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## Pérez Art Museum Miami Announces First Career Survey Devoted to the Work of Dara Friedman

***Dara Friedman: Perfect Stranger* marks the Miami-based artist's largest  
exhibition to date**



Dara Friedman, *Dichter*, 2017. Four-channel color video transferred from 16 mm film, with sound. Courtesy the artist and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York ©Dara Friedman, courtesy the artist and Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York

**MIAMI – July 27, 2017** – On November 3, 2017, Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) will present *Dara Friedman: Perfect Stranger*, the first career survey of the work of internationally renowned, Miami-based artist Dara Friedman. The exhibition features 17 major film and video works that combine the techniques and principles of Structural Filmmaking with a strong emotional charge and an intuitive approach to subject matter. *Perfect Stranger*, Friedman's largest museum show to date, also marks the largest exhibition of a Miami-based artist organized by PAMM. The exhibition is on view from November 3, 2017 through March 4, 2018 in PAMM's M.B. Fernandez Family galleries.

Friedman is a former student of legendary Austrian experimental filmmaker Peter Kubelka, whose work was a precursor to the Structural film movement in Europe during the 1960s. Her work unravels cinematic conventions, laying bare the materiality and mechanics of film production while harnessing the accidents that occur as light passes through lens and celluloid. The results demystify film's illusionistic tendencies, while distilling uncanny fragments from the ordinary world and transforming everyday sights





and sounds into the raw material for sensual—and often euphoric—encounters.



“The exhibition at PAMM captures the intensity that marks Dara’s films, reflecting the ways she uses this intensity to reach viewers directly and at a gut level, with the ultimate goal of encouraging and fostering empathy toward others,” commented Curator René Morales. “Dara’s work helps us to see ourselves and others with greater clarity; it pounds on the walls that separate self from other, and loved ones from friends and strangers.”

“Dara’s trajectory powerfully embodies the possibility that life as an artist in Miami is not just viable, but that the city can serve as a home base for a global artistic career,” remarked PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans. “PAMM has always considered its aspiration to support and collaborate with the local art community to be one of its core values and a central facet of its mission.”

*Perfect Stranger* consists of 17 major works by Friedman. The first gallery will be comprised mainly of early work (pre-2001), many on 16 mm film. The gallery will be completely open, allowing light and sound to leak from one piece to the other, resulting in a cacophony of intense energy. The second gallery will take the opposite approach, consisting of a series of closed, soundproofed rooms for each film, complete with seating. Each room will feel like its own universe, encouraging deep immersion and focus.

Exhibition highlights include:

- **Government Cut Freestyle, 1998:** Part of PAMM’s permanent collection, this film shows young people taking turns jumping off a pier in South Pointe Park in Miami Beach into Government Cut, the waterway that connects Biscayne Bay to the Atlantic Ocean. The artist shot the footage so the divers’ bodies remain tightly constricted within the frame. As a result, the camera bobs and sways gently as the divers plummet through the air, each time arching over the horizon line. The film’s slow motion pacing and the steady, undulating rhythm with which the scenes unfold elicit a swooning, hypnotic effect.
- **Bim Bam, 1999:** In two separate 16 mm film loops, one stacked atop the other, a pair of silhouetted female figures (both the artist) repeatedly step through a threshold, slamming the door in front of or behind them. When the doors are open, they fill the frame with either yellow or blue light; when they are closed, the frame goes black. The footage was filmed with the camera turned on its side so that the figures appear at a 90-degree angle from the floor. The sound of doors slamming plays on an independent track and is left unsynchronized with the projections, either anticipating or lagging behind the action.
- **Romance, 2001:** Part of PAMM’s permanent collection, this work shows a succession of approximately 70 couples kissing tenderly, playfully, or with passionate abandon in slow motion in a tightly framed composition. Friedman captured the grainy footage through a zoom lens while taking long walks with her infant daughter in a public park in the Gianicolo neighborhood of Rome. Each scene focuses on the negative space between the lovers’ profiles. The artist has likened this film to a nature documentary, as clinical in tone as a study of the mating habits of birds.
- **Musical, 2007–08:** A total of 55 participants perform in the crowded streets, subways, diners and plazas of Midtown Manhattan while singing a song meaningful to them at full volume. The resulting soundtrack features a spectrum of musical genres, from Broadway show tunes and classic rock to a Kabuki ballad and a Michael Jackson tune, culminating in a rousing interpretation of “America, the Beautiful.” The singers are, in general, barely registered by the throngs of people surrounding them.
- **Dancer, 2011:** Co-produced by PAMM, this film depicts 66 people of diverse ages and backgrounds—from classically trained ballerinas to pole dancers, tap dancers, clubbers, *capoeiristas*, calypso dancers, yogis, belly dancers, and tumblers—as they move through Miami, using the city’s sidewalks as a stage. The musical medleys that comprise the work’s soundtrack are punctuated by the sound of city traffic and the dancers’ breathing. The camera moves alongside each person’s body like a dance partner.





## Organization and Support

*Dara Friedman: Perfect Stranger* is organized by PAMM Curator René Morales and presented by Citi with generous support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Lead individual support received from Dennis Richard and Susan Bell Richard, Mark and Nedra Oren, and George Lindemann. Support from Veuve Clicquot is also gratefully acknowledged.

## About Pérez Art Museum Miami

Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) promotes artistic expression and the exchange of ideas, advancing public knowledge and appreciation of art, architecture and design, and reflecting the diverse community of its pivotal geographic location at the crossroads of the Americas. A nearly 35-year-old South Florida institution formerly known as Miami Art Museum (MAM), Pérez Art Museum Miami opened a new building, designed by world-renowned architects Herzog & de Meuron, in Downtown Miami's Museum Park on December 4, 2013. The facility and is a state-of-the-art model for sustainable museum design and progressive programming and features 200,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor program space with flexible galleries; shaded outdoor verandas; a waterfront restaurant and bar; a museum shop; and an education center with a library, media lab and classroom spaces. For more information, please visit [www.pamm.org](http://www.pamm.org). Find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/perezartmuseummiami](https://facebook.com/perezartmuseummiami)), or follow us on Twitter/Instagram (@pamm).

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