

## EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome to the Fall edition of Inspicio's e-Magazine, our second edition, which is one part of a new arts publication platform sponsored by Florida International University's College of Architecture + The Arts (CARTA).

Inspicio is currently offered as a website (<http://inspicio.fiu.edu>), where we continuously publish content about all art disciplines whenever it is ready for publication, and as a quarterly e-Magazine that can be read on most tablets and smartphones. In 2016, we will offer a printed version of Inspicio.

Contributors to Inspicio (FIU students, faculty and talented people of interest) are focused on arts activities outside of the immediate FIU community.

Inspicio supports CARTA's mission by providing a platform and process for FIU students to critically examine and comment upon the art communities and activities of South Florida, and have the opportunity to publish their work alongside professional writers who are regularly published in the world's best publications like *The New Yorker*, *the Wall Street Journal* and *the New York Times*. In addition, Inspicio aspires to be a sophisticated enabler of the arts that becomes a "must-see" resource for a global audience interested in the Miami art scene.

The Fall edition of Inspicio has been published to coincide with the magnificent Miami Book Fair International (MBFI). Richard Blanco, the fifth Presidential Inaugural Poet, who was conceived in Havana, born in Madrid, and raised in Miami, is our native-son cover person. Richard is a frequent presenter at the MBFI. I first met Richard in December, 2013, because he agreed to sit for my 40 x 60 inch portrait of him, which graces the cover of this issue of Inspicio. When I told Richard that I was exploring creating a new arts magazine for Miami, Richard (who is an FIU alumnus) connected me to people at FIU, who eventually led me to Brian Schriener, the Dean of CARTA, and Inspicio was born in 2015.

This issue also includes a conversation with Mitchell Kaplan, who founded both the MBFI and Miami's leading bookstore group, Books & Books, over 30 years ago, and an article about the dynamic Writer's Room residency program at The Betsy Hotel on Ocean Drive. When I first met Mitch Kaplan in 2013, he impressed upon me his high regard for the talented Miami writing community, and scoffed at the notion that Inspicio might be too intellectual for Miami (as suggested by some): "I'm on the front lines and I reject that characterization. Miami is as sophisticated as any other city," Mitch said. "I know what other independent booksellers sell around the country, and nobody has us beat in terms of the sophistication of the books we sell."

On the Miami music front, we include an article about Parker Thomson, an influential force behind the development of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County, and two video discussions with seriously talented Miami-based artists – jazz vocalist Nicole Henry, and super nova Tony Succar. At a very tender age, Tony began a five year odyssey to compose, arrange, produce, and perform UNITY – the Latin tribute to Michael Jackson.

We also video-recorded Australian Aboriginal contemporary art scholar Henry Skerritt as he guided us through an exhibition of contemporary abstract Aboriginal art, from the collection of Debra and Dennis Scholl, at the Perez Art Museum Miami. And to cap off our focus on that part of the globe, we include Ethan Cohen's memoir about opening Miami minds to the dynamic work of contemporary Chinese artists.

There are several themes we intend to explore in Inspicio on a regular basis including, but not limited to, climate change and the impact of rising sea levels on the arts, the exploration and documentation of Miami's artistic heritage, the creative manifestations of Miami's under-served communities, and, on a lighter note, the role of humor in art.

In previous articles we have explored Miami's architectural heritage and the impact of rising sea levels (and we will continue to do so). In this Fall edition, we take a look at an exhibition of Haitian Gingerbread architecture that was curated by Claudia and Gustavo Garcia at the Little Haiti Cultural Center; and the hard to believe Chapel of La Merced, which is inspired by a 17th century Peruvian chapel, and has risen from barren ground on the premises of Corpus Christi Parish Church, in the traditionally Dominican neighborhood of Allapattah. Beginning in 2005, Father Jose Luis Menendez has attracted a team of volunteer artisans, construction workers, and art donors, who have selflessly contributed to the astonishing success of La Merced.

In the inaugural issue of Inspicio, we began the Last Laugh section with an editorial about humor and art. In this issue, we let 94 year-old Al Jaffee do the talking. During World War II, Al was stationed in Miami, and gave drawing lessons to convalescing airmen, who were recovering in the luxurious Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. In the 1950s, Al invented the "Fold-in" for MAD magazine, and his cartoons have appeared in every issue of MAD, save one. Prior to MAD, Al worked with Stan Lee, the towering genius behind Marvel Comics. At the age of 94, Al still wakes up every morning and dreams up something funny to illustrate for MAD and other publications. And, as you'll see in our interview, he remembers the details of every cartoon we discuss.

I hope what you read, hear and see in Inspicio adds value to your appreciation of the arts in Miami.

Raymond Elman  
Founding Managing Editor