

EMPLOYEE EXHIBIT

EMPLOYEES OF THE MIAMI ART MUSEUM GOT TO SHOW OFF THEIR CREATIVE CHOPS TO THE DESIGN DISTRICT CROWD AT AN EXHIBITION DURING THE AREA'S MONTHLY GALLERY WALK

BY LAURA MORALES
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On the day Tina Cornely found out that her younger sister had just died of a heart attack, a cry of grief echoed through the halls of the Miami Art Museum.

She decided to turn her sorrow into a way to honor her sister's memory, spending much of the past year pushing numbtacks — painted red in memory of Deborah Cornely's flame-colored hair — into dress form.

"There are tacks of tears, tacks of love and tacks of forgiveness," said Cornely, a Coconut Grove resident, and the museum's assistant director of operations and special projects.

Her work, titled *Death By a Thousand Cuts*, is one of dozens of pieces created by fellow employees on display at a temporary exhibit in the Design District.

On Saturday night, 29 MAM staffers got to showcase their talents at the Buena Vista building during the district's monthly gallery walk.

For most of the evening, art lovers drifted through the compact space examining works by people who write grants, guide tours, set up exhibits and help manage the day-to-day workings at MAM.

Many artists, both professional and amateur, work day jobs at museums to pay the bills, said Terence Riley, who took a job as MAM's director in March of 2006 after 4 years as chief curator of architecture and design at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

"They have an annual staff show at MoMA, so I can't claim to have invented the concept. But I noticed how many artists work at museums," Riley said Monday. "I had a sneaking suspicion that would translate well to Miami."

Craig Robins, president of

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Miami Art Museum Staff Art Exhibit
- **When:** Saturdays through Nov. 1
- **Where:** Buena Vista Building, 180 NE 39th St., Suite 120
- **Cost:** Free
- **Information:** Call Jay Oré at 305-375-4415 or e-mail jore@miamiartmuseum.org

Dacra Development, donated use of the space on Northeast 39th Street near 2nd Avenue. The exhibit will run until Nov. 1.

Works on display Saturday included paintings, photographs, sculpture — even a bowlful of colorful fibers created by grant writer Pamela Palma.

Docent Nancy Quesada, a former financial manager who began painting this year as a way of coping with fibromyalgia, created a canvas adorned with a basket of roses — a tribute to civil-rights icon Rosa Parks.

"On a trip to San Antonio, I took a bus to the riverwalk and I noticed that each bus had a seat dedicated to Rosa Parks," Quesada said. "Thinking about her made me think about that song *We Shall Overcome*."

Painting helped her overcome her own physical pain while making an aesthetically pleasing political statement, the Coral Gables resident said.

"It was a really healing process to do it," she said.

The affordability — or unaffordability — of pretension is the theme of *Lure of Fortune*, a curious sculpture by exhibition designer Hans Seitz, who has worked at MAM for nine years.

"It's all about the pitfalls of blindly chasing after money



CARL JUSTE/MIAMI HERALD

EASING THE PAIN OF LOSS: Tina Cornely created this work in memory of her sister Deborah, who died last year.

and material things," said Seitz, an avid fisherman whose hobby helped inspire his theme for the exhibit.

He sculpted the word "Bling" from gold-colored papier-mâché, decked with rhinestones and giant fishing

lures made of shredded, albeit bogus, greenbacks.

Seitz's friend and colleague Jay Oré, an exhibit preparator and coordinator at MAM, curated the staff show — and displayed his light-box creations as well.

"We've had a lot of people to jump through to get to this point," Oré, celebrating the evening with a bottle of wine. "We wanted to be inclusive. Anyone who wanted to show their work could."