



MEDIA ALERT

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Miami Dade College's Miami International Film Festival Commissions Local Artists to Create New Awards Statues

Miami sculptors Colleen Kelley & Nicholas Nehaniv design and build palm frond award for film festival winners; sculptor Robert McNight crafts CinemaSlam Award

Miami, FL—Miami International Film Festival, produced and presented by Miami Dade College, recently commissioned local artists and members of the Miami Bakehouse Art Complex -- resident artists Colleen Kelley, Nicholas Nehaniv and Robert McNight -- to design and create sculptures as new awards for MIFF's 2011 competition winners.

Kelley and Nehaniv collaborated to create a silver palm frond sculpture, presented on March 6 to 2011 Career Achievement Tribute honoree Susanne Bier, the Danish director of the Academy Award-winning drama *In a Better World*, as well as Festival's major competitions and Audience Award winners. Visual artist and sculptor Robert McNight created the Miami-centric "Señor Sol" plexiglass sculpture for the winners of the CinemaSlam Competition for student filmmakers.

"We wanted each winner to receive an award that was also a piece of art," said Jaie Laplante, executive director of the Miami International Film Festival. "The artists created unique sculptures that captured the spirit of our vibrant city."

Inspired by the natural beauty and tropical scenery in Miami, Kelley and Nehaniv created seven sculptures of the palm frond from stainless steel, each about 7 inches tall. The awards were presented in the following competition categories: Ibero-American, DOX and World, all sponsored by the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation; and Shorts, sponsored by the University of Miami. The Festival presented two Audience Awards—for Best Feature Film and Best Short Film—both sponsored by VeneMovies. Additionally, the Festival presented the sculpture to the festival's Career Achievement award recipient and 2011 Academy Award winning director Susanne Bier.

McNight crafted seven, 7-inch tile-mosaic-and-plexiglass sculptures, titled "Señor Sol," for the winners of the Festival's new CinemaSlam Competition, a celebration of short films made by Miami-area college students. .

A resident of Miami for more than 10 years, Kelley creates large-scale art sculptures made from metal, textiles and a variety of mixed media. Nehaniv works with metals,

ceramics, oil and acrylic paints, LEED lighting and other mixed-media objects. Both artists are members of Bakehouse Art Complex, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to attracting emerging and midcareer artists in South Florida to a workplace that provides affordable studios, exhibition galleries, and professional development opportunities.

McKnight has created various public works of art throughout Greater Miami: wood collage panels at Jackson Memorial Hospital's North Dade Health Center (for Miami-Dade County's Art in Public Places); mosaic murals at the Pinnacle Park Apartment Complex (through the City of Miami's Art Advisory Board); an environmental work with waterfall, lake, rainforest, and stream, incorporating bird sanctuary and swimming pool for pre-school children, at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in South Miami; a porcelain tile mosaic at the City of Miami's Little Haiti Cultural Center; and, another mosaic mural at the Miami-Dade County Public Library System branch in the Village of Palmetto Bay.

The 2011 Miami International Film Festival, which is produced and presented annually by Miami Dade College, was held March 4-13.

About Miami International Film Festival

The Miami International Film Festival (MIFF), celebrating its 28th edition March 4-13, 2011, is the premier Ibero-American film festival in the U.S. The annual event, which is produced and presented by Miami Dade College, attracts more than 70,000 film enthusiasts and 400 filmmakers, stars and industry professionals. During the past five years, the festival has screened films from 60 countries and hosted 300 East Coast, U.S. and world premieres. Through *Encuentros*, the festival's mentorship and film development program for filmmakers and projects from Spain, Portugal and Latin America, MIFF has become a primary gateway for the discovery of Ibero-American talent in the entertainment world. In addition, the festival's REEL Education Seminar Series consistently attracts top executives from Warner Bros., Sony Pictures Classics, IFC Films, Fox Searchlight, DreamWorks Animation, HBO Films/HBO Latino and William Morris Endeavor, among many others. For more information, visit www.miamifilmfestival.com or call 305-237-MIFF (3456).

About Miami Dade College

Miami Dade College has a long and rich history of involvement in the cultural arts, providing South Florida with a vast array of artistic and literary offerings: the Miami Book Fair International; the Florida Center for the Literary Arts; the *Cultura del Lobo* performance series; The Cuban Cinema Series; nine visual arts galleries, including The Freedom Tower at Miami Dade College and the School of Entertainment and Design Technology; in addition to the renowned Miami International Film Festival. MDC is the largest institution of higher education in the country and is nationally recognized for many of its academic and cultural programs. With an enrollment of more than 170,000 students, MDC is the nation's top producer of degrees. The college's eight campuses and outreach centers offer nearly 300 distinct degree programs, including several baccalaureate degrees.

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