university outdoor sculpture collections (UCSD, Stanford, UCLA and the University of Pennsylvania are others). Margulies has a special relationship with the museum; he often lectures to students and the visiting public about the loaned sculptures. In 1995, the Art Museum presented "Miró and Noguchi: Selections from the Martin Z. Margulies Collection" and in January of this year "American Art Today: Contemporary Photography from the Martin Z. Margulies Collection." This exhibition was on view at the same time as Charles Cowles's at MAM, thus providing Miamians with a unique opportunity to view two major collections formed by two very different sensibilities (Margulies has an eye for the pictorial; Cowles for subject matter).

William Tucker: **The Rim,** *1981, steel, 124 by 124 by 59½ inches; installed in the Martin Z. Margulies Sculpture Park on the campus at FIU.*

Although the Art Museum at FIU occasionally exhibits installation, performance and video art, one of its primary points of focus is modernist painting and sculpture. Under Morgan, who is an educator as well as a museum director, the museum is geared to scholarship—even connoisseurship—and solo exhibitions have been devoted to Fairfield Porter, Elaine de Kooning, Charles Burchfield, Marsden Hartley, Louise Bourgeois and William Tucker, among others. In Morgan's American Art Today series, group exhibitions of contemporary painting and sculpture devoted to such themes as landscape, still life and portraiture are particularly well chosen. Cuban-American artists and Latin American folk art are also major areas of interest, as is appropriate for a school that graduates more Hispanic students than any other U.S. university. Once again, the perspective taken is often historical, as was the case with "CUBA-USA: The First Generation," "El Alma del Pueblo: Spanish Folk Art and Its Transformation in the Americas," "Guido Llinás and Los Once After Cuba," and "Agustín Fernández: A Retrospective" (the two latter organized by Morgan for FIU). In February, Morgan curated an exhibition of the work of Bedia (I wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalogue). The exhibition included paintings, drawings, sketchbooks and a new installation. (Robert Farris Thompson, an authority on Afro-Cuban art from Yale, lectured on Bedia's art as part of the museum's ongoing critics lecture series.) Bedia, who had a solo show at Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art in 1994 (it traveled to MAM's earlier incarnation, the Center for the Fine Arts) and a full-scale retrospective at El Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico, in 1997, is in many ways the "star" of the Miami art world [see *A.i.A.*, July '97]. His most recent exhibition at the Fredric Snitzer Gallery and his project for Miami's new Performing Arts Center will be discussed in Part II of this article.

Together, Miami's art institutions provide the city with an active contemporary-art scene. Museum exhibitions, collections and programs focus on the local and the international, as well as on the current and the historical, and, as elsewhere, considerable emphasis is placed on museum education to train audiences to look at and appreciate the new art. Yet, with the exception of the already quite exceptional three-year-old Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami's museums have not realized their potential. However, the completion of museum expansion projects, the developing of curatorial staffs, and the anticipated growth of private-sector giving as Miami's young business and finance communities mature all hold promise.

Miami's burgeoning art scene is given true shape and substance by its galleries (both public and private) and its collectors. The galleries, although few in number, showcase both international and local artists. Miami's collectors are varied, including both the Rubell family (whose collection went public in 1994) and the City of Miami (through its Art in Public Places program), and they are a powerful force in the city's cultural life. Galleries, collectors and the artists they support will be the subject of the second half of this article. □

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