

## Paper Hearts: A Freedom Tower Fundraiser to Help You Find True Love

By **Ciara LaVelle** Mon., Feb. 3 2014 at 12:18 PM



Charles Hashim, *Untitled*

**Art as aphrodisiac: Hey, it worked for these guys.**

Attention, Miami singles: This Valentine's Day doesn't have to be such a downer. You may have wined and dined your way through the worst of South Florida's dating pool to no avail, but there's still a chance for you to find true love.

There's just one catch: Your soulmate isn't a person. It's a piece of art.

**Miami Dade College's Museum of Art + Design** wants you to have the meaningful relationship you've always wanted, even if it is with an inanimate cultural masterpiece rather than Mr. Right. So it's launching Paper Hearts, the first of what organizers hope to make an annual fundraiser for the museum, just in time for Valentine's Day.

Like all fundraisers, Paper Hearts is about drawing attention and donations to its cause.

"Many folks in this city are still not accustomed nor know that the Museum & MDC Freedom Tower has public hours, let alone various events by our cultural colleagues," says Jeremy Mikolajczak, executive director and chief curator. The primary goals of the event are to raise funds to support

MDC arts programs -- "We are an admission free institution, so building and sustaining funds sometimes can be a challenge," Mikolajczak points out -- and also to "create a fun event in the amazing and historic building we call home."

But if attendees fall in love along the way, even better.

"The whole idea behind the event started with a vintage valentine card and transpired from there," Mikolajczak explains. "Amongst the museum staff, we liked the idea of tradition and exchange of valentine cards - sort of a long lost practice today. It was amazing how 'cheeky' vintage cards are, and that they did not necessarily elude to romance only, but friendship as well."



Afrobeta, feeling the love.

So they've set the stage for Paper Hearts attendees to make new friends (with benefits or without). DJ Hottpants is curating a "romantic" DJ set, Afrobeta will perform, and there'll also be red lights, chocolates, the works. Rowr.

If you're not feeling your fellow attendees (literally or otherwise), you can always focus on the art itself. A special exhibition of works on paper (hence the name "Paper Hearts") was curated by local art legend Bernice Steinbaum for the occasion, featuring many of Miami's top artists.

"I think drawings, prints, and other works on paper are always a good start to building an art collection - and what better than acquiring it while helping out a cultural institution?" Mikolajczak says. "We have some amazing pieces from the likes of Bob Thiele, Sara Stites, Adler Guerrier, Enrique Gomez de Molina, Carol Todaro, and Lynne Golob Gelfman, who has an amazing exhibition currently on view at Dimensions Variable. We have also secured works by New York artists Jonathan Beer, Elena Sisto, and Jaimie Warren; and Kansas City's Anne Austin Pearce."

The works will be both sold and auctioned off at the event. Plus, "The Museum will also be selling a limited edition replica of the MDC Freedom Tower in commemoration of the event and the

establishment of the MDC Museum of Art + Design. It's a super cool and unique piece of history in Miami."

That's a blessing for singles and couples alike, Mikolajczak says.

"Art is one of the best V-day gifts. It's personal - not only from you as the person giving the gift - but from the artist as well. It's like a handwritten love letter or note of friendship - unexpected, sincere, and possibly our last vestige [of] human communication."

*Paper Hearts takes place Thursday, Feb. 13, from 8-11 p.m. at the Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College. Tickets cost \$75 for general admission, which includes unlimited hors d'oeuvres and cocktails from local restaurants and bars, or \$200 for VIP, which adds bonuses like access to VIP lounge, special hors d'oeuvres and cocktails, an event VIP gift bag filled with gifts, and silent auction preview. Proceeds go to fund the museum's programs, which this year include solo exhibitions by Tatiana Vahan and William Cordova, and a major exhibition celebrating 50 years of the CINTAS Foundation fellows like Jillian Mayer, Carlos Alfonso, Andres Serrano, Teresita Fernandez and Maria Martinez Canas. Call 305-237-7700 or visit [mdcmoad.org](http://mdcmoad.org).*

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