

LORNA SIMPSON

October 5, 2006-February 4, 2007

FIRST MID-CAREER SURVEY OF THE ARTIST'S WORK

Miami Art Museum presents *Lorna Simpson*, a comprehensive examination of the artistic production of one of the leading artists working in the United States today. The exhibition, on view October 5, 2006 through January 21, 2007 is organized by the American Federation of Arts and curated by AFA Adjunct Curator Helaine Posner. In Miami, the exhibition is coordinated by Peter Boswell, MAM's assistant director for programs and senior curator.

MAM Director Terence Riley said, "We are delighted to present the work of this provocative and ever-more-accomplished artist to South Florida audiences. It's especially significant for us because *Still*, a centerpiece of the exhibition, was the first work Miami Art Museum purchased for its permanent collection."

The exhibition showcases Simpson's graceful balance as she shifts between the poetic, the political, the ambiguous and the specific. Lorna Simpson first attracted attention in the mid-1980s, with large-scale photograph and text works that confront and challenge conventional views of gender, identity, culture, history, and memory. Formally elegant and subtly provocative, Simpson's early work is an unsentimental exploration of photographic subjectivity. The figure becomes the locus for questioning the way gender and race shape the interactions, relationships, and experiences of our lives. By the mid-90s, Simpson began to concentrate on creating large multi-panel photographs printed on felt that depict the site of public, though unseen sexual encounters. More recently, the artist has turned to creating moving images. In film and video works such as *Call Waiting*, she

features couples engaging in intimate yet incomplete conversations that elude easy interpretation but seem to plumb the mysteries of identity and desire. Simpson's film and video works by and about African-Americans continue the dialectic of performance and spectatorship.

AFA Director Julia Brown remarked, "It is a privilege to celebrate the work of Lorna Simpson over the last two decades, beginning with her earliest photograph and text works and ending with her film and video installations of the last few years and most recent photographs. We are delighted to present this beautiful and provocative body of work to a broad national audience."

In his essay in the exhibition catalogue, Okwui Enwezor, Dean of Academic Affairs at the San Francisco Art Institute, observes that "Much of Simpson's work imbricates language, speech, and text. Language is employed like a lever to pry open the lid of the unconscious. Here text plays a subsidiary role. However, when it approximates speech, it functions like a memory trigger in relation to a visual cue. The text panels also confront the viewer with a fundamental contradiction between the sense of vision and voice as separate forms of knowing: between seeing and speaking. If we are to reconcile this contradiction, then much of Simpson's work is not simply annexed to text/image relationship, it is fundamentally audiovisual."

The exhibition will include approximately seventeen of Simpson's acclaimed image and text works (1985–92) and seven major photographs on felt (1994–2005). It will also include six film installations from 1997 to 2004, including *Call Waiting*; *Easy to Remember*; *Interior/Exterior*; *Full/Empty*, a seven-part projection and related series of photographs; and *31*, a video calendar in which the artist closely observes a month in the public and private life of an unknown woman. The exhibition will conclude with the artist's recent photographs (2001–03), which consist of a group of ghostly, silhouetted profiles of black women and men accompanied by the titles of paintings, songs, and films that date from the 1790s to the 1970s.

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by grants from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Peter Norton Family Foundation, the National

Endowment for the Arts, the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., the Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation, Emily Fisher Landau, and The Barbara Lee Family Foundation Fund at the Boston Foundation.

In Miami, the exhibition is coordinated by Assistant Director for Programs/Senior Curator Peter Boswell and Assistant Curator René Morales. The exhibition is supported by MAM's Annual Exhibition Fund.

About the Artist:

Lorna Simpson was born in 1960 in Brooklyn, New York, and received her BFA in Photography from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and her MFA from the University of California, San Diego. Her work has been exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1990), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1992), the Miami Art Museum (1997), the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1999), and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2003). She has participated in such important international exhibitions as the *Hugo Boss Prize* (1998) at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, and *documenta XI* (2002) in Kassel, Germany. Simpson has been the subject of numerous articles, catalogue essays, and a monograph published by Phaidon Press.

About the Curators:

Helen Posner is Adjunct Curator for the AFA and was previously an independent curator and writer. From 1991 to 1998, she was curator at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her exhibitions of note include *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation* (1998), which traveled to the Miami Art Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and *The Masculine Masquerade* (1995) for which she co-edited a book published by MIT Press. Posner is the author of a monograph on Kiki Smith published in 1998 by Bullfinch Press. In 1999 she was U.S. Commissioner for the Venice Biennale, where she organized an installation by Ann Hamilton.

Peter Boswell has been Assistant Director for Programs/Senior Curator at the Miami Art Museum since September 1999. He is responsible for oversight of all activities of the curatorial and education departments at the museum, including exhibitions and public programs. Exhibitions he has curated at MAM include *Miami Currents: Linking Collection and Community* (with Lorie Mertes and Cheryl Hartup) (2002); *New Work: Donald Lipski* (2002); *New Work: Teresita Fernández* (2002); *New Work: Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt* (2003); *Between Art and Life: From Joseph Cornell to Gabriel Orozco* (2004); *Robert Rauschenberg* (2005); *Wangechi Mutu* (2005); *Mapping Space: Selections from the Collection* and *Vik Muniz: Reflex* (2006). Prior to joining MAM, Mr. Boswell served for three years as Heiskell Arts Director at the American Academy in Rome and for 10 years on the curatorial staff of the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Mr. Boswell has a BA with a major in Art

History from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MA in Art History from Stanford University.

Tour Schedule:

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (April 16–July 10, 2006)
Miami Art Museum (October 5, 2006–February 4, 2007)
Whitney Museum of American Art (March 1–May 6, 2007)
Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (May 25–August 19, 2007)
Gibbes Museum, Charleston (September 7–December 2, 2007)

Publication: The AFA and Abrams, New York published a fully illustrated catalogue to accompany the exhibition. The book includes a curatorial foreword by Helaine Posner; a dialogue including Lorna Simpson, artist Isaac Julien, and Studio Museum in Harlem Director Thelma Golden, with a preface by Shamim M. Momin, Associate Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art; an overview of Simpson's work, from the earlier image and text work to the recent films, by Okwui Enwezor, Dean of Academic Affairs at the San Francisco Art Institute; and an essay exploring the relationship of Simpson's work to cinema by cultural critic and *New Yorker* staff writer Hilton Als.

American Federation of Arts: The AFA is a nonprofit institution that organizes art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishes exhibition catalogues, and develops education programs.

Gallery Notes

This illustrated take-home brochure provides background information on Lorna Simpson's work and an in-depth examination of the exhibition. Available in the galleries. Free.

Opening Reception

Thursday, October 4, 2006

6 to 8pm

DJ, hors d'oeuvres, donation bar

MAM Members only

Illustrated talk by Lorna Simpson

6:30 to 7pm

Sundays are Free at MAM

12 – 5pm

Guided tours of the exhibition every Sunday at 2pm

MAM Art Caravan

During MAM's "on the road" version of its successful Second Saturdays are Free for Families event, MAM's experienced gallery teachers lead kids of all ages in Puzzling Portraits, assembling mysterious photo-collage personages.

October 21, 2006

12noon-2pm

African Heritage Cultural Center

6161 NW 22nd Ave.

Second Saturdays are Free for Families

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 Gallery Teachers.

Saturday December 9

1-4pm

Puzzling Portraits

Put together a mysterious photo-collage personage.

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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 \$5, seniors \$2.50. Free admission every Sunday and second Saturdays.

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miamiartmuseum.org

Garage Parking

\$5 at 50 NW 2nd Ave

between Flagler St and NW 1st St