

MAM Presents *Objects of Value*
Exhibition of Works by 20 Contemporary Artists Explores
Nature of Value

November 21, 2008 – February 22, 2009

MIAMI, FL—An exhibition exploring the nature of value will open at Miami Art Museum (MAM) on November 21, 2008. *Objects of Value* will feature works by 20 contemporary artists including Dario Escobar, Josiah McElheny, Carey Young, and Wilfredo Prieto.

“At the heart of this exhibition is a deceptively simple question: Does an object’s value correspond to its intrinsic qualities, or is it merely a social construction?” said MAM Associate Curator René Morales. “Some of the featured works take serious ethical or political positions, critiquing the market for art and luxury goods or highlighting anxieties about the current global economic landscape, while others simply poke fun at the amorphous lines between luxury and decadence, greed and good taste.”

Many of the selected artists aim to destabilize the relationship between an object’s value and the substance from which it is made, in some cases using materials identified with opulence and money—diamonds, paper bills, precious metals, pre-existing artworks—to render objects associated with cheapness, “low culture,” even poverty and strife. Other works in the exhibition tie value to less material considerations, focusing an object’s emotional or religious significance.

Highlights of *Objects of Value* include:

Dario Escobar, *Untitled*, 2000/2007. This silver-clad skateboard, rendered in the elaborate manner of Spanish baroque metalwork, suggests the confrontation between traditional Catholic Guatemalan culture and the influence of a global sports and consumer culture.

Wilfredo Prieto, *One*, 2008. In this installation, one real diamond is buried and lost within a pile of fake crystal diamonds.

Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Plated Silver Rice*, 2007. These piles of rice grains cast in silver refer to the importance of rice as a staple in Southeast Asia, where fluctuations in market prices have resulted in riots and political protests.

Josiah McElheny, *Church Service for Poor People*, 1998. This installation of glass vessels is evocative of the ceremonial service sets found in poor churches in 19th century Italy and the “poor man’s silver” commonly found in impoverished households at that time.

Santiago Serra, *465 personas remuneradas* (465 Compensated Persons), 1999. Video documenting exhibition opening for which 465 people were paid to stand in the gallery for hours.

Carey Young, *Inventory*, 2007. An estimation of the monetary value of the chemicals and metals found in the artist’s body, calculated with the help of scientists.

The exhibition is organized by MAM, and combines works from the museum’s permanent collection with selected loans. MAM’s role as a hub between continents and cultures is reflected in its growing collection. Among the artists represented in the permanent collection are Carlos Alfonzo, José Bedia, Chuck Close, Joseph Cornell, Marcel Duchamp, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Ann Hamilton, Guillermo Kuitca, Wilfredo Lam, Sol LeWitt, Doug Aitken, Robert Rauschenberg, and Lorna Simpson.

Miami Art Museum

Miami Art Museum serves one of the most diverse and fast-growing regions of the country, where a confluence of North and Latin American cultures adds vibrancy and texture to the civic landscape. MAM embraces its role as a cultural anchor and touchstone in a city that welcomes countless ethnic and age groups, lifestyles and ideas.

MAM’s far-ranging vision is expressed in the breadth and depth of its exhibition program, to its ambitious education and public programs. The Museum continues to build its collection of holdings from the twentieth century through the present, as it embarks on a major new building and expansion project. The new MAM designed by Herzog & de Meuron will open in downtown Miami’s Museum Park in 2012.

###

Media Contact:

Mitch Snow
305.375.1705
msnow@miamiartmuseum.org

Chris D’Aleo / Kira Garcia
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
212.671.5178 / 212.671.5155
cdaleo@resnicowschroeder.com / kgarcia@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 sign language interpretation 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.