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LOCUST PROJECTS IS STILL MAKING ART HAPPEN Action and Advocacy for Artists During COVID-19

Announcing New Miami Artist Relief Fund and Other Resources for Miami Artists



GeoVanna Gonzalez working on her [project](#) for Locust Projects that was postponed in April. Photo: Pulp Arts

[Miami, FL]: Locust Projects announces a new Miami Artist Relief Fund and other resources to help offset hardships artists are experiencing due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19.

Locust Projects is one of sixteen partners in [The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts' Regional Regranting Program](#) participating in a national effort to distribute emergency grants to artists affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Foundation has authorized its Regional Regranting Program partners to re-allocate their annual grants designated for this program to establish and administer COVID-19 emergency relief funds in their communities.

Rachel Bers, Program Director, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, says “Our regranting partners have intimate knowledge of and regular contact with vulnerable artist populations in their communities; they possess the skills, the systems, and the strong relationships necessary to carry out this program efficiently, effectively and with heart. We are grateful for their unparalleled responsiveness and leadership at this time – and always.”

Through a re-allocation of its annual [WaveMaker project grants](#), Locust Projects’ Miami Artist Relief Fund will put significant funds into the hands of local artists experiencing hardship due to loss of income including, cancellation of exhibitions or performances, travel expenses incurred for cancelled conferences or residencies, loss of income for teaching artists and contract work cancellations. Forty visual and multi-discipline artists who have lost income will each receive \$1500 grants for basic needs such as food, rent, childcare, and medical costs.

[Locust Projects’ Miami Artist Relief Fund](#) is open to all self-identifying visual and multi-disciplinary artists living in Miami-Dade County who have a history of presenting in visual arts

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contexts and who engage visual arts discourses. Applications will be open starting May 1 through midnight May 15, 2020. Forty applicants who meet the submission eligibility criteria and demonstrate a recently active artistic practice, will be selected through a blind lottery system.

“We know all too well that artists operate in precarious financial conditions in the best of times. Due to the magnitude of this crisis, we anticipate many more requests for funding than there are funds to distribute,” says Locust Projects’ Executive Director Lorie Mertes. “Many artists have been destabilized by COVID-19 related closures, postponements, job cancellations, loss of access to studios, and other restrictions impacting their ability to work, create and support themselves and their families. Locust Projects is as dedicated as ever to living our 21-year mission to advocate for artists and help make art happen by supporting artists with access to resources and opportunities to navigate these difficult times.”

In addition to the Miami Artist Relief Fund, this May, Locust Projects will announce twelve Miami-based artists, curators and collectives who will receive WaveMaker Grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000 each totaling \$60,000 towards projects that take risks outside of art institutions and markets, creating innovative work that is accessible to the public via process, presentation, production, or publication. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, grantees may choose to amend their projects and use up to fifty-percent of their grant for emergency relief as circumstances may have changed since they submitted their applications in January.

Locust Projects’ [LegalARTLink](#) program of pro bono legal services for visual artists, dancers, musicians, composers, and other creatives, offers free legal aid and referrals, as well as webinars on legal issues artists face including cancelled gigs and contracts, evictions, and lost commissions. For the next six months, Locust Projects is waiving the \$60 administrative fee for access to LegalARTLink resources. Says Mertes, “Knowing this crisis will have long term impacts on the careers of artists and small artist-run arts organizations in our community who count on this vital program, we are working to expand LegalARTLink and the number of artists we are able to serve.”

Online resources for artists and the public include the [COVID-19 ARTIST RESOURCE GUIDE](#) with regularly updated local and national grants and opportunities. In addition to participating in national online gatherings, such as the recent [2020 Commonfield Convening](#) highlighting Miami-based artists’ contributions to art and environmental activism on national stage, Locust Projects is revisiting relevant artist interviews and projects from Locust Projects’ [YouTube Channel](#). While the galleries are empty, Locust Projects’ new blog, [CLOSER LOOK](#), features the artists, people, stories behind Miami’s longest running alternative art space. Recent entries feature artists [GeoVanna Gonzalez](#) and [Christina Pettersson](#) whose exhibitions scheduled to open April 3, 2020, have been postponed.

Says Mertes, “We are committed to supporting the artists we have commissioned to do projects—many began production over a year ago and continue to work and incur expenses,” she continues, “Despite the uncertainty and unpredictable scheduling, artists contracted for exhibitions continue to receive production funds and artist fees for their postponed and forthcoming projects. We also are establishing new platforms for commissioning new work during this crisis providing income to artists, such as providing honoraria for CLOSER LOOK blog entries and commissioning new installations for our storefront windows on North Miami Avenue while we are closed. We have been making art happen for twenty-one years, believing

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art and artists are essential, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our artist-centric mission.”

ABOUT THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION REGIONAL REGRANTING PROGRAM

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts [Regional Regranting Program](#), launched in 2007, aims to support vibrant, under-the-radar artistic activity by partnering with leading cultural institutions in communities across the country. The program allows the Warhol Foundation to reach the sizable population of informal, non-incorporated artist collectives and to support their alternative gathering spaces, publications, websites, events and other projects. In the thirteen years since it was established, the Foundation has made nearly \$10 million dollars in grants to its partners who have funded well over a thousand projects.

Re-granting programs currently are facilitated by arts organizations in sixteen cities: 516 Arts in Albuquerque; Baltimore Arts Realty Corporation in Baltimore; Gallery 400 and Three Walls in Chicago; DiverseWorks, Aurora Picture Show, and Project Row Houses in Houston; Charlotte Street Foundation and Spencer Museum in Kansas City; Locust Projects in Miami; Midway Contemporary Art in Minneapolis; Antenna and Ashe’ Cultural Fund in New Orleans; Portland Institute of Contemporary Art in Portland (OR); Spaces Gallery in Portland (ME), Southern Exposure in San Francisco, and Washington Project for the Arts in Washington, DC.

ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Locust Projects is an arts incubator producing and presenting exhibitions, programs and projects. Our mission is to CREATE opportunities for visual artists at all career stages; INVITE risk taking and experimentation; ACTIVATE conversations around new art and ideas; ADVOCATE for artists and creative practices.

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 and advocate for South 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. locustprojects.org | [@locustprojects](https://www.instagram.com/locustprojects)

Locust Projects 2019-2020 exhibitions and programming are made possible with support from: The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; The National Endowment for the Arts Art Works Grant; Hillsdale Fund; the Albert and Jane Nahmad Family Foundation; The State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; Kirk Foundation, Funding Arts Network, Miami Salon Group, the Wege Foundation and Locust Projects Exhibitionist members. Additional support from Talks program partners, Oolite Arts.

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