

**NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale Announces New Exhibition Featuring Works
Donated By Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz**

On view starting April 28, 2024, the show will feature works by artists José Bedia, Jorge Pardo, and Jason Rhoades donated by Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz, and other recent acquisitions by Dawoud Bey, Carol K. Brown, Joel Gaitan, Theaster Gates, Jared McGriff, Reginald O'Neal, Alejandro Piñeiro Bello, and Dimithry Victor

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLA. — Beginning April 28th, [NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale](#) will present *To Be as a Cloud*, featuring recent gifts from prominent Miami collectors Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz, focusing on nine major foundational paintings from the early 1990s by the Cuban-born, Miami-based artist José Bedia. The de la Cruzes identified NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale as the permanent home of these cherished paintings. Bedia's work draws both Western and non-Western sources, spiritualism, and personal histories; which served as the inspiration for this exhibition of recent acquisitions to the Museum's permanent collection. A collaborative work by Jorge Pardo and Jason Rhoades, another gift from the de la Cruzes, will also be on view.

The de la Cruzes have donated a total of 63 works to NSU Art Museum between 2019 and 2023.

To Be as a Cloud is presented in memory of Rosa de la Cruz, NSU Art Museum's Director and Chief Curator, Bonnie Clearwater, notes "We are pleased to present these paintings by Jose Bedia donated to the Museum by Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz. Not only did these paintings hold a place of pride in their home for over 30 years, the couple selected Bedia as the artist to engrave their final resting place." Clearwater adds, "Bedia was one of the artists over whom Rosa, Carlos and I forged our long friendship. They generously loaned the Ogun series of paintings to the inaugural exhibition I organized at MOCA North Miami in 1996 and more recently to a solo exhibition of the artist at NSU Art Museum. Bedia's work is the cornerstone of NSU Art Museum's Cuban art collection, founded in 1993." Clearwater remarks, "I had long made my wishes known about adding these key paintings to the Museum's collection and was delighted when I received the notification of the gift several months ago with a message 'we know you know what to do with these.' We are deeply grateful to Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz for this generous gift and it is a great honor to share these works with the public."

Jose Bedia, one of the most prominent artists of Cuba's storied '80s Generation, has called Miami home since 1993. Afro-Cuban traditions remain a focal point of his practice. As an initiated practitioner of the diasporic African religion, Regla de Congo, Bedia's works are informed by his spiritual belief system.

Bedia conveys his narrative with a variety of techniques: he draws figures in flat silhouettes that evoke traditions as varied as prehistoric cave paintings and modern-day cartoons; figures are studded with white dots, which bring to mind the ancient form of storytelling that uses the constellations to delineate mythic characters in the night sky; and he introduces text both through the title and the words he inscribed on the painting.

The title of the exhibition references artist Jared McGriff's painting *To Be as a Cloud*, 2021, also featured in the exhibition. The title references the ephemeral condition of life and becoming one with the universe.

Works on display include:

- **José Bedia (b. 1959, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Lucero viene alumbrando*, 1992. Acrylic on canvas, objects (Irregular Tondo). NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz** - This painting represents the safe passage of migrants by sea, escorted by Nkuyo Nfinda, who is a deity of the Congo traditions of Cuba, known as a trickster of the roads and trails.
- **José Bedia (b. 1959, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Untitled (Ogun Series)*, 1992, 8 large-scale Ink, conte on amate paper paintings. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; Courtesy of Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz** - Jose Bedia's Ogun series exemplifies the artist's engagement with the interconnected histories of Cuba and Africa. Within these eight paintings on amate paper (a type of bark paper crafted in Mexico with Paleo-Indian roots), the artist portrays majestic, silhouetted figures, in which man and machine come together to create supernatural visions of titanic force.
- **Dawoud Bey (b. 1953, Queens, New York, NY; lives and works in Chicago, Illinois). *Trees and Barn*, 2019. Gelatin silver print. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase** – This photograph is part of his *In This Here Place* project, consisting of photos Bey took in Louisiana to document former slave cabins on preserved antebellum plantations.
- **Carol K. Brown (b. Memphis, TN; lives and works in Miami, FL and New York). *Tondos*, 1992. Plastic, rubber, wire & acrylic** – Carol Brown's installation of circular wall reliefs overwhelms the viewer with the illusion of infinity, while a generation younger than the Minimalists, Brown knowingly toys with the modularity of Minimalist systems. Yet hers is a system that has gone haywire, in which order teeters on the edge of chaos.
- **Joel Gaitan (b. 1995, Miami, FL; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Las Jimaguas (Identical Twins)*, 2024. Terracotta with gold luster** – The self-taught Nicaraguan American artist Joel Gaitan combines traditional clay techniques and indigenous Central American motifs with his personal narrative, imbuing his forms with elements of Pentecostal symbolism (his family's faith), humor, sensuality, and Miami street culture.
- **Theaster Gates (b. 1973, Chicago, IL; lives and works in Chicago, IL). *Reflection Piece*, 2016. Clay. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase** – The Chicago-based artist combines an African mask-like visage with a hollow vessel, which forms a reliquary as a receptacle of the human spirit.
- **Jared McGriff (b. 1977, Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Miami, FL). *To Be as a Cloud*, 2021. Oil on canvas. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase** – *To Be as a Cloud* represents a moment of transformation. The subject is a rotund female figure whose ethereal white dress seemingly de-materializes her mass so that she floats freely in space.
- **Reginald O'Neal (b. 1992, Miami, FL; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Clarence*, 2020 . Oil on canvas. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase.**
- **Reginald O'Neal (b.1992, Miami, FL; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Visitation*, 2019. Oil on canvas. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase** – These paintings are influenced by Reginald O'Neal's personal experiences growing up in Miami's Overtown.
- **Jorge Pardo (b. 1963 Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Mérida, Mexico.); Jason Rhoades (b. 1965, Newcastle, CA; d. 2006, Los Angeles, CA). *#1 NAFTA Bench*, 1996. Marble, plywood, plastic, fabric, vinyl, battery-operated vibrator. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz** - This work combines Jorge Pardo's sleek, quasi-modernist designs, which mix furniture and sculpture, with Jason Rhoades' process of accumulating commonplace objects. Although both artists were based in Los Angeles at the time of this collaboration, they intended to have the work represent an intersection of their two heritages (Latin and Anglo American.)

Political and theoretical dimensions are evident in the title's reference to the North American Free Trade Agreement.

- **Alejandro Piñeiro Bello (b. 1990, Havana, Cuba; lives and works in Miami, FL). *Exodus (Escaping Paradise)*, 2023. Oil on hemp Ex. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase 2023.11** – The piece depicts a deliquescent scene, in which the artist seeks to convey the sensations of light and color under the Cuban sun, created for his solo exhibition at NSU Art Museum in 2022. The artist invites viewers to confront the paradox of Cuba's beauty and abundance against the harsh realities endured by its people, many of whom grapple with a desire to escape this island paradise. Within this epic scene, the artist looks to question the notion of paradise itself, and the illusory nature of utopia.
- **Ronald Darbouze (b. Haiti). *Haitian Boxer*, 1970. Wood. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack N. Holcomb** – This sculpture captures the tension, strength and determination of the boxer. The expression of the boxer's inner state of mind contrasts with the recent painting *Tranquility* by Haitian-born Dimithry Victor also on view.
- **Dimithry Victor (b. Haiti; lives and works in Plantation, FL). *Tranquility*, 2023. Acrylic on paper mounted on wood panel. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale; museum purchase** – *Tranquility* is striking in its representation of a young Black man in complete harmony with the world: his eyes looking inward, his shoulders and arms totally relaxed, his skin glowing with the warmth of the sun. Three colorful flowers echo the young man's peaceful countenance as they inch up towards the sun, while the puffy white clouds that frame the scene contribute to the incredible lightness of being on display in this painting.

Situated midway between Miami and Palm Beach, NSU Art Museum is located in the heart of Downtown Fort Lauderdale. The Museum is a premier destination for exhibitions and programs encompassing all facets of civilization's visual history and is widely known for its significant collection of Latin American art, contemporary art with an emphasis on art by Black, Latin American and women artists, as well as works by American artist William Glackens and the European CoBrA group of artists. For more information, please visit <https://nsuartmuseum.org>.

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About NSU Art Museum

Founded in 1958, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is a premier destination for exhibitions and programs encompassing many facets of civilization's visual history. Located midway between Miami and Palm Beach in downtown Fort Lauderdale's arts and entertainment district, the Museum's 83,000 square-foot building, which opened in 1986, was designed by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes and contains over 25,000 square feet of exhibition space, the 256 -seat Horvitz auditorium, a museum store and café. In 2008, the Museum became part of Nova Southeastern University (NSU), one of the largest private research universities in the United States. NSU Art Museum is known for its significant collection of Latin American art, contemporary art with an emphasis on art by Black, Latinx and women artists, African art that spans the 19th to the 21st-century, as well as works by American artist William Glackens, and the European CoBrA group of artists. Two scholarly research centers complement the collections: The Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman Latin American Art Study Center and the William J. Glackens Study Center.

Major support for NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is provided by the David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation Endowment, the City of Fort Lauderdale, Wege Foundation, Community Foundation of Broward, Lillian S. Wells Foundation, the Broward County Cultural Division, the Cultural Council, the



Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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