



THE ARTS & BUSINESS COUNCIL OF MIAMI WITH THE MIAMI-DADE
COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS PRESENTS

SERVING THE ARTS

2024 AWARDS CEREMONY



April 3rd • Wednesday • 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Miami-Dade Auditorium

Agenda



9:15-10:15

REGISTRATION & NETWORKING
ARTISAN COFFEE & BREAKFAST BITES

9:15-10:15

CULTURAL INTERLUDES

10:00-10:15

THEATER DOORS OPEN
DRUMMER & DANCER

10:15

WELCOME

10:45-12:00

AWARD CEREMONY

ALL LINKS AND HANDLES FEATURED IN PROGRAM ARE CLICKABLE.
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EXPLORE THEM IN TANDEM WITH THE PROGRAM.

Miami-Dade Auditorium

April 3rd, 2024

HOSTS

Serving the Arts Awards



ABOUT THE ARTS & BUSINESS COUNCIL OF MIAMI / [@artsbizmiami](#)

Since 1985, the Arts & Business Council has been at the forefront engaging business leaders and business professionals to keep the arts in business by designing programs that build audiences, strengthen boards, increase productivity and efficiency and engage business in the arts. As Miami's only organization that leverages the arts for economic vitality, Arts Biz programs inspire employees, stimulate innovation and foster creativity. . The Arts & Business Council works with the cultural ecosystem, artists and community builders to lead, serve and inspire a more creative region. Culture and creativity are built into everything we do, from the way we envision new opportunities and evaluate outcomes to the way we collaborate across programs and cultivate deep partnerships. Our north star is engaging all the people for all the arts. We empower the creative ecosystem with capacity building programs, executive consultancies, leadership training, audience development, workshops, bootcamps curated outreach and networking events. Our popular Arts & Business Partnerships create a curated competitive advantage for companies big and small. Our superpower is building relationships



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS / [@miamidadearts](#)

The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council develop cultural excellence, diversity, access and participation throughout Miami-Dade County by strategically creating and promoting equitable opportunities for artists and cultural organizations, and our residents and visitors who are their audiences. Through staff, board and programmatic resources, the Department, the Council and the Trust promote, coordinate and support Miami-Dade County's more than 1,000 not-for-profit cultural organizations as well as thousands of resident artists through grants, technical assistance, public information and interactive community planning. The Department directs the Art in Public Places program and serves its board, the Art in Public Places Trust, commissioning, curating, maintaining and promoting the County's art collection. The Department also manages, programs and operates the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center, Joseph Caleb Auditorium, and Miami-Dade County Auditorium, all dedicated to presenting and supporting excellence in the arts for the entire community.

MASTERS OF CEREMONY

Serving the Arts Awards



MARIA BUDET

As Chief Marketing Officer, Maria is responsible for shaping all organizational communications and marketing efforts, successfully raising Miami-Dade County's profile as a world-class business destination in an integrated, consistent, impactful way. In this role, Maria leads the development and implementation of The Beacon Council's global marketing and communications strategy including creative development and production, relationship management, digital and social marketing, paid and earned media, sponsorships, events, partnerships, media relations, and corporate communications. A seasoned professional Maria has more than 20 years of experience delivering creative, brand-building solutions for Fortune 500 companies. A graduate of Yale University, Maria is involved with the Yale Club of South Florida, the Yale Alumni Schools Committee, and United Way of Miami Dade. She is also a Board Member and Chair of the Arts & Business Council of Miami.



GEORGE NEARY

George Neary was appointed to the MBVCA in January 2020. He is currently the President & CEO of Tours "r" Us, a tour company that curates tours concentrated on the historic communities of Miami Beach, the historic Art Deco District, MiMo resort architecture; Wynwood, Miami Design District, Little Havana, Little Haiti, Downtown Miami, Historic Overtown, Coconut Grove and beyond. He was previously Associate Vice President of Cultural Tourism and worldwide Gay Marketing for the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) since 1998 until his retirement in 2018. He was in charge of the creation and implementation of a new arts and cultural program for Miami-Dade County and directed promotional programs that encouraged and increased visitor attendance at local cultural events and attractions. His job also included creating linkages and partnership between Greater Miami businesses and the arts community. During his tenure, his targets were cultural tourism, heritage tourism, and gay & lesbian tourism. He received his B.A. from St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, and has been involved in many community organizations over the years.

FEATURED ARTISTS

Serving the Arts Awards

We hosted a call for artists to be featured on the Serving the Arts Awards. We had over 50 amazing submissions. Meet the selected artists.



STEPHANIE MENJI / [@menji.co](https://www.menji.co)

Stephanie Menji is an artist, marketer, and Art Business Mentor based in Miami, FL. Her yearning for creativity has led her along various career paths that have formed the basis of how she makes art. By day, you can find Stephanie actively involved in leading growth marketing initiatives at tech startups and helping artists build the art businesses of their dreams. By night, you can find her creating work inspired by her travels and the simple things that we often overlook in life.



PICARDO / [@euphorical_colours](https://www.euphoricalcolours.com)

Picardo is an Afro-Caribbean artist who creates art that explores the mystical order of existence and its relationship with our physical universe. Through bold colors, form, and line, he creates a sense of movement and rhythm that draws viewers into a world of abstract figurative. Picardo was one of the most vivid local Latino artist representations in West Michigan for over two decades; currently living in Miami FL. Picardo is a professional artist who graduated in 1995 as Visual Artist and Illustrator from UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic.



MICHAEL MCKEEVER / [michaelmckeeper.com](https://www.michaelmckeeper.com)

Michael McKeever designed the original Serving the Arts graphics and our epic Serving the Arts man. We are excited to reintroduce the design. McKeever is an award winning designer, illustrator, actor and (primarily) playwright whose plays continue to be shown around the world. He is also a proud founding member of Zoetic Stage, an Arts Partner with the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami. His illustrations/design work have been seen throughout South Florida, and as a theatre artist, he is the recipient of numerous Carbonell and Silver Palm Awards. McKeever has been honored with the prestigious George Abbott Award for Outstanding Artistic Achievement.

SERVING THE ARTS AWARD

Presented to an individual or group that serves the entire creative ecosystem with vital initiatives and advancements.



**MIAMI-DADE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA**
@mayordlc



**MIAMI-DADE COMMISSIONER
EILEEN HIGGINS**
@commisheileen

In 2020, the global landscape ground to a halt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Just six months into this crisis, Miami-Dade County's cultural sector found itself reeling from a substantial financial blow, amounting to 112 million dollars in losses that impacted over 18,000 jobs. As theaters closed and performances halted, the arts community suffered greatly without revenue from tickets, patrons and subscribers.

During this pivotal period, two arts angels emerged as beacons of hope: Commissioner Eileen Higgins and the then-Commissioner, now Mayor, Daniella Levine Cava. Together, they championed the cause to use federal COVID relief funding to bolster our local artists and cultural establishments through the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs. This award is a shared honor, recognizing both Madame Mayor and the Commissioner for their pivotal roles in rescuing our entire arts community. Without this vital lifeline hundreds of our most cherished arts organizations, artists and cultural initiatives would have had a hard time surviving. We express our collective gratitude with the Serving the Arts Award to honor their vision and determination that has made an indelible impact on our cultural landscape.

Their unwavering efforts to secure vital COVID relief via the CARES Act federal funding for our cultural sector will forever be remembered. Thank you.

MIAMI-DADE MAYOR'S AWARD

Presented by Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava to a cultural leader, business or organization in recognition of extraordinary service to the arts in Miami-Dade County.



ROSIE GORDON-WALLACE

Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator / [@dvcai](#)

Rosie Gordon-Wallace is a recognized curator, arts advocate, community leader and pioneer in advancing contemporary diaspora art.

In 1996, Rosie founded the Diaspora Vibe Culture Arts Incubator (DVCAI), a visionary project with a mission to nurture and cultivate emerging artists from the Caribbean Diaspora, artists of color, and immigrant artists. For almost thirty years, DVCAI has served as one of the region's leading platforms for artists to explore and experiment with new forms and themes in the context of Caribbean and Latin American art. Rosie's curatorial work has reached a national scale to include collaborations with the prestigious Corcoran Art Museum in Washington, D.C and global artist exchange programs in numerous countries.

Rosie serves on several prominent boards and is an active member of the PAMM Fund for African American Art. She volunteers her time as a grant panelist with Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and Florida State Division of Arts & Culture. She has been recognized for her innovative work and named the International Businesswoman of the Year, and One of South Florida's 50 Most Powerful Black Professionals.

Rosie Gordon Wallace is rooted in community and a guiding light for all that follow in her footsteps. It is an honor to acknowledge Rosie Gordon Wallace as the 2024 recipient of the Mayor's Legacy in Arts Award.

ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

MIAMI-DADE COMMISSION

Presented to a Miami-Dade Commissioner that provides extraordinary and lasting support for the arts and provides a positive voice on issues important to the cultural community



COMMISSIONER KEON HARDEMON

Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissions, District 3 @mrhardemon

Commissioner Keon Hardemon, a Miami native, wears many hats with remarkable grace. As chairman of Miami-Dade County's Airport and Economic Development Committee, he shapes vital policies. His legal acumen extends to managing his own law firm. His commitment to the arts shines through his service as Chair of the Tourist Development Council, where he champions cultural organizations through grants.

Commissioner Hardemon's journey is a testament that arts and education is transformative. He received arts education in the visual arts through Miami-Dade County Public Schools, both at Charles R. Drew Middle and Miami Northwestern Senior High. He's a graduate of Florida A&M University and holds a law degree from the University of Miami School of Law. Commissioner Hardemon's journey, from Pfizer Inc. to serving as a Miami-Dade County Public Defender, — culminated in a historic moment where he became the youngest serving Miami City Commissioner under the city's single member district. He continues to strive to build and revitalize Miami-Dade County.

Through his vision and guidance, the iconic event Soul-Basel was born. This cultural experience brings thousands of tourists to Historic Overtown during Miami Art Week and has impacted the quality of life for the better, for both residents and visitors. Commissioner Hardemon is building legacy, empowering cultural arts organizations, revitalizing historic spaces, and ensuring their impact enriches our community.

ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

CITY ELECTED OFFICIAL

Presented to an elected official from a local city or municipality that provides extraordinary and lasting support for the arts and provides a positive voice on issues important to the cultural community.



COUNCIL-MEMBER LINDA JULIEN

Miami Gardens Council Member [@lindajjulien](#)

Councilwoman Linda Julien, a proud daughter of Haitian immigrants, embodies the values of education and service. She holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Florida International University and a master's degree in the same field from Florida Atlantic University. Her journey has been shaped by diverse experiences in economic development, contract compliance, procurement, and public policy.

Councilwoman Julien's commitment to community service began with her appointment to the Affordable Housing Board in Miami-Dade County by the late Commissioner Dorrian D. Rolle. Driven by a passion for economic sustainability and homeownership, she strives to empower underserved communities. Beyond her civic roles, Councilwoman Julien is an accomplished real estate professional, serving on the Board of Governors for the Florida Realtors and the Miami Association of Realtors.

As a change agent, Councilwoman Julien sponsors cultural events in Miami Gardens, ensuring access to cultural experience for her residents through programs like the Golden Ticket and Culture Shock. Her dedication extends to education, where she passionately serves as a college professor preparing the next generation of public servants.

ARTS ADVOCATE HERO AWARD

Presented to an individual doing vital advocacy work with local, state and/or national elected officials to support increased arts funding and showcase the value of the cultural community to government leaders.



DENNIS EDWARDS

Dennis Edwards has been actively involved in Miami arts, health, and political communities for over 35 years. From the local arena to the national stage, Dennis is a true champion and arts advocate. He was a founder of the Miami-Dade Arts Action Alliance and helped spearhead successful campaigns to increase funding. He was a board member/Treasurer for the Florida Cultural Alliance from 2015-2022 and helped showcase the value of the arts in our state and need for increased dollars. In addition, he has been involved with Americans for the Arts, a national arts advocacy organization.

He is a full-time volunteer, operating his own charitable foundation with husband Mark Steinberg, and participates in numerous community organizations. He has been a board member/Treasurer of Armour Dance Theatre since 2006 and was a founder and President of Maximum Dance Company from 1997-2004. He was a member of the New World School of the Arts Foundation Board from 2006-2015 and was Chair 2008-2013. He was a founding board member of South Florida Dance For Life and was a former board member of Deering Hospital's Ethics Advisory Board, Area Stage Company, and Health Crisis Network.

He has served on numerous local and state panels, including the Dance Discipline panel for the State of Florida and Capital Grants, Youth Arts Miami and Youth Enrichment panels for Miami-Dade County's Department of Cultural Affairs.

BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Presented to a board member of a cultural organization for extraordinary service.



ROSALYN STUZIN

GABLESTAGE, BOARD OF DIRECTORS / @gablestage

As a longtime resident of Miami-Dade County, Roz Stuzin has always been an advocate for the arts. As a former English teacher and author, Roz is passionate about education through the arts. Her first venture into the arts was as the creator and co-producer of Kinderkonzerts which produced children's concerts in Dade County. She is presently the president of the Gablestage board where she has served as a trustee for fifteen years.

Since 1998, Gablestage has been producing quality theatrical productions that encompass themes and ideas relevant to the multicultural South Florida community at Coral Gables' historic Biltmore Hotel. They are one of the longest-running and most highly acclaimed theater companies in our community that strives to present the most vital and cutting edge works of contemporary playwrights worldwide.

She is a hardworking board member of a well-known Massachusetts theater company called Barrington Stage as well as serving on the Collecting Council of Perez Art Museum. Her family has always believed in giving back to the community and her other charitable interests include University of Miami Law School, University of Florida, Baptist Hospital, Miami City Ballet, New World Symphony, Tanglewood, Jacobs Pillow, ICA, Federation, Birthright and Temple Beth Sholom.

ARTS & CULTURAL TOURISM AWARD

Presented to an artist, leader, organization or corporation engaged in significant and innovative work at the intersection of the arts and cultural tourism.



ART OF BLACK MIAMI

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

Art of Black

Art of Black Miami is an ongoing initiative calling attention to the impacts and achievements of Black artists from across the African and Caribbean diasporas at locations across the city. Recognizing the challenges of connecting Black artists to their fanbase and patrons, The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau created Art of Black Miami.

“Art of Black Miami is an initiative led by our Multicultural Tourism & Development Department to shine a spotlight on aspiring and renowned artists and their work representing the Black Diaspora. The program further expands Miami’s offering as a destination offering a breadth of artistic and cultural experiences.

Art of Black Miami celebrates artists, exhibits and art initiatives represented locally and abroad featuring significant works inspired by Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and beyond. They explore the visual artists, discover their stories and get a new perspective on Miami’s vibrant and unique artistic landscape that touches the Black experience.

CORPORATE & CULTURAL PARTNERS AWARD

SMALL BUSINESS

Presented to a South Florida company that has developed an important and lasting partnership with the arts. Contributions may be in the form of board leadership, business skills, cash donations or in-kind donations.



TURNER INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

CHAD TURNER, guitarsoverguns.com

Chad Turner, President of Turner Investment Management, has dedicated nearly a decade of service in philanthropy and board membership to Guitars Over Guns, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering Miami's youth through the transformative power of music and mentorship. Formerly serving as a financial advisor for Wells Fargo Advisors, Chad started his own investment management firm that has committed sponsorship to support and uplift Guitars Over Guns' mission year after year.

Chad is the former President of Friends of New World Symphony, one of the premier young professional groups in Miami. He brought the group to 500 members, raising \$500,000 annually. He first joined Guitars Over Guns to help establish a young professionals board and college/career mentoring pathways for youth served by the organization.

Thanks to Chad's years of service and partnership, Guitars Over Guns' fundraising and community engagement efforts have deepened and strengthened, as the organization has grown to impact more 1,500 youth annually nationwide.

EMERGING ARTS LEGEND AWARD

Hosted by Miami Emerging Arts Leader to honor an established leader and change maker that elevates Miami-Dade's cultural community with vital and pioneering opportunities for artists.



FRANKLIN SIRMANS

Perez Art Museum Miami / @pamm

Franklin Sirmans is an American art critic, editor, writer, and curator. He has served as the director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) since October 2015. During his tenure at PAMM, he has overseen the acquisition of over a thousand artworks through donations and purchases. Within the museum's framework, Sirmans has actively pursued his vision of PAMM as 'the people's museum,' a reflection of Miami's essence. This effort has involved fortifying existing affiliations like the PAMM Fund for Black Art, as well as establishing the International Women's Committee and the Latin American and Latinx Art Fund.

Franklin is an exceptional cultural leader and curator. Prior to his appointment at PAMM, he has served as the Department Head and Curator of Contemporary Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and the Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Menil Collection in Houston. Franklin also served as a member of the Curatorial Advisory Committee at MoMA/PS1 and has served as the Artistic Director for the prestigious Prospect.3 New Orleans. In 2007, he was honored with the David C. Driskell Prize, administered by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta.

Franklin Sirmans continues to make his mark in Miami and beyond. His passion for art and commitment to community engagement make him a significant figure in the contemporary art world and this year's Emerging Arts Legend.

CULTURAL CATALYST AWARD

Presented to an individual who has achieved a real and positive impact on the culture of the arts by inspiring and empowering the ecosystem.



SUSAN WESTFALL

City Theatre Miami/ [@citytheatremia](https://www.instagram.com/citytheatremia)

Susan Westfall is exuberant, talented, smart, and in possession of an infectious enthusiasm for theater and playwrights. As a celebrated playwright she set the stage for her amazing career in theater. She was co-founder of City Theatre in Miami. The group was founded in 1996 and is the only professional theatre in the country dedicated to developing and producing new work, specifically short form plays and musicals.

As the Theatre's Literary Director, she was responsible for coordinating the company's literary outreach to playwrights, agents and publishers, and various aspects of the theatre's unique programming. One of her most important roles was as an advocate, cheerleader and mentor for theater professionals and playwrights. From City Writes to other groundbreaking professional development opportunities she played a leading role in the career of many theater professionals.

She has been a recipient of a Florida Arts Council Playwriting Fellowship and a Remy Award for Outstanding Contribution to Theatre by the South Florida Theatre League and is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, The Playwrights Center, Theatre Communications Group and the South Florida Theatre League, an organization she helped found.

CORPORATE & CULTURAL PARTNERS AWARD

LARGE BUSINESS

Presented to a South Florida company that has developed an important and lasting partnership with the arts. Contributions may be in the form of board leadership, business skills, cash donations or in-kind donations.



PNC

ARTS ALIVE / pnc.com/artsalive

PNC Arts Alive is a multi-year initiative of the PNC Foundation dedicated to supporting visual and performing arts with the goal of increasing arts access and engagement in new and innovative ways. Nationally, the PNC Foundation has awarded nearly \$20 million in grants to visual and performing arts organizations since launching its Arts Alive initiative in 2009, including over \$1 million to organizations in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties since the program began in South Florida in 2016.

PNC Arts Alive programming demonstrates that there is an artistic outlet for everyone, regardless of age, economic background, skill level and taste. Pop-up performances, mobile arts vans and the use of unusual venues are among the many initiatives supported through PNC Arts Alive and we're excited to help invigorate local arts organizations in Florida, while bringing new and exciting programs to our communities.

Current grantees include the Florida Grand Opera; Friends of the Bass Museum, Inc.; GableStage; New World Symphony; and Pérez Art Museum Miami.

ARTS & HEALTH-WELLNESS AWARD

Presented to an artist, organization, nonprofit or corporation engaged in significant and meaningful work at the intersection of the arts and healing, wellness, and impactful art in medical venues.



Miami Cancer Institute

BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA

BAPTIST HEALTH

Miami Cancer Institute Arts in Medicine / [@baptisthealthcancer](https://www.baptisthealthcancer.org)

The Baptist Health Miami Cancer Institute Arts in Medicine program is an innovative arts and wellness initiative. The program features 11 artists in residence including professional musicians, singers, visual artists and literary artists.

Artists perform and create artworks in the main lobbies, clinic waiting areas, radiation and chemotherapy waiting areas, chemotherapy infusion suites and the outdoor meditation garden. Creative workshops are available for patients in active treatment. On the grounds and public spaces of Miami Cancer Institute, you'll find unique works of art, including sculptures, quilts and textiles. The forward thinking physicians that started the program believe that surrounding patients and caregivers with art and beauty contributes to their physical and emotional well-being.

Research has shown that patients exposed to the arts experience less pain, decreased anxiety and a better overall mindset during cancer treatment. Along with the Institute's Arts in Medicine program, our Art and Design Program cares for the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

ARTS MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD

Recognizes outstanding achievement in the management of a local arts organization. Achievement by a director or a management team.



SHEILA WOMBLE

Arts for Learning / [@a4lmiami](#)

Ms. Womble is a Miami native and passionate arts leader who has driven growth at Arts for Learning for more than 15 years. She leads a group of incredible arts professionals and together they work daily to build a culture of brilliance not just for the students they serve but also for all who work with them, especially their extraordinary teaching artist faculty.

Sheila's generous leadership style, integrity, vision and commitment to Miami's arts education ecosystem make her a cherished "go to" leader for advice, guidance, motivation, and support. During her leadership, she and her team have served more than 164,000 students. They have developed a continuum of arts care for Miami's children with programming serving children from infancy through high school in all of the artistic disciplines.

It is clear that under her thoughtful and trusted leadership, Miami's youth have more opportunities to grow up with the arts.

ARTS MARKETER AWARD

Presented to an arts organization, company or brand that has designed a campaign that helped build new audiences and increased visibility for the cultural community.



JOSEPH QUIÑONES

Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science / [@frostsscience](#)

With nearly two decades of experience in marketing, public relations, and community engagement, Joseph A. Quiñones is a dedicated professional with a passion for culture and the vital role that museums play in our society. In his role as Senior Vice President of External Affairs at the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science, Quiñones plays a pivotal role in shaping the museum's identity and mission.

He is responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive marketing and public relations strategies that cover all aspects of the museum's programs, events, and initiatives. He provides strategic direction in various areas, including public programming, government relations, marketing, design, and external communications, as well as management of the museum's membership program and the operation of the Science Store. His academic background includes a Master of Science in global strategic communications and a Bachelor of Science in communications, both earned at Florida International University.

Quiñones is a member of both the Global Trends Committee and the Conference Program Planning Committee (CPPC) for the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC). He also serves on the Arts, Culture & Entertainment (ACE) Committee at the Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and the Marketing Committee of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB).

SHINING STAR AWARD

Presented to a business professional that has been a mobilizer, a resource, an innovator whose leadership enhances the quality of life in Miami through the arts.



JOHN COPELAND

*GREATER MIAMI VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU /
[@visitmiami](#)*

John Copeland has been involved with empowering the arts in Miami-Dade for over 20 years. As head of cultural tourism at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitor Bureau he leads strategic development and implementation of programs that expand global awareness of Miami's art & culture assets and help drive incremental attendance at local arts and culture institutions, events and attractions. He has worked with the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Arts & Business Council of Americans for the Arts, Youth Orchestra of Palm Beach County, and the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach.

With a strong personal interest in serving the arts community, John is a vital and dedicated board member for the Miami Music Project and the Arts & Business Council of Miami. He is a strong advocate for the arts and serves on the board for the Florida Cultural Alliance, the statewide group that promotes the value and importance of funding the arts in Florida.

Every idea he shared, every opportunity he seized, every contribution he made over the years, helped the organizations he is involved with achieve new heights of success. John's unwavering dedication and commitment has inspired us with creativity and vision.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD

Presented to an individual who has supported an organization over a long period of time, working behind the scenes and often out of the spotlight.



REBEKAH LANAE LENGEL

[@rebekahlanae](#)

Rebekah Lanae Lengel, a proud Miami native, has dedicated over two decades to serving the South Florida nonprofit community. Her commitment to strategic innovation, impactful change management, and the pursuit of organizational excellence has been unwavering. As a producer of film and contemporary performance she has supported the development of artists and work that has been presented across North America, South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe, and has led cultural exchange projects throughout the Caribbean and South America.

Rebekah has had her plays produced and presented at such theatres as City Theatre in Miami, and the Hippodrome State Theatre in Gainesville. Her work has been published in three languages and has appeared in the web-based magazines [styluswars.com](#), [88hiphop.com](#), The Hip Hop Newsletter, ArtBurst Miami, and in print with The Miami Herald and Miami New Times. A graduate of Barry University, Rebekah currently serves on the Community Advisory Board for WPBT (South Florida PBS) and the Board of Directors of Voices United and Rosie Herrera Dance Theater.

Her diverse professional background includes serving as the Managing Producer at Miami Light Project, Associate Director for Reunions and Special Programs at Barry University, and most recently as Deputy Director/Co-Interim Executive Director at YoungArts. She is currently the Chief Operating Officer with Big Brothers Big Sisters Miami.

ARTS & ENVIRONMENT AWARD

Presented to an artist, an organization, or corporation engaged in significant and impactful work at the intersection of the arts, climate change and the environment.



XAVIER CORTADA

CORTADA FOUNDATION /@cortadafoundation

Xavier Cortada, Miami's pioneer eco-artist, uses art's elasticity to work across disciplines to engage communities in problem-solving. Particularly environmentally focused, his work aims to generate awareness and action around climate change, sea-level rise, and biodiversity loss. Over the past three decades, the Cuban-American artist has created art at both poles and across six continents, including more than 150 public artworks, installations, collaborative murals, and socially engaged projects.

Cortada, who serves as Miami-Dade County's inaugural Artist-in-Residence, has received a 2023 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Excellence in Science Communication Award, a 2022 Creative Capital Award, and a 2021 Environmental Law Institute National Wetlands Award. Other accolades include being named to the 2022 GRIST 50 list and delivering a TED Talk on the intersection of art and climate that has received over 1.3 million views. He has been commissioned to create art for CERN, the White House, the World Bank, the Frost Art Museum, and Miami City Hall, among many other venues in the arts, sciences, and government sectors.

Cortada earned bachelor's, master's, and law degrees from the University of Miami, where he now serves as a professor of practice in the Department of Art and Art History, with secondary appointments at the medical and law schools. Cortada also serves as a Research Fellow for Princeton University.

EMERGING ARTS LEADERS AWARD

Hosted by Miami Emerging Arts Leaders, the award is presented to a young leader in recognition of extraordinary work in the arts administration field, demonstrating innovative thinking, commitment to the advancement of the arts and exemplary leadership qualities.



DEREK WALLACE

Nu Deco Ensemble / @nudecoensemble

Derek Wallace is the Vice President of Advancement & Operations at Nu Deco Ensemble, the dynamic and innovative chamber orchestral ensemble who's mission is to create compelling and transformative genre-bending musical experiences that inspire, enrich, and connect new and diverse audiences and artists. Derek is the epitome of an Emerging Arts Leader and his impact in arts administration is evident.

He is committed to excellence in managing staff, cultivating foundation support, and building lasting partnerships within the Miami community. Derek has served as a Discipline Coordinator with YoungArts and volunteers as grant panelist with the Florida State Division of Arts and Culture, Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation. He has worked with prestigious organizations such as, Ithaca College School of Music, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Yellow Barn Music Festival.

Derek received his bachelor's degree in music management with a vocal emphasis and business minor from Florida Southern College. Miami-Dade county's musical and artistic landscape benefits daily through the work of Derek Wallace.

ARTS & EDUCATION INSPIRATION AWARD

GROUP RECIPIENT

Presented to an organization or company that has developed a groundbreaking or innovative educational arts initiative for children or families.



FRIENDS OF SOUTH FLORIDA MUSIC

@[friendsofsm](#)

Friends of South Florida Music is nonprofit organization that provides early childhood music education to children in under resourced communities. Their work helps children to thrive during their formative preschool years.

Led by Dr. Joy Galliford, known as “Dr. Joy” to her young students, Friends of South Florida Music has served more than 1,400 students at schools that do not have music programs. Dr. Joy has been a champion for children in Miami for more than 40 years! She has served as an elementary school teacher in Miami-Dade County Public schools and a music researcher and instructor at the University of Miami Frost School of Music. Launching Friends of South Florida Music allows her and her staff to provide free music classes to young children who otherwise would not have access to music programs.

Dr. Joy and the Friends of South Florida Music team serve with unquenchable energy, giving children the gift of music and building their aptitude for future success in school and beyond.

ARTS & EDUCATION INSPIRATION AWARD

INDIVIDUAL RECIPIENT

Presented to an artist or individual that has developed a groundbreaking or innovative educational arts initiative for children or families.



MICHAEL GIL ARANGO

@the_soundmurai

Michael Gil Arango is a Miami based Cuban American multi-instrumentalist, composer, certified Master Teaching Artist, Registered Behavior Technician, Zen practitioner and Brazilian jiu-jitsu blue belt.

Michael studied guitar and graduated from Felix Varela School of Music, Havana Cuba under the guidance of Barima Gort and Mayra Cruz. His music career has mostly been dedicated to composing and playing music for theater, documentaries, contemporary dance, sound healing, yoga, entrepreneurs 'talks, and storytelling. Michael has been devoted to play and learn about ancestral musical instruments such as the Australian yidaki or didgeridoo, Afro-Brazilian berimbau, African thumb pianos, Jaw harps, Nigerian talking drum, Afro-Cuban batá drums among others.

Michael has been a cultural ambassador throughout music. He has worked with South Florida organizations and institutions such as Musical, Fundarte, Artefactus Cultural Project, Fundación Cuatro Gatos, Anti Heroes Project, Miami International Book Fair, Conecta Miami Arts Inc., Miami Dade College, Arts for Learning, Sikan Afro-Cuban Dance Project, All Kids Included, Handy Inc, Live Arts and Florida Children Theater.

MICHAEL SPRING LEADERSHIP AWARD

The inaugural award recognizes outstanding achievement of a visionary cultural leader who embodies inclusive values and the highest level of excellence in service to the arts. Widely regarded as the architect of Miami-Dade County's cultural ecosystem, Michael Spring retired in 2023 after 40 years of distinguished public service.



LAURA BRUNEY

ARTS & BUSINESS COUNCIL OF MIAMI / [@artsbizmiami](#)

As President & CEO of the Arts & Business Council of Miami since 1988, Laura Bruney has empowered the creative ecosystem and helped develop Miami-Dade's 2.1-billion-dollar non-profit arts industry. She has led the movement to keep the arts in business with high-impact partnerships between corporations, small business, entrepreneurs and the cultural community. As Miami's only organization that leverages the arts for economic vitality, she has developed innovative programs to engage business, inspire young professionals, stimulate innovation & foster creativity.

Ms. Bruney has designed signature programs that develop better arts boards, amplify audience development and engage marketing innovators, and provide legal advice to artists and inventors. She was at forefront of increasing arts coverage in the new media landscape with the development of Artburst, Miami's media hub for the arts. The organization currently works with over 500 non-profit arts organizations and more than 1,000 business leaders and arts enthusiasts. Collaboration is Laura's superpower, and she is very involved in the creative and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

She is a tireless cheerleader, promoting the value of the arts to the corporate community. In Miami-Dade the arts mean business.

INNOVATIVE ARTS FUNDERS AWARD

Presented to a foundation or funding group that has designed innovative opportunities to fund the arts.



DEBORAH HOFFMAN

FUNDING ARTS NETWORK / [@fundingartsnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/fundingartsnetwork)

Deborah Hoffman was a guiding force in developing a new idea for funding the arts in 1996. She is an original founder of the Funding Arts Network (FAN), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and enhancing the visual and performing arts programs offered in Miami-Dade County.

This pioneering model provides member-supported grants to arts providers, capacity-building workshops to grant applicants, and educational and social programs for members to encourage greater involvement in the arts. FAN has helped keep the arts industry alive and thriving for more than 25 years by awarding almost six million dollars in grants to 114 arts organizations and 675 programs.

The innovative FAN model has been replicated in other communities that are lucky enough to have a changemaker like Deborah Hoffman to provide the spark for a new way to help fund the arts.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN THE ARTS AWARD

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes an individual who has played an outstanding and significant role for a long period of time that has impacted the arts and inspired artists, creatives and arts professionals.



MONTY TRAINER

COCONUT GROVE ARTS FESTIVAL / @grovefather

Monty Trainer is truly the heart and soul of Coconut Grove—a place where art, community, and passion intertwine. Under Monty’s stewardship, the Coconut Grove Arts Festival has flourished for 6 decades, becoming an annual beacon of creativity and cultural vibrancy with more than 100,000 visitors attending each year.

Monty Trainer’s name once graced the waterfront restaurant that became a beloved local landmark. But his legacy transcends mere culinary delights. It’s his unwavering love for the arts that defines him—a guiding principle that has shaped his philanthropic endeavors. Monty has been an active member of the cultural arts community since inception. He has been an active board member of numerous cultural organizations, including New World School of the Arts, Miami Dade County Cultural Affairs Council, Miami Symphony Orchestra, MDC Culinary Institute, and the Coconut Grove Chamber of Commerce, to name a few. Monty has been honored as one of Miami-Dade’s Top Executives by the South Florida Business Journal and for his many years of service to the community by The Theodore Roosevelt Gibson Memorial Fund.

Today, we raise our brushes and pens in gratitude. Monty, thank you for a lifetime of achievements, for weaving the threads of creativity into the fabric of South Florida. Monty’s impact is profound and will forever remain an indelible brushstroke on Miami’s cultural canvas.

ARTS & ACCESSIBILITY AWARD

GROUP RECIPIENT

Presented to an artist or individual developing programs and events for all abilities and doing innovative outreach and engagement for differently abled arts enthusiasts and artists.



INCLUSION THEATRE PROJECT AT AREA STAGE CONSERVATORY

[@ascitp](#)

The Inclusion Theatre Project (ITP) was established in 2014 by Executive Director Maria Banda-Rodaz and offers a specially designed and adaptive curriculum to students ages 5 through adult.

Services include group and private classes (voice, dance, acting) and musical productions, on site and at partner locations in Miami-Dade County. While its primary purpose is to provide such students with high-quality training in the performing arts, the benefits that ITP offers also stretch far beyond the stage.

This program serves as an important gateway to autonomy and independence, and ultimately to living a more productive and fulfilling life. So often, participants like those served by ITP are negatively defined by their differences and disadvantages; but when they are instead embraced for their unique strengths and abilities, the sky truly is the limit as far as what is possible.

ARTS & ACCESSIBILITY AWARD

INDIVIDUAL RECIPIENT

Presented to an artist or individual developing programs and events for all abilities and doing innovative outreach and engagement for differently abled arts enthusiasts and artists.



JENNIFER PUIG

[@jenniferpuig](#)

Jennifer Puig is an inclusive multifaceted dance, yoga, and creative movement facilitator, as well as a teaching artist, trainer, and dance teacher. She is certified in various disciplines, including Dance Movement Therapy, Wolf Trap Education, Movement Yoga for Children, and R.A.I.S.E. techniques. Jennifer's passion for dance and movement stems from her Dominican upbringing and culture, which emphasized the unifying and expressive nature of dance across different social and cultural contexts.

Jennifer's educational journey includes an Associate in Arts degree from Miami Dade College and studies in Dance at the University of South Florida from 2001 to 2003. She studied professional Dance at Florida International University from 2003 - 2006, with a focus in Modern Dance and Afro-Caribbean rhythms. Jennifer also pursued a master's degree in Dance Movement Therapy from 2008-2012, at the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona in Spain, where she delved into the connection between movement, dance, and the mind, body, and spirit integration. She received her certification in 2009 after completing internships in dance therapy with adults with mental and physical disabilities and at-risk children.

Through her work, Jennifer strives to help individuals rediscover their innate ability to dance, move, and connect. She firmly believes in the empowering, healing, and transformative qualities of dance and movement, and she actively promotes their integration into learning, social integration, emotional well-being, and self-regulation skills for individuals of all backgrounds and abilities.

ARTS & SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD

Presented to an artist, individual or organization engaged in significant and meaningful work at the intersection of the arts, social change, social justice and equality.



NADEGE GREEN

Black Miami-Dade / [@blackmiamidade](https://www.instagram.com/blackmiamidade)

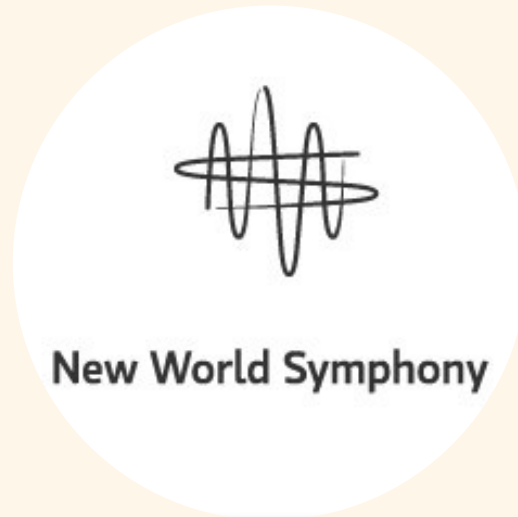
A child of Haitian immigrants and former farmworkers, Miami native Nadege Green is a journalist and community historian whose work centers the lived experiences of Black people in South Florida. Her practice and approach to storytelling is deeply rooted in history and first-person narratives that explore and connect issues around race, culture, climate justice and displacement.

She founded Black Miami-Dade, a history and storytelling platform telling the story of Miami's Black past and in 2023 she curated the first ever exhibit in Miami to honor and uplift the history of Black LGBTQ+ Miamians called "Give Them Their Flowers." Her reporting and essays have appeared on NPR, WLRN News, and in the Gravy Journal, the Miami Herald, and Atlantic and Harper's Bazaar. She is currently a Senior Civic Media Fellow at the University of Southern California's Annenberg Innovation Lab.

She was the 2022 Distinguished Writer in Residence at New York University's Center for Black Visual Culture at the Institute of African American Affairs, and she was the inaugural Community Scholar in Residence at the University of Miami's Center for Global Black Studies in 2021 and currently serves as the Director of Community Research and Storytelling at the Community Justice Project.

ARTS & TECHNOLOGY AWARD

Presented to an arts organization corporation engaged in significant and meaningful work at the intersection of arts and technology to advance the creative ecosystem.



NEW WORLD SYMPHONY

@nwsymphony

The New World Symphony stands at the crossroads of tradition and innovation, shaping the future of classical music. With a mission to prepare graduates of music programs for leadership roles in professional orchestras and ensembles, New World Symphony cultivates exceptional talent and artistic excellence. The New World Center, designed by Frank Gehry, and the home of New World Symphony, is a cutting-edge facility that leverages digital technology for artistic expression. The Center has transformed how symphonic music is taught, presented, and experienced. As part of the Symphony's commitment to accessibility, they utilized technology to launch the Mobile WALLCAST Concert Series.

This groundbreaking initiative extended concerts beyond the walls of the New World Center, reaching audiences far and wide. With a 7,000-square-foot projection of live concerts on the exterior of the edifice; it has transformed the open space into a multi-faceted free experience for attendees and cultural explorers. The New World Symphony continues to push the boundaries of innovation through its Knight New Media Center, housed at the New World Center. With support from the Knight Foundation, the center serves as a hub for digital exploration. It is a place where technology and art converge, fostering creativity and elevating expression. From multimedia collaborations to interactive experiences, the Knight New media center amplifies the impact of classical music in the digital age.

In Miami's vibrant ecosystem, the New World Symphony orchestrates the future of classical music. It bridges generations, inviting all to share in the timeless magic of symphonic sound.

PUBLIC ART AWARD

Presented to an artist or organization in recognition of a sustained commitment to public art or design of an outstanding permanent public art project.



MIAMI-DADE ART IN PUBLIC PLACES TRUST

[@artinpublicplacesmdc](#)

One of the first public art programs in the country, Miami-Dade Art in Public Places was established in 1973 with the passage of an ordinance allocating 1.5% of the capital cost of new county buildings for the purchase or commission of artworks. Art in Public Places is overseen by a citizens' Trust and the vital work of Art in Public Places would not be possible been done without the commitment and dedication of the Trust.

Appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, the Trustees act in the public interest to ensure quality selection, maintenance, planning, public education, and curating of all works of art acquired by the program. Their tireless effort and commitment have resulted in more than 1,000 works of art in the public catalogue and gained international recognition as a leader in its field.

Creative problem-solving through innovative collaborations with artist, architects, historians, and engineers has resulted in projects that validate, define, and expand the beauty of Miami-Dade County. Public art can be accessed in Miami International Airport, Metrorail and Metromover stations, PortMiami, Zoo Miami, Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, parks, fire stations, libraries, police stations, public housing developments, courthouses, and community health centers. Thank you to the Miami-Dade Art in Public Places Trust for making the county beautiful for generations to come.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!



Stay connected to the arts by following [@artsbizmiami](https://www.instagram.com/artsbizmiami). Be on the look out for our recap posts and more information on where you can find photos from this event!

Serving the Arts 2024 Award Ceremony has been made possible with support of Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs & Cultural Affairs Council, Miami-Dade County Mayor & Board of County Commissioners.