



MIAMI ART MUSEUM NAMES THOMAS “THOM” COLLINS AS DIRECTOR

Former Director of New York’s Neuberger Museum of Art will Lead MAM as it Transitions into its New Home in Downtown Miami’s Museum Park

MIAMI – June 18, 2010 – Thomas “Thom” Collins, an arts administrator, art historian, educator and author with more than 15 years of experience serving as a director and curator at several of America’s top museums, has been named as the new director of Miami Art Museum (MAM). Collins will join MAM after serving for five years as director of the Neuberger Museum of Art in Westchester County, New York. Collins’ appointment comes just as MAM begins to transition into a new Herzog & de Meuron-designed building located in downtown Miami’s Museum Park. Groundbreaking on the project is scheduled to take place in late 2010, with the museum’s opening set for 2013.

The search for MAM’s new director was spearheaded by a search committee chaired by MAM trustee Rose Ellen Greene. Collins will begin his tenure as director on August 16, 2010. He succeeds John Wetenhall, who has served as interim director of MAM since December 2009.

Recognized for his ability to advance institutional development and foster community engagement, Collins’ tenure at the Neuberger Museum of Art was highlighted by significant growth in the areas of attendance and annual giving, as well as the creation of major endowments for new programming initiatives and capital improvements. As director of MAM, Collins will oversee the day-to-day operations of the museum, as well as planning for the transition into its new facility.

“Thom’s expertise in museum management, coupled with his past success building broad-based public support for museums through programming and community outreach, make him the right fit to lead Miami Art Museum as we prepare to begin construction on our new home in Museum Park,” said Aaron Podhurst, chairman of MAM’s board of trustees. “Thom brings a fresh perspective on the role that art museums play in today’s communities, as well as a depth of knowledge in the areas of modern, contemporary, and Latin American art, all of which are core components of MAM’s artistic focus.”

A teaching museum and part of the State University of New York at Purchase, the Neuberger Museum of Art is one of the nation’s most highly-regarded presenters of modern, contemporary and African art. As director, Collins managed a 22-person staff, an annual budget in excess of \$3.5 million, and an endowment of \$18 million. He also oversaw the museum’s exhibitions, permanent collection displays, and a far-reaching platform of community-based educational programs for school children and adults.

Exhibitions organized by Collins while at the Neuberger include *Person of the Crowd: The Contemporary Art of Flânerie*; *Great Women Artists: Selections from the Permanent Collection*; *Renee Green: Wavelinks*; and the forthcoming *American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold’s Paintings of the 1960s*.

In his next endeavor, Collins looks forward to raising Miami Art Museum’s profile as a broadly accessible resource for Miami’s diverse population, as well as to strengthening MAM’s role in

the South Florida community. Along these lines, he will meet with community members, museum stakeholders, and public interest groups during his first months as MAM director, enabling him to learn first-hand about MAM's role in Miami's cultural and civic landscapes – and how that role can be expanded in the future.

“The construction of Miami Art Museum’s new building is an important step forward for this institution, but it is what will happen inside the building that promises to have the most significant long-term impact on the Miami community,” said Collins. “MAM's new building will be both a catalyst for continued renewal in Miami’s urban core and a powerful force in coalescing Miami’s diverse population around the visual arts.”

Prior to becoming director of the Neuberger Museum of Art in 2005, Collins served as director of the Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, Md., from 2003 to 2005. Here, he worked with board members and staff to stabilize a troubled community-based exhibition program. His curatorial projects for the Contemporary Museum included *New Leipzig School Painting*, *Sanford Biggers: both/andnoteither/or* and *Louise Bourgeois: Femme*.

From 2000-2003, Collins was chief curator at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. In this role, he was involved in the capital facilities planning and capital campaign processes that led to the construction of a new museum building designed by Zaha Hadid. He also developed a curatorial strategic plan for the new facility and organized its inaugural exhibition, *Somewhere Better Than This Place: Alternative Social Experience in the Spaces of Contemporary Art*.

Prior roles include associate curator at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, Wash., and Newhall Curatorial Fellow at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Past exhibitions curated by Mr. Collins include *Andy Warhol: Pop Politics* (Neuberger, 2009); *Loop*, a multimedia exhibition that explored new critical and popular understandings of time as they have been influenced by science and technology (CAC, 2002); *New Photography: Richard Billingham, Thomas Demand, Osamu Kanemura, Sophie Ristelhueber, Georgina Starr, Wolfgang Tillmans* (MoMA, 1996).

Collins earned his master’s degree from Northwestern University and his bachelor’s degree from Swarthmore College. He currently holds memberships in the Association of Art Museum Directors, the Association of Art Museum Curators, and the College Art Association.

About 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. Miami Art Museum embraces its role as a cultural anchor and touchstone in a city that welcomes countless ethnic and age groups, lifestyles and ideas. Miami Art Museum’s far-ranging vision is expressed in the breadth and depth of its exhibition program, and 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 Miami Art Museum at Museum Park, designed by Herzog & de Meuron, is scheduled for completion in 2013.

Miami Art Museum is located at 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130. Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 10am - 5pm; Saturday through Sunday, Noon - 5pm; Closed Mondays. Admission is free for MAM members, children under 12 and students (with valid ID); adults \$8;

seniors \$4; Second Saturdays are Free for Families. Parking is \$5 (with museum validation) at 50 NW 2nd Ave. Metro: Government Center Station.

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 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 Miami Art Museum's education department 305.375.4073 at least five days in advance. Materials in accessible format may be requested.

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