

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of *Inspicio's* e-Magazine, our third edition, which is one part of the new arts publication platform sponsored by Florida International University's College of Architecture + The Arts (CARTA).

Inspicio is currently offered as a website (<http://inspicio.fiu.edu>), where we continuously publish content about all art disciplines whenever it is ready for publication, and as a quarterly e-Magazine that can be read on iPads and iPhones.

Contributors to *Inspicio* (FIU students, faculty, and talented people of interest) are focused on arts activities outside of the immediate FIU community.

Inspicio supports CARTA's mission by providing a platform and process for FIU students to critically examine and comment upon the art communities and activities of South Florida, and have the opportunity to publish their work alongside professional writers who are regularly published in the world's best publications like *The New Yorker*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*. In addition, *Inspicio* aspires to be a sophisticated enabler of the arts that becomes a "must-see" resource for a global audience interested in the Miami / South Florida art scene.

THE SPRING EDITION OF *INSPIICIO* features a video interview with cover person Firelei Báez, who was born on the border of Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1981, came to the United States when she was nine, grew up in Miami (attending four different high schools), graduated from Cooper Union, received an MFA from Hunter College in 2010, and has been on a rocket trajectory ever since. From October, 2015 to March, 2016 the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) exhibited a large group of Báez's inspirational and insightful paintings. Báez's imagery is inspired by daily events in the experiences of people of color, both historic and contemporary. Her skillful command of painterly techniques provides a foundation for communicating thought-provoking concepts of racial identity.

In this issue we are pleased to unite the photography of *New York Times* architecture journalist and photographer David Dunlap with the writing of best-selling investigative author and journalist Gerald Posner, a Miami Beach resident. In 2009, Simon & Schuster published Posner's *Miami Babylon*, a thoroughly researched and riveting narrative of the history of the Miami area from conception through the banking crisis of 2008. We selected passages from Posner's book describing the battle to create the Miami Beach Architectural Historic District (popularly known as the "Art Deco District"), and blended them with Dunlap's photos of South Beach on the cusp of renewal in 1989-90.

While on the subject of journalism, we are thrilled to publish our video interview with Gail Sheehy, a journalistic icon. Sheehy is the author of seventeen books, including *Passages* (1976), named by the Library of Congress as one of the ten most influential books of our times. She has written biographies and character studies of major twentieth-century leaders, including Hillary Clinton, both presidents Bush, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev.

As a journalist, Sheehy is best known for articles published in *New York* magazine and *Vanity Fair*. She played a part in the movement Tom Wolfe called the "New Journalism," in which some journalists and essayists experimented with adopting a variety of literary techniques such as scene setting, dialogue, status details to denote social class, and getting inside the story and sometimes reporting the thoughts of a central character. We caught up with Gail at the Miami Book Fair, where she was talking about her latest book, *Daring: My Passages*, a memoir. Since I am close to the same generation as Sheehy, reading her memoir reminded me of a sweet time in my youth when I lived in Manhattan, before the age of ubiquitous graffiti.

One of the recurring themes of *Inspicio* is an exploration of the impact of climate change and rising sea levels on the arts, and on South Florida in particular. For over three decades, artist / activist Jay Critchley has been calling our attention to pending environmental degradation, often employing humor to temper his serious message. From February to April, 2016, the University Galleries at Florida Atlantic University presented a retrospective of Critchley's geo-political concerns. In this issue, Susan Rand Brown explores the scope of Critchley's interests in both narrative and interview formats.

Finally, another recurring theme in *Inspicio* is a section titled "The Last Laugh," which explores cartoons as an art form. In this issue Jens Robinson examines the dynamic life of his father Jerry Robinson, one of the primary drivers in gaining recognition for the artistic quality of the best cartoonists — from Goya to Daumier to Richter — who watched the value of original cartoon art go from zero to over \$1 million in his lifetime. As a young man, Robinson was part of the original Batman team and invented both the exotic supervillain, The Joker, and the first superhero side kick in tights, Robin. Over the next 70 years, Robinson served as president of the National Cartoonist Society, created several newspaper cartoon features, gave birth to a global cartoon syndicate, was elected to the Comic Book Hall of Fame, and even wrote a comic book opera. Robinson was a frequent visitor to Miami and in 2006 he curated an exhibition titled *The Superhero: The Golden Age of Comic Books 1938-1950*, at the Jewish Museum of Florida – FIU.

I hope what you read, hear, and see in *Inspicio* adds value to your appreciation of the arts in Miami.

– Raymond Elman