



MAM Presents First South Florida Museum Retrospective for Cuba's Pioneering Modern Artist Wifredo Lam

Miami Art Museum is proud to host *Wifredo Lam in North America*, the first large-scale solo exhibition of the work of Wifredo Lam ever to be presented in a South Florida museum. This exhibition of paintings and works on paper by the most celebrated Cuban artist of the 20th century will be on view at MAM from February 8-May 18, 2008.

Organized by the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, *Wifredo Lam in North America* features more than 60 drawings and paintings representing the major phases in Lam's career. MAM's presentation of the exhibition will include approximately 20 additional works drawn from Miami-area collections, which will be on view exclusively in Miami.

The exhibition focuses on the impact of Lam's innovative visual vocabulary, which reflected his immersion in Cubist, Surrealist and Afro-Cuban aesthetics. By hybridizing aspects of the European avant-garde with Afro-Caribbean myths and art forms, Lam highlighted the vibrant cultural heritage of the African Diaspora and struck up a rich intercultural dialogue that remains influential to this day.

Lenders to *Wifredo Lam in North America* include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; The Menil Collection, Houston; Miami Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art as well as several important galleries and prestigious private collections throughout the U.S.

About the Artist

Wifredo Lam (1902-1982) was born in Sagua La Grande, Cuba to a Chinese father and a mother of African and Spanish ancestry. He is known for asserting his heritage through his art by merging Afro-Cuban influences with the Paris School and Surrealism. His early life in Cuba had been grounded in Santería, a religion that combines African Yoruba deity worship with the Catholic tradition of prayer to the saints.

Lam left Cuba in 1923 when he received a scholarship to study at the Museo del Prado in Madrid. Remaining in Spain until 1937, he participated in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side before moving to Paris where he became a

close friend of Picasso. Through him he met other leading artists in Paris who influenced his style of painting. In 1940, he left Paris for Marseilles where he took refuge from World War II with a group of Surrealists.

In 1941, he fled the war in Europe and returned to Cuba, where he rediscovered the Afro-Caribbean myths, art forms and religious practices that had influenced his early childhood. Lam hybridized mainstream European Modernism with these non-Western traditions and used the unique visual language that resulted to raise questions of social injustice and redemption.

Lam's work began to draw international recognition in the 1940s. He was featured in full-length magazine articles and held one-person shows in London, Paris and New York. In 1964 he received the Guggenheim International Prize. Between 1947 and 1952, Lam lived and worked in Havana, New York and Paris where he settled permanently continuing his long, productive career until his death in 1982. His work can be found in major museums throughout the world including New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Tate Modern in London.

Miami Art Museum

Miami Art Museum is dedicated to engaging the public with art from the twentieth century through the present. Since its founding in 1996, the Museum has built a collection of contemporary art with the goal of providing Miami with a legacy for future generations. MAM's collection has grown exponentially since *Art in America* called it "the quintessential Miami collection" in 1999. The MAM collection is dedicated to international art of the 20th and 21st centuries, taking a hemispheric perspective of the Americas.

Exhibition Organization

Wifredo Lam in North America is organized by the Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Its presentation in Miami is curated by MAM Associate Curator René Morales. The exhibition was planned during the tenure of MAM Founding Director Suzanne Delehanty.

Major corporate support is provided by Merrill Lynch. Wifredo Lam Education Programs at MAM are supported by Darden Restaurants Foundation.

Additional support is provided by Amy Dean & Alan J. Kluger, the Fana Holtz Foundation, Sotheby's, and MAM's Annual Exhibition Fund.

Exhibition Tour

Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, Wisconsin – October 11, 2007-January 21, 2008

Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida – February 8-May 18, 2008

Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, California – June 12-August 31, 2008

Dali Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida – November 2, 2008-January 10, 2009

Opening Reception

Thursday, February 7, 2008

6 to 8pm

Live music, hors d'oeuvres, donation bar

MAM Members only

Publications

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Haggerty Museum of Art published a full-color illustrated catalogue that will make a significant contribution to the scholarship on Lam. It includes essays by Lowery Stokes Sims, Adjunct Curator, Studio Museum in Harlem; Dawn Ades, Professor of Art History and Theory, University of Essex; Valerie Fletcher, Senior Curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; Lou Laurin-Lam, widow of the artist; Edward Lucie-Smith, independent curator and Curtis L. Carter, curator of the exhibition and founding director of the Haggerty Museum of Art. It is available in the MAM Bookstore.

In conjunction with the Lam symposium on May 17, MAM will produce a catalogue illustrating the works that will be featured only in the Miami venue, as well as texts by the symposium speakers (information below).

Gallery Notes provide background information on the work of Wifredo Lam and an examination of the exhibition. Available in the galleries. Free.

Second Saturdays are Free for Families presented by Darden Restaurants Foundation and MetLife Foundation

Second Saturday of every month, 1 – 4pm

Drop in to enjoy fun, interactive programs. Families of all ages explore MAM together, find inspiration to create works of art, and participate in hands-on activities led by Education Staff.

Saturday, February 9, 2008, 1-4pm

Fanciful Feathered Friends

Fold a fancy paper origami bird as if it flew out of a painting in the galleries.

Annual MAM Family Festival

Saturday, April 12 2008, 1-4pm

Free and open to the public

A special Second Saturday celebration on the Cultural Plaza with Caribbean inspired art activities, music, games and more. Make a marvelous mask and join the Plaza Parade grand finale!

Public Programs

Sunday, February 10, from 3:00-5:00pm

EXHIBITION LECTURE

Beyond Picasso and Afro-Cuban Culture: Wifredo Lam's "The Eternal Presence"

Juan Martínez, Professor of Art and Art History and Art History Department

Chair, Florida International University

MAM Auditorium

Members and students with valid ID \$5; Non-members \$10

Saturday, May 17, from 9:30am to 5pm

Wifredo Lam in North America

A Symposium

Miami Art Museum, Auditorium

Members and students with valid ID \$10; Non-members \$20

In conjunction with the exhibition the Miami Art Museum will host invited scholars who will share new perspectives on the unique art historical position held by the great Cuban-born artist. Guest speakers will include: Judith Bettelheim, Professor of Art (History), San Francisco State University; Jacques Leenhardt, President, *Friends of Lam Association*; and Bárbaro Martínez-Ruiz, Assistant Professor of Art and Art History at Stanford University. Juan Martínez, Professor of Art and Art History and Art History Department Chair, Florida International University, will moderate.

#

Media Contact:

Mitch Snow

305.375.1705

snowmit@miamidade.gov

Ilana Simon

Resnicow Schroeder Associates

212-671-5176

isimon@resnicowschroeder.com

Miami Art Museum is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts; with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners. Miami Art Museum is an accessible facility. For a sign language interpreter or assistive listening devices please call MAM's Education Department 305.375.4073 at least five days in advance. Materials in accessible format may be requested.

Open Tuesday through Friday - 10 AM to 5 PM, Saturday and Sunday – noon to 5 PM. Third Thursdays until 8:30 PM. Closed Monday. Admission for MAM

members, children under 12 and students (with valid ID) is free. Adults \$8, seniors \$4, JAM@MAM \$10. Free admission every second Saturday.

101 West Flagler Street
Miami, FL 33130
305.375.3000
miamiartmuseum.org

Garage Parking
\$5 at 50 NW 2nd Ave
between Flagler St and NW 1st St
Overflow parking at 270 NW 2nd Street
Metrorail: Government Center Station