

# Marilyn Monroe 50th Anniversary Exhibition arrives from Rome

BY TASHA GIUDA

What do classic 1950s film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, Ecuadorian-born artist Leonardo Hidalgo and scores of pop culture aficionados worldwide have in common?

An insatiable love affair with L.A. born-and-bred Norma Jean Baker, better known as the iconic Marilyn Monroe. While the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this timeless star's death on August 5<sup>th</sup> spurred countless preparations to pay homage, one art gallery chose instead to celebrate her life in style. Galleria Ca'd'oro, one of Italy's leading contemporary art galleries with its U.S. counterpart located in Coral Gables, launched a group exhibition of 21 artists titled "Marilyn Monroe: Tribute to a Female Icon." This unique showcase debuted on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the famous Roman palace Palazzo Wedekind one week after the late star's 86<sup>th</sup> birthday and arrived in Miami for its U.S. opening reception on Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Tribute is an understatement: picture a life-sized sculpture of Marilyn donning her signature white dress in the infamous oh-my-this-wind-is-unruly pose unabashedly greeting guests at the gallery's entrance. Enter the intimate main room to find Marilyn resurrected in every size, color and medium imaginable. She is naked in Pablo Echaurren's piece; vibrant and multiplied in Andy Warhol's series; ethereal with an actual black diamond in place of her infamous beauty mark in Enrico di Nicolantonio's painting; tiny and recyclable on Pepsi Italy's commemorative limited edition cans; and in the flesh with Erika Calesini's quirky live performance. Paintings, photographs, videos, installations and sculptures comprise the lively 28-work exhibition.

"My goal is to bring artists that have a different background and mix them into



Marilyn Monroe - Bronze Sculpture by Seward Johnson

the city of Miami- with the United States, with the South American life and also with the Miami Art Basel," said curator Gloria Porcella. The daughter of Galleria Ca'd'oro's founder Antonio Porcella, she and co-curator Lamberto Petrecca dreamt up this highly-acclaimed collective exhibition and brought it from the steps of Rome- quite literally, as the gallery's flagship is in Piazza di Spagna seconds from the Spanish Steps- to the younger storefronts of Miami. Why the fuss?

"I think Europe really celebrated Marilyn as she deserved," Porcella said. Citing this year's Cannes Film Festival which named Marilyn as the face of its

65<sup>th</sup> event in tribute of her death, as well as Ferragamo's Florence exhibition exclusively for the star, Porcella explained the significant appreciation shown for the real woman behind the Hollywood icon and quintessential sex symbol. Feminism, sexuality, vulnerability, imperfection, unpredictability and empowerment: Marilyn represents the anomaly of women.

Marilyn's multifaceted yet classic persona is perhaps best embodied in Leonardo Hidalgo's "Golden Marilyn," a dazzling portrayal of black and gold. "I did this piece because we're celebrating her Golden Age," said the Ecuadorian-born Hidalgo, who was named official artist of the City of Miami's 116<sup>th</sup> birthday this past summer. "This exhibition is important because it happens

only every 50 years; for Coral Gables to have this show is very wonderful and rare."

The exhibition's calculated move from Rome to Miami aims to not only immortalize a late legend, but also to provide more exposure for the up-and-coming Italian contemporary art scene.

"Italy is known for the past, for the ancient art, for design, for fashion, but not so much for contemporary art," said Porcella. Noting Galleria Ca'd'oro's famous pink snails that invaded Miami during 2010's Art Week and Art Basel, "we like to let people know that Italy is not only about art from the past- it's much more. We have so many good contemporary artists that the world doesn't know because they don't have the opportunity to visit another country." Thus her desire to make their presence known fuels her disarming fire, exporting both art and opportunity straight from Italy. Coincidentally, 2013 is the year of the Italian culture in the United States, spurring exciting projects in preparation of this momentous occasion by Porcella and her *amici* in conjunction with the Italian Consulate and Italian Chamber of Commerce here in Miami.

To simultaneously get a taste of what is to come in 2013 and experience firsthand a truly eclectic art collection dedicated exclusively to one of the world's most notorious icons, visit Galleria Ca'd'oro until October 10<sup>th</sup>. From Marilyn's glitz and glamour to her vulnerability and spontaneous nature, it's clear that some legends never die.



Screenprint by Sunday Morning- Andy Warhol