

RUBEN TOLEDO LIMITED EDITION CIGARS



Isabel Toledo, Ruben Toledo, and Litto Gomez at the La Flor Dominicana factory in Santiago, Dominican Republic

Ruben Toledo, the brilliant Cuban born artist and illustrator, has created a limited edition cigar box and band which will be sold to benefit El Museo del Barrio the nation's premier Latin American and Latino Museum. A luxurious white lacquer box featuring black silhouetted designs by Toledo inside and out will be produced by one of the world's leading cigar makers, La Flor Dominicana. The cigars have been created uniquely for El Museo del Barrio each with a gold embossed band designed by Toledo. All profits of the project will be donated to El Museo del Barrio.

"This is a project with so much meaning for both my wife and I. El Museo is a symbol of pride for Latinos, and cigars are such a potent symbol of our heritage. We traveled last year to the Dominican and saw the factories and tobacco fields where these cigars are produced. It's a project and an institution close to our hearts" Says La Flor Dominicana founder Litto Gomez, "These are unique cigars with Dominican filler and binder tobacco grown on our own farms. The wrapper is a delicious rare Habano grown by a small farmer also here in the Dominican Republic."

The El Museo Limited Edition Cigars will be sold by the box through elite tobacconist shops and department stores in May 2009. Only 2000 boxes will be produced. The suggested retail price is \$600 and all profits will be donated to El Museo del Barrio. "We know" says Litto Gomez "that we could sell many many more, but this is to be special. There's never been a box like this before. When they've sold out that's the end of this cigar. The package, of course, will be with collectors forever."

Ruben Toledo was born in Havana, Cuba in 1961. He is a painter, sculptor and illustrator. His work has been exhibited at institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Momu in Antwerp as well as several one-man gallery exhibitions. Ruben Toledo has painted murals, portraits, album covers and barns, designed mannequins, store windows, award statuettes, scarves, fabrics, dishes and carpets. His witty illustrations have been commissioned for magazines including *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Town & Country*, *Paper*, *Visionaire*, *Interview* and *The New York Times*. He's created images and installations for Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Tiffany & Co. and Barneys. He is the author of "Style Dictionary" a collection of his drawings and watercolors. His collaboration with his fashion designer wife, Isabel Toledo, was the subject of both a book and a museum exhibition titled "Toledo/Toledo: A Marriage of Art and Fashion" at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Ruben Toledo completed his first film – an animated History of French Fashion entitled "Fashionation" in 2004 which was sponsored by Syndicate de Couture in Paris. Recently he created sets and lighting for Morphoses / The Wheeldon Company ballet. Ruben with his wife Isabel were awarded the Cooper Hewitt National design Award in 2005. Together they live and work in New York City.

El Museo del Barrio is the premier Latin American and Latino institution in the United States. Heralded by *The New York Times* as "an institution in its ascendancy," it was founded in 1969 by artist Raphael Montañez Ortiz with the support of a group of Puerto Rican educators, artists, parents and community activists in East Harlem's Spanish-speaking El Barrio. Its mission has evolved and expanded to represent the diversity of art and culture in all of the Caribbean and Latin America. As the only museum in New York City that specializes in representing these cultures, El Museo del Barrio continues to have a significant impact on our cultural life and is now a major stop on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue Museum Mile. El Museo del Barrio thrives on the sustained excellence of its collections, exhibitions and public programming. Now celebrating its thirty year El Museo del Barrio will reopen this Fall with expanded facilities, having complete a thirty million dollar capital rebuilding project. www.elmuseo.org

La Flor Dominicana was founded in 1996 in Santiago, Dominican Republic under the direction of Litto and Ines Gomez. Their commitment to quality has placed theirs among the most prestigious cigar brands in the world. Over the years they've developed a portfolio of quality blends, shapes and sizes that fulfill the ever-changing needs of today's cigar smokers. Their well known consistency is possible because Litto personally supervises every stage of production, from the farming of the tobacco at his farms in La Canels, to the art of manufacturing in the modern factory. This vertical integration and personal commitment to excellence is his guarantee.

www.laflordominicana.com