

December 1, 2010

Miami Art Museum Breaks Ground in Downtown

By Jennifer LeClaire

MIAMI—After years of planning, the **Miami Art Museum** finally broken ground yesterday on its new campus in Downtown Miami's Museum Park. Designed by Herzog & Meuron, the new museum is scheduled to open its doors in 2013.

Aaron Podhurst, chairman of Miami Art Museum's board of trustees, called the groundbreaking a "giant step forward" in Miami's emergence as "one of the world's greatest cultural cities." Total construction costs for the Miami Art Museum project are budgeted at \$131 million. Museum Park will also be home to the new Miami Science Museum, which has not yet broken ground.

"The launch of this construction process signals that the public and private sectors are committed to enhancing Miami's profile as a global arts destination and we are proud that Miami Art Museum factors prominently into that reputation," Podhurst says. "Our new building will fill many roles—as a repository for our city's greatest works, a resource for learning, an economic engine in our urban core, a gathering place for Miami residents and visitors, and as an architectural icon of our city."



On hand at the groundbreaking ceremony were Podhurst, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, Miami-Dade County Manager George Burgess, and **Miami Art Museum Director Thom Collins**. Christine Binswanger, Herzog & de Meuron senior partner in charge of the project, was also there for the milestone.

"Launching our construction timeline is certainly an exciting moment in the history of Miami Art Museum and Miami, but I'm most looking forward to the expanded possibilities that the new facility will unlock on the programming side," says Collins. "From large-scale touring exhibitions that will expose Miami to the world's finest art works, to meaningful educational programs for students young and old, the new Miami Art Museum will be a showcase for the power of the visual arts."

The new Miami Art Museum will offer 200,000 square feet of programmable space, including 120,000 square feet of interior space—more than three times the size of the Museum's current facility—and 80,000 square feet of exterior space ideal for the display of works of art, educational activities, relaxation and dining. The building will house an educational complex with a library, auditorium, classrooms and workshop space, as well as a café and museum store.

"The Miami Art Museum is in downtown already, but it is on the west side in a much smaller footprint," Alyce Robertson, executive director of the Miami Downtown Development Authority, told GlobeSt.com after the groundbreaking ceremony ended. "The architecture of this new facility is going to draw lots of visitors, especially people who come to restaurants and bars in the vicinity of the museum."

Beyond its impact on Miami's cultural arts community, construction of the new Miami Art Museum is expected to positively influence the local economy. More than \$37 million will be spent on local construction labor, and the Museum is expected to draw 200,000 new visitors to Downtown Miami each year, accounting for a \$12 million annual economic impact, according to a study by Miami Economics Associates.

"Combined with the Performing Arts Center, the Miami Art Museum starts to make downtown the Mecca for cultural activities," Robertson says. "Now we need to finish out of rest of Museum Park and make it more accessible to the public so that the residents will have some green space, especially residents in the new condominiums around Biscayne Boulevard."