Bonnie Clearwater: Dean of South Florida’s Art Museum Directors
By Elman + Zummar + Johnson

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Bonnie Clearwater joined NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale as its first Director in 2010. Under her leadership, the museum has achieved rapid growth and transformation, becoming one of the region’s leading cultural institutions.

Clearwater’s career began in New York City, where she served as Curator of the Peter Norton Family Collection and held various positions at the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. Prior to her tenure at NSU Art Museum, she was the Executive Director of the Lannan Foundation Art Program in Los Angeles and the Lannan Museum in West Virginia.

Known for her ability to identify and nurture emerging artists, Clearwater has curated exhibitions for celebrated artists such as Frank Stella, Anselm Kiefer, Helen Frankenthaler, and Roy Lichtenstein. She has presented the first U.S. solo exhibitions of many important artists, including Tracey Emin and Edward Ruscha.

Clearwater’s curatorial vision is reflected in the museum’s collection, which includes American and international works ranging from the 19th century to the present day. She has been instrumental in developing a world-class exhibition program, expansion of the museum space, and increased engagement with diverse audiences.

Clearwater’s leadership has been recognized with numerous awards and honors, including the 2016 Leadership Award from the National Association of Art Museum Directors. She has also been a contributing author to several books on art.

Clearwater holds a B.A. in art history from New York University and an M.A. in art history from Columbia University. She has also served as Curator of the Peter Norton Family collection.

From November 12, 2017 to July 8, 2018, NSU Art Museum will present Frank Stella, curated by Bonnie Clearwater. One of the most renowned American artists of the 20th century, Stella’s career-long interest in the relationship between painting and architecture is revealed in his research into art history, materials, philosophy, chaos theory, architectural sculptures, and his experimentation with process and endurance.

Works in the exhibition were selected to respond to the museum’s modernization and expansion in the Wynwood Art District and the Design District. The exhibition will include many rarely seen works, and it will be the first major showcase of Stella’s work in Florida.

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What has your presence at NSU Art Museum meant to the area?