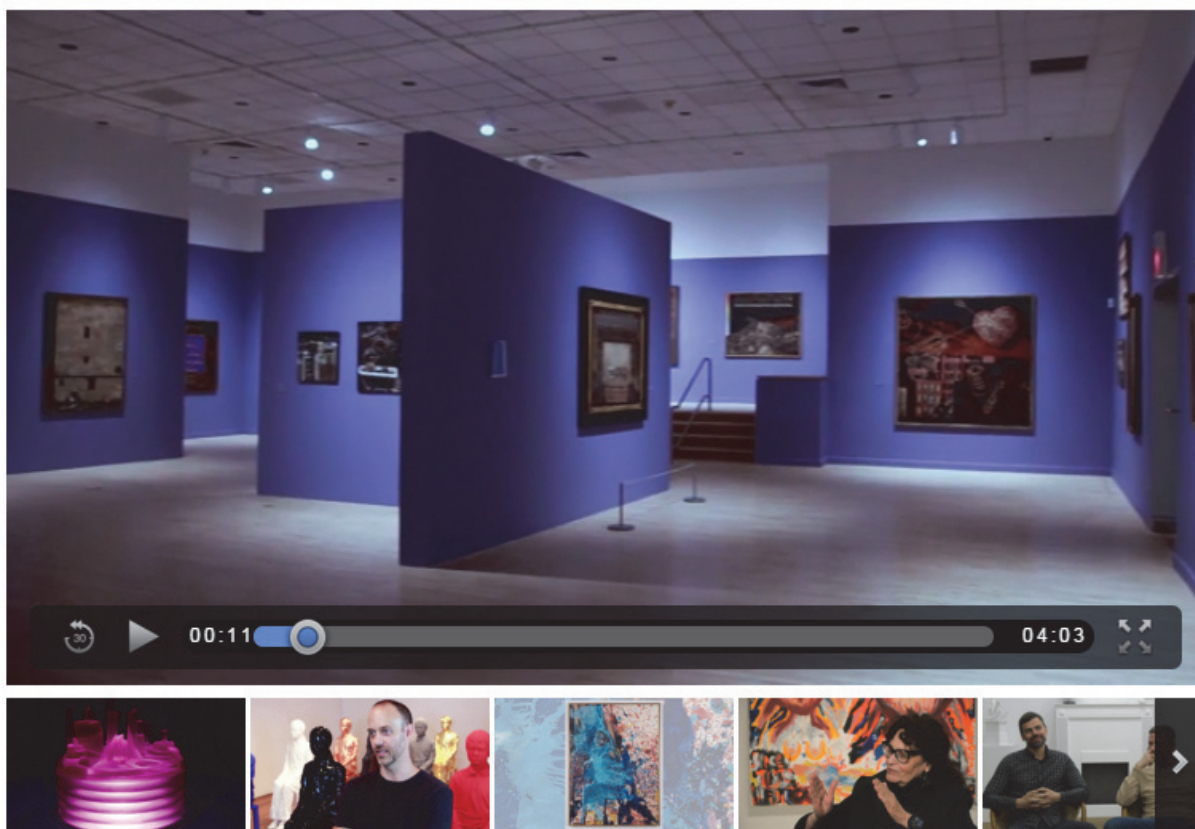


## Video: Martin Wong's Bronx Museum Retrospective Truly Shines

By: Brian Boucher



Now open at the Bronx Museum of the Arts is "Martin Wong: Human Instamatic," a lavish and startling retrospective that spans the artist's entire career, from self-portraits painted as a teenager to Wong's final canvases, created in the last years before he died from AIDS in 1999, at age 53.

It's stocked with many of the California-born painter trademark works, the affecting cityscapes and portraits he painted of the largely Latin population of his adopted home, New York's Lower East Side. Also present are his fanciful paintings of Asian icons like Bruce Lee and his fantastical, stylized renditions of Chinatown.

Featuring loans from institutions like New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and Whitney Museum of American Art as well as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Berkeley

Art Museum, it's the first museum retrospective devoted to Wong since the artist's death. With over 100 works and archival material, it's the first thorough look at the artist in New York since "Sweet Oblivion: The Urban Landscape of Martin Wong" at the New Museum in 1998, which included fewer than 40 paintings.

In addition to the early self-portraits, the show includes one ceramic work, created when Wong was a student at Humboldt State University (he would later teach himself to paint). Among the show's other surprises are photographs and documents from the Wong archive at New York University's Fales Library, some of which form the basis of paintings in the exhibition.

Yet another treat is a calling card emblazoned with the show's title, which refers to a popular cheap camera, and which Wong handed out to drum up business while he was a street portrait painter.

*"Martin Wong: Human Instamatic" is on view at the Bronx Museum of the Arts through February 14, 2016.*