

# ART WITH A PURPOSE

## The Community Foundation of Broward Builds a Brighter Future



Recipients Calbe Thompson, left, Cathleen Dean, Jenny Larsson, Niki Lopez, Ingrid Schindall and Sarah Michelle Rupert; photo by Andy Royston.

By BAJA writer Helen Wolt

**N**iki Lopez overcame a childhood of abuse and torment in a religious cult through the therapeutic power of art. When the visual artist realized how expressing herself in sculpture, painting and performance art could spur a dialogue about sensitive topics – such as race, gender, equality, molestation and shame – Lopez launched *What's Your Elephant?* In her workshops and exhibitions viewers are encouraged to talk about uncomfortable “elephant in the room” subjects.

“The importance of sharing is we realize we have community. Then we can work on healing,” Lopez said. “It’s using the arts to give people safe spaces.”

Lopez is able to take that message to a larger audience with the help of the Community Foundation of Broward. She is one of seven local creatives to benefit from a \$35,000 Art of Community grant allocated to Broward County Cultural Division. The projects range from filmmaking to culinary history.

“Art of Community grants are intended to strengthen and unify Broward through the arts,” said Kirk Englehardt, vice president of marketing and communications at the Community Foundation. “The arts are the heart and soul of a prosperous community, and they’re ideal for igniting creativity, breaking down barriers and helping us truly understand and connect with each other.”

Partnering with the Broward Cultural Division to award the funds, the Community Foundation aims to support arts that create a sense of place and pride in Broward County, Englehardt said. Grantees often use the funds to take their work to the next level which may include promoting their innovative programs and recruiting top notch talent for professional collaborations.

Darius Daughtry, founder and artistic director of the Art Prevails Project, is in his second year of producing *The Happening: A Theatrical Mixtape*. The second volume of this multidisciplinary production fuses modern theatrical formats, such as spoken word and hip-hop, with traditional elements as a means of exploring current events. It takes audiences on a “journey through the consciousness of America and her inhabitants,” Daughtry said.

His approach is three-pronged: art performance, community activism and arts education. Daughtry believes artists have a responsibility to address social issues and “spark a conversation or drop a seed, a thought, in someone’s mind,” he said. Grant funds support that goal by providing free showings at juvenile justice facilities and youth summer programs. It also pays new and emerging talent which boosts fledgling careers.

“The impact is going to be a lot larger than just the number of people who see *The Happening* in the theater. It brings the community together,” Daughtry said.





Other unique projects fueled by the Community Foundation's support include Jenny Larsson's Fågelbo Artists Residency. Fågelbo, which means "bird's nest" in Swedish, is a three-week program that nurtures collaboration among artists from diverse fields to produce experimental, interactive performances. In lieu of seating, audiences are free to engage in spontaneous conversation and choose how they view the show. That freedom fosters communication and community, Larsson said.

Musician Joshua Tiktin is the force behind the Sailboat Bend Art Festival. The art-centric celebration evolved into a pop-up market at Fort Lauderdale's Sunday Jazz Brunch and eventually led Tiktin to head up the Flagler Village Block Party Weekend. Currently, he coordinates the Flagler Village Art Walk Market, which takes place every month on the final Saturday.

Tiktin said festivals connect people on a cultural and social level. Live music, DJs, vendors, food trucks and visual arts exhibits draw crowds that enable artists to earn "money doing what they love," he added.

Calibe Thompson, a publisher, television and event producer, broadened her Taste the Islands Experience in conjunction with the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society. Thompson added a Caribbean culinary museum and theater to her annual event that showcases the Caribbean's rich culinary heritage.

The festival featured actors portraying their ancestors' stories about regional foods such as rum, sugar and spices. A museum display held antiquated cookware. Freshly prepared dishes gave attendees a taste of history.

"It exposes our culture to a broader mass market audience so they can learn about it and fall in love with it the way we love our culture," Thompson said.

“  
...THE COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION AIMS TO  
SUPPORT ARTS THAT  
CREATE A SENSE OF  
PLACE AND PRIDE  
IN BROWARD COUNTY...





TOP to BOTTOM: *The Happening* by Darius Daughtry photo courtesy the artist; *The Happening* by Darius Daughtry photo courtesy the artist; Grant recipient *Darius Daughtry*; photo by Andy Royston; Young artists learning to screenprint at the *Small Press Fair*, photo by Monica McGovern

**THE ARTS ARE THE HEART AND SOUL OF A PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY, AND THEY'RE IDEAL FOR IGNITING CREATIVITY, BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AND HELPING US TRULY UNDERSTAND AND CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER.**

**-KIRK ENGLEHARDT**





TOP: BOTTOM: Small Press Fair co-founder Ingrid Schindall at booth location, FAT Village, photo by Monica McGee; Artist creating at the Small Press Fair, photo by Monica McGee; Artist from the Small Press Fair, photo by Monica McGee; What's Your Elephant? community engagement workshop photo courtesy, Neil Lopez

In 2016, the Small Press Fair (SPF), the brainchild of printmaker Ingrid Schindall of IS Projects and Sarah Michelle Rupert of the Girls' Club, premiered in FAT Village. With its focus on printmaking, handmade books and zine creation the niche event attracted folks from across South Florida and beyond. The following year, attendance and vendor numbers grew considerably, Schindall said.

"It's inclusive to everyone working on paper," Schindall said. While fairgoers explore the unique medium artists are in a position to network and thrive in the subset of fine art.

Film producer Cathleen Dean brought the 48 Hour Film Project to Fort Lauderdale with her grant. Popular in scores of cities worldwide, the short-film competition debuted in Broward to hundreds of filmmakers and enthusiasts. Over the course of a 48-hour weekend, teams of crew members of all skill levels from novice to veteran, complete a short film. The winner goes on to compete at the world finals.

"The diversity and impact of our grantees' work is always amazing," said Adriane Clarke, Broward Cultural Division Arts Management Specialist. And like all the Art of Community projects, they add to the "cultural development of the County and provides a lot of opportunity for the community to be involved in the arts."

*For eligibility, deadlines and more information visit the Community Foundation of Broward at [cfbroward.org](http://cfbroward.org) and the Broward Cultural Division at [Broward.org/Arts](http://Broward.org/Arts).*

The grant was made possible by the following Funds at the Community Foundation of Broward: Fonds and H. Wayne Hutzenga Jr. Family Trust Fund, Gary J. Scotto Fund, and Mary and Alex Mackenzie Community Impact Fund