

Introduction to Suzanne Delehanty. 0:44 sec. Interview: Raymond Elman. Editor: Celeste Reynolds.

# Suzanne Delehanty Leading Museums

By Elman + Reynolds

**SUZANNE DELEHANTY** has had a distinguished career in the arts as a museum director, curator, and art consultant.

Delehanty began her career in Philadelphia at the Institute of Contemporary Art of the University of Pennsylvania, which gained national prominence during her directorship in the 1970s. She has also served as director of the Neuberger Museum of Art at State University of New York in Purchase, the Contemporary Arts Museum (CAM) in Houston, and the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

In 1995, Delehanty was appointed Director of the Center for the Fine Arts in Miami, which became the Miami Art Museum (MAM) in 1996, and was renamed the Perez Art Museum Miami in 2013. From 1996 to 2005, Delehanty directed MAM and in 2005 was named Founding Director of the institution which she helped to establish.

She started MAM's permanent collection, which focuses on international art of the 20th and 21st centuries. She also established the largest art museum education program in Miami-Dade County, and created one of the most ambitious special exhibition programs in the country.

During Delehanty's watch, the Miami Art Museum took a leadership role in securing a prominent waterfront site from the City of Miami for Museum Park — two new freestanding museums of art and science as well as a sculpture garden. She also provided leadership for the successful passage of a \$2.9 billion Miami-Dade County General Obligation Bond program. In 2004, by a 65 percent majority vote, the Miami Art Museum was awarded \$100 million in capital funding from this initiative.

In addition to her role in advancing the long-range plans of the institutions she has led, Delehanty has organized numerous exhibitions and publications. When Delehanty directed the Institute of Contemporary Art, she organized groundbreaking exhibitions of the work of Agnes Martin, Cy Twombly, Nancy Graves, Robert Morris, George Segal, Joan Jonas, Richard Artschwager, and Video Art, which was selected as the United States entry for the 1975 Biennial in Sao Paulo. While leading the Neuberger Museum, she curated The Window in Twentieth-Century Art and Soundings, one of the first comprehensive surveys of sound in art from 1900 to 1980. At the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, solo exhibitions of the work of Fred Sandback, James Lee Byars, Tony Cragg, and Guillermo Kuitca were mounted during her watch. She revitalized the publications program at the Zimmerli Art Museum and spearheaded the Converge™ publications to document the Miami Art Museum's new work series dedicated to cultural diversity.

Delehanty has also served on numerous committees and boards, among them the Art Museum Advisory Council at Princeton University; the Federal Advisory Committee on International Exhibitions; the Committee for Art in Public Places, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC; and the Board of Directors of the

Museums of Florida History, Tallahassee; and the Advisory Council of Art for the Twenty-First Century, New York. Currently, she is on the Advisory Board of DASH, Miami's Design and Arts High School and President of the Board of Directors, Donna Dennis Art Foundation, Inc., based in New York.

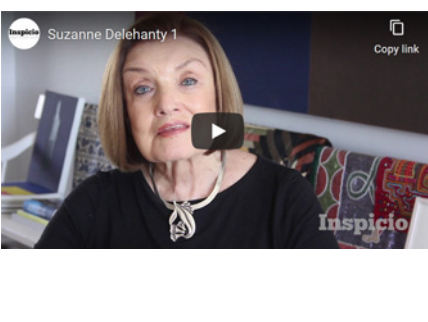
Today Suzanne Delehanty is principal of SUZANNE DELEHANTY LLC which she established in 2006 to provide strategic planning and art advisory services for initiatives that bring art, artists and communities together. The firm serves an international roster of clients, drawing upon

Delehanty's extensive museum experience. Clients include: the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian; Perez Art Museum Miami; Museum of Northwest Art in Washington State; the City of Winter Park, Florida; Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami; and the Miro Foundation in Barcelona among other institutions and individuals. For a complete resume, please visit [www.suzannedelehanty.com](http://www.suzannedelehanty.com)

Born in Southbridge, Massachusetts, Delehanty now resides in Miami. She holds a B.A. in History of Art from Skidmore College and has pursued graduate studies in History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania. She has also benefited from ongoing executive education at Columbia, Yale and Harvard universities.

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 7 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

## EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 0:50 sec.



*Where did you grow up, and what was your earliest memory of art of any discipline?*

## INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 0:28 sec.



*What's your first memory of being at a museum?*

## DEVELOP A VOICE: 0:49 sec.



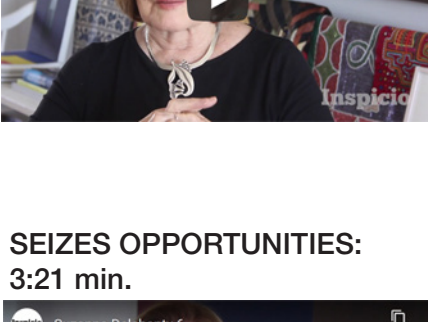
*Do you remember when you started to feel passionate about art?*

## VALUES FIRST-RATE EDUCATION: 0:56 sec.



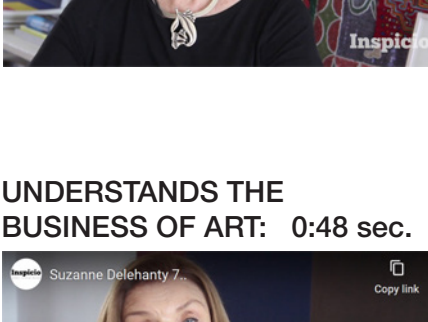
*What did you learn at Skidmore that still informs you today?*

## SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 1:29 min.



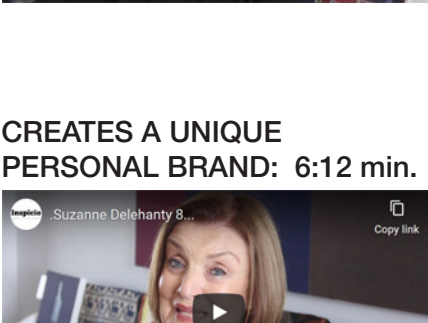
*What was your experience at the University of Pennsylvania?*

## SEIZES OPPORTUNITIES: 3:21 min.



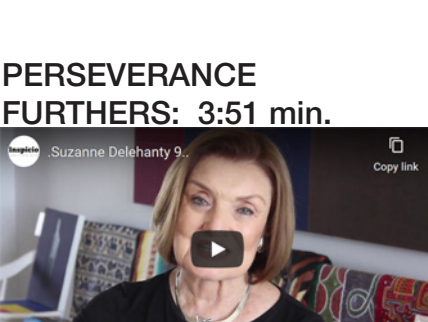
*Please describe the arc of your career.*

## UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART: 0:48 sec.



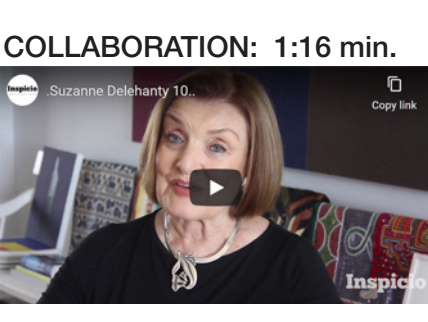
*Are you looking to step into another museum job?*

## CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 6:12 min.



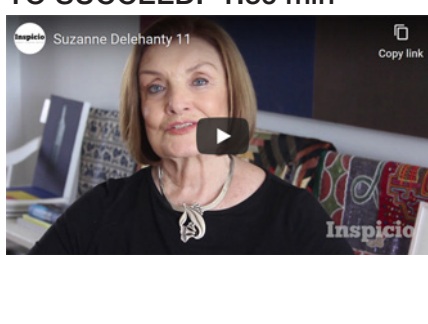
*Which art exhibitions have you curated that you are most proud of?*

## PERSEVERANCE FURTHERS: 3:51 min.



*Tell us about your experience growing the Center for the Fine Arts into the Philip Johnson Art Museum (MAM) into the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM).*

## COLLABORATION: 1:16 min.



*How did you make your final decisions about the site?*

## OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 1:36 min



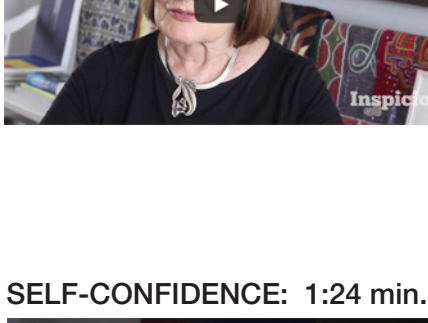
*Was the Center for the Fine Arts already established in the Philip Johnson-designed Miami Cultural Center when you were hired?*

## COLLABORATION: 1:05 min.



*There was a lot of political, financial, and legal wrangling involved with creating PAMM. Was that on-the-job training for you? Or did you gain that experience somewhere else?*

## UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART: 0:38 sec.



*Why did MAM-PAMM transition from you to Terry Riley?*

## SELF-CONFIDENCE: 1:46 min.



*What was your vision for the MAM-PAMM collection?*

## SELF-CONFIDENCE: 1:24 min.



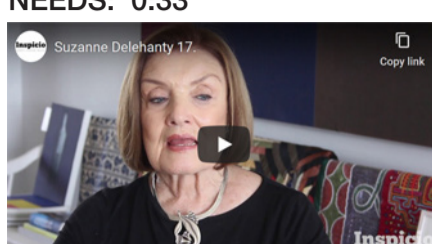
*It seems so daunting to try to create a meaningful collection from scratch.*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:**  
0:48 sec.



*Have you seen the film “Herb & Dorothy,” which is about a librarian and a U.S. postal worker who manage to amass a significant art collection?*

**UNDERSTANDS ARTISTS' NEEDS:** 0:33



*What are some of the things that can be done to support artists who want to live and work in South Florida?*

**COLLABORATION:** 3:31 min.



*Who are some of your role models and influencers?*

**CRITICAL THINKING:** 2:00 min.



*What role should a university play in the development of museum administrators and curators?*

**SERENDIPITY:** 1:20 min.



*What has been the role of serendipity in your career?*

**OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED:** 2:21 min.



*Describe a challenging situation that had a successful outcome.*

**COMMUNITY VALUES:**  
1:41 min.



*How have the governments of Miami and Miami-Dade County supported the art explosion in South Florida?*

**INSIGHT & INSPIRATION:**  
1:04 min.



*What kind of interaction did you have with South Florida's public school systems?*

**CRITICAL THINKING:** 2:25 min.



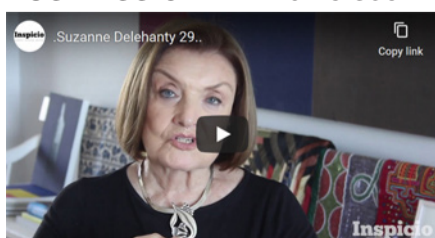
*The Miami and South Florida art communities have grown at an enormously rapid pace. What are your thoughts about Miami's position as a national and international art community?*

**UNDERSTANDS THE AUDIENCE'S PERSPECTIVE:**  
1:23 min.



*During art fair week in December, I've noticed young people, who may know very little about art, touring the art fairs just because the “scene” was exciting. I frowned at first, but then I realized that they represented potential for new art audiences.*

**UNDERSTANDS THE BUSINESS OF ART:** 0:43 sec.



*What are the challenges for the Miami art community moving forward?*