

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Knight Arts Challenge Interim Review 2008–2011

Knight Arts Challenge: Miami

October 2012



KNIGHT FOUNDATION'S MISSION

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities, and foster the arts. Through its arts program, the foundation seeks to weave the arts into the fabric of communities, to engage and inspire people, and to contribute to a sense of place through shared cultural experiences. The foundation seeks innovative ways to reach, engage and increase audiences for the arts.

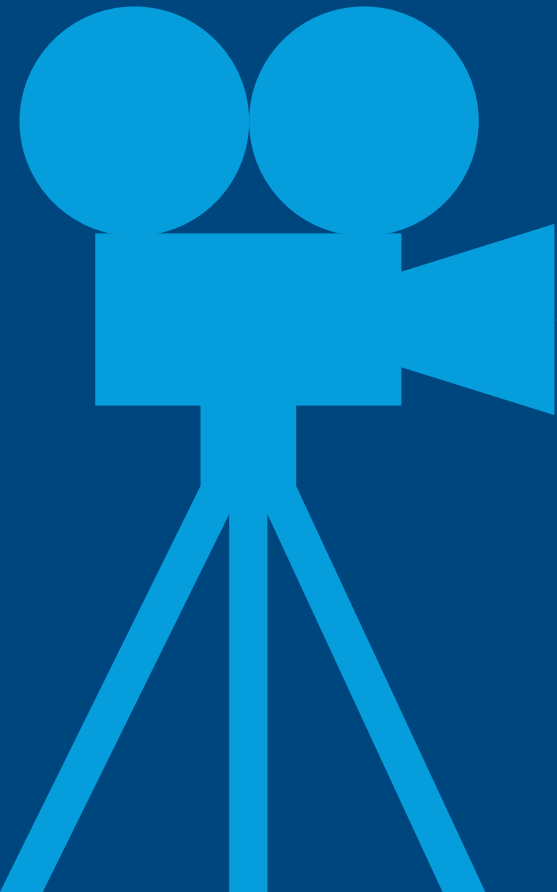
AEA CONSULTING

AEA Consulting is regarded as one of the world's leading cultural consulting firms, with almost two decades of experience assisting clients in the cultural sector internationally, helping them to define, plan and achieve their long-term goals. Specialists in facilities, operational and strategic planning, AEA Consulting collaborates with public and private cultural organizations and their funders in the U.S., U.K., Europe and Asia to help them realize the contribution that culture can make to communities.



KNIGHT ARTS CHALLENGE WINNERS – SELECT VIDEOS

As part of the interim review, a series of short videos profiling select Knight Arts Challenge winners were created to accompany the main report. **Click the links below to watch videos of individual winners:**



FEATURING

[\[NAME\] Publications](#)

[Bass Museum](#)

[Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden](#)

[Miami City Ballet](#)

[Miami Light Project](#)

[Rhythms of Africa](#)

[Sweat Records](#)

[Teatro Avante](#)

[Wolfsonian–FIU](#)

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Foreword

The Knight Arts Challenge is designed to promote the best and most innovative ideas from local organizations and individuals in the arts and cultural sector of South Florida. The sector is young yet experiencing significant growth and development. That's why the Arts Challenge spans the entire spectrum of the arts to further develop and build on the momentum of the region's recent cultural activity.

The Arts Challenge is a five-year initiative, launched in 2008, comprising two parts: three major grants totaling \$20 million (to the Miami Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami and the New World Symphony), and a \$20 million community-based arts competition. Through the arts competition (which is the focus of this report), we have funded large and small nonprofits, individual artists and entrepreneurs, commercial entities that provide a platform for local artists and educational programs, from local grade schools to major research universities. We've also funded across range of art forms, spanning the visual arts, popular and classical music, dance, architecture, theater, film and literature.

As part of our work at the foundation we review our initiatives to assess their impact on the community and to find the best ways to improve our work and invest in the future. In March 2011, we commissioned AEA Consulting to conduct an interim review of the Knight Arts Challenge to see how the winners – and the contest itself – were engaging the community through the arts.

At the time of the AEA Consulting assessment of the 2008-2011 period of funding, the Arts Challenge had awarded 110 grants in South Florida. Of these, only a handful of projects were complete at the time of the study, with most of them still developing and implementing their art or cultural programs with the support of Knight and matching funding – an integral part of the Arts Challenge. Hence, this exercise seeks to provide an interim review of what has been achieved to date and how we can strengthen the Arts Challenge going forward.



AEA Consulting found that the Arts Challenge is an important vehicle for generating ideas. The program also is instrumental in drawing new capital to the South Florida arts and cultural scene, and fueling the region's creative *zeitgeist*. Importantly, the Arts Challenge resulted in many well-received and innovative projects that may not otherwise have come to fruition, as well as several new multidisciplinary collaborations among organizations.

The recommendations contained in the AEA report are germane to our current grantees and our future plans. Among them are several terrific ideas to better engage the entire South Florida art and culture community via a "people's choice" award for several new finalists and the distribution of Arts Challenge applications in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole. Also certain to be on our menu of things to do are better tracking of individual grantee projects alongside new ways of better cultivating new ideas from future applicants through our application process.

We believe the ideas contained in this report provide useful lessons for artists, policymakers and grant makers on the role community-based contests can play in supporting a region's arts and cultural sector.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the AEA Consulting team that undertook this study. The team comprises Elizabeth Ellis, principal, András Szántó, senior consultant, Adrian Ellis, director, and Brent Reidy, consultant, all of AEA Consulting, and Alan Brown, principal of WolfBrown. We are also grateful to all who participated in the exercise, especially our Knight Arts Challenge grantees, applicants and other community members who were interviewed, for generously sharing their insights and feedback.

—Dennis Scholl, Vice President/Arts, Knight Foundation, and Mayur Patel, Vice President/Strategy and Assessment, Knight Foundation



Summary

The Knight Arts Challenge seeks to recognize the best and most innovative ideas from local organizations and individuals in the arts and cultural sector of South Florida. The region's sector is young compared to that of New York, Boston or Chicago. Over the past 10 years, however, South Florida has experienced significant growth and development, including the launch of Art Basel Miami Beach in 2002, the opening of the largest performing arts center in Florida, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (then the Carnival Center) in 2006, and the opening of Miami Beach's New World Center home of the New World Symphony in 2011.

The Knight Arts Challenge is designed to contribute to Miami's cultural development, building upon the momentum of the past decade. The Arts Challenge seeks to achieve systemic impact across South Florida's cultural sector. Its primary goals are:

- To strengthen South Florida's artistic and cultural development, and improve the perception of the city as a cultural destination.
- To engage communities in the region through the arts, and in particular to use the arts to bridge differences across diverse communities.

Projects span the entire spectrum of the arts (in terms of genre, scale and ambition) and are designed to fuel the momentum of the region's nascent, but growing cultural activity. One Knight Arts Challenge winner, the Adrienne Arsht Center, for example, launched the popular Free Gospel Sundays series during Black History Month in 2008 to celebrate gospel music in Miami. Another Arts Challenge winner, The Miami Light Project's Here & Now Festival, presents bold, original, performing art from the region, invites artists and producers from outside Miami to see local performances and offers stipends for Miami artists to attend festivals in the United States and abroad.

Some Arts Challenge projects are designed to help nurture and educate aspiring artists, retain local talent and attract national and international interest in the region's creative community. The Borscht Film Festival, another winning project, commissions short films by emerging local filmmakers, several of which have been accepted to major film festivals, including the renowned Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, and Austin's South by Southwest music and arts festival. Other Arts Challenge winners are seeking to document the region's growing cultural activity; for example Miami-based artist and writer Gean Moreno, launched [NAME] Publications, a nonprofit press to give local artists a different outlet to disseminate their ideas. [NAME] Publications' books have been featured in the New York Art Book Fair, at the NADA (New Art Dealers Alliance) fair in Miami, the New Museum and Printed Matter in New York.

The Arts Challenge's breadth reflects the idea that a healthy cultural ecology is diverse and includes artists, educators, students, presenters, promoters, funders, policymakers, critics, commentators and, not least, audiences. The winning projects span a wide range of entities, sizes, ages and art forms, and support audience development at various levels of engagement, from first-time participants and amateur practitioners to professionals meeting the highest international standards.

The Arts Challenge seeks to underscore the perception of South Florida among both residents and nonresidents alike as a place of culture. Done well, the assumption is this in turn helps attract

artists, patrons and media attention, and further propels the region's cultural development.

The Arts Challenge has three simple rules: applications should be about the arts; the creativity should take place in or benefit South Florida; and applicants should find other sources of funding to match the Knight Foundation grant.

The Challenge involves a two-round process. In the first round, applicants provide a brief description of their idea – no more than 150 words. A panel of readers drawn from the arts and cultural community winnows down the ideas, and proposes a set of finalists. These finalists are then invited to submit a three-page proposal, comprising a project description and proposed budget, which are reviewed by the readers and the foundation. In each round, final decisions are made by the foundation.

The Challenge is conceived as a magnet that pulls good ideas about the arts from the community, showcasing and investing in them, and thereby lifting the Miami cultural sector to a higher level of vibrancy, confidence and recognition. The approach assumes a net-positive effect through the extent to which new ideas are fostered (some of which might wind up being executed without foundation support), and artists and organizations are encouraged to engage with professional fundraising and philanthropic practices (skills they may end up putting into use more widely).

So how did the Arts Challenge do in these endeavors? Our assessment focused on four ambitions of the Arts Challenge:

- Does it generate ideas from the creative community?
- Does it draw new capital into the sector?
- Does it fuel the creative zeitgeist of South Florida?
- Do the winning projects have significant impact?

The assessment used surveys, focus groups and interviews with applicants, stakeholders, funders and opinion formers locally and nationally, as well as a comprehensive review of grant documentation. Our conclusions and recommendations, presented with a caveat because of the interim nature of the exercise as well as the lack of detailed benchmarks and metrics for each grant, are summarized below.

Knight Art Challenge: By the Numbers

2,432

applicants (first four years of
the challenge 2008-2010)

5,299

applications (including
repeat applicants)

219

finalists

110

winners

\$16.9

million (committed
at time of review)

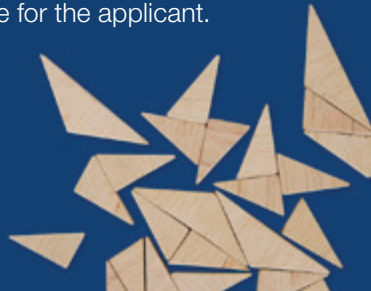
THE LOGIC BEHIND THE KNIGHT CHALLENGE MODEL

The Knight Arts Challenge is an interesting outlier in terms of its underlying logic for arts funding by U.S. foundations. The standard model for cultural grantmaking takes a “strategic” perspective – grants awarded are expected, cumulatively, to fulfill a stated strategic aim of the funder in addition to meeting the goals of the organization funded. This approach places the burden of identifying opportunities and needs in the field on the shoulders of grant makers. The advantage of this form of proactive grantmaking is that it helps foundations direct resources toward issues they have identified as being of particular importance, and progress is measured by standards linked directly to resolution of those issues. A potential danger of this approach, however, is that it shifts the emphasis from the needs and interests of grantees to those of the funder.

The challenge model takes a different approach. It acknowledges a rapidly shifting cultural ecology in which foundation personnel are not always the best positioned to identify the most noteworthy and

promising projects, creative individuals, or organizations. It explicitly downplays the need to focus grants on predetermined goals, acknowledging the fact that in the arts, as elsewhere, change and innovation happen in and through systems that are, by their nature, unpredictable and diffuse.

A final component of the challenge model lies in its assumptions about unsuccessful applicants. Traditional grant making does not ascribe a grantee benefit to the process of application itself or to a failed application. This is consistent with the model of strategic philanthropy: if a grantee fails to win a grant, no activity takes place to advance the foundation’s objective. In contrast, the Knight Arts Challenge aims to invigorate the entirety of a community’s arts life, and it places a positive impact on the activation of ideas and activity in the community generated by the application process itself – regardless of the outcome for the applicant.



Generating Ideas from the Creative Community

The simplicity of the Arts Challenge application format has generated a high number of submissions from the community. Between 2008 and 2011, the Challenge received 5,299 total submissions from 2,432 applicants.

Unusual for a foundation grant program, the Arts Challenge has tapped into a wide pool of creativity in the region; nearly three-fifths of applicants are not 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations but individual artists alongside a scattering of private businesses, arts collectives and public agencies.

There is stronger evidence that the Arts Challenge assists grantees in realizing existing ideas than in stimulating new ones. Sixteen percent of survey respondents indicated that their idea had been developed in response to the Challenge, while 73 percent indicated that their idea existed before the Arts Challenge. This may in part be attributable to a “backlog” of ideas in circulation, and one can anticipate that this ratio will change over time.

Significantly, a survey of unsuccessful applicants found that two in five (43 percent) respondents believe the process of applying to the Art Challenge was beneficial even though their proposals were rejected. Many unsuccessful applicant respondents reported that the process improved or honed their application idea. A sizeable number of them noted that the process sparked collaboration with another group or artist, and 48 percent of them report pursuing their ideas in some fashion despite not winning.

These are significant findings. They suggest that the Arts Challenge process and broad approach to marketing has had a “halo effect” beyond winners, stimulating thinking and action among a wide circle of creative individuals and organizations in the community – and that it is widely perceived to have had this net positive effect, even by those who did not end up winning. The interviews confirmed this conclusion.

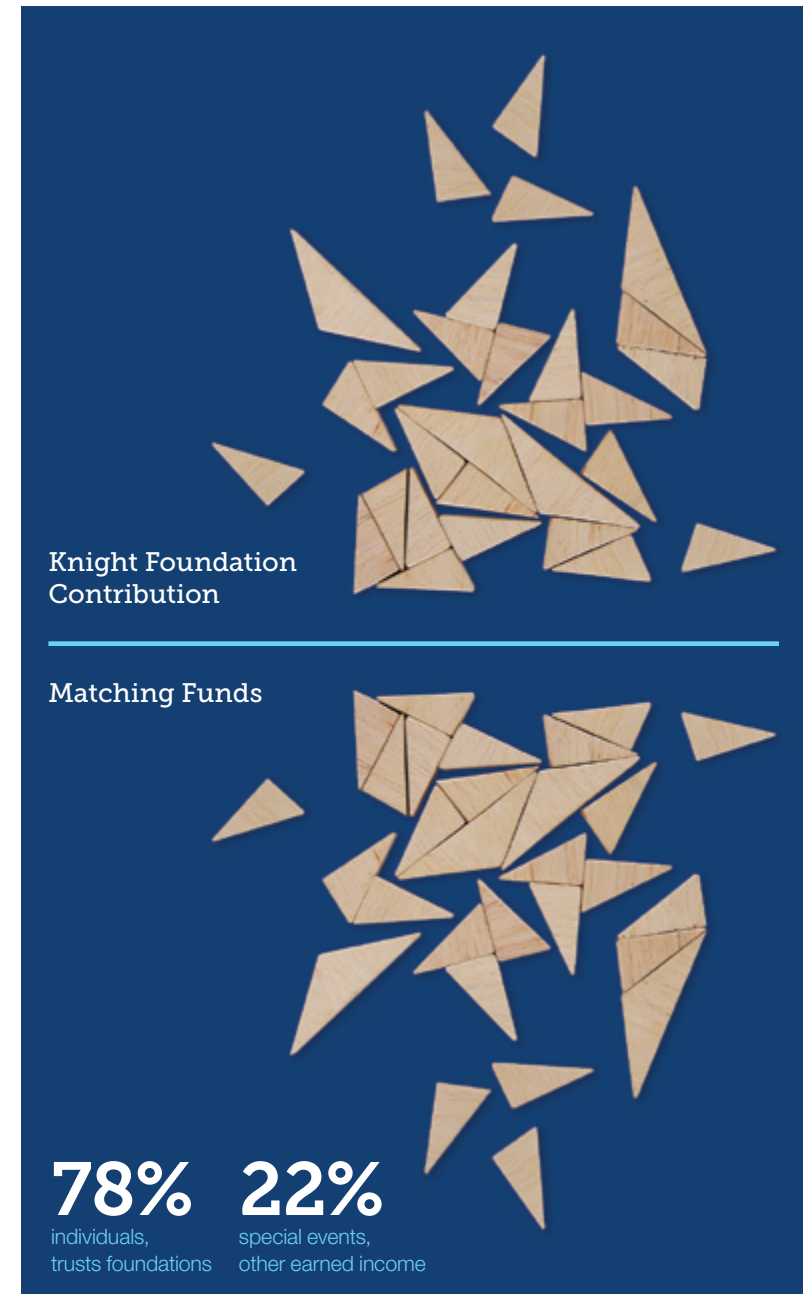
Drawing New Philanthropic Capital into the Arts and Culture

The Arts Challenge awards are contingent on a funding match, usually one to one, and the track record to date in meeting the match has been strong, with some relatively minor pragmatic adjustments to timing or percentage being made by the Foundation for a small number of grantees.

The matching requirement is intended to leverage Knight Foundation's own contribution, to bring new funds into the cultural sector in Miami and to encourage organizations to develop fundraising skills. Seventy-eight percent of matching funds raised to date has come from a combination of individuals, trusts or foundations, with some corporate support; and the balance has come from special events and other earned income. While some less experienced organizations expressed a degree of concern about what it required to make the match, most grantees did not, and some start-ups welcomed the opportunity that the match provided to help them develop professionally.

It was not possible, however, to establish what percentage of the matching funds was new to the arts, or to the arts in Miami. This was not part of grantees' reporting requirements, and most had not sought this information from their donors. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the proportion of new funds was relatively low – most Arts Challenge winners reported that they had reached out to their existing constituency for the match, although many mentioned employing new techniques in doing so. In particular, among the winners, individuals, start-ups and small creative enterprises reported learning the most about new ways of fundraising that would continue beyond the life of their Arts Challenge-funded project.

Almost all interviewed winners mentioned the importance of the Knight Foundation imprimatur in securing the match, particularly when approaching individuals and other foundations. In interviews, respondents also noted that the Challenge's support came at a critical time following the national economic downturn and functioned as a "stimulus project" for Miami's creative community.





Fueling Momentum and Adding to Miami's “Creative Zeitgeist”

We investigated whether the Arts Challenge – the mechanism of the competition, the awards themselves and media coverage they generated – had a cumulative impact on the ecology of the arts in South Florida by seeking the views of funders, stakeholders and applicants on the cultural vitality of the region, the supportiveness of the environment as a place for artists to work and live, and the contribution of the Arts Challenge to these aspects of life.

A majority of those consulted reported that South Florida has become more culturally vibrant over the past five years. Sixty-three percent of survey respondents and all interviewees reported that the Arts Challenge has made an important contribution to this trend alongside the establishment of new cultural venues and large cultural events. The Arts Challenge is also viewed by a majority of survey respondents and interviewees as contributing to making the region a supportive place for artists to work.

The Arts Challenge itself had garnered 76 mentions in the paper press and eight instances of television coverage by the time of this study. Prominent publications reporting on the Challenge included *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Atlantic* and *The Associated Press*. The overarching theme of these stories was Miami's cultural vitality and dynamism.

While the Arts Challenge has contributed to the arts and culture sector, several impediments still impede the region's cultural growth. Those widely articulated by respondents include a still developing tradition of local philanthropy, the absence of strong critical voices, under-articulated political support for the sector and the transient culture and sprawling geography of the Miami-Dade region.

Impact of Arts Challenge Winning Projects

This review does not include a detailed evaluation of individual projects, although the concluding chapters draw out some general observations about the collective work of grantees and profile a selection of Arts Challenge winners. The analysis does show a broad geographic spread of applications, albeit with a concentration in downtown and northeast Miami and Miami Beach that is higher than population density alone would explain. This reflects the location of the cultural community. The visual arts are strongly represented (40 percent of applicants and 37 percent of winners), perhaps reflecting the larger number of smaller organizations and independently working individuals in the visual arts compared with performing arts.

The Arts Challenge has resulted in many well-received and innovative projects that may not otherwise have come to fruition, as well as several new multidisciplinary collaborations among large organizations. Perhaps the best example of that was the Miami City Ballet's collaboration with the Cleveland Orchestra via an Arts Challenge grant.

As one would anticipate, the impact of the Arts Challenge has been deeper for individuals, start-ups and less prominent organizations. For many of these grantees, the level of funding, visibility and the reputational boost afforded by winning an Arts Challenge grant represent a step-change in their organizational or project development.

The diverse individual aims of Arts Challenge projects mirror the preoccupations of arts groups, grant makers and cultural policymakers across the United States, and encompass the salient dynamics now evident in the current phase of Miami's maturation into a nationally recognized arts and cultural center. Winning projects have contributed to the vibrancy of South Florida's arts scene in four broad areas:

- Expanding participation to broaden access to, encourage participation in and develop audiences for the arts in South Florida.
- Supporting local artists in the development of their skills and in the creation, presentation and promotion of their work.
- Celebrating cultural diversity to give voice to and bring together communities across the region's demographic landscape.
- Documenting cultural activity by curating, recording or showcasing the breadth of creative activities in region.



The Ziff Ballet Opera House at the Adrienne Arsht Center



Recommendations

Our review generated a series of recommendations for strengthening the Knight Arts Challenge:

1. **Cultivate the applicant pool.** The present contest design of harvesting ideas from the community and selecting winners does not invest in the process of improving the pool of ideas. This is analogous to buying an orchard and picking the perfectly ripe fruit, while letting everything else fall to the ground. At some point, if one wants a fertile and sustainable orchard, one needs to prune the trees, fertilize the soil and harvest some of the fruit that is not perfect. We recommend thinking of the pool of ideas as a community asset and allocating resources to:
 - Improving the pool of ideas.
 - Reflecting the best ideas back to the community and otherwise providing feedback to applicants.
 - Facilitating community interaction around common threads of ideas.
 - Incorporating a process into the program design that identifies promising ideas and supports their further development by carrying forward the best ideas from one year to the next, with some ability to fund their further development, much like a business with a portfolio of products in various stages of research and development.
2. **Showcase good ideas.** Given that good ideas per se have a high salience in the Arts Challenge and that many good ideas are inevitably rejected, we recommend that more be made of the ideas in addition to the current dissemination – perhaps

an “Ideas Fest” or an event of some sort in which there is the opportunity for winners and losers to workshop their ideas.

3. Attract additional funding. The match and requirements for larger organizations vs. smaller organizations and individuals might usefully be more clearly differentiated. Many applicants claimed the match requirements were initially opaque. We recommend that some thought be given to creating clearer guidelines that reflect the different capacities and different scales of operation of the applicants.

4. Improve outcome metrics. We recommend a greater emphasis on the metrics of success in the second application round of the contest so that awards and subsequent monitoring can include these data points. There is an opportunity to refine evaluation methods to gauge the impact of the Challenge with greater precision. Performance indicators can be developed with respect to various areas, such as:

- Expanding access and audiences.
- Supporting individual artists.
- Celebrating cultural diversity.
- Documenting artistic activity.

These indicators need to be tailored to individual projects at the time of project award so that there are clear benchmarks for measuring success at the individual grantee level.

5. Improve tracking of matching fund sources. We also recommend the adoption of a requirement that successful applicants provide more detail on the sources of matching funds – and whether these funds and funders are new to the sector.

6. Release matching capital early. Greater consideration should be given to releasing a small percentage of the award prior to the match being met, in order to provide “start-up” working capital for projects, especially for smaller, under-capitalized grantees. Clearly this puts the amounts released at risk, but there was a general sense among grantees that the inability to access funds until the match was fully met impeded their progress.

7. Delineate additional grant criteria. While the elegance and simplicity of the program may be compromised by layering on other implicit or explicit funding criteria, such as diversity, geographical coverage and projects that bridge

communities, all these appear to play a part in the decision-making but are not among the stated criteria. The process might be invigorated by making these additional criteria more explicit, either by choosing a focus theme each year (e.g. building bridges between cultures, participatory engagement or individual artists) or simply by prioritizing certain areas explicitly. Alternatively, the foundation could pick up on other implicit themes: the “deinstitutionalization” of the arts, fostering direct participation between audiences and artists, or audiences and the art experience.

8. Embrace more crowd-sourcing. Framing of the program as a contest taps into current interest and excitement around crowd-sourcing, and includes many positive aspects, including openness to a broader array of applicants and the generation of a large pool of ideas. The wisdom of crowds could be tapped more deeply by having communities play a role in selecting which projects to fund. As one champion of the Arts Challenge described it: “The challenge is about ideas ... ideas and the unstoppable momentum of Miami’s cultural development. Ideas that are putting our community on the map in terms of high quality, art and experiences. ... I don’t have the answers. I believe in the crowds.”

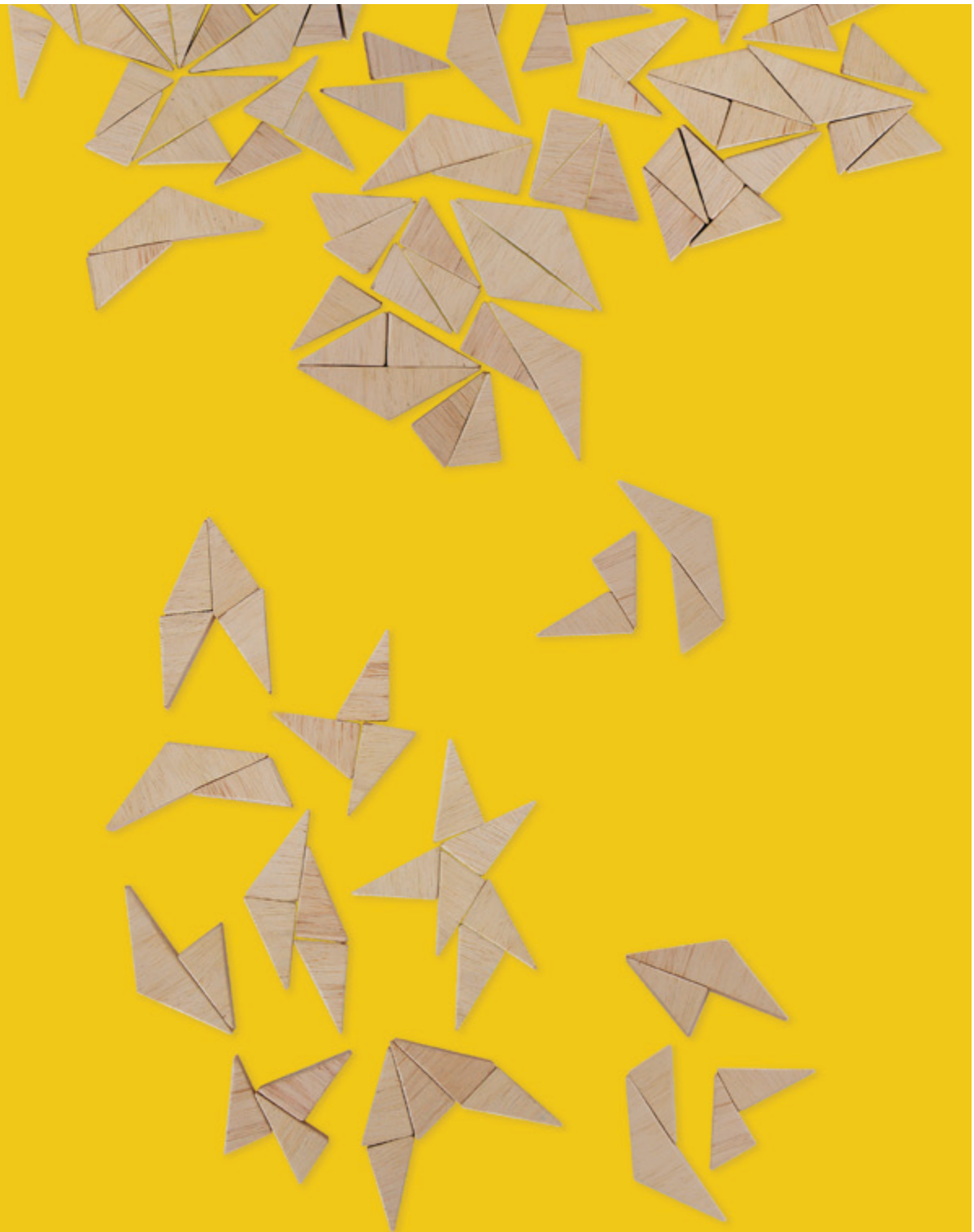
9. Resolve the geographic criteria. There is a lack of clarity and consistency in communicating whether the geographic focus of the Challenge is Miami or South Florida. Our recommendation is to embrace “greater Miami” as the focus of the Challenge.

10. Ensure a multilingual approach. The Arts Challenge cannot be inclusive without reaching more deeply into Miami communities and cultural networks and doing so with a multilingual approach. We recommend that Knight Foundation publish its application and marketing documents in Spanish and French; translate the website; hire Spanish- and French-speaking grant administrators and “ambassadors” and conduct recruiting sessions and town halls in these languages.

The Knight Arts Challenge has made a significant contribution to Miami’s cultural development, through its efforts to surface, showcase and invest in the best ideas from the arts community. The following pages in this report detail the Challenge’s role in increasing the vibrancy, confidence and recognition of the region’s cultural sector.

Chapter 2

Generating Ideas: Arts Challenge Applicants





New World School of the Arts



Teatro Avante

Generating Ideas: Arts Challenge Applicants

The Arts Challenge is unusual in its wide focus on the applicant pool whether successful or not, rather than exclusively on the grantees. The field of ideas generated is as important as the smaller group of ideas that actually secure funding. Given this, the focus of this chapter is the universe of *applicants* rather than the universe of *grantees*.

The first intended outcome examined in this assessment is to discover whether “*the Arts Challenge generates ideas from South Florida’s creative community.*” In order to test this, we examined the following indicators:

- **The number and nature of the applications:** How many applications were there each year? Did these ideas predate the Challenge, or did the Challenge stimulate the generation of the idea?
- **The breadth of applicants:** What communities do the applicants represent? Is the process attracting new applicants?
- **The impact of the application process:** What impact did the Arts Challenge process have on the applicants who were not winners?

Let’s consider each indicator and the results of our findings in turn.

The Number and Nature of the Applications

The Arts Challenge has low barriers to entry. The first round of submission asks only for an applicant's identifying information and a description of the idea in no more than 150 words. The initial application does not ask how the idea will be accomplished, how the funding match requirement will be met, or why the individual or group applying is the best candidate to receive a grant. Those questions are asked in the second round of the application.

This format has generated an extremely high number of submissions. Between 2008, when the program was launched, and 2011, the Arts Challenge received 5,299 total submissions from 2,432 applicants. Of those, 219 finalists were invited to submit second-round applications. Of those finalists, 110 submissions were selected as winners. (See Figure 1.)

We examined the first-round applicant pool, analyzing how many applications each group or individual submitted, as well as how often they applied. In total, 2,432 discrete applicants participated in the first four years of the Knight Arts Challenge, and they submitted, on average, 2.2 applications. The number of applications per applicant varies widely; some submitted only one idea, while others submitted more than 10, and one applicant submitted 34 ideas.

In terms of the nature of the applications, we were interested in which ideas were completely new for the applicant; which were not new but had never been implemented; and which were not new and, in fact, represented projects that had already been implemented in some fashion. We found that while the Arts Challenge generated 5,299 applications in four years, it did not generate 5,299 new ideas. Some ideas predated the contest, albeit as unexecuted projects.

In addition, a survey of unsuccessful applicants conducted as part of our assessment provides some insights:¹

- Fifty-five percent of respondents stated that they had conceived their idea before the Arts Challenge, but had never executed it.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents stated that their ideas predated the Arts Challenge and had already been undertaken in some form.
- Sixteen percent of the respondents indicated that their idea was created in direct response to the Arts Challenge.

Figure 1: Applicants, Finalists and Winners of Knights Arts Challenge, 2008–2011.

Year	Applicants	Applications	Finalists	Winners
2008	960	1,617	77	32
2009	891	1,509	45	20
2010	592	929	41	27
2011	826	1,244	56	31
Total	2,432*	5,299	219	110

Source: Applications submitted to the Knights Arts Challenge. "Unique Applicants" were determined by email address and individual or organization name.

*This figure does not match the column total, as repeat applicants are counted only once.

¹ See the evaluation methodology statement at Appendix A for more detail.

Figure 2: Frequency of Knight Arts Challenge applications and applicants, 2008–2011

Number of submitted applications	Number of applicants submitting that many applications	As percent of total applicants	Number of applications made by those applicants	As percent of total applications
1	1,509	62%	1,509	28%
2	392	16%	784	15%
3–4	311	13%	1,047	20%
5–9	153	6%	1,004	19%
10–34	67	3%	955	18%
Total	2,432		5,299	

Source: Applications submitted to the Knights Arts Challenge



Miami City Ballet

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

The survey and follow-up interviews with unsuccessful applicants suggest that the Arts Challenge is largely not responsible for generating new ideas. Neither, however, does it capture primarily ideas that have already taken place in some form. For the majority of applicants, the Arts Challenge was a *means of executing an idea*. Its principal role, therefore, has been to bring to light latent creative ideas germinating in the community and waiting to come into being. It may be useful, then, to think of the Arts Challenge not primarily as a generator of completely new and original ideas, but as a way of catalyzing existing ideas and bringing more of them to fruition.



Art Center of South Florida



Kathleen Hudspeth

The Breadth of Applicants

While a foundation can curate a balanced portfolio of grant winners through its selection process, it has less direct control over the scope of its grant applicants. The application asks only for ideas, with no regard for the attributes of the submitting group or individual beyond defining South Florida as the geographical catchment area. The Knight Foundation is nevertheless interested in ensuring a broad base to its applicant pool. In this section of the report we analyze separately the geographic diversity, the diversity of artistic genres, the diversity of organizational status and the number of new versus repeat applicants in the Knight Arts Challenge program.

Geographic Diversity

The Arts Challenge is open to applicants from all of South Florida. Yet most of the applicants, 69 percent, live within Miami-Dade County – as do 74 percent of the finalists and 85 percent of successful applicants. Twenty percent of applicants, 10 percent of finalists and 14 percent of winners reside in Broward County; and 7 percent of applicants, 3 percent of finalists and 1 percent of winners represent counties outside of Broward or Miami-Dade. (See Figure 3) This preponderance of applications coming from Miami-Dade is not just a factor of Miami's population density; there is a skew toward the city even when population is taken into account.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

There may be room for improvement for the Arts Challenge, either in the degree to which it embraces the entire city and region or the degree to which the Knight Foundation is more straightforward about the Arts Challenge being Miami-focused. Still, no grant program can guarantee equal geographic distribution, and outside of imposing geographical quotas, a foundation can only gain relative equity by making outreach efforts and stimulating awareness in order to yield broad geographic interest. Furthermore, a disproportionate amount of artistic activity and therefore, all things being equal, quality – the key criterion in selection – may reside in the regions of South Florida more heavily represented in the applicant pool.

Figure 3: Location of Knight Arts Challenge applicants, finalists and winners, 2008–2011

Location	Applicants		Finalists		Winners	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Southwest Miami	393	17%	15	9.9%	7	8.0%
Northeast Miami	387	16.8%	34	22.4%	20	22.7%
Miami Beach	299	12.9%	24	15.8%	12	13.6%
Northwest Miami	204	8.8%	15	9.9%	7	8.0%
Coral Gables	113	4.9%	8	5.3%	6	6.8%
Downtown	106	4.6%	23	15.1%	17	19.3%
Coconut Grove	69	3.0%	4	2.6%	1	1.1%
Key Biscayne	28	1.2%	4	2.6%	3	3.4%
Hialeah	43	1.9%	2	1.3%	1	1.1%
Homestead	32	1.4%	2	1.3%	1	1.1%
Opa Locka	23	1.0%	1	0.7%	-	-
Total Miami-Dade County	1,697	73.5%	132	86.8%	75	85.2%
Broward County	451	19.5%	15	9.9%	12	13.6%
Palm Beach County	105	4.5%	3	2.0%	1	1.1%
Monroe County	21	0.9%	1	0.7%	-	-
Total Other South Florida	577	25.0%	19	12.5%	13	14.8%
Other Florida	35	1.5%	1	0.7%	-	-
Total Florida	2,309	100%	152	100%	88	100%
Outside Florida	123		4		1	

Source: Applications submitted to the Knights Arts Challenge / *Note that organizations that were finalists or winners multiple times are counted only once in this chart, which is why the finalist and winner counts seem low.

Diversity of Artistic Genres

The Arts Challenge skews toward the visual arts. More than one-third of all applicants, finalists and winners fall within that category (see Figure 4). This is perhaps not surprising, as the Miami visual arts community has been transformed and consolidated by Art Basel Miami Beach over the last decade. The visual arts, furthermore, tend to be less capital-intensive than the performing arts and dominated by more individuals and small collectives that are able to be nimble and enterprising in a way that corresponds to the spirit of the Arts Challenge.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

Further research would be required to ascertain whether the distribution of Arts Challenge applicants faithfully mirrors the size and composition of various categories of arts activity in South Florida. If it does not, then the Knight Foundation could make an effort to broaden its reach, or alternatively, continue to build upon its demonstrated strengths.

Figure 4: Genre of Knight Arts Challenge applicants, 2009–2011

	% of Applicants	% of Finalists	% of Winners
Visual Arts	40%	36%	37%
Music	16%	20%	17%
Performance Art	9%	4%	4%
Media	9%	11%	8%
Theater Arts	7%	11%	8%
Craft & Traditional Arts	6%	4%	7%
Arch. & Design	3%	4%	7%
Literature	6%	3%	5%
Cinematic Arts	3%	2%	1%
Other	2%	5%	5%

Note: Genre was not tracked in 2008 at the applicant stage; hence information is reported only for 2009–2011.



Miami Downtown Development Authority



Miami Light Project—Here and Now Festival



New World School of the Arts



Adrienne Arsht Center—Free Gospel Sundays

Organizational Status and Diversity

Most foundation grant programs restrict applicants to groups with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit status conferred by the Internal Revenue Code. The Knight Arts Challenge, however, is open to all applicants, regardless of tax status. Significantly, according to our applicant survey, nearly three-fifths of applicants were not operating as 501(c)(3) organizations, with the remainder predominantly individual artists alongside a scattering of private businesses, arts collectives, public agencies and religious organizations. (See Figure 5.)

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

While the proportion of Arts Challenge finalists and winners that are 501(c)(3) organizations is higher (and individuals lower), the volume of applications received from individuals and groups outside the nonprofit sphere is still meaningful. In an era of what former National Endowment for the Arts chairman Bill Ivey has described as “nonprofitism,” where arts funders typically cater to “tried and true” nonprofit organizations, the Arts Challenge’s willingness and success in moving beyond the traditional confines of cultural grant making represents a significant step.

Figure 5: Organizational status of Knight Arts Challenge applicants, finalists and winners 2008–2011

	% of Applicants	% of Finalists	% of Winners
501(c)(3) Org	42%	56%	65%
Individual	30%	14%	6%
Private Business	9%	10%	6%
Arts Collective	7%	3%	5%
Public Agency	3%	12%	12%
Religious Org.	1%	0%	0%
Other	9%	5%	6%

Source: Applicant data based on respondents to applicant survey, grantee documentation and various organization websites.

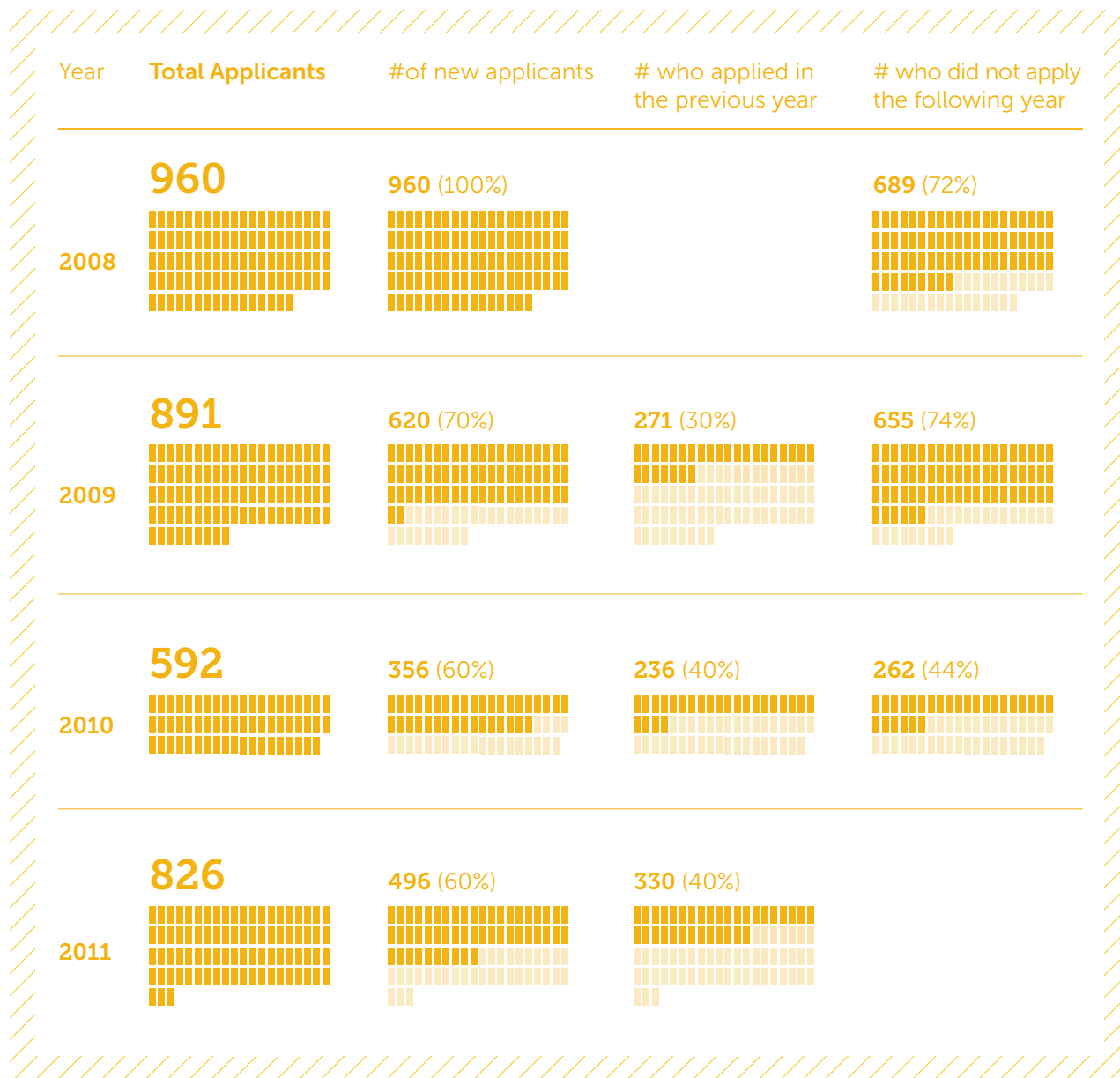
New Versus Repeat Applicants

For each year of the Arts Challenge, we examined the number of individuals or organizations that returned to apply from a previous year, those that did not and those that were new to the Arts Challenge for that year. In 2009, 70 percent of all applicants were new individuals or organizations compared to 60 percent in 2010 and 2011. As for nonreturning applicants, 72 percent of the 2008 applicants did not apply in 2009. In 2010, 74 percent of the applicants from 2009 did not reapply and 44 percent from 2010 did not apply in 2011. (See Figure 6.)

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

Grant programs axiomatically separate winners from losers. But because of its low barrier to entry, the Knight Arts Challenge generates a very high number of “have-nots,” which may appear more brutally Darwinian than most. For nearly 96 percent of the applicants, the result of the application process is rejection. This low winner-loser ratio is best seen as a sign of the contest’s openness to anyone, but it can have a demoralizing effect, even to the extent of dissuading applicants from applying again in future years. Yet, the low barrier to entry means that applicants are likely to have less connection to the process, less at stake if they fail to make the second round, and as such, a greater propensity to comprise a “transient” applicant population than would be found among the applicant pool of a more typical grant program.

Figure 6: Applicants new and old to the Knight Arts Challenge by individual or organization, 2008–2011



Source: Applications submitted to the Knight Arts Challenge.

The Impact of the Application Process

Our survey of unsuccessful applicants found that two in five believe the process of applying was beneficial even though they were rejected. A majority of those respondents reported that the process improved or honed the applicant's project idea. A sizeable number of respondents (18 percent) noted that the process sparked collaboration with another group or artist. Some respondents also claimed the process brought their own group closer together. For some of these applicants, the act of submitting to the Arts Challenge was impetus to move forward and complete the project in question.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

The findings suggest that the Arts Challenge process has had a "halo effect" beyond the winners, stimulating thinking and action among a wide circle of creative individuals and organizations in the community – and that it is widely perceived to have had this positive effect even by those who did not win. (See Figure 7.)

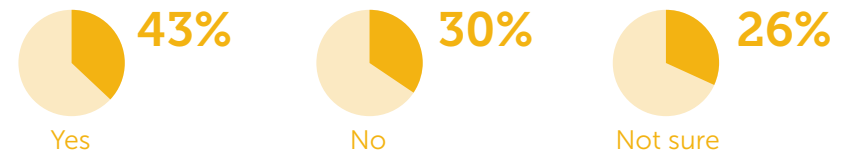
One such applicant said: "Other grants keep you in a box, they are regimented; the Challenge made me think bigger. After applying and being rejected, I felt like I needed to follow these ideas and make it happen – applying really did open that up to me; submitting a portfolio of ten edited photographs to a traditional institution would not have done that at all."

Another applicant who finished a project after applying unsuccessfully said: "My idea did not exist before the Challenge ... and one of the cool things about this Challenge was that it clarified what was most important about my vision, which I did not really know until I was forced to write it down."

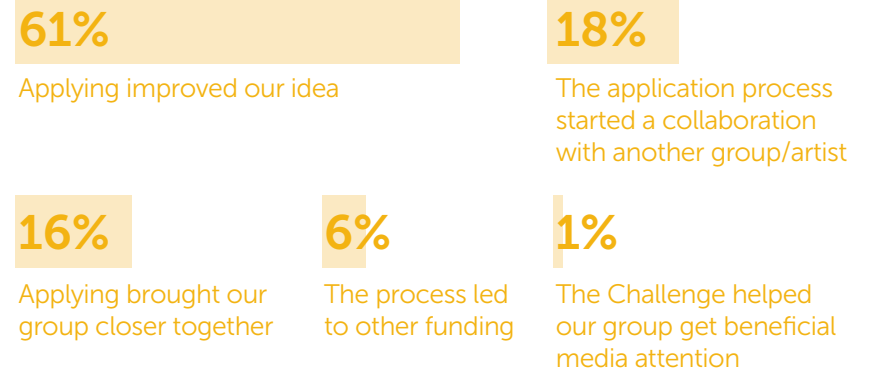
This philosophical embracing of failure may subside as the Arts Challenge generates an increasing population of potentially disaffected rejected applicants. As more applicants are repeatedly rejected, the applicant community may grow cynical or even suspicious of the Challenge. Evidence that this "cycle of disaffection" may have begun can be detected in the declining number of applicants since the first year of the Arts Challenge. In 2008, the Arts Challenge had a pool

Figure 7: Impact on applicant of unsuccessful Arts Challenge application

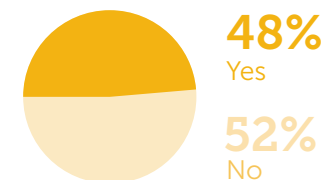
Q. Despite not having been selected, do you feel that there was a positive benefit to having gone through the process of applying to the Challenge?



Q. If yes, what were the benefits to applying?



Q. Even though you did not receive a Challenge grant, did you still implement your project idea, in whole or in part?



Source: Applicant survey

of 960 applicants, which declined to 891 by 2009 and to 592 by 2010, before picking up to 826 in 2011.

A greater problem may not be erosion – after all, a healthy number of old and new applicants did participate in the Arts Challenge year-to-year – but rather growing concern about the fairness and transparency of process of decision-making in a contest with such a marked disparity between winners and losers. In our focus group with a handful of unsuccessful applicants, such sentiments were voiced. One applicant put it in the following terms: “Our group feels frustrated. There wasn’t a gain [in applying]. There’s a feeling that the process is very “open,” but the decision process is not. It’s unclear how decisions are actually made. Maybe there’s a predisposition [among the readers] we don’t know about.”

The net impact of the application process is a mix of negative and positive experiences. Some applicants find the process beneficial to refining their idea, while others are left feeling that the Arts Challenge is opaque and possibly unfair, particularly to applicants outside select geographic areas.



Recommendations

The Knight Arts Challenge generates a tremendous number of applications from a large group of applicants, many of whom apply repeatedly. More often than not, applicants submit ideas that existed before the Arts Challenge came along, suggesting that the project serves more as idea catalyst than as an idea generator.

Yet by embracing a “Here Comes Everybody” ethos, the Knight Foundation has unlocked or tapped into a great deal of creative potential from the South Florida creative community. The process has had both a positive and a negative impact on applicants who did not succeed in securing grants, which brings into question the point of generating so many ideas among such a broad portion of the community.

Two in five rejected applicants surveyed claimed a positive benefit from applying. But a majority of rejected applicants claimed no such benefit, and a minority of rejected applicants questioned whether their ideas had even been properly reviewed. That disaffected constituency may grow as the Art Challenge continues, increasing the likelihood of negative sentiment toward Knight Foundation and its Arts Challenge.

This negative impact could be diminished if the Arts Challenge were made more transparent, a theme heard often in survey responses and interviews. Making the first-round “blind” to judges – and saying as much in the Arts Challenge description – might accomplish this.

Some disaffected applicants also wondered how they could possibly compete against well-established groups. In their eyes, a prestigious, well-established group has an advantage in applying, regardless of the merit of their submitted idea. And indeed in interviews with the panelists, they said that the name of the applicant did in fact affect first-round voting. But some saw this as an advantage. According to one panelist: “Frankly, it was very important ... if I knew someone submitted eight weird impossible ideas, I could ding them all easily because they were obviously gaming. To submit them blind would disable an avenue through which judges can evaluate.”

“Blind” applications would also add a level of administrative work, pre-reading applicants before they reach judges to make sure the project descriptions do

not easily reveal the group applying. If the first round does not go “blind,” better dissemination of information about the Arts Challenge could deter the notion that established organizations have a natural advantage over other applicants. This report and the surrounding exercise are designed to address this. An annual event for winners to share stories and build relationships might also help.

The foundation could also reduce any negative impact by providing some kind of clear benefit to all applicants. One of the Arts Challenge’s greatest (and currently unleveraged) assets has been the sheer quantity of ideas that the initiative has catalyzed. The foundation might provide rejected applicants alternate ways of “winning” that make more of their ideas and increase goodwill, while strengthening South Florida’s arts community and ultimately improving the overall impact and effectiveness of the Arts Challenge.

In our focus group and surveys, we heard several ideas about how the foundation might accomplish this:

- Ideas from the applications might be shared more widely so that applicants could see what other ideas are present in the creative community.
- In exchange for the right to publish proposals, small grants might be provided to finalists to prepare their proposals.
- Knight Foundation could provide “office hours” where applicants could get feedback on a not-yet-submitted idea.
- Knight Foundation could run a workshop where applicants could test out ideas on one another, so applicants could team up and help each other craft better proposals.
- To freshen and remotivate the pool of applicants, Knight Foundation might identify a creative topic or theme each year that would give applicants more direction and stimulate new thoughts.
- Knight Foundation could allow people to vote on a handful of the finalists through a “people’s choice” grant award.
- All of these suggestions would build on the idea underlying the Arts Challenge – that the best ideas do not necessarily come from the Knight Foundation, but from the field.

Chapter 3

Stimulating Philanthropy: Arts Challenge Matching Funds





Teatro Avante

Stimulating Philanthropy: Arts Challenge Matching Funds



A key component of the Arts Challenge – and one of the important ways it constitutes a “challenge” – is a matching requirement before grant funds are distributed. Winners are required to secure funds, usually at a ratio of one-to-one to match the Knight Foundation’s contributions.

Matching criteria are common in the foundation sector, especially in the arts, with varying degrees of formality attached to the match requirement. In Miami, a young city with a relatively underdeveloped system of philanthropic support, the requirement is intended to stimulate new giving, ideally from new donors, and to raise awareness of the importance of supporting local cultural activities.

Importantly, the matching requirement is also meant to encourage winners to engage with the realities of fundraising. For many grantees, it marked the first experience with coordinated fundraising. Because grantees include experienced organizations as well as small startups and even for-profit ventures, the matching criteria were not tightly prescribed. Earned income and ticket sales, for example, count toward the match. The foundation worked closely with grantees to clarify the specific approach to the match, with the ambition that grantees would “learn how to fish,” acquiring new or enhanced capacity to raise money. This learning process would amplify and sustain the Arts Challenge’s impact on philanthropy in South Florida.

In short, the Arts Challenge aims to draw philanthropic support into the sector in two ways:

- By encouraging recipients to become dynamic and creative fundraisers.
- By encouraging potential donors – from individuals and public agencies to corporate sponsors – to get behind Arts Challenge winners.

Were the matching grants provisions successful in these two aims? To answer that question we look at the source of matching grants, the funding of the projects and the incentives and challenges of seeking matching funds over the long term due to the matching grant requirement of the Arts Challenge. Here's what we discovered in each of these categories.

The Source of Matching Grants

Grant recipients found matching funds from a variety of sources, though they largely arrived through contributions. Individual contributions were the leading source of matching funds for Challenge winners, at 28 percent of all matching funds. When other forms of contributed support – foundation grants, government support, and corporate and in-kind contributions – are counted, 78 percent of matching funding came from direct contributions. (See Figure 8.)

There were wide variations among the matching fundraising experiences of different grantees. On the one hand, large organizations were able to deploy their formidable development departments and engage their donor networks without encountering difficulties. On the other hand, some smaller, less experienced organizations and individuals struggled with the match. Because of these variations, winners interviewed in the course of this assessment were not uniformly able to answer the question of whether donors to their project were new to funding their organizations or the arts.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

Information on new or repeat donors could be readily harvested from grantees in the future through stronger reporting requirements, but current grant reporting materials do not collect it. Yet the general pattern of fundraising consisted of outreach to donors or constituencies already known to the groups. Groups

without any prior experience in fundraising, however, were challenged to go beyond their “comfort zones” to draw in support from sources that had not previously donated money to them, and in many cases, had not previously donated to the arts at all.

Figure 8: Sources of matching funds for Knight Arts Challenge Winners, 2008–2011

Source	Percent
Individual Contributions	28%
Foundation Grants	20%
Government Support	12%
Corporate Contributions	11%
In-kind Contributions	7%
Special Events	7%
Other	15%

Source: Grantee documentation

Project Funding

The Arts Challenge is ongoing. Twenty-one winners from the first three years (27 percent) won funding for projects that will continue through 2012 and 2013. Furthermore, while a number of projects were finished toward the end of 2011, final reports for activity in 2011 continue to trickle in through 2012. Thus, at the time of this review it was only possible to measure the matchmaking made in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

In total, \$16.9 million has been committed for the first four years of the Arts Challenge by Knight Foundation, and of that \$7.9 million had been distributed at the time of this review against \$7.8 million raised by grantees. There is a slight difference in the numbers here because not all grants have a strict 1:1 matching requirement, though most do.

Clearly, Arts Challenge grantees are meeting their matching grant obligations, but are they learning from the experience in order to continue to draw philanthropic dollars to their projects? To this we now turn.

Arts Challenge as a Donor Incentive

Part of the success of the matching grant requirement is attributable to the Arts Challenge acting as a motivator for donors. A majority of grantees acknowledged that Knight Foundation's support in general, and the matching requirement in particular, incentivized giving by others.

On the whole the Foundation's approval was a major incentive to give, especially for organized philanthropy. One grantee compared the early funding provided by the Knight Foundation to leavening bread. "Early funding is like yeast," she said, helping to attract more donors. A group that organized community events in one of Miami's ethnic neighborhoods found that as a result of Knight's support, other "fundors feel more secure about sitting at the table and talking to you."

Some grantees, however, reported that receiving money from Knight could discourage smaller donors from giving, leading to questions such as, "If you got \$80,000 from Knight, why do you need our money?" In cases of groups dealing

with socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, funding by a major foundation could be a disincentive to generating individual support. "They felt that Knight is a big foundation, and they are just little people," said a grantee reporting on an educational initiative. "It didn't pull them along as you would expect." However, such responses were rare.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

Knight's matching grant support does not incentivize in equal measure across all types of donors. It "incentivized individual donors, but not institutional donors," observed one grantee. Because some individual donors appear to be swayed by an organization's need to match, this is a powerful tool for small donors to use in their appeals to individual donors.

Nonprofit foundations and public agencies are more likely to be swayed by the Knight Foundation's "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" (to use a term invoked by several grantees). Corporations may be the least impressed by foundation support. "It hasn't helped with corporate fundraising. There is very little corporate money here in Miami," said the leader of one group.



Sweat Records

Enhanced Fundraising Capacity

Thirty-six of 42 grantees who mentioned funding sources in their grant reports or interviews spoke of learning new ways to raise money that would continue beyond the life of the Arts Challenge-funded project. The diversity of the methods and sources that grantees employed speaks to the encompassing nature of the Arts Challenge.

Just Ripe Productions offers one example of how the Arts Challenge spurred younger, smaller groups to raise money. The group had never before attempted fundraising. For their Leggo My Demo project, the group succeeded in generating a three-to-one match in the first year and a two-to-one match in the second year (a concession made by Knight Foundation in view of the group's small size). At the Townhouse Hotel, where Just Ripe Productions held a fundraising event, the host company donated 20 percent of the bar sales. An additional \$3,000 was raised in three weeks from small donors through a digital fundraising drive, on indiegogo.com (a crowd-funding Web platform). Some 80 percent to 90 percent of the donors were new to the arts.

Fundraising was “hard” but the lessons learned were, according to the group's leader, likely to be long lasting. Moreover, Knight Foundation's involvement was “absolutely” an incentive for other donors to give. Yet the experience of Leggo My Demo was far from typical. It was the only grantee to answer affirmatively to all reviewed aspects of the match: attracting new donors, trying new techniques, benefiting from foundation incentive and lasting impact on fundraising.

More grantees reached out to already committed donors and used routine techniques to raise the additional funds. “To be honest,” said the head of an established performing arts organization, “the matching fund with the Knight Foundation motivated our usual donors.” Case in point is the Miami Miami City Ballet's collaboration with the Cleveland Orchestra. The ballet met much of the match requirement through tickets sales for the funded performances. Money was also raised through the organization's existing fundraising activities, such as the ballet's gala and dinner dance, a sold-out event with a “core group of Miami patrons” footing the bill.

Between these two ends of the continuum, award recipients used a wide array of techniques to generate funds for their match. Grantees took many creative

approaches to fundraising in order to meet their match. Willie Stewart, for example, found his match for the Rhythm of Africa Music Program through the Consulate General of Jamaica who secured sponsorship from his country's national airline. Other approaches included:

- The publication of a donor recognition book by the Adrienne Arsht Center's Free Gospel Sundays.
- Artist auctions and after-parties by the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood.
- Publication of a print portfolio by Bas Fischer Invitational via [NAME] Publications.
- Outreach for corporate sponsors – beer distributors supported several outdoor events, such as Big Night in Little Haiti, which received support from Prestige Beer.
- Space and equipment donations for the South Florida Composers Alliance.
- Initiating a small donation program by the Bass Museum.
- Launching a multiyear gifts program by Vizcaya Museum and Garden.
- Printing T-shirts for sale by Rhythm Foundation.
- Establishing a nonprofit foundation to buttress a public entity by Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

More conventional approaches to meeting the requirement included:

- Receiving support from a group's major donors or board chair, an approach taken by the Miami Lyric Opera, Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) and Gold Coast Jazz Society.
- Tapping into museum construction funds and membership networks, done by Frost Art Museum.
- Hosting an annual gala or fundraising event, done by Miami Art Museum, Miami City Ballet and Locust Projects.
- Applying ticket sales toward the match, done by Florida Grand Opera.
- Mass mailings by the Miami World Cinema Center.
- Requesting university funds and outreach to university alumni by Florida International University's Creative Writing Fellowship Program and the Florida Memorial University Steel Band Program.

The majority of grantees who claimed to adopt new techniques for fundraising to meet the Arts Challenge also said that these approaches would continue to be helpful in the future. “We were well positioned to view the matching aspect as an opportunity rather than to see it as a burden,” said one interviewee, echoing a majority view among smaller grant recipients. Even for smaller groups that had done some fundraising before, the matching requirement presented an opportunity to get more organized.

Yet some recipients found it difficult to raise funds, not just because of their lack of experience, but also because their art form is not usually among those seeking funds from patrons of the arts. “The penetration of ‘the establishment’ within our local community has been really difficult,” said the head of a project focusing on film. “As soon as you say ‘cinema’ to people, they see money. They don’t understand the need for it to be a nonprofit.”

“We had never fundraised before,” said another respondent. “It went really poorly. We were lousy.” She added, “It was an abysmal waste of time that we were not equipped for. I understand why it [the matching requirement] is in there. But it is a huge burden on my staff. We’ll never fundraise again, if I can help it.”

Moreover, some grantees were uncertain whether the funding sources they explored would meet the foundation’s requirements, such as donations of audio equipment, free leases of space and individual investor funds that had already been raised. On the whole, though, grantees report that the foundation was accommodating in response to their suggestions about what categories of revenue might fulfill the match.

WHAT OUR FINDINGS TELL US

The Arts Challenge creates an incentive for organizations, particularly smaller ones, to find new and inventive ways to raise money, based in part on the matching requirement and on the “seal of approval” provided by the foundation. Though several grantees identified some new donors, there is no data to suggest that the Arts Challenge unlocked philanthropic capacity beyond what might have been secured with a more conventional grant-making program with a matching criterion.

Regardless, the Challenge has functioned as a “stimulus project” in the Miami creative community during a particularly difficult economic time. Its momentum-



Miami Light Project—Here and Now Festival



The Knight Concert Hall at the Adrienne Arsht Center

fueling effect consists not only in adding dynamism to Miami's cultural life but also in muting the negative impact of the downturn on the art community. This stimulus is enhanced by the fact that the Arts Challenge seems particularly well-suited to a growing creative community such as South Florida's, where many individuals and organizations are still in the emerging and developing stage.

One perceived criticism of the matching requirement was that it delayed the release of initial operating funds to the organizations. A typical example was a group that received a \$100,000 award, with the release of \$50,000 contingent on meeting a \$50,000 match. "If some of that money had been released at the beginning," said the general manager, echoing a point made by several smaller recipients that were struggling with cash-flow issues, "we could have gotten the project going and hit the ground running. You have to jump-start it yourself before you get the infusion. That's a major drawback." On some occasions, though, the foundation did release funding in this way.

Another criticism relates to the one-to-one match ratio, particularly when that ratio was made more lenient for some groups. Some grantees were unclear as to why some groups had a two-to-one or three-to-one match where others did not.

Recommendations

The Arts Challenge would benefit from further clarification and clearer reporting guidelines on what constitutes a matching grant, but the flexibility and lack of dogmatism at Knight Foundation in interpreting what is eligible as a matching contribution is an important element that should not be lost.

More insightful data could be gained by modifying the reporting requirements of grantees. Grantees should be required to report whether donors to their Arts Challenge program have donated to their group before and be asked to canvas their donors to determine whether their philanthropy is new to the arts in Miami. Without requiring this of grantees, it will remain unclear whether the Arts Challenge has unlocked new philanthropy for the arts in South Florida.

While some grantees want the match requirement to be lifted from small groups and artists, it might be more feasible to modify the matching requirements to make it an easier hurdle to surpass rather than removing the obstacle all together. The reason: The Arts Challenge initiated new fundraising approaches for some grantees. But whether these practices will continue beyond the Arts Challenge varies widely among grantees as they differ broadly in terms of their fundraising experience and expertise, and thus their ability to recruit donors and opportunity to learn from the process.

The durability of those lessons might be enhanced if the structure of the Arts Challenge were modified to recognize these differing levels of capability, tailoring requirements to different categories of recipients. This might take the form of further technical assistance and training opportunities for some grantees, providing grantees an online fundraising mechanism or encouraging information sharing among the grantees.

Similarly, transparency about which groups can request a match that is less than one to one or a funding profile that provides up-front support would benefit the Arts Challenge. The foundation could initially distribute to the grantees a preset amount of grant funding, for example 10 percent of the total.

Chapter 4

Fueling Momentum: Arts Challenge's Broader Influence





Miami City Ballet



Coral Morphologic

Fueling Momentum: Arts Challenge's Broader Influence



Miami's arts and cultural sector is young compared with that of New York, Boston or Chicago. The past ten years have, however, seen significant growth and development, including the launch of Art Basel Miami Beach in 2002, the opening of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in 2006 and the New World Center home of the New World Symphony in 2011. One of the Knight Arts Challenge's goals is to contribute to the city's cultural development, building upon the momentum of the past decade.

Integral to the Challenge's design is that the ultimate impact of the winners is derived from the multiplicity of projects working together across the cultural ecosystem. This invigoration involves ambitious and broad goals – strengthening the cultural ecology, and the perception of that ecology, both within and beyond South Florida. It also presents challenges to traditional assessment models. To gauge the extent to which the Arts Challenge is succeeding in fueling the growth and momentum of South Florida's cultural life, we asked various constituencies (Miami-area artists, unsuccessful applicants, Knight Arts Challenge winners, other Miami-based arts funders and national leaders in the arts) for their impressions of the region's creative vibrancy. We then probed for views on whether the Arts Challenge has contributed to the evolution of creative activity in the city, and if so how. Here's what we discovered.

Perceptions of Miami and South Florida as a Cultural Center

Our surveys and interviews confirmed that Miami is widely seen as being in a time of intensifying artistic and cultural vitality. A survey of Arts Challenge applicants, finalists and artists offers evidence of perceptions about Miami's creative growth (a note about their statistical significance is included in the Appendix). Sixty-seven percent of all survey respondents reported that Miami's cultural scene is "more vibrant" today compared to five years ago. Interviews with Arts Challenge winners and with a slate of national experts were unanimous on this score.

But opinions about why this is the case were more mixed. Survey respondents were asked, "What makes you describe Miami's cultural scene as being more vibrant than five years ago?" Only one response category diagnosing improved conditions – the increase in the number of "new cultural venues in Miami" – garnered affirmative responses from a clear majority (66 percent) of all respondents. A majority also registered that "large cultural events happen in Miami" (59 percent of the group), referring to Art Basel Miami Beach and the Ultra Music Festival. In addition, about half of all respondents believe that there are "more artists living and working in Miami" than five years ago (52 percent) and that there are "more arts organizations" (54 percent) in the area (see Figure 10). These responses point to positive perceptions about the direction of change in Miami's cultural life.

In contrast, some aspects of cultural vitality generated notably low readings. For instance, only 20 percent of the respondents noted the presence of "new funders and patrons in Miami." Eighteen percent agreed that "there is a more supportive political environment for culture" in the city. And just one out of eight (12 percent) artists saw the "level of arts education in Miami's schools and universities" as an indicator of intensified cultural vitality. In interviews with winners, weak philanthropic, public policy and educational support for cultural activities were also repeatedly cited as obstacles to growth.

Within this context, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of survey respondents believe that "the Knight Arts Challenge is making a difference in Miami's cultural life." About one-third (29 percent or roughly the same number who had not heard about the Arts Challenge prior to the survey) could not say if the Arts Challenge

Figure 10: Factors Driving Miami's cultural vibrancy

What makes you describe Miami's cultural scene as being more vibrant than five years ago?	Percent
New cultural venues in Miami	66%
Large cultural events that happen in Miami (like the Ultra Music Festival or Art Basel Miami Beach)	59%
More arts organizations in Miami	54%
More artists living and working in Miami	52%
Increased media/PR focused on Miami's culture	42%
The demographic diversity of Miami's residents	32%
New funders and patrons in Miami	21%
A more supportive political environment for culture	18%
The level of arts education in Miami's schools and universities	12%
Other (please specify)	12%

Source: Unsuccessful applicant, finalist and artist surveys

made a difference. A low proportion (8 percent) of all respondents answered that the Challenge is not making a difference. What these numbers suggest is that, along with the perception of proliferating cultural activity, there is a general belief that the Knight Arts Challenge is contributing to this growth.

Miami and South Florida as a Supportive Place for Artists to Live and Work

On the whole, applicants, finalists and artists in the survey believe that “Miami is a supportive place for artists to live and work.” Fifty-seven percent found the city somewhat supportive or very supportive. Only 8 percent of respondents found the city “very unsupportive.” There were no major deviations in the response patterns among applicants and winners.

At the same time, only two out of five artist respondents (41 percent) agreed that “the Knight Arts Challenge made Miami a better place for artists to live and work.” This number was higher among finalists, almost two-thirds of whom acknowledged the Arts Challenge’s positive impact (63 percent). Meanwhile, 45 percent didn’t know or couldn’t say if the Arts Challenge improved the working environment for artists, while a small but not inconsequential group of 14 percent rejected the notion that the Arts Challenge has improved working conditions for artists.

The picture emerging from the survey data is of a city where creativity and artistic life are ascendant despite a generally underfunded operating environment. It is also of a city where, despite acknowledged hardships and missing infrastructure, artists can benefit from certain advantages, such as an atmosphere of creative openness and inexpensive housing and workspace. Given this mixed picture, it is not surprising that less than half of the survey respondents were able to ascribe clear benefits to the Challenge in terms of improving working conditions.

Similar responses echoed through interviews with Arts Challenge winners. Predictably, winners were more likely to recognize the Arts Challenge’s contributions to Miami’s arts life. The winners saw the Arts Challenge as an important part of a larger matrix of helpful developments that together are driving Miami’s cultural growth.

As part of the review process, we canvassed the opinions of leaders in the local and national cultural and philanthropic communities. These leaders also signaled a perception that the Arts Challenge was making a distinctive contribution in Miami:

“The Arts Challenge] sent a very important message: ramping up funding when economy was at its worst. Psychologically hugely important.”

“The Knight Arts Challenge has been a leading contributor to awareness of the arts with giving. No question about it. With their branding, they create strong awareness.”

“Miami has more vibrant life for sure. This initiative has played a catalytic role of moving the arts engagement beyond the Art Basel period into a year-round conversation.”

“It probably has a greater impact locally than nationally. Too early to say. There is also the nature of the Challenge. If you are funding a lot of small projects, then it will take longer to have an effect. But this is what Miami needs. Miami doesn’t need more big events.”

What such observations make clear is that the Arts Challenge is embedded in a long-term evolutionary cycle that is driven by forces that are orders of magnitude larger than what one foundation program, no matter how generous, could influence. The Arts Challenge cannot alone address the chronic impediments to cultural growth cited by Arts Challenge winners, including still under-articulated political support, a still-developing tradition of local philanthropy, the absence of strong critical voices, a transient culture and the sprawling geography of the Miami-Dade region. These obstacles are likely to endure.

While the program's overall impact on Miami's creative zeitgeist is affirmed in the grantee feedback, when it comes specifically to the living and working conditions of artists, which were broadly diagnosed as being less favorable than the overall conditions for creativity in the city, even winners tended to be more equivocal. Many of them underscored the need for more direct support of artists. "I don't think the Knight Arts Challenge has really helped," said one winner. "It's not hindering. I don't think it has contributed to artists making it. Only a few people win." Another grantee agreed: "I wish they supported more individual artists." "It makes them want to stay," another said about support for individual artists.

While the Challenge is perceived to have a positive influence on Miami's creative scene, it is not regarded as having resulted in lasting improvements in the working environment for individual artists. The best way to summarize the Arts Challenge's role in Miami's creative resurgence, therefore, is that it is without doubt fueling the city's artistic energy, but it is not (and cannot be) responsible for it.

Influence of the Arts Challenge on the Cultural Ecology

The Arts Challenge portfolio has touched all facets of the arts, from Miami's most established presenters of classical music, opera, ballet and avant-garde art, through an abundance of educational and community-based and ethnically diverse arts initiatives, to commercially oriented purveyors of popular and youth culture. The Arts Challenge has provided support to a wide range of grantee types, including start-ups and small creative enterprises that would rarely come up on the radar of a national foundation. Its impact on that less visible stratum of cultural activity is noteworthy.

In terms of artistic discipline, grants were directed toward projects spanning the visual arts, performing arts, music, theater arts, crafts and traditional arts, architecture and design, literature, cinematic arts, and other arts. Grants spanned a range of support type as well, with a majority of grants devoted to program funding, and the remainder directed to operations and capital projects (see Figure 11).

We identified several ways in which the Arts Challenge has contributed to the growth and vibrancy of South Florida's arts and culture scene. Specifically, we found that it has helped:

- Build new platforms for promoting art and culture.
- Launch new cultural offerings that were firsts for the region.
- Professionalize the operations of the winners.
- Boost partnerships with important art and culture players within and outside South Florida.
- Increase the visibility of South Florida as a vibrant arts and culture center.

Figure 11. Arts Challenge grantee funding support types, 2008–2010

	#	#
Program Funding	60	71%
Start-up	11	13%
Operational Funding	6	7%
Capital Funding	5	6%
Operating Support	2	2%
Total	84	

Source: Organizational and individual websites and grantee forms.

*Note: Some projects counted as more than one funding type, thus the total (84) is higher than the actual number of winners (78) in the first three years.

New Platforms

The Arts Challenge supported a handful of new platforms for supporting and nurturing arts and culture in the region. Notably, the Borscht Film Festival, an Arts Challenge winner, showcases Miami-based films made by Miami-based artists. The festival provides local and national exposure, which in turn spurs more Miami-based artists to make more Miami-based films. Such exposure generates ambition and incentives to create more work, which provides yet more opportunity for recognition, leading to more dynamism in Miami's film scene. Likewise, Sweat Records, a performance venue and shop in Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood, provides a gathering place and performance venue for Miami's alternative music and arts scene, and a sales and digital distribution platform. Artists benefit not only from opportunities to share their work but also from economic opportunities to sustain their practice. The presence of such opportunities fuels the energy and development of the art forms involved.

Firsts for the Region

A number of Arts Challenge winners created new shows and offerings that were a first for the South Florida region. The classical music radio station, Classical South Florida, got off the ground with a 2008 Arts Challenge grant. Similarly, Miami's first art-house cinema, O Cinema, opened with a 2008 matching grant from the Arts Challenge. And the first publishing house dedicated to South Florida-based art books, [NAME] Publications, also opened its doors under the direction of Miami writer and artist Gean Moreno in 2008 (see profile on page 54).

Increased Professionalism

The Arts Challenge has supported several individuals, start-ups and less prominent organizations. In many cases, Knight funding has helped significantly augment the level of professionalism among these entities. One representative of a young organization that opened its first bank account because of the Arts Challenge said the grant "forced us to clean up our act," a typical reaction to the arrival of a Knight Foundation grant requiring matching grants. For an emerging arts community that includes start-ups and many small, local initiatives, the recognition of the Arts Challenge helped galvanize determination and stimulate

enterprise. "You feel a responsibility to the project to make it self-sufficient," said an artist who started a new project with Arts Challenge funding, "and to explore the opportunities that working at this scale gives you."

Boosted Partnerships

A majority of winners reported some level of partnering, which ranged from collaboration on the creative content of the project to help with audience outreach, marketing and media exposure. A few more formalized organizational alliances also emerged, including the partnership between the Cleveland Orchestra and Miami Ballet, and the collaboration between the organizations participating in the Cultural Passport program and Miami-Dade County schools, which resulted in a series of field trips to bring South Florida students together through the arts. In some cases, Arts Challenge winners reported collaborating with each other. For example, the Borscht Film Festival screened its films at the Adrienne Arsht Center. Overall, winners indicated that the Arts Challenge made them aware of cultural resources in Miami, and connections between Arts Challenge winners and alumni could spur more creative and organizational alliances.

Among locally cited partners (or partnerships being explored) by Arts Challenge winners are the Museum of Contemporary Art, Palm Beach Poetry Festival, the Adrienne Arsht Center, Miami Beach Tourism and Cultural Development, Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs, Miami Downtown Development Authority, Miami Symphony Orchestra, University of Miami, ArtServe, WLRN, YMCA, Prometeo Theatre of the Florida Center for the Literary Arts at Miami Dade College, Latin American Theatre Review, Winter Music Conference, Palm Beach High School Poetry Contest and Roofless Records. National and internationally renowned institutional partners cited in interviews, included Art Basel, Nada Art Fair, Sotheby's, the Guggenheim Museum, Tunis International Film Festival, Ultra Music Festival, Creative Time and the Wexner Center for the Arts.

While these alliances were instrumental in bringing about the outcomes of the funded projects, it is difficult to discern the extent to which the partnerships contributed to bridging entire communities within South Florida. In the majority of cases, organizations partnered with other like-minded groups that tended to serve similar demographic segments. It appears that only a minority of the winning groups developed partnerships and alliances that were entirely new.

Increased Visibility and Recognition

An important ambition of the Arts Challenge is to increase visibility and exposure for the South Florida arts scene, thereby building the self-confidence of the local artistic community. A number of winners registered important gains and awards for their art or performances. Vizcaya Museum and Garden, for example, found that 90 percent of surveyed visitors rated Vizcaya's artist residency and exhibition as "excellent." And the Miami Downtown Development Authority's outdoor concert series won the "Best Concert Series" designation in Miami New Times' "Best of Miami 2009" survey.

The Arts Challenge itself garnered 76 press articles and eight instances of TV coverage (between 2008 and the end of 2011). A few prominent national news mentions, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Condé Nast Traveler, The Atlantic, and The Associated Press. On the whole, Arts Challenge winners typically reported healthy local media interest in their projects. Winners often drew direct connections between the received coverage and the Knight Arts Challenge. "There was a lot of publicity and it was really driven by the fact that this was part of the Knight Arts Challenge," observed the head of one organization.

But it wasn't just Knight Foundation that drew media interest. In stories on Miami's cultural resurgence, the national press frequently mentioned the initiative or one of its grant recipients. Such stories have been proliferating of late, reflecting the very real changes in Miami's arts activity and the city's growing reputation as a cultural center. More often than not, the Arts Challenge is cited as both cause and evidence of this resurgence, and specific grantees are frequently used as examples of Miami's cultural evolution.



Street Fair in the Design District

Chapter 5

Assessing the Impact of Winners: Arts Challenge Selected Profiles





New World School Of The Arts

Assessing the Impact of Winners: Arts Challenge Selected Profiles

One of the Knight Arts Challenge's defining features is the diversity of the winners. This breadth is predicated on the assumption that the creative vitality of a community hinges on invigorated activity across a wide spectrum of demographic groups, creative genres and organization types. Arts Challenge winners differ from each other not only in terms of their artistic categories and objectives, but also in the impact of their projects.

No single evaluation measure, quantitative or qualitative, can capture the multiple ways in which grant-funded projects can make an impact on communities or on the supported artists and organizations. This is particularly true of the Arts Challenge given the sheer range of projects. The limitations are compounded in the case of this interim review because the focus of the assessment is not intended to address the outputs and outcomes of individual projects, but instead to provide feedback to the foundation to strengthen the Challenge.

With those caveats stated, our aim in this chapter is to look at the contribution of winning projects to the South Florida arts scene, drawing on assessments from grant reporting and polling data and from interviews with grantees. A number of winners reported exceeding their own best hopes for success, while others new to professional cultural activity stumbled on the path to execution, set back by poor planning, steep learning curves and challenges in eliciting cooperation and financial support for their projects.

One example of a less-than-successful project was the Knights Arts Challenge 2008 grant to The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum at Florida International University to create a “virtual gallery kiosk.” By the time the project was implemented, however, the software allowing visitors to curate their own gallery was outdated, and the company hired to digitize the collection delivered a product that required extensive maintenance. The museum was eventually able to circumvent the obsolete software and produce a better visitor experience. The experience of the Frost Art Museum was not uncommon among the winning grantees of the Arts Challenge.

The diverse individual aims of winning projects mirrors the preoccupations of arts groups, grant-makers and cultural policymakers across the United States, and encompasses the salient dynamics evident in the current phase of Miami’s maturation into a nationally recognized arts and cultural center. These dynamics can be divided into four broad clusters in which the principal aim is:

1. Expanding Participation

to broaden access to, encourage participation in, and develop audiences for the arts in South Florida.

2. Supporting Local Artists of Today and Tomorrow

in the development of their skills and in the creation, presentation and promotion of their work.

3. Celebrating Cultural Diversity

to give voice to and bring together communities across the region’s demographic landscape.

4. Documenting Cultural Activity

by curating, recording, or showcasing the breadth of creative activities in region.

Among the Arts Challenge winners, no single cluster predominates and many are overlapping. A series of gospel concerts in Miami’s largest performing arts center, the Adrienne Arsht Center, for example, can be considered both as a means of broadening participation and as a means of bridging and bonding diverse communities. What these four types of characteristics do encapsulate are the aspirations and preoccupations of Miami’s art community – from concerns about broadening access to the arts and providing suitable working infrastructure for artists and organizations, to embracing Miami’s social and cultural diversity and developing mechanisms to record and study the city’s expanding cultural scene. So let’s now look at each of these clusters and where the individual grantees and their projects fit into them.



Adrienne Arsht Center—Free Gospel Sundays



Miami Light Project—Here and Now Festival



The Miami Theater Center—The Red Thread

1. Expanding Participation

Encouraging participation by larger and more inclusive audiences has been a key goal for many arts presenters in South Florida, as is the case elsewhere in the United States. In recent years, in response to declining participation and increased competition for audiences and grant dollars, organizations across the country have been experimenting with new approaches to programming to broaden access to the arts. Some are succeeding by going to where the audience is, rather than asking the audience to come to them, and by hosting events in easily accessible or unorthodox venues.

It comes as no surprise that encouraging participation is a primary concern for artists and arts groups in South Florida. Miami arts and cultural activity has only recently attained levels comparable to other major urban centers that have a longer history of fostering and sustaining the arts. In Miami, efforts to broaden participation in the arts run up against many obstacles, from the region's extraordinary demographic complexity to the city's increasingly outdated reputation as a haven for the "sun and fun" crowd.

Generating audiences, large or small, has not been a requirement to enter the Arts Challenge. Some winning projects were not designed to engage the public at all. Even so, Arts Challenge grantees, on the whole, were eager to draw people to their offerings, from seasoned art enthusiasts to those who seldom attend cultural events. Approximately half of the winners from 2008 to 2011 were involved in some way in broadening access to, encouraging participation in, and developing audiences for the arts. For example, The Miami Theater Center (formerly Play-Ground Theatre) tallied 9,926 children and family visitors for a grant-supported production of one of their shows, *The Red Thread*, a contemporary look at a traditional Chinese folk tale.

Many events in this group took place in nontraditional or unexpected venues, often close to the residential and business districts where Miamians live and work. Grants included performing arts organizations filling seats with free or discounted tickets. For example, The Florida Grand Opera's "Free for All" ticket giveaway marketing campaign garnered 10,918 entries, 9,923 of which were "new accounts in the FGO's database." The winners from all over Miami redeemed 1,100 pairs of tickets according to the grantee. Some projects reached audience beyond South Florida via traditional and online media. The Wolfsonian-Florida International

University museum, for example, was able to digitize 10,000 images and upgrade its website to attract new visitors to its site and its exhibitions.

The goal of this cluster of winning projects was to broaden and deepen engagement with South Florida's cultural life for the benefit of the widest possible range of people. From public art installations in Miami's parks to musical concerts in spaces frequented by young people and digitally broadcast events, these projects reached audiences from a wide range of socioeconomic groups.



City of Miami Beach—Sleepless Nights

WINNER PROFILE:

City of Miami Beach —“Sleepless Night”

Launched in 2007, Sleepless Night presents 13 hours of free cultural events, including art installations, dance, theater, music, slam poetry and acrobatics at more than 80 venues, to mark the last night of Daylight Saving Time each year. Produced by the Miami Beach Tourism and Cultural Development Department and Cultural Arts Council in collaboration with almost every cultural organization in the city, the project received a \$150,000 Arts Challenge award for the 2009 event.

Measures of success included boosted attendance (increasing from 100,000 to 130,000 between 2007 and 2009), increased use of shuttles ferrying people between presenting locations (eight additional buses were needed in 2009, with a total of 20 packed buses shuttling visitors) and sharp increases in hospitality business (with record-setting results for many area businesses).

The three Sleepless Night events to date have given performance and exhibition opportunities to hundreds of artists, according to Gary Farmer, cultural affairs program manager for the tourism and cultural development office of the city of Miami Beach. “The Knight Arts Challenge was tailor-made for Sleepless Night, and vice versa,” Farmer said. “It brings out people who don’t normally come to the arts. It shows members of the community what their community really looks like.”



The organizers credit the event not only for exposing audiences to new sights and sounds but also for putting artists in front of much larger crowds. As a collateral effect, the events led to new collaborations and performance opportunities. The large crowds gathering for Sleepless Nights events presented organizers with an enviable problem – people being “turned away from indoor venues already filled to capacity.” In subsequent years, more outdoor venues were incorporated to absorb the growing audience.

In addition to attracting large audiences, the events have demonstrated the importance of new marketing channels to generate media attention. Even after cutting the marketing budget by half and relying more on donated marketing and word-of-mouth, the organizers were pleased to learn that the number

of media impressions increased substantially. The popularity of the series also underscores the appeal of innovative programming, as well as the enduring value of creative collaborations. “We give bonus points for unique collaborations and organizations that incorporate technology in their projects,” Farmer said. “Audience-building should be the goal for all of us.”

Sleepless Night received a second Knight Arts Challenge grant of \$200,000 to host the event for the first time in consecutive years in 2011 and 2012. Although the event was held in 2011, the 2012 Sleepless Night was cancelled because of difficulties the City of Miami Beach faced in attracting a title sponsor.

WINNER PROFILE:

Adrienne Arsht Center —Free Gospel Sundays

A cornerstone of South Florida's cultural life, the Adrienne Arsht Center, has been the recipient of four Knight Arts Challenge grants to date. Two awards were for the center's highly popular Free Gospel Sundays series, the first event of its kind to celebrate the art of gospel music in Miami. The awards – a one-year, \$100,000 grant in 2008 for four concerts and a two-year, \$200,000 grant in 2009 for eight concerts – provided underwriting and free admission and parking for three years of the series. The Adrienne Arsht Center secured matching support for the Arts Challenge grant from the Performing Arts Foundation of Greater Miami and individual donors, drawn principally from the African-American community.

Launched during Black History Month in 2008, the concert series grew its audience by more than 45 percent in its second season, 2008-2009, when the Center added nationally-recognized gospel performers, drawing a total crowd of 4,012. Attendance, predominantly from the African-American community, continued to grow over the next two seasons, soaring to 6,138 in 2010-2011 – more than double the size of the first season's audience.

Adding marquee names presented both opportunities and problems in the form of scheduling conflicts. "Some big-name artists were reluctant to commit to a performance too early," the grantees reported, "but the Center was eventually able to overcome this trepidation and book major acts."

Sunday concerts were complicated by the fact that many performers attended church services on the same day. The Center responded by shifting rehearsal dates and dispatching a staff member to churches to involve their musical directors in preseason programming.

Participation was expanded beyond live performance through radio broadcasts on WMBM 1490 AM. The radio station not only broadened the audience of the concerts, but also collaborated with the organizers on planning the concerts by suggesting choirs and headliner singers. The concerts were memorialized in an illustrated book, which also functions as a development tool for use with local donors.



In all, more than 24,000 people have attended Free Gospel Sundays shows since the concerts began. "In addition to the expected crowd of African-American and Caribbean music lovers," the Arsht Center reported, "the soul-stirring series traverses cultures, attracting people from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds."

The organizers also learned about the power of the Web in generating interest in community events. No fewer than 1,800 tickets were claimed within three hours of a single email blast in 2009. The gospel series also received a strong response from traditional and online social networking outlets. Above all, the concerts succeeded in raising the level of awareness and comfort with the Arsht Center in the community. Jodi Farrell, Director of Foundation Relations for the Arsht Center, recalled how a local pastor from an African-American church described the impact of the series: "Wow, we really feel the Arsht Center is ours now."



Miami Light Project—Here and Now Festival

2. Supporting Local Artists of Today and Tomorrow

Providing money for the production of new work is not enough, on its own, to ignite the artistic potential of a community. Creative vibrancy depends on an array of support mechanisms that combine to create a fertile environment for the art – from opportunities for training in creative skills and facilities and venues where work can be made and shown to marketing and promotion channels that connect artists and productions to a wider public. In a healthy arts community, such resources are available not only to established arts groups but also to aspiring artists and start-up organizations.

South Florida is a young region with a maturing arts scene – and that scene needs a supportive ecology to flourish. Arts Challenge grantees were receptive to this need. A large segment of winners, approximately half, entered the challenge with plans for projects that aid individual artists and students in furthering their creative practice. Some proposals envisaged new organizational frameworks to commission and present work by local artists. Others focused on cultivating talent; for example, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) (also known as ‘YoungArts’) created a new regional competition as part of its national program to develop young South Florida artists. Still others endeavored to fill gaps in the arts infrastructure by building facilities and distribution channels to connect Miami-based artists into national and international cultural networks.

The preoccupation with new working and support mechanisms puts South Florida in league with communities nationwide. In Miami as elsewhere, policymakers are becoming increasingly cognizant of the infrastructural needs of a well-functioning arts community. From the Ford Foundation to the National Endowment for the Arts, funding strategies have recently shifted the focus away from merely subsidizing new artistic “products” to ensuring better conditions in which artists can live and work. In a relatively young arts city such as Miami, these needs are thrown into sharp relief. And the applications to the Arts Challenge echo the South Florida art community’s desire to create better presenting and distributions platforms.

WINNER PROFILE:

Miami Light Project— “Here & Now Festival”

The Miami Light Project’s “Here & Now Festival,” launched in 1999, presents bold, original, performing art from the South Florida region. The organization entered the Arts Challenge in 2008 seeking to expand the festival and create opportunities for artists to present their work to local and national audiences. It also proposed to establish a residency program for the commissioned artists. A \$200,000 Knight Arts Challenge grant, dispersed over 2009-2012, has allowed the organization to present new work, invite artists and producers from outside Miami to see local performances, and offer stipends for Miami artists to attend festivals in the United States and abroad.

“There were few organizations investing resources in Miami-based artists,” said Beth Boone, artistic and executive director of Miami Light Project. “I absolutely believe, with all humility, that the program has changed the emerging performing-arts scene in Miami.” The project provides a platform for local performers not only by commissioning new work, but also by giving local artists exposure in Miami and beyond.

The opportunity to be seen and heard by audiences outside of South Florida is particularly important for local artists. Here & Now performers have been invited to the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, Mass., the Redcat theater in Los Angeles, even a TED conference of leading thinkers around the globe – all important venues and events that command the attention of national and international program-

mers, magnifying the visibility of Miami-based artists who are given the opportunity to attend. All of this new artistic programming and outreach added new creative dimensions and national visibility to Miami’s evolving art scene, resulting not only in a more muscular performing arts life in the city, but a more confident one as well.

“This Arts Challenge came at a really challenging time,” Boone said, referring to the global financial crisis. It also provided a lesson in how to leverage one source of funding into a broader appeal to the community. “It helped us to think about the power of incremental fundraising. Early money is like yeast. The Knight funds go away, but we have built a stream of individual contributions.” Knight grant funds were matched with approximately \$40,000 each year from individuals, with the remaining matches raised from institutions, including the National Endowment for the Arts.

For the Miami Light Project, the grant also led to a realization that putting money in the hands of artists is not enough. “We started thinking about what other resources are not taken into consideration in a cash grant.” Boone said. “We had to figure out how to build capacity around the artists. The decision totally altered our trajectory as an organization.”

Expanding on its efforts to provide infrastructural support to performing arts activity in the city, the Miami Light Project decided to plan and build a new presenting facility. In 2009, the organization won a second Challenge grant for \$400,000 to complete the new venue, The Light Box, in 2010-2013. This was followed by a \$250,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to support the opening and operation of The Light Box.



WINNER PROFILE:

Gold Coast Jazz Society— First Friday Jazz Jams

The Gold Coast Jazz Society, a community jazz organization based in Fort Lauderdale, hosts free concerts and outreach programs for students to introduce them to jazz. Its First Friday Jazz Jams series was formed in response to the dearth of opportunities in the Miami area for school-age students seeking to study jazz and perform alongside seasoned jazz musicians.

In 2008, the Gold Coast Jazz Society received an \$18,000 Arts Challenge award to launch and host the series over its first two years, providing South Florida area students with an opportunity to play and experience jazz in a venue accessible to minors. An average of 20 students, drawn from middle and high schools in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach counties played to audiences of 60 to 100 people in each session, backed up by a professional rhythm section. In the inaugural year, 126 student musicians and 497 audience members participated. In a region where access to arts instruction in schools is rare, and where opportunities to play jazz are especially hard to come by, the program provided many students with their first contact with professional musicians. “The students and their parents continually told our staff how valuable this opportunity was for the students’ musical growth,” the Jazz Society reported.

Although the program filled an important gap and need, the Jazz Society nevertheless had to confront the challenge of recruiting students and securing

support from the community. Information was disseminated through modest advertising, email blasts, newsletters and a Facebook page. The Jazz Society received matching funds from three foundations. In-kind donations were received toward the grant’s matching requirement from ArtServe, a Fort Lauderdale community organization that provided the venue, and a web designer. WLRN public radio joined the project as a media sponsor, publicizing the project.

The greatest difficulty for the project organizers was reaching students from across the large tri-county region and generating publicity for the event with meager resources. The Jazz Society found that by working diligently to develop a good email list of students, parents and regional musicians, they were able to build their audience base.

“Students can’t go to bars,” said Pam Dearden, the Jazz Society’s executive director. “This program gave them an opportunity to jam and perform in public.” The investment into student involvement stems from the realization that “audiences for jazz are growing older,” Dearden said. As it heads into its third year, the program is helping to draw the next generation of young people in South Florida toward jazz.



3. Celebrating Miami's Cultural Diversity

Arts funders around the United States have been working to encourage greater diversity in the cultural life of their communities. In the case of Miami, one of the most diverse urban areas in America, cultural heterogeneity is a given. In most of South Florida, the coexistence of varied cultural expressions is not a contrived reality or a noble philanthropic goal; it is a fact of life. The opportunity lies instead in celebrating the region's complex artistic heritage and in tying closer together the cultural interests and exposure of various ethnic groups.

Projects can celebrate cultural diversity in two ways – by bridging and by bonding. On one hand, projects that deliver audiences from outside a particular demographic group to a performance or exhibition celebrating that group's heritage help forge connections between heterogeneous neighborhoods and communities. On the other hand, projects can foster cohesion and collective identity by appealing principally to members of a given demographic constituency that is celebrated through the art itself.

Examples of both can be found among the Arts Challenge winners. In doing so, some projects also have provided occasions for members of different demographic groups to come together. Shared cultural experiences of this kind can strengthen the civic fabric of a city that remains, to this day, an amalgam of relatively isolated socio-economic groups.

The projects celebrating South Florida's cultural diversity showcased distinctive cultural traditions chiefly through productions of new plays and musical performances and by convening community events. Here as elsewhere, though, the winners spanned various art forms and levels of professionalism from a program for aspiring musicians, such as the Rhythm of Africa Music program to celebrate African rhythms and history in percussion classes for children with musician William Stewart, to efforts to augment and expand existing festivals, such as the International Hispanic Theatre Festival of Miami produced by Teatro Avante.

Not all winners in this group were equally predisposed, or equipped, to build bridges between different ethnic groups. Some projects took place in community spaces and local schools that mostly serve a single constituency. Others did not intend to draw an audience at all. As a group, however, the winning projects in this cluster have helped to create a stronger foundation for South Florida's varied cultural traditions to thrive, for the benefit of the entire community.



Rara Lakay performs as part of Big Night in Little Haiti

WINNER PROFILE:

The Miami Theater Center —The Red Thread

Among the many ethnic communities in South Florida, people of Asian extraction comprise one of the smallest, accounting for just one percent of Miami's citizens. But here as elsewhere in the United States, the Asian population is growing and so is interest in the culture of the world's fastest growing economic region – in particular China.

Founded in 2004, The Miami Theater Center (formerly PlayGround Theatre) produces plays for audiences of all ages and abilities, with a special emphasis on providing educational opportunities for children through free tickets and transportation. In 2010, it won an Arts Challenge grant to produce 62 performances of *The Red Thread*, a play inspired by a Chinese folk tale. The Miami New Times called the production “an organic display of Chinese culture, myth and history with music sound effects and magnificent visuals,” including shadow puppets (another ancient Chinese tradition). With the \$100,000 Arts Challenge grant, the theater undertook all aspects of the world-premiere production, from script writing to marketing and educational programming.

Audience members received study guides to learn about Chinese culture. Teachers were prepared for pre- and post-performance activities. Miami Theater Center actors conducted workshops in schools and parks. An inclusion program was tailored to 1,400 children and adults with special needs. The opening festivities, titled “Chinatown Miami,” celebrated traditional Chinese culture with music, dance and food. “We closed eight blocks and had 60 Chinese artists, acrobats and dragons, and we saw about 5,000 people that night on the street,” said executive director Elaiza Irizarry. The overall target was to attract a combined audience of 16,000 children, teachers and family members – the actual attendance reached almost 18,000 by the end of the play's run.

For the Miami Theater Center, success was the result of careful preparation over two years. “The key word here is planning,” Irizarry said. “Plan your dreams. Even if you have dreams, they need to be set on a programming plan.” *The Red Thread* will be part of the company's repertory for the next decade.



Diversity has been a hallmark of the performances in every respect: a work highlighting Chinese culture for children and caregivers of all ages, with a majority Latino and African-American audience – a classic example of a “bridging” project that connected young and old audience members and drew a cross-section of Miamians beyond the small local Chinese population. “The community has been extremely receptive,” Irizarry added. “The response has been ovations. We had many reviews and letters. It has been a beautiful journey.”

WINNER PROFILE:

The Rhythm Foundation —Big Night in Little Haiti

Miami's Little Haiti neighborhood is one of the most important hubs of Haitian Creole and Francophone culture in the United States. In recent years, Little Haiti has remained a magnet for the Haitian diaspora even as surrounding neighborhoods have experienced rapid gentrification. Despite its name, the neighborhood is far from a homogeneous ethnic enclave. Almost two thirds of its 30,000 population is African-American, and about one out of seven are Hispanic. Meanwhile, the size and influence of the Haitian community has been growing, in particular since Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake.

In 2010, The Rhythm Foundation received a two-year, \$125,000 Arts Challenge grant to produce a monthly series of free events, starting in Little Haiti in March 2011, to showcase Haitian music and culture. The series involved local restaurants, arts studios and cultural facilities, with musical concerts that drew locally and internationally renowned artists and enthusiastic crowds from the Haitian community and beyond. Interactive tools, including a website and social media were employed to spur interest. "We were aware of the new Little Haiti Cultural Center that the city had built, and we wanted to activate that center and bring this area to life," said Gene de Souza, the Rhythm Foundation's director of development.

Grant-funded activities included an arts and crafts area featuring Caribbean vendors, openings in art studios and galleries, and music and dance events in neighboring restaurants and venues such as 7th Circuit Studios, Haitian Cultural Alliance and Sweat Records. The organizers put several measures in place to ensure the support of the community. They set up an advisory board of Haitian community leaders and put services in place to ensure public safety and comfort. The events generated significant media and volunteer interest. "People have come out of the woodwork asking how they can be part of this," said de Souza. The project – although frequented by many outside the Haitian community – has been primarily a means of bonding for a large and growing ethnic constituency in Miami with access to few opportunities to engage with its own cultural traditions.

On a typical Friday, the four-hour Big Night events drew crowds of up to 1,200 people. To generate matching funds, the organizers "attacked on all fronts." They printed T-shirts to solicit individual donations and found corporate sponsors in Prestige Beer and American Airlines. With the "sign of prestige" of the Arts Challenge grant, de Souza said, "the funders feel more secure about sitting at the table and talking to you."

Perhaps the most important lesson, however, has been about the feasibility of organizing multicultural events in Miami's famously splintered ethnic mix. "We didn't want just Haitians there," de Souza said. "We have so many communities here – Cubans, Colombians, Haitians – each with their own events, their own newspapers, their own isolated scenes. But it is also important to promote mixing of these different cultures, to make it an overall stronger Miami community."



4. Documenting South Florida's Cultural Activity

One indicator of the evolution of a cultural community is growing interest in documenting its own activity. In the early phase of a maturing art scene, many works go unpublished or unrecorded. Artists often work in relative obscurity and isolation, lacking a common platform through which to share and record their works. The result: lower levels of audience recognition, critical scrutiny, media coverage, financial support, and commercial reward.

Over time, however, artists and arts advocates recognize the importance of gathering evidence of their contributions and building a shared cultural memory. Various domains of South Florida's cultural life have recently attained a critical mass where documentation and archiving of arts activity have become not just a possibility but also a necessity.

Some Arts Challenge projects intend to capture and extend the life of ephemeral performances seen only by small live audiences that often fade from memory after their initial run. Others facilitate systematic research and archiving by gathering digital copies of songs, films, dance pieces and musical performances for the purposes of future enjoyment or study. Online film archives, published catalogs and digital inventories of art works are providing a resource not only for artists and scholars, but also for advocates. They give tangible form to the vitality of the arts in South Florida.

Projects belonging to this group formed the smallest cluster among the Arts Challenge winners – understandably, as the interest in documentation and preservation tends to trail such primary needs as generating audiences, creating better working conditions for artists, and engaging and connecting local demographic communities.

Several projects documenting South Florida's cultural activity involved creating new organizations and documentation formats that had never been tried in the region. This included well-established groups seeking to highlight aspects of Miami's arts life, such as efforts by the Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs to increase appreciation of Miami-Dade's Art in Public Places collection through an accessible digital inventory of works, and young, entrepreneurial individuals whose aim is to give voice to activities that had formerly been on the margins of Miami's cultural mainstream. Almost all have grappled with the promise and challenge of digital technology. Together, the projects in this cluster are mapping the cultural ecology of a city and a region undergoing intensive change.



Borscht Film Festival—Redefining Film in Miami

WINNER PROFILE:

Gean Moreno— “[NAME] Publications”

Miami-based artist and writer Gean Moreno entered the Arts Challenge in 2008 seeking to establish a nonprofit press for Miami artists. The idea, spurred by the Arts Challenge, was to give local artists a different outlet to develop and share ideas. “I hadn’t thought about having a book publication company prior to the Arts Challenge,” said Moreno, who has produced five books since 2009 with the help of a \$30,000 operational grant.

The artists are provided simple parameters. The books must be six by nine inches, hardcover, about 100 pages, with four-color printing. In one example, Miami artist Nicholas Lobo produced a book about his experiences with the Go-Go dance music scene, a music subculture developed from jazz, funk and disco. Lobo worked for a year as an unpaid designer to Go-Go bands and promoters and his book is a record of his collaborations presented in his own signature graphic style. A published synopsis describes it this way: “Part hyper-extended liner notes for a nonexistent album, part ethnographic coffee table gone awry, ‘Album Graphics’ settles in a third place: neither of the Go-Go scene not entirely outside of it.” All [NAME] Publications books give similarly broad leeway to their creators to expand their practice into book form. An edition of 1,000 is produced for each title.

For Moreno, an important goal of the project was to archive the work of South Florida artists and leave a legacy for future generations. “These books do go out on their own, independently of the artists,” Moreno observed. “It opens a different tributary for the work.” Moreno makes the books, priced affordably at \$15, available through his own website and through local and national art book distribution channels.

Although artist books are a popular and growing genre, [NAME] Publications is the first venture of its kind in Miami. In addition to producing books, Moreno has focused his efforts on building national and international distribution. [NAME] Publications books were featured in the New York Art Book Fair and at the NADA (New Art Dealers Alliance) fair in Miami. Some have found their way to the New Museum and Printed Matter in New York. Distribution in European museums is next. “While Miami lacks the critical infrastructure of a New York or London, some individuals are making concerted efforts,” Art Monthly magazine reported in 2010, pointing to Moreno’s efforts “in producing books on artists and experimental designers.”

For Moreno, the Arts Challenge meant more than just start-up money. “The Arts Challenge makes you think twice as large as you would otherwise,” he said. “You feel a responsibility to the project, to make it self-sufficient.” Matching funds were raised by inviting 10 artists to create portfolios of prints for sale to supporters.

Moreno’s venture and other like-minded alternative platforms are creating a new framework for the arts in Miami. As Moreno notes: “All these things are starting to make the culture more horizontal and bottom-up: the community is building the culture, rather than it being imported.”



WINNER PROFILE:

Borscht Film Festival—Redefining Film in Miami

Miami is a popular location for film and TV shoots, yet the city's own cinematic life is underappreciated. Films about real Miamians are rare. The Borscht Film Festival was established in 2004 to showcase Miami's independent film scene. It commissions short films by emerging local filmmakers that go beyond clichéd portrayals of Miami as a party town in the sun.

Until recently, though, young local filmmakers lacked any kind of organization. "Everything is a learning experience for us," said Lucas Leyva, the festival's spokesperson and "Minister of the Interior." "Everyone is still figuring out how to make sustainable cultural institutions here for a new generation of artists.

After its first successful event, the Borscht Film Festival received \$75,000 per year in Arts Challenge funding for 2011 and 2012 to develop and broaden its ambition to forge Miami's cinematic identity. It issued an open call for films that tell unique Miami stories. The grant provided financial and professional support for more than 30 films. Once produced, the films were screened at the Adrienne Arsht Center to a crowd of more than 2,000 people, mostly under 35 – the event was so popular, more than 300 guests had to be turned away. The group's website now counts 14 sponsors in addition to the Knight Foundation.

Some films were accepted to major film festivals, including the Sundance Film Festival in Park City,



Utah, and South by Southwest in Austin. The Borscht Corporation, as the collective behind the festival is now known, recently attended the Sundance Film Festival to promote a 12-minute short film titled *Life and Freaky Times of Uncle Luke*. The presence of the group at Sundance, wrote *The Miami Herald* on Jan. 22, 2012, "is a testament to a budding film scene here that is unmistakably Miami: brash, playful, cultured, irreverent and young, with the talent and tools to actualize their ambitions." After their first screenings, the films are also being made available online.

In addition to facilitating production, the Arts Challenge grant propelled the Borscht Film Festival to a new level of professionalism. Above all it made the organizers realize the importance of a well-run, accountable organization as a means of securing the collaboration and support of a wider range of partners. "It forced (us) to become more organized,"

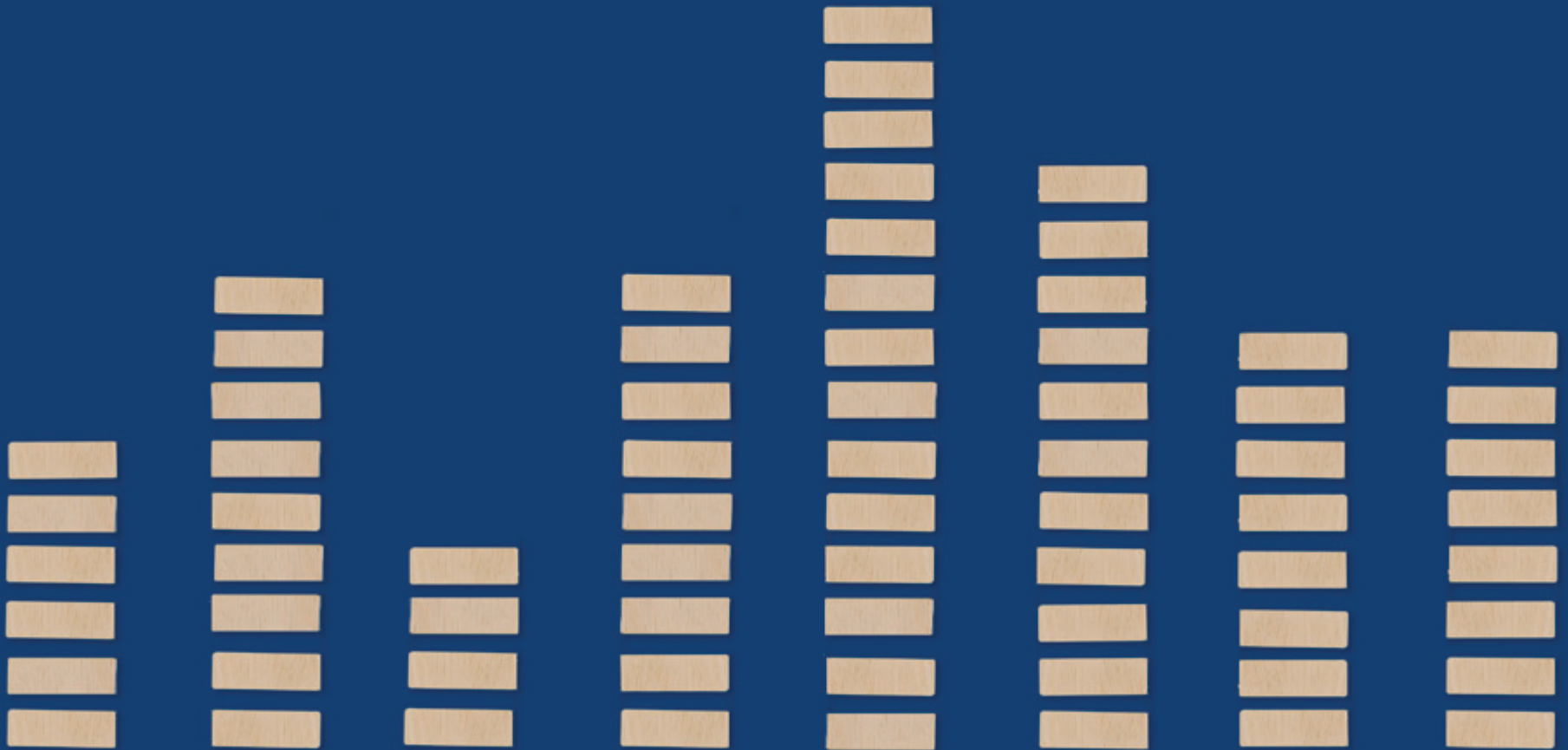


Leyva said, and "clean up our act." The organizers created their first budget and opened a bank account.

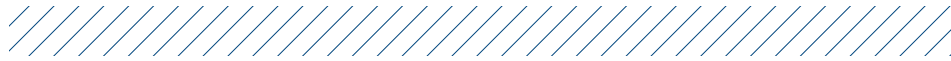
Fundraising was a challenge, Leyva said, because "we don't have a traditional base of philanthropists – all of us are middle-class or lower middle class kids from the suburbs." But a fruit juice company came through with sponsorship support, as did the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, which paid for a film by one of its scholarship alumni. "Before, we never even had a serious push for fundraising," Leyva noted. "Now, we're more legit."

Appendix

Evaluation Methodology



Evaluation Methodology



Our interim review collected information through the following methods:

- An evaluation design workshop with Knight Foundation staff.
- 67 stakeholder consultations (38 grantees, 11 unsuccessful applicants, 5 arts leaders, 4 grant panel readers, 3 Miami funders, 6 Knight staff), including a focus group with unsuccessful applicants.
- A survey of Knight Arts Challenge applicants and finalists as well as artists in Miami who did not apply to the Knight Arts Challenge (see below for details).
- On-camera interviews with grantees, distilled into short videos to be released by the Knight Foundation in conjunction with this report.
- An analysis of all 5,299 applications over the first four years of the Arts Challenge.
- A review of all second-round applications, grantee progress and final reports, and all other documents related to the Arts Challenge.
- A scan of local and national media related to the Arts Challenge.
- A background literature review of trends in grant making.

Due to the nature of the evaluation and Knight Foundation's desire to focus on arts sector outcomes, not individual grantee outcomes, AEA's data collection relied heavily on qualitative methods as well as analysis of secondary data sources:

Analysis of secondary data

- Analysis of the multi-year database of applicants, including first-round and second-round applications.
- Analysis of the database of grantee reports, including records of matching funds.
- A scan of media coverage of the Knight Arts Challenge and a cross section of winners' projects, accessed through Lexis-Nexis and Google News.

Structured depth interviews and focus group discussions

- 38 in-depth interviews with Arts Challenge winners (both by telephone and in-person; some were videotaped with consent).
- Focus group discussion with a cross section of 7 unsuccessful applicants (recruited from a pool of survey respondents); plus 4 additional interviews with unsuccessful applicants.
- 6 interviews with Miami-area arts leaders.
- 4 interviews with Arts Challenge readers (who review applications).
- 6 interviews with Knight Foundation staff.
- 4 interviews with other Miami-area funders.

Group	Sent	Responses	Response Rate	Notes
Applicants	1965	249	13%	Sent to the Knight Arts Challenge applicants who did not win or become finalists
Finalists	61	16	26%	Sent to finalists that did not win
Artists	462	58	13%	Sent to artists as identified in a Miami Department of Cultural Affairs List. Artists who had applied to the Challenge were removed from the list.
Total # People Surveyed	2488	323	13%	

Surveys

An online survey was administered to 1,965 Knight Arts Challenge applicants since the first challenge that did not win or become finalists. Responses were received from 249 applicants, for a 13 percent rate response. Results from this sample are representative of the universe of applicants within a margin of error of +/- 6 percent.

61 finalists (applicants who made the first cut, but did not win) were surveyed, generating 16 responses, or 26 percent. Due to the small sample size, results should be considered exploratory in nature.

A survey of artists was administered in August 2011 to a list of 462 artists provided by the Miami Dade Cultural Affairs office, of which 58 responded (13 percent). Due to the small sample size, quantitative results were not reported on their own, although qualitative data from responses to open-ended questions provided some helpful perspective.

Photography Credits

Adrienne Arsh Center for the Performing Arts of Miami Dade County p. 31, 43, 46;
Borscht p. 53, 55;
Coral Morphologic p. 35;
City of Miami Beach p. 44-45;
Gold Coast Jazz p. 49;
Kirmaya Cevallos pp. 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 27, 29, 42;
Matthew Pace p. 5;
Miami Light Project p. 40, 43, 47, 48;
Miami Theater Center p. 43, 50, 51;
Rhythm Foundation p. 52;
Robin Hill Photography p. 11, 31, 32;
[NAME] Publishing p. 54;