



The Wolfsonian
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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**The Wolfsonian–FIU Presents a Site-specific Installation by Artist Bhakti Baxter: *Untitled*
([construction of good])**

On view in The Wolfsonian Bridge Tender House, 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL

(MIAMI BEACH, FL) November 8, 2012— The Wolfsonian–Florida International University presents *Untitled* ([the construction of good]), a site-specific installation by Miami-based artist Bhakti Baxter that will be on view in The Wolfsonian Bridge Tender House beginning November 29, 2012.

The Bridge Tender House is one of two stainless-steel structures in the Art Deco style that were placed at either end of the NW 27th Avenue Bridge on the Miami River with its reconstruction in 1938–39. Saved from demolition in the late 1980s, the structure currently resides outside the entrance to The Wolfsonian where it intermittently serves as a space for temporary art installations.

Baxter cites the history of the Bridge Tender House as the central reference for his installation. In particular, he turns to a statement made by H. A. Wortham, then-regional director of the Public Works Administration, at its September 1939 inauguration ceremony: Wortham dedicated the bridge “to the construction of good for mankind.” Baxter notes how this simple phrasing effectively converts an act of labor (i.e. construction) and a product of labor (i.e. a bridge) into philosophical and moral principles.

“What exactly is meant by ‘good for mankind’ is always changing according to time and place,” says Baxter. “In the context of its original construction, the bridge and the Bridge Tender House provided practical services to cars and ships traveling on or over the Miami River, while at the same time acknowledging the value of good design in public works. Now with its mechanical guts removed, placed in a new and unexpected environment, the structure stands as a worthy relic of the Art Deco moment. Like the other contents of The Wolfsonian’s collection, it can help us to think through the complexity of such fundamental ideas as ‘good’ and ‘mankind’ by demonstrating how the meanings of things are perpetually shaped by their human and historical contexts.”

Baxter’s thought was also informed by his experience as a participant in *Describing Labor*, a forthcoming exhibition by artist Esther Shalev-Gerz, commissioned by The Wolfsonian and on view beginning December 3, 2012. As The Wolfsonian offers a picture of labor in its historic moment, both of these projects invite the public to rearticulate that picture for our own time.

This exhibition is on view through April 7th, 2013. Contact maris@thewolf.fiu.edu for more information.

About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University

The Wolfsonian 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. The collections comprise approximately 120,000 objects from the period of 1885 to 1945—the height of the Industrial Revolution to the end of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors, students, and children age 6 -12; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under six. The museum is open daily from noon–6 p.m.; Friday from noon–9 p.m.; and closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at www.wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian–FIU is proud to receive ongoing support from The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, The Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; The State of Florida; Department of Cultural Affairs; The Florida Council on Arts and Culture; The City of Miami Beach Cultural Affairs Program Cultural Arts Council; The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; United Airlines, the Official Airline of The Wolfsonian–FIU; Bacardi, USA., Inc.; and The Wolfsonian Visionaries.

About FIU

Florida International University is one of the twenty-five largest universities in the nation, with more than forty-two thousand students. Nearly one hundred thirty thousand FIU alumni live and work in South Florida. Its colleges and schools offer more than two hundred bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs in fields such as engineering, international relations, and law. As one of South Florida's anchor institutions, FIU is worlds ahead in its local and global engagement, finding solutions to the most challenging problems of our time. FIU emphasizes research as a major component of its mission. The opening of the Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in August 2009 has enhanced the university's ability to create lasting positive change in our community. For more information about FIU, visit www.fiu.edu.

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