PAMM CELEBRATES ART OF THE
PARTY PRESENTED BY VALENTINO

Palm trees swayed, libations flowed and the art benefactors partied to celebrate the fifth annual Art of the Party Presented by Valentino, PAMM’s biggest fundraiser of the year. Oh and what a party it was! The Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) opened its doors and gorgeous “backyard” to hundreds of art lovers, collectors, philanthropists and community leaders to honor renowned artist Christo and philanthropists Dorothy and Aaron Podhurst, who have been longtime supporters of PAMM since its inception 35 years ago. The grand affair raised more than $1 million, with all funds directly supporting the Museum’s education program, the largest program of its kind outside the Miami-Dade County school system. Way to go!!!

Ladies and gents donned their runway faves with many magnificent ladies in their Valentino designs. The well-heeled crowd witnessed the inaugural recognition of the Perez Prize by Jorge and Darlene Perez, a new annual, unrestricted award of $50,000. PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans announced Christina Quarles as the first recipient which salutes Quarles’ outstanding achievements and impact on the current art historical narrative. The selection was made by PAMM’s curatorial team in collaboration with Jorge M. Perez Family Foundation and honors experimentation, creativity and promise. It is also a symbol of PAMM’s mission to be a leader in the presentation, study and interpretation of international modern and contemporary art. The Perez Prize will be announced annually at PAMM’s Art of the Party.

Now listen up to this unique experience— you see, the evening featured three guest happenings, all conceptualized by the one and only, Lee Brian Schrager, as well as culinary collaborations by Miami-based, James Beard Foundation Award-winning chef Norman Van Aken and Constellation Culinary Group. Notables rocked out the Chef’s Table, the Supper Club Dinner Lounge and a Remix party. Kicking off with the Chef’s Table, PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans paid tribute to critically-acclaimed artist Christo, one of the most admired and influential living artists in the world, whose monumental exhibition Surrounded Islands, was on view at PAMM this past year, celebrating the project’s 35th anniversary and the lasting mark that it left on Miami’s cultural history. The evening also celebrated philanthropists Dorothy and Aaron Podhurst, who were among the visionary founders and leaders whose generosity and unwavering commitment helped PAMM grow from its inception as the Center for the Fine Arts into a world-class cultural destination.

The Supper Club dinner lounge invited luminaries to feast on a one-of-a-kind al fresco dining experience on the picturesque waterfront promenade before kicking up their heels to music by Phaxas. And to close out the Party, what better way to end the evening with an after party, where a vibrant dance club featuring music by Danny Stern greeted partygoers to groove under the stars and fulfill their sweet cravings.

So just who attended this Party? PAMM brought together cultural ambassadors, social tastemakers and more including musicians Marc Anthony, Alejandro Sanz, model Devon Windsor, film director Aaron Lieber, chef Norman Van Aken, Judge Cecilia Altonaga, Nadine Asin, Caroline Vreeland, fashion designer Naeem Khan, Jorge and Darlene Perez, Maria Bichi, Mitchell A. Bierman, Adrienne Bon Haes and Marvin Friedman, Wayne and Arlene Chaplin, Sebastian and Natalia Echavarria, Alberto and Susana Ibarquin, Deryl Mickissack, Gregory and Leslie Ferrero, Mireille Chancy Gonzalez, Rose Ellen Greene, Diane Grob, Jeff Krisinsky, Luke Palacio, Patrick and Jaleh Peyto, Otis Roberts, Nina and Camillo Miguel, Reaj and Tanvi Vattikuti, and Susie and Waldi Wahab, PAMM Chief Curator Tobias Ostrander and Vice President of the Knight Foundation Victoria Rogers.

High Rollers

A roll of the dice and a flip of the card turned guests into winners at the Love and Hope High Rollers Night to benefit the Diabetes Research Institute (DRI) and its mission of finding a cure. The casino-themed bash hosted more than 300 gambling gala-goers who raised funds and support for the DRI reaching close to $400,000! The Nobu Hotel Eden Roc Miami Beach rolled out the red carpet as superstars including long time DRI supporter Sir Barry Gibb and his lovely wife, Lady Linda Gibb, who serve as Love and Hope’s International Chairmen, and baseball great Ron Darling, who serves on the DRI Foundation’s national board. The lively vibe filled the air as Las Vegas-style showgirls decked in red feathers and sparkling beads beckoned the generous benefactors to the ballroom for dinner and dancing.

Executive Chairman Sandra Levy welcomed the philanthropic set then WPLG Local 10 morning news anchor Jacey Birch, who served as mistress of ceremonies, helped thank the evening’s top sponsors: the Caroline and Alitza Weiss Family Foundation, National Chairman Kathi Simkins and the Simkins Family Foundation, and Barbara Shapiro. But it was Alitza Weiss who delivered the evening’s biggest surprise when she announced that they would be doubling their donation to the DRI to a total of $1 million! WOW! A-mazing!

The Vegas-feel transcended throughout the night with a sultry Marilyn Monroe impersonator, who accompanied by “Elvis Presley,” perform a rendition of the iconic “Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend.” After the phenom performance, the evening boasted a luxury auction
featuring a signed Roberto Coin ladies’ white gold and diamond bracelet valued at $35,000, among numerous fabulous items. Oh and did I mention, the tables were packed—yes from blackjack to craps to roulette and even slots, revelers had the chance to win designer-named prizes and one-of-a-kind treasures. Everyone’s a winner—the charity and the evening’s supporters!

Theater of Shopping

The pleasant and surprising cool weather set the tone for the elegant soiree hosted by Bal Harbour Shops in their Center Courtyard to launch the amazing book, Theater of Shopping: The Story of Stanley Whitman’s Bal Harbour Shops published by Rizzoli and Gordon de Vries Studio. Divinely decked out guests turned out for an intimate conversation with Chairman, Whitman Family Development, Randy Whitman, President and CEO, Whitman Family Development, Matthew Whitman Lazebny, author Alastair Gordon and co-author Barbara de Vries. Owner of Books and Books and co-founder of the Miami Book Fair International Mitchell Kaplan moderated the evening which drew much interest and memorable discussions in celebration of retail visionary Stanley Whitman. Whitman, often called the Walt Disney of retail, had a dream and henceforth, the creation of Bal Harbour Shops, the most successful luxury fashion center in the world. The engaged audience asked questions and reminisced with stories about Whitman’s passion, sense of humor and hard work. Event hosts Gwen Lazebny, Gigi Whitman, Kristin Lazebny, Lola Jacobson, Maris Tocciin Lucas and Schatzi Kassal were joined by numerous others including Micky Wolfson, Sonia Gibson, Jennifer Valoppi, Don Browne, Nina Miguel, Diana Morrison, Carolyn Travis, Lia Costa, Maria Hoyer, Kristian and Rosemarie Andersen, who enjoyed an evening which paid tribute to a truly remarkable man, Mr. Whitman, who dedicated his life to creating a unique and captivating fashion center that would stand the test of time.

STEPH SEZ... HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE ST. PATRICK’S DAY!

Aaron and Dorothy Podhurst were honored at PAMM’s Art of the Party.


DRIF CEO Alice Rodd O’Rourke, top sponsors Alitza and Caroline Weiss, Director Dr. Camillo Ricordi, and Executive Chairman Sandra Levy at DRIF’s High Rollers event.

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