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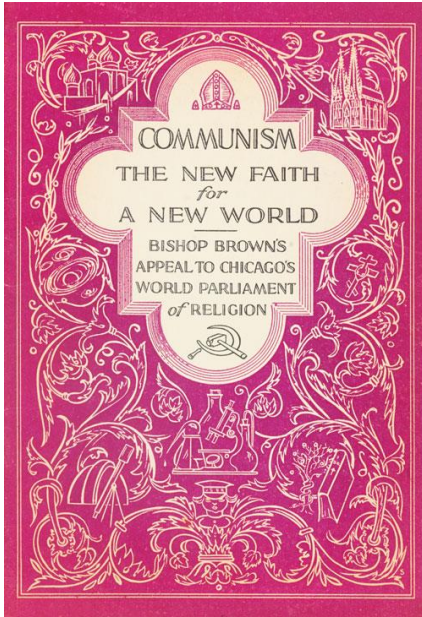
## **The Wolfsonian–FIU Returns to its Roots with *A Universe of Things: Micky Wolfson Collects***

*Opening November 15, 2019, and marking Mitchell “Micky” Wolfson Jr.’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, exhibition spotlights little-known finds from the museum founder’s 7 decades of travel and acquisition*

*Selection of over 100 objects from around the world creates unique avenues into understanding Micky, the Wolfsonian collection, and its collecting period (1850–1950)*

**MIAMI BEACH (June 27, 2019)** — For the first time since The Wolfsonian–Florida International University opened its doors to the public in 1995, the museum will honor the legacy of its founder, Mitchell “Micky” Wolfson, Jr., with an exhibition examining Wolfson’s life of collecting. *A Universe of Things: Micky Wolfson Collects* opens November 15, 2019, and brings together more than 100 objects—ranging from Wolfson’s initial purchase at age 12 to more recent Wolfsonian donations—that represent the scope of his collecting interests and The Wolfsonian’s world-class holdings of modern-age art and design.

Coinciding with Wolfson’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday year, *A Universe of Things* features dozens of works that have never before been displayed, in addition to iconic pieces that are longtime visitor favorites of The Wolfsonian. Produced in tandem with the exhibition will be a companion book, *Founder’s Choice* (Scala Publishers), focusing on 37 of Wolfson’s selections from the collection paired with commentary that expands on his memories and perspective.



Rather than tracking Wolfson's collecting activity chronologically, the show groups objects according to shared qualities. One set consists entirely of works made in 1939—the year of Wolfson's birth, the New York World's Fair, and the start of the Second World War. Other themes are informed by material (aluminum), medium (books), or subject (heroes and villains; women). With this curatorial approach, *A Universe of Things* invites guests to draw connections across time and cultures through the lens of design.

"The Wolfsonian collection reflects the passion of many generous donors, but Micky has always been the heart of the museum," said director Tim Rodgers. "His gifts, personality, and philosophy shape what it means to be 'Wolfsonian' in endless ways, and I can't think of a more appropriate time for our curators to share his rarely heard stories than this milestone birthday."

Wolfson's mantra—"What man makes, makes man."—is at the center of the exhibition. Through its broad cross-section of modern material culture, *A Universe of Things* unearths the vast array of human pursuits, dreams, inventions, and follies that mark the 100 years between 1850 and 1950, The Wolfsonian's collecting period. Highlights of the show are:

- Hotel room keys playfully pocketed by Wolfson on family vacations beginning in his childhood, creating a colorful array that summarizes a lifetime of travel;
- Samuel Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1875), Wolfson's first official purchase at age 12;
- A Japanese decorative screen depicting a naval battle, shown alongside a sideboard by British designer E. W. Godwin, revealing the rich and complex cultural exchange between East and West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- *Communism: The New Faith for a New World*, written in 1935 by the "Bad Bishop" William Montgomery Brown, an excommunicated Episcopal clergyman who preached the gospel of science and communism over religious adherence;
- A 1938 large-scale model of the Littorina—a train car in the Wolfsonian collection designed by FIAT for the Italian Fascist government—on loan from Wolfson's other namesake museum, The Wolfsoniana, in Genoa, Italy;
- Taboo "Tijuana Bibles," sexually explicit comic books illegally distributed in the 1930s and '40s;
- A streamlined trophy for female pilots competing in the 1939 Miami All-American Air Maneuvers, expressing the new opportunities available to women due to advances in technology; and
- A bust of heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis and *Hotzi Notzi*, a novelty pincushion satirizing Adolf Hitler, juxtaposing how artists depicted heroes and villains in the early 1940s.

"*A Universe of Things* mirrors Micky's unrelenting enthusiasm for discovery," said Lea Nickless, Wolfsonian research curator and co-organizer of the exhibition. "His curiosity and compelling worldview will inspire future generations of collectors."

Co-curator Shoshana Resnikoff added: “These works do double duty, charting Micky’s collecting *and* telling their own stories. Whether propaganda, an appliance, or even a bicycle, each object is evidence of a movement, a maker, a user, and a culture.”

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#### Exhibition Support

*A Universe of Things: Micky Wolfson Collects* is made possible by Funding Arts Network, Inc.

#### About Mitchell “Micky” Wolfson, Jr.

An author, philanthropist, and former diplomat, Mitchell “Micky” Wolfson, Jr. (b. 1939, Miami) is driven by limitless interest in the world’s cultures and peoples. Traveling by ship, plane, and rail, he has spent his life circling the globe to acquire rarely studied, often overlooked material, from small souvenirs to entire rooms, to preserve what might otherwise be lost for ongoing research and exhibition. In 1986, he founded The Wolfsonian in Miami Beach—transforming a private collection into a public resource that in 1997 became a part of Florida International University—followed nearly a decade later by its sister museum, The Wolfsoniana, in Genoa, Italy. Wolfson has since authored several books and won numerous awards and recognition for his preservation efforts and support for scholarship.

#### About The Wolfsonian—Florida International University

The Wolfsonian—FIU is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collection comprises approximately 180,000 objects dating from 1850 to 1950—the height of the Industrial Revolution through the aftermath of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$8 for seniors, students, and children ages 6–18; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under 6. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10am–6pm; Friday, 10am–9pm; Sunday, noon–6pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at [wolfsonian.org](http://wolfsonian.org) for further information.

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#### About FIU

Florida International University is Miami’s public research university and in less than five decades has become a top 100 public university, according to U.S. News & World Report’s Best Colleges. FIU is focused on student success and research excellence, with nearly \$200 million in annual research expenditures. The Next Horizon fundraising campaign is furthering FIU’s commitment to providing students Worlds Ahead opportunities. Today FIU has two campuses and multiple centers, including sites in Qingdao and Tianjin, China, and supports artistic and cultural engagement through its three museums: Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, The Wolfsonian—FIU, and the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. FIU is a member of Conference USA, with more than 400 student-athletes participating in 18 sports. The university has awarded more than 330,000 degrees to many leaders in South Florida and beyond. For more information about FIU, visit [fiu.edu](http://fiu.edu).