

A circular graphic featuring a city skyline at the bottom, with several white, curved, brushstroke-like lines arching over it. The background of the circle is a dramatic sky with dark blue clouds and bright light rays. The text "LIFE IS art" is centered in the upper half of the circle.

LIFE IS  
art

# Prosperity Through Creativity

*Promoting vibrant, engaged Miami-Dade communities through arts advocacy, education and collaboration*



Founded in January 2009, **Life Is Art, Inc.** is a South Florida based 501(c)3 not-for-profit dedicated to building a stronger society through cultural infrastructure. We have 3 primary areas of operation: **Education, Presentation, Facilitation.**

Our approach to consensus-building and community has allowed artists to hone their craft, learn the nuances of earning a living as an artist and **build bridges** between disparate communities which might not normally find common ground. To date, Life Is Art has organized over **one-hundred** events, exhibitions, lectures, networkers, fairs, festivals and other arts-oriented happenings, all in **collaboration** with other entities.



## EDUCATION Department

- \* **Conferences**
- \* **Seminars**
- \* **Workshops**
- \* **Salons**

Through entrepreneurial education, the goal of the **Art/Work** programs is to provide all people, artists and art lovers, with the knowledge and tools necessary to create robust art commerce. This is achieved through a variety of educational formats, including workshops, seminars, salons, roundtables, visitations and interactive experiences. The educational programming culminates in an annual **international art conference**.



## PRESENTATION Department

- \* **Festivals**
- \* **Fairs**
- \* **Exhibitions**
- \* **Performances**

The **River Of Art** exhibition programs are designed to engage the community by bringing people and art together. These programs are anchored by two major annual events, a community **music festival** and an **international art fair**, which are fed by monthly local shows across the county. An important economic engine for participants, event locations for the monthly shows are selected with the goal of dispersing opportunity throughout Miami-Dade to bridge the cultural accessibility gap and provide greater exposure for the arts while providing favorable circumstances for local artists and businesses to engage potential patrons.



## FACILITATION Department

- \* **Advocacy**
- \* **Collaboration**
- \* **Housing**
- \* **Development**

The **Culture Builds Communities** programs are designed with the goal of enhancing opportunities to leverage artistic work for the benefit of the community and the artists. These programs include working with other entities, municipalities, non-profits and businesses, to help them bring art to enhance their own projects. One of the largest projects in this department is the creation of **artistic centers** across the county, community cultural hubs with affordable living, creative and exhibition space for artists where residents and visitors can enjoy the arts and businesses can thrive.

**Contact: James Echols, [james@lifeisartfest.org](mailto:james@lifeisartfest.org), 305-494-5992**  
**[www.lifeisartfest.org](http://www.lifeisartfest.org)**



# IMPACT

LIFE IS  
**art**

*Hey, Just a note to say a job very well done. You hit it out of the park [at PhilanthroFest]. Congratulations on such a big success.*

**- Matt Haggman, Program Director, Miami, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**



*The organization is sincerely dedicated to advocating awareness and growth in our local art community.*

**- Susie Glass, VP Marketing Metro 1 Properties USGBC Miami-Dade & Keys Communications Chair**



*I have seen nothing but positive and inspirational things done by them for the good of Miami's emerging Artists. Through their programs they have been an integral part of my development as a growing visual artist.*

**Rei Ramirez**

*What James and Annette are trying to accomplish in the Miami Art Scene is - plain and simple - priceless. I hope to see them everywhere for many years to come.*

**Monique Lassooij, Artist**



*They open doors to the local art world, their dedication and creativity on how to support the art is unmatched! Thank you!*

**Rainer Lagemann, Artist**

*James and Annette from Life Is Art have incredible ideas and the energy, knowledge and organization to make them come true. They are helping artists to showcase their work, they are organizing meetings to educate the artists about their legal rights, teaching artists how to market themselves and the list continues.*

**Adela Holmes, Artist**



*I'm a former foundation program officer, so I can say with a good deal of grantmaking experience that James and the Life Is Art team are the model grantee for a program focused on social change— smart and dedicated; thoughtful and empathetic to community needs; and passionate about achieving a demonstrable impact with their work. With goals that are inherently difficult to measure—like achieving social change through art—the team at the center of a project becomes even more important.*

*This is a team to bet on.*

**Christopher Sopher, The New Tropic / Whereby.us**

*I can't say more about the quality of the events that the good folks at Life Is Art have been doing. They have definitely filled a void that previously (and for too many years) was empty.*

**Nathan Delinois, Artist/Illustrator**



*I have personally experienced how Life Is Art manifests its mission to build a "stronger community through cultural infrastructure." Whether its hosting art shows, networking events, festivals or seminars for artists, Life Is Art is as true to its mission statement as it is to its name. They live art and through them art lives in Miami.*

**Ralph Ventura, Attorney, Photographer, Chief Of Staff for The City Of Sweetwater Mayor's Office**





LIFE IS  
**art**

# Positive Outcomes of Engagement with Art



\* Image created by James Echols and © 2016 Life Is Art, Inc. Testimonials have been edited for brevity, full text available upon request.  
Information from National Endowment for the Arts report, "The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies"  
Arts Council England report, "The value of arts and culture to people and society - an evidence review" and Miami Dade County report, "Arts & Economic Prosperity IV"



# River Of Art

## Presentation Overview

The **River Of Art** programs serve to bring people together in strategic venues to foster appreciation for the arts while providing opportunities for local artists and businesses to engage potential patrons. An important economic engine for participants, the event locations are selected with the goal of dispersing opportunity throughout Miami-Dade—in much the same way the Miami River flows through the region.

### **Miami Featured International Art Fair** - *shining the light on south Florida arts*

- This event is designed to be the missing bridge of that chasm between the local emerging artists and the international arts scene.
- A major contemporary art fair that includes art from all over the world, but also provides opportunities for south Florida based artists to participate through scholarships.
- It also hosts the finalists from the River Of Art shows.

### **River Of Art Social Actualizers** - *bringing people and art together*

- Using artistic works as a back-drop, social networkers engage a broad set of business professionals, innovators, entrepreneurs, change-makers and civic organizers through pop-up exhibitions in locations around the County.
- These social exhibitions provide opportunities for local artists to display their works, introduce new people to local art appreciation and showcase community organizations and businesses.
- The shows are anchored by visual art, but may include music or performance, as well.

### **LifeFest** - *signature music and community festival*

- With artistic, community-engagement and educational programming, this major outdoor festival features all that is awesome in South Florida, everything conducive to a healthy, happy and prosperous culturally-rich environment.
- Anchored by headlining music acts, featuring the best of local music and highlighting talented emerging artists, this show is designed to blow up the live music scene in south Florida, while providing space for changemakers and community-builders to promote their missions.
- It also hosts the finals of the Soul Of [City] Shows.

### **Soul Of [City] Shows** - *community stories through music*

- Through music showcases, this program highlights local communities and uplifts artists by employing hometown experiences as cultural well-springs.
- The Soul Of [insert City name] Show is a series of competitive events across the County at which emerging music artists from the local areas submit original works that reference their life in their respective community.
- The local qualifying showcases culminate with a final major annual event to bridge the cultural accessibility gap between the communities and provide greater exposure for the artists.





LIFE IS  
art



## Education Overview

Through entrepreneurial education, the goal of the **Art/Work** programs is to provide all people with the knowledge and tools necessary to create robust art commerce. This is achieved through a variety of educational formats, including workshops, seminars, salons, roundtables, visitations and interactive experiences.

### **Art/Work Conference** - *major annual international arts conference*

- This large-scale event is designed to bring together all aspects of the art community from all over the world to learn, share and discuss best practices and trends in the art world.
- The conference is a weekend of educational breakout sessions, keynote speeches, plenaries and socials.
- Renowned international leaders and local experts are tapped to deliver presentations for three segments of the art community: Artists, Arts Administrators and Art Enthusiasts.
- The Conference is intended to not only educate attendees, but also advance Miami's reputation as a serious, thriving arts metro to both international and local observers.

### **Art/Work Connections** - *business knowledge for artists*

- These seminars create a support network for artists by bringing them together with experienced business leaders, arts professionals and educators who share their knowledge regarding the entrepreneurial aspects of art as a business.
- As emerging artists become knowledgeable in such topics as contract negotiation, copyright law, financial planning, marketing and art sales, Miami becomes known for its art/work infrastructure that supports a sustainable art ecosystem.
- Seminars are held at galleries and other art spaces to provide host-partners with exposure and allow gallerists and artists to connect.

### **Art/Work Collections** - *art appreciation for emerging collectors*

- The Collections series works in a social capacity to bring emerging art enthusiasts together with experienced collectors, curators and artists to educate and grow the local base of collectors.
- These sessions take a variety of formats, including visitations to experienced collectors' homes to gain insights into their collecting and social discussions at galleries to learn from established curators or artists about their backgrounds and motivations.

### **Art/Work Conversations** - *critical discussions about art*

- Conversations bring a much-needed critical approach to art and create a platform upon which deeper discussions of art and, specifically, local art can take place.
- Held as roundtables, panels or salons, each session has a specific topic.
- Topics can include a current exhibition, a specific artist, an individual piece of artwork, even a trend or a movement within the art community.
- One goal of each session is to create and publish a white paper regarding the topic.



LIFE IS  
art

## Facilitation, Infrastructure & Advocacy Overview

The **Culture Builds Communities** programs are designed around facilitation, infrastructure and advocacy. The goal of these programs is to enhance opportunities to leverage artistic work for the benefit of the community and the artists. Advocacy is directed at supporting the artists and assuring their best interests are served.

### **Imaginarium Artistic Hubs** - *building the foundation of the arts*

- Life Is Art works in tandem with municipalities and community leaders throughout Miami-Dade County to develop artistic compounds that focus around live/work spaces for artists supplemented by housing scholarships.
- These cultural hubs include cost-supported artist apartment/studios, a shared exhibition/performance space, and a communal garden/meditation space.
- Each compound is developed with the participation of the local municipal government, the residents and the artists in order align it with the heart of that neighborhood.
- Key to the success of this program is maintaining that the land used for the compounds is to remain in the public interest and not be sold for redevelopment, providing continuity and sustainability for generations to come.
- By providing artists with affordable spaces to live and create art, as well as providing residents with a dedicated area within their community to enjoy the arts, all sectors of the region benefit.
- A prime consideration for locations is the opportunity to be economic drivers, bringing in businesses to the surrounding area like restaurants, boutiques, lounges and other creative economy entrepreneurs.

### **Facilitation Projects** - *helping others help others to help themselves.*

- The keystone to this program is working with other entities to enhance the quality of their programs and projects through art while maintaining quality benefits for the artists.
- Primary partners are municipalities, other not-for-profit organizations and for-profit companies.
- These entities often wish to incorporate art into their projects, but do not have the knowledge or experience to do so with meaningful outcomes.
- Artists have creative vision and ability, but often lack the knowledge or experience to put their creative genius to work.
- Life Is Art bridges this gap by serving as facilitator managing communication, dialogue and resources.