

EDITOR'S LETTER



Welcome back to *Inspicio's* e-Magazine, which is one part of the arts publication platform sponsored by Florida International University's College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts (CARTA), in the School of Communication + Journalism.

Inspicio is currently offered as a website (<http://inspicio.fiu.edu>), where we continuously publish content about all art disciplines; as a periodic e-Magazine that can be read on iPads and iPhones and can be installed through the Apple APP Store; [and accessible online through Digital Commons](#), an open access publishing and archival platform supported by FIU Libraries.

Contributors to *Inspicio* are a blend of FIU students, faculty, and a network of talented people who regularly appear in some of the best publications in the world.

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 New Yorker*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*. In addition, *Inspicio* aspires to be a sophisticated enabler of the arts that is a "Must-See" resource for a global audience interested in the Miami-South Florida art scene.

We should note that ever since the **Covid-19 pandemic** gripped the world, **we have been recording video interviews via Zoom**. While the videos present the same high-quality, in-depth content you have come to expect from *Inspicio*, the quality of the Zoom-recorded video and audio is similar to the mixed results we see every day on TV news programs.

THE CURRENT EDITION OF INSPICIO features a video interview with cover person **TANYA BRAVO**, the founder and Executive Artistic Director of **Juggerknot Theatre Company**, which she started in Miami in 1998. **Miami Motel Stories** are the signature **immersive theatre** productions of Juggerknot, all written by **Juan C. Sanchez**.

JUAN C. SANCHEZ is a Cuban-born playwright who has been living in Miami since he was seven years old. He is the author of all four immersive theatre productions staged by Juggerknot Theatre.

Rounding out *Inspicio's* theatre section is **CHRISTINE DOLEN** with an article about Juggerknot Theatre and its pre-pandemic production of **Miami Motel Stories: North Beach**.

I was blown away by the energy, passion, and vision of photographer **ZACHARY BALBER** when I interviewed him at the **Jewish Museum of Florida – FIU**, during his exhibition titled "Tamim" of large-scale photographs of Jews with decorative tattoos. In our interview, Zach recounts a hard-scrabble life that eventually bore fruit.

I first met Brazilian artist **FRIDA BARANEK** at the home of Jordana Pomeroy, director of the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum at FIU. As it turns out, I serendipitously first encountered Frida in 2017 while I was filming the installation of Frank Stella's monumental exhibition at the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale. Frank and Frida strolled in and out of my camera as they monitored the installation. Like Stella, Baranek makes beautiful large-scale, abstract, organic sculptures out of a wide variety of materials. Many of her sculptures are wall-mounted.

Shortly after we met, Frida Baranek invited my wife Lee and I to dinner, and seated me next to **JENNIFER ROBERTS**, the CEO of **Design Miami/** (the "/" is part of their logo), which also operates a design fair in Basel, Switzerland. I overheard Jen telling someone at the table that her father attended the University of Pennsylvania. Our ensuing conversation went something like this:

RAY: I went to the University of Pennsylvania! What class was your father in?

JEN: The Class of '67.

RAY: I was in the Class of '67! What's your father's name?

JEN: John Roberts.

RAY: Not the John Roberts who produced the legendary 1969 Woodstock Music Festival? I once won a thousand dollars from him in a poker game at Penn.

JEN: That's my Dad.

Miami is blessed with art leadership by people who possess vision, ability, and empathy for artists. For this issue of *Inspicio* we recorded video interviews with two of the best, **MICHAEL SPRING** and **ROSIE GORDON-WALLACE**.

MICHAEL SPRING serves as director of the **Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs**, where he is responsible for the supervision of a public arts agency with an annual budget of more than \$53 million and a staff of 100. Under Spring's leadership, the MDC Department of Cultural Affairs has become one of the best such agencies in the world. Among many accomplishments, Spring was involved with the development of the **Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts** and the **Pérez Art Museum Miami**.

ROSIE GORDON-WALLACE arrived in Miami from her native Jamaica in 1979 as a medical microbiologist investigating infectious diseases. Always attracted to the arts, by 1995 she had laid the groundwork for what became the **Diaspora Vibe Cultural Arts Incubator (DVCAI)**, which serves as a local and global laboratory dedicated to promoting, nurturing, and cultivating the vision and diverse talents of emerging artists from the Caribbean Diaspora, artists of color, and immigrant artists.

For years I have driven around Miami listening to **WLRN**, Miami's NPR station; and if I was braving Miami's streets or highways on a Sunday, I would hear all sorts of folk music on a program called "**Folk and Acoustic Music**." The impresario of *Folk and Acoustic Music* is **MICHAEL STOCK**, and we were fortunate to record an interview with Michael just before the pandemic took off.

Victoria Rogers of the Knight Foundation introduced me to filmmaker **ALEXANDRA CODINA** in 2017. Somehow we didn't manage to schedule a video interview until July, 2020, and by that time we opted to record the interview via Zoom. Ali has made two profound films so far. Her debut film, **Monica & David**, tells the love story of two adults with Down syndrome. The film won Tribeca Film Festival's Jury Award, was nominated in 33 countries. Her new film, **Paper Children**, is a YouTube Originals release about four siblings who fled gang violence in Honduras and sought asylum in the USA.

For our poetry offering we turned to **CAROLYN FORCHÉ**, a celebrated American poet, editor, professor, memoirist, essayist, translator, and a human rights advocate. I first met Carolyn when she was a fellow at the **Fine Arts Work Center** in Provincetown, Mass. We caught up with her for a video interview at the 2019 **Miami Book Fair**. In this instance, she wanted to talk about her most recent book, a memoir titled **What You Have Heard is True**.

I have known authors **PETER ALSON** and **DAVID MICHAELIS** since they were teenagers playing tennis at the Provincetown Tennis Club, where Pulitzer Prize recipients Norman Mailer and Stanley Kunitz used to play. Now in their 60s, Alson and Michaelis have written many excellent books. In 2020, I hosted a video conversation via Zoom with Peter and David, and created a video that appeared in the 2020 edition of the **Miami Book Fair**, made virtual by the Covid-19 pandemic. Alson discussed his first novel, **The Only Way to Play It**, and Michaelis talked about **Eleanor**, his biography of Eleanor Roosevelt.

I was so pleased to record a conversation via Zoom with **CAROL DAMIAN**, noted art historian, pioneer, and expert on Caribbean and Latin American art. She is the former director of the Frost Art Museum and chairperson of FIU's Department of Art and Art History. Dr. Damian is also the curator of the art collection at the **Chapel of La Merced in Allapattah**.

As always we end this edition of *Inspicio's* e-Magazine with **The Last Laugh**.

In the 1980s I was pleased to be represented by the same gallery as cartoon great and fine artist **MISCHA RICHTER**, who delighted readers of *The New Yorker* for a half century and was one of *The New Yorker's* most prolific contributors. In this issue, we present a video of Mischa's son **DAN RICHTER** describing his father's career. Dan Richter is perhaps best known as the choreographer and star ape in the opening scene of **Stanley Kubrick's** classic science fiction film, **2001: A Space Odyssey**.

Throughout history, the arts and humanities have been an instrument for identifying, discussing, and enacting positive social change. I hope what you read, hear, and see in *Inspicio* adds value to your appreciation of the arts in Miami and South Florida.

– Raymond Elman, founding editor-in-chief