



WOLFSONIAN

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THE WOLFSONIAN-FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY AWARDED MAJOR GRANT FROM THE GETTY FOUNDATION

MIAMI BEACH, FL (March 4, 2008)—The Wolfsonian-Florida International University has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the prestigious Getty Foundation to work on one of its most significant architectural treasures—the John and Drew Ebersen Architectural Record Archive. Ebersen is known in South Florida as architect of “atmospheric theaters” such as Miami’s Olympia Theater, now known as Gusman Center for the Performing Arts. This grant matches a previously awarded \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to work on this architectural archive.

“We are so honored to be awarded this grant, which will enable us to gain intellectual control, properly archive, and ultimately provide access to one of our most important architectural holdings,” stated museum director Cathy Leff. “Access to this collection will facilitate new research on this important firm, with a Miami connection, whose architecture and interior designs set a new standard in theater design in the 1920s and 1930s.”

The John and Drew Ebersen Architectural Collection was purchased by Mr. Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. in 1991 and gifted to The Wolfsonian. It remains, to this day, one of its most significant architectural holdings. The collection contains more than 420 individual projects and more than 7,600 individual items, including nearly 4,800 design drawings and over 2,600 photographs. The archive includes original and reproduction design drawings, floor plans, diagrams, photographs, films, job records, correspondence, as well as documents about the professional lives of the firms’ principals, John Ebersen and his son, Drew, who joined his father’s practice in 1926 as full partner and originated much of the job correspondence and film records. The John Ebersen firm designed and built hundreds of movie palaces from the 1920s through the 1960s, and is credited for popularizing the “atmospheric” style of theater architecture. This type of architecture attempts to transport the audience into another time and place often utilizing an exotic vernacular which has included styles such as Italian Renaissance and Moorish Revival. The numerous architectural projects of the firm were geographically located throughout the country as well as in different locations abroad. However, many of these theaters have since been destroyed or are currently facing demolition which makes the visual documentation of the materials all the more important to preserve.

The grant enables The Wolfsonian to address its first priority of properly archiving the project-related materials in order to allow access to the many scholars, architects, historic preservationists, architectural societies, and historic theater societies that contact the museum to request review of these important materials.

About The Getty Foundation

The Getty Foundation provides support to institutions and individuals throughout the world, funding a diverse range of projects that promote the understanding and conservation of the visual arts and furthering the work of all Getty programs. The Foundation also encompasses the Getty Leadership Institute, the leading source of continuing professional development for current and future museum leaders.

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 120,000 objects from the period of 1885 to 1945—the height of the Industrial Revolution to the end 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, Fla. Admission is \$7 adults; \$5 seniors, students, and children six-12; free for Wolfsonian members, State University System of Florida staff and students with ID, children under six, and Miami Beach residents with ID. The museum is open Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday from noon-6pm; Thursday and Friday from noon-9pm; and is closed on Wednesday. Contact us at 305.531.1001 or visit us online at www.wolfsonian.org.

The Wolfsonian receives ongoing support from the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts; Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; Crispin Porter + Bogusky; Continental Airlines, the preferred airline of The Wolfsonian; the Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Foundation; and Pistils & Petals.

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