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47 win grants in 2014 South Florida Knight Arts Challenge

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Zedric Bemby receives \$20,000 for a Young Students Trained in Urban Dance project led by the Live in Color Dance Collective from Alberto Ibarguen, president and CEO, and Matt Haggman, program director, during the 2014 Knight Arts Challenge. MAX REED / FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

A poetry competition sponsored by a pro football player, a play based on the stories of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and a Miami-Havana exchange of visual artists were among the 47 ideas awarded a total of \$2.29 million in the 2014 South Florida Knight Arts Challenge.

The big surprise Monday night at the Knight Arts Challenge's annual celebration: the People's Choice Winner. That \$20,000 prize went to the Key West Art and Historical Society to fund an arts and history program in Monroe County schools, which competed with five other small arts groups for the prize chosen by text votes. (The Art and Historical Society also won a second award, \$15,000, to create a kinetic art-on-bicycles parade.)

Now in its seventh year, the Knight Arts Challenge encourages groups large and small to submit arts-related ideas that benefit or take place in South Florida. The Knight funding commitment must be matched by outside funds.

Dennis Scholl, vice president/arts for the John and James L. Knight Foundation, noted that this year's winners have a wider geographic range than in the past, "from Fort Lauderdale to Doral, Hialeah, Homestead, Key West – that is saying something, that the contest has inspired and excited people in all the neighborhoods in South Florida."

More winners this year came from the literary world, including publishers Jai-Alai Books and Exile Books, mobile book source Bookleggers and the former Miami Dolphins player Jason Taylor Foundation's poetry "Super Bowl."

"Much like Art Basel impacts the visual arts in Miami and brings it to a different level, I'm thinking the Miami Book Fair is impacting the literary practice in Miami," Scholl said. "It simply has made this a more open, interested place when it comes to literature."

A third trend: Many grants went to expand existing programs, pointing to the maturation of the organizations and to Miami overall. Those included the Miami Music Project, Bas Fisher Invitational and Cannonball.

To compete for the challenge, major initiatives and grass-roots groups submitted a short paragraph answering the question, "What's your best idea for the arts?" Most of this year's winners were small arts organizations, collectives and individual artists with ideas including an artist-in-residency program at Stiltsville, setting traditional Indian dance to the rhythms of Afro-Cuban poetry and a rover busker festival. About 1,200 ideas were submitted, Scholl said.

Over the program's seven-year span, 8,900 ideas have been submitted in South Florida, with 241 chosen for a total of \$25 million in funding. About 95 percent have raised the matching funds needed to progress. The Foundation has contributed close to \$100 million total for the arts over the past seven years, with projects including the Wallcasts at the New World Symphony and school visits at the Pérez Art Museum Miami.

Also honored was Ruth Shack for her contributions to the arts.

2014 WINNERS

Amanda Keeley (Exile Books): \$50,000 to promote the visual arts with a pop-up artist's bookstore

that travels around Miami.

Andrew Yeomanson (DJ Le Spam): \$35,000 to improve an analog studio that allows local musicians to record on vintage equipment or preserve works currently cataloged on older formats.

Artists in Residence in Everglades (AIRIE): \$60,000 to bring the Everglades into the city by creating billboards emblazoned with images of the South Florida outdoors.

BFI (Bas Fisher Invitational): \$150,000 to raise the profile of Miami artists by hosting a global gallery swap.

Bookleggers: \$30,000 to expand a community mobile library that provides books for free.

Books & Books: \$80,000 to stream and archive author events with noted writers.

Buskerfest Miami!: \$10,000 to stage a street performance festival and ongoing series.

Cannonball: \$150,000 for microgrants for innovative, artist-driven projects in Miami.

Centro Cultural Español de Cooperación Iberoamericana: \$50,000 to provide an intimate cultural experience by expanding its microtheater program of short plays in confined spaces.

City of Doral: \$60,000 for classical music, dance, exhibitions, art films and more in Downtown Doral Park.

Community Arts and Culture: \$40,000 to expand the Afro Roots World Music Festival to three days.

Elizabeth Cerejido: \$60,000 to launch an artist exchange program between Havana and Miami, in partnership with local universities.

FATVillage Arts District: \$80,000 to expand Fort Lauderdale's FATVillage Projects Contemporary Art Space for experimental work.

Foundation for Emerging Technologies and Arts (FETA): \$15,000 to highlight new music in the Americas through an experimental electronic music and sound art series.

Hialeah Contemporary Culture Project (HICCUP): \$15,000 to Hialeah-based collective featuring artists whose works engage the surrounding city.

HistoryMiami: \$150,000 to create a photography center at the museum focused on curating exhibitions and engaging the community in documenting life in South Florida.

IFE-ILE: \$15,000 for the company's dance festival, which hosts workshops and performances reflecting the diversity of the African diaspora.

inkub8: \$30,000 to provide an artists' workspace at the organization's Wynwood studio.

Jai-Alai Books: \$40,000 to launch a literary publishing house.

Jason Taylor Foundation: \$50,000 to bring a friendly poetry competition to Broward County.

Key West Art & Historical Society: \$15,000 to create a kinetic sculpture parade featuring wacky art on bicycles.

Letter 16 Press: \$20,000 to digitize the work of Miami photographers from the 1970s and '80s and publish it in a book series.

Little Haiti Cultural Center: \$50,000 to create a youth rara institute where teens can learn to play and make traditional instruments.

Live in Color Dance Collective: \$20,000 to train young urban funk artists and provide them with

opportunities to perform.

Mexican American Council: \$60,000 to create a children's mariachi academy in South Miami-Dade.

Miami Center for Architecture & Design (MCAD): \$15,000 to bring artists and architects together through a lecture series.

MDC Live Arts: \$50,000 to share the stories of modern-day veterans and their families through a season-long initiative featuring a multimedia performance, exhibition and veteran arts engagement program.

Miami Music Project: \$75,000 to implement a new teaching artists training program at Miami's only El Sistema-modeled orchestral program.

Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs: \$75,000 to commemorate the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center's 40th anniversary.

Museum of Fashion: \$25,000 to strengthen a new museum collection that highlights vintage couture.

Norton Herrick Center for Motion Picture Studies: \$15,000 to expand the Cosford Classics series at Cosford Cinema.

Nu Deco Ensemble: \$75,000 for concerts offering a hybrid of music and multimedia performances.

Oliver Sanchez: \$15,000 to support Swampspace, an alternative exhibition space for local artists and musicians.

Olympia Theater at Gusman Center: \$50,000 to expand an arts series in the Olympia Theater lobby.

Opa-locka Community Development Corp.: \$100,000 to transform a street into a large-scale public art project.

Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science: \$15,000 to create a performance series mixing 20th century science and science fiction films with musical improvisation and multimedia presentations.

Pioneer Winter / Pioneer Winter Collective: \$20,000 to create site-specific works in nontraditional spaces.

Ranjana Warier: \$35,000 to set traditional Indian dance to the rhythms of Adrian Castro's Afro-Caribbean poetry.

Sound and Vision: \$10,000 to bring creatives together for weekly meetings to share work, perform material and challenge artistic boundaries through technology.

Stiltsville Trust: \$25,000 to create an aquatic-inspired arts incubator and residency program at the seven remaining houses of Stiltsville.

The Children's Voice Chorus: \$25,000 to provide transportation for migrant farming children to the Children's Voice Chorus program in Palmetto Bay.

The Screening Room: \$25,000 for programming at the Screening Room in Wynwood.

Third Horizon Media: \$50,000 for showcases featuring the work of Miami's Caribbean cutting-

edge filmmakers, musicians and visual artists.

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral: \$30,000 to create a concert series of up-and-coming musical talent.

University of Florida, College of Fine Arts, School of Music: \$75,000 to support the University of Florida's Brazilian Music Institute to be presented at Broward College.

Village of Pinecrest, Pinecrest Gardens: \$75,000 to expand Pinecrest Gardens' popular South Motors Jazz Series to include a new mentor program for students.

Virginia Key GrassRoots Festival of Music, Art and Dance: \$75,000 to create a four-day festival of music, workshops and events.