

# ANNUAL REPORT

July 2020–June 2021

**FIU** | The Wolfsonian



# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

As the world closes in on two pandemic years, all stand ready for change. Though we have learned to adapt and keep a brave face, we are eager and excited to return to pre-COVID life as soon as possible. Taking stock of what has happened and considering what might be next, it is hard not to lose sense of time and feel stuck in between. But our story, and yours, is not one of stasis.

There is so much to report on from the past fiscal year at The Wolfsonian—FIU that the following pages will only scratch the surface. These 12 months were ones of incredible achievement—retaining staff and budget despite the pressures of an economic recession, earning praise from the likes of the American Alliance of Museums and Forbes.com, successfully passing a key Miami Beach ballot vote for our expansion project. There has also been renewed focus on diversity, with fresh faces added to the team and important strides made in improving representation in our collection. And importantly, we opened a new chapter in our long history of community partnerships, adding further dimension to our relationships with The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab and John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, two linchpin supporters behind our digital rebirth.

We have done our best to select from among the many highlights of July 2020–June 2021, teasing out the stories embedded within. You will find 5 strategic goals recur over and over as themes throughout: deepen our scholarship; grow our community commitment; open access; ensure long-term sustainability; and invest in FIU student success. These overarching institutional thrusts, stemming from our mission and shaping our path, provide clear direction toward a bigger and better tomorrow. Though things haven't been "normal"—and won't be again for a while—there is light, and hope, ahead.

The pulse of The Wolfsonian is steady and strong. This stability—and our future promise—is only possible thanks to the care and attention of Wolfsonian friends, fans, and family, of which you are part. We are humbled and grateful.



Casey Steadman, director



# RECURRENT THEMES

**These big-picture goals are interwoven through all we do:**

## Deepen our scholarship

Envisioned by our founder as a study center, our institution is dedicated to ongoing scholarship and strengthening our roots in academia. We will continue serving as a cultural cornerstone of FIU, broadening and deepening our relationships with faculty and enriching our knowledge of the objects in our care. As leading authorities on art and design, we will lend our voices to discourse in the field and amplify those of others—especially partners from historically marginalized communities—to ensure we are always on the leading edge and present multiple perspectives.

## Grow our community commitment

We strive to open a gateway to the modern age for visitors of all interests, backgrounds, and demographics. Focusing on inclusion and immersion, our public and K–12 programs will foster lifelong learning and spark curiosity about lessons from the past. Optimizing partnerships with community organizations, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and city leaders will enable us to expand our reach and touch more lives with “the Wolfsonian way.” Our singular approach—the belief that objects reveal stories that bridge yesterday, today, and tomorrow—will be clear and coherent to both new visitors and returning fans.

## Open access

Museums should be welcoming and accessible and engage beyond their physical galleries, auditoriums, and classrooms. Through a John S. and James L. Knight Foundation-supported digital action plan, we will structure new means and methods for drawing in audiences, remove barriers to inquiry, and enhance the face-to-face interaction with our art, content, and people. Our expansion’s improved facilities are also key to offering more spaces for interpretation and experiential learning, with a larger swath of the collection available through open storage and digitized resources.

## Ensure long-term sustainability

From infrastructure to collection care to the endowment, The Wolfsonian must revolve around sustainability. We will increase our revenue sources and leverage real estate holdings, maximize philanthropic support, and consider how to best safeguard the collection we steward while minimizing the environmental impact of our operations. Effective, smart campaigns, a representative advisory board, and a diverse staff are elemental to our continued prosperity.

## Invest in FIU student success

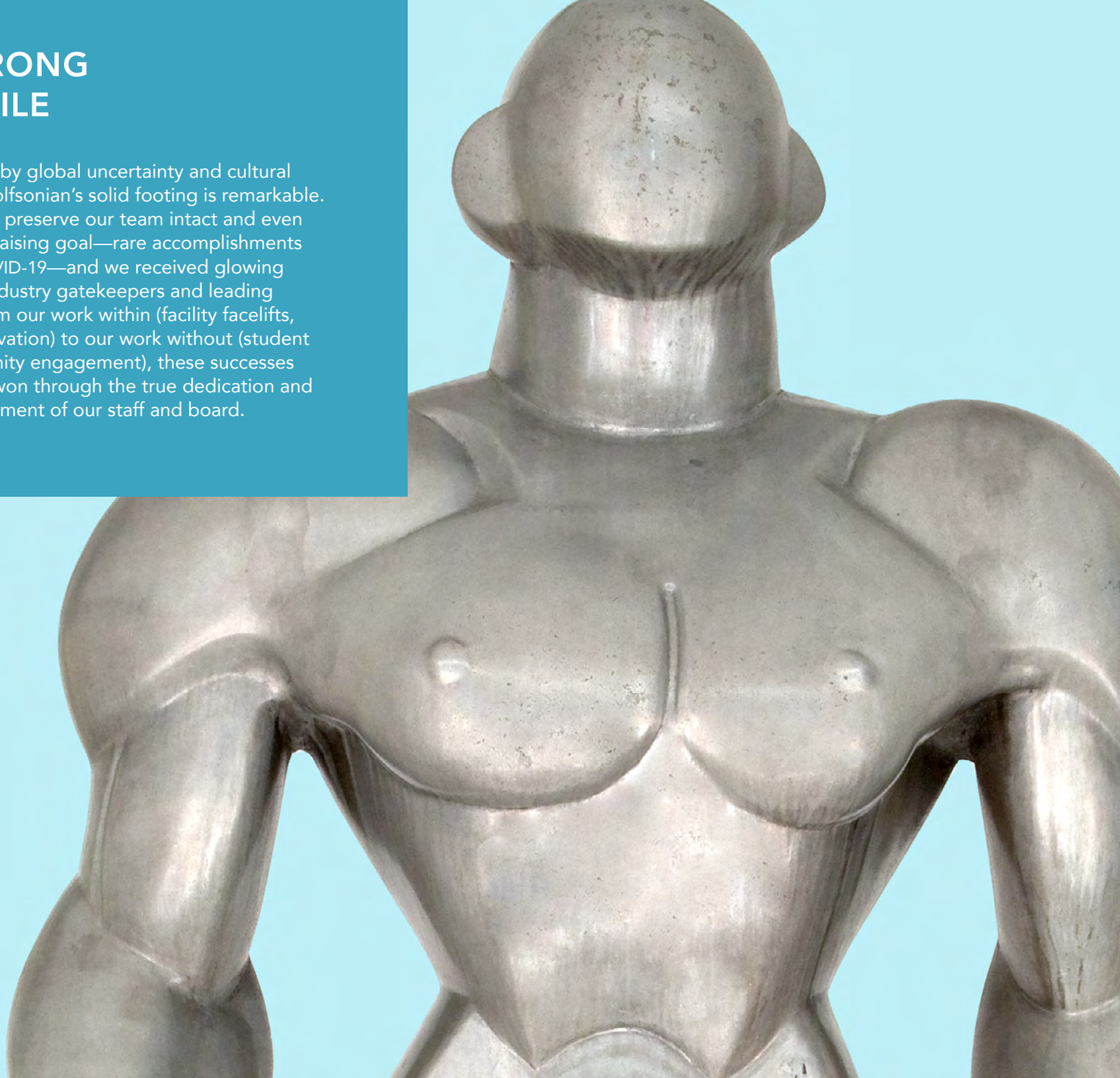
Students have always been the heart of FIU. It is our core responsibility to teach and to listen, empowering and equipping students to seize opportunities and enter alumni life with confidence. We will integrate seamlessly with curricula, University course credit and micro-credentialing systems, and placement programs to build out a rich array of student work and learning options that emphasize professional and interpersonal skill-building. With a strong student cohort in place, undergraduates and graduates alike will be integral parts of all Wolfsonian activities.

## THE WOLFSONIAN PUBLIC HUMANITIES LAB

WPHL bridges all of the humanities at FIU and connects academic, public, and civic life. Comprised of faculty, fellows, and a network of supporters across campus—including at The Wolf—the WPHL team seeks to enhance understanding of the role of public humanities and to position FIU as a pathbreaker in this important emerging field. In many of our community engagement efforts on the following pages, they are valued partners and co-creators.

# 1 A STRONG PROFILE

In a year marked by global uncertainty and cultural cutbacks, The Wolfsonian's solid footing is remarkable. We were lucky to preserve our team intact and even exceed our fundraising goal—rare accomplishments in the age of COVID-19—and we received glowing feedback from industry gatekeepers and leading tastemakers. From our work within (facility facelifts, collection conservation) to our work without (student support, community engagement), these successes have been hard-won through the true dedication and steadfast commitment of our staff and board.



# APPLAUSE, RENOWN + VISIBILITY

**148,755,160**  
media impressions worth

**\$1,257,934**  
in ad value

**25**  
online visitor recommendations +  
5-star reviews

**134**  
loans to  
**10**  
institutions  
including  
Poster House  
High Museum of Art  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
Palm Springs Art Museum  
The Patricia & Phillip Frost  
Art Museum  
The Phillip and Patricia Frost  
Museum of Science  
Ronald Reagan House, Florida  
International University  
Design Miami/  
Fralin Museum of Art  
McNay Art Museum

## AAM Accolades

After a rigorous review, the American Alliance of Museums awarded us with re-accreditation through March 1, 2030. Their overwhelmingly complimentary report examined our practices and projects relating to collections stewardship, organizational health, education, planning, and public service. The review committee was impressed with the team's commitment to excellence and our ability to meet the needs of both the University and Miami Beach communities.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ASSESSMENT

- Recognition for our "imaginative, intellectually engaging, and visually compelling" shows
- Glowing feedback on two student programs, Zines for Progress and the Metadata Squad, which were singled out as models for other institutions
- Excitement over collaborations and integration with The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab

**"[Our] overall impression of The Wolfsonian is that of a mission-driven, high-achieving museum.... The institution consistently 'boxes above its weight' ..."**

—AAM

**"The Wolfsonian proves "big experiences can still be found in small spaces"**

—Forbes.com

## Press Praise

In early 2021, visiting journalist Chadd Scott wrote a Forbes.com article ranking three of our 1st-floor installations among "the most powerful exhibitions anywhere in South Florida," commending their current-day resonance and their remarkable documentation of times past.

## A New York Moment

The Wolfsonian's 2017 exhibition *Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age* traveled to Manhattan for a successful run at Poster House. Seen by an audience of 10,000, the show was well received and earned a spotlight on New York local TV station PIX11.



# SUSTAINABILITY

**100%**  
staff retention during the pandemic

**\$3,000,000**  
raised, doubling  
**\$1.5 million**  
fundraising goal

**5**  
grants  
**\$741,524**  
awarded

**252**  
collection  
items displayed

**51**  
conserved

**33,000**  
cleaned

**602**  
inventoried

**3,042**  
re-housed

## Shoring Up

New and improved! Key facility work has ensured The Wolf will sustain the tests of time and keep visitors invested.

- **Building + Storage Updates**  
Launching a multi-million building hardening project, we began work in 2021 on restoring our exterior (stucco and concrete repair) and strengthening our long-term resiliency with hurricane impact-glass replacements and new roof coverings. Collection protections were further enhanced through improvements that allow us to use storage space more strategically and in ways better suited to the safety of the objects.
- **Upgraded Design Store**  
This past year was all about audience in our reconfigured shop. Focusing more than ever on the visitor and shopper experience, we unveiled exclusive Wolfsonian merchandise, installed new signage and displays, and engaged in strategic community partnerships that brought community creativity front and center.

## A Next Chapter in Collection Care

A \$250,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services is changing the face and footprint of The Wolfsonian Library. Fully funding a multi-year effort, IMLS support is underwriting ambitious assessment, cleaning, rehousing, and treatment of more than 33,000 works as well as the addition of new compact shelving, which will open up space for strategic collection growth and greater public access.



## Conservation Triumph

Our conservation team dedicated 8+ hours to stabilizing artist W. A. Bagdatopoulos's c. 1930 gouache-on-paper painting, above, performing comprehensive treatment that included mending tears and compensating losses with heat-set Japanese paper, correcting color issues in past re-paintings, and carrying out color in-painting with Carbotello pastels.

# IMPACT

111,845

online visitors

8,169

on-site visitors

30

programs attracting

16,938

program views\*

384

members

119

FIU Museums Insiders

hosted

16

student workers

672

K–12 students reached in

28

classrooms from 15 schools

14

community partnerships

including:

The Betsy Hotel

Jewish Museum of Florida

Miami Beach Urban Studios

Miami Design Preservation League

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum

The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab

\*Viewership counts include registered attendees, Facebook Live viewers, and YouTube watches

## Deeper Engagement

### • Community Collaborations

Through programming and projects, we strengthened existing relationships and forged more new alliances in a single year than ever before. We are especially appreciative of The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab, who are leading the way in public and civic engagement.

### • A Solid Student Work Program

Our employment opportunities and internships were enhanced by work-sharing experiments, a robust calendar of professional development activities focused on practical skills and career readiness, and additional positions such as a 4th Metadata Squad graduate assistantship dedicated to single-collection cataloging.

### • Member Access

Curator's Choice, our signature member series, brought to light unique collection stories shared by Wolfsonian curators and staff. From our digital collection to the Grosvenor School's cutting-edge women printmakers to the Harlem Renaissance, the wide array of subjects offered unprecedented depth and cultivated a strong fan base among those eager for access.

### • STEAM+ Expansion

For the first time we offered our dynamic STEAM curriculum at schools beyond Miami Beach, bringing the program to Miami's mainland to open students' eyes to how design connects the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

## Connecting to the Academy

Embedding The Wolfsonian more fully into the FIU ecosystem, we increased faculty outreach, reinstated the fellowships program, and grew the FIU Museums Insiders student memberships program to provide more than 120 FIU members with free access and benefits at Jewish Museum of Florida, Frost Art Museum, and The Wolf.



**Spotlight Project:** In bold cross-cultural coursework, Dutch designer Bas van Beek mentored students at FIU and the Royal Academy in The Hague in reverse-engineering collection items to produce new, 3D-printed works inspired by historical design. Selections will be featured in Van Beek's Fall 2021 Wolfsonian exhibition, *Shameless*.

# COMING UP...

## NEW SHOWS

Major Wolfsonian exhibitions return with *Aerial Vision* and *Shameless* in Fall 2021, plus untitled jewelry and Roberto Lugo installations set for Fall 2022.

## NEH SUSTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS GRANT

The National Endowment for the Humanities announced they will fully fund nearly \$350,000 for a multi-year collection preservation plan addressing climate challenges and accessibility goals.

## HYBRID EVENTS

Applying lessons learned from the pandemic, we're striving to reach more audiences than ever before by rolling out programs that can be enjoyed both virtually and in person.

## RECIPROCAL MEMBERSHIPS

We believe you should get more for your money—stay tuned as we explore adding additional perks and partnerships bringing double-duty benefits to your Wolfsonian membership.

## EXPANDED STUDENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES

Students are increasingly part of daily life at The Wolf. From federal work study positions to museum studies internships, an array of added options is just over the horizon.

## THE FINAL WORD ON DECO DESIGN

Our reputation precedes us! Invited by the Cité de l'architecture & du patrimoine in Paris, chief curator Silvia Barisione has contributed an article on Miami Beach architecture for *L'Art Déco: France, Amérique du Nord*, a publication produced to complement the 2022 exhibition *Art Déco France-Amérique du Nord, l'émulation réciproque*.







Collections manager + conservator Silvia Manrique working on a mural study by Dean Cornwell made for the Eastern Airlines offices at Rockefeller Center in New York City (c. 1944).

# 2 OUR DIGITAL "BIG BANG"

In the pandemic age, virtual engagement is a necessity for survival. Thanks to core support from John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we've been able to open more digital doors to discovery than ever before—developing new online experiences, hosting our programs for fans around the globe, and even bringing the collection directly to classrooms. With a new strategy laying out the path ahead, we're poised to reinvent how we entice, entertain, and educate on the web.



Deerfield Beach

Patrick Church

The Bass

Beach High School

Miami Beach

Muscle Beach

The Washington Storage Company (YOU ARE HERE)

Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU  
Jewish experience in Florida since 1763

3rd Street Beach Yoga

South Pointe Park  
Water views, trails & kids play areas

Playground

The Hills At South Pointe Park

Shore Library

te  
use

# A NEW ERA

revamped digital strategy  
informed by

68

hours of staff interviews conducted  
across curatorial, marketing, design,  
registration, and library departments

R&D launched for

7

gallery interactives

produced

21

educational videos for

462

students in

17

K–12 classrooms

124

hours of digital literacy professional  
development completed, focusing on:

cybersecurity  
design thinking  
UX (user experience)  
oral history creation  
podcast production  
metadata best practices  
digital marketing  
digital collaboration + leadership

## Knight Foundation Museum of Ideas

Funding from John S. and James L. Knight Foundation has revolutionized what The Wolfsonian is able to do in the digital realm, from digitization to in-gallery technologies to online experiences. In FY21, their support concentrated in the following areas:

### Upgrading the Digital Catalog

Digital.wolfsonian.org is moving to a new host: Islandora, a customizable, user-friendly, open-access platform that will allow us to keep pace with our audience's evolving needs. Functionality upgrades include the ability to direct-download hi-res files, deep zoom, annotate, compare works, filter by public domain, and search all text.

### Strategy + Staff Development

Since establishing our first digital strategy a decade ago, we have completed two foundational phases focusing on online collection access—digitizing images, improving collection metadata, and launching a public-facing digital catalog—and hiring a digital curator dedicated to creating online experiences and in-gallery interactives. Now, we build upon our past successes to advance into a crucial third phase: (1) generating user-facing content, (2) strengthening workflows and training, and (3) solidifying infrastructure.

Central to the updated strategy is ensuring future growth in the field of museum tech and embedding digital development into our DNA by investing in staff digital literacy and encouraging enthusiasm, curiosity, and talent for all things digital. We thank our advisors for guiding us through this complex, multifaceted process.



## K–12 + the Next Generation

We have adapted our historically on-site educational approach into physically distant, remote learning-friendly modules suited to the COVID era. After repackaging Zines for Progress and STEAM Zines with virtual classroom-ready instructional videos, workbooks, and Zoom sessions, Wolfsonian educators successfully hosted entirely virtual editions of these critical thinking and visual literacy-based curricula, ensuring not only a seamless transition for teachers, but rich, challenging, and rewarding material—accessible from anywhere—for children and teens.

## Leadership

The Wolfsonian's digital team is seizing opportunities to help steer the field. Lending her expertise, management skills, and mentorship for a national forum, digital assets + collection data manager Isabel Brador served as scholarship program co-chair at the 100% virtually hosted Museum Computer Network Conference 2021.

# GOING (AND STAYING) VIRTUAL

streamed  
**>43**

hours of virtual programming

exploring subjects like activist art, classic film, architecture, collection storage, caricature and cartoons, and art movements such as Futurism, Art Deco, and Art Nouveau

debuted  
**9**

new digital experiences

including Dial M for Micky, Shelf-Aware, and Timeliner

+ **6**

Google Arts & Culture exhibitions

including *Art and Design in the Modern Age*; *Harry Clarke's Geneva Window and the Irish Free State*; *The Harlem Renaissance*; *Modern Dutch Design*; and *Cuban Caricature and Culture*

+ **14**  
DigiBooks

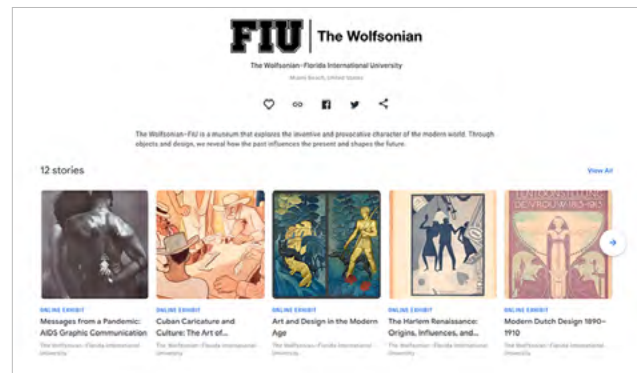
including *Bruynzeel's Fabrieken Zaandam*; *Voy bien Camilo?*; *Industrial Design, A Practical Guide*; *Negro Drawings*; *Volkswagen-Werk G.M.B.H*; *Scottsboro: A Story in Linoleum Cuts*; *Répertoire du gout modern No. 2*; *L'art décoratif à Paris*; *L'architecture a l'Exposition de Arts Décoratifs Modernes de 1925*; and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

## Virtual Programs

From the art of Seiz Breur to imperialism propaganda in Africa, our eye-opening events covered cultures from around the world and moments throughout the modern age. Sharing images, audio, and video through Zoom, we were able to shed light on more corners of the collection, feature non-local partners, and unlock access for audiences limited by geography.

## Digital Deep Dives

Digital interest, and investment, is now encoded in our DNA and part and parcel of our process. Complementing the stories found in our galleries, publications, and programming, online exhibitions and web-based experiences have the potential to send our metrics and real-world impact into hyperdrive. Between projects produced in-house and those developed with the help of outside partners, we reached an added audience of 82,857 with new narratives, interactives, games, and other digital tools.



## Essential Allies: Thank You

We owe a debt of gratitude to two critical support pillars underpinning our digital efforts:

### John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Longstanding patron and champion of our digital vision, Knight Foundation makes all Wolfsonian digital content possible. We deeply appreciate their ongoing support in making our collection more accessible on-site, online, and beyond.



### Spotlight: Dial M for Micky

A web-hosted, rotary telephone-inspired interactive connecting users to collector/founder Micky Wolfson and his favorite finds

## The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab

Our WPHL collaborations are countless and continuous. Colleagues at the Lab have played co-hosts for numerous online events—fostering dialogue among staff, faculty, guest speakers, and members of the public—and their work in digital storytelling is upending traditional modes for how arts organizations relay to, and relate with, audiences.



### Spotlight: Messages from a Pandemic

An online exhibition exploring the overt and covert messaging embedded in AIDS awareness posters from around the world and the power of graphic design in communicating during crisis

# DIGITIZATION

**35,690**

object records updated

**3,800**

items digitized  
including

national parks postcards  
Spanish–American War sheet music  
RV and trailer brochures and  
advertisements  
leftist propaganda  
Harlem Renaissance material  
aerial views  
aeronautics

**21,482**

images added online

covering:  
ceramics  
metals  
paintings  
works on paper  
glass  
brochures  
rare books  
periodicals  
pamphlets

**36,323**

digital catalog visitors with

**619,288**

pageviews

## The Wolfsonian Metadata Squad

Our research assistantships program has become a critical keystone to understanding the Wolfsonian collection. Now in year 6, the Metadata Squad employs paid FIU History department graduate students in verifying and enriching object metadata while supporting digitization—efforts that resulted in 577 object record improvements for FY21. This past year also saw the Squad expand in scope to include object handling and cataloguing, a new, hands-on dimension to a successful program boasting a 100% employment rate.

### Spotlight | Rafael Portilla's Private Collection Work

Starting in Summer 2021, Portilla built on his 1-year Metadata Squad tenure with a special appointment bringing him inside a private art and design collection in Miami. With his position funded by the collector, Rafael has catalogued and photographed 330 objects to date, taking more than 1,000 shots of items ranging from transistor radios to vases and sculptures.



## Community Data Curation

The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab invited us to assist with their ambitious \$1 million, multi-year community story-gathering effort funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Supporting our FIU colleagues as digital consultants, the team is aiding in the creation, narration, and preservation of stories about underrepresented South Florida communities by assisting 8 partner organizations with capturing oral histories, developing archives, and establishing sustainable digitization practices.

### WPHL's community partners:

Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center

Historic Hampton House

Museum of Graffiti

Broward County Library's African-American  
Research Library and Cultural Center

Jewish Museum of Florida–FIU

World AIDS Museum and  
Educational Center

Stonewall National Museum & Archives

Vizcaya Museum & Gardens

## COMING UP...

### MORE ONLINE EXPERIENCES

Continuing to add to our Google Arts & Culture page and breathe new life into past Wolfsonian exhibitions, we will soon produce online versions of prior shows including *A Universe of Things* and *Promising Paradise*.

### BRINGING PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGES TO THE WEB

Collection material that is free to use, repurpose, and adapt will be published on major discovery platforms such as DPLA, Wikimedia, and Wikicommons, ensuring that our collection remains a public resource.

### CROWDSOURCING + METADATA STANDARDIZATION

Making our collection easier for researchers and curiosity seekers to explore is always top of mind. A new tagging and object record enhancement project on Zooniverse will improve searchability and access.

### DIGITAL OPEN HOUSES

To increase digital literacy and awareness among Wolfsonian staff, the team will be launching an internal open house series designed to lift the curtain on digital initiatives and preview projects in development.

### STUDENT + SCHOLAR VIRTUAL RESEARCH GUIDES

Stay tuned for cross-channel, multi-format "101"s to assist remote learners and researchers with the ins and outs of navigating, referencing, and publishing our immense collection.

### AUTOMATED DIGITIZATION

Through innovative technologies such as OCR (Optical Character Recognition)—a groundbreaking method for digitizing books cover to cover—we hope to streamline our process and bring more library works online.

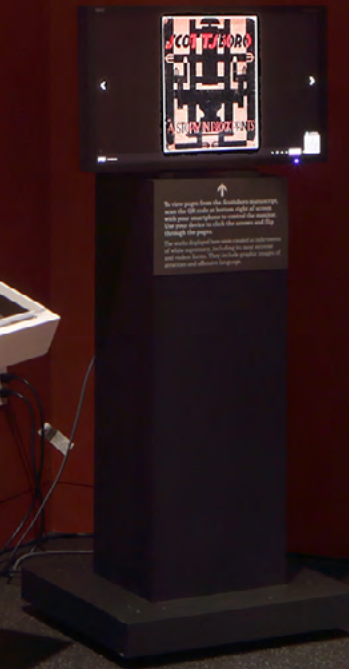
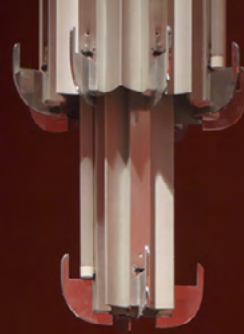




Digital assets + collection data manager Isabel Brador and museum studies intern Kathleen Obrer navigating *Aerial Miami*, a Google Earth-based digital interactive.

# 3 MORE RELEVANT + REPRESENTATIVE THAN EVER

The Wolfsonian is so much more than a window into the modern age; we are a means of understanding the world around us and life today. Bridging past and present, helping visitors see the familiar with fresh eyes, and welcoming all into the discovery experience—no matter age, background, identity, or creed—have been at the heart of our mission and values since the beginning. With renewed focus, we are dedicated to evolving from the inside out, from the stories we tell and the objects we preserve to the people we entrust, equip, and empower to steer us into the decades ahead.





# TIMELY SUBJECTS + URGENT CONVERSATIONS

18

Wolfsonian-inspired contemporary artworks created

mounted

4

installations connected to issues today exploring:

the 1931 case of the falsely accused “Scottsboro boys”

mass-produced colored glassware

New Deal artwork ranging from murals to posters

visual messaging in AIDS graphic design

10

students across the country guided in developing

5

projects focused on responsibly presenting sensitive imagery including how to consider:

creating safe spaces for visitors

solving content challenges

navigating ethical dilemmas

addressing offensive material

contextualizing through programming

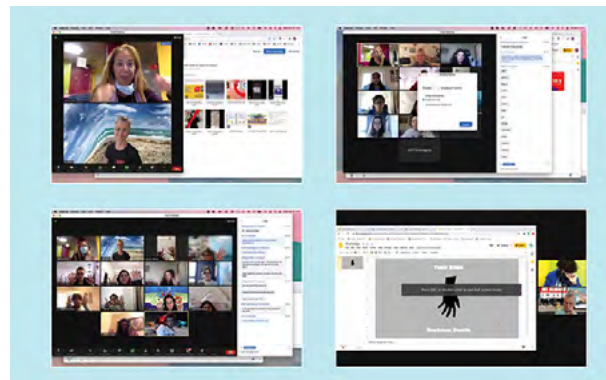
interpreting for young audiences

## Responsive Curating

Reflecting on the events of the past two years, we have joined museums around the world in reassessing our visitor experience and the stories we tell. Wolfsonian curators and librarians worked at lightspeed to respond to the realities of the current moment—an epidemic, an economic crash, protests against racist violence—and tie these issues and concerns back to history in 4 critically acclaimed installations.

## Zines for Progress + the Zeitgeist of 2020

Redesigned from the ground up for a post-COVID world, The Wolfsonian’s signature high-school outreach program brought Miami teens into the iterative process of zine making as an art form—this time, online. Adapting to remote learning realities, educators pivoted away from hands-on and in-gallery workshops toward digital collage by asking young zine-makers to create artwork reacting to the historic changes contained in 2020. The result, *Hybrid Reality—Living History*, compiles 133 individual digital works that together serve as a time capsule of a year marked by culture-shifting protests, unprecedented stresses on mental health, and a jarring, life-altering global public health crisis.



## Our ARIAH Mentorship Debut

The Wolfsonian participated for the first time as a host institution for the Association of Research Institutes in Art History’s Careers in Art History Internship. Alongside premier cultural organizations like The Met, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Yale Center for British Art, and The Huntington, we developed a 1-week curriculum and led virtual presentation and workshop sessions for 10 students selected for the competitive program.

We centered our approach on a question topical to the field—how should museums navigate highly charged works and subjects? Interns learned how to plan and promote exhibitions with an audience-centric mindset and became familiar with considering content challenges through the lenses of a variety of museum roles, shaping safe spaces for visitors to encounter difficult collections.

Topics tackled: Nazi design, pulp magazine covers, cartoons, totalitarian dictators, work by problematic artists

*“I loved how open [staff] were... they didn’t shy away from giving us ‘tough’ assignments.”*

*“It was amazing to be able to go step-by-step through the process.”*

*“refreshing”...“challenging”...  
“fun and generative”*

—ARIAH interns

# DIVERSIFYING OUR COLLECTION + STORYTELLING

added to the collection:

**20**

artworks and library items by artists of color

**8**

objects relating to marginalized communities

**21**

works by women

---

explored themes and subjects such as:

**The Harlem Renaissance**

**designing for activism**

**LGBTQIA+**

**Afrofuturist cinema**

**unsung Black and female artists**

in installations, digital projects, and blog posts

## More Makers, More Narratives, More Experiences

To see the full picture of the modern age, we are devoted to strengthening our collection's representation of artists, histories, and cultures. New acquisitions and gifts in select areas such as the Black American experience, disability studies, and women's lives are improving how well our collection reflects a global scope and three-dimensional perspective, while research on these subjects and others enhances knowledge and records for future generations.

### What's New

#### George Washington Carver Mural | Acquisition

Produced to promote George Washington Carver's many commercial products, this major vernacular painting from 1947 (right) celebrates the life and accomplishments of the African-American scientist, inventor, and agricultural innovator. The painting hung for years in a store operated by Carver's assistant, serving as both advertisement and commemoration for shoppers and admirers alike.

#### Kimonos Collection | Gift from Erik Jacobsen

The famed record producer donated 142 objects, including 110 Japanese propaganda garments and 32 kimonos and textiles, from his private collection comprising the top 5% of all known Japanese propaganda material.

## Richer Storytelling

Finding fresh angles in what we say and share is another prime focus of our efforts toward greater inclusivity. Probing deeper than the stories on the surface, our exhibitions, programs, and conversations go beyond the expected to shed light on history's lesser-told and under-celebrated. Of note for FY21: we explored the work of musician Ornette Coleman, American muralist Lucienne Bloch, French artistic and personal partners Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore, and author/illustrator Miné Okubo, in addition to many more.

Also sharing in this commitment, our colleagues at The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab centered Season 2 of their Coffee & Conversations series around museums and histories of anti-Blackness.



# REFLECTING + UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY

worked with

**7**

new partners and speakers:

- Coral Gables Museum
- Barbara Elting and James McKillop
- Cristina Favretto
- Carter Jackson-Brown
- Dale Zine (Steve Saiz and Lillian Saiz Banderas)
- Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

featured

**15**

local scholars, artists, poets, musicians, and collectives:

- Tyron Barrington
- Deborah Briggs
- Nathaniel Cadle
- Howard Camner
- Leo Castañeda
- Shawn Christian
- Mason Duboff
- Chris Friday
- Michael Klotz
- Jacek Kolasinski
- N'agelie Lazo
- Rhea Leonard
- Tudor Parfitt
- David Rifkind
- Nathaniel Sandler

## Providing a Platform

Inviting people and groups we admire to share their work and passions with our audiences continues to add new voices, ideas, and interpretations to the mix. From top designers to fashion experts to zine-makers, these partners represent a wide array of specialties and art practices and ensure that our programming explores issues and topics of relevance to the community.

One thing going virtual allowed us to do was connect local talent with artists and experts from all over the country. In our program dedicated to artwork about the Scottsboro 9 trial, Miami artist Rhea Leonard spoke with University of Texas historian Minkah Makalani and New York University librarian Andrew Lee. Our two #WolfWatch programs about Afrofuturist cinema connected local film curator Carter Jackson-Brown with musician Angel Bat Dawid and film programmer Amir George, both based in Chicago. And “A True Fairytale” put FIU architectural historian David Rifkind in conversation with New York animation artist Ezra Wube.



## Yard Sale x Lucy St.

As part of Miami Beach Open House—a program providing innovative artist-in-residence opportunities in city storefronts—The Wolfsonian Design Store played host to curator and artist Chris Friday's interactive exhibition and retail experience. Mimicking a classic neighborhood rummage sale, the pop-up installation featured objects made exclusively by artists of color (Arsimmer McCoy, Chazney Thomas, and Carrington Ware, to name just a few) and explored the various sounds, textures, and visual incarnations of Blackness.



# COMING UP...

## **PROPOSALS**

With many ambitious projects on the horizon, we're outlining detailed plans for community and partner collaborations. Please stay tuned for new ideas and opportunities to become involved.

## **ROBERTO LUGO COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

In Fall 2022, our project with the artist and activist will engage local communities to tell a broad story of Miami, past and present.

## **DESIGN STORE ARTIST TAKEOVERS**

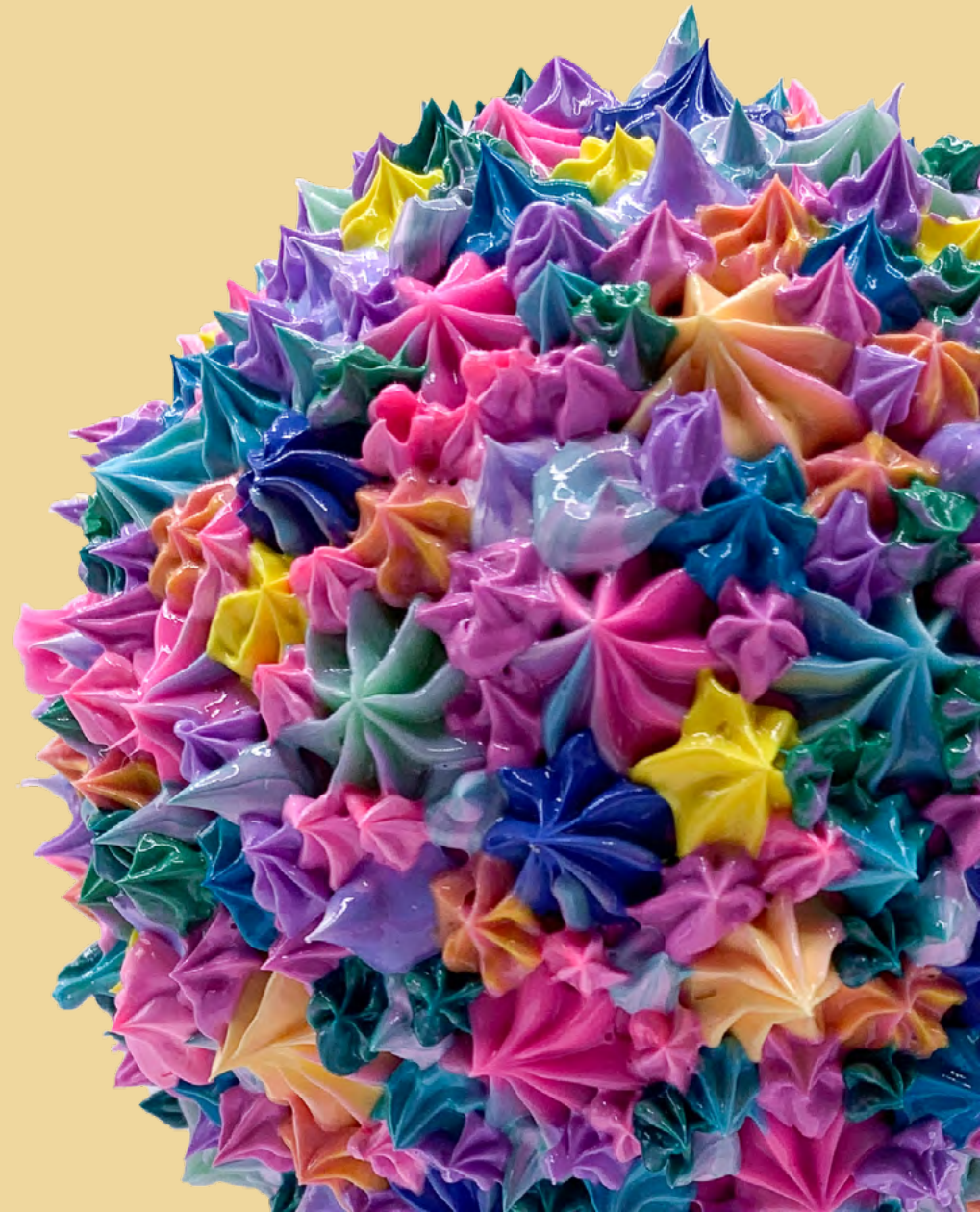
Invest in Miami talent by buying local! Next in our Miami Beach Open House showcases: curator Yi Chin Hsieh and artist Juan Matos. And get used to seeing South Florida creatives in the shop—trunk shows, curated selections, and other collaborations will make our shop an experience you won't find anywhere else.

## **HUMANITIES EDGE RETURNS**

This fall and spring, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded internships offered through The Humanities Edge at FIU are opening up 5 Wolfsonian positions to FIU students studying the humanities, plus an FIU museums multimedia role jointly overseen by Jewish Museum of Florida, Frost Art Museum, and The Wolf.

## **FIU MUSEUMS INSIDERS FUNDING**

We believe a student membership program should be student-driven. A soon-to-launch Insiders Council will empower student leaders to take the reins.





Yard Sale x Lucy St. curator Chris Friday with participating artists Arsimmer McCoy, Carrington Ware, and Chazney Thomas.

# 4 LAYING THE FOUNDATION

The Wolfsonian's upcoming expansion, targeted for completion in the next 5–7 years, will mark a game-changing transformation for us as a research center and community cultivator. A project with a million moving parts, this ambitious update is already stirring excitement among art and design lovers, preservationists, city residents, our international audience, and beyond—and the first steps are underway. At this natural inflection point open to so many possibilities, your imagination could have profound impact on the course ahead.



# THE VISION

built for the future,  
respectful of the past

**3x**

the number of art and  
objects on view

welcoming cultural hub for all:  
South Floridians  
FIU students and faculty  
researchers  
tourists  
families

creative incubator with dedicated  
classrooms, workspaces, studios,  
and Knight Digital Lab

## Fusing Community + Academy

The project will kick off a new era for our site as Miami's nerve center for all interested in art and design. Along with The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab, we will connect students, faculty, and the public, inviting discovery and posing provocative questions about how history has shaped the world we live in today. Spaces will activate and engage all core audiences—so a stop at The Wolf might bring you into the orbit of scavenger-hunting families; emerging designers creating new 3D-printed, collection-inspired pieces; school groups on a tour; scholars researching in the library; and, of course, our regular visitors (locals to out-of-towners) as well as University classes milling about the galleries and multi-use rooms for discussions, meetings, and beyond.

## Greater Access

Currently, only a fraction of the Wolfsonian collection is on view at any one time. With the benefit of additional exhibition space, open storage, and state-of-the-art Knight Digital Labs, our audiences will be able to experience more of the myriad cultures, designers, and art movements of the modern age—and in new ways. A visit that begins with wandering the galleries to appreciate the art could wind through immersive interactives, period rooms, visible collections, artist workspaces, and communal spaces, all to paint a richer picture of the power and legacy of design.

## Preservation + Sustainability

The Wolfsonian's expansion must balance two central values: honoring the historic integrity of our existing 1927 Mediterranean Revival building and updating the site to meet the complex needs of 21st-century audiences. Like all South Florida cultural institutions, our focus is on addressing climate-control concerns, minimizing environmental effects, and incorporating creative, long-term solutions to pressing problems like sea-level rise, factors that will weigh heavily on the final designs of our forward-thinking new campus.



## Bridging Past and Present

Linking the worlds of yesterday and today, our architectural scheme will seamlessly incorporate historic architecture and the contemporary addition. Visitors will encounter artifacts of old right alongside modern interpretations and throwback design homages—from the art on the walls to the fabric of the structure—exemplifying in the flesh a central tenet of the Wolfsonian mission: to inspire new insights into the world around us by making eye-opening connections between past, present, and future.

# DRIVEN BY YOU

**63%**

of Miami Beach voters said “yes” to November 2020’s Ballot Question 5 allowing our development by approving an FAR increase for the Wolfsonian site

**\$1,100,000**

raised to date

## Resident-Friendly, Voter-Approved

We were thrilled to cross our first major hurdle and see the city’s citizens embrace our concept for a bigger and better cultural beacon on the beach. Voters clearly recognized civic leadership’s interest in enhancing arts for all, and we’re honored to be a part of that vision. Securing the FAR increase was just one step of many, but our community’s blessing is foundational to this project’s success, and we take the responsibility of what the voters have entrusted us to do very seriously. The team looks forward to turning our plans for the future into a reality.



## Capital Campaign Launched

Several valued supporters stepped in early to help pave the way for future expansion conversations, marking a strong start to our fundraising efforts. Donors receive the opportunity to name spaces in the building.

### The Suzi Rudd Cohen and Philip H. Cohen Reading Room

Suzi’s deep love for learning and admiration for the exceptional talent of our librarians became the perfect inspiration for a dedicated area for scholars, students, faculty, and everyday book lovers. She and her husband have been members for 15 years and Suzi has joined us on our excursions around the world as a board member.

### The Richard Levine, AIA Gallery

Richard—a Wolfsonian donor since 1998, celebrated architect, and former President of the American Foundation for the Arts—is esteemed for his dynamic interiors in Miami buildings such as Villa Regina on Brickell, the Towers of Key Biscayne, and Quayside.

### Paul Beirne | Lead Donor to the Ashton Hawkins Board Room

Along with Bob MacLeod and Steve Byckiewicz, Paul conceived of a giving challenge to name our board room in honor of Ashton Hawkins, longtime advisor to Micky, former trustee for The Wolfsonian Foundation, and general counsel for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



# DESIGN ASPIRATIONS

inviting new entrance

50,000 sq ft of gallery  
and program space

walls of windows

flex-use spaces

history meets contemporary

green architecture

## A New Hello

Visitors will enter The Wolfsonian through a visionary entrance and airy courtyard. Activated by curated retail—which will showcase and boost local businesses and support our city’s economy—the community gathering space will offer a relaxing sanctuary set off from the bustling activity of Washington Avenue. This revamped introduction to the museum will be a 180° experience from the historic building’s imposing, fortress-like atmosphere, but many elements (like the historic storefront facades) of our current streetscape will be retained and integrated into the fresh look.

## Outside In/Inside Out

Museums cannot be insular environments. To help the new Wolfsonian Arts District truly “breathe” the vibrant life and energy of South Beach, the campus’s architectural design will bring the art forward and nature inward, collapsing perceived barriers for curious culture-seekers and beach lovers on the avenue. No longer an imposing presence, our building will actively invite pedestrians and passersby into the fold, providing hints at the treasures within through street-level views straight into the galleries and by offering welcoming green sanctuaries interspersed throughout the structure. This new sense of transparency and accessibility is also a return to tradition; recent research reveals that before 1001 Washington Avenue was entirely enclosed in the 1930s, broad showroom windows along 10th Street afforded a glimpse into the magic and mystery behind the vault doors.

## Adaptable + Multi-Use

From a double-height, light-flooded Great Hall to versatile event rooms with sweeping panoramas of Miami Beach’s iconic Art Deco architecture, the expansion will be designed around economy of space. Areas will easily transform from gallery to program stage to rental venue, immersing visitors in art and design: collection light fixtures, 45-foot murals, fireplaces, and shelves of objects echoing the original use of our historic building, once the Washington Storage Company.



## An Architect’s Eye

While the project’s framework and scope is already defined, many decisions are dependent on the input and artistry of the selected architectural firm. Some ideas that could take shape:

- Solar panels and renewable energy
- Gardened terraces and rooftop
- Monumental space to return and display the 1937 Fiat *Littorina* railcar (currently on loan in Turkey)

# COMING UP...

## REVIEW BY FIU LEADERSHIP

FIU's Board of Trustees and FIU Foundation's Board of Directors will conduct a comprehensive assessment of all plan materials with approval expected by early 2022.

## ANNOUNCE AN ARCHITECT

After a competitive solicitation process kicked off by an international RFP (request for proposals), we will identify our firm of choice and hopefully begin the collaborative, community-informed design process in 2022.

## NAMING EVENTS

Our closest friends and biggest fans deserve the most heartfelt toasts in thanks of their giving. To show our appreciation, we'll be holding ceremonies and hosting exclusive experiences for major donors.

## BREAKING GROUND

Construction will likely start in 2024 and last at least two years, with a grand opening ceremony possible as early as Miami Art Week 2026.





Spatial design intern Liudmyla Stasiv preparing a project packet for prospective architectural firms.

# CREDITS + SUPPORTERS

## Major Gifts + Bequests

**Mellon Foundation** | \$1,000,000

Awarded to The Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab for use over 3 years to support the preservation, creation, and narration of stories about underrepresented South Florida communities

**Kirk Landon Bequest** | \$290,592

Given from the heart to inspire others and encourage a next generation of art and design enthusiasts through funds supporting Wolfsonian education

## Highlights of Donors Who Generously Added Works to the Collection

**Helene Fortunoff and Robert Grossman**

53 pieces of Aesthetic Movement ceramics from Great Britain

**Henry Hacker**

Jean-Maurice Rothschild upholstered chair from the SS Normandie (1935)

**Erik Jacobsen**

145 propaganda kimonos and textiles from Japan

**Keith Sherman and Roy Goldberg**

Illustration by famed caricaturist Al Hirschfield (1939)

**Beth Dunlop**

British ceramics; vintage postcards; photographs

**Historical Design**

Jewelry collections and a rare and reference book library

**Finlay B. Matheson**

Trade catalogues; books; medical devices; and prosthetics

**Harvey Mattel**

Louis Rigal commemorative etching certificates from the 1925 Paris Exposition

**Eric Marx**

1930s Mauser-Werke GmbH chair

**Michel Bouvier Mathews**

Photo albums of the original Washington Storage Company + Mathews family

**Mitchell "Micky" Wolfson, Jr.**

3,100 works of decorative art, fine art, and ephemera

**Philip Schneider, Jr.**

1961 George Nakashima walnut coffee table

## Leadership

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The Wolfsonian Foundation

As of October 2021

## With Gratitude

The Wolfsonian lost two dear friends and valued members of our leadership in 2021.

### Ray Marchman

Ray joined The Wolfsonian Advisory Board in the spring of 2000. His 21 years of extraordinary service included introducing scores of wonderful friends into our orbit, recruiting many fellow board members, taking on a leadership position as board president, becoming a major gift donor, and extending his support to the academy by joining the FIU Foundation Board. We cannot thank him enough for the nurture and care, and for always helping us set our sights high.

### Helene Fortunoff

Helene's impact has been deeply felt in her year on The Wolfsonian Advisory Board. A ceramics collector, highly successful businesswoman (owner of Fortunoff Fine Jewelry and Silverware), and leader in jewelry design and merchandising, she served on many boards of directors, including as chair for both the Gemological Institute of America and Hofstra University board, before joining The Wolfsonian's in 2020. Her gifts of Christopher Dresser ceramics from her collection—the world's largest—will have a lasting effect on visitors and scholars.

### Florida International University Board of Trustees

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## Unparalleled Experiences



### Director's Circle | A Night with Leonard Lauder, April 15, 2021

In honor of the philanthropist, businessman, and collector publishing his new memoir, *The Company I Keep: My Life in Beauty*, we were delighted to celebrate Leonard's legacy with Books + Books, the Bal Harbour Shops, and the author himself. Many thanks to Wolfsonian Advisory Board member Jackie Weld Drake for the introduction and *Miami Herald* columnist Stephanie Sayfie Aagaard for leading the discussion.



### Donor Spotlight | Tamara Harris

An ardent advocate for education, entrepreneurship, and the arts, life coach and business owner Tamara Harris combined her passions for empowerment and fostering agency within youth communities in her support of Zines for Progress. Concerned for the protection of Black and brown bodies, Harris sees the program as uniquely designed to create safe spaces for children to process and record personal and universal traumas so prevalent in society and world events today.

**The Wolfsonian—FIU thanks the following for contributing to our success in 2020–21:**

**The Wolfsonian receives generous support from**

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Rita Bucheit  
Arlen D. Dominek  
Leonard Finger  
Jane Garmey  
Henry S. Hacker and family  
Historical Design  
Paul Kashden  
Victory Gold Levi  
Alfred Allan Lewis  
Francis Xavier Luca and  
Clara Helena Palacio Luca  
Joan and Finlay B. Matheson  
Michael J. Maxwell  
Louis S. Miano  
Malcolm Payne  
Thomas C. Ragan  
Shoshana M. Resnikoff  
SKALL & Pierre-Jean Cornuat  
Sandy Steinberg  
Christopher English Walling  
Paulette and Arthur Wiener  
Darryl Zbar

Giving period: July 1, 2020–June, 2021

We have made every effort to ensure accuracy of this list. If a mistake has been made, we sincerely apologize and encourage you to contact us at [give@thewolf.fiu.edu](mailto:give@thewolf.fiu.edu).



Cover, p.1: Selection of kimonos recently donated to The Wolfsonian–FIU.

- p. 3: Sculpture (detail), *Wrestler*, 1929. Dudley Vaill Talcott, designer. The Aluminum Company of America, Cleveland Foundry, maker. The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, TD1991.36.1.
- p. 4: Installation view of *Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age* at Poster House, New York City.
- p. 5: Painting, *Wrigley Building and Tribune Tower*, date unknown. W. A. Bagdatopoulos, artist. The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XX1990.4125.
- p. 6: Rendering, *Pavilion*, 2021. Amaya Cameron, FIU School of Architecture, designer.
- p. 7: Cup and saucer, *Cup and Paste*, 2010. Bas van Beek, designer. National Glass Museum Leerdam, the Netherlands, commissioner. Sincere Arts and Crafts Co., Ltd., Tianjin, China, manufacturer. Glass. Courtesy National Glassmuseum / Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed.
- p. 9: Aerial Miami interactive on Google Earth.
- p. 10: Steam Zines Zoom workshop.
- p. 11: The Wolfsonian's Google Arts + Culture homepage; Dial M for Micky digital interactive; Poster, *Condoman Says: Don't Be Shame, Be Game*, 1987. Michael Callaghan and Paul Cockram, designers. Redback Graphix, Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, graphic design studio. Offset lithograph. The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Henry S. Hacker & Family, 2011.14.333.
- p. 12: Metadata Squad graduate assistant Rafael Portilla cataloguing at a collector's home.
- p. 13: Guidebook, Cuba, *Ideal Vacation Land*, c. 1950. Cuban Tourist Commission, publisher. The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Vicki Gold Levi Collection, XC2002.11.4.16.
- p. 15: Installation view of *Art for Justice*, 2020.
- p. 16: Page from Zines for Progress book, *Hybrid Reality—Living History*.
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- p. 21: Interior rendering of the Wolfsonian expansion's proposed storage area, Playard Studios.
- p. 22: Exterior rendering of the Wolfsonian expansion's proposed facade, Zyscovich Architects.
- p. 23: Interior rendering of Richard Levine, AIA Gallery signage.
- p. 25: Blueprint of proposed second floor of The Wolfsonian's new construction, Zyscovich Architects.



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