

## Keith Edmier displaying Edison's 'Death Mask' at FSW

The Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at Florida SouthWestern State College will display Thomas Edison's full-head "Death Mask" in a new exhibition by New York artist Keith Edmier.

The mask will appear in "Keith EDMIER: Edison Impluvium" inside the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW on the Thomas Edison (Lee) Campus, opening Saturday, Dec. 5, with a lecture by Mr. Edmier at 6 p.m. and an opening reception from 7-9 p.m.

Before Mr. Edison's death in 1931, close friend Henry Ford commissioned James Earle Fraser, a distinguished American sculptor, to produce a bronze statue of his hero. Mr. Fraser took the original mold of Mr. Edison's head, but his project's completion was delayed until 1949 due to a bronze shortage and the World War II. Mr. Edison's very rare "Death Mask," a product of Mr. Fraser's mold, is on loan from a private collector in California and has never been previously exhibited.

Mr. Edmier's gallery exhibition will include a full-scale re-creation of Mr. Edison's concrete swimming pool, currently located at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates. Along the walls of the pool will be Edison's "Death Mask" and 50 additional plaster masks created by Mr. Edmier as a historical record of family and friends.



COURTESY PHOTO

Thomas Edison's "Death Mask" will be on display for the first time.

Besides self-portraits of himself, Mr. Edmier memorialized his parents Tom and Beverly, and a "who's who" of famous friends including Farrah Fawcett, Michael J. Fox, Charlie Sheen, David Bowie, former studio-mate Matthew Barney and many others.

Mr. Edmier explained that ancient Roman society inspired much of the exhibition.

"Edison's Fort Myers pool is reimagined as an ancient ruin and references both the Roman Republic-era idea of life casts as ancestral masks and the water basins (known as impluviums) in the atriums of houses like those found in Pompeii," he said.

The event is open to the public, free of charge. The first-come, first-served seating for the 6 p.m. lecture is limited.

For more information, call 489-9313 or visit [RauschenbergGallery.com](http://RauschenbergGallery.com). ■