

VANESSA DIAZ CREATES IMAGINATIVE INSTALLATION FOR THE TRADITIONAL PERIOD ROOMS OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, OPENS APRIL 20

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St. Petersburg, Fla.--Vanessa Diaz will transform the Museum's period rooms and decorative arts galleries into surprising, fantastical spaces. She uses sculpture, furniture, curtains and other textiles, found objects, and much more to turn domestic, museum, and gallery interiors into dream-like environments.

Vanessa Diaz: Beginning at the Cornice, Not the Foundation opens Wednesday, April 20, and continues through Sunday, July 10. This is the first site-specific installation ever devised for the MFA's galleries. **Ms. Diaz will greet visitors at a reception opening day of the exhibition from 5:30-7 p.m., and Curator of Contemporary Art Katherine Pill, who selected the artist for this project, will conduct a Gallery Talk on Sunday, April 24, at 3 p.m.** The *Tampa Bay Times* is the Media Sponsor.

"Scavenging is at the core of my artistic practice," Ms. Diaz has explained. "I'm not able to do it on a daily basis, but I am always on the lookout for materials to repurpose.

"I begin by selecting things that resonate with me and that are typically functional objects with a history of use made evident by wear and tear," she added. "I like to see the marks made by repetitive behaviors and habits, such as threadbare fabrics and scarred furniture. These indicate both an object's past value and its connection to the lives of the previous owners."

Ms. Diaz brings a contemporary spark to some of the MFA's most traditional spaces. The Jacobean Room was originally part of a Staffordshire manor house built around 1610, and the Georgian Room, a parlor believed to have come from the Bulls Inn in London, dates to about 1740.

Given by Schenley Industries of New York, they were part of Museum Founder Margaret Acheson Stuart's desire to enhance the visitor experience of the MFA. Just as Mrs. Stuart wanted the Museum's interior to resemble a private home, Ms. Diaz reimagines galleries, but in a much more daring way. Her approach to the MFA's period rooms will be especially dramatic.

Ms. Diaz recently developed a site-specific installation, *In Considering Placemaking*, for Project Row Houses, an arts project in Houston's Third Ward, the city's oldest African American neighborhood. She experimented with the interior of the shotgun house, a narrow, rectangular dwelling throughout the South, which became a staple of African American communities.

Based in South Florida, Ms. Diaz was one of 10 artists invited to participate in the premier Florida Prize in Contemporary Art exhibition at the Orlando Museum of Art in 2014 and won "best in show" at the 61st All Florida Juried Exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art in 2012.

She holds both her BFA in painting and her BA in art history from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and her MFA from the University of South Florida, Tampa.

In addition, she has been selected for numerous residencies and workshops in both the United States and Europe. She has received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

MORE EXHIBITIONS AT THE MFA

Visual Metaphor (Pinellas County High School Art Exhibition)
Through Sunday, April 24

Christian Marclay: Telephones and Sound Holes
Through Sunday, May 1

Contemplating Character: Drawings & Oil Sketches from Jacques-Louis David to Lucian Freud
and
The Art of the Classical Guitar
Through Sunday, May 29

Measured Life: Works by Vicky Colombet, Babs Reingold, and Tip Toland
Through Sunday, June 26

Harold Edgerton: What the Eye Can't See
Saturday, May 7-Sunday, July 31

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive N.E. has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Gauguin, Renoir, Morisot, Cézanne, Rodin, O'Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. The photography collection is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, until 8 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. **Admission is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.** Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for those 65 and older, and \$10 for students seven and older, including college students with current I.D. Children under seven and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$12 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. For more information, please call 727.896.2667 or visit www.mfastpete.org.