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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE REBIRTH
2020 Locust Art Builders (LAB):
Summer Art Intensive for Teens,
Public Art Project

Where: Windows on 39th Street and North Miami Avenue adjacent to Locust Projects in the Miami Design District

Publication:
The Rebirth: Behind the Scenes of Locust Art Builders 2020
[student-produced zine](#)

View the exhibition online:
Images available by Aug 7 at
[locustprojects.org](#)

Exhibition Dates:
August 5 – August 31, 2020

LOCUST PROJECTS PRESENTS THE REBIRTH, AN 80-FT LONG PUBLIC ART PROJECT BY MIAMI TEENS PARTICIPATING IN THE 2020 ONLINE EDITION OF LOCUST ART BUILDERS



Detail from *The Rebirth*, a collaborative art installation by LAB teens on view along North Miami Avenue and 39th Street



Locust Projects is proud to present the culminating exhibition project by this year's cohort of teens participating in Locust Art Builders (LAB): Summer Art Intensive for Teens. Celebrating its [10th anniversary year](#), LAB brings together a diverse group of high school-aged aspiring artists from schools across Miami-Dade County for a four-week Summer Art Intensive for Teens, where they learn to collaboratively build an exhibition from scratch and begin the process of building the world they imagine.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Locust Art Builders program was changed to an online format to ensure the safety of the students. It was held over four-weeks on Zoom, where art and ideas were under construction Tuesdays-Thursdays from 1-3pm. All twenty-five selected students received a \$500 honoraria to participate in addition to a BUILDERS BOX of art supplies and an artist-designed LAB t-shirt by Atomik personally delivered to their door.

"LAB is a rite of passage for many of Miami's aspiring teen artists, and we were determined to make it happen this year, our 10th anniversary year," said Lorie Mertes, Executive Director. **"Given the pandemic, safety and accessibility were a priority, so we made the decision in May to move online, and by extending an honoraria, students weren't forced to choose between summer jobs or the LAB experience."**

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Under the direction of Miami-based contemporary visual artist Monica Lopez De Victoria since it's founding in 2010, LAB is a unique opportunity that allows students artists to widen their perspectives, gain new skills, connect with peers, and meet local artists and arts professionals from throughout Miami-Dade. This year's LAB intern was Angel Casso, a 2018 LAB alum. Participating LAB 2020 student, Ava Luna Santiesteban, served as overall design concept coordinator.

Students experiment in a range of media, many new to them. In addition to art making, their days include group discussion as they conceptualize their ideas behind the show. Students take the lead in writing their artist statements, designing all digital and print materials, promoting via social media, and budgeting expenses.

The Summer Art Intensive for Teens is complemented by a series of talks by speakers from the Miami art and creative community and a special Mentor Meet + Greet where students get to network with artists, teachers, arts professionals, board members, donors, and other community arts mentors.

The culminating LAB exhibition this year has been adapted from the usual gallery exhibition to a more than 80-foot long public art project on the highly visible storefront windows along N. Miami Ave and 39th St. in the Miami Design District, making it accessible to all, 24/7, by foot or by car.

Each year's show evolves as a unique and timely reflection of the current issues and ideas impacting youth today. This year's theme, *The Rebirth*, is inspired by concepts of transformation and change that everyone goes through in life—and that the students especially—relate to as teens navigating an unpredictable and shifting world, simultaneous with the changes they experience as their identities evolve and sense of self emerges.

The public exhibition consists of a unifying illustration that unfolds across the length of the window panels, interspersed with various elements contributed by each student, from writing, drawing, painting, photography, and video insertions. In addition to their weekly Zoom sessions, the students developed their ideas and collaborated on and shared their concepts over Instagram group chats after class. The project also consists of an online zine with additional works and artist statements from each student. [VIEW HERE.](#)

The title of the exhibition is *The Rebirth*, a seemingly simple phrase that, according to the students, yields infinite meanings. The dictionary defines rebirth as the process of being reincarnated or of starting to flourish, or increase, after a decline. However, taking a deeper look into the word itself gives it a whole other meaning. Whether from a religious, literal, or spiritual point of view, rebirth emits quite a strong feeling. For the students, its meaning ranges from transformation, to new beginnings and change, and

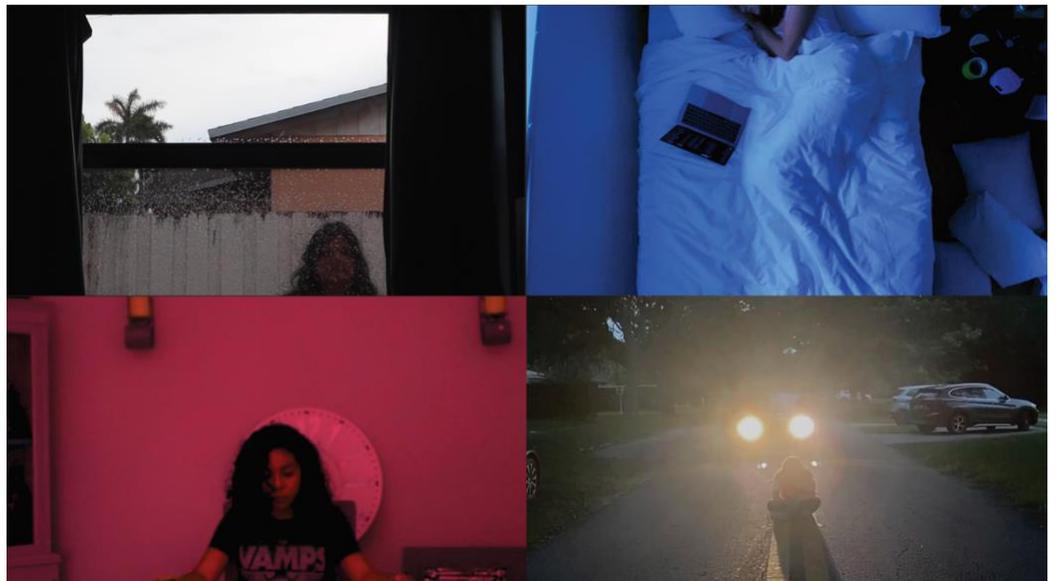
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even to life in and of itself. They believe it's impossible to understand their concept without taking the time to interpret rebirth for yourself.

Their goal with the project is to create an experience that opens the viewers' eyes to the endless possibilities life holds, even if it seems hopeless at times. Everyone has a chance at their own form of rebirth, and with their project, the students hope to inspire everyone to give themselves a chance at their own new beginning.

***"We rebirth as new people every time we transform from a traumatic event. We become a new person"* - Isabella Mendoza, Locust Art Builders Summer Art Intensive participant**



Stills from "The enduring cycle of strangers" a component of *The Rebirth*, by Satya Clemetson, Katharine Guzman, Isabella Mendoza, and Olivia Rubell

One of the collaborative contributions inserted into the overall piece is a video titled, *"The enduring cycle of strangers."* According to student artists Satya Clemetson, Katharine Guzman, Isabella Mendoza, and Olivia Rubell, **"As humans, we all deem that our experiences and traumatic events can be compared and judged by a stranger's mentality and perspective. We grow and transform every passing day, constantly learning from others and ourselves."**

While collaborating via social distancing, they recreated their ideas of what self-isolation can do to one's mental health, as well as how it transforms and recreates one's self again. Their film communicates four different stories from four different perspectives. Collectively, it portrays feelings of built up anxiety and creates a space of infinite sounds about which, they say, "The constant ticking noise that a standard clock makes signifies

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that we all run out of time—and become someone new. We're all bound to change as individuals, but there's no set time or place that it may occur.”



Participating Student Artists: Selena Bracamontes, Daniela Camacho, Myona Clay, Satya Clemetson, Camila Diaz, Kiara Figueredo, Annai Flores, Katharine Guzman, Abigail Lambert, Ian Mena-Lopez, Cooper Menachem, Isabella Mendoza, Emily Miller, Matthew Monzon, Adriana Paredes, Lesli Pineda, Skylar Rosario, Olivia Rubell, Cameron Santamarina, Ava Santiesteban, Kimberly Seda, Sabrina Sierra, Darryl Thomas, Florencia Umpierrez, Valerie Vazquez.

Schools represented: Design and Architecture Senior High, Doctors Charter School Miami Shores, Fort Lauderdale High, Gulliver Preparatory, Hialeah Senior High School, Miami Arts Charter School, Miami Beach Senior High School, Miami Carol City Senior High School, Miami Palmetto Senior High School, Pinecrest Preparatory Academy Middle/High School, Ransom Everglades School, Somerset Academy South Homestead High School, South Miami Senior High, TERRA Environmental Research Institute.

ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami’s longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South

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Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.

LOCUST ART BUILDERS (LAB): Summer Art Intensive for Teens promotes contemporary art and project-based learning as a means to encourage creativity, critical analysis, and problem solving, while building communication skills. LAB extends Locust Projects' 20-year commitment as an incubator of new art and ideas by supporting experimentation and innovation in artistic practice with the next generation of South Florida artists. See the [10th Anniversary Video](#) featuring past LAB Alumni and read more about the founding of LAB by founding Artistic Director Monica Lopez de Victoria [here](#).

LAB (Locust Art Builders) 2020-2021 is made possible through lead support from the Hillsdale Fund Inc. and the Albert and Jane Nahmad Family Foundation. Additional support provided by The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor Board and County Commissioners, The Children's Trust; The Kirk Foundation; Susan and Richard Arregui; Miami Salon Group, and donors to the Team LAB Annual Education Fund. THE REBIRTH exhibition is made possible, in part, by Kalex Graphics and Signs.

ART HAPPENS HERE.