



THE ART NEWSPAPER

[Russia-Ukraine war](#) [Art market](#) [Museums & heritage](#) [Exhibitions](#) [Books](#) [Podcasts](#) [Columns](#) [Adve](#)

Miami
Archive

Rubells donate \$1 million worth of art to Tampa Museum

The institution has received 91 paintings by the Outsider artist Purvis Young

Jason Edward Kaufman

31 August 2005

New York

Miami collectors Don and Mera Rubell, whose extensive collection of international contemporary art is open to the public in a newly expanded private museum, have donated 91 paintings worth \$1 million by local artist Purvis Young to the Tampa Museum of Art. Elaine D. Gustafson, director of exhibitions and collections at the Tampa Museum, says the couple had agreed to the donation two years ago when the institution was planning a \$76-million building designed by Rafael Viñoly, and stuck to their decision even when plans for the building were scrapped.

Young, now in his 60s, is an American of Bahamian descent who taught himself to paint after serving prison time for armed robbery. He first came to public attention in 1972 when he fixed

clusters of his archaic expressionist paintings to derelict buildings in the run-down Overtown area of Miami where he lived. A decade later he painted murals on the local Culmer Library.

Since then, his works, often painted on pieces of wood and paper, have been shown in commercial galleries, such as Frederic Snitzer in Miami and Skot Foreman Fine Art in Atlanta, as well as in various museums, several of which own his works, including the High Museum in Atlanta, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, both in Washington, DC.

Six years ago, the Rubells acquired several thousand of his paintings and some 10,000 drawings in exchange for an annuity that they continue to pay him. Last year they began donating his work to museums in Florida, giving 30 pieces valued at \$300,000 to the Naples Museum and 15 works worth \$170,000 to the Fort Lauderdale Museum. The American Folk Art Museum in New York is to be the next beneficiary of the project, which will distribute \$2 to 3 million worth of Young's art to museums every year, says Mark Coetzee, director of the Rubell Collection.

The gifts are unconditional, but the Rubells require that the recipients publish catalogues raisonnés of their holdings and organise an exhibition. Tampa plans to open an exhibition with catalogue in 2007. Mr Young's work will reach an even wider audience with the release of a documentary on his life currently being planned with funding from actress Jane Fonda.

[Miami](#)

[Donations](#)

[Rubell Collection](#)

[Tampa](#)

[Purvis Young](#)

COOKIE SETTINGS