

# SEANKELLY

Ascher, Storm. "Pérez Art Museum Miami Celebrates Art and Soul." *Cultured Magazine*, February 8, 2022.

## CULTURED



The 9th Annual Art + Soul Celebration has become Miami's most anticipated fundraising event for cultural workers, art enthusiasts and philanthropists. The program is inclusive of African diaspora, Latin American and Caribbean artists beyond the United States to celebrate the vastness of Black art and culture. Pérez Art Museum hosted its ninth Annual Art + Soul Celebration, which has become Miami's most anticipated fundraising event for cultural workers, art enthusiasts and philanthropists. The program recently changed titles from Fund for African American Art to Fund for Black Art, to be inclusive of African diaspora, Latin American and Caribbean artists beyond the United States. The Black Art Fund's Ambassadors program at PAMM has raised over \$1 million this year including a fundraising match by the Knight Foundation.

The dinner began with remarks from Director Franklin Sirmans and journalist Neki Mohan. The presentation reflected the artistry that goes into every type of industry, including Art + Soul honoree David Alan Grier who is an actor, activist, comedian and seasoned art collector, as well as Chef Alexander Smalls who offered his curated dinner menu featuring recipes adapted from his recent book, *Meals, Music and Muses*. Director Franklin Sirmans then graced us with the acquisitions reveal and brought artists Calida Rawles and Dawoud Bey to the stage. Three new artworks were added to the PAMM permanent collection that reflect on Black trauma and history in the US.

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*Dawoud Bey, Cabin and Palm Trees, 2019. Collection Perez Art Museum Miami, museum purchase with funds by Jorge M. Perez the John S. And James L. knight Foundation, and PAMM Ambassadors for Black Art Copyright Dawoud Bey, courtesy of Sean Kelly, New York.*

"I'd like to thank everyone who was involved in acquiring my work. It's a really gratifying moment for me particularly not one piece coming into the collection but to have two of my recent works come into this museum," says Dawoud Bey, one of the artists whose work was acquired. "For the past 10 years, I've been making work that looks at and seems to bring into a contemporary conversation aspects of African American history. I'm trying to use the history in a way that allows us to first engage in an act of memories so that our history is not forgotten, and second, to bring it into a meaningful conversation in our own times because past is never the past. The past is always present. How does one visualize the past? How does one make work about something that has already happened?"



*Calida Rawles, On the Other Side of Everything, 2021. Collection Perez Art Museum Miami, museum purchase with funds by Jorge M. Perez the John S. And James L. knight Foundation, and PAMM Ambassadors for Black Art.*

"I am so honored to be here and celebrate Black artistry, and to have my painting, *On the Other Side of Everything*, as a part of the Perez art museum and

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its collection. Although I painted it last year, it feels like much longer," says artist Calida Rawles. "I knew I wanted to focus on Black men. When I thought of what I wanted to express, I kept circling back to the obvious: I'm not a Black man nor do I understand what it means or how it feels to be a Black man, and then I thought, 'What if I start from there?' That mystery of not fully knowing someone, of only seeing parts of them. Isn't that the beauty of the human experience? I kind of believe that's where the journey of compassion begins. I feel so blessed to have such beautiful gentle and strong Black men in my life and when I see any Black man walking down the street I can't help but be reminded of a friend or cousin my son, my father my brother, my loving husband. The beauty of Black men and the love and little touch of mystery is what is in my painting, what I tried to capture."



*Calida Garcia Rawles, Gerald Rawles and Rachel Lehmann.*

During dessert, Board Trustees Kimberly Marshall and Dorothy Terrell led a round of pledges. More guests arrived for the celebration with DJ Pam Jones and Deep Fried Funk. The outdoor terrace was filled with Black joy and dancing through the wee hours of the night.