



The Wolfsonian–FIU and Designer Bas van Beek Bring Dutch Dazzle to Miami Art Week

Shameless, a colorful exhibition of pattern and design, will feature new Wolfsonian collection-inspired work and highlights from Van Beek’s projects with cultural institutions in the Netherlands

MIAMI BEACH (September 23, 2021) — Marking his U.S. debut, the Rotterdam-based designer and artist Bas van Beek will create an immersive, jewel-box exhibition for The Wolfsonian–FIU in an expansive Miami Art Week takeover of the museum’s South Beach site. *Shameless*, on view November 29, 2021, through August 7, 2022, will present Van Beek’s new work and installations derived from the Wolfsonian collection as well as recent career highs at Dutch institutions like Het Nieuwe Instituut, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Van Abbemuseum, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and Kunstmuseum Den Haag.

“Looking back at our historical heritage, Van Beek brings to life credited and anonymous designs,” said Wolfsonian chief curator Silvia Barisione, who organized the exhibition. “By reshaping and improving them using new materials and techniques, he is ‘shameless’ in his provocative approach that goes beyond time, genre, and geographic boundaries. He never hides his source of inspiration; on the contrary, it becomes part of his creation.”

Added Aric Chen, general and artistic director of Het Nieuwe Instituut: “We are delighted to contribute to an exhibition that reimagines design history by creating new perspectives and alternative narratives—something that is core to what we do as both an archive and producer of contemporary knowledge.” In addition to serving as one of the seven participating Dutch organizations, Het Nieuwe Instituut helped coordinate the project in the Netherlands and edited a small publication accompanying the exhibition.

Bas van Beek, known for dynamically repurposing historical design, ignores traditional boundaries by exploring relationships between “old” and “new,” turning admired, familiar artifacts into fresh, contemporary work—often with a wink. Intrigued by the richness and variety of existing material, he reconsiders shapes, functions, and meanings by playfully riffing off work by artists past. Van Beek’s project is the latest in an ongoing Wolfsonian series that engages contemporary artists and designers in reinterpreting its historic collection and building.

“I try to unravel the intentions and principles of the original designer and unlock them,” said Van Beek. “Exactly fitting my interests, The Wolfsonian has a vast collection and is one of the rare institutions that chooses to collect and preserve works of often-overlooked cultural value. It was exciting to find so many works in their holdings that feel as contemporary as they are modern, like in the design drawings of Wilhelm Poetter that became fodder for my new, Wolfsonian-specific tapestry work, which evokes the effect of a computer glitch.”

Transforming The Wolfsonian's ground floor, *Shameless* will feature a unique graphic scheme for each component of the exhibition:

- *5xWP*, a new Wolfsonian-commissioned tapestry work designed by Van Beek, woven by Miami-based Odabashian, and drawn from Wilhelm Poetter modernist textile patterns;
- *Lauweriks Teakettle*, a 3D-printed teakettle derived from a Wolfsonian collection piece, a 1907 design drawing by Mathieu Lauweriks;
- Enormous blue, purple, and bronze wall tiles inspired by Verner Pantón and Frank Lloyd Wright in addition to wallpaper and tapestries that fuse elements from the Wiener Werkstätte, Bauhaus, Mediterranean Revival, and Art Deco;
- Christmas ornaments, textiles, and aquarium sculptures nodding to highlights from Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, such as Claes Oldenburg's monumental *Screwarch* and Salvador Dalí's *Lobster Telephone*;
- An overview of Van Beek's work from the past 15 years, including *Cup and Paste*—an espresso cup based on H. P. Berlage's never-executed sketches for pressed-glass pieces and A. D. Copier's planters for Leerdam Glass Factory—and a 3D-printed recreation of an unrealized coffee service design by Frank Lloyd Wright; and
- An installation that alternates Amsterdam School Lambertus Zwiers-esque wallcoverings with a geometric grid animated by digital screens, based on the method of conceptual artist Sol LeWitt and the aesthetics of Memphis artist Nathalie du Pasquier.

Additionally, Van Beek, who teaches in the Industrial Design Department of the Royal Academy in The Hague, partnered with FIU architecture professor Nick Gelpi to co-teach a virtual course in Spring 2021, *Morphology in The Wolfsonian*. Students from FIU and the Royal Academy were guided in reverse-engineering existing historical design objects, investigating their form and aesthetics, and applying those principles to create new, 3D-printed objects. Each work will be displayed alongside the associated Wolfsonian collection item that served as muse.

"As part of Florida International University, The Wolfsonian is committed to creating one-of-a-kind student learning opportunities," said Wolfsonian acting director Casey Steadman. "That the result of this international venture winds up in a major institution during Miami Art Week is a testament to the true and unexpected power of artistic collaboration."

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Image

5xWP tapestry design, 2021. Bas van Beek (Dutch, b. 1974), designer. Commissioned by The Wolfsonian–FIU, Miami Beach FL.

Exhibition Support

Shameless is made possible by Creative Industries Fund NL; Dr. David and Linda Frankel; Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam; the Mondriaan Fund; Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York; George Lindemann Jr.; and the Netherland-America Foundation.

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. Our holdings comprise more than 200,000 items 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; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare and reference books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; sculptures; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is free and the museum is open Wednesday–Sunday, 10am–6pm. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

About FIU

Florida International University is a Top 50 public university that drives real talent and innovation in Miami and globally. High research (R1) activity and high social mobility come together at FIU to uplift and accelerate learner success in a global city by focusing in the areas of environment, health, innovation, and justice. Today, FIU has two campuses and multiple centers. FIU serves a diverse student body of more than 58,000 and 270,000 Panther alumni. U.S. News and World Report places dozens of FIU programs among the best in the nation, including international business at No. 2. Washington Monthly Magazine ranks FIU among the top 20 public universities contributing to the public good.