

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

--MEMORANDUM--



The City Beautiful

**TO:** Members of the City Commission  
City Manager, Peter Iglesias

**FROM:** Mayor Vince Lago

**DATE:** June 10, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Acquisition of Artwork by Augustin Cardenas

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**Background**

The City of Coral Gables has been presented with a proposal for the acquisition of the artwork *Le Couple* (1989) by the renowned artist Agustín Cárdenas. The proposal was submitted by Latin Art Core, a Miami-based gallery with an established history of promoting and showcasing modern and contemporary Latin American art. The gallery has a strong reputation for curating high-quality works and collaborating with cultural institutions to foster artistic dialogue and preserve important cultural legacies.

The proposed acquisition aligns with the City's strategic commitment to fostering diversity, artistic excellence, and cultural enrichment. Adding *Le Couple* to the City's public art collection would significantly enhance our cultural offerings and further solidify Coral Gables' reputation as a community that values and promotes the arts.

**About the Artist**

Agustín Cárdenas (1927–2001) was a Cuban sculptor of Afro-Caribbean descent whose work is internationally celebrated for its organic, fluid forms and cultural depth. After relocating to Paris in the 1950s, Cárdenas became an active member of the Surrealist movement under the leadership of André Breton.

Cárdenas developed a distinct sculptural language that merged abstraction with influences drawn from African artistic traditions, Surrealism, and modernist principles. His work often

explores themes of identity, form, and symbolism, resulting in pieces that are both visually striking and culturally resonant.

Over the course of his illustrious career, Cárdenas' sculptures have been exhibited in and collected by major museums and institutions around the world. He is widely regarded as one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century, with a legacy that continues to inspire artists and audiences alike.

### **Proposal Summary**

Latin Art Core has proposed the acquisition of *Le Couple*, a 1989 sculpture by Cárdenas, for inclusion in the City's public collection. The artwork has been described as an exceptional example of Cárdenas' mature style—marked by elegant abstraction and rich symbolic content. Full documentation and details on the artwork have been provided by the gallery.

### **Recommendation**

The acquisition of *Le Couple* presents a valuable opportunity for the City of Coral Gables to further its mission of cultural enrichment through the arts. The artwork's historical and cultural significance, coupled with the artist's international stature, makes it an excellent candidate for inclusion in our public art collection.

I highly encourage the City Commission to consider this acquisition favorably, subject to appropriate due diligence and alignment with existing public art policies and budgetary considerations.

# LATIN ART CORE

FINE ART GALLERY

*1646 SW 8th St Miami, FL 33135 · Ph. 305.989.9085*

## ARTWORK ACQUISITION PROPOSAL

Presented to  
The City of Coral Gables





April 28, 2025,

To whom it may concern,

Latin Art Core is pleased to present for your consideration the acquisition proposal for the artwork *Le Couple* from 1989, created by the artist Agustin Cardenas.

The proposed work stands out not only for its artistic excellence but also for its cultural relevance within the broader context of Latin American art, closely aligning with the values that Coral Gables promotes: diversity, artistic excellence, and cultural enrichment. Incorporating this piece into the city's public collection would further strengthen Coral Gables' cultural heritage and reinforce its reputation as a city committed to the arts.

Included on this document is all the details on the artwork and documentation.

Our gallery is based in Miami and is dedicated to promoting and showcasing modern and contemporary Latin American art. With a distinguished track record and ongoing collaborations with cultural institutions, we are committed to bringing high-quality artworks to diverse audiences, fostering artistic dialogue, and preserving cultural legacies.

Sincerely,

Israel Moleiro  
President





## AGUSTÍN CÁRDENAS

(b. 1927 Matanzas, Cuba - d. 2001 La Habana, Cuba)

Agustín Cárdenas was a Cuban sculptor of Afro-Caribbean descent, renowned for his organic, fluid forms that bridged Surrealism, modernism, and African artistic traditions. After moving to Paris in the 1950s, he became an active member of the Surrealist movement led by André Breton. Cárdenas developed a unique sculptural language that fused abstraction with deeply personal and cultural symbolism. Today, he is widely regarded as one of the most important sculptors of the 20th century, with his work represented in major museums and collections around the world.





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Agustín Cárdenas

**Le Couple**, 1989

White Carrara Marble

59 x 34 1/2 x 24 1/2 in / 150 x 88 x 62 cm

Base: Travertine Marble 16 x 34 x 25 in / 40,5 x 87 x 64,5 cm

\$600,000.00



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Detail



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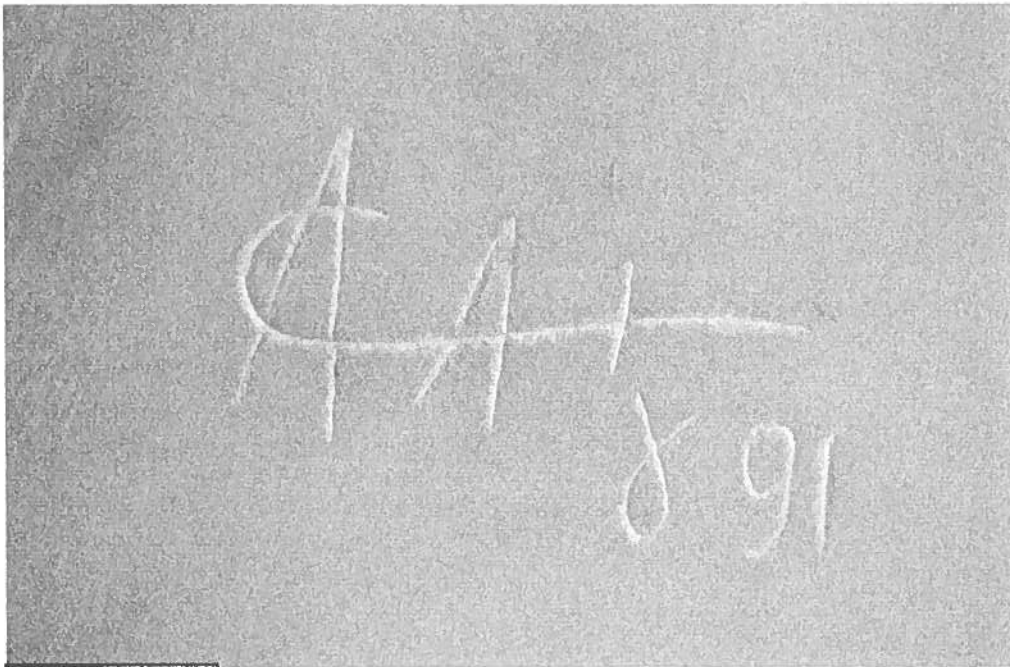


Detail





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Signature



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AGUSTIN CARDENAS  
*Le Couple*  
Marmor bianco de Carrara  
150 x 88 x 62 CM  
1989  
BASE: Marmor Travertino, 40.5 x 87 x 64.5 CM

Moi, AGUSTIN CARDENAS, je certifie que  
la sculpture reproduite sur la photo  
ci-contre est une oeuvre authentique  
realisee par moi-meme.

Meudon, fevrier 1993.

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Meudon, fevrier 1993.

Certificate of Authenticity





**Agustín Cárdenas** was a prominent Cuban sculptor whose career bridged the avant-garde currents of mid-20th-century Europe with deep-rooted Afro-Cuban spiritual and cultural influences. Internationally recognized for his elegant and evocative sculptural forms, Cárdenas remains one of the most important Latin American artists of the modern era.

Born in the city of Matanzas, Cuba, on April 10, 1927, Cárdenas was of African descent, tracing his lineage to Senegal and the Congo—ancestral roots that would profoundly shape his artistic language. He received his formal training at the prestigious Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes San Alejandro in Havana, where he studied from 1943 to 1949. During this time, he was briefly associated with *Los Once*, a groundbreaking group of Cuban avant-garde artists who challenged academic conventions and

introduced abstraction to the island's art scene.

In 1955, Cárdenas moved to Paris—a pivotal decision that placed him at the heart of Europe's postwar artistic ferment. He soon became affiliated with the Surrealist movement, joining the circle of André Breton, who championed his work for its dreamlike presence and symbolic intensity. Cárdenas absorbed the influences of European modernism, particularly the biomorphic forms of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși, and Henry Moore, yet he remained faithful to a sculptural vocabulary deeply rooted in his Afro-Caribbean heritage.

Working primarily in marble, bronze, and wood, his sculptures are celebrated for their sensuous curves, vertical thrust, and totemic aura. Often suggestive of the human body, organic forms, or ritual objects, his works merge abstraction with metaphysical meaning. Critics and scholars have long interpreted Cárdenas' art as a lyrical synthesis of modernist formalism and spiritual intuition—mysterious, ancestral, and transcendent.

Over the course of his career, Agustín Cárdenas received numerous accolades and exhibited widely in major galleries and museums across Europe, the Americas, and Asia. His work forms part of the permanent collections of institutions such as the **Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris**, the **Centre Pompidou**, the **Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes de La Habana**, the **Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York**, the **Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami**, and the **Tate Modern in London**, among others. He was awarded the **Ordre des Arts et des Lettres** by the French government and was internationally recognized, including through his participation in the **Venice Biennale**.

Throughout his life, Cárdenas' work was exhibited alongside that of renowned artists such as **Joan Miró**, **Pablo Picasso**, **André Breton**, **Jean Arp**, **Salvador Dalí**, **Wifredo Lam**, and **Roberto Matta**.

Agustín Cárdenas passed away in Paris on February 9, 2001. He left behind a body of work that transcends borders and time—a sculptural legacy that continues to inspire for its poetic synthesis of modernity, memory, and identity.

It is a striking omission that, despite Miami's vibrant Latin American cultural presence, there is not a single public sculpture by Cárdenas in the city—a void that deserves to be addressed.

