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Pérez Art Museum Miami Announces Landmark Acquisition from the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry

*Over 400 language-based works purchased with support of
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*

MIAMI—September 9, 2016— Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) is proud to announce its major acquisition of over 400 language-based artworks from the world-renowned, Miami-based collection of Ruth and Marvin Sackner. The acquisition is a combined gift and purchase made possible thanks to the generosity of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Marvin Sackner and his late beloved wife Ruth of 59 years, co-founder of the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry. The museum will receive the contents of PAMM's well-regarded 2013 exhibition, *A Human Document*, which was part of the museum's inaugural exhibition series. Additionally, PAMM curatorial staff selected another 150 pieces representative of the collection's breadth and historical importance. A new exhibition celebrating this milestone currently scheduled for 2017 will be unveiled in the Diane and Robert Moss Gallery.

"The Sackner Archives are like no other, just like Miami. The collection challenges conventional understanding of words and poetry and presents them as concrete art," said Knight Foundation President Alberto Ibarguén. "Ruth and Marvin created this world-class collection over a lifetime in Miami, making PAMM its perfect home."

"Ruth and Marvin Sackner put together a singular, prescient collection, one that preserves the history of numerous distinct fields of twentieth-century art while celebrating radical experimentation," adds PAMM Director Franklin Sirmans. "This is a unique resource, for the public and scholars alike. And, rightly, the bulk of this treasure, collected over several years by a very special collecting couple, will remain here in Miami. The acquisition, thanks to our collaborators at Knight Foundation, further elevates PAMM as a requisite destination for art and scholarship, not just in Miami, but in the world. It also gives the museum another bridge in the discussion of modern art going back to its formation in the early 20th century."

Consisting of over 70,000 objects, the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry constitutes the largest private collection of verbal/visual creative production in the world, with notable strengths in typewriter art, artist books, micrography, sound and performance poetry, mail art, experimental calligraphy, and numerous other subcategories. The collection is grounded in the early 20th-century European avant-garde, bringing together vibrant examples of the linguistic and typographic experiments that emerged from several foundational modernist movements, from Italian Futurism to Dada, Russian Constructivism, Surrealism, and Situationism.

"It's a great pleasure to see this selection at PAMM," says Marvin Sackner. "Ruth and I spent decades collecting, regarding each piece as a work of art, a piece of history, and a constant source of knowledge. Now the works can have the same effect on countless others."

The Sackner Archive's contemporary holdings are also expansive, encompassing important works by thousands of artists including Carl Andre, Öyvind Fahlström, León Ferrari, Ian Hamilton Finlay, John





Giorno, Jenny Holzer, Paul Laffoley, Shirin Neshat, and Tom Phillips. PAMM's selection was determined with an eye toward representing the Sackner collection proportionally and in both breadth and depth, preserving its unique conceptual framework for future generations.

Highlights from the PAMM acquisition:

Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer is best known for artworks that take the form of short, barbed statements, such as "Protect me from what I want," or "Abuse of power comes as no surprise." The PAMM acquisition includes Holzer's *Olympian Sign* (1986), an LED device that displays a continuous scroll of Holzer's aphorisms drawn from her *Truisms*, *The Living Series*, and *The Survival Series*.

Carl Andre

Minimalist Carl Andre is considered one of the most important visual artists of the 20th century, yet his significant contributions to the field of English-language visual poetry remain under-recognized. PAMM's acquisition from the Sackner Archive includes five notebooks containing a total of over 350 individual Xeroxed sheets. In his poems, Andre uses words as modular units arranged in sequential formations, in ways that evoke the bricks, blocks of wood, and sheets of metal that he employed in his seminal sculptural practice. The PAMM acquisition also includes a rare original typewriter poem titled *July 26 Movement Cuba Side 2*, from 1965.

Guillaume Apollinaire

Guillaume Apollinaire was a profoundly influential art critic, theoretician, and advocate of the early 20th-century Parisian avant-garde. He was also one of the first practitioners of modern visual poetry. PAMM's acquisition from the Sackner Archive includes rare editions of Apollinaire's *Les Soires de Paris* (1914), and *Calligrammes* (1918). It also includes Apollinaire's *Peintures de Léopold Survage* (1917), an exhibition catalogue that features 13 striking picture poems taking the form of horses, clocks, flowers, and other visual motifs. This extremely rare, signed edition is one of only ten copies that Apollinaire tinted by hand with watercolor.

Marcel Broodthaers/Stéphane Mallarmé

The PAMM acquisition includes a rare 1897 publication of Stéphane Mallarmé's "Un Coup de dés" ("A Throw of the Dice"). As the first modern concrete poem, it is considered a landmark in the history of experimental literature. The acquisition also includes Marcel Broodthaers's 1969 adaptation of "Un Coup de dés," in which Mallarmé's words are struck through with black lines, preserving only the poem's visual structure. By printing his version on translucent paper, Broodthaers allows the observer to view the poem's configuration across multiple pages simultaneously; each turn of the page generates a new abstract-geometric composition. The PAMM acquisition also includes a 1972 print diptych by Broodthaers titled *Das Recht*.

Augusto and Haroldo de Campos

The PAMM acquisition includes rare, unpublished manuscripts by Augusto and Haroldo de Campos. The de Campos brothers were among the principal progenitors of the pivotal strand of concrete poetry that emerged in Brazil in the 1950s.

Ian Hamilton Finlay

The PAMM acquisition includes several dozen examples of Ian Hamilton Finlay's "poster-poems," in which the Scottish artist adopted the silkscreen technique and format associated with the ordinary, mass-produced poster: what appear at first glance to be mundane advertisements for retail stores, rock concerts, movies, and other forms of popular consumption are actually sly conceptual interventions in disguise.

Tom Phillips

The PAMM acquisition includes several selections from Tom Phillips's *A Humument*, which is considered a classic of the artist book genre. The work is based on a little-known Victorian novel titled *A Human Document*, by W. H. Mallock, which the artist discovered by chance in a secondhand bookstore in South London in 1966. Employing various techniques, from painting and drawing to typewriting and collage,





Phillips eradicated all but a few words or lines of text on each of the tome's 367 pages. In the process, he transformed his source material into an epic work of visual poetry.

About the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry

Founded in 1979, Ruth and Marvin Sackner's "archive of archives" initially focused on concrete and visual poetry—including rare manuscripts and published works by international luminaries such as Augusto and Haroldo de Campos, Oyvind Fahlström and Eugen Gomringer. The collection subsequently grew to encompass a broad array of historic and contemporary works that synthesize word and image. Rooted in the early to mid-20th-century European avant-garde, the collection provides a unique lens through which to examine the foundational movements of modernism, including Italian Futurism, Russian Constructivism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, Dada and Lettrisme, among others. The Sackners' contemporary holdings are also expansive, with special strengths in artist books and "assemblings" (limited-edition groupings of materials by numerous contributors), as well as various subgenres such as typewriter art, performance poetry and micrography (abstract or representational designs comprised of minuscule lettering).

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 32-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 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, find us on Facebook (facebook.com/perezartmuseummiami), or follow us on Twitter (@pamm).

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit knightfoundation.org.

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