



Neo Rauch, *Vorführung*, 2006, Oil on canvas, 118 1/8 x 165 3/8 in. (300 x 420 cm)
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MIAMI MEDICI

SOUTH FLORIDA'S NOBLE ART COLLECTORS SHARE THEIR VIEWS

- I. THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION (RFC) II. THE DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE
III. THE CIFO ART SPACE IV. THE MARGULIES COLLECTION AT THE WAREHOUSE

BY ELIZABETH SOBIESKI

The “Miami Model” is not some 5’11” leggy creature with piles of hair and luscious lips, though there are scores of models in Miami that fit that description. No, the “Miami Model” is the much admired and emulated concept of a combination private and public contemporary art collection, where a meta-museum or quasi-institution opens to visitors without appointment, exhibiting the artwork of a single collector or family of collectors. But the “Miami Model” is more than just a model, because the four passionate individuals and families profiled here are outstanding philanthropists and patrons of the arts, more Medici than model to be sure. Other cities around the world may have one private contemporary collection open to the public, but only Miami has four private collections, each with a unique vision, spotlighting art that easily competes with (and often bests) any contemporary museum in the world.



Above: Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Left: Charles Ray, *Male Mannequin*, 1990, Fiberglass mannequin and paint, Ed. 1/3, 73 1/2 x 27 1/4 x 18 1/2 in. (186.7 x 69.2 x 47 cm), Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.



I. THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION (RFC)

Here is a unique love story shared by five extraordinary entities: two parents, their two adult children and contemporary art. Mera and Don Rubell began their grand art adventures as newlyweds, but were soon joined by their son, Jason, who undertook his own collecting career as a young teenager, and their daughter, Jennifer, a most intriguing artist.

Mera and Don live in the midst of their spectacular collection, perhaps the world’s most extensive accumulation of stellar contemporary art from the last four decades. Enter the 45,000 square foot exhibition space in the Wynwood Arts District, 27 galleries and a research library. Pass hundreds of works; exciting new acquisitions from El Anatsui, Rachel Harrison, Elizabeth Peyton, Huang Yong Ping, Matthew Day Jackson, Thea Djordjadze, Cecily Brown and Kaari Upson. Note that these artworks will be replaced in the autumn by other creations from the collection, equally as powerful and outstanding (rumor has it that Paul McCarthy and Charles Ray just might be included). A modest door leads from the exhibition space to the Rubells’ personal abode. There, Mera is chopping fruit, fresh from the trees in the garden; small, tasty bananas and ripe mangoes. Breakfast is served. Sit opposite Mera, Don and director of the collection, Juan Roselione-Valadez. All three brilliant and passionate, Mera bubbles with enthusiasm, while Don offers exceedingly wry comments and Juan sometimes plays devil’s advocate, as befits a

close colleague of thirteen years. Partake in a delicious breakfast. Laugh. A lot.

One important lesson to be learned from the Rubells is that anyone can collect art. Mera says, “We began collecting when Don was a medical student and I was a schoolteacher... We married 47 years ago and we started by creating a \$25 [a month] budget... and it continues like this. Of course, the stakes have gotten higher. But today, if we couldn’t pay for our artwork, we wouldn’t have the



Don and Mera Rubell, Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

great treasures we have because often we’re paying off, I don’t know, thirty pieces at any one time.”

Don mutters, “Unfortunately!” Mera continues, “People don’t know. They think they have to be barons of industrial fortune to become the owner of an original work of art. It’s not the case.”

Along with Don being a now-retired OB/GYN, the deliverer of 5,001 babies (probably a figure similar to the number of art pieces in the collection!), the Rubells also have built a thriving hotel business. They began

to dedicate time to Miami when Jason opened a gallery on Lincoln Road, and all four Rubells played a part in turning distressed properties into popular hotels. They relocated from Manhattan to Miami in 1993, and converted a DEA storehouse into the Rubell Family Collection in 1994.

Without the Rubells, there surely would be no Art Basel Miami Beach. Mera says, “There were some thoughts or fantasies about Art



Above: **Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still (#63)*, 1980**, Black-and-white photograph, Ed. 2/10, 8 x 10 in. (20.3 x 25.4 cm), Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.
 Right: **Rosemarie Trockel, *Untitled*, 1986**, Wool, 14 1/2 x 14 1/2 in. (36.8 x 36.8 cm), © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2011/Rosemarie Trockel, Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.



Basel having an American satellite, and we became very friendly at the time with Lorenzo and Sam (Lorenzo Rudolf and Sam Keller, both former directors of Art Basel) and we said, you guys have got to consider Miami.

"As transplanted New Yorkers, we were desperate to bring many of our European and New York connections. There was a kind of art situation here. There were some private collections; Marty was here, the de la Cruzes had their private collection here, but there was no private/public and a very minor museum situation. ...Why not think of Miami as this neutral center of attraction for North America, South America and, really, Europe? What made Basel so interesting was how cozy a town it was. Basel runs very much like Miami Beach; everybody runs into everybody. So this clan of art lovers that gathers once a year can actually be in a kind of 'camping ground,' so to speak, a little town that allows everyone to feel like they really physically come together. And the moment they actually got here..."

Don offers another pithy comment, "The smart thing is we brought them here in December!" He adds with a laugh, "And every meeting was on the beach!"

Mera continues, "We sat on Lincoln Road; I'll never forget it. It was Sam, Lorenzo, Don, myself and Jason. Lorenzo said, 'What makes this place so special?' and Jason said, 'You can do something here that you cannot do in Basel'... 'What you can do here is you can have an art fair ON THE BEACH!' Crazy idea! Have the art fair on the beach. Only the cutting edge containers (Shipping containers that were refurbished as exhibition spaces) could happen on the beach, but when they got to thinking about Picassos on the beach, it got a little complicated. But that driving idea of an art fair on the beach really hooked them. They said, 'Jason, we can't do an art fair on the beach in Basel. You're right! ...How could Europeans not want to come to an art fair on the beach?' Of course, the logistics got a little bit out of hand. And all those containers really did happen. But you cannot believe how hard we all had to fight. And I have to say that a lot of the collectors then came together to convince the

city to have it, because they wouldn't give up a week during December of the convention time. They said, 'How many people are going to come here?' We had to write a letter guaranteeing that they would use a thousand rooms during the week. We certified in our best judgment, our best opinion... I don't know what that legally meant, but we said 'Yes! We definitely guarantee that a thousand rooms would be used in the city.'

"And we did count heads the first year," laughs Don.

Mera says, "I have to say that a lot of credit has to be given to the mayor at that time, Neisen Kasdin, because this was going back and forth, back and forth, even though he was a big champion... You wouldn't believe what goes on at the Convention Center... They were thinking, who's going to come? Thinking of some lame artist showing up trying to sell a hundred dollar painting."

The Rubells are known for discovering breakout artists early in their careers. Around 1980, they offered to collaborate with the art museum at Cornell University, Don's alma mater. Don recalls saying to the director, "Each time we buy a work of art for us, we'll buy one for the museum." And he said, 'you know we have a storage full of junk.'" Years later, the director changed his mind and sought out the Rubells: 'We'll now accept everything.' Too late. The five artists whose work had been rejected included Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Susan Rothenberg, Cindy Sherman and Richard Prince, when, as Mera jokes, "Richard Prince hadn't heard of Richard Prince, either."

An early black and white Cindy Sherman that was purchased for \$25 now has an estimated value of \$250,000. The Rubells have donated work successfully to various welcoming institutions, including gifting an extensive collection of paintings from Purvis Young to Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Don contrasts the value of having a large private collection open to the public with Contemporary art available for viewing in a museum. "One of the most disturbing things about museums and art, and it's inherent, and it's probably correct that it happens that way, is there's a lag time between the production of the art and the

This page counter-clockwise from top:

John Baldessari, *Stake: Art is Food for Thought and Food Costs Money*, 1985, Black and white photographs, color photograph and acrylic paint on canvas, 144 x 480 in. (365.8 x 1219.2 cm), Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Glenn Ligon, *America*, 2008, Neon sign and paint, Ed. AP, 24 x 168 in. (61 x 426.7 cm), Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Paul McCarthy, *Cultural Gothic*, 1992, Metal, wood, pneumatic cylinder, compressor, programmed controller, burlap with foam, acrylic, dirt, fiberglass, clothing, wigs and stuffed goat, 96 x 94 x 94 in. (241 x 235 x 235 cm), Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.



time it enters museums, and it probably has a basis, as museums are a repository of the history of art. You can't become a repository of the history of art until the artist enters the history of art."

He continues, "The major contribution of these private/public collections is it fills the gap for young people to see the art that's being made today. I remember when our kids went to Duke and Harvard, and we had to sit in both of their art history courses; both ended with Andy Warhol... it's a twenty-year lag. The young people never see what's being produced, that relates to their issues and passions. So maybe private collections serve a useful point. Over a period of time, private collections are rarely sustained, I'm talking generations, and eventually almost all work enters that repository of the museum. I mean, the MoMA was founded by five women; several generations gave their collections. The Metropolitan Museum again. The National Gallery in Washington boasts about the fact people gave all the pieces."

Mera adds, "But when you bring it to the museum at a certain point, it's just going to go into storage. It's not going to have a conversation as quickly. We create these exhibitions, we publish these catalogues, we're having a conversation about artists that the

museums would probably take another ten years to have... So what is the argument against that? Are you putting too much pressure on the museum? Do they look like they're late and we're early? Well, that's a problem. Are we maybe presenting artists who don't deserve to be celebrated yet?"

Don interjects, "Historicized."

Mera agrees. "They don't deserve to be historicized. When we put up a show, we are not saying these are the best artists in the world. We are simply saying this is what is happening in the studio, this is what is happening in the gallery."

Don counters, "No. We're saying this is our belief system... Rosa may have a different view. Marty would have a different view. Cisneros definitely has a different view. But these all contribute to the public being able to make their own decisions."

Of their children, Mera says, "Unbeknownst to us, we made one collector and one artist." Several large canvases by Jennifer hang near the dining table, and recently she received attention for a life-size wax replica of Prince William. But she is best known for her knock-out food installations: such ephemeral conceptual pieces as a Warhol head full of desserts at the Brooklyn Museum and chocolate



Above:
Matthew Day Jackson, Installation view, *How Soon Now*, Rubell Family Collection, Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Left:
Jennifer Rubell, *Just Right*, 2010, Interactive food installation, December 1, 2010, Courtesy Rubell Family Collection, Miami.

Jeff Koons rabbits at *Performa 09*. Last Art Basel, Jennifer created an intriguing participatory artwork behind the RFC, *Just Right*, a Goldilocks-inspired edible environment, where visitors could enter a separate world and partake in a mammoth-sized, oatmeal-based breakfast. Inside the RFC, Jason's precocious collecting skills are on display. *Time Capsule-Ages 13-21*, shows stunning examples of work from such artists as Gerhard Richter, Rosemarie Trockel, Brice Marden, Eric Fischl, George Condo, Cady Noland, Richard Artschwager and Christopher Wool, originally curated as Jason's senior thesis at Duke in 1991. This from a boy whose Bar Mitzvah invitation was designed by Keith Haring.

The Rubells rarely sell pieces from the collection, but have hundreds of works on loan at any given time. A show titled *30 AMERICANS*, featuring all African-American artists, is at the North Carolina Museum of Art through September, opening in October at the Corcoran in Washington (through February), and then continuing on to the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, from March until July. The exhibit presents work by artists Mark Bradford, Glenn Ligon, Rodney McMillian and Kara Walker, among others. There are plans to take it to the Middle East.

The Rubells travel frequently; always digging in the trenches, discovering new art where it is created. Mera claims, "There's no greater joy for me than going into a studio and having that conversation and exploring the imagination and the potential and the vision of a creative person. It's like the best! And owning the work is

a consequence, in a way. A responsibility which I take. In a curious way, I take more responsibility than Don on that end, because he doesn't even want to know about the five warehouses we have to worry about." She giggles heartily. "But it's a tribute to Don that if it was just up to him, he would be a collector alone, unto himself. But that's not possible in the context of our family. Because the whole family is financially invested."

Don says, "That's not true. I would collect absolutely with my family. I wouldn't collect with anyone else."

When asked if they ever have major disagreements, Mera exclaims, "Always! Every day! Are you kidding?"

Don explains, "If you don't reach an agreement, you don't buy the piece. Actually, it has to be Jason, Mera and myself... It's not a majority. It's an absolute." Almost sheepishly, he admits, "I once bought a piece by myself, but it made me so miserable I had to return it the next day."

Mera and Don Rubell clear the remains of the breakfast vittles and depart. Don has a tennis date with two of their four grandchildren. The love story continues.

THE RUBELL FAMILY WILL BE LAUNCHING ANOTHER EXTRAORDINARY PRIVATE/PUBLIC COLLECTION SPACE, THIS ONE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., PROJECTED TO OPEN IN 2014.



Hernan Bas, *The Paper Crown Prince Once Upon a Time...*, 2005, Water-based oil on Panel, 12 x 10 in. (30.5 x 25.4 cm), Courtesy de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space. De la Cruz Collection, Miami. Photo by CM Guerrero, Courtesy de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space.



II. THE DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

"Art needs to be generous," says Rosa de la Cruz, her vivid blue Modigliani-esque eyes insistent. "When you are confronted with art, art cannot be meager. The experience of art is that it expands your lungs, expands your mind, expands your self, expands everything." She reiterates, "Art should be generous. You should not charge. The moment you start charging at the door, you lose that openness." She wants visitors to feel completely welcome amidst the extraordinary collection, to return numerous times to experience the artwork, but also to attend lectures, films, concerts, workshops and performances.

Miami-based collectors, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz are famously generous and open. Prior to debuting the newest of the private/public collections in December of 2009, Rosa and Carlos often would unlock the doors of their expansive waterfront home in Key Biscayne, hosting thousands of art-interested strangers over a twenty-four year period. There is no charge, of course, to enter the de la Cruz Collection in the Design District of Miami.

Designed by architect, John Marquette, the airy, three-story 30,000 square foot exhibition space features exceptional lighting from the north. Each art piece often seems to communicate with other works by the same artist, as the de la Cruzes strive for depth in their collecting. At this time, there are multiple pieces from such artists as Christopher Wool, Rudolf Stingel, José Bedia, Sigmar Polke, Isa Genzken, Jorge Pardo, Peter Doig, Alex Hubbard, Josh Smith, Tauba Auerbach, Seth Price, Hernan Bas and Arturo Herrera.

Despite a neon piece by Martin Creed commanding *Fuck Off*, there is a warm atmosphere in the open and freely accessible to the public offices on the ground floor. Rosa introduces her vibrant, permanent staff of five, which often is supplemented by paid interns from local schools. She says, "Carlos likes to come here, but the curatorial decisions are made by all of us. Everybody here tends to be very opinionated." Director, Ibett Yanez, chimes in when Rosa says, "It's a completely democratic space."

The de la Cruzes departed Cuba as teenagers in 1960, first settling in Spain, marrying in 1962, then becoming Floridians in 1975. They both were from prominent and sophisticated Habanero families. A portrait of Carlos' mother hangs in the collection, a departure from Contemporary art, but a luminous example of the brushwork of Salvador Dali. Rosa's grandfather designed the capital building in Havana and, in 1902, was the first student to graduate with a degree in architecture from the University of Notre Dame.

The couple began their own art journey in Miami, initially collecting Latin American modern masters, including Wifredo Lam and Rufino Tamayo. "We were buying Modern art, not Contemporary art, mostly acquiring at auction, and we realized we were missing our own time, that we really needed to start looking for art being made now, and to meet the artists. Then I got to meet Félix González-Torres, Gabriel Orozco, and from that point the collection opened in different directions. I realized that even though Gonzalez-Torres was a Latin



Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz in front of a site-specific installation by Wade Guyton/Kelley Walker, Photo by CM Guerrero, Courtesy de la Cruz Collection.



Jim Hodges, *Where are we now?*, 1999, Silk, cotton, polyester and thread, 288 x 216 in. (731.52 x 548.64 cm), Courtesy de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space.

huge leap in the past ten or fifteen years. I remember nobody was looking at Contemporary art.... People were very blue chip. It was a very small group collecting Contemporary.” She acknowledges, “And no doubt the Rubells were a major factor when they came. They created a lot of awareness in Contemporary art.”

The de la Cruzes often travel the world searching out talent. “We acquired great works by Sterling Ruby and a Swiss artist, Ugo Rondinone. I have been looking at Neo-Abstraction today. Also, there’s a huge return to American art from graffiti art, street art. The artists are using the aerosol can as well as the brush to create these magnificent works, which are really not graffiti, but made with certain techniques.... LA’s Kelley Walker, and Wade Guyton, are two artists we collect in depth. Gonzalez-Torres is always my anchor tenant here. He and Jim Hodges are artists who are very close to our collection. And Ana Mendieta; we have a room only for her work that’s permanently installed.” Visitors seem to experience something magically serene on the third floor of the collection, perhaps the spirits of Gonzalez-Torres and Mendieta.

The de la Cruzes also provide succor for local artists who are not part of the collection. “The artists in Miami have two project rooms in this space. So we are constantly inviting artists from our community to produce work and it is important. For example, there is one artist here in Miami who is going to The Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia because he was seen here at our space. We have another artist here, Christy Gast, who’s having a show at the Miami Art Museum, and no doubt this place also served as a catalyst. We always look at our community.”

The de la Cruz Collection also has an artist residency program, linked to the SculptureCenter in New York. Rosa says, “We provide housing and a plane ticket. They don’t have to do anything for us. Usually artists want to come to Miami for some reason. For example, David Brooks was interested in going to the Everglades because his sculpture deals a lot with environmental issues. Some photographers like the light of Miami or others may like the Art Deco district.” Sounding very pleased, Rosa continues, “We have the travel program for students. Every year we are taking the senior class that graduates from the New World School to Europe. This year, they are going one week to Berlin and one week to Venice—twenty students with two professors and the dean. We started that program. Also, we are sending thirty students from DASH (Design and Architecture Senior High) for one month to New York. And, it’s a collaboration with the School of Visual Arts in New York. It’s an expensive program. But we managed to fundraise... I think that the best gift you can give to a community is the idea of having your mind opened.”

Many of these young people are from deprived backgrounds. “I want those students to feel that there is a world out there that belongs to them. I think in life you have to be able to have a dream. The Queen tells Alice, every morning before breakfast I’ve had six impossible dreams. Those impossible dreams make life! I’m a big believer in shooting for the stars. And why not?”

Along with sharing a passion for art collecting with his wife, Carlos de la Cruz is chairman of a large bottling company and a civic leader. The de la Cruzes have five children and seventeen grandchildren. Of her husband, Rosa says, “He has his taste. I have my



Performance by Xavier Cha at the de la Cruz Collection, May 14, 2011, Courtesy de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space.

American artist, he was also an international artist. The same thing with Gabriel Orozco, and Guillermo Kuitca. The collection became more what it is today, international, going in different directions.”

Speaking of Miami’s place in the art world prior to Art Basel, she notes, “I think Miami is not a typical art center. Some people thought Miami was a desert, but there were always strong grass-roots, even though we’re so far south, almost like an island. But if you look at the Wolfsonian, Micky Wolfson’s collection of propaganda arts (which opened in 1986), that’s a unique collection. And then you always had people here like the Sackners with a collection of art texts. Also very well known. Marty Margulies has been collecting for many, many years. And Norman Braman has a major collection. Bonnie Clearwater (the influential director and chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami) moved to Miami twenty years ago from the Lannan Foundation. In Miami, there was always something going on. When people ask me, did it start recently in Miami? I say, no, that when we moved from Spain in 1975, already Miami had people interested, maybe not the way things are today. Because I think, in general, Contemporary art has taken a

taste. Art has never made us fight. Art has always been a very conciliatory experience for both of us. We both enjoy doing all kinds of things for the community, like the scholarships. My husband is a big believer in education. That’s where he thinks you should put your money.”

For eight years prior to opening the de la Cruz Collection, Rosa had run an alternative space for young artists, The Moore Space, partnering with developer and collector, Craig Robins. Rosa says, “Alternative spaces should always have a short life. When you try to extend their life, they become institutions.”

She notes, “We are in the era of a globalization and technology where everything is fast. Museums move very slowly, with a 19th

century concept of committees, one committee to another committee, and of course, this whole due diligence slows you down. And at the same time, you understand. How much can they acquire? How much can you have under one roof? Sometimes, some of these museums can only show five percent of the collection. Even for collectors today, it gets to a point. What do you do? How do you show a collection? Are you only buying to amass? That’s why it’s so important to have programming.”

Proud of all the de la Cruz space has to offer, Rosa remains realistic. “The arts in Miami must compete with the weather! In other cities, when it’s cold, people go. In Miami, we have twelve months when you can be outdoors.”



Ella Fontanals-Cisneros, Courtesy CIFO. **Francis Alÿs, *The Night Watch*, 2004**, Color Film on single channel monitor, Duration: 17:30, Courtesy the artist, Lisson Gallery, London & CIFO.



III. THE CIFO ART SPACE

Ella Fontanals-Cisneros arrives in her spacious and remarkably tranquil art-filled Coconut Grove duplex aerie. “I just bought some art in Cuba. There was a curator I left there, who had lived in Cuba, who knows the ways. You have to pay them there and they want dollars.” Even with the complications, she is very excited about the new artwork coming out of Cuba, noting that, “The artists are the elite now. They go out and come back. They have cars and nice houses. The artists now have a lot of privileges in Cuba.” Will her next exhibition focus on Cuban art? “Not Cuba! It’s a surprise! It’s going to be...” She pauses, laughs and seals her lips, “It should be a surprise! Every year it’s difficult to match what you did last year. A challenge! Something new and different to excite the people who come.” The last exhibit, *Inside Out—Photography After Form: Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection*, was curated by Dr. Simon Baker and Tanya Barson from the Tate London. It included major examples of photography from Thomas Struth, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Fiona Tan, German Lorca, the Bechers, Song Dong, Uta Barth, Candida Höfer, Edward Burtynsky and Luisa Lambri.

Fontanals-Cisneros’ superb collecting focuses on three areas: geometric abstract art from Latin America, international contemporary work, emphasizing video and conceptual art, and the photography. Wandering around the penthouse, its extensive terraces offering eye-popping, panoramic azure bay and majestic city views, you face arresting works by such artists as Fred Tomaselli, Lorna Simpson,

William Kentridge, Anish Kapoor, Liz Larner, Jenny Holzer, Zheng Guogo, Francesca Woodman and Damien Hirst.

Ella Fontanals-Cisneros is the most surprising member of the Miami Medici. Although she is a much admired and established art collector, she is not Miami-based. Cuban born, but, she says, “I grew up in Venezuela and I feel that is my country.” She no longer lives there; instead, she travels frequently, dwelling more in Europe than in the United States, dividing much of her time between Gstaad and Madrid, but also passing three or four months a year in Miami. “I got married here many years ago and kept coming. We always had a family home, a vacation home... We’ve always been involved with Miami for the last forty years.” After a long marriage, she is divorced from a member of the uber-wealthy Cisneros family.

She explains she chose Miami as the venue for the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation and Art Space (CIFO), “Because of the situation in Venezuela, the violence, the political situation. We have been out of Venezuela for a long time now. My children have been living here for ten years. All of my grandchildren have been born here, in Miami or New York, so they are all Americans. So I thought, when would be the time I could do this? And where? I can’t do it in Venezuela. I’m floating. But [then] I thought, where are my children? My children are here, and I was thinking of the future. Who would continue what I have started? That’s why I chose Miami. It was the obvious place for me. So when Art Basel started here, I thought it



CIFO - Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Courtesy CIFO.

Cisneros' foundation. Over one million one inch glass tiles, in two hundred colors, were incorporated into the façade. Gonzalez won the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Award in 2006 for his design, and the building also was given an award by the Italian Trade Commission.

Rather than a single curator for her shows, CIFO has created a 'guest curator' program. Fontanals-Cisneros explains, "Before, I had a single curator in-house. One day, I thought, I'd like to see different views. People come to the collection with different perspectives, and also it gave me the opportunity to look at the collection from another point of view from my own. For the end

of the year, when we open the exhibition for Art Basel, we choose one or two curators to work with us (like the curators from the Tate who mounted the photography show). That gives us an opportunity. The curators may say, 'You are missing this artist' or 'Why don't you look at this?'"

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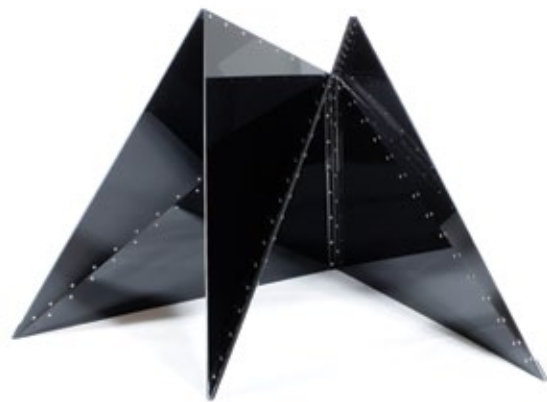
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Marta Chilindron, *Black Triangle*, 2004, Acrylic sculpture, Dimensions variable, Photo by Oriol Tarridas, Courtesy the artist, Cecilia de Torres Ltd and CIFO.



Martin Z. Margulies.



Sculpture Exhibition at the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse from November 2007 to April 2008 featuring works by William Tucker, Isamu Noguchi, Anthony Caro and Willem de Kooning.

IV. THE MARGULIES COLLECTION AT THE WAREHOUSE

Martin Z. Margulies says, "I used to be a boring businessman and now I'm a boring art collector." Then he adds, thoughtfully, "There's no end to learning."

There is nothing boring about the soft-spoken gentleman in the penthouse above Key Biscayne, this man who is learning all the time. And even if he were boring, which decidedly he is not, the apartment is astonishing. In every direction you turn, you are besotted with masterpieces; paintings by Lichtenstein, Picasso, Rothko, Kline and Stella. Major works by Nauman, Hume, Rosenquist, Segal, Warhol, Miró and de Kooning dwell here. Phenomenal vintage photographs line other walls in smaller rooms. A prominent real estate developer and one of the world's preeminent art collectors, Marty Margulies now uses this apartment for an office, as the building isn't dog friendly. For their pets' sake, he and his wife, Constance, now dwell in a house in Coconut Grove. The paintings in this penthouse are primarily private. The work presented to the public in his 45,000 square foot space, the Warehouse, is from his outstanding collection of contemporary sculptures, installations, time-based art and photography. The cutting edge art in the Warehouse is as equal a testament to the fantastic eye of Margulies as is the more established work in the penthouse.

There are certain pieces that are permanent to the Warehouse, like the Michael Heizer volcanic rocks and Magdalena Abakanowicz's *Hurma* (Crowd), an environment containing 250 headless figures. But when the Warehouse reopens in October, there will be many changes, as there are each year. Margulies says, "Because of the size of the facility, we have several themes this coming season. We're going to have a photography show of Mary Ellen Mark. And we're going to have a wonderful, exciting sculpture by Nancy Rubins. We will have a lot of Japanese works, including a video of Tabaimo, who is now representing Japan in the Venice Biennale. We bought that a few years ago, but it hasn't been shown in three years. So, we're having a video/photo film by David Claerhout and some works by

John Baldessari. We will show Ernesto Neto again; some pretty big work hanging from the ceiling, thirty feet of spines, quite beautiful. We're having some fun, putting it together." And the Warehouse will be showing some paintings this year, paintings from the '80s that have been in storage.

Some artworks arrive and some depart. *L'Hospice*, a grouping of aging superheroes in their dotage by Gilles Barbier and a favorite of many visitors, will be traveling next season. And this summer, 400 photographs from his collection are being exhibited by the Barrié Foundation at A Coruña in the Galicia region of Spain (closing September 25), and then reopening in Barcelona where they will be presented by the Foto Colectania Foundation (February through April, 2012). The show is called *The Dwelling Life of Man. Photographs from the Martin Z. Margulies Collection*, and includes work by such artists as Ed Ruscha, Gregory Crewdson, Zwelethu Mthethwa, Thomas Ruff, Gillian Wearing, William Eggleston, Alain Bublex, Lee Friedlander, James Casebere and Andreas Gursky.

Storage requirements originally motivated Margulies to purchase his Warehouse, which opened to the public twelve years ago in the Wynwood Arts District of Miami. "We ran out of room! There was no place anymore for me to put it in my residence. At that time, I had also started collecting photography. We realized we would need extra space. So, we were very lucky. We bought a 15,000 square foot space, and lo and behold, the space in back of us became available with a parking lot, so we were able to bust through and then we connected the parking lot into another space, so it just turned out very well."

What is his take on why Miami has become the center for fantastic private contemporary collections open to the public? "You have some significant collectors here and they needed space. And space, at the time they bought it, was very, very reasonable and they were able to move forward with the facilities, and Art Basel, of course, was the catalyst. Well, the collectors were here first, but Art Basel made



Top: Ernesto Neto, *É ó Bicho*, 2001, Lycra tulle, polyamide tubes, hooks, turmeric, black pepper and cloves, Dimensions variable, Photo by Peter Harholdt, Collection Martin Z. Margulies.

Bottom: Gilles Barbier, *L'Hospice*, 2002, Mixed media installation with wax sculptures, Dimensions variable, © 2011 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris, Collection Martin Z. Margulies.

is worth \$800 million dollars. Margulies hears this and jokes, “It’s probably worth a hundred thousand.” Some would say that even Wikipedia’s estimate may be low.

His collection is very personal and eclectic, but it all seems to harmonize, almost like a symphony by Marty Margulies. He notes, “It’s not about the ‘hot artist.’ It’s about what you respond to aesthetically, which is triggered by your internal and external sensibility and your experience in your life and what you respond to in an object. So, when you learn about something, it helps you see it better. That doesn’t mean you don’t like it. But at least you have an appreciation for something you might not have had before. At this point, it has to fit into the collection. It has to fit into my vision. And hot artists? I don’t get too involved in that. I’ve had dealers offer me, ‘Come to the front of the waiting list,’ and I am not interested. I just don’t function like that. It’s not that I dislike the work. There are enough people that relate well to ‘hot artists’ and it helps them.”

Dozens of educational institutions visit the Warehouse each year and are given a presentation, usually from Margulies or Hinds. To gain admission to the Warehouse, there is a charge of \$10, although students are admitted for free. The entrance fee is donated directly to Lotus House, a shelter for homeless women and children, run by Constance. Of his wife, an attorney and former real estate developer herself, he says, “She takes a very holistic approach to rehabilitating these women, who are bipolar, mentally and physically abused, coming out of prison, coming off the streets, HIV, anything but drugs and alcohol. When we finish fixing up our new building, we’ll have about 120 women and children that we are taking care of for a one year period.” Margulies remarks, “She’s the

Mother Teresa of Miami. I married a nun!” The couple married in the shelter three years ago, and Margulies says, “She’s learned a lot about art and I’ve learned a lot about homelessness.” The Martin Z. Margulies Foundation also is behind Miami’s Overtown Youth Center, which was established in 2003 and provides a stable, safe and educational environment for underprivileged children. And, Margulies recently pledged an unconditional \$5 million dollars to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Some Miami institutions weren’t happy. “Some people made some comments, but I felt that it was very appropriate. I went to the Met and I stood on the stairs and I saw school buses all over the place and I saw kids coming in and I saw older people coming in and I saw tourists and residents and I saw tremendous attendance with a huge facility. And when I walked around, I saw an iconic history of the world. I didn’t necessarily see a museum, but something about civilization, about learning, and I said, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice if I stepped forward?’”

this into an art destination.” He adds, “When you have a lot of space, you can be a little more adventurous in your pursuit of collecting.”

A native New Yorker, but a Miamian for fifty years, he says, “We go up to New York every month. That’s where you have very, very good dealers. What am I collecting? Videos, photography, sculptures and some paintings, so I’m a pretty diverse collector. The fairs are very important to me, because I have access there to the European dealers and I tend to like what they show.” He admits he favors Art Basel in Basel to Art Basel in Miami. “I prefer Switzerland. There are many more European dealers. It’s less of a social atmosphere there, a little more serious, a whole different sensibility.”

He’s rumored to have over 4,000 pieces in his collection. “I guess so,” he nods, almost shyly. He began collecting thirty-three years ago, and his curator, Katherine Hinds, has been with him for thirty years, handling all the administrative work. Wikipedia, not an absolute authority on such matters, says that the Margulies Collection



Sculpture Exhibition at the Margulies Collection at the Warehouse from November 2007 to April 2008 featuring works by Donald Judd, Siobhán Hapaska and Frank Stella.

Which is not to say he isn’t passionate about art in his community. A few years back, he commissioned some young artists to spray paint the exterior sides of the Warehouse. “The code enforcement officer came and said, ‘This is graffiti.’ I said this was put up by a group of artists. Whether it’s graffiti, urban art, or street art is immaterial, because this person didn’t have the judgment or the qualifications to make that determination, as opposed to saying this is an electrical violation or a plumbing violation. So I decided to challenge that. I got a couple of museum people to write letters and compiled some books on Keith Haring and Basquiat from those days of SAMO and Lee Quinones, and how this would be a very viable thing for the Wynwood area, which was nothing but a desolate area of warehouses that only had daytime activity. Now you have some restaurants, art galleries, and you have graffiti. I guess the press made a story out of it. I felt I was going to go to court and I felt I could win. It never got that far.... They had a parochial view that all graffiti was vandalism. More importantly, the artists were very happy. They felt that someone had recognized their efforts.”

Margulies has two sons based in Florida, a prosecutor and an artists’ representative, and a son and a daughter who are enrolled at the School of Visual Arts in New York.

Looking around the spectacular penthouse, Margulies smiles broadly and says, “I see these paintings even when the lights are out!” □

NEW YORK AND LOS ANGELES-BASED CONTRIBUTING WRITER, ELIZABETH SOBIESKI, IS A SCREENWRITER/PRODUCER WHO HAS WRITTEN ON ARTS-RELATED SUBJECTS FOR A VARIETY OF PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING *NEW YORK MAGAZINE*, *AVENUE MAGAZINE*, *THE NEW YORK POST* AND *COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE*.

John Baldessari, *Foot and Stocking (with Big Toe Exposed) Brienne*, 2010, Edition of 45, 8 color screenprint with paper and fabric collage, 50 x 33 in. (127 x 83.82 cm), Collection Martin Z. Margulies.

