The Wolfsonian–FIU and EXILE Books Partner to Celebrate Iconic Moment in South Florida History

MIAMI BEACH (October 26, 2015) — The Wolfsonian–Florida International University is pleased to present Orange Oratory, an activation of the museum’s historic Bridge Tender House co-organized with EXILE Books founder Amanda Keeley. On view November 6, 2015 through January 31, 2016, Orange Oratory is inspired by the 1939 inauguration of the Bridge Tender House, a notable Miami landmark today located in front of the museum on Washington Avenue. The project will coincide with EXILE Books’ residency in The Wolfsonian Shop.

Historically, the concept of Orange Oratory stems from a 1939 Miami Herald article announcing the opening of the 27th Avenue Bridge over the Miami River, the original home of the Bridge Tender House. Headlined “Fruit Juice and Oratory to Feature Span Opening,” the article detailed organizers’ choice of fresh-squeezed orange juice—a signature South Florida thirst quencher—to toast the new architectural landmark with city officials and the Miami community.

“It says something about the South Florida spirit when a project that signaled economic recovery for a region hard-hit by the Great Depression becomes an occasion to celebrate with tangy, tropical beverages,” said Wolfsonian curator Matthew Abess. “Considering the parallels between that moment and our own, we are especially excited for this timely revival of the fruit juice and oratory tradition.”

A contemporary reimagining, Orange Oratory takes form as a neon sculpture suspended inside the Bridge Tender House, creating a bright orange beacon that connects to this historic moment. In addition, The Wolfsonian and EXILE Books will informally recreate the 1939 inauguration ceremony at a festive opening reception with complimentary orange juice on November 6, 2015.

Orange Oratory will be presented in tandem with an artist’s book designed by Richard Maassey, a virtual exhibition accessible on wolfsonian.org, and a pop-up EXILE Books installation in The Wolfsonian Shop featuring publications thematically linked to the color orange. Both the artist’s book, published by EXILE Books, and the virtual exhibition will highlight and re-contextualize works from the museum’s permanent collection that capture the whimsical, unusual character of what it means to be “Wolfsonian.” Many of the showcased objects—ranging from citrus industry ephemera to bold travel posters advertising Florida’s exotic, tropical allure—are rarely on public
display, offering a refreshing new perspective on, and local point of departure into, an internationally renowned collection.

Added Keeley, "Orange Oratory provides a platform for the public to engage with our ephemeral history and re-examine Floridian culture, ultimately provoking new thinking about how we craft our local story."

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**About The Wolfsonian–Florida International University**

The Wolfsonian is a museum, library, and research center that uses objects to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design, to explore what it means to be modern, and to tell the story of social, historical, and technological changes that have transformed our world. The collections comprise approximately 180,000 objects from the 1850s to the 1950s—the height of the Industrial Revolution through the aftermath of the Second World War—in a variety of media including furniture; industrial-design objects; works in glass, ceramics, and metal; rare books; periodicals; ephemera; works on paper; paintings; textiles; and medals.

The Wolfsonian is located at 1001 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL. Admission is $7 for adults; $5 for seniors, students, and children age 6–12; and free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, and children under six. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 10am–6pm; Friday, 10am–9pm; Sunday, noon–6pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at wolfsonian.org for further information.

The Wolfsonian receives generous and ongoing support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; and City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council.

**About EXILE Books**

EXILE Books is a pop-up, artist’s bookstore that migrates throughout Miami, spending 2–3 months in each location. At every venue EXILE evolves, presenting a thematically curated selection of titles and public programing like lectures, performances, workshops, and events. Our hybrid art installation, bookstore, and programming outlet is dedicated to advancing the circulation, understanding of, and engagement with artist’s publications. EXILE seeks to establish a pervasive print culture in Miami by creating hubs for independent publishing that represent and serve our diverse community. EXILE Books is made possible with the generous support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Printed Matter, Inc., and FEAST Miami. For more information visit us at exilebooks.com.