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Orlando Museum of Art Presents Therman Statom: Stories of the New World

ORLANDO, FL. – A major figure in the contemporary Studio-Glass movement, Therman Statom, will create *Stories of the New World* at the Orlando Museum of Art, which will be showcased January 10, 2009 through May 10, 2009. *Stories of the New World* will transform 6,000 square feet of the Museum's galleries into a visually dazzling environment of light and color with a unique, site-specific glass installation. Therman Statom has earned a reputation for his visionary creations that push the boundaries of his medium, challenging his audience to look at glass in new and interesting ways.

Statom will use Juan Ponce de Leon's 1513 search for the fabled Fountain of Youth as a point of departure for *Stories of the New World* exploring both historic and contemporary themes of hope, discovery, ambition and destiny. Visitors will take a journey, which will include a walk through a mirrored maze, panoramic murals, video projections, blown glass sculptures and finally ending in a room-size glass building filled with art works, the artist's conception of the Fountain of Youth. Ponce de Leon intrigues Statom in part because of his historic association with Florida, but more so because of broader implications, symbolic and real, societal and personal, of the explorer's quest for this elusive goal.

"I want the gallery to have the atmosphere of having arrived at a place or destination that reflects the search, discovery and mysticism inherent in these ideas. In essence, this installation will function as a conceptual Fountain of Youth," Statom said.

Statom is a pioneer in the use of glass as a material for sculpture and room-size installation art. He studied under Dale Chihuly, who has remained a lifelong friend and mentor, but his work is distinguished from other glass artists of his generation in that he works with a wide variety of materials in addition to glass. Statom begins his creative process sandblasting sections of the big sheets of glass inside and out, drawing both abstract and realistic painted imagery with colored pencils, acrylics and oil in bright, vibrant colors and adding three-dimensional objects to the interior, including blown glass, sheet glass, shards of glass and metal, and found objects.

Statom was born in Winter Haven, Florida, and his African-American and Seminole Indian roots are inspirational sources. He attended the Pilchuk Glass School in Stanwood, Wash., when it opened in 1971. Statom earned a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1974 and an M.F.A. from the Pratt Institute of Art and Design in 1978. And later, he received National Endowment for the Arts fellowships in 1980, 1982, and 1988 and a Ford Foundation grant in 1977. In his 30-plus-year career, he has had more than 60 solo exhibitions and participated in more than 100 group exhibitions at prestigious galleries and museums in this country and abroad, including the Smithsonian Institution. His work can be found in numerous public and private collections, including the Carnegie Museum of Art.

The OMA will provide educational programs surrounding the exhibition to students as well as teachers that will offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that will stress critical thinking skills. The OMA Discovery Center will feature a film about Statom's creative installation process with Dale Chihuly commenting on Statom's work. A Family Day, Home School Day and Creation Station, an art activity family "drop in" opportunity, will capitalize on the exhibition as an enjoyable learning tool for visitors of all ages.

The OMA will also provide several adult educational programs to inform and delight during the exhibition including docent led tours; Looking Together, a monthly lecture and tour program; a video series on the history of glass; Gallery Talks with curators; 1st Thursdays, Orlando's original art party; and an exploratory trip to Seattle, Wash., home to many glass masters and collectors.

In addition, the OMA is collaborating with cultural institutions to present programs related to *Stories of the New World* including the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities, the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art and the Orange County History Center.

Orlando Museum of Art

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Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday – Sunday noon – 4 pm, closed major holidays

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