Latino/a artist educators (LAES) and their role in creating and sustaining alternative democratic spaces in Miami

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LATINO/A ARTIST EDUCATORS (LAEs) AND THEIR ROLE IN CREATING AND SUSTAINING ALTERNATIVE DEMOCRATIC SPACES IN MIAMI

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

College of Arts & Sciences
Department of Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies
Department of Spanish

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DEDICATION

For Alessandra Teresita Marisol Boissiere, who started this journey with me while in utero, and spent the first 6 1/2 years of her life at the University at Albany with me...for the entirety of her life, I have been on this path! May she have the same determination and passion to pursue what makes her feel joy and experience wonder...

For Solange Jyoti Isabel Boissiere, born in Albany just one year into the PhD program, who has weathered the storms and emerged resilient! May she see her future as limitless and bright...

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And for baby #6, Imani Ileana Rose...who has reaffirmed for me that new beginnings and new chances for love and beauty and righteousness are always right around the corner, and that the relentless pursuit of justice—in all its forms—is a lifelong and worthy endeavor!

Los quiero y adoro mas que todo el mundo. Que nunca se olviden que preciosos son.

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings.” — Hodding Carter

“Remember that your children are not your own, but are lent to you by the Creator.” — Cherokee wisdom
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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study utilizes a qualitative, ethnographic approach to locate and contextualize Latino/a Artist Educators (LAEs) in Miami, Florida. Foundational and cutting-edge, it brings together many distinct perspectives to illuminate the power and promise of a newly imagined yet group of individuals to build and sustain alternative democratic spaces. Building on critical educators Paolo Freire, bell hooks, Henry Giroux and Howard Zinn, as well as extending the framework of critical theorists Gloria Anzaldúa, Cornel West and others, this research begins to sketch the influence of the LAEs interviewed in Miami from 2003-2013. As a sociocultural ethnographic study positioned at the crossroads of many fields, this research is hopefully the first step toward understanding the central value of LAEs’ work in Miami.

Through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, field notes, and archival data, the perspective of 52 individuals who self-identify as “Latino/a,” “artist,” and “educator,” are brought into view for analysis and discussion. Open-ended interview questions included queries ranging from motivation and inspiration, to identity, to perceptions of the Latino/a artist (LAE) community, to opinions on schooling and educational processes, to mentoring and how they sustain themselves. Sample questions included: “How does your ethnicity, background and culture shape or impact your art/work/teaching?” and “What can the art world learn from the ‘culture of education’ and vice-versa?”

The demographic breakdown of the 52 individuals participating in the research study included 30% Cuban, 26% Puerto Rican—with the real story in the remaining 44% representing a panoply of many Latino nations. LAEs averaged 36 years old at the time of interviews, with males outnumbering females, 56% to 44%. The average LAE has lived in Miami for 20 years. Although the preponderance of LAEs are performing artists (rather than visual artists), nearly
40% claim to be “multidisciplinary” or “interdisciplinary” and practice multiple artistic pursuits. Paradoxically, what LAEs have most in common is their diversity and divergence.

However, not all analysis yielded a divergence of results. LAEs resonated with synchronicity and strength around the expression of four themes—necessity, urgency, fluidity and agency. All stated explicitly that their creative endeavors were an inextricable part of their identity, providing expression, connection, mental challenge, and healing. None of the LAEs interviewed saw their art (and to a lesser degree, their teaching) as “optional.” This necessity, this insatiable, non-negotiable need to create and educate was accompanied by a palpable sense of urgency. Each LAE expressed with enthusiasm and intensity their works-in-progress and the realization that the situation with our youth is both pivotal and critical. Perhaps the most exemplary quality of LAEs in Miami is their astounding flexibility or fluidity, the ability to shape-shift, integrating and capitalizing on the specific milieu as it changes over time and space. Finally, these three combined—necessity, urgency, and fluidity—result in a powerful sense of agency; LAEs believe that their creative and educational investments are powerful influences in affecting the health and vitality of our youth, our schools, our communities and our society.

Many additional findings illuminate the range of LAEs teaching styles, motivational sources, philosophical and political views, and their characterization and critique of the LAE communities where they live, work, and create. These findings could be applied in countless ways to continue this trajectory of research and discovery—better supporting and understanding LAEs, clarifying the conflicted yet active role of resistance that artists play in the gentrification process, and even understanding how schools and our society need to evolve in order to support, nurture and protect democracy at its core—creating spaces for diverse views, dissent, dialogue, debate and maintaining the deepest respect in the process.
Future research should include more detailed analysis of collective and individual efforts of the activities of artist/educators involving gender implications, other ethnicities, and the importance of place by including other big cities. Additionally, other variables might be considered more thoughtfully: the central role of music in the creative process, as well as the impact of audience members, venue owners and emcees/hosts in co-creating alternative democratic spaces.

LAEs’ creative and educational work has impacts beyond our scope of measurement; to this day, numerous LAEs continue to create the fabric of the artistic, edgy, latino/a/caribeno/a, bohemian aesthetic—the “image”—that is so alluring internationally, and forms the basis for tourism and wealth in Miami, and the prerequisite for imagining the development of Wynwood. Undoubtedly a global city, the “Gateway to Latin America” is a unique, complex metropolis. LAEs could serve as a prototype for learning from Artist-Educators’ endeavors in other cities; in fact, they may be just one reflection of an already occurring international phenomena.

Given this enormous influence, LAEs seem to be unaware of their immense potential; are they harnessing, leveraging, and directing their influence for the greatest good, both for themselves and the 60% of Miami households surviving on less than a living income? LAEs are positioned to leave a lasting mark on their Miami communities, to re-calibrate the cultural values that guide our social experiment. Rooted in the rituals of pre-rational creative spaces, LAEs could inspire and co-create future development patterns that strengthen our schools, communities, and our democracy, prioritizing humanity, human rights, and social justice over corporate control, greed and widespread inequality.

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1 Miami-Dade County Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, 2015.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This exploratory study of Latino/a Artist Educators represents a confluence of my personal, professional, artistic and academic interests, and ideally, will open up new possibilities in theory, practice, and policy for critical education, area studies, women’s studies, and cultural studies. Concretely, the researcher seeks to uncover the sociopolitical and cultural beliefs and theories-in-practice of a group of “catalysts”—specifically, Latino/a Artist-Educators (LAEs)—and the salient themes and categories of meaning that inform and sustain their decision to work in two cultural worlds. Because LAEs have not been the subject of much study, this initial investigation will build a thorough understanding of the complex circumstances surrounding their entry and continued work in the arts and education. The individuals who are the focus of this research define themselves as “artists”, “educators”, and of “Latino/a” heritage. All criteria were intentionally left open for self-definition for those LAEs who agreed to participate. Artists include primarily performing artists (dance, theatre, music, performance poets), and to a lesser extent, visual artists. Many consider themselves multidisciplinary artists, practicing multiple forms of creative expression, or blurring boundaries to create hybrid forms. Educators include full-time teachers and administrators, non-profit educators, paraprofessional educators, and community educators.
The researcher seeks to explore what unites the preponderance of LAEs living in the South Florida area. Seen through the lens of 49 individuals\(^2\) who self-identify as “Latino/a,” “artists,” and “educators” we will investigate the contours of what it means to be creating and teaching in this arena. Utilizing the ethnographic approaches of participant observation and extended interviews, it is possible this initial conceptualization may present a complex and possibly, contradictory picture of LAEs. Through extended conversations, semi-structured interviews, and in-depth immersion in the community, the overall research goal is to identify similar practices as well as a set of critical questions and key variables for future inquiry. In the process, we should emerge with a deeper understanding of the social-political-artistic dimensions that permeate the South Florida artist community. It is expected that we will uncover some common characteristics that define, motivate, and sustain the work of these LAEs, both in their artistic and educational pursuits\(^3\). Finally, I will compare their collective profile (goals, objectives, motivation, purpose, philosophies) against the backdrop of the current research concerning progressive educators and civic-minded artists.\(^4\)

\(^2\) While participants are multiethnic “Latino/a,” other artist-educators informed the study with commentary from the multiculturally vibrant artist-educator community. These black, white, Asian, and multiracial allies are involved in many experiences with Latino/a Artist Educators and share much of the ideology and philosophy, and cross paths on a fairly regular basis in varied artistic and community endeavors. The term “Latino/a” denotes anyone from the New World, and includes all of the Caribbean, Central, and South America without regard to mother tongue.

\(^3\) At the same time, I expect a certain amount of variance and “messiness” in their individuality and distinction, as is reflective of their uniqueness—where they fall among the three indicators of “artist,” “educator,” and “Latino/a”—not to mention the different trajectories each may have taken vis-à-vis their careers in education, the arts, and levels of acculturation and time spent in Miami/U.S.

\(^4\) This and other key terminology is defined in the subsequent section—*Why We Teach* (Nieto, 2005) and *What Keeps Teachers Going* (Nieto, 2003) provide critical insights into teacher motivation and continual improvement in the face of mounting challenges, rampant disrespect, relative low pay, occasional violence, and the ongoing de-professionalization of education.
The main objectives of this research are:

- To create a baseline profile of LAEs, highlighting their range and diversity, and noting emerging patterns through their demographics;
- To closely examine the phenomena of hybrid identities, as it applies to LAEs living in multicultural and multiethnic Miami;
- To explore the reciprocal benefits (and possible costs) of being artists AND educators;
- To create a preliminary sociocultural sketch of the evolving Latino/a Artist community in Miami, with a particular emphasis on how the dynamic process of negotiating “latinidad” affects this community, it’s efficacy, and LAEs’ sense of social responsibility; and,
- To investigate the role LAEs may play in making schools and communities more democratic spaces, acting as a catalyst and sparking social justice.

With this study, I am bringing together a significant sampling of LAEs in Miami and allowing their individual perspectives to create a composite understanding and an awareness of similarities and divergences in their attitudes, motivation, histories, and philosophical approach to their work. Borrowing the concept of “borderlands” from Gloria Anzaldúa’s groundbreaking work (1987), the LAEs who comprise our sample represent the uniqueness of a patchwork, hybrid, non-monolithic identity known as the “Latino experience”; in addition, daily they straddle and blend the boundaries between the worlds of art and education. Ultimately, these LAEs could be instrumental in the struggle to build the democratic fabric\(^5\) of both schools and communities, resulting in substantive and long-lasting educational reform, and heralding a return to more participatory, interactive, and socially just communities.

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\(^5\) What does the democratic fabric consist of and how is it recognizable? Borrowing from Henry Giroux, Paolo Freire, and others, we will describe this in greater depth in Chapter 2 with the Literature Review.
Statement of the Problem

It is both exciting and somewhat intimidating to be a pioneer. This research is the pioneering kind, exploring new territory at the crossroads of several strands of knowledge and theory, spanning multiple disciplines—critical theory, critical/radical education, multicultural/urban education, sociology of art, anthropology of art, political science, philosophy, women’s studies, and Latino/a Studies. The notion of LAEs has not been conceptualized or even “imagined” as a category of individuals whose merit and contributions warrant investigation. While it may be true that few, if any, research studies focused on the lives of the artist-educators, we benefit from the presence and practice of Latino/a Artist Educators (whether or not they labeled themselves as such!). This presence is undeniable—their participation is documented in the archives of many non-profit organizations. The literary arts—poetry and creative writing principally—have led the way in fusing arts and education. Notable examples include Poets and Writers (http://www.pw.org/content/special_projects) and LouderARTS (http://louderarts.com/), both non-profit organizations whose mission includes bringing poetry into schools, hospitals, prisons, and shelters.

Poetry Outloud, now in its 10th year, provides important teaching resources for those wishing to integrate poetic intelligence in the standards-driven curriculum. NEA Chairman Jane Chu argues:

6 One blog details Puerto Rican poet Bobby Gonzalez’ series of poetry workshops at the Betances Community center, available here http://www.pw.org/content/bobby_gonzalez_poetry_as_community_collaboration
For a decade, Poetry Out Loud has proven to be transformative for nearly three million high school students, and tens of thousands of teachers in high schools across the nation. Programs like this are so important, and not just because it introduces the beauty of poetry to young people. NEA research shows that arts education is linked to many positive, long-term academic benefits, social benefits, and workforce benefits. Programs like Poetry Out Loud give our nation’s youth access to arts education opportunities that will help them learn and succeed in life.” (http://www.poetryoutloud.org/competition/national-finals)

We know that the arts—not just poetry—are vital for engaging our youth. One of the most compelling and dynamic examples of the fruitful symbiosis of art and education features the life work of Magdalena Gómez—Teatro Vida, “The Other TV”! As the most established and decorated LAE in our study, Magdalena demonstrates that spoken word and theater can be powerful vehicles for leadership development, mentoring, and building confidence through for Springfield, Massachusetts teens. Similarly, Teatro Campesino, and schools like Juilliard and El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice have demonstrated the power of the arts for engaging and empowering students and communities.

The value or importance of this study is related generally to the overall teacher shortage, but is also significant in terms of educational policy and practice, given:

- Latina/o teachers are vastly underrepresented demographically while the Latina/o student population continues to climb in urban and suburban areas in the U.S. (Macedo and Bartolomé, 2001).7

7 In Miami specifically, as of 2007, 62% of students are “Hispanic” according to the Miami Dade County Public Schools of 2004. In the state of Florida, 22% of all students are “Hispanic” as of 2010, according to the Florida Legislature, Office of Economic and Demographic Research at http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/atlas/population/PopAtlas2012/Page_6_Racial_and_Ethnic_Distribution.pdf. In contrast, Hispanic teachers make up only 9.3% of all teachers, according to a Schools and Staffing Survey by the IES, International Center for Education Statistics.
Many Latino/a, Spanish-speaking students experience difficulties in school, and for a multitude of reasons, we are told, achieve at levels notably below their white, English-speaking counterparts.\(^8\)

Across all ethnicities, but especially marked among Hispanic\(^9\) students, levels of motivation and interest in school are lagging\(^10\), as evidenced by dropout rates, percentages of young adults seeking alternative high school diplomas (GED), and persistence at the level of higher education.\(^11\) Although the quality of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools has improved markedly with Superintendent Carvalho’s leadership in the past few years, in 2013-2014, graduation rates still reflected racial disparities with Hispanics (75%) and Blacks (65%) lagging behind Whites (82 %). See [http://oada.dadeschools.net/SchoolPerformanceData/SchoolPerformanceData.asp](http://oada.dadeschools.net/SchoolPerformanceData/SchoolPerformanceData.asp)

The infamous “achievement-gap” of Latinos/as at higher levels of education—while troubling—is but a small slice of the conundrum facing all educators and policy-makers, who find it difficult if not impossible to educate all our students to high levels of accountability.

The outdated and ineffective mode of socializing and training teachers reveals itself to be incongruous with the current needs of all our students, schools and communities, and the corresponding need to find and develop a new breed of teachers.\(^12\)

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\(^9\) The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino/a” will be used interchangeably in looking at demographic data and the literature review.

\(^10\) Neil Postman’s *End of Education* explores this challenge and offers several solutions for revitalizing education by reframing the purpose of education.

\(^11\) The Pew Hispanic Center reports that as few as 1/10 Hispanic dropouts seek a GED diploma, as compared to 2/10 Blacks and 3/10 Whites. [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org),

\(^12\) See Henry Giroux’s *Teachers as Intellectuals* (1988), for one take on this argument.
The retention and ongoing development of teachers is another challenge to which this study could respond, especially to questions of teacher satisfaction and teacher efficacy.\(^\text{13}\)

In summary, more studies are needed which examine the specific experiences of Latino students and teachers\(^\text{14}\) so that we may find clues to creating successful teaching and learning environments, and in the process, clarify and strengthen the approaches, attitudes and beliefs that are consistent with building more engaging, progressive, responsive spaces for learning and community exchange.\(^\text{15}\)

**Background**

The historical, sociopolitical, and geographical context of Miami is significant in understanding the shifting dynamics of this multi-ethnic, heavily Latino metropolis and the LAEs who inhabit the city and are the focus of this research. Overall, 65% of Miami-Dade County residents consider themselves “of Hispanic descent” (2010 U.S. Census, [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)), and as any visitor can attest, the character of the city is strongly affected by the Latino/a presence. Relative to the state of Florida, 51% of Miami-Dade citizens are “foreign-born” (as compared 19%), and 72% of persons over the age of 5 speak a language other than English at home (ibid). It would be a mistake, however, to

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\(^\text{13}\) Sonia Nieto’s *Why We Teach* (2005) and *What Keeps Teachers Going* (2003) attempt to document how teachers sustain their dedication and passion despite a multiplicity of obstacles and discouraging practices.

\(^\text{14}\) De Jesús and Vásquez (2005) suggest that “research that documents the ground level experiences of students and educators” would complement their analysis of the macro-level trends of Latinos in New York State and the educational pipeline from preschool to university. This study is such an endeavor.

\(^\text{15}\) Essential questions of the purpose(s) of education and the distinction between “education” and “schooling” are necessarily part of this discussion and will be explored in the full Literature Review Section. Similarly, the democratic imperative of artists and educators will be explored; two informative texts include F. Burnham and S. Durland (eds) *The Citizen Artist: 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena* (1998) and Polisi, J. and *The Artist as Citizen* (2004).
resort to an overly simplistic characterization of Miami as a “little Cuba,” as the demographic composition has become much more multifarious in the recent past, attracting large numbers of Colombianos, Argentinos, Nicaragüense, Dominicanos, Puertorriqueños, Hondureños, Peruanos, and other ethnicities. In the past decade, a marked influx of Venezolanos has added to the Latino flavor, corresponding to the political and ideological shifts occurring with Hugo Chávez’s rise to prominence. His recent re-election has spurred many real estate brokers to believe successive waves of Venezuelans will bring additional investments and resettlement in South Florida (The Miami Herald, 10.10.12). This migration mirrors that of Cuba and other Latin American countries, with the earliest waves bringing primarily educated and affluent transplants to South Florida.

Alongside this undeniable Latino presence—which asserts itself in the omnipresence of Spanish, a flurry of weekend festivals celebrating every ethnicity and almost as many Spanish/Spanglish music radio stations as English—coexists a strong Caribbean island presence that brings Haitians, Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Bahamians, and Bajans (Barbadians) into many neighborhoods in Miami. Dubbed the “gateway to Latin America,” Miami also has a history of being a lawless city, a city where anything goes and anyone can escape to for rejuvenation, to hide out (think Miami Vice in the 80s) or

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16 In one particularly extreme case, an urban Catholic school where the researcher worked for several years, students’ families represented 31 ethnicities, with a total population of 85% Latino, and the remainder Afro-Caribbean. This school is also exemplary of Miami’s transient character, with an average family income of $10,000 per year, illustrating how many recent immigrants and those with limited education and/or job skills continue to populate the city.

17 Coconut Grove, one of the earliest outposts to predate “Miami,” was founded by Bahamian fisherman in the early 1800s, and remains today an enclave or ghetto, albeit under the pressures of gentrification, depending on your perspective.
reinvent themselves. The allure of Miami as “the Magic City” is permeated with pulsing rhythms, all kinds of music\textsuperscript{18}, and a sense of progress and possibility. The traditional racial constructs of pick one: “White,” “Black,” “Asian,” or “Hispanic/Latino/a,” are too rigid to be relevant and fail to capture the complexity of identity in the context of multiethnic, multiracial, and multilingual Miami. As one LAE summed up, “…in this Euro-Afro-Caribbean- Cuban-Colombian Miami…we have the cultural mosaic that no other [place] can live up to—it is the best, most enjoyable, most entertaining genetic orgy on the planet…everybody pissing in the gene pool, and all our kids are mixed up looking great …better and better with each successive generation” (Rio, June 26, 2008). Consequently, we will explore both the opportunities and obstacles for new forms of self-identification and finding solidarity across traditional lines of race and ethnicity, and what role LAEs may play in this process.

Multimillion dollar homes appear to be everywhere for wealthy Argentinians, Colombians, and Cubans, who populate Coral Gables (“The City Beautiful”), the ostentatious Brickell high-rises and Trump-financed glittering towers of Sunny Isles and Miami Beach. Simultaneously, a survey of the neighborhoods of Wynwood and Sweetwater, Morningside, Midtown, Overtown, Little Havana.\textsuperscript{19} Allapattah, El Portal,

\textsuperscript{18} The Ultra Music Festivals and Winter Music Conference, held in February, have increased in size and popularity in the past few years, bringing music lovers from as far as California, and international visitors from Canada and Europe.

\textsuperscript{19} Little Havana has extended and evolved into “Little Nicaragua,” according to Dr. Paul George, local Miami Dade College professor and expert on Miami’s history and culture. Dr. George regularly engages groups in public and community education, through tours and special events hosted through the South Florida. Historical Museum (SFHM). For more, please visit the SFHM at http://www.hmsf.org/.
Little Haiti, Buena Vista, Westchester, South Miami, and West Kendall testify that the Latino population runs the gamut from uber-affluent to middle and working class, to extreme poverty as seen in overcrowded and dilapidated neighborhoods. In fact, Miami was designated as the “poorest big city in America” in 2002 and 2003, and five years later, remained in the top ten, with the official poverty rate pegged at 25.5%, down from 32% (Villano, 2003). As the recession hit in 2009, Miami was ranked as the sixth poorest large city (with a 26.5%) poverty rate; 2010 Census Data reveals a jump to third poorest large city in the United States, with 32.4% of the metro area at or below the poverty level (Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, 9/22/2011). More recent data from 2014, shows the Miami-Ft.Lauderdale-Palm Beach metro area coming in as the second poorest big city in America, with a median household income of less than $47,000 (Perera, J.-H.). Ironically, in 2011, Miami was ranked as the world’s fourth-richest city in terms of purchasing power, dropping to the seventh-richest city globally, according to a UBS study of 73 world cities. (http://www.citymayors.com/economics/usb-purchasing-power.html).

Unraveling and explaining these seemingly contradictory indicators will occur as we explore in-depth how Miami is growing and “being imagined” as we move through the first decade in the 21st century. Artists and educators typically confront these opposing currents—whether teaching in the shadows of condominiums under (halted) construction, as they pass homeless panhandlers—or witnessing the ongoing renovation of Biscayne Boulevard, “ground zero” for development and gentrification, as
it connects the downtown/Brickell financial centers\textsuperscript{20} winding through Edgewater, Overtown, Wynwood, Midtown, Little Haiti, Morningside and the Upper Eastside. Their perspective and activism will be particularly telling in discussing these recent developments. Due to its size and population—it is the fourth-largest urban area in the US and with 5.5 million people, the seventh most populous metropolitan area—greater Miami holds particular relevance (\url{www.census.gov}). Whether citizens—emboldened, encouraged and empowered by LAEs and other catalysts—will take an active role in determining Miami’s future fate, remains to be seen. At best, it could be a model for other cities attempting to climb out of this economic recession and re-establish the parameters of equality and democracy; furthermore, as the “Capital of Latin America,” there is much at stake as the U.S. Latino population continues to swell across the country.

Traditional notions of gender (specifically prescribed roles for men and women)—often one of the pillars of Latino/Hispanic culture—fight for continued dominance against a surge of modernity in Miami. Cultural views that limit or constrain possibilities for women are turned upside down when many Latinas successfully find work in Miami before their husbands/boyfriends, challenging the patriarchal and “machista” systems. Cultural norms are constantly being challenged and re-evaluated, as multiracial, multicultural neighbors and friends share the rhythm of life in Miami.

\textsuperscript{20} South Florida is home to the largest concentration of international banks in the United States (\url{https://www.nestseekers.com/Guides/Neighborhood/Brickell}).
So it is a city of contrasts: cement inner city desolation looks to the sky to see flocks of wild green parrots loudly parodying the city noise below, and notorious traffic bumps up against warm ocean breezes. The sky and sea have motivated artists from Gaugin to Cezanne, whose Gulf de Marseilles by the same name pays homage to the unique mix of light and brilliance found only in coastal cities. Miami is also a city at the crossroads, and the importance of being a cultural crossroads cannot be overlooked, historically spawning some of the most fertile creative leaps in human development—think Persia, China, Egypt, India and Rome, epicenters of commerce, technology, and the arts. Like the LAEs who inhabit this complex city, Miami bears a capricious nature, yet our participants, like their city, have learned to accept and integrate their many contradictions. The city's dubious distinction of having the most number of models per square mile (perhaps a rough indicator of commercialism, media infiltration, and an obsession with beauty and luxury) is tempered by a healthy and thriving grassroots social justice community made up of artists, educators, community organizers, and ordinary citizens. Miami’s Occupy Movement in September-October-November 2011 was supported by local artists and educators in a myriad of ways, and their presence is certainly central to the ongoing dialogue raised by the “99 percent.”

It is this writer’s contention that this environment—complex, contradictory, and captivating—is fertile ground for the creative activities that engage LAEs. Contrasts, cultural crossroads, and proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America combine to create an intoxicating mix that lures all types of artists and creative personalities as an enviable backdrop to inspire and display the fruits of their work. At one end of the
spectrum is household name Brazilian-born Romero Brito, whose sculptures and pop art iconography have world-wide appeal; unknowingly, my 14-year old Caucasian niece demonstrated this recently by sporting a T-shirt with one of his designs. This level of international recognition is juxtaposed with the humility and struggle of countless local artists who inhabit the affordable studios at the Bakehouse Art Complex and surrounding Wynwood Arts District warehouses, sprouting like “flowers from concrete.”

The economic, as well as cultural influence, of the presence of artists is well-documented and cannot be understated. Just as gentrification in the East Village/Alphabet City/Tribeca areas functioned to bridge a dangerous neighborhood’s evolution into a respectable, “edgy” hip place for young professionals, the same can be said of Wynwood, bordering Overtown and Allapattah, once two of the highest crime neighborhoods in Miami, now the center of Art Basel and one of the most visited and photographed areas in the city.22

Research Objectives

Through the life experience of over 49 LAEs (and 3 informants), we will reconstruct the social-political-artistic dimensions that permeate the city and the artist community. After outlining common patterns and noting interesting observations, the investigator will

21 Miami has long been a “location” for television and film producers, but in the past decade, has developed a serious reputation for the fine arts, sculpture, and photography—all the plastic arts—underwritten and inspired by explosive growth of Art Basel, a hugely profitable undertaking, drawing bringing together thousands of diverse artists and aficionados.

22 A detailed analysis of the dynamics of gentrification is beyond the scope of this project. However, many urban planning scholars have demonstrated that poor, usually people of color, are steadily bought out and pushed out of these evolving neighborhoods. In the past four years, from 2008-2012, there has been a noticeable evolution in many neighborhoods. We will sketch these changes in the body of this research, and discuss briefly the role that LAEs may have played.
suggest areas for further study. Finally, once we have uncovered what motivates and sustains LAEs, their composite profile (goals, objectives, motivation, purpose, philosophies) will be compared against the contemporary knowledge regarding what inspires and motivates progressive educators.\textsuperscript{23}

\textit{The main objectives of this research are:}

1) To create a baseline profile of LAEs, highlighting their range and diversity, and noting emerging patterns through their demographics;

2) To closely examine the phenomena of hybrid identities, as it applies to LAEs living in multicultural and multiethnic Miami;

3) To explore the reciprocal benefits (and possible costs) of being artists AND educators;

4) To create a preliminary sociocultural sketch of the evolving Latino/a Artist community in Miami, with a particular emphasis on how the dynamic process of negotiating “latinidad” affects this community, it's efficacy, and LAEs’ sense of social responsibility; and,

5) To investigate the role LAEs may play in making schools and communities more democratic spaces, acting as a catalyst and sparking social justice.

6) To probe the notion of hybrid identities, as it applies to Latinos/as living in multicultural and multiethnic Miami;

\textit{These essential research questions, expressed thematically below, will guide our inquiry:}

- What drives and sustains the work of LAEs?

\textsuperscript{23} This and other key terminology is defined in the subsequent section—\textit{Why We Teach} (Nieto, 2005) and \textit{What Keeps Teachers Going} (Nieto, 2003) provide critical insights into teacher motivation and continual improvement in the face of mounting challenges, rampant disrespect, relative low pay, occasional violence, and the ongoing de-professionalization of education.
• How do the multiple and complex identities of LAEs strengthen their impact as both artists and educators?

• How does the interplay of national/ethnic identity and pan-ethnic Latino consciousness affect the work of these LAEs? Similarly, how do the labels, “urban” and “artist” and “teacher/educator” with all their connotations rub up against each other and how are they integrated and reconciled?

• In what ways does an artistic perspective and training enhance teaching and vice-versa, how does being an educator enrich and lend meaning to artistic pursuits?

• How does the work of LAEs create spaces for social justice and greater equality in schools and the public sphere?

• What potential and possibility exists for a unified Latino/a artist community in Miami, and what interferes with its realization?

**Terminology**

**ARTIST:**

To be included in the study, individuals had to self-identify as artists. They all see art—the creation and pursuit of their unique art forms—as central to their identity and purpose. All of them have performed or exhibited their work in Miami, and some find their art provides a measure of financial stability. The clear majority of artists are young, ranging in age from 20-50, with the mean around 35 years. Most of those to be interviewed are performing artists, with the preponderance being poets and actors. It is also interesting to note that close to one quarter pursue multiple artistic endeavors. See Appendix A for more detail and artist demographic tables.
(AUTHENTIC) DEMOCRACY:
Cornel West imagines this definition most vividly for me, with his explanation in *Democracy Matters: Winning the War Against Imperialism*, “The first grand democratic experiment in Athens was driven by a movement of *demos*—citizen-peasants—organizing to make the Greek oligarchs abusing their power accountable. Democracy is always a *movement* of an energized public to make elites responsible—it is at its core and most basic foundation *the taking back* of one’s powers in the face of the misuse of elite power. In this sense, democracy is more a verb than a noun—it is more a *dynamic striving and collective movement* (emphasis mine) than a static order of stationary status quo. Democracy is not just a system of governance, as we tend to think of it, but a cultural way of being. This is where the voices of our great democratic truth tellers come in” (2004, 68). The Occupy Movements around the country, along with the increase in frequency and size of protests in both Europe (especially in Spain and Greece in opposition to austerity measures and government cutbacks) and in the Middle East and Arab countries of North, are all examples of citizens taking back their rights and agitating for accountable leadership.

EDUCATOR:
Again, the specific meaning of this term is variable based on individual definition. In comparison, however, this category contains more divergence than the artist category. All the artists who participated in this study have some experience “teaching”: at one end of spectrum are those who use their art to “teach” through artist talks or sharing poetry and performing their lessons on stage. Another level of educator engagement
includes those that are involved in community education circles, hosting or facilitating viewings of documentaries, or leading contemporary political discussions for youth and adults. Approximately 15-20% of the total sample could be considered “casual educators” (though it must be said this is not in commitment, intensity, or at these two levels, but more in terms of frequency or representation in traditional teaching structures). The majority of interviewees teach on a regular basis, either through regular school programs, afterschool programs, summer intensive workshops, or in-school collaborations. Some LAEs vary in their relative time commitments to teaching, some years teaching full-time, and others working only sporadically teaching workshops. See Appendix B for more demographic data on the types of educators included in the sample.

LATINO/A:

The participants all agreed that they identify as “Latino/Latina.” It is important to note that this does not mean that “Latino/a” was their primary “label of choice” or their only self-designed category. Many identify as “immigrant” or “queer” or “woman” before or alongside Latino/a. The notion of Latino/a is rooted in a sense of common history, common language, and common cultural values, generated from being neighbors sharing this hemisphere. Most identified along ethnic lines first (indicative of how they see themselves), but when asked if they consider themselves “Latina/o”, had no problem putting that label on (much like buttons on a backpack). This expression reveals that they feel they “belong” in this category and/or would consider this group to

This is a target projection, since interviewees are still being recruited—actual data forthcoming.
be populated with allies and confidantes. The concept of Latino/a identity will be examined in depth in the Literature Review Section.

**PROGRESSIVE EDUCATOR:** This definition is a composite of ideas borrowed from hooks (1993, 1994, 2006), Freire (1992, 1998, 2007), Kozol (2006), Nieto (1999, 2003, 2005), and the researcher’s own experience, and consists of at least four identifiable dimensions, to be explicated in the Literature Review Section:

a. They are dynamic and responsive to the constantly changing realities of their classrooms or learning environments;

b. They bring a sense of possibility, passion, commitment, caring, and creativity to their teaching and are not constrained or disheartened by the challenges of urban teaching;

c. They create a democratic learning community that is inclusive and engages all students, creating a student-centered classroom (the opposite of the banking model) that builds on the strengths that students/families/cultures possess—essentially a model of learning known as “strengths-based,” “asset-based” or an “empowerment” approach;

d. They recognize that they are constant learners alongside their students and are on a quest for self-actualization in their personal lives; through constructively critiquing their own educational, economic, and cultural histories and experiences

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25 Chapter 4 of Paolo Freire’s *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to those Who Dare to Teach* (1998) outlines nine “indispensable qualities of progressive teachers for their better performance: humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, security, patience/impatience, verbal parsimony, the joy of living (39-53).
they develop meta-cognitive awareness, and thus are better able to understand
and adapt their teaching approaches.

Hypotheses

Utilizing a composite approach with regard to theory and methods has resulted in some
initial hypotheses. First, based on the review of pertinent literature and the construction
of a theoretical framework, and secondarily, through active engagement as both
participant and researcher in the community. With a grounded theory approach, it is
possible that additional hypotheses will be added as the research unfolds.

It is my contention that LAEs occupy a unique niche in the political economy of South
Florida, as well as in their sociopolitical and cultural impact, warranting further
examination. This researcher believes that this experience—a sort of professional
transmigration experience—results in a unique philosophical and methodological
approach that is creative, critical, reflective and reflexive. Furthermore, the researcher
hypothesizes that:

➢ LAEs are motivated by emotional, political, and spiritual goals that find their
expression in a movement toward greater social justice both in the classroom
and beyond.

➢ LAEs are uniquely positioned, by virtue of their flexible, multiple identities and
their dual professional perspectives, to positively influence both education and
society in ways that enhance and strengthen the democratic fabric of schools
and society.
➢ As “human bridges of understanding and communication,” LAEs are cross-pollinating the fields of education and the arts to bring numerous benefits to both spaces, blurring the lines between education, the arts, community, and activism. Probing, exploring and perhaps mapping the ways in which this blending, mixing, and cultural transfer occurs, is a primary objective of the research.

➢ The Latino/a artist community in Miami is in transition, made up of many (imagined) factions; moreover, there is a significant difference between the nature of the Latino/a artist community and the subset of this community which we are studying, the LAE community.

In seeking to answer the question, “What is it about their realities that positions LAEs to be agents for social change, co-creators of innovative, alternative democratic spaces?

Latino identity, in its many incarnations (never singular or monolithic) is comprised of different perceptions, and is at once variable and similar. The 20 national groups present in the United States who the U.S. Census labels Hispanic/Latino straddle multiple political and cultural locations—the borders of immigrant status/legality, homeland, language, race/ethnicity and citizenship. It is precisely their interstitial position that encourages the “bridging” of cultures, forging coalitions to create real—although sometimes fleeting—intra-group coalitions with other Latinos/as26 and Blacks.

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26 Panel #40 at the 2008 Puerto Rican Studies Association Conference in San Juan (Oct. 1-4) presented an overview of Boricua-Chicano relations in Chicago, noting that there have been conscious, coordinated, community-wide efforts to build a sense of solidarity around “Latinidad” between these two ethnic groups. Interestingly, the presenter notes a tension between the cultural similarities and distinctions of each group and that the second-class citizen status of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. as a result of being colonial subjects has fostered an empathy and support for undocumented Mexican immigrants. As a “voice for the voiceless” these Puerto Ricans are challenging existing notions about intra-group Latino rivalries and shedding light on the processes by which solidarity is achieved.
Latinos/as are the ultimate bridge-builders and translators of experience precisely because their identities are so diverse, flexible, and chameleonic; it is this adaptability and resilience that enables them to forge common ground (Morales, 2002; Fox, 1997; Tobar, 2005; Anzaldúa, 1999).

*What role can LAEs play in the current efforts to reform schools so that they are more just, addressing the needs of all students?*

LAEs are better able to guide the most disinterested and disengaged students, primarily because they understand what it is like to be lost and to have your identity and motives questioned. It is possible or even likely that they were marginalized or excluded at some point in their childhood/teen years, or even had to translate between parents and teachers. This experience of finding yourself, when you are not entirely one or the other—not fully American, and not fully ______ (substitute whatever country/ethnicity), could prove a valuable base of empathy for their students. Their agency and their process for making sense of their history and their present position vis-à-vis their identity formation should be inspirational to young, troubled students (primarily urban students of color) because they stand as examples of individuals who have successfully achieved integration from fragmented, often negative or stereotypical images of themselves.

*How do LAEs act as a healing force, drawing on a strong spiritual tradition and multiple ways of knowing, being, and expressing meaning, in order to strengthen the democratic fabric of our urban communities?*

The strong creative impulse of Latino/a artists, combined with the moral imperative inherent in educators whose theory-in-practice follows a social reconstructionist or
critical theory perspective, results in an activist approach to both the world of art and education. These LAEs see their role as pivotal in providing information and inspiration to urban youth and understand that we must undergo, as the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed, “a revolution of values” if we are to rescue our world from imminent peril and destruction. In essence, LAEs, through their work in community art and education, attempt to “re-equilibrarnos” so that we may transition from a “thing-oriented society to a person-oriented society.”

Restoring the rightful place of humanistic values and interactions over market considerations, as Adelaide Sanford remarks in her interview with the editors of *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education*, “we want people who care about the young, who care about the aged…the kind of human being we are trying to create is not just an educated person, because educated people have done some terribly inhumane things” (Cahan and Zocur, 1996,12). A study of LAEs provides an example of how—through tugging on the strings of mind and heart, utilizing cognition and emotion—a return to humanistic values in education can provide the balance needed in our social order, turning away from a nihilistic wasteland and the excesses of capitalism.

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27 hooks cites the insightful and inspirational words of late Dr. Martin Luther King in perhaps his most revolutionary book, *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community* (1968) where he warns “. . . the stability of the large world house which is ours will involve a revolution of values to accompany the scientific and freedom revolutions engulfing the earth. We must rapidly begin the shift from a ‘thing-oriented society’ to a ‘person-oriented society’. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. A civilization can flounder as readily in the face of moral and spiritual bankruptcy as it can through financial bankruptcy” (27).
Researcher Qualifications
With over 20 years of experience in education and the equivalent in the performing arts, this researcher has a distinct interest and investment in the convergence of these two cultural worlds. Since my earliest forays into the world of education, I have been drawn to schools, classrooms, teachers, programs, and philosophies that embrace the arts, particularly if their school culture is guided by a social justice framework. Conscious choices have led me to a more recent blending of these two fields, as I am cognizant that both art and education, taken individually, have enormous potential for self-expression, self-empowerment, and self-sufficiency; moreover, when applied together in the right circumstances, art and education can transform our society. Aside from my interest in the sociopolitical dimensions of education, art has the power to shape perceptions, reinforce values, and reflect contemporary society. However, I also note the many ways that art has been utilized to wake up the masses, stir consciousness, and point out the flaws, limitations, and contradictions in our modern world.

This overlap—the slippery, morally-tinged, spiritually-grounded terrain—is the tract I will traverse in this study. I am particularly interested in LAEs efforts (individually and together) toward the goal of creating and strengthening the democratic fabric of our urban schools and communities. Alternative learning communities allow LAEs to bear witness to the multicultural urban reality while inspiring creative and critical reflection. This complex interaction of art, education and democracy—often overlooked—falls “between the cracks” of analysis of sociology, art, education, anthropology, and political science. Partly due to the organization and division of knowledge and information at the level of higher education, these three arenas occupy not only different disciplines, but
different sciences. Art is the study of humanities (the non-sciences), while education is the study of social sciences, and democracy defies categorization, but most often is found in political science or philosophy. Research studies in the field of education tend to be very pragmatic and down-to-earth. Democracy and the study of citizenship is typically more theoretical, while art defies categorization. Because of this, researchers have not attempted to put these three components together to gather responses, and subsequently analyze these responses systematically. Through the lens of over 50 LAEs and their diverse viewpoints, we will be guided in exploring this nexus.
Three eminent scholars provide the foundation for our initial research and understanding of LAEs living, creating, and teaching in Miami. Gloria Anzaldúa provides one anchor, unpeeling the concept of cultural identity one layer at a time through her landmark work Borderlands/La Frontera. Alongside Anzaldúa, bell hooks brings a wealth of wisdom to our understanding of both the arts and the potential within education for creating “the practice of freedom.” Known and admired worldwide, Paolo Freire’s theories, seeing education as liberation, provides depth and an irreplaceable foundation to this study. This trinity of intellectual giants—Anzaldúa, hooks, and Freire—will comprise the basis of our theoretical web, rooted in a critical approach to understanding identity, art making, and educational possibilities. However, their work will be situated within a larger theoretical context and set of related literature.

In particular, Cornel West, Howard Zinn, and Henry Giroux lend a critical education perspective to the process and together attempt to “redefine the value of school” as stated in the ancillary title of Neil Postman’s *End of Education* (1995). Connecting education to our history, the political economy, and contemporary debates about democracy, education, race, and class, West and Zinn form convincing and cogent arguments. West’s contribution assists us in understanding the perils facing our democracy and the importance of creating a *paideia* (critical citizenry), and notes that in terms of protecting, policing, nourishing democracy, “…this democratic vigilance has primarily, predominantly, overwhelmingly, steadily, without fail, been disproportionately
expressed by artists, activists, and intellectuals in American life” (67). Following this logic, I suggest that educators co-occupy/overlap this category of “activists” and “intellectuals” and thus, LAEs become, by extension, critical actors in the creation of a robust democracy.

In order to have a healthy, thriving democracy, both art and education are essential. Education, in a normative sense, “should” be the great equalizer, but increasingly, authors like Jonathan Kozol (Shame of the Nation, 2005) and Susan Eaton (The Children in Room E4, 2006) paint a grim picture for students from urban environments; concentrated poverty and the accompanying social ills prove that this resegregation by ethnicity, social class, and parents’ education stands in direct opposition to efforts to increase equity for underserved students (Kozol, 2005; Orfield & Eaton, 2007). The rhetoric behind the recent “No Child Left Behind” legislation and its “accountability at all costs,” without significant changes in the structure or quality of the learning environment, only compounds the difficulties facing teachers and administrators of urban students of color. At its utopian best, however, education is designed to equip students to think critically, act compassionately, and assert their opinions lucidly, providing the foundation for active citizenship.28 As Paolo Freire advises, “education is

28 West's Democracy Matters (2004) and Howard Zinn and Donaldo Macedo (in Howard Zinn on Democratic Education) assert that schools promote a discourse of democracy, while supporting structures that are inherently anti-democratic and authorizing a curriculum whose selectivity retells history from the point of view of the victors. West contends that this obfuscation of many incidents in history results in generations of students who are ignorant of the racist and imperialistic acts indispensable in establishing our early experiment in democracy. West goes on to say that identifying and seeing these atrocities is fundamental to our seeing patterns of aggressive militarism, postmodern colonialism, unchecked authoritarianism; ultimately, this will lead to confronting nihilistic tendencies and extricating these elements from our current democracy to bring some alignment and authenticity to the schism between our ideals as a nation and our actions.
not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it, transformation cannot occur” (1998, 37).

The need for transformation is evident, regardless of the criteria we use to determine the health of our democracy. While the United States is not the only democratic experiment in our world’s history, it is perhaps the most captivating and most enduring. How we gauge the well-being, strength, and vitality of the U.S. democracy can be complex, but a simple comparison across class and ethnic lines immediately poses a challenge to the myth of meritocracy. Across many measures, we fall short—the gap is widening among the rich and poor;\textsuperscript{29} as evidenced in a growing differential in educational attainment and home ownership. Pew Hispanic Center reports that 41% of Hispanics, 23% of Blacks and only 14% of White adults aged 20 and older do not have a high school diploma; furthermore, only 1/10 Hispanics seek a GED, as compared to 2/10 Blacks and 3/10 Whites (www.pewhispanic.org). On average, nearly three-quarters of White, Non-Hispanics own their own home—as contrasted with 47% of Blacks and 50% of Latinos (www.census.gov). Of course, there exist significant differences both between and within nationality groups for Latinos across virtually all indicators. Cubans top the list for home ownership (at 57%), followed by Mexicans

\textsuperscript{29} In their foreword to \textit{Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach} (1998), D. Macedo and Ana Maria Araujo Freire assert that “we are experiencing a rapid ‘Third Worldization’ of North America, where inner cities more and more come to resemble the shantytowns of the Third World, with high levels of poverty, violence, illiteracy, human exploitation, homelessness and human misery (1998, ix). See also Smiley and West’s \textit{The Rich and the Rest of Us} (2012), and “Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities,” IES (Institute of Educational Statistics), 2007.
(50%), Colombians (49%) and Peruvians (49%). Finally, only 13% of all Latinos/Hispanics have a bachelor’s degree, as compared with 28% of the overall U.S. population (Motel and Patten, 8-12).

For evidence of the dysfunction and inequality inherent in our democracy, we need only to open our eyes to the reality of living in 2015. People of color and those living “at or near poverty,” experience instances of police brutality, incarceration, teen pregnancy, and homelessness rates astronomically higher than those that are more affluent in socio-economic terms. Latinos are three times as likely and blacks eight times more

30 These differences across Latino sub-groups continue: Ecuadorians have the highest average household income, followed by Colombians with Puerto Ricans and Dominicans at the bottom of the list. In terms of health insurance, half of all Hondurans lack coverage, where in contrast, only 15% of Puerto Ricans are without it. See Motel and Patten, 2012, available at www.pewhispanic.org

31 Colombians and Peruvians exceed the overall U.S. rate for college graduation, with 32% and 30% respectively (Motel and Patten, 2012).

32 The tragic and untimely killing of unarmed teen Michael Brown thrust the issue of police brutality centerstage in our national dialogue, and demonstrates the importance of de-militarizing the police force. Extensive coverage on this appears at Democracy Now! See especially August 15, 2014 segment entitled “Cops or Soldiers? Pentagon, DHS (Dept of Homeland Security) Helped Arm Police in Ferguson with Equipment Used in War” (http://www.democracynow.org/2014/8/15/cops_or_soldiers_pentagon_dhs_helped) and subsequently “Senate Holds Hearing on Police Militarization in Ferguson Aftermath” at http://www.democracynow.org/2014/9/10/headlines#9105.

33 Between 1980 and 2000, the number of U.S. citizens incarcerated tripled, jumping from 2 million to 6 million. Of those imprisoned, black and brown young men are disproportionately represented; nearly 1/3 of all black male high school dropouts between the ages of 22 and 30 are behind bars, as compared with only 3% of white male dropouts. See article by Trei, Lisa which explores the links between race, crime, and incarceration. Full citation in references.

34 Complex, interlocking systems of oppression (drugs, crime, violence, lack of community resources, lack of role models, etc.) are endemic to urban poverty; addressing these challenges structurally, systemically and in a collaborative approach is a necessary prerequisite to create the conditions for economic and educational mobility. (Class notes, Lawson, H. “Interprofessional Leadership for School, Family, and Community Partnerships.” University at Albany, Fall 2000).
likely to be imprisoned compared to their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{35} Housing discrimination —whether renting or buying—is a reality in one out of every five interactions, data from the National Fair Housing Alliance claims. Not surprisingly, as of 2005, 72% of white families owned their own home whereas only 47% of Black Americans and just 50% of Latino families can claim the same.\textsuperscript{36} From a sociological perspective, we see that the “underclass” (rapidly expanding to include the middle and working classes especially during the recent economic “recession” of 2008-2009) is relegated to second-class status in the United States, with dual systems of health care, education, housing and legal services. Separate is far from equal, with this duality resulting in substandard services and limited choice for those who cannot afford costly private alternatives. The U.S. then, fails to stand up to its rhetoric with such glaring inconsistencies and inequalities across racial, ethnic, and socio-economic groups.

Despite the fact that the U.S. is viewed as a model worldwide—especially in contrast to dictactorships and authoritarian regimes—our own democracy is undeniably “in crisis”\textsuperscript{37} economically, socially, and culturally. Cornel West's (2004) analysis—that we are experiencing a weakening of democratic energies—is a clarion call within a sea of voices (Galeano, 1992, 2001; Giroux, 2005; Postman, 1995) urging a deepening of our democracy through exposing the inconsistencies and creating conditions that are truly

\textsuperscript{35} A wealth of demographic data outlining incarceration by race, gender and age is available at \url{www.prisonpolicy.org/articles}. See Wagner (2012).

\textsuperscript{36} See Home Ownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity of the Homeowner. Available at \url{http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0883976.html}, data compiled from U.S. Census Bureau.

\textsuperscript{37} Aya, one LAE discusses this at length, suggesting, “We are a society, a people, a country, a world in crisis.”
conducive to the realization of our nation’s promise of “liberty, justice and freedom for all.” West joins forces with Tavis Smiley to co-author, The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto (2012), exposing the reality that according to 2010 Census data, nearly one in two Americans, or 150 million people, have fallen into poverty, or are considered “low income.”

Most scholars recognize art and education as politicized spaces. In the discipline of education and beyond to linguistics, politics, critical theory, and literature, intellectual giants such as Paolo Freire (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1968), Noam Chomsky (Chomsky on Mis-Education, 2000), Howard Zinn (Howard Zinn on Democratic Education, 2005), Henry Giroux (Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life, 2005), Jonathan Kozol (Shame of the Nation, 2005), bell hooks (Teaching to Transgress, 1994), Sonia Nieto (Affirming Diversity, 1996) and others have put forth arguments which are diverse and multidisciplinary, noting the many ways that education has political roots (inequality, design, frameworks, theories), is politically shaped and constrained (by policies, structures, incentives) and has political purposes (Shor, 1992).

The politicization is inevitable; our responsibility is to recognize the values underlying the political agenda. Currently, schools are “driven” (albeit behind the scenes) by the values of competition, individuality, and capitalistic consumption. With this study, we

38 They argue that income distribution has happened—from poor and middle-class Americans to those in corporate power—and that this is an invisible or unspoken issue in recent Presidential campaigns. Most tragic, is that we have the tools to eradicate poverty, according to Smiley and West; through L. Johnson’s “War on Poverty” and subsequent social movements, the nation’s poverty level declined from 24% to 11%. Today, in contrast, “…1% of the population got 93% of the income, while 22% of all children in the U.S. are living in poverty—an ethical abomination.” (Interview with J. Gonzalez and A. Goodman, 4/19/2012, at www.democracynow.org)
may see that LAEs can create a different (although still politicized) culture of learning, based on the values of mutual respect, collectivity, inclusion and what is best for the community. Insofar as we may disagree regarding the purpose of schooling—an educated citizenry, productive workers, a democratic society, ensuring free market values, or passive consumers—we must acknowledge that schools are vital in creating and maintaining social stability and indispensable to the creation of a viable democracy.

Because education is a site of political and social struggle, teachers are often at the crossroads of such a struggle. Whether the struggle is at the level of state policy—California’s infamous Propositions 187 and 227 are the most recent and well-documented—or regarding funding and access to higher education, such as the CUNY system witnessed in the 90s, or at the school level where teachers routinely see students “tracked” based on race/nationality/ethnicity, there is no doubt a struggle for the political agenda in the realm of education. From curriculum, to tracking, to teacher education, to the de-professionalization of teachers, to standardized testing, we see that education is a high-stakes game, with everyone coming to the table having something to gain or something to lose. Most recently, national attention turned to Chicago, where on September 10, 2012, close to 30,000 teachers and supporters took to the streets, protesting the takeover of many urban neighborhood schools, lobbying for smaller class sizes, more AP choices for students, fair teacher pay and an increase in resources to support their efforts. As the third-largest school district in the United States, this has re-inserted the complex issue of public schooling into our national imagination, as many have said Chicago exemplifies a struggle for “the heart and soul of public education.”
If one believes—as citizens, scholars, artists, and educators—that our democracy is “at-risk,” it should come as no surprise that our educational system is also in peril, buckling under ever-mounting pressures from policymakers, with increasing demands and high stakes accountability.\(^{39}\) As social institutions, schools reflect the surrounding contemporary, cultural milieu. The contemporary challenges in education are many, including a widespread teacher shortage, concern that our students are not globally competitive, and drop-out rates that soar upwards of 30% and up to 70% in some metropolitan areas\(^{40}\). Add to this list the changing student population, the postmodern expectation to educate all students to high standards and prepare them for college, along with our common perception of the school’s responsibility for students with special and varying needs (National Research Council, 2010, 17)—and the result has been enormous stress on the individuals in the trenches (teachers, students and parents). Simultaneously, with dwindling resources, the public has come to expect miracles from teachers, who despite their overwhelming courage, creativity, and compassion, are only human. This inequality has been exacerbated by an increasing re-segregation—a modern-day apartheid—whereby the two systems differ starkly in resources, funding,

\(^{39}\) The “solution” to the current challenges in education are simply and easily remedied, according to the educational policy “experts,” many of whom have never been in a classroom. Their panacea is framed in the discourse of accountability and standards in order to raise student achievement. What this argument fails to capture is that raising expectations and standards is but one tiny adjustment in a constellation of needed reforms, most critical: reducing class sizes, increasing/equalizing per pupil spending across districts, radically restructuring schools of education (teacher training), expanding the “culture of education” to include a diversity of perspectives, linking schools with comprehensive family support services, and re-conceptualizing the way students learn and demonstrate knowledge.

\(^{40}\) Donaldo Macedo remembers a conversation with Freire, who responds to Donaldo’s outrage that industrialized, wealthy countries could produce so many dropouts and educational failures—with the following wit: “Donaldo, don’t be naïve. What you are calling a failure is the ultimate victory of the system, because the system was never designed to educate those who are failing to begin with” (Zinn and Macedo, 2005, 57).
preparedness for school, teacher training and expertise—among many other variables (Kozol, 2005).

Not only do we see stark differences between public and private schools, but also within public schooling, between suburban and urban school districts and most recently, in urban neighborhoods where charter schools are pitted against traditional public schools (Butrymowicz, 2013). This means that students receive fundamentally different programmes of education, despite attempts to equalize systemic inequality via raising standards. UCLA’s Civil Rights Project released a report which claimed (its title) ‘Charter Schools’ Political Success is a Civil Rights Failure.’ Moreover, while a Chicago public school teacher earns over $71,000 in annual salary (Kim, 2012), in contrast a charter school teacher earns much less—sometimes only $50,000—but may receive incentive bonuses for student performance gains (Perez, 2012); this competition undermines teacher solidarity and contributes to the de-professionalization and devaluing of education. The deregulation and privatization of public education means

41 Under the recent national legislation “Race to the Top,” billions of federal dollars are being given to states that lift charter school caps, along with linking teacher evaluations to student test scores, closing failing schools and re-opening them under privatized, corporate-run operators. “So what we have is a neoliberal project nationally, tested out in Chicago,” says Pauline Lipman (Democracy Now! interview, 3/26/10, www.democracynow.org) and originally pioneered in Chile under Pinochet, “…implemented by force of military dictatorships and the World Bank and IMF…and the results have been…they produced increased stratification,” reports Lois Weiner (Democracy Now! interview, 9/3/2010, www.democracynow.org).

42 Quality of schooling is too often directly proportional to property taxes in the surrounding neighborhood, and as long as that is the model, there will continue to be increasing educational inequality. Title I and other programs have attempted to “close the gap” with mixed results.

our children’s academic potential has been co-opted by business enterprise, an unprecedented scenario.

The unfortunate outcome is that the rhetoric of “accountability” has put schools, districts and teachers in a creative straightjacket, with policy interventions dictating not only the philosophy and tenor of teaching and learning, but often the curriculum, structure, and practices as well. Alongside this dilemma, the past decade has seen a sharp increase in “for profit” educational firms where inasmuch as 25% of per pupil expenditures go to consulting/management companies who are in the business of schools (different source). Professor Lois Weiner hypothesizes that this type of educational reform leads to an increased “vocationalization of education,” which is linked to our current “jobless recovery” as “education can democratize the competition for existing jobs, but it cannot create new jobs,” thus, “when the jobs being created are by companies like Wal-Mart… where all that is required is an eighth grade education…we need to look critically at Race to the Top and the way it fits into this new economic order” (Gonzalez, Juan. Interview “Educators Push Back Against Obama’s Business Model for School Reforms” on Democracy Now! September 3, 2010).

The transformation of Chicago’s public schools over the past decade is evidence of the shifting of public school students out of the inner city and transferring them to suburbs, charter schools, or other corporate-sponsored schools. See interview “A Look at Arne Duncan’s VIP List of Requests at Chicago Schools the Effects of his Expansion of Charter Schools in Chicago,” on 3/26/2010 at www.democracynow.org.
While the top-down reforms dominate, and the wheels of school reform continue to spin round and round, many critical educational theorists propose ways to remedy the imbalance and restore meaning, equity, balance, and justice to education. From Dewey’s progressive *Democracy and Education* (1916) and Ivan Illich’s *Deschooling Society* (1971), exposing the limitations and hypocrisies inherent in traditional schooling, critical education theorists continue to search for the missing pieces to resolve the puzzle. George Counts, with his landmark *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* (1969; 1932) saw experiential learning as “the enormous potential of education to improve society,” not only guiding student inquiry, but also imagining and building an educational system and society which reflects our modern, humanistic values. Freire’s philosophy for eradicating oppression builds both individual and community agency; while becoming culturally literate, students re-create and rewrite their own history.

Because the teaching practice is creative, critical and active, soaked in possibility, the students transform from passive recipients to active creators. Centering education in the immediate history, culture, and reality of the students results in a radically different model as compared with traditional, passive educational methods. This researcher believes that LAEs may be especially adept at this recasting of history, and rewriting their futures. According to Karen Lewis, recently thrust into national recognition with the

45 This metaphor is the title of a book, highlighting the seemingly haphazard and cyclical attempts within the educational reform industry, where every two or three years, there is a new “buzzword” or conception of schooling which is heralded with trumpets and fanfare, while teachers, parents, and administrators are supposed to drop their former programs and jump on the new bandwagon (Hess, 1998).

46 These varying, but progressive, humanistic, and multicultural theories of education can be envisioned as branches on a tree of school reform.

Chicago Teachers’ Strike, what elementary students receive now is “…reading, reading, reading, reading, math, math, math, reading reading, reading, math…” with the result that “…kids are bored to tears. They’re hating school at an early age. There’s no joy. There’s no passion” (Lewis, 2010).

Furthermore, critical theorists and social reconstructionists highlight a mismatch between the structure of schools and the goals they are purportedly meant to achieve.48 Henry Giroux (1988) eschews questions of instrumentality—What type of curriculum? Which teaching methods?—for deeper structural and philosophical questions: What is knowledge for? How does it relate to democratic life? What does it mean in terms of providing the conditions for individual and social agency? How does it address questions of injustice? How does it prepare us for a global democracy? Returning to these fundamental questions reframes the debates around educational reform in terms of purpose, agency, and potential. Put another way, most conversations about schooling concern the means, rather than the end result desired (Fried, 2005; Postman, 1995; Mathews, 2008). Neil Postman’s End of Education: Redefining the Value of School, provides a refreshing take on several broad themes illustrating how we might recapture the curiosity and imagination of learning, framing it in a manner that injects purpose, thought, debate, dialogue, and meaning back into our educational institutions; like a weary packhorse, our schools, students and teachers have been struggling up a mountain, oversaddled, ridden hard, and undernourished.

48 Daniel Pink (2006) discusses this mismatch in terms of right-brained and left-brained dominance, another scholar who asserts schools are not designed to teach the way students learn, as Gardner claims (2004).
The challenges facing contemporary education in the United States have perplexed scholars and experts in the fields of urban education, multicultural education, and education reform for decades. The “crisis in education” includes not only the difficulties of educating all of our youth, but also to the immense struggle to recruit, train, and retain teachers who are progressive, creative, rigorous, effective, and compassionate. While perhaps not the single most important factor in fostering student success—parent involvement takes the cake overall—the importance of an effective, high quality, caring teacher is the single biggest factor in determining student academic success, more important than per pupil expenditures, class size, or even demographics of the school (Rothstein, 2010). In 2006, there were 3.6 million teachers in the United States, comprising nearly 10% of all college-educated workers between 24 and 65 years old (NCES, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_064.asp, retrieved November 2009). As one of the largest occupations in the United States, every year 200,000 new teachers graduate, far outpacing any other profession (National Research Council, 2010, 12). Yet, despite the numbers of teachers needed and the importance of their role, there is no standardized teaching preparation and the extreme variation in teacher preparation reflects “overlapping layers of authority and oversight in a system that has placed education firmly in the jurisdiction of state and local governments” (National Research Council, 15). The teaching force is predominantly white (84%) and female (75%), with less than 8% of all teachers African-American and 49

For this reason, alternative pathways to teacher education fill a valuable need; programs such as Breakthrought National (formerly Summerbridge) where this researcher worked as a young teacher, Dean of Faculty, and Program Director are a resource to be further explored and utilized as models for future integration into teacher training and preparation. (www.breakthroughcollaborative.org)
less than 6% Hispanic/Latino (National Research Council, 14). The variance between teachers and students of color is problematic, and many alternative programs have been developed to attract more teachers of color, among them Call Me Mister, NY Teaching Fellows, the Breakthrough Collaborative, TNTP (The New Teacher Project) and others.

However, the central role of schools of education (SOEs) in attracting, preparing, grounding and inspiring our future educators cannot be overlooked. Historically, however, SOEs lean heavily toward behavioral and cognitive psychology in assessing problems and looking for solutions; essential questions concerning power, ideology, and culture have been overlooked or excluded (Giroux, 1988, 163). Deeper and more lasting reform might occur if we “…recast teacher education as a political project, as a cultural politics that defines student teachers as intellectuals who will establish public spaces where students can debate, appropriate, and learn the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve that individual freedom and social justice” (ibid.167, emphasis mine). LAEs could represent a novel approach to fulfilling such a need, especially given a propensity toward multiple ways of knowing and their lived experience which demonstrates that knowledge can be interrogated and synthesized in a myriad of ways. Perhaps LAEs might create “community gathering spaces” (which act to fill the vacuum left by the town hall meetings, the plaza or public square, the regular interaction and dialogue that binds a community together) and reinvigorate or act as a prelude to

50 Miami’s LAEs could present a balance to this disproportionate demographic.
“reconceiv[ing SOES] as public spheres” as today most are “damagingly bereft of social conscience and consciousness” (Giroux, 1988, 159).

To accomplish this vision, Giroux advocates extending the depth and breadth of teacher training programs to accomplish several goals: 1) to analyze “cultural production and how it is organized within asymmetrical power relationships in schools”; 2) to close the gap between “ivory tower theorists” and teachers as non-thinking technicians; and, 3) to immerse student teachers in a radical citizenship education. Citizenship education—the ultimate lynchpin—is accomplished through ongoing dialogue and experience to illuminate difference and diversity, how these “fundamental antagonisms” are played out in ensuring democratic rights for students (170-171). It is possible, even probable, that LAEs will be ideally positioned to open up dialogue to “illuminate difference and diversity,” especially if they are outside the school system, lessening the risk for speaking out or rocking the boat, both pressures administrators place on teachers. These tough but necessary conversations are most successful when an open, supportive environment is established; this researcher proposes that LAEs are particularly adept at creating these kinds of democratic spaces. Making these changes

51 The researcher has worked extensively with a school in Miami that exemplifies these tensions, designing and conducting “Welcoming Diversity” workshops, schoolwide assessments, teacher and parent trainings and surveys. While the school’s leadership is culturally grounded, many teachers are uncomfortable and unprepared to deal with the many points of conflict that arise due to race, ethnicity, class, religion and other identity differences. SOEs (Schools of Education) did not prepare teachers to be active participants/facilitators for dialogue around these “fundamental antagonisms.”

52 This dialogue is a cornerstone in hooks’ theory, one that plays out between teacher and student, whereas these “fundamental antagonisms” are waged internally in Anzaldúa’s theoretical blueprint, and are imagined and encouraged with Freire’s agency-driven practice. More on citizenship education will follow, from Giroux’s *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Democracy’s Promise and Education’s Challenge* (2005).
will surely elevate the pivotal role of the teacher in creating the most visible, wide-ranging, and lasting change in schools. Sonia Nieto (2003, 2005), Rafe Esquith (2007) and other scholars provide an important window to understanding the complexities of school dynamics—through the eyes of teachers—in particular, the most dynamic, student-centered, motivated and effective teachers. The resourcefulness, tenacity, creativity, determination, joy, and sense of purpose needed to sustain a career in teaching all provide important clues to teacher efficacy and long-term satisfaction and success in the classroom. This researcher believes that LAEs share many of these same characteristics.

More than the sum of various enviable traits such as those listed above, bell hooks (1994) describes the effective, progressive teacher as one who can create “inclusive [democratic]—communities of learning”. Sharing her ability to relate, to connect in an empowering “Freirian” way with all her students, hooks forces us to see that changing education begins with changing the teacher-student relationship. It is only through seeing them as individual students—and their particular, political, cultural history and experience—that she is able to inspire student enthusiasm, motivation, and

53 The same may be true for artists; in other words, the two careers may have more in common than we think. In comparison, teachers’ philosophies, motivations, challenges, and successes have been studied much more than artists’ ways of working and surviving.

54 See Freire’s (1998) list in Chapter 4 (“On the Indispensable Qualities of Progressive Teachers) of Teachers as Cultural Workers.

55 Likewise, this researcher believes that LAEs share a broader, deeper “ability to relate” or “ability to connect” with a wide range of people, because of their identity and experiences.
commitment. 56 This accomplishment—as most seasoned, successful teachers will tell you—is the most difficult yet essential in the learning process. Student engagement is the prerequisite to generating concentration, receptivity, active inquiry, communication, teamwork, discovery, and collective insight. Furthermore, hooks is brilliant to recognize that her students will learn more, as will she, if those that are “learning” and those that are “teaching” are not cast into rigid, impermeable roles.

Here hooks’ transgressing is akin to the metaphor of a trampoline: her authenticity and connection with her experience catapults her into the air, this initial action is so powerful/ radical precisely because it is so personal. This jumping off point creates an arc of empowerment, soaring to places that neither she nor her oppressors can imagine, the essence of which is the delight and mystery of freedom. Like all inspirational teachers in popular films—Stand and Deliver, Dead Poet’s Society and The Freedom Writers—if you want to move students to believe and risk and work harder than they ever have before, you must be fearless. It is your empowerment that shows them that they can grab the same reins and ride to their own destination, no matter how far away or how many hills and valleys stand in between. Latino/a Artist Educators have overcome fear of speaking, fear of showing their authentic or true nature, and the fear of criticism. In relation to other teachers who are not artists, this could be a valuable strength, a key element to creating more democratic spaces for learning. This tradition of “star teachers” of students (of poverty) includes The

56 hooks gives us the blueprint to create this “empowering” educational community; her autoethnographic account, theorizing her truth from experience, is one “map” to become a self-actualized teacher, the first step to creating a new schooling environment. Here, her transgressions hold keys to liberation and freedom and democracy realized, and could provide guidance and support for LAEs in moments of stress or doubt.
Dreamkeepers (Ladsen-Billings, 1994) and Star Teachers of Students of Poverty (Haberman, 2005).

Howard Gardner notes “another challenge is to prepare a cadre of educators, be they termed masters, teachers, brokers or curators, who feel comfortable in exhibiting the links among different forms of knowing and in drawing children and families into a fuller approach to learning and understanding” (Gardner, 2004, 252). Cultural competency is essential for this task, as children and families are ensconced in their cultural behaviors, values, and norms⁵⁷. This is yet another arena where LAEs can assume leadership: most LAEs have a nuanced and intuitive understanding of culture. In The Unschooled Mind: How Children Think and How Schools Should Teach (2004), Gardner provides some starting points to explain why so many students struggle with school. Explaining the mismatch between intuitive learning (sensorimotor) and school-based learning (symbolic), Gardner further elucidates this argument explaining some students possess a certain “blend” of intelligences—usually linguistic/logical intelligence profile—more closely aligned to the formal tasks required of traditional schools (147). After pointing out the nature of the “mismatch” in several key disciplines, Gardner recommends “fusing institutions” to our current schools, harnessing the benefits of apprenticeships, community work programs, hands-on museums, and professional mentoring organizations. The power and potential of various arts-based institutions in motivating

⁵⁷ Krashen (1996), Walsh (1991), Nieto (1996) and others have elucidated the importance of language and culture in creating positive learning environments for students whose first language is not English. For more on the sociocultural dimensions of education, see Woeckner Saavedra’s unpublished Masters Thesis (1999).
and reinforcing learning for students is another avenue deserving further research and attention. In this scenario, LAEs could play a foundational role.

The critical educator Paolo Freire has chronicled the efforts to bring literacy and empowerment to the most disenfranchised of Brazil’s massive peasantry, and in doing so, created a blueprint for dynamic action as it relates to educating students normally seen as “incapable” or “unworthy” of education. The global impact of Freire’s teaching and philosophies have influenced teachers worldwide to reconsider their teaching practice and principles in order to (re)situate their efforts in a consciously political, reactionary stance. For this researcher, Freire’s contributions are many; synthesizing his impact, Freire embraces the possibility for transformation through emancipatory education, while expressing indignation at the current socio-political state of affairs and its trickle-down effects to education. His unwavering stance that all learning is cultural—and should never dichotomize emotion from cognition—encourages educators to begin with learners’ lived experiences, thus guaranteeing that learning is made accessible, meaningful and relevant, with the added benefit that any sustained inquiry or critique will raise consciousness through illuminating interlocking, institutionalized systems of domination. Perhaps most importantly, Paolo Freire’s deep level of trust, faith and respect in his students encourages hope to blossom in all of us, despite the limitations of democracy and the immense challenges facing education.

58 This researcher believes that LAEs are more conscious of inequalities and injustices through their daily lived experiences.
Recognizing a “multiplicity of contradictory social relations,” Freire rejects the Marxist idea that there is a “universalized” axis of oppression; by joining together the traditions of radical critical theory and the necessity for radical struggle, his genius lies in combining a “language of critique” and a “language of possibility” (Giroux, 1988, 108-109). The possibility in this approach is the potential for seeing common ground, feeling empathy, and joining hands in “the struggle”—empowerment begins with the individual, but is created and buttressed by a circle of solidarity. It is likely that LAEs—by virtue of their worldview and the work that they engage in—have high levels of empathy and understand the importance of solidarity. Critical theorist Ira Shor defines “empowering education” as a “critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change” (1992, 15, emphasis mine). Echoing Freire, Giroux, McLaren—even Dewey—he outlines eleven (11) dimensions or values that create such an empowering pedagogy: 1) participatory, 2) affective, 3) problem-posing, 4) situated, 5) multicultural, 6) dialogic, 7) desocializing, 8) democratic, 9) researching, 10) interdisciplinary, and 11) activist (1992, 17). These eleven dimensions, in their simplest imagining, stem from a “strengths-based” approach, building on students’ capacities, informal knowledge and potential. For all his wisdom, Shor omitted a crucial “12th” guiding value for an empowering pedagogy—artistic! Although the category of “multicultural” is often represented through some artistic medium, this researcher has seen tremendous possibility in the integration of the arts with such a progressive pedagogy. Centralizing the role of art and identity in a “problem-posing” approach to education just may bring

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59 In contrast to “the deficit model,” a strengths-based approach to teaching and learning emerged in the 70s, thanks multiple influences: swelling popular ethnic pride, the Chicago School of Sociology’s work, and the impact of fundamental values and beliefs from the School of Social Work’s infiltrating education. Haberman, Nieto, and many others have been influenced by this movement.
the kind of intelligent, lasting change so sought after in our schools and society, and LAEs could lead the way.

Susan Cahan and Zoya Kocur probe this intersection—the fertile crossroads of art-education-politics-culture—in *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* (1996). This comprehensive and multi-purpose volume demonstrates how multicultural education—when combined with a critical look at contemporary art—can become counter-hegemonic. “Generally missing from multicultural art education is an approach which connects everyday experience, social critique, and creative expression. When the focus is shifted to issues and ideas that students truly care about and that are relevant within a larger life-world context, art becomes a vital mirror, a means of reflecting upon the nature of society and social existence”⁶⁰ (1996, xxii). Utilizing a “rigorous approach”⁶¹ to studying multiculturalism—contextualized, grounded, and questioning existing power dynamics and structural hierarchies—Cahan and Kocur build on the work of many scholars—Sonia Nieto, Michael Apple, Christine Sleeter, and Donaldo Macedo. Situatedness and practicality account for the power of this book: by insightfully selecting emerging and established artists, we gain insight into motivation, their work, what messages they hope to send, and the role they create for themselves in our evolving democracy. Personal histories, identity struggles, cultural clashes are presented as a template to demonstrate that art-making can be a powerful entry into

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⁶⁰ Aimed toward multicultural art education, the same could easily be prescribed as the solution for revitalizing urban failing schools. This researcher believes that in order to inspire students and gain their trust, educators must begin with their interests and needs.

⁶¹ Nieto’s *Affirming Diversity* (1996; 2005) delineates what constitutes a superficial study of culture versus higher levels of authenticity and rigor in exploring multicultural issues.
learning about self and society and posing critical questions for transforming social, economic and political inequalities. Cahan and Zocur provide an example of how the thoughtful, rigorous integration of the arts in the curriculum can boost motivation, spark curiosity, and enrich learning. This work provides a valuable template for LAEs who share this mission.

While there is an absence of scholarly work on the personal lives of artists and educators in general, the literature is even scarcer when we search for Latino/a artists, Latino/a educators, or even artist-educators. Therefore, understanding the sociohistorical and sociocultural context of becomes the next best alternative; fortunately, there is a rich history of Latino/a, Latin American, and Caribbean artists who direct their art toward consciousness raising and community education. Artists have long spoken out against government abuse or neglect, demonstrating that art and activism share a natural bond. “I’ve always been struck by the fact that the great artists and writers have in general been outspoken in their criticism of existing society and in their longing for a different kind of society” (Zinn, 2005, 127). It is no accident that Latin American and Caribbean writers from Gioconda Belli to Eduardo Galeano to Miguel

62 _Wild Fire_ (Barndt, 2006), _The Arts Equation_ (Taylor, 1999), _Artists in Times of War_ (Zinn, 2003), _Contesting Art_ (MacClancy, 1997), and others scholars demonstrate they have thought seriously about the role of art in identity-making and social transformation. At the same time, as Taylor (1999) comments in his introduction, “There are chasms of misunderstanding between the public’s perception of the arts, how they are presented in schools, and how the arts are actually practiced (9).

63 Melanie Kramer cites a German artist, John Heartfield, 1891-1968, (born Helmut Heizfelde) a member of the Berlin Dada Group and producer of satirical collages, as being one of the first artists to use a photomontage techniques to undermine Nazi Germany’s propagandist efforts. Through “cross matching” photographs, he used parody and juxtaposition to create politically meaningful art forms. (Kramer, M. “Garden the City: Activism through Interventionist Art," in Barndt, 2006, 122).
Ángel Asturias have been forced to seek exile abroad, fleeing dictatorial governments who target public intellectuals—artists, writers, educators, and other social justice actors—with torture, disappearance, kidnappings, threats, and other acts of intimidation.

Chile, Argentina, Peru, Nicaragua, Honduras—and more recently, with the “Arab Spring” and uprisings in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Bahrain, Morocco among many others—stand as painful and costly examples of this deliberate attempt by authoritarian regimes to squash popular dissent. By silencing the voices of those who speak out and expose corruption and human rights abuses, they hope to maintain their absolute economic, political, and cultural dominance. From another perspective, however, it is immensely inspiring to know that words and actions—combined as art in poetry, theater, street performance, murals, music, and dance—especially when used as inspiration alongside civil disobedience, can shake the foundation of government’s absolute power.

The most recent and exciting evidence of civil disobedience here in the United States is the 2011 Occupy Movement, claiming its power source from “the 99%” of the population. With such a widely cast net, it is not surprising that Occupy Wall Street and other Occupy movements in cities around the country, attracted people of all ages, occupations, ethnicities, religious, social and political beliefs. United in the belief that

64 Closer to home, the Occupy Movement met with some heavy para-militarized police resistance, and there is widespread documentation on the popular uprisings in Greece and Spain as a result of austerity measures imposed by the European Union.

65 This is short-sighted, for just as vocal citizens and activists are “disappeared,” many more will appear to take their place.

66 Authoritarian regimes wear the mask of government or military brutality, but behind the mask, it is global capital and corporate dominance propelling such tyrannical acts, designed to silence dissent.
bailouts for big banks, and turning a back on America’s growing poor, the Occupiers not only showed that U.S. citizens were capable of direct action, but also could inspire a change in the national conversation. Occupy Movements initiated a new “language of possibility” which critical theorist Henry Giroux has been claiming is missing in our democratic discourse. Closer to our focal point, Occupy Miami, although a relatively smaller (but spirited) movement, incorporated both visual and performing arts to provoke thought, galvanize support, and encourage active participation. Visual graffiti artist “Above” created a simple, direct mural visible from Highway I-95, which read “If you give a Wall Street banker enough rope, he will hang himself.” This bold statement was flanked by an effigy of a “banker” mannequin complete with noose, suit and tie, and briefcase spilling out money67 (Garcia-Roberts, 2011). Visiting a gathering at the Peace Village encampment within the first week or so of Occupy Miami, I found about 50 people expressing themselves with movement and head nods as local musicians Bread Crumbs performed at Peace Village. This spirit of art in the service of activism—with the goal of changing perceptions and reality—is not new in our Latino/Latin American/Caribbean history, but rather this phenomenon has roots that extend back for decades.

The artists of the Puerto Rican Generation of 1950 and their students——Antonio Maldonado, Rafael Tufiño, Irene Delano, Lorenzo Homar, Myrna Báez and Rafael Rivera Rosa—followed in the footsteps of the Mexican art movement of the 1930s, 

67 “Above” is not one of the LAEs interviewed for this study; yet, this work became a powerful and provocative statement, and part of the conversation in resisting corruption and greed at the highest levels of the financial world. http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/graffiti-artist-above-hangs-anti-wall-street-art-along-i-95-6385024.
centralizing social commentary and valorizing the working poor, characteristics of the Mexican muralist tradition. Carlos Raquel Rivera’s prints (“Hurricane from the North” and “The Massacre at Ponce”) perhaps best epitomize the indignation and anger felt by the Generation of 1950 (Benítez, 81-83). Utilizing the linoleum block, these artistas puertorriqueños presented images of exploitation through the lens of a Puerto Rican colonial reality; these poster images stamped visual raw material into the minds of millions, soon to be recycled by performance artists in order to capture our political imagination (Benítez, 83). Artists are unafraid to speak the truth, however ugly or unpopular, and through showing the reality, they lift the veil on illusion and fantasy, forcing the rest of society to see from a revolutionary perspective.

In the landmark book, *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theaters and Their Legacies*, the volatile social period of the sixties is sketched, from the perspective of the eight radical collectives, among them The Living Theater, El Teatro Campesino, The Free Southern Theater, and Bread and Puppet Theater⁶⁸. El Teatro Campesino (among others) created “temporary autonomous zones,” fluid spaces that “offer a fleeting glimpse⁶⁹ of what a radically altered society could look and feel like.” Hakim Bey suggests that the creation of such spaces is an ideal tactic with which to drive a wedge in the cracks of what can seem like an all-encompassing state power and surveillance (Harding and Rosenthal, 2006, 82-83). The ongoing annual Burning Man Festival in Black Rock

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⁶⁸ After an historical overview of each group’s work, next an exploration of the group’s significant contributions to political theater follows, and finally, the legacy of those contributions is presented.

⁶⁹ This is closely related to “suspension of reality,” the goal of all theater, whereby the audience temporarily “forgets” that they are sitting in an auditorium and the performance transports them to “another dimension” or the world being enacted on the stage.
Desert perhaps best exemplifies an enduring social experiment, whereby an alternative reality is created, based on the principals of community, participation, self-expression, and self-reliance. The culture of this unique experiment has evolved in the more than three decades since its inception in 1986, and it presents a contrasting vision to our current society, blending celebration, art, radical inclusion, and creative, spontaneous performance (www.burningman.com). It is the researcher’s belief that LAEs can serve the same purpose, driving open a space of possibility to create a more democratic discourse. For this study, we seek to understand more regarding this phenomenon, particularly asking, “How do LAEs assist in creating temporary autonomous zones?”

Teatro Campesino is notable in our analysis as a grassroots, Chicano-flavored model for community education through artistic performance. Actively embracing pop folk traditions, Luis Valdez grounded each performance in migrant workers’ reality and Chicano myths, values, and narratives. Teatro Campesino exemplified a new kind of theatre—a working class, radical, revolutionary, folksy theatre drawn together by common cultural values and ways of symbolically representing their collective reality—demonstrating that this type of “activist art” is unique from other forms, highlighting process over outcome, collaboration over individual focus, and the centrality the audience/community for public participation” (Felshin, 1995, 10-13, emphasis mine). At the roughly the same time, Brazilian theater director, writer, and politician Augusto Boal began to experiment with giving the means of production (the tools of how to create

70 The importance of festivals to create such TAZs (temporary autonomous zones) and other rituals is an arena worthy of investigation for those seeking transformation to a more democratic society. The Bloom: A Journey through Transformational Festivals is particularly engaging, covering close to 30 transformational festivals internationally, in a four-part series. Available at http://thebloomseries.com/.
theater) to the audience, and eventually developed several innovative branches of theater—Newspaper Theater, Invisible Theater, Forum Theater, among others—whereby theater became “a dialogue and an opportunity to act out social change” (Gonzalez, J. Interview with A. Boal, 5/3/2005). Boal’s *Theater of the Oppressed,* written while in exile, develops the theory behind his techniques, whereby essentially, he quotes Shakespeare’s Hamlet, noting that “theater should be a mirror… [where] we see our vices and virtues” (ibid). Not content to stop here, Boal’s approach is to “penetrate into that mirror, and transform the image and then come back with the image transformed. The act of transforming, I always say, transforms she or he who acts” (ibid). Ultimately, the hope is that LAEs can also create transformative experiences, designed to increase opportunity and educational opportunities for the most disenfranchised. This project represents the first step in that direction.

Huge social upheaval occurred in the U.S. as the 1960s morphed into the 70s, with the role of women and minorities at the center of these struggles. The programs of the Young Lords and The Black Panthers are well-documented, as neighborhood breakfast programs, schools, and other services began to be imagined and executed not by the government, but by the people. Few 20th century artists have captured the hearts and minds of the oppressed citizenry as Emory Douglas. As Minister of Culture and Revolutionary Artist of the Black Panther Movement, Douglas brought the outrage and indignation of police brutality, violation of Constitutional Amendments, and the gross injustices of the black urban landscape to life—through powerful images—spurring

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71 Augusto pays homage to his friend and mentor Paolo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* and is succeeded by Chela Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed.*
thousands to action in one of the most legendary chapters of our Civil Rights Movement (Douglas and Durant, 2014). Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and its widespread opposition, artists of all genres spoke out against unrestrained imperialistic ambitions. Bob Dylan’s “Masters of War” blasts the politicians who would “fasten the triggers…for others to fire…then you set back and watch…when the death count gets higher…” (Zinn, 2003, 30). Challenging government abuse of power continues in both North and South America throughout early 70s, in Chile with Unidad Popular’s incorporation of Neruda’s Canto General in their collective creation of community murals highlighting the social and economic struggles of the people (Barndt, 2006, 60).

Concurrently, on the East Coast, in the early 1970s, the Puerto Rican trifecta (Piñero, Pietri and Algarín), and others presented the ugly reality of poverty and crime—as reflected through New York city’s Latino barrios—with riveting spoken word performances. The Nuyorican Poet’s Café—testament to the strength and resilience of the transplanted, transmigrated Puerto Rican community in El Barrio, Harlem, the South Bronx and the East Village—remains their most enduring legacy (Morales, 2003, 97-100). The Nuyorican has thrived, evolving through five decades because it filled a void—to articulate a new identity, to give testimony to struggle, and to keep tradition and faith alive. Today it stands as a multicultural, multiethnic form of cultural, community, and artistic resistance, perhaps one of the best examples of a democratic, inclusive, artistic, community spaces, poised to engage in the “imaginative re-discovery of essential identities.”
The 1980s and 1990s in NYC are times of transition for Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, overshadowed by the intense theoretical leaps taken by feminist scholars. The Chicana literary scene is exploding at this time, with Cherrié Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Haciendo Caras*, and the revolutionary feminist anthology *Ésta Puente Mi Espalda*; Lorna Dee Cervantes is but one of many politicized Chicana poet-academics. These progressive strides in literary and creative production paralleled an upsurge of attention and interest invested in Chicano/a and Border art, best investigated in Gaspa de Alba’s *Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master’s House, Cultural Politics in the CARA Exhibition* (1998) and Chávez, Grynsztejn, and Kanjo’s *La Frontera/The Border: Art About the Mexico/United States Border Experience* (1993). These exhibitions, grand and sweeping in nature, were designed to redefine Latinos in the mind’s eye of the American public and to challenge the stereotypes of Hispanics/Latinos. They further demonstrate that activism and art are easily integrated and fused together.

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72 Becker notes that although the Reagan-Bush years were devastating for all economically disenfranchised groups, they were especially so for artists, writers, and intellectuals (Becker, 1994, xii). Frances Aparicio calls it “the failed decade of the Hispanic” (2007). I prefer to see it as the evolution from a “Hispanic” identity to a “Latino” identity. Ed Morales chooses to sidestep this thorny label issue, which cuts across many dimensions of ethnic/national/racial/economic/political difference, in calling his book *Living in Spanglish* (2002). Seizing on the language as hybrid metaphor, Morales, a Puerto Rican poet/journalist/writer himself, focuses on the role of music to cross cultural boundaries. There are multiple musical hybrids in Miami, with one of the most beloved being DJ Le Spam and the Spam All Stars. Ralph spoke at length of their initiation in creating the ¡Fuácata! experience in Little Havana in the late 90s, a parallel to Ozomatli’s musical Spanglish experiment in Los Angeles (Morales, 195-196).

73 The first major national art show organized and represented by Chicanos/as in collaboration with a mainstream art institution, CARA engaged in the critical debates and struggles of a postmodern society.” (Gaspar de Alba, 5-7). CARA was notable because of its presence in major museums across the country (Los Angeles, Denver, Albuquerque, San Francisco, Fresno, Tucson, El Paso, Washington, D.C., San Antonio, and The Bronx, NY) and because of its inherently counterhegemonic ethos, should be framed in the logic of Chela Sandoval’s “oppositional consciousness” (Gaspar de Alba, 10; 279-286).
bell hooks’ insightful collection, *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*, discusses the role of art—its appropriation, subjugation, and ultimate eradication—as an area for control and mastery in the process of asserting imperialistic dominance. She reflects “…if one could make a people lose touch with their capacity to create, lose sight of their will and their power to make art, then the work of subjugation, of colonization is complete” (hooks, 1995, xv). In other words, creativity provides an antidote for submission to the dominant ideology of passive consumerism. Critiquing one of the most elusive painters of the 21st century, Jean-Michel Basquiat, she claims that his work confronts the “unspeakable” and that his work “unmasks the ugliness” of Western imperialism (hooks, 1995, 38). At the same time, hooks elevates the possibility of alternative visions of blackness, seen in the resistance of Lorna Simpson’s photography, depicting black women with elegance and grace, as many times they turn their backs to the camera, signifying defiance (hooks, 1995, 97).

Retaining optimism for the transformative power of art, she explores the connection between art, democracy, and freedom: “Art should be, then, a place where boundaries can be transgressed, where visionary insights can be revealed…and remains such an uninhibited, unrestrained cultural terrain only if all artists see their work as inherently challenging to those institutionalized systems of domination…” (hooks, 1995, 138).

Matthew Fox’s *Creativity* (2002) asserts that creativity is not only a natural human endeavor, but one way we connect with cosmic energies, and can transcend the limits of our physical existence.

This researcher hypothesizes that LAEs—through teaching and art-making—present the best and worst possible scenarios. Once they unveil the ugliness, we are all able to imagine the opposite, the antithesis to begin planning and working toward better alternatives for the ways we teach and learn, live and thrive.
From ancient times, art has been perceived as a generator of moral transformation; in fact, Plato saw art as such a powerful force that he recommended it be under the “rigorous control of the state and a major consideration in educational planning.” (Edelman, 1995, 54). Similarly, Sonia Sanchez agrees with Shelley’s claim that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world,” echoing this sentiment claiming, “Yes, all poets, all writers are political. They either maintain the status quo or they say, ‘Something’s wrong, let’s change it for the better.” (Reich, World, May/June 1999). Once we agree that change is necessary, the next step is determining how to orchestrate this change. LAEs may provide important clues in this journey.

While artists have shown admirable courage in critiquing war and totalitarian governments concerned with power, prestige, and expansion of profits over humanitarian rights, governments have attempted to appropriate art to consolidate the state’s absolute power objectives. Adolph Hitler was a student of art, and attempted to oversee the ruthless “regulation of art to enhance the authority of his regime.” (MacClancy, 1997, 10). Without a doubt, art and education are both “contested spaces,” precisely why they are so powerful as “spaces of possibility.” Art, in particular maintains an “aggressive refusal to sustain society’s illusions” (Becker, 1994, xiii.). Marcuse posits “the possibility of human liberation lies “in the imagination—its regenerative abilities to remain uncolonized by the prevailing ideology, continue to generate new ideas and reconfigure the familiar” (Becker, 1994, 114). As a dimension of human expression that is so contested, one begins to see why art can never be completely colonized, controlled, manipulated, or mandated. In contrast, the world of

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education is much more highly regulated with oversight coming from multiple sources (parents, administrators, district, peers). LAEs must navigate both spaces, and learn to avert indirect pressures and direct efforts to control the messages they project through their art and teaching. Uncovering how they are able to negotiate these identities and cultural worlds is the one of the foci of this research.

The concept of Latino/a ethnic identity can be conceptualized similarly—as a contested space—eclectic, elusive and ever-changing. Sociologists, anthropologists and philosophers have been exploring “identity” formation, development, change, and resilience since the Civil Rights Movement gave birth to “ethnic studies” departments. The difficulty in arriving at a solid understanding stems from several factors. First, scholars must flush out the last vestiges of positivism—there is “no one truth” as much as there is “no one definition of Latino/a identity.” This dialectic between similarity and difference presents a loose constellation of “characteristics that may or may not be true,” especially when a more complex analysis—considering gender, race, class, education, sexuality—all affect and skew the concept of “Latino/a identity” in different ways. Furthermore, a sense of “latinidad” by virtue of its expression as a pan-ethnic consciousness, is as complex and multiple and mixed as each of its components, within each culture/nationality and across groups. What Latinos/as may have in

76 Stuart Hall’s “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” frames Caribbean identities as being placed along two axes or vectors that operate simultaneously: the vector of similarity and continuity and the vector of difference and rupture (Williams and Chrisman, 1993, 395).

77 Anzaldúa makes a compelling case for “reclaiming la mulata,” invoking the central and sacred metaphor of corn to explain the tenacity of the mestiza, “kernels clinging to the husk,” her connection with the land and how hybridity creates strength inherently through its crossbreeding and regenerative nature.
common, may be paradoxically, the discontinuities, ruptures, divisions, and diversity of their experiences. Finally, for four decades or more now, the processes of Americanization, acculturation, globalization, transnationalism, and sweeping technological changes have resulted in profound impacts for identity formation and articulation. One of the key research questions surrounds the possibility and practical limitations to the creation and nurturing of a Latino/a (Miami) aesthetic or ethos around the cultural production during the five-year period encompassing 2003-2007, and more recently from 2010-2013. LAEs may help to shed light on the ever-changing, fluid notion of “latinidad” or “latino/a-ness” as one component of their identity under scrutiny in this exploratory study.

As the number of Latinos in the U.S. continues to surge, increasingly Latino/a artists have begun to explore what unites U.S. Latinos—despite our diversity—through various performative works. Caridad “La Bruja” de la Luz and La Mariposa are two Nuyorican spoken word performance poets who illustrate the complexities of being a Latina woman; their widespread appeal transcends their ethnicity and both present themes of social justice in their writing. Malverde, raised in a family of migrant farm workers, has adopted the name of Mexican saint—akin to a Robin Hood hero for the poor—began writing poetry, which soon morphed into hip-hop. On the forefront of the Spanish hip-hop movement, Malverde speaks to issues facing all Latino youth (http://onesheet.com/malverde/splash/#). In contrast to Malverde, Afro-Peruvian Immortal Technique (raised

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78 For more background on La Mariposa, see http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/mariposa

79 As an organizer for the National Latino Collegiate Conference in 2000, I was privileged to see La Bruja perform at the University at Albany. I witnessed the way she moved the audience, although heavily Puerto Rican, included Latinos of many stripes.
in New York) has refused to sign to a major record label, but still enjoys widespread popularity; singing and rapping mostly in English, he utilizes his music as a platform to send strong messages about poverty, inequality, war, corruption and greed80.

While these Latino/a Artist (educators?) are motivated by a quest for social justice, similarly their music and art creates inspiration through a ripple effect. As Edelman (1995) explains, “the influence of these works is multiplied, extended, and reinforced…through two stage flows…in a crucial sense, then, art is the fountainhead from which political discourse…and consequent actions spring” (2-3). The impact is magnified even more with the 21st century advances in technology have democratized not only the means of production and the means of distribution in the hands of everyone. As Ben Cameron (2010) mused, “who doesn’t know a 13 or 14 year-old hard at work on their third film?!” (TedxYYC Talk). Cornel West’s observation that youth culture has been central to many of the significant social movements of in the American democratic experiment—from the anti-Vietnam war movement and black freedom struggles to the more recent protests—and the centrality of hip-hop music to express the younger generation’s frustration with the empty promises of America’s democracy point to interesting possibilities for this research81.

80 See Immortal Technique’s Facebook page. A brief interview with Immortal Technique is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XGTHgsevQA.

81 Most of the Latino artist-educators in our sample are young, of the generation of Chuck D or influenced by hip-hop and rap music, and many of their art forms (especially spoken word), incorporate direct or indirect references to these artists.
In another realm—that of theater and comedy—John Leguizamo forges a pioneering path of seemingly irreconcilable differences. Through self-deprecating humor, he makes his Latino/a characters come alive by showing their idiosyncrasies—through works that are simultaneously “…harsh, graphic, funny—and at the same time tragic, desperate, and painfully raw…like Latin life itself (Chirico, Fall 2002, 40). Filled with “so much grace and chutzpah,” Leguizamo “uses comedy to make heroes of his characters…these outcast individuals who suffer from poverty, discrimination and feelings of unworthiness are as much a symbol of hope, pride, and integrity” as he explains his theory in the introduction to Mambo Mouth: “You’ve got to be strong to make fun of yourself…mocking the Latin community was one of the most radical ways to empower it.” (ibid). Although Leguizamo is Colombian-Puerto-Rican, he extends his metaphors to incorporate identity challenges for all Latinos/as. He explores the pain of assimilation, the challenge of self-love, and the quest for solidarity and understanding through many characters, who often speak interchangeably in Spanish and English, “suggesting the complex political and social negotiations those of Hispanic descent experience in their attempts to remain true to one identity while assimilating with another” (ibid, 43). Garnering a Tony nomination and the first Latino one-man show to play on Broadway, Freak, Leguizamo’s semi-demi-quasi-pseudo autobiographical one-man show, bonds Latinos together by sprinkling in just enough Spanish to signal who is “of the tribe” (Chirisco, 36). Though his other works celebrate multiple characters of wide-ranging ethnicities, through Freak, Leguizamo’s is much more personal, seeking understanding, healing, and catharsis. Ultimately, however, through expanding the boundaries of performance, he is developing a new “Latino prototype” and “using
comedy as a political force,” demonstrating to the audience new ways of “examin[ing] their own cultural assumptions and encourag[ing] them to formulate new models of community and identity.” (ibid, 49). This suggests that LAEs may also engage in complex negotiations, synthesizing their many hybrid identities. Similarly, LAEs could be central in proposing innovative ways to find wholeness and groundedness in their own individual identities and in the collective, surrounding community.

As Frances Aparicio notes in her essay, “U.S. Latino Expressive Cultures,” the arts as a cultural production constitute an ongoing dialogue of “imaginative rediscoveries of essential identities”(356). Regardless whether theatre, poetry, painting, sculpture, photography, or music, art teaches the audience. The particular lesson varies with the observer, as critical theorists have long claimed that the interaction between viewer/audience and art/artist is the determining factor, creating specific meanings, depending on culture(s) and context(s). At the same time, when the artist and his/her work resonates with the audience, individuals experience a moment of awareness, understanding and knowing⁸² that extends beyond the intellectual to include dimensions of the spiritual, emotional, and psychological/other affective epistemologies. Allowing individuals to reconnect symbolically, while creating a space for collective identification, the LAEs in Miami assert their own re-creative and regenerative identities through integrating⁸³ the fragmentation characteristic of a postmodern cultural existence.

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⁸² I would argue that this illumination is driven by an emotional or visceral response and, according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, reflects the highest levels of knowledge—evaluation and synthesis.

⁸³ Grotowski’s method and approach provides a parallel window into the world of theater education and actor training; he asserts that growth as an actor is contingent upon the “discarding of masks” and making the soul transparent.
Just who are these LAEs, these modern-day mystics? This researcher set out to explore on a deeper level, not just “who?” they are on a deeper level, but more importantly, questions of “how” and “why” they engage in cultural production. Over 100 hours of interviews and countless months and years of engagement have led this researcher to examine LAEs with rigor, detail, curiosity and criticism. It is to this work we now turn.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Site Selection
The proposed dissertation is strengthened due to this researcher’s professional experience, and familiarity with South Florida’s educational and cultural landscape. As a non-profit educational administrator, collaborating with nearly three-dozen different schools (ranging from elementary to university-level, and including public, private, parochial and charter schools), the researcher was afforded the flexibility and autonomy to create academic programs and their corresponding curricula. A love of the arts encouraged an experimental six-week arts-based, innovative enrichment afterschool program. Soon, this afterschool program morphed into year-round academic enrichment programs, designed to serve not just students, but families. Meeting a handful of artists, we began presenting workshops in community education programs, and Saturday enrichment programs. These “regular” artists-- Will “da Real One,” Profet, Amy Baez, and Rashida Bartley—who had been engaging our population of “at-risk” middle school students, were primarily spoken word artists. Through their friends and connections, the artistic milieu of Miami quickly came into focus, as the non-profit educational program intensified its collaborations with local artists.

A multi-year, multi-million dollar grant under the “No Child Left Behind Act” served as the impetus for the researcher, then Program Director and 21st Century Community Learning Centers Director, to imagine, design, plan, and supervise a new afterschool intervention program around visual and performing arts. This program soon became a model for innovative educational approaches, aiming to increase student motivation,
creativity, cooperation, and self-esteem. The initial process of seeking out, observing, interviewing and hiring a dozen artists within a tight time frame snowballed, and soon I became fully engaged in the artistic community of Miami. During the subsequent four years, more Latino/a artists were encouraged to explore teaching through guest performances and summer residencies in our “workshop in education.” Conversely, because the academic program I administered utilized young teachers (between 16 and 23) in an intensive summer training program, I consciously crafted their training to emphasize the power of the arts to inspire, illuminate, and deepen learning for students who struggle in conventional classrooms. It is possible that the researcher helped to create some of these LAEs, through consciously blending the education world with the art world. A small number are former Breakthrough Miami (Summerbridge Miami) teachers who all visual artists, and each served in the role of Art Director during the intensive summer program: Yudelka, Melina, and Karina. Some of the LAEs had already engaged in educational events and activities, but they became more active and conscious educators working with the Summerbridge/Breakthrough program (Profet, Amy, Tony Gee).

Participants in the Research Design

From 2003-2008, Miami—the gateway to Latin America—and arguably, one of the most diverse cuidades latinas (“Latino” cities) in the United States, became my

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84 Temporarily relocating to Tampa from January 2008 through April 2010, I was somewhat removed from the development of the artistic milieu in Miami during these two years. However, I made frequent trips (in the neighborhood of 15-20 visits) during those 28 months. Between 2010-2014, I lived in Miami full-time, and splitting my time between Miami and Tampa in 2015. Much social, cultural, demographic, and economic change has occurred since 2008, and while it is impossible to cover the entire scope of this evolution we will elaborate on significant aspects in subsequent chapters.
classroom as I immersed myself in the artistic and cultural vibrancy of this community, where many young Latino/a artists were engaged in diverse and thought-provoking projects. Soon, it became apparent that many of my artistic colleagues were also educators. Many were involved in leading community programs, from the occasional workshop to regularly weekly or weekend youth programs. Others worked through a highly successful afterschool program called Arts for Learning in Miami. Another segment of the participants was currently teaching full-time (or had been in the past) and devoted their evenings, weekends, and summers to practicing, perfecting and performing their artistic craft. Conversely, a few taught only during the summer months. Most of the LAEs included in this study have taught in more than one context, and their time spent teaching in relation to creating art has changed as opportunities arise, and their financial, personal, or familial needs dictate.

They were selected if they answered “yes” or agreed to each of the following three questions: Are you Latino/a? Are you an artist? Are you an educator? If the individual self-defined as an LAE, they were eligible to be interviewed. While the research was underway, several people suggested others I could interview and soon, the goal of two dozen informants quickly grew into over fifty participants. Of these 52, 29 were known to the researcher via the dominant artistic networks in Miami, and could be considered within a broad “circle of friends,” with another five categorized as colleagues or friends of friends. As mentioned, three were teachers in the educational enrichment program, already dedicated visual artists. The researcher knew two LAEs as teachers of her own children or teachers of her former students. All in all, 39 LAEs were known to the
researcher prior to the interviews, with thirteen participants were fairly unknown to the researcher, with the interview questions serving as the first real exchange.

Through extended interviews with the inhabitants or “border crossers” of both of these spheres of existence, we will draw together the confines and contours of the culture of education and the culture of the arts. To be included in the study, the artist-educators need only to define themselves as both artists and educators. They are not all certified teachers, nor always renowned or established artists—at least not by the criteria most often used to evaluate artists or teachers. Furthermore, it is important to underscore that the operational definitions of “education” and “arts” that frame this research are necessarily and intentionally broad and somewhat atypical/non-traditional (see “Terminology” in the Introduction Section or Appendix A: Master Chart of LAEs).

“Educators” here consist of typical educators working in schools, community educators, afterschool educators, mentors or coaches in their chosen arts genre, and many others who “teach” at least part-time to some segment of the community, across many diverse settings and circumstances. Likewise, my conceptualization of “the arts” includes a preponderance of performing artists, with a sprinkling of visual artists; there are those that have never “exhibited” their work in a professional venue, and others who are performing consistently, but perhaps not always for pay or in high-profile venues. On the flip side, there are highly established artists, some of whom have been present working in Miami’s cultural venues for over 25 years. Finally, some LAEs vary in the amount of time they teach from year to year, or even month-to-month, and this fluid, flexibility may be one key to their success.
Because most of the LAEs in this study are young—ranging in age from 24 to 60 something, yet with a mean age of 36—as emerging artists, their work is even more accessible; the immediacy and intimacy of an open mic event or a community theatre piece staged in a small warehouse minimizes the separation and space between artist and audience. Through witnessing other artists perform and create (many of whom form the “audiences” at these events), they are inspired to expand or interpret using their medium and their voice. Even more intriguing, the various performance spaces dedicated to emerging artists allows them to develop, rehearse, and refine their work while receiving ongoing feedback from an audience. In fact, most of the artists featured in this study are quite accessible, and rooted in community work of some kind or another.

Research Methods

The research design was qualitative and ethnographic in broad terms, and included the following specific methodologies:

➢ Participant Observation—My direct observations and professional experiences, tempered with reflexive analysis and multiple methodological approaches, constitute a significant asset in the research. Spanning many months and environments, these direct observations of LAEs in classrooms, cafeteria programs, libraries, cafés, in the streets, at festivals, and other performance spaces.

85 While the vast majority of LAEs are “emerging” in terms of their level of recognition and sustainability, most have been practicing their art for many years. Magdalena Gomez is certainly an outlier in this assessment as her work has been published and presented for over four decades now. Jude Papaloko is similarly entrenched, having established several galleries since the late 1980s in Miami Beach and Miami. LAEs such as Jesus Quintero and Octavio Campos have traveled internationally to perform their creations.
venues provide a valuable backdrop for the analysis of individual LAEs. LAEs have been observed both “teaching” and “performing” (or exhibiting). In some instances, I was able to see them “performance teaching” and “teaching performance” as the lines and roles are at times delineated, and occasionally, quite interwoven. An important aspect of this ethnographic data collection was the inclusion of the audience, whose role in co-creating meaning—whether in the classroom or from the stage—cannot be underestimated. Conversation and feedback from participants facilitated exploring these “alternative democratic spaces” for critical questioning, testifying, connecting, discovery, and sharing through communal rituals. Some of these conversations were audio-recorded, and others documented in field notes. Photographs and videos of the more influential and important venues provide a backdrop for reference purposes and will constitute another level of analysis. Finally, some festivals and events where LAEs are performing or networking have also been included to allow an additional window of observation and perspective, important in understanding what happens with local LAEs when Miami is the destination for global music and art festivals.

➢ **In-Depth Interviews**—This segment of the research design forms the cornerstone for analysis, with 49 Latino/a Artist Educators interviewed, and three informants interviewed as part of the study. Informants are artist-educators, but are not Latino/a: A select few “artist-educators,” were consulted for their feedback, because of their deep involvement personally and professionally with
both the arts and education. These semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed to full text versions of the participants’ responses. “Semi-structured” interviews indicate that the same questions are asked to each of the participants; these questions appear below and in Appendix A. While the same questions will be posed to all LAEs, the order and flow of the interview will likely vary, appearing more conversational so that all of the topics are addressed while avoiding a stilted interaction.

**Interview Questions**

1) Where were you born? ¿Dónde naciste?

2) How long have you lived in the United States? For how long in Miami? In which other cities? ¿Por cuánto tiempo has vivido en los estados unidos? ¿Cúanto tiempo en Miami? ¿Y en otras ciudades?

3) Tell me the story of your family…your parents? Brothers and sisters? What you remember most about growing up/your childhood? Cuéntame la historia de tu familia…

5) Do you define yourself as an artist? In what ways? (Primary as well as secondary pursuits) ¿Eres un/una artista? ¿En cuales sentidos?

6) Tell me about the kind of art you create and why you create it… Cuéntame sobre el arte que Ud crea, y porque lo crea así…

8) Are you an activist? Someone who works for social change? How so? ¿Eres una activista—o sea, alguien que trabaja por un cambio social?

9) Why do you do what you do? (if needed) ¿Porqué haces lo que haces?

10) Going back to about your childhood…why do you write/act/make music/sing/dance/perform? How were you exposed to the arts growing up? Cuéntame de tu niñez—por que crees que ahora eres una artista? Habían muchos influencias artísticas en tu familia ó tu experiencia en la escuela?

11) Growing up, what were your career aspirations? What did you dream of becoming when you “grew up”? ¿Cuándo estabas joven, cuales eran las aspiraciones de profesión?

12) Where does your motivation and inspiration come from? What motivates you to create your art? What motivates you teach? ¿De donde viene tu inspiración y motivación? ¿Qué te inspira para crear tu arte? ¿Qué te inspira enseñar?

13) Why do you combine arts AND education? Why not just one? ¿Porqué ambos—los artes, y la educación—porqué no solo uno?

14) How do you identify? (Culturally, ethnically) Cómo identificas? (culturalmente, en términos de étnicidad)

15) Does your art reflect your culture and identity? How? Does your art challenge popular notions or stereotypes about your group? Explain. Does your teaching reflect your culture and identity in any way? How? Does your teaching challenge popular ideas or stereotypes about your group(s)? ¿Refleja tu arte la cultura y identidad? ¿Cómo? Presenta “un reto” a los opiniones populares tu cultura y
identidad? Explica, por favor! ¿Y la enseñanza—tu filosofía, tus métodos, etc. reflejan tu experiencia y identidad? ¿Cómo?

16) Which other artists have influenced you—both in your genre and others? Are there any educators who have had a profound influence on your decision to teach or your teaching practice? ¿Cúales otras artistas te han influenciado, tanto en tu área y otras. ¿Hay algunos educadores que han influenciado tu decisión o modo de enseñar?

17) Which Latino artists or Latin American artists have influenced your work? Who have been greatest influence (both Latino and non-Latino)? ¿Cúales artistas latinos o latinoamericanos han sido lo más impactante en tu trabajo?

18) Who are your greatest heroes, role models, or mentors? ¿Quiénes son tus héroes y mentores, o gente que admiran y tiene aspiraciones acercarse Úd?

19) How do you see yourself in relation to the greater society of non-Latinos? ¿Cómo te percibes tu en relación a la mayoría de los que no son latinos?

20) What are your views on the artist community in ________? (your city) Is there a “Latino Artist community”/movement? ¿Qué opinión tienes de la comunidad de artistas en _____? ¿Existe un movimiento de artistas latinos en tu comunidad?

21) How does your ethnicity, background and culture shape or impact your art/work/teaching? Does your art reflect your identity in any way? Does your teaching reflect your identity in any way? ¿Cómo impacta tu etnicidad a tu arte/trabajo/enseñanza? ¿Refleja tu arte tu identidad de alguna manera? Y tú modo de enseñar?
22) Is there a specific “culture of education”? (in other words, in your experience, do you feel the educational/teaching world has certain norms, values, expected behaviors…?) Is there a specific “culture of the arts”? How similar and how different? Are you a different person when you are “an artist” vs. “an educator”? If so, how? ¿Crees que hay cierta cultura de education? ¿Sientes que el mundo de la education tienta ciertas valores y comportamiento…¿Hay una cultura de los artes en específico? ¿Cómo de similares y diferentes?

23) What can the art world learn from the “culture of education”? What can the education world learn from the “culture of the arts”? (As both an artist and educator, if you could “wave a magic wand” and give one thing to teachers which most good artists possess, what would this gift be? (a talent, a perspective, a strength, an ability) and…vice-versa, if you could give one “gift” to all artists that most good teachers already have, what would it be? (This question seeks to find the most valuable “lesson” to be shared across these 2 worlds.) ¿Qué puede aprender el mundo del arte, de la cultura de la educación? ¿Si pudieras darles una sola cosa a los maestros fue la mayoría de las artistas buenas poseen, que sería (un talento, una perspectiva, una habilidad)?…y si de la misma forma pudieras darles algo a todas las artistas que la mayoría de las maestras buenos poseen, que sería?

24) Do you consider your art to be a vocation, trade, calling, a mission, or a profession? What about your work with children—how would you classify it? ¿Consideras que tú arte es una vocación, una misión, o profesión? Y tú trabajo con ninos, cómo lo clasificarpas?
25) Do you feel a responsibility to future generation(s)? If so, in what ways? ¿Sientes cierta responsabilidad hacia las generaciones del future?

26) Do you consider your art/work to be political? Do you consider your teaching to be political? ¿Consideras que tú arte/trabajo es político? ¿Consideras tú forma de enseñar política?

27) What was your experience like in school? ¿Cúal fue tú experiencia en la escuela?

28) How do you think schools “should” be? ¿Cómo crees que las escuelas deben ser?

29) Looking at schools today, how “fair,” or “just,” or correct are they? Do you see opportunities for the creation of a truly democratic space? Viendo como estan las escuelas hoy en dia, ¿cómo de justas, injustas, o correctos crees que son? ¿Crees que hay oportunidades para un espacio verdaderamente democrático?

30) Do you see yourself as having an ethical role as an artist? As an educator? If so, how? If not, why not? ¿Consideras que tienes una responsibilidad cómo artista? ¿Cómo educador? ¿Porqué? ¿Porqué no?

31) What is the relationship, if any, between your teaching/your art and the creation of a (radical) democracy? (can substitute “authentic” for radical—a system where the government is truly “of the people, by the people, for the people”) ¿Qué relación, si alguna, existe entre tu forma de enseñar y tu arte, y la creación de una democracia radical? (verdadera)

32) Some people claim that we have entered a “raceless, color-blind society.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Hay personas que creen que nuestra sociedad no ve “color” ni existe racism…¿Estas de acuerdo?

33) How do you identify? ¿Cómo te identificas?
34) Do you have a personal mission statement? If so, can you share it…¿Tienes un propósito específico en tu misión? ¿Puede compartirlo?

35) What sacrifices are you willing to make for your art? What sacrifices are you willing to make for your teaching? ¿Qué sacrificios estás dispuesta hacer por tú arte? Y por tú enseñanza?

36) How do you communicate to the audience in the classroom, and how do you communicate through your art? What makes good communication? How important is communication in performing and teaching? ¿Cómo te comunicas con la audiencia en su salon de clase, y cómo te comunicas atraves del arte? ¿Cómo creas buena comunicación? ¿Cómo de importante es comunicación cuando enseñando o actualizando tú arte?

37) How important is “hope” in creating art or in teaching young people? Where does your sense of “hope” come from and how is it expressed in your work? ¿Cómo de importante es la esperanza creando arte o enseñando a estudiantes jóvenes?

38) How is your art related to the notions of liberty, freedom, and justice? How is your teaching exemplary of these values? ¿Cómo esta relacionado tú arte a las nociones de libertad y la justicia? ¿Cómo es tu enseñanza un ejemplo de estas valores?

Participants were given the choice to conduct interviews in English or Spanish or Spanglish. Of the fifty-two interviewed, four preferred Spanish, four flipped back and forth in typical Spanglish, and the remainder chose to respond in English. Upon reviewing the audiotapes and transcripts, if there were questions that were skipped or
responses that seemed unclear, the researcher then attempted to contact the participant once again to fill in any gaps in questioning. At the conclusion of the interviews, LAEs were asked to indicate the level of confidentiality they desired, based on the questions and their responses. All but one LAE chose to be identified by their full name.

The exception to this is that three of the 52 interviews were not conducted in person, but via written correspondence. The researcher mailed the participants the questions and they chose to answer them through text format and email the responses. Of these respondents, one was living in California, the second—although a native Miamian—was in college in New York City, and the third participant, also from Miami, preferred to write out his responses rather than coordinate a face-to-face interview.

➢ Reflective/Reflexive Practice—Writing, drawing, sketching, stream-of-consciousness, sometimes informal talks with other LAEs, creating and performing poetry, dance and creative movement, and other rituals were documented, either in field notes, or at times, photographed and/or videotaped. I have also attempted to capture glimpses of a changing Miami, taking photographs of various neighborhoods and the impact of artists, especially at critical junctures, such as during the Occupy Movement. Chronicling as much of the surrounding community evolution served to make sense of what was going

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86 All participants were given the option of selecting a level of disclosure, choosing to be identified by their full name, first name only, or a pseudonym. Each selected the level of transparency they felt comfortable with as part of their participant release form. Overall, only one LAE asked for a pseudonym.
on around me; many times, there operated two levels of “meaning-making” with artists interpreting various events or situations, and then my interpretation of their reaction.

In the tradition of strong subjectivity, I invoke Freire’s (1998) declaration that knowing “involves the whole conscious self, feelings, emotions, memory, affects, an epistemologically curious mind, focused on the object” and that two levels of “knowing” occur—the first, as “pure experience” from “moving in the world” (undeniable, tangible and commonsensical) and second, the kind of knowing that comes from distancing ourselves, objectifying the situation (quantifiable, systematic, rigorous), in order to gain an exactitude or margin of security (92-93). Naturally, our perceptions and understanding are filtered through our own personal, subjective lenses, which are shaped by our identity, character, and experience. Strong subjectivity from the feminist tradition of epistemology says that we must acknowledge, admit, and be held accountable for the intrusion of our “selves” into the research process.

Franks (2002) puts it this way: rather than defining “objectivity” as the problem, we need to recognize the real problem is “the illusion of objectivity” (41). This awareness leads us to avoid making assumptions or assimilations during the analysis. Ideas about the self undoubtedly shape understanding and knowledge, yet critical awareness and questioning can help “tease out” what is the domain of the data, and what is the researcher’s imposed ways of thinking and seeing. Of course, the challenge is finding balance and authenticity in this grey area. Based on the concept of “identity
politics," (Alcoff, 1997), Frank agrees that positionality is the most relevant concept, and provides the basis for action for social justice" (43). One of the creative tensions I share with the LAEs is “our multiple and overlapping identities as artists, activists, and academics” (Barndt). The reconciliation and integration of these identities is central to understanding the LAE experience.

Data Collection and Storage
Each interview was recorded on a portable MP-3 player, so complete attention could be focused on listening LAEs, ensuring that all questions were asked and answered, and interacting with participants. Notes taken during the interview process captured the interviewee’s attitude, energy, and general impressions. After each interview, the researcher summarized salient points from memory—most striking or lucid—and noted questions/comments for reflection and consideration. In addition, each interview was downloaded immediately onto my personal laptop computer (access to which is limited to the researcher), and saved on an external USB drive for additional security. The interviews were transcribed, converted into text format; these transcribed files were all saved on my laptop and backed up on an external drive for extra precautionary measures. The researcher completed all of the transcriptions, with the exception of five interviews, which were completed by an assistant. This assistant completed the transcription and returned the CD which held copies of these specific interviews only. No outside persons have access to my computer or to this external jump drive, in order to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of transcribed comments. When requested, the researcher provided a copy of MP3 audio file of the interview for that particular LAE.
Data Analysis

The process for analyzing data gathered from interviews will approximate the following series of steps:

1) Initial listening to audio version of interviews. Once downloaded and saved, the interview was listened to by the researcher.

2) After listening to each interview, a “quick sketch” was compiled, summarizing the most interesting commentary, making notations, where applicable, to connect interviews to the hypotheses and/or relevant theoretical assertions.

3) Repetition of listening to interviews. Each interview was listened to at least three times, to get a general sense of the most compelling segments of the interview and where there might be overlap or convergence in ideas or themes presented. Additional notes may be added to the “sketch” already in progress.

4) Transcription of interviews. The interviews were transcribed and converted into Word documents. This process required patience and diligence. These were all saved in the researcher’s laptop, printed out, and placed in a binder for further reading, study, and analysis.

5) Spiral Process. In order to transcribe, the interviews need to be listened to several times. This listening, typing, and recording happens while the researcher is reflecting on the responses of other LAEs, and the responses of this particular LAE to other questions in the interview. All the while, reflection and making connections are underway. Each time around, the analysis goes deeper, with layers of meaning and discovery emerging. The researcher recognizes that the
interviews can sometimes “talk to each other,” translate ideas, as well as challenge or confirm scholarly assertions. Making connections between the theory and practice is a primary goal in this stage of the process. In other words, the researcher here, seeks to understand the responses of LAEs in the light of the research—holding these thoughts up to the scholarly literature, as well as the placing these narrative texts alongside the knowledge she carries regarding the artistic and educational environments in Miami. This qualitative approach brings together elements of ethnography, women’s studies and critical theory, alongside grounded theory and participatory action research.

6) **Variable, specific analytical strategy.** Each question or segment of the interview was analyzed differently according to the nature of the question and responses. This strategy is based upon what the researcher deems relevant and compelling in relation to the literature reviewed and the research objectives of the study. For instance, the demographic analysis is presented to facilitate quantifiable comparisons. With other interview questions, a qualitative approach is adopted as a more relevant lens of analysis. Overall, the interviews are considered as individual pieces of art (metaphorically), all part of an installation. This exhibit is akin to an orchestra of diverse and distinct voices which occasionally coalesce along points of congruence and harmonize to convey broader messages.

As evident by the range of questioning, each interview covered much territory, from the mundane to the moving. The range of topics explored was intentionally varied, with the goal of collecting as much data as possible on this fascinating category of artist-
educators. Still, there was considerable variation in the depth of the responses for each question, with some interviewees spending 45 minutes responding to all the questions, while it took others almost three hours!

Interview questions intentionally begin with questions of family and childhood, for psychological and cultural reasons. As Jeanette Castellanos stated in her “Centralizing the Role of Espiritualidad in Latino/a Students’ Educational Processes and Well-Being: Theory, Research, and Practice” session at the National Latina/o Psychological Association (November 2008), “familisimo” is one of the central lynchpins of Latino/a culture. Within la cultura latina, the centrality of “la familia” is undisputed: they become our mirrors and form the basis or starting point for our identity, even if later we disagree with what they say or who they envision us to be (as is the case with both Gloria Anzaldúa and bell hooks), the enduring impact of their early views on our psyche and self-image is undeniable.

The initial question “Tell me the story of your family…” is intentionally open-ended, provoking LAEs to narrate the story of their upbringing and situate themselves within a family dynamic that is self-constructed, where they select relevant facts, information, details, and general gestalt of the story. Because this segment of the interview is essentially a collapsed or condensed life history, we will analyze it using a narrative framework. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), narrative (and life history) approaches in research provide “a fertile source of hypotheses” and present “actions and perspectives across a social group” (121). The value of this approach goes beyond
detailed information about events and customs, “to capture the evolution of cultural patterns and how the patterns are linked to the life of an individual (121). From a feminist and cultural studies point of view, this increases participant empowerment and efficacy, creating a platform to voice specific experiences, events, and phenomena. The choice of deciding what details and how to retell the “story of my family” is critical, and the selectivity involved—the construction of the story hinges on inclusion and omission. This subjective telling allows LAEs to reveal which aspects of their identity and upbringing carry the most weight and figure most prominently in their development, as artists, educators, and individuals.

Two different approaches were used in meaning making with the information from the interviews and field notes: the first sees the interview in its entirety for a holistic understanding of the LAE, who they are, how they work, what drives and sustains them, and their sense of purpose. Because the questions are so varied, there are similarly, various ways to organize, understand, and compare the responses from these fifty plus interviews. The initial approach involved understanding the LAE in a holistic approach, taking all the responses from the interview questions, and putting all the pieces of the puzzle together to understand what makes them tick, in essence. Their particular responses help to situate the LAE on a multidimensional matrix.

The second approach in analysis studies one particular interview question and compares responses across all 52 informants, looking for congruence or divergence.
Because there are so many “planes” on this matrix—age, gender, ethnicity/race, and many others—each one of these “planes” or variables, will be presented independently, as much as possible. For example, in comparing the ethnicity of the LAEs, a pie-chart represents national origin groups and their percentage of the overall sample. Therefore, methods for organizing the data have assumed many different forms or dimensions.

Perhaps most importantly, the researcher has presented a demographic profile, one of the primary objectives of the research: to establish a basic understanding and sketch the contours of this diverse group. In seeking to paint a picture of the LAE community, we turn first to the demographics of age, sex, ethnicity, artistic focus, type of educator, generational status, family structure (single, married, children?), and family status (parents are married, divorced)—all of which are presented in graphs and charts for easy synthesis of information. For the birthplace of LAEs, the researcher employed a technique used in population maps, creating bubbles of different sizes to represent the number of LAEs born in that particular city/country. For other variables, such as “transience,” a simple chart is presented, listing the LAE and the number of years that they have lived in Miami, along with summary statistics such as range and mean.

Much of the remainder of the data collected, really the “meat” of the interview, is qualitative and narrative, and does not lend itself to a quantitative approach. Several key topics are explored or analyzed in depth for this dissertation project, namely the role of music, how they feel about the labels of artist and educator, and their impressions of and their predictions for the Miami LAE community. For each of these themes, we will
discuss general trends are presented, while noting examples from the interviews or field notes to support these assertions.

The researcher employed an approach called crystallization—a “creative analytical” approach, building on long-standing feminist tradition—to integrate the many strands of data gathered in this dissertation project. The metaphor of seeing “truth” as a dazzling crystal or gem is invoked by Laura Ellingson’s innovative work Engaging Crystallization in Qualitative Design (2009), offering a framework for blending grounded theory and other social scientific analyses with creative representations of data, such as narratives, poetry, and film. Refuting the positivist claim of one “absolute truth,” crystallization instead asserts there are multiple vantage points for viewing, interpreting, and understanding particular phenomena. Discarding the concept of “triangulation” for a more nuanced, dimensional, postmodern approach, crystallization privileges multiple and multi-dimensional epistemologies. The brilliance in this inclusive approach is that methodological and analytical hybrids provide an alternative framework to analyze identity, hybridity and the social and cultural boundaries of artist-educator-citizen.

While not constituting one specific method, this research will be guided by a feminist approach to knowledge and an action research approach to this scholarly investigation. Anzaldúa, Moraga, and others have long broken boundaries, rupturing the artificial dichotomy between art and science to tell their stories from a multiplicity of perspectives. Feminist teaching emphasizes being cognizant of the power dynamics between subjects and researchers, the role of the research, how information is “known,”
the question of bias, and the general sensitivity to and awareness of difference—all of which has been carefully considered in every stage of the dissertation research (see Harding’s *Feminism and Methodology*, 1987). Beyond representing the diversity of human experience and foregrounding the lived experience of women and other subaltern groups as theoretical and scholarly—in essence, legitimate and worthy of study—one of the hallmarks of feminist research is that it aims—expressly or tacitly—to create social change. Through the process of “giving voice” to the realities of the oppressed and vulnerable in our society, we make a conscious commitment to increasing social justice.

**Researcher Standpoint**

Likewise, as a researcher, I am driven by the search to bring more equality and justice to a world that is *Upside Down*, to borrow the title from Eduardo Galeano's (2001) moving critique of our postmodern world. Just as third world women and US feminists often find a fundamental disconnect—with the former principally concerned about improving social and economic conditions and the latter more interested in theoretical or abstract themes (Acosta-Belen, 1993)—this research attempts to build on the theoretical knowledge base, but is driven by the conviction that education can be radically improved, and even transformative. While one segment of my conscious, critical mind is engaged in the present, practical, and pragmatic aspects of research, another is entirely devoted to the implications for improving policy and practice as both the starting point and the raison-d’être for engaging in rigorous research. My early young adult experiences chronicle a world where all statistical odds were overcome for
my students, through an educational model that was built on personal relationships and
heavily saturated with creativity, rigor, caring, cultural competence, and the building of
personal self-confidence. The social justice perspective undoubtedly influenced the
research design, as the researcher is acutely aware of the need to apply the ideals of
an evolving, inclusive democracy to both education and the arts.

“Living in a state of psychic unrest is what makes poets and artists create” claims
Anzaldúa (1987, 95), and similarly, living in a state of intellectual ambiguity—permeated
by a restlessness, and a deep need to reconcile my diverse academic, artistic, and
cultural interests—drives this researcher to bring these ideas together. In the words of
Stanley, one of my informants, I am creating a “bricolage” of theory and methods in
order to illuminate the phenomena of LAEs’ work in classrooms and communities. This
comfort in ambiguity—along with a healthy skepticism and critical perspective—compels
me to analyze the phenomena of LAEs and their activity from multiple angles, revealing
their mission, purpose, impact, relevance, and promise.

“Not only postmodernist and poststructuralist theory, but also feminist methodology in
general has treated the goal of objectivity in research as an unobtainable
phantasm” (Franks, 41). Harding’s (1991) work suggests seeing objectivity on a
continuum, with “strong” and “weak” variations; strong objectivity is attained when the
illusion of researcher separation is discarded and instead, “the researcher exposes the
cultural and biographical aspects of the research” (Harding 1991, cited in Franks). This
exposure allows transparency, lays the groundwork for reflexivity, and most importantly,
gives readers an opportunity to analyze ways in which “tendencies of the researcher
may have influenced the research.”

Toward that end, the experience of the researcher provides a particular lens through
which theory and relevant literature is incorporated, as well as in seeing and analyzing
the perspectives of the 52 interviewees. The cultural immersion of the researcher
extends to 20 years of living the sociology of the educational world as a student,
student-teacher, teacher, teacher assistant, educational administrator (program director,
grant writer, public relations person, parent counselor, psychologist, motivational expert,
and teacher trainer), private tutor, and more recently, educational consultant.
Understanding the sociology of the art world is the result of 14 years of dance training,
six years of writing and performing poetry, four years of theatre preparation, two years of
visual art classes. Rather than attempt the “illusion of objectivity” (Franks, 41), the
researcher concedes that her specific positionality predisposes a certain understanding
of LAEs, and furthermore, that there is a possibility of generalizing from my own
experience. Notwithstanding, the goal of this exploratory research is to create a
combined profile, a baseline, a description of individuals and community in broad brush
strokes. As an ethnographic, qualitative study, all perspectives and points of view are
valid, beginning with the scholarly literature, and traversing through the experiences and
of the 52 LAEs interviewed, and finally, placing in context, or situating these realities
within a broader sociocultural community, through the interpretation of field notes and
observations from the researcher’s experience as participant-observer.
The real potential invoked with crystallization is that there are multiple frameworks and vantage points through which to view the overall experience of LAEs in Miami, illuminating the diversity in style, context, location, voice, presentation, and motivation. To provide additional perspective and more detailed analysis, I have assembled a virtual portfolio, comprised of samples of artistic work from many of the LAE participants. Some Latino/a artist educators selected the works they felt best “spoke to” the issues raised in our in-depth interviewing sessions, while I researched and found examples of work produced by others and published on websites, Youtube, and posted in various forms of social media. These artistic works include photographs (for photographers or visual artists), literature (for poets, playwrights, creative writers), CDs (with poetry or music recorded), or DVDs (for poetry, music, theatre, or dance). This archival or historical analysis includes not only “primary source documents” including newspaper articles, eyewitness accounts, relics, and other memorabilia but also a substantial collection of photographs and videos of LAEs engaging in cultural production. The researcher plans to include this “visual anthropology” or “film ethnography” as a supplemental presentation to the dissertation defense (Marshall and Rossman, 124).87

87 It is also possible that these multimedia documents may be combined with a performance piece to speak to a wider audience both in Miami and in other cities.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

“Until the lions have historians, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” –African Proverb

This chapter will analyze the results of the study, and begin to form a composite picture of these Latino/a Artist Educators. While demographically diverse in almost every way, there are several key characteristics they share. We will begin with a discussion of the process utilized to collect the data, take a detailed look at the demographics of the group, and then proceed to synthesize their thoughts and responses to the interview questions.

The chapter also provides a detailed discussion of the findings of nearly a decade of research and data collection. As a researcher exploring relatively new terrain—at the multidisciplinary intersection of education, psychology, political science, sociology, cultural/area studies, and urban planning—one of the most important tasks is organizing and analyzing the findings, formulating conclusions, and identifying areas for future research. Because of their multiple dualities, their potential impact on our youth, in particular, and society, in general, the power and impact LAEs can and do exert should not be underestimated. Toward this end, we begin a discussion of the most pertinent findings, sketching the contours and parameters of Latino/a Artist Educators and their creative work in Miami. Based on our original research goals, the following considerations guide the analysis of the data:
I. This study is both exploratory and holistic. As such, and because LAEs have not been comprehensively or critically studied, the findings will necessarily be divergent, covering a wide range of topics.

II. Recognizing LAEs do not exist in a vacuum, but instead are shaped by and are active agents in shaping their environs, I will explore this dynamic relationship between individual and community for LAEs in Miami.

III. While the lion’s share of the data stems from the semi-structured interviews of the LAEs selected for this study, the data collection is far more expansive including nearly a decade of ground-level observations—mostly immersive—and chronicled in field notes, journals, poetry, photographs, videos, and supplementary interviews. Additionally, various print and promotional materials have been archived, including flyers, newsletters and programs. Likewise, social media and other internet sources provide input into the historical memory through various websites, Facebook, event pages, and other virtual platforms.

IV. In describing LAEs and their diverse experiences and expressions, the focus is on highlighting patterns, and making note when resonance occurs to indicate similarities or common perceptions. Points of contrast are equally valuable, however, indicating the true diversity of our LAEs.

V. Notably, this study is enriched and complicated by the role of the researcher; embedded in the community as an LAE herself, she embraces the opportunity to share the diverse experiences and perspectives of participants. With courage and vulnerability, she is cognizant of her own critical evolution, and
shares this through auto-ethnographic reflection, multimedia creations, ongoing reflexivity, and praxis. By tracing her path of healing, empowerment, and integration, she maintains Anzaldúa’s tradition, (re)claiming her “serpent tongue” through critically revisiting, and ultimately, valuing all the facets of her history, mythology, ideology, and culture.

VI. Finally, this research attempts to be authentic, participatory, and empowering for the subjects and communities that form the foci of the research. Bringing the LAEs together for a networking reception and “Sunset Summit,” strengthened bonds across genres, generations, and groups. Sharing our collective work in the arts and education could initiate fundamental allegiances, and foment a broad vision for social change. Some initial questions included:

a. What are LAEs’ unique strengths?

b. What is Miami lacking that LAEs can provide? In which areas? Culturally? Artistically?

c. How can LAEs leave a positive and lasting imprint on the community? On students and schools?

d. How can LAEs inspire people of all ages?

e. Where/when/how can LAEs collaborate for the greatest good in shaping the future of this city and its most vulnerable populations?

f. What can we build/create/imagine/act upon/design/promote? Where? And with what kind of resources and support?

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88 At this point, the research is aligned more with traditional ethnographic and qualitative methods. However, going forward, I see it evolving more and more toward a PAR (Participatory Action Research) framework. Regularly monthly LAE gatherings could create the space for our participants to explore the results of the research, discuss goals, and conduct additional investigations as envisioned, directed, and executed by the LAEs themselves.
g. How can LAEs be a force for equality and change? In which settings and/or schools?

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection phase of this research began in 2003 and extended in 2014. The researcher conducted almost half of the interviews within ten days in late June/early July of 2008. During this time, the researcher was living in Tampa, and continued to gather data and listen to the recorded interviews from there. The late spring of 2010 marked a return to Miami to complete the other half of the interviews. In total, the researcher has interviewed fifty-two (52) individuals. Of those 52, there are three that meet only two of the three identity categories for inclusion—as artists and educators, but not as Latino/a—hereafter called “Informants.” See Appendix A: “LAEs Master Table” for a detailed chart outlining individual characteristics of all who participated in the study.

PARTICIPANTS

The data collection process proceeded forward, albeit in fits and starts occasionally. The 52 individuals included in this study result from a combination of established relationships and referrals. Utilizing the snowball method, or encouraging participants to make recommendations or referrals, the LAE participant group mushroomed.

89 52 people were interviewed overall, with 49 identified as Latino/a Artist Educators as defined earlier in Chapter 1; three additional people were included as “informants” because although they may not be Latino/a, they are artists and educators and their involvement in the community of LAEs is pivotal. Kristen, Josh, and Dennis are these non-Latino LAEs. Furthermore, their knowledge of the Miami’s artistic and educational arena is as deep as their history in helping to shape and influence this community. Striving for comprehensive understanding, these “informants” comprise only 5.8% of our sample of 52 individuals.
Nonetheless, the clear majority of LAEs (36 of 52) are friends/acquaintances of the researcher; sixteen of the participants were unknown to the researcher at the time of the interview. Three of these were targeted at an academic conference, and others were referred by someone, but most often, suggested by another LAE in the study. Like the roots of a tree, the LAE group is extensive, diverse, and interconnected in obvious and subtle ways. Serendipitously, I figure at an interesting crossroads, like a bridge connecting several groups. A “Relationship Map” is provided in Figure 1.

Beyond the 49 LAEs whose experiences and thoughts form the backbone of this study, there are another 20-25 LAEs who easily could be added to the participants. In other words, there is no shortage of Latino/a Artist Educators in Miami. These individuals will be identified and approached in the future to bring additional strength and diversity to the multitude of insights and reflections already gathered. The researcher found that interviewing LAEs brought valuable insights and joy; LAEs conversations were provocative, reflecting, and insightful. Many participants remarked—either during or after the interview—that the experience of talking about these topics was both empowering and enlightening.

INTERVIEWING LAEs

Of the 52 interviews conducted, all but five occurred face-to-face, using a portable MP3 player to capture the audio. The researcher was free to listen, interact, and observe the body language and the tone of the conversation. Initially, twenty-five questions were posed to the selected LAEs, ranging from “How do you identify?” to “How is your art
and/or your teaching related to the notions of liberty, justice, and equality?"90

Throughout the querying, not one LAE refused to answer a question. By 2011, the researcher had developed some ten additional follow-up questions. These were emailed to most of the participants and 25 returned their responses. For those LAEs who were interviewed in mid-late 2011, 2012 or 2013, most often these questions were posed during the interview itself.

Most interviews lasted about an hour and a half. The shortest one spanned about 40 minutes, while two LAEs exceeded three hours in conversation! Occurring in a variety of settings, most in LAEs’ homes or workplaces, or in my home, but spanning across the entire city of Miami—in cars, at Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, and other coffeehouses/cafés, in galleries, and in parks. All in all, there are over 100 hours of audio recorded, including initial and follow-up interviews, recording of performances and teaching, and other exchanges between LAEs and others. Three interviews occurred during a PRSA Conference in Puerto Rico (2008), and two more over the phone (Melina in Switzerland and Magdalena in Massachusetts). Another three decided to complete the interviews via email, returning written responses to the questions (Miguel, Joseph, Michaelangelo). See Table 1: “Location of Interviews.”

All participants chose the language of the interview. The majority selected English as the official language of our interaction; only seven preferred Spanish as the language of communication, and six employed active switching between the two languages.

90 See Appendix B: “Interview Questions” and Appendix C: “Follow-Up Questions.”
DATA STORAGE AND ANALYSIS

Once an interview was complete, it was downloaded on the researcher’s laptop. The transcription process began with listening to the interview at least once, usually twice. The next task was listening and typing simultaneously. This process was repeated numerous times, until all the missing words/phrases/sentences were replaced with dialogue. This transcription process was time-intensive and detail-oriented, ranging anywhere from 3-6 hours per hour of interview time. Once all the interviews were transcribed into text format, they were read and reviewed again, noting insightful commentary, questions, and connections across interviews. To track and categorize all the responses, some information was recorded in a “Master Chart.” (See Appendix A). For other responses, a two-column tally was utilized. Still others required a different schema to organize and synthesize information. As a visual learner, large white sheets were taped to the walls, to record notes and ideas. This enabled the exploration of connections and patterns to emerge over time.

OTHER FIELD WORK ACTIVITIES

Interviewing LAEs comprised the core activity of data gathering; however, the researcher has also engaged in extensive observation and documentation of these LAEs at work, in their process of cultural production. Detailed field notes, photographs, video, and voice memos assisted in capturing the essence of the moment; these archives are central to understanding the larger context of how LAEs live, work, and create in Miami. Data collection involves chronicling major events: dozens of Open Mic
flyers, event posters, news articles, and other print media provide glimpses into the larger story of Latino/a Artist Educators in Miami. Online sources—Facebook and YouTube principally—allow the researcher to access the original work of some of the LAEs interviewed for this study, as well as view their thoughts and perceptions about events and situations in Miami as they are occurring. See Table 5: LAE Artistic Contributions. The synthesis of these materials will be presented in an auto-ethno-drama-choreopoem (to be performed in Miami and in other locales by the researcher known as “Najirrah”) and in a highly-textured journal/scrapbook/palpable memory book. These examples of crystallization provide another vantage point for understanding the process, providing depth while outlining and delineating the abstract-random yet purposeful path this researcher has traversed for over a decade.91 Both the choreopoem and the installation pieces (scrapbook serving as anchor and centerpiece) are creative analyses which will be developed to show another dimension of the research process, foregrounding the most salient lessons and messages synthesized from LAE interviews and field notes. Both projects are currently in development, with completion scheduled for spring of 2017 and installation and performances in the late summer/fall of 2017.

91 As Anita Hunter (2002) argues, magic making is making sense of the data. “Don’t be afraid to play, to hold it up from many angles, to be scholarly and whimsical, serious and spontaneous, curious and cautious. These are all facets of the crystal that sheds light and illuminates any phenomena to reveal meaning” (393).
This researcher was interested in documenting the time period in Miami and South Florida that spans from 2003-2013. The 52 participants serve as the lens through which we see Miami; during this decade, the city changed dramatically, in terms of arts and culture, neighborhood development, and demographics. All but five of the individuals interviewed (Alicia, Aya, Suiko, Miguel and Magdalena) have made Miami their home. These additional participants were selected because of their well-established involvement in both the arts and education, and their ability to provide generalized insight and experience regarding the art-education nexus.

In any exploration of uncharted waters, a preliminary step is to describe and name the key components of this study. In the case of LAEs in Miami, a careful look at the demographics of the group is foundational for understanding the dynamics of how LAEs interact with each other and their environment. Following a descriptive, quantitative summary sketching out the characteristics that define our LAE study subjects, we venture into a similar quest to understand Miami’s demographics. Once these quantitative parameters are sketched, a rough outline of participants and their home city will emerge. Finally, we focus on the interview questions and responses, seeking a

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92 For an overview of the LAE Participants and Informants, including gender, ethnicity, birthplace, age, time in Miami, and artistic/educator focus, refer to Appendix A: LAE Demographics/Master Chart.

93 Magdalena Gomez and Aya de Leon each have a long history as teaching artists and community organizers. They have traveled extensively performing their art and are connected with institutions of higher education, as well as with various non-profit educational programs and K-12 schools. For these reasons, the researcher chose to include them in this investigation, despite their geographic location in Massachusetts and California respectively.
detailed qualitative description of the individuals in relation to specific topics and themes within the study. Now, we turn to a detailed review of the demographic data.

**ETHNIC ORIGIN, BIRTHPLACE, AND GENERATION**

The Latino/a Artist Educators represent the following ethnicities, in order from greatest to least: Cuban (30%), Puerto Rican (26%), Colombian (9%), Haitian (4%), Colombian and Cuban (4%), Chilean (4%), Puerto Rican and West Indian (4%), Chicano/a (4%), and 2% each with ancestry from Venezuela, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Jamaica. While the Cuban community has certainly left an indelible mark on the city of Miami, our study reveals a much more complex interaction of multiple ethnicities.

A look at the birthplace of the Latino/a Artist Educators interviewed for this study reveals that forty percent were born outside of the continental United States, with twelve in the Caribbean (Puerto Rico: 6, Cuba: 2, Dominican Republic: 1, Haiti: 1, Jamaica: 1 and Trinidad: 1). One LAE was born in Central America, in Nicaragua. South American-born LAEs number eight: four from Colombia, two from Chile, and one each from Brazil and Venezuela. Twenty-five percent (thirteen of the 52) interviewees are Native Miamians, born in the metropolitan area. After Miami, New York City is the next most concentrated birthplace for participants residing in Miami—with three specifying the Bronx, three stating Manhattan, one from Long Island, and two undisclosed—for a

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94 In our sample, Puerto Rican LAEs are disproportionately overrepresented, with four times the number found in the overall Latino population.

95 In this category, both LAEs have Puerto Rican mothers. Fathers are from St. Kitts and Nevis (Aya) and from Trinidad (Sesame).
total of nine Latino/a Artist Educators. Collapsing neighboring New Jersey into the metropolitan NYC area brings our total of New York-New Jersey natives in our sample up to a dozen. These three Jersey LAEs hail from Camden, Elizabeth, and Union City. The remaining six LAEs in our sample were born in California or the southwest (four) or in other cities in the Northeast (Rockville, MD and Philadelphia, PA). Please refer to Figure 4A, 4B and 4C for visual representations of birthplace.

In terms of generational status, just over half (53%) claim they are second-generation (im)migrants, born in the United States. Forty percent are foreign born, or first-generation immigrants, and another 6% claiming they feel “in-between” generations. Figure 5 illustrates the generational status of LAEs and other participants.

**AGE and SEX**

The age difference of the LAEs included in this study spans 34 years, with the youngest at 24 and the most veteran at 58 years old. Although wide, it is fairly balanced: one-third of the subject pool are in their 30s, slightly less (31%) in their 40s, and 29% in their 20s. Only four LAEs are over 50. Within this considerable variation, the mean age is 36, the median is 34, and the most common age of LAEs is 24 (mode). All graphs and demographic data in visual representations are found in Figures 2-9. Drawing firm boundaries between age groups belies the real fluidity and interactivity of the relationships of LAEs. The researcher has observed generational “waves” of artists, specifically with respect to the performance arts (spoken word poetry, theater, music)
most commonly practiced in the Open Mic scene. Please refer the visual representation Figure 10: “Waves” for more information.

Using sex as a lens, we see that males outnumber females in the group of Latino/a Artist Educators, at a ratio of 57 percent to 43 percent, as seen in Figure 6. Including the informants in those calculations only reduces the inequality by one percent. This question of why women are less represented in artistic circles and especially in a female-dominated arena such as education should be explored further.

**ARTISTIC/DISCIPLINARY FOCUS**

The Latino/a Artist Educators that comprise our sample are diverse in nearly every way; viewing their artistic focus is no exception. Some 21 LAEs exclusively devote their time to one genre, with the following distribution: spoken word/poetry (six), visual arts (six), dance and/or choreography (three), acting and/or directing (three), writing (one), music (one), and street/protest theater (one). While they engage in an extensive variety of artistic pursuits, 60% express their creativity through more than one medium or genre. The remaining 31 participants are all over the map, but the majority immerse themselves in multiple artistic mediums in a distinct or separate way. Jude Papaloko The Genus, for example is a renowned painter, yet also an accomplished musician, an occasional poet, and as a child, first discovered his creative expression through dance. In contrast, there are several LAEs who integrate multiple artistic forms into their performance—most notably, Octavio Campos, “El Rio de Miami,”\textsuperscript{96} and the Biscayne

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Poet, aka: Oscar Fuentes. Octavio claims to be a “hybrid fusion artist,” saying that his creations are “not even interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, but a pure fusion… everything is informing everything else,” (Interview, 6/19/2008) as he blends dance/movement, theater, burlesque, circus arts, activism, storytelling, and education. See the Appendix A: “Master Chart of LAEs” for the artistic genres practiced by individual participants, or Figure 7: “Artistic Focus of Participants” visual for representation by genre.

**TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

As educators, the LAEs surveyed defy orderly and predictive categorization. Many, such as Octavio, have worked in several categories—teaching at New World School of the Arts High school and Miami Dade College, serving as the choreographer-in-Residence of the nonprofit PlayGround Theater (and teaching creative movement in the Musical Theater Summer Camp), and overseeing and staffing a comprehensive community outreach program for LGBTQ youth called Pridelines. In numerical terms, the most common form of “teaching” is working in a “summer, afterschool, or weekend enrichment program,” closely followed by educating through “community outreach” programs. These two categories taken together comprise 24/52 and 23/52 respectively, or two-thirds of overall teaching by LAEs and informants. A total of 12 have worked in a Pre-K-12 school setting (traditional “teaching”), and seven have worked or currently work in an administrative capacity in schools, non-profit educational organizations, or universities. Finally, five are or have been employed to lecture or teach at institutions of higher education, three serve in supportive academic roles, and one has experience
teaching early childhood classes. See visual graph and table, Figure 8: “Types of Educators” for more details on the variations found among the LAEs sample.

NATIVES OR TRANSPLANTS?
The LAEs and informants have a combined average of 20 years in Miami living, working, and artistically creating. The most recent arrivals have only five years of time invested in this city, where the most veteran “native” of Miami has 40 years of experience observing the city and its various evolutions. The vast majority of participants have made Miami home for ten years or more, with only six falling below this threshold. For a complete chart of time in Miami by participant and accompanying scatterplot diagram, please refer to Figure 9: “Time in Miami” for individual LAEs.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF MIAMI

CITY OF PARADOXES
In seeking to understand the place where the preponderance of LAEs create, it is important to note that perception and reality intertwine in dramatic proportions; a trip through Miami is like a journey through a house of mirrors. With reality so distorted, one asks, “Am I really seeing what I think I am seeing?” Insane levels of opulence, flash, and glitterati are juxtaposed with hundreds of homeless whose bed is a concrete slab, within blocks of the grandiose American Airlines Arena (AAA). A pair of 2013 floor-side NBA Miami Heat playoff tickets valued at $20,000 could underwrite 12,500 hot breakfasts, or three months-worth of daily, sustaining meals for the 100 or so homeless men women and children who skirt the blocks encompassing Miami Rescue Mission,
just a stone’s throw from the arena. Referred to as the “gateway to Latin America,” Miami represents a new prototype for a global city, with high population density, strategic location, high number of tourists and conventions, and its position as a destination city for business and leisure, despite, or maybe because of high levels of poverty.

In terms of landmass, the Miami-Dade County extends to more than 2,000 square miles, making it larger than the state of Delaware or Rhode Island. Miami-Dade is the seventh most populous county in the nation and first among counties of the southeastern United States, with a population of over 2.5 million persons in 2010, up 10% since 2000. Per the 2010 census, the City of Miami boasts a total population of 399,457 people, with over 7,025 people per square mile, much higher than Florida’s average density of 285.92, and exponentially higher than the national average density of 81.32 people per square mile. Looking at the area from the perspective of Miami-Dade County, the density still soars above that of the averages, with over 1000 people per square mile (http://www.usa.com/miami-fl-population-and-races.htm).

With over 21 billion dollars of revenue generated from the tourist industry, there are over 13 million people who visit Miami annually. Many of these are heading to island


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destinations—as the “Cruise Capital of the World,” the Port of Miami bids “bon voyage”
to more cruise ships than any other port. Carnival Cruise Lines is the granddaddy of
them all, operating 24 ships and carrying 4.5 million passengers to various ports of
call.\textsuperscript{100} Two other large-scale events—Art Basel and Ultra Music Festival—
demonstrate undeniably that the arts translate into big business for Miami. In 2012, for
the 10-year anniversary of Art Basel, 50,000 artists, collectors, curators and aficionados
flooded the Miami Convention Center, Wynwood’s core galleries, and a dozen other
“spinoff” or “pop-up” fairs inspired by the elaborate and eccentric international artistic
showings. Similarly, Ultra Music Festival has skyrocketed in popularity, despite its
humble origins on the sands of South Beach.\textsuperscript{101} The 2012 recent edition of Ultra
expanded to include two weekends of the best in electronica, with DJs from around the
world taking turns at numerous stages in Bayfront Park downtown. When the dust
settled, over 330,000 electronic dance music (EDM) fans from over 80 countries made
the pilgrimage to the EDM mecca known as Miami.\textsuperscript{102}

In economic and strategic terms, however, it is impossible to dismiss Miami as a viable,
powerful city whose combined energies have far-reaching influence over the entire
United States, and beyond. Aside from being a major international resort center, the

\textsuperscript{100} Carnival Cruise Lines Website, accessed on 12.7.13 at \url{http://carnival-news.com/2013/01/17/carnival-cruise-lines-fact-sheet-2/}

\textsuperscript{101} Running since 1999, Winter Music Conference birthed the Ultra Music Festival, because all
of Miami is a playground and a “party” waiting to happen. Miami native Ralph de la Portilla, co-
creator of Fuacata! explains the cultural environment of Miami well when he states, “No matter
what your event is—premiere, fundraiser, auction, gallery opening—call it a “party” if you want
people to come.” Brand new documentary released December 2016, called Miami Boheme: An
American Musical Journey. See \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK4wbMpvvA}

\textsuperscript{102} Disturbing information released from Ultra 2012 on social media sites indicated that the
culture of electronic music has become quite misogynistic and anti-female.
economy is highly diversified and includes the largest concentration of international and
Edge banks\textsuperscript{103} in North America. A national leader in biomedical technology, the health
care sector provides another major thrust for development and job creation. Just
recently, Miami jumped 10 spaces forward in the list of international cities that “Shape
the World.”\textsuperscript{104} Finally, the Port of Miami is currently one of the busiest ports in the U.S.
with over 2 billion dollars in capital improvements just completed (http://
www.miamidade.gov/portmiami/).

Despite all the indications of affluence, Miami bears some dubious distinctions; among
them, the unsightly scar of being the 5\textsuperscript{th} poorest big city in the United States, according
to the John S. and James L Knight Foundation, or the city with the fifth highest
percentage of people living at or below poverty, hovering at just under 20\% for nearly
the past decade (www.knightfoundation.org). \textit{Forbes Magazine} presents the ugly
underbelly of the “playground of the rich and famous,” where our public consciousness
is saturated with glamorized images, where we imagine everyone is perfectly shaped
and dressed, toned and tan, living in their high-rises and dining on patio terraces in
Brickell and Coral Gables restaurants. Pronouncing Miami as “The Most Miserable
City” in the United States, \textit{Forbes} reveals a well-known sociological connection: at the

\textsuperscript{103} For more on how foreign banking organizations (FBOs), through the Edge Act, create
freestanding legal entities, and the role they play in the U.S economy—holding over $1 trillion in
assets and approximately 11 percent of the total commercial banking assets in the U.S., see
DeYoung and Nolle for more.

\textsuperscript{104} Miami jumped 10 spots to #40 for international “Cities that Shape the World.” Other Unite
States cities came in at New York (1), Chicago (9), Washington, D.C. (14), Los Angeles (17),
San Francisco (18), Boston (19), Houston (27), Dallas (32), Atlanta (33), and Seattle (35). Full
story at Munzenreider, K. in \textit{Miami New Times Blogs}. See
core of poverty, violent crime, and social malaise lays extreme income inequality, and
the correlated phenomena of extremely limited opportunities. Neighboring Ft.
Lauderdale and West Palm Beach rank seventh and fourth, respectively, making the
entire metropolitan area a concentrated zone for stress, frustration, and high pressure.
In this formula, a transformative educational experience that could lead to
empowerment and social mobility is screaming to be imagined and brought to life.  

Beyond being the 5th poorest big city, Miami is also known as one of the “Sexiest” cities
in the United States, relaying the message and reinforcing the perception that we
(Latinos/as) are hot-blooded, lusty people. Amazon reports that in 2013, for the second
year in a row, Miamians ordered the most number of “sexual wellness” products per capita.  
Huffington Post and conducted by Orbitz, cited Miami as the second “Sexiest City,”
coming in after San Francisco, according to travelers. Miami is notorious for its
“beautiful people” and the high number of models per capita; confirming this, Travel and
Leisure magazine pegged Miami as the “Most Attractive City,” based on various inputs.

One truly innovative endeavor is underway in the Liberty City neighborhood of Miami, where
childhood poverty exceeds 60%, and the overall poverty level is 45% ([http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Liberty-City-Miami-FL.html](http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Liberty-City-Miami-FL.html)). The Miami Children’s Initiative, has begun to work comprehensively and cooperatively to eradicate transgenerational poverty in this neighborhood. Utilizing the same approach as the Harlem Children’s Zone, MCI hopes to replicate the success of the HCZ by providing integrated training, education, health, counseling, and psychological services for community wellness. See [www.iamlibertycity.com](http://www.iamlibertycity.com) and [www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org) for more.

This same study cited Miami as the third most “Romantic City” based on sales related to
love, sex, and romance.
Renowned for its strip clubs, party scene, and the preponderance of fake body parts, Miami is also perceived as the destination for those desiring to “remake themselves.” On any of the mainstream radio stations, the “Ideal Image” commercial repeats its choral refrain—“Get rid of unwanted hair! Get rid of unwanted cellulite! Be the you of your dreams…Be ideal, at Ideal Image.” The sheer number of plastic surgery offices in Miami is overwhelming, and a glance through the authoritative weekly free entertainment magazine, *The New Times*, (October 31, 2013 issue) reveals a startling number of print ads relating to sexuality. A quick review resulted in a total of 73/267 advertisements relating to strip clubs, sex stores, plastic surgery, chat lines, escorts/outcalls, and massage parlors. Taken together, these industries directly or indirectly support a sex-obsessed economy. Combined, these constitute 27% of the overall advertisements in the most popular weekly in Miami, whose expressed primary purpose is to promote music, film, art, dining, and other forms of entertainment.

**NEW WORLD CITY: MULTIETHNIC, MULTICULTURAL, MULTIRACIAL MIAMI**

Dismissed by many as “not really being part of the continental United States,” Miami maintains an obvious connection with Latin America. To be summarily discounted or seen as “other” is a common perception held by those who come to Miami for business or pleasure. Indeed, it does seem that we are more Caribbean, tropical, South American, Spanish-speaking than the rest of the US. Miami has stubbornly refused to meld into the melting pot of mainstream WASP-driven suburban culture, though the city is not without the vestiges of super-saturation of pop culture courtesy of the corporate-
driven media. However, Miamians undoubtedly feel, taste, live, and exude the “sazón” from the 260,000 Cuban exiles who arrived in the 1960s. The cultural landscape was further developed when subsequently waves of New World people arrived from the entire Caribbean archipelago and all the ancestral homelands where African and Indigenous once reigned. Indeed, Colin Woodard’s new book, *American Nations: The History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* designates the southern third of the Florida peninsula as “part of the Spanish Caribbean.” (2013), confirming that Miami is one of, if not the most, “Latino” cities, more “European” than “American.”

Census data tells us half of the city of Miami is foreign-born, and among those over the age of 5, more than 72% speak a language other than English at home. (See [http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/12086.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/12086.html).) The huge influx of Cubans—initially in the 1960s and later in the 1980s—drastically altered the cultural, political, educational, and linguistic landscape of Miami. Up until the late 1990s, Cuban hegemony as the largest Latino/Hispanic group in Miami remained unchallenged. However, the last two Census reports (20000 and 2010) reveal a more nuanced picture emerging. Once the Cuban hegemony in Miami-Dade was unquestioned, but now—although still the majority—their presence reflects a mere 48% of the overall Hispanic population (Motel and Patten, 2012).

In recent years, the city has become home to thousands of Latinos from every corner of the Caribbean and Central and South America. According to the Pew Charitable Trust, Miami-Dade County is home to the largest Colombian, Honduran, and Peruvian

Thousands of affluent Venezolanos have flocked to Miami seeking refuge from the socialist policies of Hugo Chávez. Although the second largest ethnic/national origin group in Miami, Puerto Ricans account for only 9% of the total Hispanic population, suggesting the depth of variety and variation within the Latino/a community in Miami. (Pedraza and Silver, 2010). Large numbers of Mexicans are concentrated in the south in Homestead, and recently have begun organizing against racial profiling107. Seen together, the total Latino/Island/New World presence is undeniable and incredibly multifaceted. The 1880s saw the first and bravest settlers of this swampland, Bahamian fishermen, whose families built the earliest homes, schools, and public institutions in Coconut Grove. Soon, they would become servants and second-class citizens to the white elite who came to Miami to vacation—the asymmetrical pattern of race/ethnic relations continues to this day. Adding to all the Latino groups, large numbers of West

107 The study surveyed 192 persons, and found that those who self-identified as Latino were three times more likely to get pulled over by police versus those who self-identified as “white” in South Dade. Mexican and Central American groups in Homestead represent 45 of the Hispanic population, in contrast with the rest of Miami, where 70% of Latinos are of Cuban or South American ancestry. http://www.miamiworkerscenter.org/news/11-racial-justice
Indians reside in western parts of Broward County in Davie and Miramar: Trinidadians, Barbadians, and Guyanese principally. Jamaicans are ubiquitous and the Haitian community, while once clustered in Little Haiti, has branched out to show a strong presence in cities like Miami Shores, Opa Locka, North Miami, North Miami Beach and even Biscayne Park. Simultaneously, according to Census data, three-quarters of the city claims to be “white” (remembering that Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race): “un choque,” is inevitable, showing that realities and perceptions can clash in our attempt to conceptualize complex issues such as race and ethnicity.108

A thriving Jewish community extends throughout Miami Beach and other areas of the city; large numbers of Russian, Ukrainian, and other Eastern European immigrants have settled in the Sunny Isles/Aventura/North Miami Beach area. Add into the mix the large numbers of Europeans and Canadians who come to enjoy the year-round balmy tropical weather and the cosmopolitan nature of Miami begins to emerge. According to Richard Florida, the growing class divide between the wealthy and the poor in Miami can be understood as those who “vacation” in Miami as snowbirds (the wealthy few) and the masses of working poor, an underclass which labors to support their luxurious indulgences in the tourism, service, and entertainment industries.109

108 The hyperinflation of whiteness is not surprising given the enduring and crippling legacy of racism and white supremacy and the long-lasting impacts of colonialism on the collective psyche. Frantz Fanon’s Black Skin, White Masks provides a deep and moving account of the struggle with racial identity and internalized oppression for people of color.

In summary, Miami is a city of contrasts and contradictions. On the one hand, locals lament that its transient nature encourages superficial interactions and a lifestyle based on status, image, and artificial beauty. With designations such as “The Most Attractive City” and the “Sexiest City,” it appears that Miami is all flash and frivolity. Certainly, monster size billboards on I-95 advertising “Safety Made Sexy” (referring to Volvo’s industry rating) and “Your Wife is Hot” (subtitle, “Better get your A/C fixed”) play on the obsession with sex and physical attractiveness. At the same time, Miami is the city that showed strong citizen support in protests ranging from the FTAA conference in 2004 to Occupy Miami in 2011-12. Moreover, the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-West Palm area is home to thirteen (13) colleges and universities, with an aggregate student population of nearly 400,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The six largest colleges/universities provide hubs for intellectual exchange and cultural performances, a counterpoint to the culture of superficiality. This recent emergence of a university

110 While this is not a phenomenon exclusive to Miami—it is a global epidemic, that of superficiality and hypersexualization, glorification of the body over the mind or spirit—the researcher believes that it is more heightened/pronounced in the “magic city.” At Words and Wine in October 2013, LAEs Rio and Nikki both expressed disgust with how shallow and superficial Miami seems. In response, the researcher performed La Luna Llena and Set Yourself Free, two poems that speak to interconnectedness and a depth of spirit, included in Appendix N: Selected Poetry by Najirrah.

111 Many argue that the “Miami Model” emerged from the FTAA protests, the testing ground for an increased use of force, massive pre-emptive arrests, confiscation of private cameras, phones and other recording devices, and embedded corporate media with militarized police squads. The documentary “Miami Model,” produced by Indymedia (available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2QfHaFitMs), reveals the tactics of police-induced chaos, followed by threats, intimidation, and excessive force. Also significant is the precedent established to outlaw public congregations (even peaceful gatherings) without a permit. The ACLU has filed several cases and since that time, the city and county of Miami have paid close to $500,000 in settlements. See http://newstandardnews.net/content/?action=show_item&itemid=488.

112 From greatest population, in decreasing order, they are: Miami Dade College (175,000 students), Broward College (68,000), Florida International University (50,000), Florida Atlantic University (30,000), Nova Southeastern University (28,000), and the University of Miami (15,000) (http://www.miamidade.gov/greenprint/planning/library/milestone_one/schools.pdf).
infrastructure places Miami at “seventh per capita in terms of college students in a metropolitan area,” a positive factor in knowledge production and creative solutions for a city at the crossroads.\textsuperscript{113}

\section*{EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS}

Concerning education, Miami-Dade and Ft. Lauderdale school districts are the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} largest nationwide. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is comprised of nearly 400 schools, and serves 345,000 students and 40,000 employees. Since late 2008, under the leadership of Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, MDCPS has received state and federal recognition for substantial increases in graduation rates and student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores. Recently named as one of the states leading the way in terms of school choice\textsuperscript{114} (referencing all the programs through which students and parents can elect where they’d like to attend school), Florida currently has over 200,000 students enrolled in 574 charter schools in 44 Florida districts. Laura Isensee of the \textit{Miami Herald} (2012), reported that both Broward and Miami-Dade ranked among the top 10 school districts with the most charter students. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools’ annual report (2012) shows an enrollment increase of 26\% for Broward and 18\% for Miami-Dade.\textsuperscript{115} In Miami Dade

\textsuperscript{113} Richard Florida’s assessment of Miami and its persistent segregation, despite a strong creative class, can be found at \url{www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2013/03/class-divided-cities-miami-edition/4678/}.

\textsuperscript{114} This also includes students who are homeschooled, numbering around 48,000 in Miami.

\textsuperscript{115} The article goes on to report that Miami-Dade County Public Schools holds the number six spot in total enrollment, with more than 41,700 students in charters, or 12 percent of the student population. Broward County Public Schools ranks tenth, with more than 30,400 charter students, also about 12 percent of the student population. See \url{http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/11/14/3097482/broward-sees-26-percent-jump-in.html#storylink=cpy}.
County, there are over 130 charter schools which serve all ages and many of which cater to students with special needs (http://charterschools.dadeschools.net). This proliferation of magnet (choice) schools reflects innovative teaching and learning models for urban students. As a leader in bilingual and bicultural education, Coral Way Academy is among the most enduring and efficacious model of teaching and learning for creating balanced bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate students from both Anglo children and recent Latino/Hispanic (im)migrants.

**Snapshots of Miami**

“The Latin Diaspora (not just Cuban) is what gives Miami its unique flavor. A deeper understanding of the cultural idiosyncrasies between nationalities has offered me a real enjoyment of our similarities and our differences. Language is the undeniable bond that exists between Latinos in Miami and it helps bridge our differences, particularly if one is open to understanding the nuances of the other’s particular culture.” (LAE Ralph, tour guide, Miami and Little Havana, personal communication, June 20, 2008).

Miami is a mercurial city: the southernmost major city in the continental United States, yet the “southern” has been painted over, much like the graffiti murals of Wynwood, with several layers of paint. New York/New Jersey vacationers and other wealthy snowbirds leave their mark on the city. Latino (im)migrants splash like Picasso, vibrant sprays of culture, language, food and music on the already diverse, mixed-up canvas. Founded by Bahamian fisherman in the early 1880s, Coconut Grove—the oldest neighborhood in Miami—is the enclave where the researcher has lived for most of her tenure in Miami. This neighborhood, with its child poverty rate of 41% is exemplary of the many areas of
entrenched, generational poverty\textsuperscript{116}. The “Grove,” along with Liberty City and Overtown—were the primary recipients of a massive food drive spearheaded by the 2013 Miami Reggae Festival, which occurred the Saturday prior to Thanksgiving. Coconut Grove also boasts one of the highest concentrations of “creative types,” according to Florida, and there is a marked contrast between the North Grove and South Grove’s opulence (a pattern of development where wealth follows the water along the shoreline), and the West Grove’s crime and poverty. This neighborhood, the original artsy hippie district in Miami in the 1970s, today reflects the same schizophrenia, split personality as the rest of the city.

The transient nature of the city undoubtedly has an impact on artists, as it both attracts new artists and repels some of its natives. In 2008, just before moving to Los Angeles, Rio explained to me that he had played every pimp, drug dealer, or gang member he could in Miami, and was tired of being typecast, overlooked and underappreciated. His patience worn thin, he busted out with,

\begin{quote}
F*ck you, Hollywood\textsuperscript{117}…. I am an amazing artist, and I am gonna f*ckin’ show it…if I have to go and play a wolf in sheep’s clothing before I can…to come back and be who I really am in Miami… Why? Because if I do it here, I am not gonna get any money, I am not gonna get any funding…I am seeing my professors who have put in 30 years, seeing them suffer, living paycheck to paycheck…so I am gonna gamble my short little life,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{116} Forty-one percent child poverty rate places Coconut Grove (also sometimes referred to as “the black Grove” or the “west Grove” when in actuality, it is the “original” grove) at a higher rate than 86.7% of neighborhoods in the United States (\url{www.neighborhoodscout.com/fl/miami/frow-ave/}).

\textsuperscript{117} It is well known among acting circles that Miami is a “location” for shooting, but the lead roles are usually already cast (in Latin America or Los Angeles) before a new television series or film launches a production. They throw crumbs to the local actors by auditioning for extras.
gamble it until the wheels fall off…(Personal communication, June 26, 2008).\footnote{118}

Recently, there are several artists from the newest “wave” or generation that are traveling and touring, remaining true to Miami as their home base, but making frequent trips. Raffa and Rainer, Mercury Wolff, Free Like Me, and others come to mind. Miami natives, or those that claim this city, having lived here for 10 years or more—lament the increasing traffic, commercialization and commodification of art, gentrification of whole neighborhoods and the “everybody-wants-to-be-hip” scene. Meeting LAE Tony Gee one evening, he chose a new “hipster” bar called The Corner. Arriving at the corner of 11\textsuperscript{th} Street and North Miami Avenue, I see a brand-new bar and building, with a couple dozen slightly bored, slightly spoiled twenty-somethings inhabiting the bar, and outside tables. In shock, I reminded Tony Gee that this corner used to be “crack central” and he just laughed, commenting that this “hipster” bar would be out of business in a few weeks, once the novelty wore off.\footnote{119}

In June of 2013, inspired to bring together the students I mentored as middle school and high schoolers, I organized a Summerbridge Miami reunion, with the meetup spot at the Wynwood Art Walk. Two former students, Khyid and Kezmet, rode with me over to the designated café, both were mesmerized and amazed at the spectacle. Driving up and searching for parking was the first major hurdle, although we got lucky and found

\footnote{118 LAE Rio is now back in Miami, taking a hiatus from 2008-2010. His search for recognition and artistic challenge landed him a gig in Hong Kong, impersonating Charlie Chaplin for Walt Disney World. Back in Miami now, Rio is creating opportunities for himself, hosting several Open Mic venues (Words and Wine, Tequila and Tassels) acting as an emcee for several burlesque shows, and establishing Curveline Films.}

\footnote{119 Tony Gee explained that it is a curse to be called “hipster” as he has seen dozens of these kinds of bars surface and go under within months (personal communication, October 14, 2013).}
something a few blocks from NW 2nd St., the aorta of the monthly Wynwood artwalk.

Vibrant colors and patterns clamored for attention on thirty-foot tall wall murals as thousands of people spill out of gallery doors and restaurants. Astonished to see these masses of people, I wondered where all these people were coming from…Who are they? What are their stories? What are they in search of?

Following our reconnection with the Summerbridge Miami (now Breakthrough Miami) crew at a coffeehouse, old friends dispersed, leaving Kyhid, Kezmet and I to explore the venues. We mingled among the throngs of people and find ourselves swept into the concrete embrace that is Wynwood Walls, “a more tightly curated and manicured” version of the original graffiti/street art that originally put this neighborhood on the map. This open-air gallery functions as a sort of an epicenter, something akin to an “urban park” to the Art Walk, with 12 large-scale murals wrapped around an open patio, a showcase of “street art’s big dogs like Shepard Fairey and Aiko” (Alvarez, 2011). Wynwood Walls is a must-see for it allows an immediateness, an accessibility on a grander scale, yet many claim that “it can turn the stomach of any serious art aficionados,” primarily because WWs is an emasculated version of street art. Alvarez’ indictment is quite strong: “Goldman managed to take the insurgent impulse of illegal street art in the area and institutionalize the open urban space into a backdrop for the elite clientele of this high-class restaurant” (Alvarez, 2011).

Tonight, outdoors under the sky, as is often the case, there are DJs spinning music, beat box and breakdancing boys and girls, and poets and emcees performing. It
appears that the crowd this evening came to be entertained. They are “contained” watching dancers and listening to music in the central courtyard. I wonder why no one is dancing and interpret that as a direct challenge. Employing the principle of “radical participation,” I decide it is time to get this party started. As I begin to dance, with my robust and smiley eight-month-old dance partner, Elijah—the baby boy is wrapped and strapped to me kangaroo style—people can’t help but smile. The ice is broken.

Continuing to dance and smile, I weave through the crowd, like the dance fairy, sprinkling shimmy-shake, boogie and bounce dust on the congregation of sleepwalkers, seemingly numb. I awake them from their slumber, their stupor, revealing that music was meant to inspire dance. After a dozen or so begin to dance, and the ripple has begun to flow through the crowd, I consider my mission complete. The audience feeds the performers, and when there is true synergy, it becomes increasingly difficult to discern the audience members from the performers.

Kyhid and Kezmet live less than 5 miles from this scene, yet they are mystified, as young black males in Miami, that this place even exists. Tell me, how can thousands of people, separated from Miami by an ocean’s expanse (Art Basel attendees), connect with and benefit from the energy and expression in this art zone, while the local citizens remain disconnected, isolated, and in the dark? In contrast, Julie Wright, a young black female and former student, tutor, and volunteer with our program, is a regular at this

120 Radical participation is one of the 10 core principles that dictate the nature of human interaction at Burning Man, the nation’s oldest and most elaborate transformative arts festival. http://burningman.org/#.UoMAVShc ww. For more on Burning Man culture, history, themes, and production, see www.burningman.com.
scene, having graduated from Ransom Everglades School\textsuperscript{121} and Amherst College, now Assistant to the External Affairs Director, at the newly expanded and re-imagined “Perez” Miami Art Museum (PAMM).\textsuperscript{122}

IMPROMPTU AND IMPROVISATIONAL EXPLORATIONS

We laughed and explored, stopping at LAE Jude Papaloko’s Jakmel Gallery. We wandered down the street to see a corner crowd gathered around a “crew” of breakdancers, Future Force Crew, and enjoyed the spirited performance. Continuing our walk, we passed a drum circle on the corner of NW 25\textsuperscript{th} St and NW 2\textsuperscript{nd} Avenue. Recognizing “Flex” and his followers, we stopped to clap and dance and show appreciation to Nanay\textsuperscript{123}, the indefatigable hula-hoop dancer. We arrived at LAE Roly’s event a few blocks over, and although disappointed that we could not enter because of the baby, we enjoyed some pizza from the food truck, and lingered on the sidewalk on the perimeter of this open venue. With walls on only two sides, it had a fluid, open feel. Monologues, songs, and poetry enticed the crowd, small but spirited. From the sidewalk rimming the venue, we brought the dance energy outside and crossed boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, and language with the other audience members and performers. Laughter and possibility were sparked in that exchange, smiles building

\textsuperscript{121} This was my host institution and employer for almost four years while I was directing and overseeing the expansion of the Summerbridge Miami (now Breakthrough Miami) program. Annual tuition is over $20,000. \url{www.ransom.edu}.

\textsuperscript{122} While writing this Data Chapter, I was reminded of Ralph’s point, in order to be a success in Miami, it’s gotta be a “party.” The multibillion dollar Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) advertised that it is “Open to Party.”

\textsuperscript{123} Also a talented violin player, Nanay—while not one of the LAEs included in this study—is part of the younger generation of artists spawned by Cornerstone high school crew which morphed into the Nikki’s Words-N-Wine crew of artists and aficionados. She is pictured in Appendix J: Stone Groove bottom right, playing the violin.
bridges, encouraging performers and audience to reach deeper, stand taller, and proclaim more fully their manifesto to create. With shouts and whispers and sweat, this communal expression of creativity became an antidote to depression and submission.

The first time I had ventured to a formal Wynwood event since December’s 2012 Art Basel, it became apparent that the organic experiences—the ones that were not planned—on the street corners, the non-curated but artist-citizen driven, were the most engaging. Here, the lines between audience and performer faded, became fuzzy, with interaction the operative word. Spontaneous expressions of creativity, alive and vibrant cyphers, showcase amazing, insanely talented people, and harken us to a time of tribal gatherings with ritual, mystical transformative healing experiences. In this conception, it is perfectly natural to bring one or more of the babies, especially given my attachment parenting style. At Art Basel, I was not the only one pushing a stroller, but saw few others with three babies, me wearing baby boy in a sling, and Leilani and Malila in a double stroller, soaking up the art that knew no boundaries, emerging before our eyes on external warehouse walls and gleaming inside galleries. Lack of sidewalks and dusty pothole-filled roads did not deter us. Parking next to a crew of five guys settling in to begin work, I learn that they are from Minneapolis and have brought their own DJ, who improvisationally fashions a DJ booth from atop the van that is both their means of transport, sleeping accommodations, and artist studio on wheels. (Field notes, December 8, 2012).

124 Obviously, this smacks of subjectivity. What might be more accurate is that these street performances seemed to be the most natural and unique, and the least “staged” or artificial or contrived of the performances and exhibitions. The exception was the spontaneous “dance party” at Papaloko’s gallery in the late night, on our way back to the car.
That June summer night during Art Walk, many were surprised, even astonished that I would bring a baby. In our traditional, indigenous community gatherings, all ages are welcome and protected—babies, children, teens, young adults, middlers, and elders—as they all bring talents and insights to share, and all benefit from the teachings that come through collective experience. However, this event had morphed into something different—more party and less art-making, more revelry and less reflection, more obnoxiousness and less reverence. Seen in this light, the spectacle that has become 80% debauchery and 20% serious or reverent art viewing/participation, it does seem a little odd to have little ones around. However, I assert their right to be there as a conscious form of resistance to the unthinking party culture that consumes and commodifies, appropriates and regurgitates artists’ messages.

For Kyhid and Kezmet, the crowds provide a measure of comfort, of anonymity, and the ability to “get lost” and be part of the bigger wave of people. For those that are coming

125 A friend, originally from Toronto, hailing from Chicago, and now living in Miami for three years, purports that 90% of Miami is ignorant and stupid, and in this ongoing debate I try to convince him that the percentage is not that high. However, this evening, with multiple people asking, astonished, “Is that a real baby?!?” I began to wonder if his theory could be truer than I wish to admit.

126 Just recently watched a couple of videos of Sunni Patterson, a well-established spoken word artist whom I met in New Orleans at SuperLove in the Superdome, for V-Day’s anniversary in 2008. See her performance in 2010 at Black on Black Rhyme in Tampa at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbudXLaU3IA. At the conclusion of this piece, Patterson gives thanks for “these are spaces that are made this way—they are made beautiful and holy and good, and just abundant with good life, especially for me since I travel with my son, must give thanks for allowing this space to be conducive for him…and what is imprinted on his mind, is something of goodness, so he knows already unity and togetherness, what it means to see different people, different colors and different creeds, everything, that’s all here, listening and loving and speaking and talking and all these kind of things that make a difference in the world. See also her poem in Dayton, OH and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyuiDUfbZkU. In these videos, she holding him as a toddler, and wearing him as an infant.
to observe, to be entertained, they expect and tolerate the masses of people, all in order to fulfill the implicit underlying motive of being “seen.” In contrast, those that come to engage, participate, and even co-create, find the drunkenness, the obnoxiousness, the rudeness that comes with large groups to be just too much—too much static and annoyance to negotiate simply to commune on a higher artistic vibration. Hence, LAE Marcus Blake tells me there are now “Second Thursdays” in Wynwood—where the “real Artwalk” occurs since 2nd Saturdays have become the carnival, Miami’s quintessential “party.” Rebirthing through repositioning has become necessary for Miami artists to create a space conducive to more meaningful, thoughtful, provocative, and sincere interaction predicated on a truer or more indigenous expression of communal creativity.

RISE OF WYNWOOD

Wynwood is largely the result of the late visionary Tony Goldman, the man responsible for turning Hells 100 Acres into the now so-fashionable SoHo District in Manhattan. The creator of the “SoHo effect” has recently commissioned a film series about the power of public art in urban placemaking called, “Here Comes the Neighborhood.” In the Season 1 Finale, Art Basel Weekend 2011 is featured, and Goldman asserts that the beauty of Wynwood is that “It has no boundaries…no economic boundaries, no ethnic boundaries, no racial boundaries, no gender boundaries…and that’s where the tapestry is the thickest and the best.” Artists have always been averse to boundaries and fostered allegiances across the artificially imposed “invisible” lines that society draws to

\[127\] This was the experience of the researcher, and was echoed in the JamHouse interview, along with others.

\[128\] This video, Episode 8, is available to be viewed on the HCTN (Here Comes the Neighborhood) at [http://vimeo.com/36213345](http://vimeo.com/36213345).
demarcate groups and keep us suspicious and separate. This assertion, while beautifully optimistic, may be naïve, if not overly simplistic. In this less-than-seven-minute short film, Goldman with collaborates Martha Graham, a local photojournalist, who remarks at how much has changed within just two years. Graffiti artists hailing from Germany, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Los Angeles, along with the best from our own “305” backyard, discuss the power of street art to create or change a place.

Goldman recognized the beautiful marriage between art and food, commenting that galleries won’t bring in thousands of people, but restaurants do have that pull, and therefore, they are the essential first step to create a new neighborhood feel. The two restaurants flanking Wynwood Walls, Joey’s and Wynwood Kitchen and Bar, are Goldman family-run, and the walls inside are no less spectacular than those outside, adorned works that feature a “who’s who” of acclaimed street artists. One of these, Gaia, remarked, “…they get some real high-end clientele, so we are definitely a mechanism in that transformation, for better or for worse.” Goldman talks about extending sidewalks for cafes, and creating magnets for activity, to lure people to walk and wander through the neighborhood. While perhaps naïve about the impact his “gentlefication” has on the local residents, he remains a vocal advocate for artists, recognizing that “typically, artists lead you to a neighborhood, and then get priced out! We must give artists a stake in the long-term action.” Goldman advocates involving artists in the development plans for a neighborhood and making them investors with dividends. (See http://vimeo.com/36213345).
Others see the results as more mixed, pointing to the number of ways development also means change; typically improvements go hand-in-hand with higher rents. This formula is almost unavoidable. Although the transformation is relatively recent, there are already several commentaries and critiques from both text and film perspectives. Two college female filmmakers from FIU and UM collaborated to create *Right to Wynwood*, a documentary that explores the conflict of being artists on the one hand, and liking the art, the galleries, Panther Coffee (location of my interview with Marcus) yet on the other hand, recognizing gentrification as a “modern type of colonization.” They point out that a developer-led process of urban change is fundamentally different than an artist-led process, or even one that seems to happen “accidentally” (Hinton, 2013). Local blogs forecast “If all goes along to according to plan, the shoe business will fall away entirely, the restaurants will multiply; condos will be bought and sold. Money will be made” (Meier, 2012). Most troubling, is the lack of interaction between artists/gallery owners and the local community; gallery owner Dario Posada sums it up as, “They see us as distant and indirect. We see them as dangerous and delicate” (Alvarez, 2011).

**LAES’ PRESENCE IN THE WYNWOOD ART DISTRICT**

In May 2005, when Cornerstone opened, there was no “Midtown” in the approximately four block-by-four block open grassy area fenced off, an abandoned train station.

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At the most recent meeting of NCOBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America) at the Peoplez House on NW 26th Street, LAE Profet (Yusuf Malik Shabazz) confides that owner of the warehouse space, Black Panther Party veteran “General” Rashid, has recently been pressured to sell his property/vacate from the neighborhood. See Appendix L: Photos of The Peoplez House.
Wynwood Art walks included seven or eight galleries, separated by several long dark blocks in between galleries, and only the truly passionate, really “down” artists could come through without fearing their safety. Consequently, those that did come through had a grittier, younger edge than those that work the Design District, the more high-end, refined, artistic cluster. Informant Josh tells of the time he pulled up to his building, at the corner of 20th St. and N. Miami Ave—with LAE Fiorella, and Francesco, her son, asked, quizzically, “Mama…este es…pobre?” Interestingly, Wynwood developed almost in opposition to the high-brow art and design of the Design District immediately to the north less than a mile, with Wynwood’s galleries maintaining more of low-brow, more accessible “art for the people” approach. The organic nature, grittier neighborhood and more than anything else, the numerous blocks of windowless warehouse walls provided the perfect canvas for urban street artists, notably, graffiti artists, to create their masterpieces.

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130 Today, Midtown is the commercial link and residential safe haven for those who want to straddle the Design District and Wynwood. It is the “normalizing” factor, what makes those suburban-raised young professionals more comfortable, with their Target, Subway, Foot Locker, Ross, and too many sushi and Asian fusion bistro to count. Three or four high-rises shoot up into the sky and house Florida’s “creatives” or so one would presume. It is an enviable standard of living, being able to walk to restaurants and work and home, and within 10 minutes of so much innovation and design and creative expression.

131 Read as “legit”, unpretentious, from the hood, streetwise, mostly Miami-born and bred badasses. Someone who walks hard, yet smooth, exuding toughness and sophistication.

132 See Appendix E: Cornerstone Articles for information on gallery, events, opening, anniversaries and closing. Dates span from summer 2005 to summer 2007.

133 Cornerstone’s storefront gallery occupied the downstairs and his apartment, along with Rio’s and maybe two-three others, were upstairs. Josh admits a moment of doubt, “like what the f*ck am I doing here?” By all measures, however, The Cornerstone Experiential Gallery was a huge success.

134 There is some dispute or disagreement as to whether this distinction has remained, with Wynwood becoming more commercialized and renowned as an international art hub.
In Spring 2005, LAE Profet (Malik), along with Rachel “FlowDiva” and Liza “Lovechild” posed for the photo shoot promoting *Life Told in Rhyme* cover shoot (See Appendix F). Elaborate graffiti tags provided color and energy to the longest visible wall connecting NW 24th and 25th streets, yet for the most part, the graffiti was spread out, as photograph shows. For the past several years, popularity skyrocketed, and now, a drive through Wynwood dazzles your eyes; it’s almost like you can’t take it all in quickly enough. Like contestants on “America’s Next Top Model,” each piece of art vying to seduce your gaze and win over your attention, the murals jut up against one another, entire blocks covered. Once completely organic (outside of the shoe paintings commissioned by the store owners), most of the work was renegade, as in the spirit of urban street art. Today, in contrast, as LAE Felipe tells us in his election-season art-meets-politics political parody, more than 50% of the works are commissioned pieces, cultivated and somewhat scripted by owners of particular warehouses, shops, and restaurants.

Wynwood is sandwiched between poor urban neighborhoods to the west and south (Allapattah and Overtown), and booming development at Midtown (and Design District) to the north, and the ultimately limiting Biscayne corridor and Biscayne Bay. The west end “Fashion District” for wholesale shoes, purses, luggage, and other accessories is largely Jewish-owned, and the remainder of the neighborhood is fairly poor and mostly Puerto Rican, as the El Jibarito Supermercado on NW 2nd Avenue proudly announces.
Urban neighborhoods are ecosystems and need to find homeostasis on many levels. Economic investments require initial capital. Artists both start the wheels in motion and provide the ongoing pull or magnetism to sustain interest in the community. The burgeoning field of “Creative Place Making” is looking at these same phenomena. Few challenge the idea that arts and culture bring many positive benefits to communities; now more than ever, artists should be encouraged, wooed, courted to come to cities and establish their homes. Richard Florida’s (2014) work on the rise of the creative class certainly highlights the role that cultural producers play in developing, establishing, or otherwise re-injecting life into ossified neighborhoods.

The question is whether this development benefits the artists and the neighborhood citizens. Yes—people, traffic, exposure—are all theoretically good for a neighborhood, but at what cost? Are boundaries erased or reinforced? What happens to the people and their existing businesses when the economic base changes? Stratification, edification, and commodification are the possible outcomes of neighborhood development.

135 Yo Miami! founder invokes the metaphor of an ecosystem in attempting to describe the mission of his organization/blog/efforts. Find them at http://www.yo-miami.com/ or on Facebook under “YOmiami.” Love the play on the bilingualism—Yo! English “What’s up?” and “Yo” en español significa “I” as if the individual is inextricably part of Miami.

136 Most agree that R. Florida’s Rise of the Creative Class and its central hypotheses provided the catalyst for the growing field of “Creative PlaceMaking.” Community Development, Urban Planning, Economics (Demographics) and other interdisciplinary streams feed this perfect storm of variables.

137 “Cleveland Weekend,” advertised at http://www.ibtimes.com/cleveland-ready-rock-are-you-1462896 is one example where city government has initiated incentives for artists to settle in economically depressed areas. CPAC (Community Partnership for Arts) and Culture and Northeast Shores covered the hotel costs, meals and local transportation, while visiting artists paid their way to Cleveland. Seth Beattie, the city’s Strategic Initiative Director, compared this recruitment to that of CEOs or other professionals, but was unaware of any city “that was aggressively going out and marketing to individual artists” (Killoran, “Cleveland is Ready to Rock: Are You?,” Nov. 8, 2013).
revitalization. Predictably, the rents go up because overnight, “dangerous” has become “hip.” LAEs Nikki, Melvin, Felipe and Natalie, interviewed at the Jamhouse, all in their mid-20s, expressed incredulous disbelief at the overnight mushrooming up of this “place” known as Wynwood (personal communication, April 15, 2013).

This research shows that high numbers of artists were concentrated along Biscayne Blvd. and that they established some of the earliest venues for performance, entertainment, art-celebrating in two neighborhoods undergoing the process of gentrification—Wynwood and Little Haiti. The venues of Cornerstone (Wynwood) and Theatre de Underground at Churchills (Little Haiti) served as central—if not the primary—catalysts in creating the initial buzz of an artistic movement. Numerous press articles document this flowering of creative energy. Two LAEs and one informant—Andrio (Rio) Chavarro, Fiorella Podesta, and Joshua Weiss—together founded Cornerstone, encouraging experimentation and creative exploration above all, highlighting the role of play and discovery in pursuing art, and giving artists of all disciplinary backgrounds, permission to push boundaries, all within a 700 ft² space (See Appendix E for article by Torres, “Co-Op an Exercise in Experimentation,” 2005). Cornerstone’s genius of presenting theater, film, music, and art as collaborative, mutually inspiring artistic expression, has yet to be replicated by a DIY team in Wynwood; although Miami Light Project has a similar zeitgeist, it is corporate and foundation funded. Josh, Rio, and Fio all confirmed that Theatre de Underground’s weekly, long-standing open outdoor patio

138 White re-population of the center of cities is nothing new; it is occurring in urban centers across the U.S. In fact, the downtown segment of Miami has shown the greatest overall growth between the 2000 and 2010 census, with the population nearly doubling, growing from 39,132 to 71,000 persons, and projected to top 81,000 by 2014, according to Goodkin and Werley’s (2010) report, for the Miami Downtown Development Association (2).
celebration of diverse art and music, inspired this trio to establish “La piedrita de la esquina” (as it was known to the inner circle), which although it had physical walls, embodied the spirit of living and creating without boundaries.

Where Cornerstone was like the womb—intimate, close, cozy—nurturing and growing us in our embryonic creative first steps, Theatre de Underground at Churchill’s was the street corner, where a steady stream of people from punks to preppies, all shades and vibrations, wandered between the two bars and the regular Monday night Jazz Jam inside and the outdoor stage, flanked with original creations by Frankie Cruz, graffiti artist extraordinaire. Despite the “open market” nature of Theatre de Underground, and the rowdiness of the crowd occasionally, founder and host Kristen maintained an easygoing balance between revelry and reverence, rooted in personal freedom and mutual respect. Two factors were operational in Cornerstone’s opening—to add another supportive, unpretentious venue to support creative work, as many LAEs wanted to connect as community more than once a week to reconnect with likeminded folks. Aside from reinforcing the rhythm of connection, Theatre de Underground was too big and open for some who wanted to find a smaller space to present works in progress. A groundswell of support for Cornerstone resulted in donations of lighting from Churchills, signage, equipment, and other items to launch the space, Rio recounts in one documentary (http://www.openfilm.com/videos/cornerstone-experimental-art).

The collective energy and expression of LAEs inspired investors, developers and others with capital, to actively contribute in creating new communities—the same process that
preceded Cornerstone’s opening of its doors was mirrored through all of Wynwood, albeit on a larger scale. Similarly, the re-design of NE 2\textsuperscript{nd} Avenue and 54\textsuperscript{th} Street intersection, now with a MetroPCS store on the corner, and the facelift at the Walgreens, paved the way for Churchill’s new paint and exterior renovations. (Inside it still smells like sweat and alcohol, and graffiti still adorns the bathroom stalls, but outside it appears “respectable” as the British owner would say). The creation of Little Haiti’s Performing Arts Center and shopping center, with island colors of turquoise and gold and orange and pink storefronts, and the establishment of a community garden, are natural extensions of this “cleanup effort” for the neighborhood. Yuval Ofir, founder of Yo Miami!, teamed up with Sweat Records, Little Haiti’s Cultural Center, Moksha Family Artist Collective, and others to host the “Little Haiti Sunday Stroll,” designed with families, bikers, and more those who want to appreciate art and culture at a leisurely daytime pace. (Melnick, 2013). New lighting, new paint, new signs—“visible signs of development”\footnote{My friend Cecilia introduced me to this term, as the leader of the MCI: Miami Children’s Initiative. Visible indicators of change and progress are vital in influencing a community’s collective psyche and perception of reality. Picking up trash, a new playground, and fresh coat of paint are some of the ways MCI has attempted to bring optimism and hope into a depressed Liberty City neighborhood. \url{http://www.iamlibertycity.org}}—are intentionally designed to brighten up a neighborhood and make it more appealing to the yuppie element of young singles and couples who can afford the trendy hipness, and ultimately, the original inhabitants and first wave of artists are squeezed or pushed out, only to search for the next inexpensive and “available” neighborhood; and so the cycle continues.
LAES AND THE ELUSIVE QUEST FOR SIMILARITIES

It is difficult to find one characteristic or variable that is unilaterally similar across the entire LAE group—because of the extreme diversity of the sample in age, ethnicity, birthplace, artistic expression, generation, language, gender, sexual orientation, or philosophy. On the one hand, we appreciate the complexity as it rules out simplistic causal relations; yet, on the other hand, discerning patterns can be complex and capricious, much like Miami. There are undoubtedly, multiple pathways to creativity, and each individual LAE is unique. Furthermore, caution is essential when declaring a characteristic to be “true” for the entire group. As an exploratory study, a foundation is essential, with the goal being to “sketch” the contours and parameters of this group of artist-educators, suggesting some common threads, and postulating connections between existing research and literature and my findings. Perhaps most importantly, my task is to focus the lens for future research directions, imagining new paradigms and possibilities.

Disclaimer aside, there are several interesting trends that caught the eye of the researcher—filtered through the lens of the personal experiences of the LAEs interviewed for this study—given what we know about Latinos/(as) and our many expressive cultural traditions, given what we know about arts and activism, and given what we know about progressive models of education. These common threads, or familiar “refranes,” LAEs echoing one another in sentiment and feeling, will comprise the next segment of this chapter.
How will we apply these insights? This is the core of participatory action research—turning over the reins to the LAEs and allowing their combined intellect and experience to guide the application of the research and its integration vis-à-vis future realities. Toward that end, a “Sunset Summit” or informal reception occurred on November 16, 2013, bringing together all of the LAEs (See Appendix P). This event was designed to build community, encourage networking, share a preliminary synopsis of findings, and begin to explore a unified purpose as LAEs in Miami. As Soulflower suggested, gathering the “generals” (or the elders) of our artistic-activist-educational community to the table was the first step (Personal communication, September 27, 2013). From here, a common agenda can be forged to work collaboratively to create the type of change we would like to see in Miami—in our schools, in our public spaces, and in our neighborhoods and extended communities. There are plans to make this a regular gathering, with LAEs determining the focus of these sessions, and our evolving collective goals. We see most clearly when we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us to gain a broader perspective, raise the proverbial light (the focused beam of knowledge) so it can cast a wider swath of illumination. This African-centered perspective—Sankofa, looking back in order to move forward—will provide the scaffolding for those who will succeed us in this cultural production.

140 Dangerous to predict what these realities might be, but overall, the goal is to begin with the questions on pages 89-90 of this chapter.

141 This element, actively building the LAE community in Miami, supersedes the scope of this study. However, the researcher sees the value of creating such a space for LAE support, mentoring, collaboration, encouragement and sharing of resources. The monthly salon, like those “Saturday Nighters Clubs,” founded by Georgia Douglas Johnson in Washington D.C., in the heyday of the Harlem Renaissance, brought together Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Angela Weld Grimke, and Carter Woodson to “share cake and wine, and talk poetry, books and plays.”
ART AS LIFE AND DESTINY

On the most basic level, virtually without exception, almost every LAE interviewed expressed an absolute, a non-negotiable element to their art-making. What they do to create and why they do it is inextricably wound up with who they are (identity). Many, if not most LAEs see their creation as a “necessity,” an indisputable “just is” or a “fait accompli” when speaking about their pursuit of cultural production. The artistry at times was voiced as “creating for survival”: that they could not possibly remain sane in this world without their art, as is the case with Profet and Alicia. Others exemplify an attitude of pursuing art for the intellectual challenge (as Melina explains); viewing it as an exercise that demands deep thinking, analysis, sustained focus, and emotion. Others share that their highest purpose calls them to do this creative work. In the final analysis, most LAEs voiced the idea that creating (and to a lesser degree, teaching) was the only thing that they knew. The necessity of being an artist was verbalized explicitly during the course of the interview, in various ways by almost half of the LAEs interviewed.  

Seeking fulfillment, these LAEs are adept at being resourceful and utilizing the “witchcraft of the poor”—to make something out of nothing—as Magdalena quips, as a

142 Alberto, Alonso, Alicia, Analyze, Edgar, Fiorella, Ika, Juan Andres, Jesus, Jude, Magdalena, Marcus, Melissa, Melvin, Melina, Octavio, Oscar, Profet, Renee, Rio, Roly, Sergio, Sesame, Stanley, and Teo.  

143 A wonderful chat with intellectual and writer from Grenada, Philip Dickenson-Peters, author of Caribbean Zen, introduced me to his theory of true happiness. There is an internal and an external drive within artists—their passions (endogenous) and a greater/higher purpose (exogenous)—finding the ability to be happy in both these zones of existence leads to experiencing “deep fulfillment.” (Personal conversation, November 11, 2013 at 3 pm, Bookstore in the Grove.)
means to not only survive, but resourcefully maximize the raw materials, resources, and talents of individuals, families, and communities.

Edgar relays “que siempre estaba muy inquieto,” until he resolved that he would commit to pursue a career in acting full force ahead. It was as if he could not settle down into himself until he found the right match for his intellect, heart, and spirit—acting gave him the space to both explore the deepest reaches of his internal and external selves—the spirit/soul/essence and the universe/cosmic/interconnectedness of the world. He conveys, “it’s like I touch a very deep part of myself,” intimating the sacredness and spirituality of his creativity. Some LAEs deliberately tried other career paths to please their parents for some time—Ika with business, and Carolina with physical therapy—but ultimately, the art chose them. They could not deny the force, the pull, the allure; it felt like it was “meant to be” for these LAEs. Some even went as far as to claim that they could not exist in this world, could not be sane and satisfied without the ability to express themselves creatively as artist-educators. This notion that the art chose them, they didn’t really have a choice, is alleged by Edgar and likewise in the interviews held with Jesus, Melissa, Rio and Profet (Malik).

Whether explicit or implied, the fait accomplis—that they were born to be an artist, or meant to be expressing their creativity—was voiced in numerous interviews. Most felt that their art was what anchored them, kept them sane and balanced, and enabled them

144 Translation by the researcher: I was always very restless.

145 Chapter 2, Literature Review introduced this concept. Matthew Fox’s Creativity: Where The Divine and the Human Meet, explores this connection between spirituality and creation.
to grow as a person. Regardless of their family’s associations, the vast majority felt “called” to be an artist, and a fewer number also expressed that sentiment about teaching/educating/community activism.

As Alonso explained in his interview, they are not always entirely in control of their creating. Analyze reinforces this notion, uttering, “at times, I don’t even know where the piece is going, I just keep writing…” and sometimes, “I don’t even feel like I am creating. Something outside of me, a somewhat mysterious something, inspires me to create, gives me direction and motivation, and the gift of creativity comes to life.” Continuing this theme, Alonso summarizes, “It is more like “it” is creating me creating.” This healthy respect for the mysterious and sometimes moody powers of creation is evident in most of the interviews; some believe this impetus and inspiration to be divinely guided.

Even though they are deeply committed to their creative work, and its ultimate expression, an uneasiness about embracing the label “artist” permeates many of the LAEs’ mentality. Alicia divulges that it sounds pretentious or showy. Marcus says that he feels that an artist is someone who has achieved “self-actualization, or mastery,” whereas his thought process is that he is merely creating. Similarly, Melina and Karina prefer to avoid the label artist and merely talk about the creative projects that they are currently working on seeing to completion.

A chorus of voices resounded among LAEs who agreed that music played a central, powerful, influential role in their creative process. “Completely” and “entirely...music...
influences my creation,” says Alonso, explaining further “especially since the traits of beat, rhyme, rhythm and lyricism apply equally to music and poetry.” Yudelka and Meli talk about the choice of a “soundtrack” for creating, both referencing entering a trancelike or transcendent state during the creative process, with music acting as one of their muses. During my interview with Fiorella, she shared the importance of music as background, saying her music has to match her mood and activity, that she must have it all the time, it soothes the soul, in her words, “silence, [being]without music is like torture…I thought, if I don’t have it, how will I do this interview?!” (February 17, 2013) Absolutely, we can have music, I proclaimed! When seeking to understand this nearly universal phenomenon with the LAEs and creating, several factors seemed to be at play. First, the role of music in creating and releasing endorphins is well established. Afro-Cuban dancer Renee says, “if you aren’t happy and laughing, you will never create anything!!” The root chakra feels the vibrations most sensually, and this connection to the fertility of mother earth can be enacted through music, and enhanced when we allow our bodies to move in celebration of the music. The ancient tribes all worshipped through music and dance; the drumbeat was the heartbeat of the globe and the heartbeat of its children, since all are brothers and sisters of nature. The African connection is not surprising since we are all new African people, as Marcus claims, this “where are you from?” is superficial and deceiving, since we are all just “passing through” this nation, with the real question being: “Where did you originate?” (Personal communication, September 24, 2013).
Another similarity found across the LAE interview group is that the proclivity to foster friendships with like-minded people. When asked to imagine their 10 closest friends and then communicate how many of these 10 would be classified as “Latino/a” and “Artists” and “Educators.” The resulting response shows strong significance, with the LAEs most commonly surrounding themselves with other artists. On average, almost \( \frac{3}{4} \) of LAEs’ circle of closest friends are also “artists.” Next most indicative of the friend characterization is “Latinos/as,” with LAEs responding that 68% of their closest friends are also Latino/a. Of least importance, but still significant, is the number of “educators” found in LAE friendship circles—just over half of their friends are also engaged in teaching and learning at some level. It makes sense that LAEs in Miami (and perhaps in general) look to other artists, other Latinos/as and other educators for friendship and to support their worldview, lifestyle, vision, and choices. Although it is possible that this is a sociological truth across cultures, time and space, it is worth noting the contours for LAEs in Miami specifically.

The overwhelming majority of LAEs found art first, and then later became educators in some capacity. Madelin admits that initially, she pursued her creative work “for the love of the art” and more recently “for the love of a paycheck.” For some it was necessity, for others, another level to their evolution, some saw teaching as a way to extend the joy that they had found, to inspire others, Oscar and Aya share.

Multiple LAEs conveyed that both their creative process in art-making and teaching involved a strong sense of cariño. Students—Carolina reminds us—all of them, but
especially the younger ones—need to feel loved and appreciated. Sesame, Melissa, Aya and Alicia all add to this theme, as they reference the importance of demonstrating love and understanding to their students as part of their mission.

**LAEs COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY**

About 50% of LAEs (22 individuals to be exact) are actively involved in one or more community initiatives that demonstrate taking an activist stance (See Table 6: Activist Involvement). Most LAEs spoke out against at least one injustice during their interview, and many go even further to establish a platform for their perspectives, either through creating a non-profit or community group or mentoring younger students, or engaging in other political and social causes and bringing an arts activism to these events. Deborah, Dennis, Knowledge, Jude “Papaloko,” Magdaena, Octavio, Melissa, Sophie, and Kristen have all established and founded innovative community arts programs that increase social capital and minimize injustices. Some organize community film nights, such as Malik, through the RNA and N’Cobra collective gatherings at the Peoplez House in Wynwood. Responses to the question, “Are you political?” varied widely, yet the term “activist” or “someone who works for social change” carried much more resonance.

When it comes to family, most LAEs have parents who were either 1) artists themselves, 2) creative people bridging the arts, or 3) folks who exposed, encouraged, and nurtured exploration in the arts. See Table 2 “Family Influence.” The number of LAEs who grew up in “broken” families exceeds 50%, and although this level of divorce
seems rather high, a detailed comparison with the societal norms could provide more insight. Please review Figure 12: “LAEs Family Status re: Parents.”

Clearly evident, however, when it comes to family, is the preference of LAEs to either remain single, or partner with someone without having children. Fully two-thirds (66%) of LAEs do not have children, suggesting that pursuing creative endeavors and teaching are all-consuming tasks. With precious little spare time, most LAEs devote all their time to arts/teaching/living, and it follows logically: when would one have time and energy to maintain a family? While it is not the norm, there are some who have families, most commonly, in a two-parent household. With the age demographics as they appear, the relatively “youngish” age of LAEs could suggest that some may eventually decide to have children¹⁴⁶, but have postponed this life step for the time being. For those that do have children, they rely on the support of either a generous non-Artist–Educator partner, who can take a greater role in family responsibilities, OR they have a fellow Artist-Educator partner who understands their devotion, and is compassionate and flexible. Among LAEs with children, the average number is two. Least common are those LAEs who are single parents with children. Please refer to Figure 11: “Family Structure” visual for more details.

UNITED IN SEEING THE ARTS AS VITAL FOR YOUTH

If there is one universal aspect about all of the LAEs, it is that they deplore and decry the removal of arts in schools and call for broad, sweeping changes to our educational

¹⁴⁶ Since the time of their interview, Felipe and Natalia have had a child, and Nikki and Melvin are expecting a baby in May 2015.
system. This understanding—the transformative power of the arts and its ability to revolutionize education, along with the ways in which education can provide pragmatic, humanistic guidance and grounding to artists—is the subject of “Education for Liberation” found on pages 169-171. Their conscious decision to engage in teaching is found in the section “I Teach, Therefore I Am” on pages 153-155. For the ways in which education and the arts can be mutually beneficial, please refer to “LAEs Bridging Arts and Education” on pages 171-174. Finally, for specifics on their educational theories-in-practice, see “Pedagogy and LAEs” on pages 181-182.

LAES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WEB

Relationships are the pillars of any community and the same holds true for LAEs in Miami. As social creatures, a community is essential on many levels—first providing connection with other like-minded individuals. With regular venues/meetings, the relationships become synergistic and give rhythm to the LAE’s weekly routine. For emerging or young artists, having a supportive environment to “rehearse” new pieces and to receive audience feedback during the artistic process, is invaluable. Many young artists utilize the network of more established artists around them for inspiration and confidence; in the best-case scenario, they become mentors and role models.\textsuperscript{147} At the most basic level, even if an audience member is not an “artist,” according to Marianne Williamson, their role is central:

\begin{quote}
Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{147} In our study, Melissa sees Jesús as a mentor; Renee recounts how Jude “Papaloko” literally scared the fear out of her. Isaida found inspiration and encouragement through Deborah Magdalena; Alicia looks to Aya for models of how to integrate activism and community organizing within various art forms.
most. We ask ourselves, who are we to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There’s nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us, it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we’re liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. (A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles," (1992) Ch. 7, Section 3, P. 190).

Therefore, the computer programmer, community organizer, speech therapist, and yoga instructor—as audience members—are each potentially “liberated” to let their own light shine. They are also the mirror—jury and judge—as they either validate or alienate the artist, performing their “soul excavation” work in front of the audience. Connection from a shared experience or universal feeling creates a sense of expansion and acceptance, whereas the opposite, ridicule or even worse, apathy or disinterest, produce devastating effects for the artist.

On a more pragmatic level, LAEs (and everyday people) need a public, recreational space to communicate, express themselves, and let off steam; when this is provided, regular interactions can deepen into meaningful relationships. For the more conscious and conscientious individuals, Open Mic venues, backyard theater projects and
Performances, and City of Miami birthday parties, and community film nights offer an opportunity to discuss the current local (and global) events, and to discuss their role in relation to larger society. Sustainability in venues is one of the most difficult challenges in creating these spaces for reflection and communion. For those elusive venues and relationships that last more than a few months to a year, LAEs can strategize ways to live creatively, authentically, and abundantly. Appendix R: “Timeline of Venues” provides an attempt at charting the major venues in the South Florida area over the past ten-plus years.

At this magical moment in 2004, seemingly suspended in time for 2-3 years, there was a coalescing of people and energies. LAEs whirled together like a cyclone, gaining force and power and momentum, sweeping up other artists and educators hailing from multiple cultures and backgrounds. These energies—life path energies from so many talented people moving forward—came together and nurtured each other, challenged each one to develop their own distinctive style, celebrating each achievement and mourning each loss or setback. It was as if Marianne Williamson’s quote was becoming

148 Three particularly inspiring events come to mind. In chronological order of experiences, Jesus’ acclaimed one-man show, Hour of the Wolf (March-April 2011) http://www.examiner.com/article/hour-of-the-wolf-at-the-jq-studio-march-3-20, staged in his living room; Melissa and Ivan’s White Rose Miami’s An Evening of Art and Whimsy (with over 20 performances of music, poetry, theatre, monologues, spoofs, and audience interaction, occurring early 2012 in the luxurious backyard of friend and supporter of the arts in Coral Gables (https://www.facebook.com/WhiteRoseMiami) and Oscar “Biscayne Poet” Fuentes’ fundraiser for his Biscayne Blues film project (May 2012), which incorporated body painted mermaid, informant Kristen, in the pool, live music and other performances—also hosted at a private residence in the Upper East Side/Miami Shores/Shorecrest area. For a teaser performance from that fundraiser see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srk14w_c9sk. Also, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhJPJuwk6o.

149 The researcher attended several of these events, organized by LAEs Octavio and Ralph, and held at the Camposition Studios and parking lot of the Jose Martí building in Brickell in 2004-2005-2006. These elaborate concoctions featured several rooms with live performance art, dancers, a giant birthday cake, masquerading attendees topping 300-400 people.
manifest and each of us found our light, and that light was admired and loved by all, so it continued to glow brighter and grow bigger. It was this culture, this sense of invincibility, an emotional cocktail simmered with the sweetness of possibility and the bitterness of outrage, passion and purpose that partially propelled Will “da Real One” Bell, the first Miami poet to appear on HBO’s Def Poetry Jam. Soon to follow was Asia. Both were regulars at Malik and Chunky’s Friday night Open Mic called Street Linguistiks: A Profetik Mixture, at Audy’s Place in Ft. Lauderdale, just off the main strip, a hidden gem of a venue which ran for over three years. Of the 52 people in my study, nearly a third, or about 17 were “regulars” at Street Linguistiks—Alonso, Analyze, Rio, Deborah, Isaida, Knowledge, Kristen, Profet, Roly, Stanley, Tony Gee, Tania, Yudelka—and/or made regular appearances at Churchill’s (Rio, Oscar, Kristen, Profet, Sergio, Josh, Fio, Jude, Tania) for “Theatre de Underground,” hosted by Kristen on Monday evenings (Field Notes, April 2010).

Bringing a microscope to this collective web of LAEs reveals several couples (romantically entangled), notably Najirrah (the researcher) – Profet and Joshua-Fiorella. Kristen and Oscar were roommates, as were Rio and Josh and Moses. Tony Gee lived with Profet (Malik) as a roommate as well. These friends, couples, yoga partners and schoolmates (Kristen, Rio, and Oscar all went to school together at New World) formed an inner circle whose interconnections are represented visually in Figure 1: Relationship Map. Interestingly, there is another sweeping arc, which overlaps and intersects with

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150 Neither Will nor Asia was included in this study. Will was tragically murdered in September of 2011 and Asia, a professional traveling poet, was unable to meet to interview in time, as he just recently became a father.

151 Chunky is the stage name for spoken word artist Therese Hill.
the first collective, comprised primarily of poets and artists who identify as black, and venues hosted by Caribbean “black” and African American artists, but where Profet, Alonso and Amy Baez also frequented. This collective included Will da Real one” Bell, Chunky, Lori “Elle”, Emonde Love, Rachel FlowDiva, da Youngsta, WillBeez, Darryl “Blackest Man” Payne,” Poetiss, Kyla, and others. This group is primarily still intact, despite the painful absence of Will da Real one and Lori, thanks to arts promoter and savvy businesswoman, Ingrid B. Rashida Bartley must be given credit, however, in building this movement and creating a space for artistic expression through Funk Jazz, a regular Thursday night venue at the ground floor of the ___ hotel. Ingrid B has continued to host multiple events, including The Bohemia Room, Cunninglinguistics, Mellow Mondays, and others. Marcus Blake has emerged as a strong leader in hosting venues and providing spaces for artists of all stripes. As one of our LAEs, although his Stone Groove is frequented by predominantly black folks—when I went in March of 2013, I could count maybe five people who were not black, light-skinned Latinos or white folks (Field notes, March 11, 2013). Majestical Lips—the reincarnation of Marcus’ Blue Lotus, a short-lived, but very intimate and swanky space—is hosted by Chez and draws and eclectic, multiracial and multicultural crowd. Marcus, who traces his heritage from Jamaica, partnered up with another LAE, Colombiana Sophie Moon, to present the White Rabbit Society at the Stage, which also is more diverse, bringing in the typical Miami Latino/a demographic, mixed with elements of West Indian and American black performers. This evening was envisioned to assist local artists in networking and collaborating.

152 This venue was located on NE 2nd Avenue, in the area now known as “Buena Vista” before the restaurants and sidewalk cafes began appearing, with La Teresita Market being the main business anchoring that block.
As time passed, relationships were ended and new ones begun. People pulled up roots and transplanted themselves into other communities. The first major blow that the LAE community suffered was the shocking death of Lori “Elle” Tennant, violently murdered on August 26, 2005, by the father of her two sons as they lay sleeping in the house and he stabbed her multiple times and slit her throat. By early 2007, my connection to the artistic community becomes more sporadic, as job changes, relationship challenges, and single motherhood take their toll on my time. After my fading away gradually, Josh and Fiorella are on and off, eventually parting ways, so there is additional fragmentation there. Kristen and Oscar, who were once roommates, were forced to leave their apartment off of Biscayne Blvd, as it was bulldozed to make way for higher density, higher rent, high-rise condominiums. In essence, what was once a daily interaction, and perhaps taken for granted, was now more challenging, requiring effort where it was once automatic and effortless to connect, create, and collaborate. The flourishing of Cornerstone from 2005-2007 is last wave of optimism and true dedication to a grassroots artistic community experiment. By late 2008, early 2009, Rio moves away to California and then China (2009-2011), and Moses moves from “the Castle” (home of Castle Yoga and later “I love Yoga” right around the corner from Cornerstone) to north Miami/Broward. In September of 2011, Will “da Real One” Bell became the victim of a

153 This page by Ingrid B has remembrances of Lori, photos, the news of her death. http://www.mail-archive.com/bsidenews@yahoogroups.com/msg00079.html. I remember sitting at Denny’s off of Sheridan and I-95 with another 10-12 poets, the morning after this news ran through the poetry community, all of us in a stupor. Dazed and in complete shock. Elle joked about her “crazy baby daddy” and referenced him in poems, but no one ever thought that she was in imminent danger.

154 Driving through Wynwood in 2011, I was witnessed a line of hundreds of people snaking around the block, and was surprised to see it led up to the Castle, making concrete and undeniable the reality of change, as Castle Yoga had been transformed into Basel Castle. In 2012 and 2013, the art installation took the form of a circus performance.
homicide in the parking lot of his venue, The Literary Café—one of the staples in the poetic community. While not “Latino,” Will was a native son of Miami, a product of Liberty City. In the wake of this tragedy—he was a colossal presence in every sense of the word—many artists went underground for a period of time, either grieving and shocked, or because they were frightened and freaked out over the seemingly senseless and random murder. Will was one of the afterschool teachers hired by the researcher in an innovative arts-based program designed to motivate students, improve academic performance, and increase confidence.

While initially an audience member, Josh eventually embraced performance, but his greatest gift was his constant presence, “holding space.” This concept is the act of conscious attention and reverence, critical for both Churchill’s Theatre de Underground and Cornerstone. Pursuing teaching as well as acting full-time, Kristen decided in 2008-2009 to train an apprentice host, Benny, for assistance. After so generously sharing what she worked so hard to build, Benny, as most imperialistic white males are known to do, stole what was not his, and proceeded to destroy its spirit. The death of Theatre de Underground (TdU) marked the passing of a conscious, multicultural, multiethnic, fiery, spiritual, deep, loving, raw, reverent, and sometimes raucous poetry, storytelling and music, and experimental theater. Musically, TdU incubated most if not all the live music performers in Miami, ranging from Raffa Jo, Jesse Jackson, Cleaveland Jones, Brendan O’Hara and the Humble Ones, Adonis (Elijah) Cross, Nacho (Arboles Libres, later Eagle Chief), Rachel Goodrich, and Sol Ruiz. Theatre de Underground is still running, but now an entirely different entity, a subject the researcher
discussed informally in interviews with Josh, Sergio, Nikki, Felipe, Melvin, Sophie, Michaelangelo, Malik, and others, and this shift to Benny as host, provided the final nail in the coffin for the dispersal of our once tight-knight group. The venue is still multiracial and multicultural, yet the sense of mutual respect, reverence, and devotion to the art form seems to have disappeared, replaced instead by audience members who are interested in cheap thrills and drinking as many pitchers of beer as possible. Kristen told me that she had to “educate” or “train” the audience on how to act; with Benny oblivious to that conscious and ongoing effort, the culture of the evening has become much more superficial, and individual, less connected, less social commentary, and less communal (Personal communication, June 24, 2008). See Appendix O: “TdU Mystics at Loveapalooza,” a small, but incomplete reunion of some of the creative souls.

Hence the period (2008-2010) referred to, somewhat in jest, by the researcher as “The Dark Ages.” Perhaps a harsh judgment, but, from my perspective, this was a quiet time for the Open Mic scene in Miami. It is possible that because I was long-distance—living in Tampa—perhaps I am projecting feelings of distance, feeling out-of-the-loop somewhat. This possibility of personal distancing is mitigated by my frequent back-and-forth\(^\text{155}\) (a rebirth of circular migration!), when in town, I frequented Theatre de Underground, attended the PlayGround Theatre’s performances, and visited “Speak! Inner Look,” along with many other venues. When not in Miami, I maintained a connection with fellow LAEs through Facebook and Myspace. Just after Obama was

\(^{155}\) In 2008, I made easily 8 trips during the course of the year, in Miami almost monthly, if not every six weeks or so. By 2009, I was visiting probably 5-6 times. Early 2010, at least one pivotal visit, and then moved in April. But, even though I would frequent Churchills on a Monday, missed Juan Andres, who hosted a Wednesday music jam and open mic in 2009 for about a year.
elected, most of the nation was like Talib Kweli, trying “just to get by,” and aiming to
“keep hope alive.” The black community was proud and silent and praying. Most of us
who were supportive of the first Black President were holding our breath, and many
decided to step back and look inward. In many ways, I believe that LAEs were
regrouping, rekindling their artistic urges, and trying to plot their next move. The same
could be said for the nation—there was that kind of vibe in the air.

Also notably, 2008-2010 saw virtually no new construction in Miami—remember seeing
the giant cranes from Ralph’s Brickell Key high-rise apartment one sunny Saturday in
October 2006, counting 14 one day! Eight years later, the construction cranes are
ubiquitous once again, clustered tightly in the downtown skyline once again, with the
most recent count at 22 in a 20 by 10 block area (Field Notes, February 22, 2015).

We would be naïve to overlook an economic correlation with the flourishing of the arts.
When the housing market crashed in the foreclosure/home-loan crisis in 2008, a quieter
phase was put in motion. Most artists didn’t cease creating and teachers never stopped
teaching; however, because of the economic recession, the average art aficionado had
less disposable income and was therefore, less likely to go out to frequent a venue.
Without regular audience members’ support, many spaces closed (Please refer to the
Appendix R: Timeline of Venues).

156 The resurgence and development of downtown Miami is explosive, nothing short of
incredible. As of February 26, 2015, the researcher counted over 20 cranes supporting the
surge in construction of additional high-rises. Another friend, in relating a conversation about a
meeting he had downtown, interjected, “Foreign money everywhere you look downtown, these
hug skyscrapers going up, on top of each other, cranes almost touching!” (Personal
communication, March 24, 2015).
As testament to the human spirit, however, it is notable that several “homegrown” events were birthed during this time. Words ‘N Wine originated with a few people wanting to get together and express themselves. Without a “venue,” they began to meet in the living room of an artist cooperative known locally as “the JamHouse,” and invited friends to bring their own bottles of *vino*[^1]. Words and Wine, like every venue, has evolved, and its evolution is testament to the ability to morph and change, creating a big enough circle so that all feel comfortable inside, and it can shape-shift as performers and audience dictate.

Similarly, Ray “Knowledge” Dominguez founded The Write Side Poets, initially offering his home as rehearsal space and meeting point for aspiring young spoken word artists to gather and hone their skills. After demonstrating success and generating some notoriety (their slam team placed multiple times in the Top 10 at Brave New Voices’ Annual (Inter)National Competition), the City of Lauderhill offered community space, which they maintain today, as The Write Side Poets Café. Our interview was conducted amidst camera crews filming for Brave New Voices’ segment, poets rehearsing and timing team pieces, his four children clamoring for the last few pieces of the pizza they ordered. Beautiful noise. Malik (Profet) was the Assistant Director/Assistant Coach for

[^1]: Words ‘N Wine continues to this day, even though it has changed venues with capricious regularity, and is now hosted by Rio, rather than Nikki, who is expecting her first child. One local entertainment website, BeachedMiami, did a write up on Words and Wine, and the commentary is interesting, from attendees and audience members. Read it here [http://www.beachedmiami.com/2011/01/06/words-wine-miami-open-mic-american-legion/](http://www.beachedmiami.com/2011/01/06/words-wine-miami-open-mic-american-legion/).
The Write Side Poets, two Nuyorican transplants in Miami! The energy and excitement of this gathering of young poets was palpable, as they rehearsed and gave each other honest, constructive feedback. (Field Notes, June 21, 2008).

The organizations that were formed in 2008-2009, although much fewer in number than the listing of venues in the “Early Years” and in “The Flourishing,” do manage to have strong staying power, with most sustaining themselves into the present. The four most significant ones represented in my study are: Stone Groove, Words and Wine, The Write Side Poet’s Café, and Speak! @ The Inner Look.

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158 Knowledge and Profet (Malik) even more so, performed and led poetry, writing, and performance workshops at Summerbridge/Breakthrough Miami while I was directing the program. The Write Side Poets were featured in a couple of events the researcher coordinated: the QECR Quality Education as a Civil Right Project Spring Break Empowerment Week (in collaboration with FIU and Bob Moses’ Algebra Project), and the 8th Grade Applying to High School Day at the University of Miami.

159 Marcus Blake is the host of this event that just recently celebrated 5 years. Its ambience is rebirth of cool, with red lights and co-founder Rod Deal’s art work gracing the walls. Bartender Holly Peño hails from Chicago, is a burlesque dancer, and brings positive energy and a non-judgmental vibe to the location. She claims Stone Groove is the “soul” of the Vagabond. Aye and aye remember it as the original spot in the hood, “crackhead central,” even when it was the I/O Lounge. On the night in 2004 that Deborah Magdalena performed with her father and brother (Nestor Torres Sr. and Jr.) for her musical debut and CD release, maybe 50 people were present, in a venue that can do ten times that capacity. Holly claims that no other night compares to the energy, she confides in me. A house band, some erotic and soulful poetry, and a whole lot of singer/songwriters, and emcees lined up to battle as the night morphs again. Overall, lots of love I saw there. Very chocolate. Not even Latinos. Maybe 3-4 of us. DJ Wasabi spinning fresh and oldskool beats. Brooklyn Red with his Irish looking self. See Appendix J for Stone Groove Photos. (Field Notes, March 2013).

160 Nikki Rodriguez is current host and godmama of Words and Wine, which has traveled to so many locations, from her house, to American Legion (once the site of Shamele’s Lip, Tongue and Ear Poetry Guild weekly readings), to PAX, to Electric Pickle, back to her house, to Grand Central, her house, Lalas (formerly the Literary Café where Will da Real One was king), to a brief stint at Moonchine, the Asian bistro, and now held at TSL: The Social Lubricant in Wynwood. Sophie Moon and Mercury Wolff were once best friends with Nikki when Words and Wine started, but then Nikki took the lead. See Appendix I for “Words and Wine Snapshots.”

161 Still operating monthly Open Mic’s Third Saturdays of the Month, plus now a Gospel Open Mic, and other special events occasionally, City of Lauderhill in Broward County. See Appendix H for “Photos of The Write Side Poet's (TWSP) Café.”
The mapping of these relationships results in a thick, cross-cutting diagram of names with multiple strings attached to other names in many cases. There are the outliers, like Joseph, recommended by Jesus, and probably only knows a handful of names from the list. Most of those interviewed who live in Miami would recognize at least half a dozen names on the list of people who were interviewed. There are actually four core connections that many LAEs share. A total of seven have been or currently are “Arts for Learning” afterschool/summer teaching artists. Another eight have worked or currently work for the PlayGround Theater in Miami Shores, where the researcher also worked as Director of Education and Outreach for a brief period. Six LAEs have an enduring relationship with the Breakthrough Collaborative (formerly known as Summerbridge)—as former teachers, parents, or directors—and another three served as regular workshop facilitators and guest artists at Breakthrough Miami (formerly Summerbridge Miami). Finally, there are 18 LAEs whom not only educate and inspire through their creative work, but have organized and/or hosted an Open Mic venue in Miami or South Florida. These relationships and cross-connections between and across LAEs are worthy of more examination.  

LAEs as MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS

One of the most interesting aspects of the interviews was the preponderance of LAEs who named other LAEs in the survey (or other artist-educators in the community) as their “greatest role models” or primary sources of influence and inspiration. Strong

162 There are naturally holes and gaps in the schema, because there are people that are part of these relationships yet are not on the map because they are either not Latino/a and/or were not interviewed. Prominent examples include Will “da Real One” Bell, Lori (“Elle”), “Chunky,” Shamele, Rashida, and Ingrid B, who are all African-American or Black Caribbean artist-educators.
connections across the LAEs in this study (and extending beyond the individuals who participated in the investigation) are evident. Many LAEs expressed feeling a sense of mentoring or inspiration from watching others perform. When questioned specifically about other artists who have had an influence on their creativity, 13 LAEs named other LAEs in the study. Another five named Miami Artist Educators (some Latino/a) as influential to their development. Combined, these 18 represent 35% of the overall group of participants. Alonso gave a shout-out to Deborah Magdalena for her business savvy and artistic devotion; Knowledge gave a nod of inspiration to Profet; Meli talked about how much she learned from Jesus; and Sergio gushed earnestly about the influence of Kristen, Josh, Profet, Tony Gee and Najirrah (yours truly!), giving him permission to find his own voice and share his stories through theater, poetry, and movement. These compliments, acknowledgements, and recognition demonstrate the importance of these relationships for setting a tone of encouragement, risk-taking, and achievement for developing artist-educators.\textsuperscript{163}

**LAEs CONSTRUCTING THEIR IDENTITIES**

It is hardly surprising that LAEs and informants eschewed labels. Artists, by nature, rebel against boundaries. Our LAEs either expressed outright disdain for the rigid categorization of people or an uneasy ambivalence at best. Many LAEs avoided referencing as an “artist,” saying it “sounded pompous or pretentious,” and preferred to identify with their specific art form—“I am a painter” or “I am an actor.” A handful of LAEs (Octavio, Oscar, Deborah) also felt limited by this approach, choosing instead to identify

\textsuperscript{163} This theme continues on page 168-169, under the section heading “LAEs: Influence and Impact.”
as a “hybrid fusion artist” or “contemporary performance artist.” Analyze, Isaida, Melissa and Marcus felt that “educator” sounded stuffy and overly serious. Alicia prefers “youth worker,” as does Aya, who share a Bay Area/West Coast ideology influenced by socialist ideas. This thread—refusing to be categorized—reflects a reactionary approach to the contemporary obsession we have with labeling everyone. Others, like Marcus Blake, despite clear success and recognition as an artist, brushes off the label “artist” and asserts that he is simply feeding the “need to express myself.” He believes, “On the other hand, an artist has perfected a certain style, craft, approach—they have mastered that art. Whatever I do, that’s just one of my creations. I am just creating.”

When it comes to cultural identity, there is also much divergence in how it is viewed. The overwhelming majority of the LAEs interviewed preferred to reference their country of origin first, and then perhaps Latino/a or Hispanic. Six of the 52 indicated in the initial interview that they prefer to supersede race and ethnicity and identify as “human being,” “multi-racial, multi-ethnic human being,” “light being,” “no labels,” and “citizen of the world.” Almost in deliberate rebellion, Yudelka tells me that, when confronted with that question, she either “leaves it blank or checks them all.” In speaking of his identity, Alonso explains, “My culture is a freakish hodge-podge. It depends….sometimes I feel as American as John Wayne and apple pie, and other times I am Cubano…compartiendo un cafecito y pastel…shar(ing) a connection with Latinos everywhere.

164 See Appendix A: “Master Chart” under the column entitled “Their Own Labels for Themselves” for specific response to the question, “How do you identify?”

165 Of these six, two are non-Latinos included in the study as informants.
The bind being a shared sense of history, culture, language, and life experience. Often times, it’s a vague combination in a constant state of flux” (Personal communication, June 2008).

Only five individuals in the study chose the larger, pan-ethnic label first: Lucy, Ika, Carolina, and Fiorella said “Latina,” followed by their national origin label, two “Colombiana” responses, “Brasileña” and “Chilena” respectively. Similarly, Juan Andrés claimed Latino, Venezolano; almost as if saying, “I belong to this larger cultural group, but/and if you use the microscope to zoom in, I am from this patch of land.” Perhaps because Miami has been so dominated by Cuban politics, history, and culture, those from South America (and more recent arrivals), choose to identify with a larger umbrella, emphasizing commonalities first and particular ethnic idiosyncrasies second. Within the Cuban-American participants, they identified almost exclusively as “Cuban” or “Cuban-American.” Only three LAEs (two of those older and from more affluent family backgrounds, one younger and Hialeah-bred), chose “Hispanic,” associated with a more politically conservative or Republican point of view. Even so, these LAEs represent only 21% of the overall participant group of 14 of Cuban ancestry.

Outward representation of an intangible and yet invaluable piece of our “selves” creates a dilemma of justification and authenticity for some, and almost always involves a
complex (even if subconscious) negotiation.\textsuperscript{166} Another, more progressive and transgressive approach is to use multiple labels interchangeably. Why be forced to choose one? Why allow someone else’s choices to define us? LAEs have consistently and creatively resisted typecasting and homogenizing in films, television, and popular culture. They slip and slide easily between multiple languages, dialects, accents in Miami—why not with identity labels? Because they “straddle borders,” LAEs can be ethnically ambiguous at times. Deborah says she is “definitely una latina, definitely una Boricua, definitely una negra.” In a similar vein, Aya declares that she freely “exchanges Black, Puerto Rican, African-American, Latina, Caribeña, Afro-Latina in a series of overlapping and rolling identities, all of which are more or less true” (October 2, 2008). What changes is not who she is or what ethnicity and ancestry she claims, but merely the priority shifts, making way for the label which is most advantageous given shifting realities and local context. The way LAEs perceive identity—as fluid and flexible—represents an awareness of interconnectedness.

This researcher views the role of family as central in nurturing and encouraging the development of creativity through various outlets. While is it likely that “uno nace así”\textsuperscript{167} (in the words of Edgar), there are several direct and indirect linkages to artistic

\textsuperscript{166} Most evident in the interview of LAE Melina, who says she checks both White and Latina, since she is the “daughter of a white dad and brown mother.” Melina recognizes her economic and educational positions of privilege and says the language, speaking Spanish, is the most “latino” thing about her. Her father, however, grew up in Mexico to American parents, but culturally, her father is just as “latino” as her mother (born and raised in Ecuador). This segment of the interview represents the complex negotiation between how she sees herself, and her knowledge of her family’s history and culture as juxtaposed by how the larger society will view her and attempt to categorize or label her.

\textsuperscript{167} Translation by the researcher: “One is born that way”
endeavors. First and most impactful, incredible support and motivation comes from having direct relations (mother, father, uncles, aunts, siblings, or grandparents) who are artists. Oftentimes, simply the way the family lives—their daily reality—“normalizes” the hectic reality that can be living the artist’s way. Deborah speaks of being “snuck in the village gates to see my dad (Nelson Torres), perform with Machito, opening act for Celia, Los Palmieris, Mongo…this was just normal for me growing up. Surrounded by tons of gay guys doing my aunts’ hair, making sure everyone looks beautiful.” (Personal communication, June 17, 2008). As the niece of “el alma de Puerto Rico Hecha Canción,” Ponceña singer and senator Ruth Fernández, Deborah’s artistic genealogy is impressive, not only considering her father’s legacy, but also brother Nelson Torres Jr.’s flute-playing prowess and international acclaim. From an activist perspective, Alicia (daughter of Aurora Levins Morales, Puerto Rican author of Getting Home Alive), speaks of being raised in “a pretty intense family culture” where her mom “is very politically active” ; she confesses “honestly, I just couldn’t imagine that I wouldn’t be in jail, or that I might not be…wouldn’t be dead by the time.” While only three can claim that level of notoriety, in total, there are 13 LAEs who benefitted from having close, direct relatives engaged in artistic pursuits.

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168 Because of the historical time period of the 1940s in Puerto Rico, and it’s status as a de-facto United States colony, “Titi Ruth” as she was known by many, had to confront many racial and sexist barriers in her early musical career. Through her actions, she was an activist, and Puerto Rico declared three days of national mourning when she left the mortal plane in 2012. (Personal communication, 2012).

169 In addition to the abovementioned, Sesame Raphael’s parents opened the first playhouse in Trinidad and Tobago. Sesame shared that while in NYC—where his parents met in the late 60s and early70s, his parents (dad a playwright and mom a painter) were close with John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and have even appeared in documentaries about John Lennon.
Slightly more common, however, was the pattern where LAEs had parents engaged in some sort of creative activity that served as a bridge into the arts. Oscar postulates that he learned patience, striving for perfection, and fearlessness from his dad’s devotion to beekeeping; combining this with the discipline of studying karate proved to be beneficial in supporting his study of theater. Ika relates that her father’s talent as a tombstone carver (headstone carver) in Barranquilla provided fertile inputs to her imagination. While he carved, he told her stories of the people who had passed, and the saints their families chose to accompany them into the afterlife. Taking all these together in conjunction with those LAEs with close artistic relatives, results in a total of 22 of the LAEs experiencing some kind of “direct exposure” to the arts while growing up, or 42% of our participants.

Parents are our earliest teachers. Together with extended family, for many LAEs, they provided a direct example of pursuing a passion and cultivating creativity. Undoubtedly, watching their parents put in hours of work rehearsing, practicing, perfecting and performing, sent the subtle but powerful message that “Work is love made visible.” Doing what they loved, despite temporary hardships or setbacks, gave LAEs the confidence to do the same, following their own purposeful path. Aside from serving as direct examples (modeling an artistic life), others provided an indirect portal into the

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170 Ika believes that witnessing her father make a life doing something he enjoyed and was good at, was a powerful message for her to pursue acting, filmmaking and directing. She also mentions that she gained valuable business acumen from seeing him turn his artistic talents into a means of survival.

171 Joseph’s parents gifted him with a strong sense of faith, as they founded a Temple Messianique, where “church service every day of the week provided ample opportunity for my siblings, Daniel, Esther, Rachel and I to develop our discipline in music” (Personal communication, October 10, 2011).
world of the arts by practicing a related activity or craft that provided transferrable skills. Alberto speaks of his mother’s gift for scrapbooking and interior decorating, saying that she has always been a creative person. Perhaps her sense of “I can make anything” is what gave him the confidence to design the costumes for his competitive dance company. Finally, the vast majority of LAEs spoke of their parents or siblings acting as cheerleaders, artistic guides, and muses, and providing an unending well of encouragement and support, as well as the concrete tools they needed to pursue their craft. Melissa, Karina, and Melina speak most persuasively and extensively on parental support, but many other LAEs also mention it, including Alfredo, Carolina, Fiorella, Jesus, Joseph, Ralph, Sergio, Sesame, Tania, and Yudelka. See Table 3: “Artistic, Educational Influences.”

**LAES CREATING: MOTIVATION, ARTISTIC APPROACHES & SACRED SPACES**

The fountain of creativity springs from many sources, yet there are common themes that provide a cross-connection for many LAEs. Nature, family, life itself, injustice, love, tyranny and oppression, beauty, love of knowledge, observing people and occasionally, not even knowing where or how a creative work is birthed, just that it begins to stir inside. Across many interviews a familiar refrain was heard: something bigger, more encompassing, larger, more grandiose, more cosmic was at work each time the artistic urge was recognized. The commentary spiraled around phrases like: “it creates me” and “it just comes through me” and “I am just a vessel.” Furthermore, while none of the LAEs professed to be overtly cognizant, many were aware, with Edgar commenting that each time he is diving into the psyche of a character, “I touch a very deep part of myself”
and Ika proclaiming, “I know that it is something very spiritual.” This notion was echoed by the majority of LAEs, notably Melissa, Malik, Jesus, Rio, Roberto, Ika, Edgar, Teo, Deborah, Fiorella, Isaída, Joseph, Magdalena, Renee, Roly, Sergio, Sesame, Soulflower, and Tania. In response to where her motivation comes from to create and to teach, Alicia comments:

I think that young people have a lot of intelligence and energy and insight and that it is hard to hold onto as you get older just because the way (schooling is structured, society)….and if we’re talking about injustice, this is a great place to start….they have a very strong sense of justice, what’s right and wrong…and they get treated like they are powerless, or they don’t know, or they will understand when they get older…but for me, it’s about solidarity (10/3/2008).

The underlying motivation, mentioned explicitly by many LAEs, is that they have something to say, something to express. Some LAEs are more pragmatic in their conceptualization of their work in creating art, notably Ika and Jesus, who were trained at the same intensive theater school in Colombia. Jesús claims that “yo no creo en la inspiración, yo creo en el trabajo. Si escojes el camino correcto, la inspiración fluye, corre.”

For Ika, keeping traditions alive and maintaining a connection with her cultural roots, was a primary motivator for the creation of her first documentary “Barranquilla.” In fact, she claims “it (inspiration) comes from grandparents, ancestors.” Joseph, Melissa, and others reveal that making their family proud is another motivator supporting their creative process. Likewise, family and friends inspire Felipe and Miguel, while and Renee, Oscar, and Lucy specifically mention their children. Alicia gives recognition to her peers, her students, and elders as being prominent sources of

172 English translation: “I don’t believe in inspiration, I believe in work. If you choose the right path, the inspiration flows.”
motivation. Renee echoes Ika showing reverence to the “Orishas” (ancestors) and the inspirational value of rituals and traditions.

Sophie, Río, Carolina, Isaida, Melissa, Oscar cluster around the theme of our natural environment as (a) lightning rod of inspiration. “Trees, water, wind, leaves, grass, gardens” always provide impetus to create for Melissa. Karina, Miguel and Octavio specifically spoke of parks and green spaces, while Magdalena and Joseph highlighted spending time by the ocean as a source of inspiration. Magdalena and Lucy mentioned travel as another avenue to see the world differently or through new eyes. Melissa remarks that, although she has lived in Miami all her life and has not traveled as much as she would like, being in Miami is an opportunity to view an incredibly diverse group of people and cultures:

Walking through different sections of Miami can also inspire projects…Little Havana, Wynwood, Little Haiti…there’s a grit and life to those areas that inspire work…I want to broaden my perspectives. I’ve discovered that for me, it doesn’t matter where I am, a soul that’s open is going to learn about the world without ever needing to travel, but just by looking within and keeping an open heart, you know what you need to live. Miami itself is an inspiration (June 15, 2011).

Workshops and conferences presented another pipeline for inspiration, relevant to Deborah, Profet, and Octavio. Other artistic events—such as opera or art galleries—were mentioned by a few LAEs, but more frequently, these expressions of artistic sensibility when combined with a larger community celebration, seemed to be more significant, with Amy, Oscar, Ralph, Miguel, and Magdalena recognizing theatre festivals, poetry slams, drum circles, traditional rumbas, open mic events, and other gatherings. Specific venues were also mentioned by LAEs, with Churchill’s,

Karina explains that for her, motivation to create art comes from two places—being inspired by things that are beautiful (design) and having a strong desire to make a point (about religion, politics…)—and ultimately, it is the union of these two that fuel the creative process. Deborah writes and performs for “self-healing,” reflecting Aya’s proposition that indeed, we are a “people, a country, a world in crisis.” Further, one of the primary goals of art should be to understand, heal from, and ultimately, overcome the individual and collective traumas we have sustained. Naming, feeling, linking, understanding, and ultimately releasing as part of the process in recovery is facilitated by for both artist and audience through a creative and performative catharsis. Melissa, in her ambitious creation of White Rose Miami with partner and fellow Cuban-American Ivan, has set out to “inspire hope” in Cubans, to heal the scars and address the deep divide created by separation, exile, philosophical differences, and family disruption for the Cuban diaspora. For more, see https://www.facebook.com/WhiteRoseMiami.

**LAEs: I TEACH, THEREFORE I AM**

Miguel (along with many other LAEs), believes that his drive to educate creatively is an attempt “to give back to communities that have nurtured me, to be a role model, and because I love working with youth” (November 11, 2010). Similarly, Sesame admits that his motivation comes from “music and education… I think that the young people are what it’s all about, whether they are students that you know or little people throughout
the world…they’re the ones, once you get too old, you get caught up in the system, you can’t see it anymore, [you’re] in the matrix” (June 20, 2008). Oscar spoke of the fact that he recognized he loved the artistic expression of writing and music so much that he wanted to share it with others. This became a bridge to performance, which ultimately led to his teaching. Similarly, Magdalena divulges, “I started as a writer…I saw how much joy that gave me and how empowered I felt, the sense of voice and agency, so I decided to help others find that same sense of agency, power over their lives…and dedicated my life to giving others the tools to express themselves” (December 7, 2012).

Ika states that it is “results” that inspire her teaching: “the idea that they (students) can do something even if they don’t know that they can do it, to see the finished product, usually it is a surprise” (June 17, 2008). Lucy explains that “seeing young children respond in a positive way and they get excited (about their learning)…it is more meaningful to raise consciousness, teach peace…Montessori really gives them the confidence to seek solutions…it gives them a voice,” adding that for her, education should “respect children as people with ideas who definitely help shape the world” (June 22, 2008).

Aya, Magdalena, and Lucy speak of the balance between creating and teaching. All three infer that it is difficult to balance “your art” with “teaching.” Aya articulates a complex relationship,

173 Presumably “it” refers to another world, another perspective, outside of the matrix, it could also refer to their own sacred creativity, the beauty and necessity of creating.

174 Teaching can be quite performative, depending on the individual’s teaching style.

175 Interestingly, these three women are the most senior, and therefore have the most experience “balancing.”
I was a full time artist for a few years, and that was really hard...It was hard on me, it was hard on my personal relationships...I think being a woman artist, and a person of color artist, one of the hardest things about being a woman...let me go back, one of the big reasons that I teach...I love teaching. I am a great teacher, if I am gonna be there, I am gonna seek transformation and honestly, if I had the resources to support myself, I might not teach...part of the teaching is that it is supporting me...I mean I am a great teacher, I know that I am making a difference and doing amazing things with the program, but...it's definitely, it's definitely 'a day job’” (October 2, 2008).

Reflecting on the need to seek financial support, Aya intimates that her integrity and conscience has steered her toward teaching as a complementary professional pursuit, in contrast to others as she explains:

Let me say there are particular ways that women and women of color artists can position themselves in my field to have more appeal and make more money... positioning themselves to sort of cater to what white people want to hear, or positioning themselves more toward what men want to hear, sort of a romanticized and sexualized way of presenting themselves...that’s just not me, it's not, no, it's not...not my aesthetic, not what I am interested in” (October 2, 2008).

Inevitably, there will be cycles where the focus will swing one way more than the other.

But a few months, a year later, or a decade later, the reverse will happen with the pendulum.  Lucy’s believes “even though I have gotten away from it, I will do more art, I am not done creating.”176  The key is finding ways to utilize the consistency and stability of teaching, with the flexibility it affords a working artist.

176 Working with her in creative educational settings, I believe that Lucy creates daily; she creates “communities of learning” where all children find joy, discovery, love, respect, and acceptance.
SACRED SPACES: CARIÑO AND CONNECTION FOR LAEs

Renee returns to the simple, spiritual, sacred perspective, not surprising given her strong sense of rootedness in the Native teachings,\textsuperscript{177} ancient wisdoms and ways of the ancestors. Shrugging her shoulders, she confers that her purpose—whether teaching or dancing or teaching dance or dancing while teaching, “at the end of the day, is to GIVE LOVE.” (June 30, 2008). This idea, the presence of “CARIÑO” and its seminal function in creating art, teaching and learning, surfaces multiple times in many variations throughout the LAE interviews. Carolina and Melissa both speak of the children they teach in summer and afterschool theater enrichment programs, coming to them with arms outstretched, and “needing a hug.” The cultural construct of “cariño” is manifested in LAEs being more expressive, in their closeness, their need to touch, because shaking hands is not enough. They habitually, if subconsciously need smell, touch cheeks, break barriers of personal space, and share a breath with you—even if only fleetingly—that’s the Latino/a way.\textsuperscript{178} The customary kiss on the cheek is standard greeting in Miami, even in many “professional” environments. Juana Bordas claims that cariño (affection) is central to the principle of “Gozar La Vida” (Enjoying Life), one of the key components driving Latino/a leadership (4); these cultural constructs of carino and sentimiento all deeply embedded in the collective imagining of a cultural personality.

\textsuperscript{177} Renee’s parents are Apache and Navajo and she traces her ancestry to region where NM, AZ, CO and UT meet, “where the four corners of the earth come from, this vortex.”

\textsuperscript{178} I wonder if that was the original way, the Taino or African way, if that is in our tribal, indigenous nature? Social and community bonds are strengthened by touch, as research by Dr. Paul Zak (the “love” doctor) has shown—hugging (along with dance, prayer, nursing, childbirth, and other activities) releases oxytocin, which in turn, fosters generosity and trust. See his Ted Talk at www.ted.com/talks/paul_zak_trust_morality_and_oxytocin.html.
Roly declares that he is a spiritual artist, talented in the arts of spirituality and spoken word. Ika also acknowledges that her creative expression is a gift, and spiritual work. Both Josh and Alfredo relay that their path as an artist/creator/educator/community organizer came from a quest, a search for something bigger. Each had a “cosmic experience” as they explained, although they happened quite differently. Joshua shares that there was

A big chunk of my life that I was out of body, out of my spirit, really disconnected and struggling through bouts of depression, and when I was about 20, I had this ‘cosmic experience’ with a Bob Marley song. It just hit me in such a deep place, resonated…took me back to my childhood, music was always one of the highlights…but I always saw it as being ‘out there’ rather than ‘in here’(pointing to his heart chakra). I didn’t get that I could actually do this, that I could create…so I got a guitar, and wow…staying up all night, playing one note, I can feel! I can play…I was so out of touch with myself, but now I have a feeling, I can feel it, I can feel things through music (September 23, 2013).

Alfredo articulates his “a-ha” moment in this way:

That morning, something happened to me, beyond words…I felt a sense of oneness with time—past-present-future all collapsed into one, this was a defining moment. I was listening to the Dalai Lama discourse on Netflix, a series revealing four truths, six hours of wisdom, and meditating, and four hours into meditating, I opened my eyes, and at that moment, the camera was scanning the crowd, and I see a sea of smiles, everyone is smiling, and I was there, even though it was recorded and playing through my TV, time and space were irrelevant, I was there. I felt that connected, that close (October 10, 2013).

Octavio is the first to adamantly state that we cannot afford art without a message, there is no time or space to waste. Michaelangelo relays that one of the central themes in his music is that change starts from within. Meli seeks to have her audiences from White Rose Miami feel hope, exercise forgiveness and, ultimately, find healing and peace. Lucy sums it up by saying, “my philosophy is that no matter what’s ‘in’ or what’s selling, real art, true art comes from the heart, comes from the soul…it reaches people, and
truth awakens people…even if you have been numbed up” (June 22, 2008). Malik (Profet) believes the entire fabric of society must be reconstructed: “we must change the paradigm…it’s the only way” (June 18, 2008). Knowledge sees his role as a spoken word artist as “messenger” more than “entertainer,” making the content as critical to the success of the poem as the creative conventions and the delivery. As a platform for something important to say, many artistic works carry a message, a feeling, and a vibration.

When queried as to the “sacrifices” involved in creating art or teaching, the most common response took the pattern of: first, a litany of the things they “could have” done, followed closely by the realization, “so glad I am not a lawyer” and exhale “sigh,” followed then by a smug satisfied smile that says, “I couldn’t live any other way, this is the only way I know, and it is me and I am it.” Joseph’s declaration, “If music is the truest expression of my soul, I believe it will stop at nothing to create,” which began this section, demonstrates the resoluteness of LAEs. Many LAEs echoed this idea—the art and creation would happen somewhere, somehow, it would triumph, it would find a way. Karina admits she is willing to do “most things that fit within my values if I think it will improve my art, and especially if I it will help my students” (November 15, 2010).

Multiple LAEs chastised me subtly for the word choice, adamant that they do not perceive their lifestyle from the perspective of “sacrifice” or “what they are giving up.” Rather, they suggest that the focus is on what they are gaining, and the value and beauty of the art/teaching/community work. Lucy expounds,
I don’t like that word sacrifice, as if you lost something, or had to give something up, think of the Catholic Church when I hear that, don’t like to view my life that way, everything I have done, I have learned from, came back to make me stronger…in some way…I have gained and benefitted from every experience (June 22, 2008).

I burst out in euphoric laughter of disbelief when Juan Andrés said, “I am not into sacrifices. We have Che…and we have Christ…that’s enough. No more crucifixions! Not at all, no, that’s not what I am here for, [I am] here to have fun and do good….and hopefully find a middle point between the two” (October 6, 2013). Josh says it beautifully,

I could say that I have made a lot of sacrifices on the one hand or at least some important ones, I did what I wanted and I knew to do what I really wanted, to get that, I had to let go of some other things…knew [I was] coming into abundance…whatever the path is that narrow path to get to where you really want to go, you can call it sacrifice or just walking the path…give thanks, got to let go of some baggage along the way, give thanks for all that we have (September 23, 2013).

LAES KUMBAYA OR “WE ARE FAMILY”

I feel connected to Latinos from all over the map. We share many aspects of our history: legacies of colonization, cultural ingenuity and fusion, and creative survival. I also think our beauty is in our diversity. As a puertorriqueña in a majority Mexicano community, I find a lot of learning and hilarity in differences and similarities of culture. –Alicia (October 3, 2008).

With very notable exception, the overwhelming majority of participants indicated that they felt a strong affinity with other Latinos. Lucy states matter-of-factly, “I am bi-cultural and living in Miami is a bi-cultural experience—I certainly relate to my Latino friends by engrossing myself in their culture, dialect, costumbres….and synthesize our commonalities!” (June 22, 2008). This bond, common sense of belonging to a larger

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179 Only one individual interviewed seemed to downplay or outright deny their connection with other Latinos/as, responding, “Not at all—only when I am with family do I feel Latino.”
tribe of people “is inexplicable—it just is” quips Magdalena, and continues to explain “I believe it is tied to our ancestral and present struggles with colonialism. The wink that the Master is asleep and the time for revolution has arrived each time we gather” (December 7, 2012). Renee reinforces Magdalena’s assertion, adding “Cultural similarities will always bind people; it’s an understanding you don’t have to explain, or learn or teach or lobby for…” (June 30, 2008). Rio emphasized the importance of place, hinting at a specific “Miami experience” by saying, “[I feel] Very much connected. To Cuban, Colombian, which are my parents’ nationalities, but all of the “Latino” peoples as well. I grew up all over Miami. We’ve all grown up together here” (June 26, 2008).

Yudelka raises the issue of competition and inter-ethnic rivalries, claiming she feels that the Northeast (and New York City, in particular), is much more progressive.

Although I am very proud of my Dominican heritage, I feel a slight disconnect to the Latino community here in the United States. I moved to New York at the age of 6 and was raised and educated there. Spanish is my first language but English is my dominant tongue. As of the year 2003, I have been residing in South Florida, and it has stunted my thoughts about the cohesiveness of the Latino population. There is a lot of racism, envy and hatred. Puerto Ricans versus Dominicans. Colombians within themselves. Cubans against the “blacker” Latinos, etc. We are all very different, even in our vernacular of the Spanish language. Where we should be more tight-knit, I see nothing but room for improvement in these regards. South Florida feels like another planet! I find that the Northeast part of the country carries more cultural intellect and sensitivity with these matters. When discussing myself and my Latino identity, I know exactly who I am and where I come from, thanks to my parents. I recognize my African, Native, and European ancestry. I make it a point to read, write in Spanish and to educate myself by staying current on what is happening outside of the U.S. that affects Latinos worldwide. I have a love of my traditions, but do not fit the expected stereotype of what typically leaves my island. Never have I accepted what Dominicans do, worship, wear, eat, dance, as the end-all, be-all for my lifestyle. I pride myself in keeping an open mind; I try to respect all cultures (and honoring my own), adopting what works best for me along the way (June 25, 2008).
The researcher has spoken with numerous individuals in Miami, of all backgrounds, but one who we will call Aaron\textsuperscript{180}, of Guyanese and African-American ancestry, has extensive experience living and working among Latinos, whether in Brooklyn’s Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Diego, the Southwestern US or in Miami. The issue of internalized racism and Latinos’ feeling of superiority over blacks is particularly blatant in Miami, from his perspective. Different Latino groups, and even individuals who share the same ethnicity, but perhaps different generation or educational level, or language ability, posture and parade around trying to prove who is more American, more deserving, projecting bravado and arrogance while trying to adopt cultural and social norms. (Personal communication, October 2010). Despite the competition, which is real and exacerbated in certain situations due to limited economic opportunities, there is “an immediate comfort when I’m in a Latin community,” Melissa explains

They understand the power of abuelita and abuelito, they understand living at home for an extended period of time, and they understand family the same way. Unfortunately, I feel the differences in how we judge each other; every Latin nationality seems to have major stereotypes about each other that ultimately affect our communities. These barriers are created through fear, anger and resentment, and not out of reality. We really could let it all go and support each other, but we don’t. I’m the same in culture, and I celebrate my roots, but I’m different because I stand more as an individual and a humanist beyond anything else, more than I identify as a ‘Latina’. I am proud, and I love, and don’t want the culture erased, but I am detached [from other Latinos] because I didn’t live a difficult life and I look inside to identify myself, and not outside at things like culture, and economy (June 15, 2011).

\textsuperscript{180}Aaron is an artist who was not explicitly interviewed for this research, but with whom the researcher spent considerable time discussing issues of art, culture, identity, and society.
Deborah supports Meli’s ability to see beyond ethnicity, by explaining “I was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, and that’s it! I feel and am a very proud Puerto Rican who grew up in NYC. I am deeply connected to my Latino world community. I’m also connected to anyone else from a different background whose values, ideas, thoughts, and compassion are vast like mine” (June 17, 2008). Rio revels in the fact that Miami-born Latinos are “all mixed up,” claiming the 305-area code boasts “the greatest genetic orgy on the planet, and we all keep coming out looking better and better” (June 26, 2008). Without a doubt, the diversity, proximity, and heterogeneity of Latinos in Miami encourages interethnic, interracial, and intercultural mixing to a degree rarely matched in other cities.

**LAES’ INFLUENCES AND IMPACT**

There are several LAEs who adopt a stance that can be summarized by the theme of the Latino/a Psychology Conference “la cultura tambien cura,” or recognizing the healing power of the arts. Melissa states that she and partner Ivan founded White Rose Miami, in order to bring “healing to the community” explaining further that “art can really be a catharsis” (June 15, 2011). In this vein, with conscious awareness, they decided that every project they undertook would be aimed at promoting healing, forgiveness, and hope for their community. Aya returns to the theme of “trauma” several times during her interview, indicating that all teaching should begin with addressing individual, familial, cultural and historical traumas that have been inflicted in order to begin the healing and recovery process. Meli and Ivan’s conscious choice of intentionally surrounding themselves with only positive people has enabled them to work
collaboratively toward community healing, rather than be stuck with actors “working out” their individual traumas on each other. In response to the question, “What kind of art do you create and why?” Deborah states, “self-healing, self-transformative.” Ultimately, she reveals, “I can’t write anything else but my truth,” sharing that she came to poetry in response to the events of September 11 and the tragedy that struck too close to home. When her best friend’s fiancé (a firefighter) fell victim, along with all the “1st responders” to the towers, the intensity of feeling needed an outlet. She turned to poetry to help her through this and other difficult personal moments, explaining “[I] just wanted to vent, to get it out…with poetry, spoken word, it was so immediate, I was really drawn to it and I could feel a sense of completion” (June 17, 2008).

One of the most inspiring and positive aspects of speaking with the over 50 LAEs was the frequent mention of other LAEs or other artist-educators who had inspired, mentored, or otherwise supported their development and growth. This is testament to the importance of the community and its mentoring relationships; opportunities to see other artist-educators risk and push boundaries is ultimately empowering and liberating to LAEs. In total, 19 LAEs gave credence to the work of another artist, and several mentioned more than one artist-educator who had been influential. Renee’s realization that Jude “Papaloko” was responsible for “literally scaring the fear out of her” revealing a close mentoring relationship. Later, she would turn to Soulflower and her monthly “Raize it Up Live” events for sustenance and inspiration. For other poets, like Analyze, seeing Melkisedek perform spoken word, and for Alonso, witnessing Kush and other poets at Body, Mind, Soul (BMS), simply pulled open the curtains on another world that
they did not even know existed. But once tasted, this nectar they craved, and LAEs went home to create their own spoken word concoctions. Other comments are more a nod of acknowledgement, between contemporaries, such as Rio mentioning Kristen, Oscar and others from Theatre de Underground at Churchills, or Knowledge speaking of Profet, Alonso, Amy, and Deborah as people “committed to the art form” and model a level of dedication and integrity that undoubtedly inspires and assures. For a complete list of “Who’s Who” among LAEs, see Table 3: “LAE Cross Reference” and Figure 1: “Relationship Web.”

The essential importance of positive reinforcement—recognition and approval—is a key influencing factor for LAEs. Being told that they are GOOD at something provides emotional and artistic sustenance. Roly recounts a hilarious high school escapade, while “panchangeando” in the Everglades with twenty friends, he drops his journal and a few friends “discover” it, crowding around, they believe they have tripped over something miraculous, mystical, and mysterious. “Look what we found! This awesome book!! Somebody wrote this stuff, it’s amazing, come look, Roly!!” Roly’s “coming out” as a poet began with this experience, as he read his poems to this circle of friends, they raved at the depth and intensity of his writing. Similarly, Mr. Lee, Meli’s drama teacher from South Miami Middle School made her feel special, and her talent singular. Melina

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181 On December 23, 2013 Chris da Imperial, hosted a ceremony to recognize long-term contributions to the black artistic community in Miami. At times, I feel that this community is more advanced, cohesive, and proactive than the Latino/a Artist community.

182 Slang inferring enjoying oneself and acting crazy, sometimes but not always under the influence of mind-altering substances. “PACHANGA ISLAND” happens once a month when a small lancha (boat) carries interested revelers to a deserted island in the middle of Biscayne Bay. Here, there is a drum circle, and music and dancing are king and queen of the island.
shared that she received positive reinforcement and feedback from parents and
teachers, which made her feel good, and motivated her to continue. When this
affirmation or acknowledgment comes from someone other than parents it is particularly
powerful; as a teen, tween, youngster, or even young adult, you don’t trust your parents
to tell you the truth. Often, you believe that they will tell you that you are good because
they love you, and they can’t see objectively.

A total of 13 LAEs mentioned “staging shows” of one kind or another, using siblings,
cousins or dolls, and inviting their family to view their masterpieces—early evidence of
interest in performing or teaching/directing, or both. Renee recalls arranging her dolls in
different formations, choreographing dances and instructing them. Similarly, Nikki
orchestrated siblings, neighbors and cousins into “classrooms” where she would be the
teacher. This pattern is divulged in 28% of the LAE participants’ interviews. Often, these
“shows” were staged with our parents the first audience members.

One of the most powerful influences on LAEs is music. In the series of follow-up
questions, LAEs were asked how often they listened to “música latina,” and if they felt it
influenced their creative process. Nearly 60% say they listen “everyday” with another
30% listening “often.” A scant 10% of respondents listened occasionally to música

\[183\] Magdalena says that she prefers the “origins” of música latina; African, Indian,
and Asian and Aboriginal roots music are her favorites (December 7, 2012). From “a

\[183\] Alonso and other LAEs question what is meant by “musica latina” and purport that most of
the music he listens to—rock, jazz, blues, and hip-hop—is influenced by Latinos or he has
friends who create this genre of music who themselves are Latino/a—making the designation
necessarily complicated as to what constitutes “música latina.”
considerable influence” to “completely inspires my creative process,” LAEs articulate the centrality of music—all music—in creating a “state of mind” or a “mood.” Yuki divulges that at times she will repeat a certain song or album to induce a trance state, enter into an extended meditation so that she can completely feel whatever emotion(s) are bubbling to the surface, and then express them in her creativity to its cathartic completion. Similarly, Melissa admits that she uses music to create a mood, an emotional state. Others talk about music as a force that “energizes” them. Finally, utilizing music to “relax and stay happy,” is quite common. Coupled with Renee’s assertion, “if you are not happy, you will never create!” it follows logically that music must figure prominently in the world of artists of all genres. Empirical studies reinforce this notion, with many recently suggesting that listening to music releases endorphins, creating higher thresholds of pain, more positive feelings, and greater levels of cooperation.184

LAEs were queried regarding the other artists that have had the greatest or most long lasting influence on their creative production. Likewise, they were asked to mention specific educators who significantly impacted their philosophy or approach to teaching. These influences were so wide-ranging that it is difficult to synthesize the responses, other than to refer readers to the chart listing such artistic influences. Repetition or mention of the same artist by multiple LAEs was infrequent, but did occur in a few

instances—Salvador Dalí, Frida Kahlo, Beat Poets (Ginsberg, Kerouac), Vincent Van Gogh, Miguel Piñero, and the Fania All-Stars were all mentioned twice, with Robert Nestor "Bob" Marley getting three testimonies. Full listing of influential artists available in Table 4: “Artistic, Educational Influences.”

**LAEs AND THEIR AUDIENCES**

In “5 Habits of Happy Artists,” number 4 counsels “to put something out there every day,” marking the difference between those who create selfishly, insecurely, or with paranoid perfectionism, and never release their creations. Quoting Steve Jobs as saying, “Real artists ship,” this author implies that only when the artwork is exhibited, performed, recorded, or otherwise transported beyond the artists’ “batcave,” is the act of creation complete. Certainly, the earliest creations were communal, as were most of the cultural practices in indigenous societies. The appreciation of the beauty of all creations fed the spirit and soul, much as bell hooks (1995) articulates the necessity of seeing and creating beauty, no matter the means or sacrifices. The artist serves a contemporary role, which depending upon their message and aesthetic, can range from provocative to passionate, persuasive to pensive, from criticism and condemnation, to recognition and reconciliation. But the essential element is that they provide a window onto a different (or sometimes obscured) reality, bringing their audience a new perspective, a clarity of vision, and sometimes even, an impetus to make change.
More research is certainly needed here, and I envision the possibility of focusing almost entirely on the role of the “consumers and decomposers,” to use Yo Miami’s\(^{185}\) analogy to refer to the audience and others who make their living off of the artistic creation (buyers, agents, promoters, curators and the like). The author engaged in only very minimal questioning of the audience as to their perception and feedback after seeing, hearing or otherwise participating in a performative or other cultural event. This is not to discount the role of the audience or that of the student in shaping the performance and/or teaching space. Melissa offers her formula for deciding which productions to stage, explaining that first she seeks a really good story, knowing that theater is fundamentally about telling and sharing universal stories. One of the most critical questions: \textit{Will the story resonate with her audience, will the characters, emotion, challenges, resolution, zeitgeist all be something that participants can relate to?} So while the audience (or in the case of educators, the students) often shape the initial vision of the work and its purpose and tone, at some point in the creative journey, the artist-educator must leave the audience/students behind and immerse themselves fully in the creative process. For White Rose Miami, Melissa’s hope is that the audience have a “full experience, a full sensory experience,” and that through this, they will be able to heal from their sadness and nostalgia and feel a sense of connectedness and acceptance (June 15, 2011).

\(^{185}\) The founder of Yo Miami! is documenting this social-cultural-economic-spiritual shift in the landscape of Little Haiti and Wynwood. His metaphor for the artistic-cultural community is an ecosystem where the artists are the producers, the consumers are attendees, those who purchase, promote and otherwise support the artists, and the decomposers, the general public to whom the art is presented as a movement. See http://www.yo-miami.com.
Melissa reflects on White Rose Miami’s first production, “Proof,” and the post-production interaction with the audience. At the close of the show (held naturally at the incubating stage of Jesus and Carolina’s home in Miami Shores), they took their bows, went into the audience and shook hands and began conversing and sharing. Minimizing boundaries requires the utmost of courage, to show your true self unmasked in the close proximity of others, is not a task for the fainthearted. We laughed when she told me of the audience lingering for some time afterwards, and I compared it to a good meal, feeling satiated and full, wanting that feeling to stay with you for some time. Keep the magic hanging in the air, feed it with conversation, and more connection (June 15, 2011). The art functions as an embrace, pulling all in together to gather in communication; this imaginary communication bridge becomes lodged in the psyche of the participants, so even after they physically depart, they maintain a connection, leading to deeper relationships.

Rio expresses outrage at the inability to be a role model with this rant, “How am I ever supposed to be a positive Hispanic role model for the fucking kids growing up if all I can be in your *&%&$ white bread TV-world is a drug dealer, a pimp, a killer?!?!?!?” (Personal communication, June 26, 2008). His obvious urge to shape the future drives that statement, as he synchronizes and crystallizes the pressures of pop culture on the arts; his frustration with stereotypes in TV and film, injustice on the streets

187 Both Melissa and Jesus are proponents and products of the Grotowski method, whose central principal is the discarding of masks in order to become a more authentic and versatile actor.
and big screen are connected, he intimates, with a sense of directness and a vague sort of vengeance. The sense of ultimately achieving acclaim and respect, enabling him to create more fulfilling, meaningful and transformative art is the undercurrent in our conversation. Rio voices that this temporary challenge will be overcome; now five years later, he coordinated a traveling spontaneous community/street art/flash mob experience for Art Basel 2013, centered around Charlie Chaplin as the conductor in his “Action of a Smile” and continues to perform widely.188

EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION

Lucy’s grandfather instilled in her the idea of “education for liberation.” Juan Andrés is hopeful that his teaching can be liberatory and serve the purpose of showing his students a new way of seeing the world, but he is practical in recognizing that their current awareness and disposition prohibits such a classroom community. With thirty urban eighth graders vying for attention and desperately seeking direction, inspiration, boundaries, something of substance, his speaks of the need to establish self-discipline, mutual respect, ground rules, and culture of cooperation as the first and most fundamental task of his teaching.

When asked about the impact they seek to make in response to stereotypes and for future generations, Miguel explains “One area where my art has stood out is in dealing with themes of queerness and homosexuality. In both my teaching and creative

188 Originally, Rio posted the call for this interactive, subversive event at the meetup pages, a this now-defunct url: http://www.meetup.com/Flash-Mobs-Miami/events/146121172/. For documentation, see Rio’s Facebook page.
reflection, I often return to themes of “otherness” especially with regards to sexuality. I wish to challenge the notion that all Latino (males) are straight, macho, and machista” (November 11, 2010). Similarly, Alicia talks about how she represents proudly her Bay Area identification, and hopes to challenge stereotypes related to being young, being female, and being queer.

LAEs have mixed feelings regarding their sense of responsibility to future generations. Melina asserts, that yes, “I do feel somewhat responsible to lay the groundwork for those who will come after me, but truthfully,” she admits that she feels “most responsibility to my own generation first” (April 11, 2009). Oscar draws on his experience as a father to frame the discussion around future responsibility:

Whatever I do today is a vibration that will stay with my son, he will carry it around, the same thing with an artist, it is a vibration that is sent out…we’re like little antennas, I think everybody picks up on that, different effects…we carry a little bit of influence and pass it on to future generations…one of the most important things for artists is to become published, to stay here, because that is a form of immortality, it is important also to be involved in the community, doesn’t have to be revolutionary, activism, but performing for the public, the general public, for the children more so…if the outstanding artists out there become teaching artists, they are creating more, having a more profound impact and effect—creating future artists, and influencing those lives (June 28, 2008).

Oscar takes the idea of responsibility one step further with the notion of legacy.

LAES BRIDGING ARTS AND EDUCATION

Aye and aye dream of a time and place where the foremost artists and educators can come together in a series of exchanges in urban settings across this country and in global cities worldwide. This exchange, I believe, would embolden us to move forward into a new era of teaching and learning, creating and participating, revising and re-envisioning our mission as cultural producers, intellectual coaches, and fire-tenders for those who dream impossible dreams. An endeavor such as this requires nothing less
In my initial query of just over 50 individuals, there was much ingenuity, individuality and variation in the responses to the question initially posed as, “What can the art world learn from the best aspects of the “culture of education”? And conversely, what can the educational world learn from the best of the “culture of the arts”? Notwithstanding, although the responses varied quite substantially, there was a distinct consonance of ideas. (For a more detailed summary of LAE responses, see “Artist-Teacher Swap” Table on page 178). These ideas were clustered around multiple themes. LAEs’ responses for the question of “the gift exchange” from (the world’s most evolved and talented) artists to teachers (of the world) could be grouped under one or more of nine thematic categories. When the gift swap is reversed, and we are selecting the most positive traits of gifted teachers to bequeath to artists of the world, the resulting responses are somewhat more disparate, with eleven categories as opposed to nine, and the highest frequency of repetitive responses was only six. Mapped, it shows more clustering and less congruence, which could reflect that most of the LAEs in the study were artists first before they became teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTISTS → TEACHERS</th>
<th># of times mentioned</th>
<th>TEACHERS → ARTISTS</th>
<th># of times mentioned</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give and take, connect, about relationships with students</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Community—recognize integral part, support from others, communal well-being, no one left out</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being fearless, letting go</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Humility, be grounded, less ego-centric, purpose</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the most valuable gifts for artists to share with teachers include recognizing a give and take in the teacher-student relationship, expressed as “being present,” “remaining human,” “having empathy,” and allowing students to “know who you are.” Veteran educator Rita Pierson asserts that relationships are crucial to learning, and believes that “learning sometimes occurs because someone insists that you recognize the excellence in yourself.” The power of strong mentoring relationships, along with remembering that “all children deserve to have a champion,” can have strong and

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189 In her 25 years of teaching and working in educational capacities, the researcher is cognizant of the fact that the best learning comes once there is a strong relationship of trust-understanding-respect between teachers and students. As Rita Pierson says, “Kids don’t learn from people they don’t like.” (May 2013).
significant resonance in the life of students, according to veteran educator Rita Pierson (May 2013). Melissa’s interview revealed this connection with heartfelt sincerity and deep emotion as she honored her middle school drama teacher Mr. Lee—“his support and his faith in children…his love for it, his love for theater…he had so much faith…kind of what made me want to do White Rose, made me want to give that faith to others, not just artists.” (June 15, 2011). Thus, seeing his conviction, and how much he believed in her and all of his students, is what motivated her to develop discipline, take risks, and continue to strive for higher levels of achievement in pursuing theater.

“Being fearless,” “having the power to release all fear,” and “taking risks” harmonized with as many as 8 LAEs or a full 15% of our sample. That awareness—coupled with a more creative approach to learning, seeing from multiple perspectives and thinking outside the box—tied with “creativity” for the second most popular response thematically. Following this trilogy of super-gifts, artists could also assist teachers in evolving by 1) expressing love and passion, 2) going deeper or channeling a greater power, and 3) being more daring in exploring and experimenting with students. These approaches reflected an accord of seven, six, and five LAEs, respectively.

Looking at the reverse flow, wherein teachers would bestow a talent or aptitude to artists, we see two themes emerge at the top, both related to seeing the art as “beyond the individual.” It seems paradoxical, because to create, one has to be very connected to the individual source and must focus inward. However, the artistic creation demands a sense of purpose, and more specifically, an ethic of service to humanity, according to
several of the LAEs interviewed. Moreover, while going into the creative cocoon is
sometimes essential, artists should not overlook the pivotal role that community plays in
restoring, reviving, rejuvenating, and replenishing the artist. Humility and service
together captured the imagination of six LAEs, while almost as many (five) advocated
for recognizing an integral connection with a larger supportive community.

When asked if being an artist makes you a better teacher, Madelin gushed effusively, “[it
makes you]…so much more enthusiastic…everything has to be aesthetically beautiful…I
think also [I] tend to be more creative and flexible, whether rehearsing a scene, or
painting, choreographing, have to be open to different possibilities…I think the best
teachers are those that don’t stop learning. Those who STAY IN THEIR ART. See their
teaching as an art form” (July 20, 2009).

PEDAGOGY190 AND LAES

For the LAEs included in this study, several claim that their teaching style is “hands-on”
and activity-based, and more often than not, “interactive” and “experiential” (Melina and
Magdalena). Both Ika and Felipe underscore the importance of individualizing teaching
approaches to fit the student, while three LAEs (Nikki, Lucy, Melissa) are united in the
view that teaching should be “impulsive” or “spontaneous” or should “follow the child.”
Other comments on teaching style or methodology most often employed, resulted in an
array of responses, ranging from Renee’s “heavenly, from God” to Profet’s “no

190 As Education and Outreach Director for The PlayGround Theatre in 2007, the researcher
recognized the need to provide these teaching artists with some basic theory, tools, and
methodologies that would anchor them in the world of urban education. Weekly staff
professional development sessions and ongoing training encouraged inquiry, dialogue and
modeling of innovative, successful teaching practices.
nonsense, sugar-free style.” Felipe and Alicia both emphasize building relationships with students as central to the learning process. Miguel also mentions relationships, but his notion is somewhat more abstract; the focus is on helping students understanding their identities and the relationship of that identity to culture and community. Yudelka unabashedly reports that she employs a variety of theatrical devices, including accents and costumes; similarly, Deborah seeks to be “extremely interactive and comedic.” In summary, the LAEs pedagogical approach can be categorized as innovative, transgressive, and relationship-centered. (For more detail, please see Table 7 for the chart entitled “Teaching Style.”)

While many of these characteristics may be intrinsically related to personality or character, it is also probable that the act of being an artist, and the pursuit of that mastery of their art forms, fosters or enhances these sensibilities which, in turn are attributes that facilitate more engaging, enlightening, exciting, and experimental classrooms and communities of learning. Two additional dimensions were explored in the follow-up questions asked of all the LAEs, concerning the role of “play” in teaching and learning, and the role of “humor” in their pedagogical practice. (See Tables 8A and 8B for “Role of Humor” and “Role of Play” in learning, respectively). Both of these indexes hold promise in bringing much needed transformation to the contemporary urban education models, and future research should explore these dimensions of pedagogy.
ACTIVISM AND AGENCY FORGE THE PATH, FOREGROUND COMMUNITY WORK

Perusing the list of LAEs, some are more vocal or outspoken in their activism while others claim to be “quiet activists” or more subtle than those who go out to protest. Nikki, founder of Words and Wine, explains, “by our lifestyle and by the choices we make, the way we choose to live, that is an act of protest or of rebellion.” Showing young people our age it can be different—“you don’t have to go out and get a job and do what they expect you to do and be unhappy” (April 15, 2013). During our interview, Venezolano Juan Andrés concurs by saying that sometimes, living “outloud,” finding meaningful happiness outside of the superficial status symbols, represents a strong revolutionary stance. At the same time, Juan Andres extols the virtues of his activist-based artistic pursuits—to bring some joy and levity to the protest movement. Through the use of giant puppets staging street theater, social messages are parlayed to the audience with engaging, dramatic delivery. Juan Andrés explains, “The entire tone is different when music and puppets are part of the protest movement; it lends a playfulness to what could be otherwise way too serious” (October 6, 2013). At the same time, there is the realization of a silent threat—sure these people are out here marching and having fun, but this collective energy could easily be unleashed on an entire a city or a neighborhood.

Looking at the LAEs through this activist lens reveals that twenty-three (23)—nearly half—have engaged or are currently engaged in some form of community outreach. While hosting Theatre de Underground, Kristen initiated Underground Outreach, one Sunday

191 As is the NYC-based poetic consortium is named. Poets Out Loud, based at Fordham University in NYC, presents a monthly series of readings, publications, and prizes. Additionally, there is a national recitation competition entitled Poetry OutLoud.
per month where artists and audience friends alike would gather to make bag lunches for the homeless, plant trees at a state park, or some other service endeavor. Magdalena’s Teatro V¡da is a counterbalance and holistic, cultural response to the numbing and homogenizing effects of television on our youth. Now entering its seventh year, Teatro V¡da is an exemplar of what community arts activism could look like, and fundamentally, a testament (in the words of my mentor and founder of Summerbridge now Breakthrough Collaborative) to “both the obvious and hidden talents of our youth.” Deborah’s Spoken Soul Festival, SWAN (Support Women Artists Now), ready to celebrate its 10th year in 2017, has garnered national support for the artistic and literacy enrichment activities for youth that accompany the performances and exhibitions of the dozen female artists who participate annually. Octavio is passionate about working with LGBTQ youth and has directed a number of counseling, advocacy, and leadership programs like Pridelines. Alfredo continues to host demonstrations and support protests to raise awareness around many issues of inequality and injustice. Aya coordinated a 100-person strong anti-nuclear war protest of high school students in the Bay Area of California at the tender age of 16. Jude oversees a non-profit called “Papaloko for Kids” aimed at ensuring children in his native Haiti have a champion for their ongoing learning and development.

Rio’s explanation goes back to the etymology of the word “act” and its many variations. The list of derivatives of the root “act” includes active, activist, actualize, activate, actor, action, actuate, activity, and interactive. This cluster of related words represents

collectively many of the elements of the agency evident in the majority of the LAEs in Miami. Without a doubt, LAEs are engaged actively in some variation of community outreach or service, with many volunteering their time and talents regularly. The artist-teacher swap suggests that *inter-act-ion* is needed for a more cohesive community to develop. Delving further into the origins of the root word “act” provides interesting lines of meaning to pursue. Depending upon the language of origin, the meaning of the word varies accordingly. Both the Old French and Latin forms of the word, “acte” and “actus” refer to "a doing, a driving, impulse; a part in a play…" and draw their etymological roots from *agere "to do, set in motion, drive, urge, chase, stir up,"* from PIE root *ag- "to drive, draw out or forth, move." Other sources, such as the Greek *agein* present another shade of meaning: "to lead, guide, drive, carry off." Referencing the ancient language of Sanskrit brings us to two roots: *ajati* meaning "drives" and *ajirah* referring to anything "moving, active." Investigating parallels in Old Norse brings us to *aka* meaning "to drive." Finally, the Middle Irish root *ag* refers to a "battle," even more focused from the more global "drive, urge, chase, stir up."¹⁹³ Taken against this backdrop, “*aquí, en la lucha*” the familiar response to “¿cómo estás?” heard all over Miami, resonates on a different note. Being an artist-activist is a “battle” or a struggle, and involves “drawing out” the conscience of the masses, “moving” them forward “actively,” “urging” an epiphany, “stirring up” their ideas of the possible and desirable for society, and finally, “chasing” this vision until it is no longer elusive.

During this study, it became apparent to the researcher that in the act of establishing democratic spaces, community spaces or “venues” provide another layer of study. While the perspectives of individual LAEs can shed light on the motivations, limitations, inspiration, and evolution of artist-educators and their activist pursuits, ultimately, our LAEs need an audience. This essential “audience” is found in public spaces, or in established “venues” where people gather to perform, connect, share, teach, “vibe out,” and speak their truth. Establishing a venue for such a gathering—whether weekly or monthly—is no easy feat, as evidenced by the majority of venues that are short-lived, lasting maybe a few months up to a year. (See Appendix R: Timeline of Miami, for an attempt at reconstructing a historical memory that details the venues available to artists from the early 2000s to the present).

Eighteen (18) of our LAEs currently oversee or have hosted a regular venue. For a weekly event, such as “Theatre de Underground,” the time estimate invested can easily reach or exceed 15-20 hours per week, the equivalent of a part-time job. To create space for other artists to perform and audience members to be inspired, this “labor of love” as it was described by Josh, involves promoting, scheduling features/lineup, coordinating, and a myriad of other tasks which can include prep and set-up, sound check, social media outreach, telemarketing, soliciting press for the venue, establishing

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194 Some have hosted multiple venues, such as Aya, Deborah, Kristen, Marcus, Malik, and Sophie.

195 For eight years (2001-2009), Kristen went to Churchill’s every Monday afternoon to sweep the outdoor patio, arrange the chairs, check the space, assemble or move the stage, hang backdrops, troubleshoot technological issues, and otherwise prepare for Theatre de Underground. This represents over 400 Mondays that she was accountable to the event that she had birthed; a regular, committed host engages with more than hands or head, it is a labor from the heart.
new pieces of art, overseeing installations, and rehearsing pieces for performance. Hosting a venue is a critical link in creating artist-educator communities working for social change; these individuals represent the leadership and the backbone of this LAE community. Nikki believes that this is her “art form”: bringing people together and creating community. By starting up and sustaining a venue, they create incubators for Latino/a and non-Latino/a artists seeking to expand or explore their craft; simultaneously, these creative spaces demonstrate the vitality, vibrancy, and urgency of art as a critical component in creating revitalized communities.

The role of a supportive community for artists (or artist-educators for that matter) has not been comprehensively or critically studied. Educator communities of learning have received more attention in the world of academia. This research attempts to begin a conversation around the role of community in motivating and sustaining LAEs work and creativity in Miami. There are a myriad of reasons community engagement is vital, among them a sense of connection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement. From another standpoint, being socially connected could serve as an antidote to the cynicism and depression—born out of isolation and hypercriticism—that periodically befall many artists.

Despite this lack of formal research, there is broad consensus that artists excel when they are supported by having their basic needs met, feel secure, and are therefore “free” to be creative. In fact, it could be said that these basic needs and social support apply to all people. So what is it that artists need from their surrounding community?
Several medium-sized cities, among them exemplar Cleveland, Ohio, have begun to explore this question to intentionally lure artists to settle in their neighborhoods. Cultureforward.org provides a doorway into exploring the “Community Partnership for Arts and Culture,” a program aimed at “strengthening, unifying and connecting greater Cleveland’s arts and culture sector.” Their diverse menu of programs includes Artists in Residence and Creative Workforce Fellowships to support and advance an artist’s work and professional development; Arts and Culture Roundtable Forums; The Artist as Entrepreneur Institute196 (to hone business and legal skills ranging from marketing, branding, protecting your work, raising capital and more); Creative Compass (a means to connect artists with opportunities for grants, loans, jobs, calls to artists, available spaces, etc); Booked (a monthly reading exchange); From Rust Belt to Artist Belt (chronicling and supporting the evolution of the industrial Midwestern cities as engage in creative placemaking in order to redesign neighborhoods that support and encourage public art and artistic expression of all kinds); and Counsel and Connections, to assist artists with particular questions, concerns, or conundrums.

Within the past decade—and particularly during the period of 2009-2014 while recovering from an economic recession—the role of the arts and artists as economic engines of growth and development has come to the forefront of our awareness. With Richard Florida’s conceptualization of the pivotal role of the “creative class,” we have become cognizant of the numerous ways arts and culture can benefit communities and cities—from inspiring “at-risk” youth to injecting vitality and life into abandoned

196 The Artist as Entrepreneur Institute is also operational in Broward County, albeit not as frequently as in Ohio. See www.broward.org/arts.
neighborhoods, to bringing social change, greater levels of civic involvement and connection among neighbors who were formerly strangers. Ignited largely by the work of OurTown and ArtPlace, national initiatives that leverage/partner resources from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) alongside federal and local philanthropies, one of the unifying goals of creative placemaking is to get “artists and designers, community culture groups, arts research groups, cultural affairs offices, and arts organizations out of their silos and into the neighborhoods and regions around them” (Schupback, 2012). See also http://arts.gov/NEARTS/2012v3-arts-and-culture-core/defining-creative-placemaking).

LAEs Oscar and Lucy both believe that Miami is still a very young arts community; Sergio characterizes Miami’s artistic community as a young tween or teenager, thinking they know everything, emboldened and ambitious, yet foolish and myopic. Whatever the metaphor, there is broad agreement Miami’s artistic community is still in the developing stages. O’ Miami’s 2013 Ferrari-driving stuntman, Dave Landsberger, returned to his native Chicago upon completing a Masters in Fine Arts at FIU in 2010. He explained that he is drawn to Miami because of “a feeling that something is happening in Miami. You don’t feel like something is happening in Chicago, it’s already happened. You’re just adding to it. But in Miami, you’re getting in on the ground floor.” (“O’ Miami: How a Festival Infused a City with Poetry,” 13).

197 O’ Miami is a month-long celebration of poetry, with the lofty goal of reaching every Miami Dade citizen, with poetry on trains, at bus stops, in balloons from the sky, on the beach, and in every imaginable corner of Miami. Founded in 2012, this year will be the fifth celebration. See more at http://www.omiami.org/.
MIAMI’S ARTISTIC COMMUNITY: TRANSFORMATION, RITUAL, AND THE CREATION OF DEMOCRATIC SPACES

Each LAE was queried as to their perceptions and characterization of Miami’s artistic community. When asked to describe this nexus of individuals, many were vocal in their disdain, with Rio defining the community as “confused, reckless, and without a voice” (June 26, 2008). Consensus existed on the fragmentation of the artistic community—with Octavio claiming it is “super-separated, super, super separated” (June 19, 2008) and Deborah extrapolating on this idea “the Venezuelans come out in droves, the Colombians support their artists, Mexicans support singers—they will eat nothing but tortillas for weeks to afford a ticket!” (June 17, 2008). Several factors operate in conjunction to conspire against a cohesive arts community—chief among them the geographic dispersion of the south Florida metropolis, lack of substantive public rail or transport, and the high level of transience in the area. Add to that consideration, the numerous “fault lines” that run through the artistic community—genre or disciplinary focus, age/generation, primary language, ethnicity or national origin, and you begin to glimpse the challenge of unifying such a diverse set of actors. This separation is something that both Michaelangelo and Papaloko spoke to directly, pinpointing their willingness to “go beyond” and “cross boundaries” as one of the reasons for their success. Michaelangelo claims,

A lot of people in Miami stay to one niche...I would recommend going around and communicating about what is going on in your niche. That is kind of what I do. I go from scene to scene, clique to clique and I notice a lot of the people at certain places don’t step outside of that...[sometimes they are] at the same venues, just different nights. And we all cross paths. All the time (October 20, 2013).
Similarly, Jude explains he sees himself as a “cultural ambassador” because “I never stay to one group, one scene…when I went to Miami Beach in the late 1980s, there was a lot of racism, and my Haitian friends would say, Jude, why do you go over there? But I am not one to stay in one place, I must explore, and I find my rhythm wherever I go” (May 7, 2013).

Lucy and Oscar are more tempered in their response, and see the problem as one of “juventud”—Miami is just a young city and has not yet grown into its full sense or sensibility as it relates to cultivating and creating situations which inspire and sustain artists. Comparing Miami to New York City, parts of New Jersey or even Chicago makes this artistic landscape seem infinitesimally smaller, more timid, more tentative. Sergio and Josh mention the term, “Miami Renaissance” to assert that the arts and cultural production are enjoying a central position since 2010, as the city (along with the rest of the nation), slowly drags itself out of the quagmire of economic meltdown and the seeds of optimism and growth and opportunity seem to sprout anew.

With the multibillion dollar Arsht Performing Arts Center—the second largest in the country--and newly designed Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), and remodeled and expanded Museum of Science and Planetarium constituting together a downtown “arts park,” along with the boom that Art Basel and Ultra Music Festivals have initiated, it is difficult sell that there is a lack of importance or respect placed on the arts. Digging a little deeper, however, reveals that the large institutions are indeed flourishing, but these megaplexes of presentation space most often feature national or international artists,
leaving little room for local artists to gain exposure, experience, or expertise. In recent years, many non-profit arts-based organizations have originated, with Cannonball\textsuperscript{198} and its predecessor Legal Arts, as one such example. Of course, Tigertail represents one of the longest-running and most dedicated non-profits to supporting and nurturing local artists while also bringing the best of the nation and world to Miami for artistic and cultural exchanges. The Bakehouse Art Complex (BAC)\textsuperscript{199} was one of the oldest and most enduring institutions to support artists in Miami, offering low-rent studios, gallery space, and support to the visual and plastic arts. It is this “third leg” of the cultural stool—the artists themselves—as referenced in the case studies of Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus’ white paper, “Creative Placemaking” (2010), which need to be the focus of support and sustenance. Broward County claims to have 10,000 artists and over 7,000 arts-based businesses; in contrast to Miami-Dade’s Cultural Affairs Department,\textsuperscript{200} Broward and Palm Beaches seem to have a more progressive and proactive approach to developing artist-entrepreneurs and artist-citizens.

Without a doubt, as Ben Cameron (2010), director of arts-based giving at the Doris Duke Charitable Trust in New York City says, we are ensconced in a time of transition, a time of “cultural reformation” where there are no roadmaps to guide us. The “old world

\textsuperscript{198} \url{http://cannonballmiami.org}

\textsuperscript{199} \url{http://www.bacfl.org}

\textsuperscript{200} A visit to the Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Department reveals a number of granting opportunities, but few are developmental, or focused on the emerging or establishing artist. Funding is, in most cases, limited to those individual artists who have “an established body of work” or to organizations that have at least three years of experience under their belt. \url{http://www.miamidadearts.org/}
“order” is crumbling around us, yet the new structures and ways of communicating, and creating is still under construction\textsuperscript{201}.

Most LAEs concur that there exist many Latino/a Artist-Educator communities, supporting creation and growth. Joshua refers to these groups as “tribes” and claims that these many strands or streams bring small groups of people together. Joshua and Alonso stand out as the two “elders” who have remained a constant presence in the creative community—they were the two faces I recognized when I visited Miami’s Occupy camp at Government center downtown, two of the most embraced poets and performers by the younger generation of Nikki’s Words-n-Wine crew. Theoretically, there is an impulse toward unification, but perhaps there is some sacrifice or homogenization that occurs when many diverse factions are forced to unite. A “Gathering of the Tribes” may be a more pragmatic goal: bring together the many nations, or many groups. Perhaps, a diversity of smaller, more cohesive communities is not necessarily deleterious. It may be that one large (although less tightly connected) LAE community would not serve individual LAEs as well as these smaller entities. Smaller could be more manageable in terms of relationships and communication, fostering stronger ties of trust and mutual support, leading to higher levels of generosity and efficacy. Rather than erase these boundaries between groups—in order to form

\textsuperscript{201} This concept, being midway between destruction and creation, is one that LAE Felipe (April 15, 2013) mentions he is particularly drawn to, and often depicts such processes in his visual work, buildings and entire neighborhoods being deconstructed and simultaneously reconstructed, which is something he has witnessed with the change of the Biscayne Boulevard corridor. Interestingly, he also mentions this symmetry of two opposing processes in his sense of identity—having spent roughly the same amount of his life in Chile as in the United States, he feels completely “half and half” and able to switch in and out of languages and feelings without much thought.
one overarching mega-community—maybe the goal should be to make the edges more porous, and the individuals more inviting and embracing of welcoming in visitors, interns, and new members, for a project collaboration or a resource sharing, or whatever is mutually agreed upon. “Bridging” between these communities could increase the collective strength without sacrificing each LAE communities “imagined identity,” and provide a stronger, more impactful presence in the ongoing development of Miami’s neighborhoods and public spaces.202

If we hope to “bridge” the various “factions” or “tribes,” the creation of a portal, or a gathering place—whether actual or virtual—such as Cleveland’s Creative Compass, could begin to shift energy in this direction. Connecting disparate elements, and pointing the way to opportunity, encouraging collaboration, exchange of advice, mentoring and counseling, and providing professional development—these are goals of the Latino/a Networking Guide and the LAE Sunset Summis, which the researcher hopes to see continue as an ongoing regular gathering. In the absence of a formal public structure that is dedicated to this pursuit, an informal collection of individuals who are seeking assistance in some areas, while having expertise to offer in others, would accomplish the same objective as the Creative Compass approach. A loose constellation of LAEs, linked together by common needs, goals, and challenges, could be metaphor to pursue; as such, many would be empowered knowing that they are able

202 “The Paradox of Diverse Communities,” a recent article posted in Florida’s Atlantic Cities website, discussed the findings of a sociologist that ran simulations within neighborhoods on the tightness of social bonds and diversity, and found that these two goals were inversely related. The more cohesive a neighborhood, the more homogeneous it’s ethnic/racial/class composition. Intuitively, we know people trust and feel most comfortable with those they know best or are most familiar. (http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2013/11/paradox-diverse-communities/7614/).
to access support and guidance, whether it be for grant-writing, or to collaborate on a “Call for Artists” or even for more ambitious ventures such as taking over an abandoned park and turning it into public art, or co-presenting a new street festival, or establishing and sustaining more affordable live/work spaces for artists in Miami.

Richard Florida asserts that Miami is among the cities with the greatest class divide, even as it attracts creative types, many citizens and neighborhoods remain locked into persistent, generational poverty (See http://www.citylab.com/housing/2013/03/class-divided-cities-miami-edition/4678/ ). The role of the artist in the gentrification process and in creating more equality and more opportunity across divisions of race, class, gender, language, and ethnicity…eventually will be confronted and grappled with, as LAEs recognize their growing power to shape and create the spaces around them.

Ultimately, these LAEs, along with many other citizen-activists, will determine the tenor and tone of the changes in neighborhoods in Miami. Will these transformations be democratic and inclusive, or will they increasingly serve the elite while marginalizing the local and less affluent members? They will decide if they will be “radical participants” or sideline observers. Their diverse and deeply empathic voices will echo sounds of truly diverse stakeholders, if they can be emboldened to realize that it is within their power, their REACH, to ensure that the stakeholders are all represented at the table, and that their extended communities are built on the virtues of compassion and creativity, humanity and humility, and individuality and interdependence.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

When I began this research endeavor over 7 years ago, I could not predict or imagine the concrete results, any more than I could have anticipated or prepared myself for the process—the unpredictable, serendipitous road I have walked—or the intensity of emotion and struggle that accompanied the journey. Nor could I foresee the joy and camaraderie I have felt with the LAEs I have interviewed and come to know personally. I have observed the vast majority of the 52 participants and informants performing and teaching on multiple occasions; moreover, I have created and collaborated alongside quite a few LAEs in Miami. A number of personal epiphanies and revelations constitute an evolution of my personal-intellectual-academic-emotional-cultural self. It can be argued that this knowledge—sketching Latino/a pathways to the Ph.D\textsuperscript{203} and how to survive almost anything while completing your advanced degree—is valuable in its own right. Seeking to advance the state of knowledge, the researcher is presenting first the traditional account of results, summarized in this chapter. In the Ellingson’s tradition of crystallization, a creative interpretation is forthcoming, to stand alongside the rigorous scientific approach: an extended one-woman play performance (choreopoem) will interrogate, integrate, and (re)incarnate the knowledge and wisdom gained through this pivotal extended life experience.

\textsuperscript{203} Jeanette Castellanos and Alberta Gloria, co-editors of \textit{Latino Pathways to the Ph.D.: Abriendo Caminos} co-presented a session at the 2008 Latino/a Psychology Conference in Costa Mesa, CA, where they spoke of the academic family, cultural anchors (bendiciones, building altares), and a strong sense of faith/spirituality as some of the key underpinnings enabling some Latino/a students to complete the most rigorous course of study. Gratitude goes to Azara Santiago-Rivera, my thesis advisor, for introducing me to this community of dynamic, progressive, culturally grounded, and interdisciplinary scholars. With this research, I present an autobiographical ethnography charting the path, connecting the dots, and providing texture, nuance and depth to the experience.
The goal of any situated scholarship is to report findings and focus the efforts for future researchers and scholars. I am grateful and indebted, and pleased to share the major findings and suggest directions for future research on the topic of Latino/a Artist Educators (LAEs). Let us begin by methodically revisiting our original research objectives.

1. **Create a baseline profile for LAES.**

This initial objective is foundational: in order to understand this community of LAEs, we must sketch its parameters before we can begin to question their attitudes, values, philosophies, behaviors, and principles. Although there is a wealth of scholarship on each of these three streams independently: 1) pan-ethnicity (“Latinidad” or “latinness”), 2) identity of artists, and 3) identity of educators, there is scant knowledge on the intersection of any two of these domains, much less research that explores this complex identity that the researcher has coined as “LAEs” or “Latino-a Artist Educators” living in Miami/South Florida. More than just summative, these three tributaries flow like a spectacular waterfall; understanding how each of these dynamic identities interact, transform, and amplify each other’s essence is critical. Therefore, developing some initial descriptors and parameters is our first and most basic goal.

Paradoxically, this research reveals that LAEs, above all else, are an elastic, fluid and ever-changing group of individuals, spanning many categories and dimensions, and often resisting neat patterns and paradigms. Ethnically, they are not surprisingly, predominantly Cuban (30%), but Puerto Ricans are a close second, comprising 26% of the LAE sample. The real story is in the incredible mix of ethnicities/nationalities of the
remaining 44%, a sprinkling of Colombian, Haitian, Chilean, Chicano/Mexican-American, Brazilian, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Jamaican, Ecuadorian, Dominican, and Venezuelan and Latino-other mixes, illustrated in Figure 3: Ethnicity. LAEs range in age from 24 to 58 years old, with the mean at 36 years (see Figure 2: Age of LAEs). They are 57% male and 43% female (see Figure 6: Sex of LAEs), and roughly evenly divided between first and second-generation Latinos (see Figure 5: Generation). 40% were born outside of the continental U.S. (see Figure 4B: Birthplace of LAES, Caribbean Basin and Central America and Figure 4C: Birthplace of LAEs, South America), and those U.S. born are clustered primarily in Miami or greater New York area. Just four were born outside of the East Coast, in California, New Mexico or Arizona (see Figure 4A: Birthplace of LAES, Continental U.S.). Though most, if not all, LAEs are bilingual of varying degrees, a strong preference for English seems apparent, with less than 10% choosing to interview in Spanish.

Understanding what kind of artistic pursuits engage the LAE participants is perhaps one of the most interesting and detailed elements comprising their undeniable diversity: see Figure 7: Artistic Discipline(s) for exact numbers and breakdowns. A full 60% of LAEs practice more than one art form: Teo engages in spoken word poetry, theater, playwriting, directing, and creative writing; Jude Papaloko is both a visual artist and percussion player with Loray Mystic, yet claims that dance was his first love; Deborah has pursued acting, dance, spoken word poetry, and vocal music; and Juan Andrés is known for his guitar-playing and songwriting, poetry/creative writing, and puppetry of protest. Looking at each type of artistic pursuit independently, 22% of LAEs regularly
write and perform poetry/spoken word, a logical outcome given that the researcher herself is a poet/spoken word artist, and the connection between academic English/Writing courses and the use of poetry to engage students is a natural bridge and a well-established practice. 21% of LAEs actively pursue theater activities, whether on stage or in supporting roles. Some 17% are musicians, either vocal or instrumental or both.

Analyzing the umbrella of performing arts—defined as spoken word/poetry, theater, dance, arts organizing, protest arts, and puppetry—reveals that a full 77% of our LAEs practice at least one of these art forms. A total of 10 LAEs engage in some form of visual arts, comprising 9% of the research participants. Other artistic genres represented include writing (fiction, plays), filmmaking, graphic design, culinary arts, fashion design, and photography.

Just as most LAEs regularly engage in more than one artistic medium, the vast majority have had multiple educational experiences as “teachers.” Close to one-third of the sample teaches in summer, afterschool, weekend enrichment programs, with another third of the participants working in community outreach program—prisons, shelters, orphanages, and other special programs and events (Figure 8: Educator Type of Engagement). The next most common type of “teaching” is the traditional K-12 classroom teacher, representing only 16% of LAEs. Smaller percentages work in administrative roles or supportive capacities (counselors, coaches, therapists), with one early childhood teacher. The multiplicity of types of teaching jobs that LAEs have
undertaken speaks to the complexity of life as an LAE and the need for steady income at times, counterbalanced with the flexibility teaching affords to create artistically.

Analyzing their family structure, we see that most LAEs, whether single or coupled, are without children. 66% are single with no dependents (see Figure 11: Family Structure). This discovery itself speaks volumes, indicating the difficulty of balancing a fully committed life of art, teaching, and family. Not impossible, just difficult. The exceptions to this trend include twelve LAEs partnered or married with children, and six single parents. Also of interest to the researcher is the family status of the LAEs while growing up. 62% of LAEs grew up with just one of their parents, with 53% of LAEs’ parents divorcing during their youth, and another 9% experiencing the death of one or both parents. The impact of being from a “broken home,” may be something interesting to investigate, in future research, although from a normative stance, this may be the “new normal.”

There is also considerable variation regarding their early exposure to the arts, formal arts training, and parents or close relatives engaged in serious artistic practice and performance. This researcher expected to find a stronger sense of “artistic lineage” in the LAEs interviewed for this study, but only 13/57 or 27% have a close relative devoting their lives to creative or artistic pursuits. Another unexpected discovery is that many LAEs had parents who engaged in creative activities, perhaps not classified as “art” including beekeeping, sewing, tombstone carving, scrapbook making. Whether conscious or not of their role-modeling, these LAEs learned dedication, discipline,
resourcefulness from their parents’ devotion; most importantly, though, they witnessed the joy in their focused attention, the contentment with their creative flow, and the pride of their accomplishment.

Despite the characterization of Miami as a city of transients, the LAEs selected for this research study reflect a different pattern—LAEs and informants combined for an average of 20 years living, creating, and teaching in Miami. It appears, at least initially, that there is a “sense of place” reflected in this longevity. The question then becomes, why do LAEs choose to stay in the “Magic City”? While many variables may be responsible for the rootedness of our LAEs—the proximity to Latin America and the Caribbean, the preponderance of a bilingual, Latino/a audience, or the constant influx of visitors from many international destinations—the cultural backdrop of Miami certainly affects the LAEs’ many diverse aesthetic expressions. The image of Miami is not typically one of stability, although this research suggests differently. As the scatterplot diagram in Figure 9: Number of Years in Miami demonstrates clearly, the number of years in residence varied widely, with five years on the low end, and 40 years on the high end.

To assume insularity, however, on the part of LAEs in Miami would be erroneous—many of the LAEs interviewed travel regularly to perform their art, or engage in national and international educational/teaching activities, conferences or programs. Eight LAEs/informants moved away from Miami since the time of their interview; however, currently, four of those have returned to South Florida. But most exciting is the number of LAEs
who regularly travel outside of South Florida to expand their art and/or teaching practice—no less than 37% of our sample of our recognizes the benefits of travel, learning and growing alongside other talented teachers and artists around the country and the world! These numbers indicate a global impulse, a distinct interest in cultural and artistic exchange; sparking a constant, continual evolution, these LAEs bring Miami’s talent to worldwide attention, often challenging dominant stereotypes. (See Table #5: “LAEs Digital Portals”).

Michelangelo and Sophie represent two of the most interesting and exciting examples of this “LAE as global sojourner” archetype. For the past several years, Michelangelo, former lead man/emcee for the band the Cornerstoners (born out of the venue The Cornerstone, one of the pillars that anchored Wynwood in its pre-heyday days), has been traveling to Colombia to record and perform with the group Crack Family, and has hosted visiting musicians and artists from Colombia in Miami. Sophie spent six months on an eco-indigenous and spiritual journey traveling through Central and South America, returning to Miami in fall 2015, only briefly before moving to California. A second tour, Weaving Worlds, brought together a group of visionary artists, healers, activists, sustainability experts who traveled in an eco-bus through Mexico, Central America and Colombia, connecting with indigenous communities and learning alongside to create balance and harmony with the earth and each other.
2. To closely examine the phenomena of hybrid identities as it applies to LAEs living and working in multicultural and multiethnic Miami. In other words, what does it look like or feel like to be an LAE?

As we dig deeper into the primary components of the complex, composite identity of LAEs in Miami, we see a continuing trend of variance, rather than predictable patterns. LAEs live in all neighborhoods of Miami, some have “jobby-jobs” (a term coined LAE Malik aka “Profet,” a somewhat condescending way to refer to the 9-5 grind), some freelance, and some are fully supported by their artistic and/or teaching pursuits. How, when, and where they practice their art or their teaching craft also varies tremendously.

During the 2003-2013 time period, several “dropped out” of the live music, art, poetry underground scene, for various reasons: Kristen, Tania and the researcher all had babies and family issues which superseded the need to perform regularly. For these three females, the response was to turn more fully toward teaching and continue freelance artistic work. Stanley, Renee, Jesus, Carolina, Melina, and Dennis moved away. Tony Gee decided to focus his energy on his business opportunities, and Analyze and Edgar have both been absent from the scene.

Since 2008, the younger generation, or next “wave” of LAEs has emerged, with most of them graduating from high school, now in their mid-to-late twenties (See Figure 10: “Waves of LAEs”). This group includes Alfredo, Felipe, Juan Andrés, Melvin, Nikki, Natalie, Sophie, and Joseph. Some LAEs, including Amy, an occupational therapist, evolved in their particular role in the artist-educator-activist community. Amy once performed regularly at weekly poetry readings, but since 2008, has dedicated her creative energies to founding and expanding the Vanessa Baez Memorial Luncheon (in
honor of her sister), a key component of Deborah’s SWAN (Support Women Artists Now) Spoken Soul Fest and starting her own company called Playapy. LAE Sergio and informant Josh both evolved in their roles—from being audience members and supporters in the early years to regular performers, now performing and organizing as active elders in Miami’s artistic community. The most consistent engagement (in the performative sense) comes from the male elders—LAEs Alonso, Josh, Profet, Rio, Sergio, Jude, Marcus, Octavio, and Oscar—who have maintained and active presence as both performers and educators, interacting with and mentoring the next generation of poets, actors, organizers, musicians, and LAE activists.

With these male elders maintaining an active presence, we wonder—where are the female forces for mentoring and inspiration? The obvious gender bias could reflect women’s historical caretaking/mothering roles; despite trends to stay single and childless longer, women today perhaps still struggle with society’s expectations and their own internalized gender stereotypes. Taking a closer look, we see that Isaida has maintained close connection with the Write Side Poets, and as an alumnus of and volunteer for Deborah’s SWAN (Support Women Artists Now) annual Spoken Soul Festival, continues to influence other women artists and artist-educators. Informant Soulflower continues to host monthly or quarterly events, creating a space for celebration, contemplation, and spiritual connection (Appendix K). Her Raize it Up events at Naomi’s Garden in North Miami always begin with a sage-burning cleansing and sound healing by local didgeridoo player Joda, clearing heart, throat, and third-eye
chakras. Deborah Magdalena is perhaps the most consistently involved and active participant (of the older generation of female LAEs) in Miami’s artistic scene.

Interestingly, most females in the study are pursuing more solitary artistic pursuits—notably visual arts (Fiorella, Yudelka) or filmmaking (Ika). Carolina, married to Jesús, moved with their family to Montana for a professional theater teaching position Jesús was offered. Melissa (theater) has been involved presenting projects and events from 2010 through 2013, but relatively silent the past year. LAEs Madelin and Lucy are devoting more time to family. Moreover, these two female matriarchs of the LAEs in Miami are being formally entrenched in Miami-Dade County Public School System and invested in their educational communities, often teaching and encouraging young artists rather than pursuing their own artistic passions. All of these female LAEs are not likely to be seen at any of the regular venues that present live performance in the form of a weekly “Open Mic” format.

With Kristen beginning a family and no longer hosting Theatre de Underground, a void was left in female leadership in the greater Miami artist-activist arena. A younger generation of female organizers—who were sneaking into Churchill’s as high school students between 2003-2004, and as 18-19-20 year-olds experienced the Cornerstone Gallery (2004-2006)—was inspired, and endeavored to spread the seed of creative expression and nurture its manifestation. Sophie and Nikki—each a powerful force for organizing arts and community events—took the reins in 2010. As one of the godmothers and bridge-builders for The Virginia Key Grassroots Festival, founder of
Ancestral Roots Festival at Tobacco Road (Miami’s oldest bar, holding Liquor License #001), informant Josh shared that Sophie “…has been moving and spinning some serious energies in Miami.” (Personal communication, June 15, 2012). Clearly there is more to be uncovered and understood here: two other fierce female artists, though not LAEs, were instrumental in creating alternative spaces for LAEs and others to envision and realize community during the years 2010-2013: Rune Lazuli, the creator of “She Said” Open Mic series and more recently “Blend the Femme, and Candace Meyer, whose creative brainchild “Grey Area” provided a space for emerging artists in Miami’s Wynwood neighborhood.

Although the LAEs interviewed for this study varied tremendously in their approach, their philosophy and theories-in-practice, their pedagogy, and their artistic stance, there are at least four dimensions where they are united and have similar experiences or perspectives. These “lowest common denominators” or unifying factors are necessity, urgency, fluidity, and agency. Without exception, they all believed that their artistic (and to a slightly lesser degree, their teaching) pursuits were absolutely essential, vital, critical, necessary for their survival, sanity, and self-actualization. Second, the LAEs in this doctoral study expressed a sense of urgency, both in creating art and in creating opportunities for the future through teaching. In addition to “necessity” and “urgency,” LAEs exhibit an uncommon fluidity, or the ability to adapt to their surroundings as circumstances, challenges, and collaborations change. Finally, their sense of agency—empowered with knowledge, for the most part, LAEs embrace their purpose as creating a more inclusive, just, balanced, harmonious, and democratic world. Of course, the
paths they take and the ways they travel this road toward social justice are as varied and wide-ranging as the biospheres on the planet.

The sense of urgency I witnessed with the LAEs observed and interviewed can express itself in many shades. Most of the LAEs shared an impatience and insistence, refusing stubbornly to accept reality as it is, refusing to acknowledge limitations, refusing put up with the “BS” or buy the crap we are being sold through corporate-bought and controlled media. This sense of urgency, “carpe diem” approach to life, also typically means that LAEs are working on multiple projects simultaneously, as there is no time like the present. Melissa recounts, “I wonder what it would be like to have all this extra time to just lounge around,” at the same time acknowledging her drive and passion and intensity for telling stories, recreating characters, and building communities of understanding (personal communication, May 2011). Without a doubt, each of the LAEs interviewed feels that they have a particular message (or many messages, lessons, “truths”) to relay to their audiences, and this is an urgent matter. Most freely admit that they hope their creative and community work will elicit a reaction, either an intellectual revisiting or a visceral gut-level emotional response. LAEs Profet, Alonso, Melvin, and Rio all allude to the desire to get the masses to wake up, to spark critical thinking in their audience, to become “conscious” and hopefully, eventually, to organize and take action for change. This leads into the last commonality mentioned above—agency. One of the ways they accomplish this is through an impressive flexibility or fluidity.
In order to fulfill their highest purpose—while surviving in this society—LAEs must be extremely adept at adapting to change. Highly malleable, resilient, and flexible, most the LAEs are comfortable with change and the constant evolution of their artistic, teaching, and other “selves.” Depending upon the timing, family needs, personal goals, and other factors, they may spend more time teaching than creating their own art for several months or years, and then switch into a slightly different balance, reprioritizing their artistic practice once their financial needs have stabilized.

Deborah Magdalena is a prime example of this flexibility and shape-shifting, reinventing herself and constantly evolving. My first meeting with Deborah occurred even before moving to Miami, where she was hosting an Open Mic at an upscale Miami Beach venue near the Purdy Lounge called Jade. I knew her spoken word talent to be mesmerizing when she visited LAE Malik’s weekly Friday night poetry venue, Street Linguistiks. Her family name (daughter of Nestor Torres and niece of Ruth Fernandez) and industry connections were parlayed into a gig in front of an audience of 20,000 Latinos at SoulFrito, Urban Soul Festival in late 2003, creating opportunities for other local LAEs Amy, Malik (Profet), and Alonso to increase their impact and reach (see Appendix Q: Soulfrito). Within a year, she was releasing her first CD, and performing music with her father and brother, pianist Nestor Torres Sr. and flautist Nestor Torres Jr., respectively. Deborah hosted numerous venues, including collaborations with DJ Brass King, launched and staffed radio shows, continued auditioning for TV and film in Miami. For several years from 2006-2008, Deborah taught at Arts for Learning, a creative afterschool program which partnered with Miami Dade County Schools. When Young
Audiences moved into the Bacardi Building on Biscayne Boulevard, Deborah was hired as one of its ambassadors, and in 2011-2012, she visited my daughter’s charter school, Academy of Arts and Minds. Since the summer of 2013, she has taught in Alvin Ailey’s Dance Camp at the Arsht Center; once 2014 arrived, she began organizing and promoting special events for Little Haiti’s Cultural Center. From 2008 through the present, she has nurtured the SWAN (Support Women Artists Now) Spoken Soul Festival. This diversity of working, teaching and artistic expression took many forms over the past decade. She is by no means alone in this flexibility or fluidity of personal expression.

Two other common denominators are noteworthy: the majority of LAEs are on a constant quest for self-improvement, believing they have both the ability and responsibility to create greater social justice through a consciously active stance. Regardless of their artistic stance, LAEs pursue a variety of means to continually improve both their creative and educational practice. Many seek out artistic and educational mentors, as noted. Attending workshops, constantly developing and honing their creative expression, and applying for grants, residencies, and other expansive experiences are some of the ways LAES in our study strive for ongoing self-improvement. Yudelka’s Berkshire Hills Internship Program (BHIP) for arts administration and community engagement at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) is one shining example. Similarly, LAE Profet (Malik) has continued to challenge himself by completing a mini-tour several months ago, and performing at the 30th anniversary of the MOVE massacre in Philadelphia as part of another East Coast tour.
Since moving to Montana, Jesus has toured his one-man show “The Hour of the Wolf” in both off-Broadway in NYC and in Europe. As of June 2015, he has just completed a residency in Bali to study traditional Balinese dance and theater. Jesus’ commitment to indigenous cultural practices, and keeping them alive, is evident, along with his quest to extend, amplify, and broaden his own ability to put on and discard masks, in the Grotowskian tradition of pursuing truth and beauty by understanding the many masks we wear. Along with LAE Carolina, they founded the American Laboratory Theatre as a training/retreat space for artists of all disciplines to work with one another, engage in the process of removing of their own masks, and reveal deeper levels of identity and humanity.

The other arena where LAEs resonate similarly is in their activist stance, and their dedication to improving the lives of those less fortunate around them. Kristen’s work with the Indian Ocean tsunami fundraiser brought over a dozen LAEs together in partnership with MOCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) and the City of North Miami in 2004. Numerous other events demonstrated a sense of shared responsibility for uplifting our most vulnerable citizens, whether aimed at supporting our neighbors in Miami (as in Underground Outreach and the Feed the People programs) or across the Caribbean (as in Sophie’s outreach with indigenous tribes in South America). Alfredo and Juan continue to engage in direct action with creative protest, continuing their engagement with and the spirit of the Occupy Movement.
3. To explore the reciprocal benefits (and possible costs) of being artists AND educators. Why do LAEs pursue both endeavors, and what might be the benefits of this dual engagement?

Without a doubt, there are logical reasons for bringing together the arts and education, multiple benefits, and a complementary nature to the partnership. The two worlds maintain distinct differences, but their commonalities are also significant. Both worlds can be intense, inspiring, unpredictable, and creative. There is possibility for incredible connection and transformation—as a teacher or an artist—yet also the potential for massive failure and disenchantment. Neither is a typical 9-5 corporate job, and both thrive on a complex balance of structure and novelty, innovation and consistency.

Artists and teachers occupy an in-between layer when it comes to class. They are neither doctors and lawyers, nor bricklayers or plumbers. Ironically, even though they often struggle economically, both artists and teachers tend to have more education than the average citizen (whether formal and/or self-taught). In this sense, LAEs are similar to professionals or white collar workers. However, the struggle to maintain economic solvency or self-sufficiency connects them with the working class and skilled laborers. I like the term “organic intellectuals,” because it implies creativity, fluidity, and agency. In contrast with Richard Florida's conglomerate of “creatives” or the “creative class,” in my imagination, LAEs would be central, serving as the primary prototype for this emerging class of workers.

For the LAEs in this study, teaching provided, at minimum, a much-needed extra source of income, and in some cases, an anchor of stability. Juan Andres went from working
part-time freelance screening T-shirts, to working as a middle school teacher, while continuing puppetry of protest. LAEs Jesus, Melissa, Carolina, Edgar, and Joseph leveraged their experience teaching in the PlayGround Theatre’s Musical Theater Summer Camp into an ongoing job as afterschool teachers where their passion translated into extra income. Most of our LAEs either are currently teaching semi-regularly or have taught in an extended, ongoing context.

As one of only five LAEs living outside of Miami, Magdalena Gomez began as a writer in the turbulent sixties and seventies; many scholars and cultural critics view Magdalena as the bridge between the Nuyorican poetry generation and today’s slam poetry scene. Her poetry paved the way for performance, leading into theatrical works and bringing her into contact with a core group of young people in Massachusetts, eager to articulate their feelings and take action in their own lives, schools and community. The non-profit Teatro V¡da (“the other TV”) has garnered countless accolades, and is now extending their reach into the schools in Western Massachusetts, bringing theater games and activities of poetic expression, movement, and drama to students to increase their academic engagement and provide anchors for their own self-definition and self-discovery. The evolution of her work and its incredible staying power stands as a testament to the power of education and the arts—whether working with teens outside of schools, bringing art into schools and classrooms through collaborative projects, or developing diverse theater works for all ages, Magdalena has definitely achieved balance and integration utilizing education and the arts to affect social change and systems change. The Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of
Connecticut has recently institutionalized her contributions as a performance poet, writer, and teaching artist by archiving materials that document her work and life’s vision. Although she resides outside of Miami, Magdalena’s trajectory and experience navigating and weaving together the worlds of education and the arts serves as exemplar for other LAEs.

Across the board, LAEs were called to be an artist first or at the same time as they tried on the role of teacher. There are no LAEs in our sample who were teachers first, and then became artists. Typically, the artistic discovery comes first or perhaps in tandem with the opportunity to teach. LAEs view the process of creation with a certain reverence and uncertainty, seeing themselves as vessel, the creating coming through them from some higher source. Most LAEs felt compelled to share their message, thoughts and ideas; fortunately, their artistic practice gave them a platform and microphone. For many, once they had empowered and liberated themselves, they sought to do the same for others, now wearing the label of “teacher” or “teaching artist.” Many LAEs expressed fulfillment in helping others find and exercise their creative voice. This process can be a portal for healing, as Jesus and Carolina can attest, working at an innovative school where the arts are an essential component of transformation and empowerment for students who struggle with depression, anxiety, trauma, drug abuse and other behavioral/emotional disorders.

As if creating was not enough of a challenge, the idea that you can influence another person’s future can be a daunting consideration. This awareness brings a sense of
responsibility and the weight of influence, and ideally, an ethic of integrity to the profession. LAEs are often not formally trained as teachers, but enter the classroom with an open mind and a desire to communicate and connect; similarly, the primary goals of art-making include to connect people, places, ideas, visions; to communicate feelings, beliefs, messages; to hold a mirror up to our subconscious. Because of this positive attitude, most LAEs are successful in the classroom and if struggling, seek out support and strategies. Many find that teaching, even part-time, can provide an element of safety and legitimacy to the unpredictability of life as an artist.

Artistic pursuits and teaching pursuits may fulfill different needs for individual LAEs. For some forms of art, there is a solitary aloneness that could be combatted by the social interaction of teaching. Many artists say that they sometimes feel “invisible,” as their lifestyles and values are often out of sync with the rest of society. Working with younger children—full of wonder and curiosity—could alleviate any anxiety and counterbalance hubris. Similarly, for the individual artist who feels disconnected, or might have an overinflated sense of ego, teaching or working with youth in some mentoring capacity could provide an important interchange of ideas and a healthy dose of humility and humanity. The freedom of expression found in the artistic milieu may be a welcome juxtaposition or relief from the overly hierarchical, authoritarian, and rigidly prescribed roles of teaching in the 21st century.

There are enough similarities between the two professional and cultural worlds that many skills and predispositions are transferrable between roles. A preliminary list could
include adaptability, spontaneity, discipline, communicativity, impactfulness, and principled integrity (maintaining high standards). As LAE Teo Castellanos has demonstrated, writing poetry and performing at Open Mics, can lead to telling stories through poetry, writing plays, performing in these one-man shows, traveling around the country, becoming a coach for the Tigertail Spoken Word Team, and directing the annual Piano Slam performances at the Arsht Center. His longevity in the South Florida artist-educator community is notable but not uncommon.

Engaging in both sociocultural worlds—as “artist” and as “educator”—has numerous benefits. First and foremost, enlarging your circle is always beneficial; working in different environments means you are more likely to cross paths with those who may be interested in your talents. If you are an artist “dabbling” in teaching, working at the Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs, for example, could provide a doorway to teaching private lessons. Likewise, for the teacher who has been a private artist, the distinction as an active, “out-in-public” artist, will likely correspond to new artist friendships and colleagues, to support the further evolution of your art, and become guest teachers/presenters/facilitators in your class. A team of artists could come in for a special project. You could even set up artistic residencies rotating through, demonstrating how their activities, exercises and instruction correlate with state standards and national curriculum. This research marks merely the beginning of exploring a very fertile crossroads; the variations of this symbiotic relationship and potential for mutual beneficence have yet to be articulated.
4. To create a preliminary sociocultural sketch of the evolving Latino/a artist community in Miami, with a particular emphasis on how the dynamic process of “latinidad” affects this community, its efficacy, and LAEs’ sense of social responsibility.

To depict the LAE community or even the Latino/a artist community in Miami is to outline the antecedents and precedents to the massive gentrification underway in neighborhoods across the metropolis, especially in the neighborhoods of Wynwood and Little Haiti. Coconut Grove and Little Havana, once neighborhoods where crime and poverty were concentrated, have already been largely sanitized and whitewashed, allowing for the expansion of the aristocratic aesthetic of Coral Gables to extend its tentacles into neighboring communities. Miami is a city under construction, where massive wealth is supported by a sprawling underclass, whose economic function is to serve the needs of the uberveralthy. Ironically, the local Miami citizens, the hardworking underclass, exploited and overworked, seem to relinquish their ownership of the city, resigned to second-class citizenship.

LAE Rio once described Miami’s Latino/a artist community as “confused, reckless, and without a voice” (June 2008), and now (Spring 2015) asserts that now “…nearly 7 years later, it has a voice that is meek and kneels to city planners, local political despots, and cash money developers. Still confused in its infancy, it has become a false Disney world of half-truths and artistically masked icons of greed and irreverence.” (Personal communication, May 11, 2015). Perhaps maybe not so reckless but still confused, looking for a moral and ethical compass to counterbalance the influence of capital and corporate consumption. The artistic and artist-educator-activist community is, like the
city, under construction, and still without a unified voice. The development of this mega-city known as Miami, “the gateway to the Americas” will continue regardless of whether unity is achieved.

The question becomes, “What kind of development?” A development model that devours and dismantles? Or one that bridges, builds and brings together creative capacities? Who will be served in this developmental model and whose needs will be prioritized? In the words of Eduardo Galeano (2001), will this be “a development model that scorns life and idolizes things” (286), where appropriation, strategic manipulation, bribery, extortion and other deals made behind closed doors are the norm, the standard of doing business, or will we be able to create coalitions for change, informed and active citizens, a padeia of participants who bring justice, equality, dignity, sustainability, peace, inclusion, and humanity out of the shadows and into the light, as guiding pillars/principles for development?

What is happening now is that there are two movements underway: first, the “institutionalization” of Miami as a city of vibrant art and culture is underway, as symbolized with the sprawling PAMM (Pérez Art Museum Miami) and ostentatious Arsht Center—not that either of these venues are disconnected from the community, but they do not see outreach as part of their fundamental, central mission. This is “ART” on the macro-level, visible to all, but accessible only to the few. Because fundamentally, their boards, their leadership is of the “ART” world first and foremost, and has not fully embraced their “EDUCATOR” mission and responsibility by virtue of the revenue and
spotlight they receive. The Adrienne Arsht Center does a free Family Day twice a year where a dance performance or matinee show is staged, usually preceded by face painting, and other activities. The researcher attended one with her children, and the events themselves are incredible. Yet, by their very nature, these “outreach activities” naturally self-select educated families and resourceful parents, rather than reaching the most underserved segments of the community. What about the families who may live less than 10 blocks away in Overtown, or further in Brownsville or Liberty City or Hialeah, who don’t even know this is happening? That’s where the real outreach lies. How do these children become exposed to the power and possibility of the arts? In theory, this occasional act of generosity, while praiseworthy, parades as “community outreach.” Why not stage such an event quarterly, or even 6 times per year, every other month? While most museums in Miami have a free family Saturday, one monthly, this barely begins to approach bridging the vast chasm of experience and opportunity that separate the haves and the have-nots” in Miami, as one of the Poorest Big Cities in America.

At the same time, many LAEs continue to flourish, and the larger Miami artistic community sees their work as valuable, impactful and important, hence their inclusion in several larger artistic community initiatives. Both Oscar Fuentes and Sergio have most recently participated in O-Miami’s month long celebration of all things poetic and lyrical. Melissa and Rio led the “Dead Poets Parade” in O-Miami’s inaugural year Oscar has also parlayed his connections with the Miami Public Library system to host workshops in storytelling and poetry, played special events with the Oscar Fuentes Combo (the
musical meets spoken word/theatre experiment). Currently, he is Curator for the Arts at Miami’s Downtown Library, and is showcasing “Biscayne Blues,” in Miami’s short film festival. Rio (along with his brother Michelangelo) continues to host Words-N-Wine (although promotion and venue relations remain Nikki’s domain). Marcus Blake has moved his “Stone Groove” to a new location and continues to create, branching out to more visual art projects and murals where once more of spoken word lyricist (see Appendix J). Malik continues to host The Underground Railroad, Conscious Culture Open Mic, and has connected with others who are interested in issues of social justice and community empowerment. This is “ART” on the micro-level, happening in geographically dispersed neighborhoods, each community with its own approach and agenda, reaching hundreds, even thousands of people who can appreciate artistic expression, making it accessible to the many, but visible by the few. Newcomers to Miami must really search out these LAE communities, but once they find them, it is like finding a secret doorway into another world, a world that is diametrically opposed in many ways to Miami’s façade and its postcard images.

Nearly all of LAEs in this study continue to build a following of those who love and support their work. Nonetheless, many are still struggling to pay their rent, and find the right surroundings (venues and audiences) to present their latest creative works. Informant Kristen explains that in Miami “Schools are segregated, underfunded and the children under nurtured. Some of the poorest schools are trying the hardest and some of the richest schools try the least. At the same time, many people have never worked harder to nurture and bring education and art to the community. Politicians have already
told us no one will stop gentrification. And rents keep rising, pushing artists’ warehouses into worse neighborhoods. In 2007, I got held up at gunpoint in Midtown on N. Miami Ave and 27th Street…now a one-bedroom goes for over $2,000 a month. Miami still breeds the best artists and [yet] they still leave to go other places…that hasn’t changed in 20 years.” (Personal communication, October 16, 2015).

Unbeknownst to many, the irony is that many of these LAEs pre-date the Wynwood Arts District explosion—in fact, this artistic renaissance in Wynwood was predicated on their work, namely the core group of Fiorella, Rio, Josh, Kristen, Moses, Malik, and Marcus, among others. Their artistic and creative impulse was the prerequisite for Tony Goldman’s vision to reach fruition in putting Wynwood on the artistic and cultural map. For LAEs in our sample, this feat alone should grant them some form of notoriety and status in the artistic community; however, despite their successes, there is still a sense among most of the LAEs that they must leave Miami to perform nationally and internationally in order to be given respect, acknowledgement, and financial support for their talent.

Three LAEs—Oscar, Rio, and Sergio—are friends and close creative compatriots, and along with informants Moses and Josh, they form a strong coalition. But they are either unaware of their potential impact, or too engaged in their own individual art projects. Even if united, conscious, and committed to using their art in the service of democratizing Miami’s public spaces, they would still need to agree upon a common agenda, concrete goals, objectives, measures, and synchronize their priorities. I
believe, after a decade of front-line interaction and living and working in this community, that LAEs could be the architects of the Miami of 2025, as Latinos and Hispanics become the largest single demographic in the United States. Of course, there is so much diversity within the “Latino” label, it could be argued that this single demographic is really so diverse in its expression that it is difficult to categorize us—the previous indicators have now been eclipsed or rendered irrelevant (language, Spanish surname, country of birth/nationality, those of Spanish-speaking descent born or raised in the New World). At the very least, LAEs could significantly impact the gentrification, growth and development, and evolution of Miami in the next 5-10 years, insisting on balance, inclusion, and creativity as indicators of social well-being, and shifting the focus from the individual to the collective.

This study suggests that artists, like teachers, excel when their basic needs are met, and they are “fed,” (literally and figuratively). The researcher’s experience as a veteran educator, confirms this time and time again, as described in Nelia Connors *If You Don’t Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students!* In essence, once the teacher/educator’s basic needs are met—basic dignity and respect, autonomy, connectedness, competence, and creativity—they are then “free” to teach and lead in ways that are most empowering, flexible, inclusive and creative in the classroom. Similarly, artists thrive at their highest creative apex when their security is solidified—only then are they able to imagine most deeply and daringly, charting a future course and centering their consciousness and their purpose. This is merely an extension or reiteration of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, where food, water, and shelter are at the base of the pyramid, with
love, belonging, group affiliation higher up, and at the top, self-actualization. For those who are interested in nurturing artists and incubating the creative impulse, a focus on meeting the needs of LAEs would be fundamental.

The inaugural Sunset Summit, held by the researcher, was envisioned to provide a gathering space for LAEs, providing a communal setting where they could mutually support each other. Beyond meeting their needs—affirmation, encouragement, mentoring, peer training and evaluation, coaching, networking, collaborating, and engaging in service—the researcher hopes that LAEs find ways to impact the lives of Miami’s most vulnerable, through activities and programs that celebrate the arts, heal individuals, and empower communities.

What is missing in this formula for change is someone to bridge these LAEs, both vertically and horizontally, to provide support, to share information, cross-fertilize ideas and keep everyone abreast of new developments. Someone who can set goals and bring many people together for a common purpose; sadly, one of the people best suited to bring those people together is Sophie Moon, but she has left Miami. After investing so much energy and heart into the artist-educator-activist communities, Sophie has organized pilgrimages to Central and South America in order to create ripples of change, learn from our indigenous ancestors, and re-envision the world as a more harmonious, sustainable planet. In many ways, the researcher is part of that bridge, and seeks to create strength by interlocking and interconnecting the LAEs of this study, making them more accessible to each other, offering mutual support, and interconnecting the many disparate parts of the LAE puzzle in Miami.
5. To investigate what role LAEs may play in making schools and communities more democratic, acting as a catalyst and sparking social justice initiatives. In what ways do LAEs strengthen the democratic fabric of the institutions and communities they serve?

Our sample demonstrates that LAEs are risk-takers, and meet challenges with an open mind, embracing new opportunities. Based on observation and interaction with LAEs, I would also assert that they are consummate multi-taskers, highly intelligent, and in need of variety and stimulation to avoid boredom. They engage in their creative endeavors as a means of intellectual, artistic, emotional practice, constantly seeking to evolve, inching closer to “mastery,” but ultimately, aimed at sharing a universal experience, in a way that is unique to their aesthetic.

Without a doubt, LAEs are instrumental in creating dialogue, building community, and encouraging individuals to connect across the many strata in our contemporary society. It is my theory that they can co-create “temporary autonomous zones” (TAZ) whereby the standard operating procedure, the “manual” we have been handed down for acting and reacting, feeling and being, has been hacked and rendered irrelevant. Wedging a crack in the hegemony of our largely technocratic, capitalistic and consumeristic culture, we are free to recreate ourselves and our communities. One of the most enduring examples of this, and certainly one of the most colorful and expansive, is the creation of an entire city, BlackRock, in the middle of the desert for the annual Burning Man festival. Impressive and inspirational, it is not surprising that many of our LAEs—Sophie, Moses, Rio, Octavio, Soulflower—have attended Burning Man for artistic rejuvenation and to rekindle the imaginative possibilities that this festival suggests with its principles of
radical self-reliance, barter system, leave no trace, and random acts of kindness and generous creativity. On a much smaller scale, the same type of alternative environment can be created in any public space, as many LAEs can attest, with Deborah’s First Friday’s at Little Haiti Cultural Center, Soulflower’s Raize it Up monthly gatherings, and informant Moses’ I Love Yoga Studio’s many events.

Moksha’s Art Basel main event “Return to Dreamtime” on Saturday, December 7, 2013 stands as perhaps the best example of an organic, spontaneous creation of a TAZ witnessed by the researcher. Sophie Moon enabled me to sidestep the $50 admission fee, and my older daughters babysat their one and two-year-old siblings. Intricate, elaborate art where precision meets passion in the work of Alex Grey, alongside constant musical performances on three stages, a silent disco, a mystical mushroom where people shared magical elixirs, and wandering performers like stiltwalkers, contortionists, mimes and others created an other-worldly experience that definitely disrupted the sensibilities. The most magical moment was the convening of strangers outside in the parking lot, where a small group of six of us—mostly strangers—held hands and engaged in spontaneous prayer or ritual, me reciting a poem, friend Joda playing his digeridoo, and each individual offering up some gratitude and expression of thanks as the sun rose. The exhilaration and energy from that event allowed strangers to unite, share their gifts, and celebrate individuality while remaining grounded in our common humanity. This is the clearest example I have seen of art in action as a democratizing and humanizing force; rather than art imitating life’s myopic vision and distorted values, art here demanded that life imitate art, as boundaries of separation are
torn down and limiting belief systems discarded for a blank canvas, an open stage, an opportunity to begin anew. (More at http://www.mokshafamily.org/moksha-art-fair-2013-dec-4-7-return-to-the-dreamtime-at-7th-circuit-studios/). This event can be placed in the larger context of transformational festivals, whereby ritual, performance, (electronic) music and ecstatic dance lead to similar “temporary autonomous zones.” The Bloom TV has recently completed a three-part series, traveling the world in search of such festivals that promote new ways of seeing, being, and living in harmony (www.bloom.tv).

What is missing in these transformational festivals (not so much Moksha’s event, as it is typically very diverse in participants, reflecting Miami’s mosaic), but in the larger scope of such events is the participation by people of color. A few individuals are seen in these videos that are obviously people of color, but the group of participants is overwhelmingly white. This brings up some interesting questions, among them the possibility that individuals of color are more closely aligned to ritual, performance and community, either through their own indigenous traditions, gospel churches, or other community initiatives. The thirst for communion and the collective experience seems most desperate for young white males and females as seen in the videos from Bloom TV, compiled for observations of over two dozen international festivals. In the absence of a strong, well-articulated sense of “white identity” and by virtue of the melting pot, losing touch with their Irish, German, French, Scottish, British, Welsh, Russian, Polish roots, I propose that many Caucasian youth experience a vacuous hole in their sense of belonging and affiliation, creating a strong need for being rooted in a particular community or group. This helps to explain the rapid rise of hate groups and anti-
immigrant rhetoric, on display this season as “Make America Great Again,” and a nostalgic longing for an imaginary past.

Looking at Miami, there are a plethora of Black artists and artist-educators creating alternative community spaces: Emonde Love (Mi Corazon) who hosts a radio show, Kyla (once the host of Flow Wednesdays at Ginger Bay Café in Hollywood, and now volunteer for a youth performing arts organization in Hollywood, FL, Chris da Imperial with his West Palm Beach Youth Open Mics specifically geared to create safe spaces for LGBTQ youth, Ingrid B (promoter) of several poetry venues, and Rachel “Flow” Diva with her Coocaroo’s Open Mic in Broward county. Bringing together LAEs with other people of color is the key to transformation, if we are seeking to create alternative democratic spaces—especially the black artist-educator-activists mentioned above, along with Asia, the only other South Florida poet to be featured on Def Poetry besides Will da Real One. Our own group of LAEs includes Jamaican Marcus, alongside Haitians Jude and Joseph, as these islanders share many aspects of identity with Latino/as living in Miami. This cross-section represents the true power connection and the catalyst for change. Still, I would like to see more research, including and perhaps comparing the African-American or Black artist-educators (AAEs or BAEs), with LAEs in other major urban areas, not only to investigate the male-female demographic, but also to analyze the leadership (venue hosts, community magnets) of the these other extended “arts communities” which, this researcher contends, is really the “artist-educator-intellectual-activist communities and the intersection of gender/race/culture and language as it is expressed in creating artistic works and community spaces.
Reviewing our list of LAEs demonstrates that there are numerous initiatives underway to create more democratic spaces through the intersection of the arts and education. Marcus Blakes’ “My Block” project in Little Haiti has brought together artists to collectively paint murals and give visible signs of improvement and inspiration to his neighborhood. Sergio’s involvement with the AntiHeroes project brings people of differing abilities together for creative movement and theatrical dance performances. His mentor, who happens to be blind, has influenced Sergio to be much more inclusive and encompassing, recognizing that all individuals have the capacity to be created and no one should be excluded from that opportunity. There are a number of politically conscious venues in Miami, as hosted by Malik and Soulflower. Nuyorican LAE Malik is also heavily involved in the Republic of New Afrika and NCOBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America), and hosts weekly “Feed the People” programs in some of the most impoverished neighborhoods in Miami (Appendix L: The Peoplez House). On a more individual level, Ika has made space for Alessandra, the researcher’s daughter, to attend acting workshops free of charge, or for an agreed upon barter. Informant Moses hosts a 200-hour yoga instructor training, whereby those who cannot pay the $2500 fee, can complete a work-exchange program at the studio. Essentially, that is the task of the LAE in Miami: to make space for as many people as possible at the table of self-awareness and self-empowerment. In the process, this radical concept known as inclusion, engenders not only individual transformation and healing, but raises the health and vibrancy of the entire community.
From some perspective, LAEs’ efforts to create community are like chocolate chips, sprinkled throughout the city and in many different milieus. The flavor is there, the reality of their existence cannot be denied, and they act as a magnet for other like-minded people who are similarly seeking change. Coordination, collaboration, and cooperation of LAEs for a common purpose are the missing ingredients. This can be done. Up until now, it appears that the energy and commitment of LAEs has been co-opted and appropriated more than it has been invested, directed, harnessed and leveraged. While not necessarily or completely true, the most altruistic and communal-oriented LAEs are still hustling—always hustling to keep their game strong, make ends meet, and extend their reach. The researcher is uncertain if they are unaware of their power and potential, or if they are so busy creating and surviving, or if the task of community-wide change is too daunting, time-consuming, or risky for their careers.

Certainly, the circle needs to be widened to include not only other artist-educators of color, but their Caucasian counterparts who are allies in the struggle to bring more democratic energies to bear on the development model in Miami. DJ Seth Brimstone and his P.A.T. H. program (Preserving, Archiving and Teaching Hip-Hop), now in its seventh year, is bringing together alternative educational models with artistic expression on four fronts—visual arts of hip-hop (think murals and graffiti), spoken word/emceeing and rap, dance and b-boy/b-girl traditions, ad musical beats and juxtaposition of rhythms. Another program, Guitars Not Guns, is also making a noticeable impact in bringing arts and education together for youth and community empowerment.
Future research should focus on the role of women, compare LAEs in other cities, and include other artist-educators of color in order to better ascertain just how these essential bridge builders and catalysts for change are charting new directions in a time of immense uncertainty in our world. Other than taking a specific interest in the role of female LAEs in the ongoing creation of democratic spaces, this researcher is curious about a number of other roads of inquiry. Some of these include exploring how these LAEs measure their success. In the words of Hal Lawson, Professor at University at Albany’s School of Social Welfare, “How would you know it if you saw it? How do LAEs measure their impact? How do they understand and accept the uncertainty in their world, or how do they compensate for that unpredictability? Additional research endeavors could explore further the role of the audience, role of the venue, and role of the host/emcee/organizer in creating alternative democratic spaces. How exactly does music influences the creative process? It is without a doubt influential and central, but we really do not understand how, when, and why it functions to initiate, facilitate, and lubricate the creative process. Finally, two additional areas for future research: the role of play and the role of humor in the learning process and creative process.

Our LAEs are the consummate bridge-builders. They embody most if not all words beginning with the prefix “Trans” including translating experiences to diverse audiences, transacting in novel ways with others, transporting us to other dimensions of time and space, transitioning our sense of the possible into a new realm, transforming our senses, our hearts and minds, while transposing our reality onto a new screen. LAEs in Miami live and create to achieve transcendence, to reach
beyond the limits of their mortality and tap into the creative, sacred impulse in each of us, but that which lies dormant in many, if not most of us. This transformational and transcendent experience is their most enduring gift, leaving a legacy of beauty and bravery, through their art and dedication to expressing their individual truth.

With a disruptive, evolving economy, artists have always been engaged in a trade-off—freedom over stability, expression over conformity, liberation over security. As this project evolves, it likely will take the shape of a participatory action research design, making the most of the participants and increasing their engagement. In the post-9-11 world, we realize that no one is safe from the volatility and unpredictability of the new world economic order, and only through a bold, imaginative project of re-envisioning our identities as creative, capable, compassionate humans, will we be able to collectively chart a course which steers clear of increasing inequality and brings our humanity into congruence with our technology. If there has ever been a time where the arts are essential to our survival, that time is now, as Ben Cameron of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation said in his TED talk (February 2010), reminding us that:

“especially now in this world, where we live in a context of regressive and onerous immigration laws, in reality TV that thrives on humiliation, and in a context of analysis, where the thing we hear most repeatedly, day-in, day-out in the United States, in every train station, every bus station, every plane station is, "Ladies and gentlemen, please report any suspicious behavior or suspicious individuals to the authorities nearest you,"... when all of these ways we are encouraged to view our fellow human being with hostility and fear and contempt and suspicion. The arts, whatever they do, whenever they call us together, invite us to look at our fellow human being with generosity and curiosity. God knows, if we ever needed that capacity in human history, we need it now. You know, we're bound together, not, I think by technology, entertainment and design, but by common cause. We work to promote healthy vibrant societies, to ameliorate human suffering, to promote a more thoughtful, substantive, empathic world order.” (www.ted.com/talks/ben_cameron_tedxyc)
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Pew Hispanic Fund: www.pewhispanic.org
Poetry Outlouid : http://www.poetryoutloud.org/competition/national-finals

Poets and Writers: http://www.pw.org/about-us/staff_list and http://www.pw.org/content/bobby_gonzalez_poetry_as_community_collaboration
http://www.pw.org/content/special_projects

Prison Policy Initiative: www.prisonpolicy.org/articles

US. Census: www.census.gov
# APPENDIX A: Master Chart of LAEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Artistic Genre</th>
<th>Educator Slant</th>
<th>Their own labels</th>
<th>Time in Miami</th>
<th>Ge</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Pena Jr</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Teach dance competition (Hialeah)</td>
<td>Hispanic or Cuban</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo Quintana</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Protest/Street Teacher</td>
<td>Community educator</td>
<td>Cuban-American</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Community Organizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Raquel</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>Dance, Theater, Vocalist , Poet</td>
<td>Youth Worker (Destiny Arts), many innovative after school &amp; community programs</td>
<td>Puerto Rican, Cali-Rican, mixed, female young queer</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso Menendez</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Bronx, NY</td>
<td>Multi-poet, playwright, actor, musician, graphic artist</td>
<td>Poetry is classroom</td>
<td>Latino or Cuban-American</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Baez</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Camden, NJ</td>
<td>Poet</td>
<td>Support Schools as OT</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Vanessa Baez Memorial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze (aka Richie Lopez)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Spoken Word Artist</td>
<td>Poetry is teaching</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<th>Time in Miami</th>
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<th>Par</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aya de Leon</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>PR-WI</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>Writer (poetry &amp; fiction), performance poet (theater, music, dance)</td>
<td>Director of Department at Berkeley, Arts in Teaching</td>
<td>Black, Puerto Rican, African-American, Latina, Caribena, Afro-Latina, series of overlapping and rolling identities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D*</td>
<td>Oakland, Nuclear War Protest Rally at 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina de Amaral Sa</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>Theater</td>
<td>Afterschool Theater with Pegasus Project</td>
<td>Brasilera, Latina</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Magdalena</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Mayaguez, PR</td>
<td>Singer, spoken word poet, actress, dancer (contemporary performance artist)</td>
<td>Arts for Learning, Young Arts Foundation, Alvin Ailey Summer Dance Camp</td>
<td>Latina, Boricua, Negra, Mulata</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>SWAN (Support Women Artists Now, Spoken Soul Festival, now in 12th year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAE</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td>Artistic Genre</td>
<td>Educator Slant</td>
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<td>Parents</td>
<td>Activism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Breedlove</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Black, Chinese, English, Native</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Dance, Choreographer</td>
<td>Dance/PE instructor at Ransom Everglades, Dance at Richmond Middle School, Founder of DJB Dance Program</td>
<td>Multi-racial, Multi-ethnic Human Being</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Coconut Grove programs for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Caraballo</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Ponce</td>
<td>Theater</td>
<td>Living we Teach</td>
<td>Puertorriqueño</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Lagos</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Visual Artist</td>
<td>Teach Community Art in Kampong</td>
<td>Feel half and half</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiorella Podesta</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>Santiago, Chile</td>
<td>Visual Artist</td>
<td>Afterschool Jewish private school on MB art teacher</td>
<td>Latina, Chilena</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika Santamaria</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>Bogota</td>
<td>Theater, Film, Director</td>
<td>Director, Taught film at MDC</td>
<td>Latina, Colombiana</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mom - deceased young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaida Ortiz</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Manhattan, NY</td>
<td>Poet</td>
<td>Spoken Word, SWAN</td>
<td>Boricua</td>
<td>15?</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>TWSP</td>
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</tbody>
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<th>Their own labels</th>
<th>Time in Miami</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Par</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Quintero</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Theater, Director, Music</td>
<td>Teacher in Colombia/ Miami of theater, other disciplines</td>
<td>Colombiano, Latino</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Community engagement through theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Valbrun</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td>Hollywood, FL</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Taught Music in afterschool program run by Jesus</td>
<td>Haitian American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Mapp Weiss</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jewish American NY-Miamian</td>
<td>Rockville, MD</td>
<td>Music, Poetry, Theater</td>
<td>Full time teacher preK4,</td>
<td>No labels</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Andres Morales</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Venezuelan</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Puppet Theater, Writer, Music</td>
<td>Full time Teacher 8th grade</td>
<td>Latino, Venezolano</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude Papaloko</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td>Port Au Prince Haiti</td>
<td>Visual Artist, Musician, Poet, Dancer</td>
<td>Workshops, Artist Developme, Papaloko 4 Kids</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAE Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina Grande</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Visual Artist</td>
<td>Summerbridge/BT teacher, College teaching and mentoring expert</td>
<td>Cuban-American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge (Ray Dominguez)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Bronx, NY</td>
<td>Poet</td>
<td>Founder of TWSP</td>
<td>Boricua, Puertorriqueño</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>TWSP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen Dawn McCorkell Gomez</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Irish Italian</td>
<td>Minneola, NY (b/w Queens and Long Island)</td>
<td>Poet, Actor, Vocalist, Creative Writing</td>
<td>Arts for Learning</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Canzoneri-Golden</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>Bogota</td>
<td>Dance, Theater</td>
<td>Montessori Teacher, Co-founder of CRMA</td>
<td>Latina, Colombiana, Sicilian</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Co-Founder of Coral Reef Montessori Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeline Marchant</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Matanzas, Cuba</td>
<td>Theater, Music</td>
<td>Director of Musical Theatre Program at Center for the Arts at South Miami Community Middle Magnet School</td>
<td>Hispanic or Cuban-American</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
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## APPENDIX A: Master Chart of LAEs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LAE Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Birth-place</th>
<th>Artistic Genre</th>
<th>Educator Slant</th>
<th>Their own labels</th>
<th>Time in Miami</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Activism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena Gomez</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Theater, Poetry</td>
<td>Founder of Teatro Vivo in Mass</td>
<td>Borikua-Gitana Citizen of the World</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Founder of TV in Holyoke Massachusetts</td>
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<td>Marcus Blake</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Spoken Word Artist, Music, Writer, Film, Fashion</td>
<td>Community Mentor for young artists</td>
<td>New World African</td>
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<td>Melina Davis</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>Manhattan, NY</td>
<td>Visual Artist, Theatre, Photo, Singer</td>
<td>Summerbridge/BT teacher, college teaching and mentoring exps</td>
<td>White Latina, Ecuadorian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Work in Mexico around domestic violence, sexual orientation, identity politics</td>
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<td>Melissa Almaguer</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Acting, Directing</td>
<td>Lead Teacher at MTSC for PlayGround Theatre, after school teacher</td>
<td>Cuban-American</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melvin Bravo</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Nicaraguan</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Writer/ Poet</td>
<td>Educate through writing</td>
<td>Nicaraguanense Latino Male</td>
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<td>Michelangelo Chavarro</td>
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<td>Emcee, Musician</td>
<td>Educate through music</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>White Rabbit Society</td>
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<td>Miguel Prieto-Valle</td>
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<td>Tucson, AZ</td>
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<td>Mentor teacher at SB/BT Sacramento</td>
<td>Chicano, Politicized</td>
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<td>LAE</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
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<td>Educator Slant</td>
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<td>Natalia Inoa</td>
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<td>Nikki Rodriguez (Bravo)</td>
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<td>Miami</td>
<td>Poet and Organizer</td>
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<td>Octavio Campos</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Hybrid Fusion Artist</td>
<td>Theater Teacher at NWSA/MTSC teacher, Pridelines teacher</td>
<td>Cubo-Deutsch</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Composition Theatrical works addressing political issues</td>
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<td>Profet (Yusuf Malik Shabazz)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>Bronx, NY</td>
<td>Spoken Word Poet, Graphic Designer</td>
<td>Teaching workshops at BT/SB, Poetry in Prison, community education (films, documentaries, roundtable s)</td>
<td>Human Being</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>NCOBRA and RNA</td>
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<td>Ralph de la Portilla</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Theater</td>
<td>Arts for Learning</td>
<td>Hispanic or Cuban-American</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>? LGBTQ support of Octavio</td>
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# APPENDIX A: Master Chart of LAEs

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<tr>
<th>LAE</th>
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<th>Birthplace</th>
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<th>Educator Slant</th>
<th>Their own labels</th>
<th>Time in Miami</th>
<th>Gen</th>
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<th>Activism</th>
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<td>Renee Chaves</td>
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<td>Chicana</td>
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<td>Dance</td>
<td>Arts for Learning</td>
<td>Coconut Grove</td>
<td>Cares Educator</td>
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<td>Barnyard, Little River Clean Water Initiative, Indigenous practices</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Barnyard Artist in Residence</td>
<td>Chicana</td>
<td>Art in Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>(sweat lodges, ayahuasca ceremonies)</td>
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<td>Roberto Garrido</td>
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<td>Miami</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>NJ</td>
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<td>Cuban American</td>
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<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>CRMA Teacher Montessori private school teacher</td>
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<td>Stanley Gemmel</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Poet</td>
<td>Community Educator</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>LAE</td>
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<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
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<td>Educator Slant</td>
<td>Their own labels</td>
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<td>Sophie Moon</td>
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<td>Colombian</td>
<td>Bogota</td>
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<td>Festivals, International pilgrimages to learn indigenous ways</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
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<td>Dancer, MC, Hip-Hop Artist, Organizer</td>
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<td>Suiko Garcia</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>PR</td>
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<td>Tania Duran</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>Union City, NJ</td>
<td>Visual Artist</td>
<td>Arts for Learning Cuban American</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teo Castellanos</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Poet, Theater, Movement</td>
<td>Tigertail Miami and Brave New Voices Coach, Piano Slam IV Puerto Rican</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Gee (Anthony Garcia)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>Spoken Word Poet</td>
<td>Community educator Puerto Rican-Italian</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAE Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td>Artistic Genre</td>
<td>Educator Slant</td>
<td>Their own labels</td>
<td>Time in Miami</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Activism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yudelka Tavera</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>Santo Domingo, DR</td>
<td>Visual Artist, Interior Design</td>
<td>SB/BT Miami teacher, Art Director, Art Teacher at Pembroke Pines Charter School</td>
<td>Latina, Dominicana</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>?</td>
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APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

1) Where were you born? ¿Dónde naciste?

2) How long have you lived in the United States? For how long in Miami? In which other cities? ¿Por cuánto tiempo has vivido en los estados unidos? ¿Cúanto tiempo en Miami? ¿Y en otras ciudades?

3) Tell me the story of your family...your parents? Brothers and sisters? What you remember most about growing up/your childhood? Cuéntame la historia de tu familia...

4) Do you define yourself as an artist? In what ways? (Primary as well as secondary pursuits) ¿Eres un/una artista? ¿En cuáles sentidos?

5) Tell me about the kind of art you create and why you create it... Cuénteme sobre el arte que Úd crea, y porqué lo crea así...


7) Are you an activist? Someone who works for social change? How so? ¿Eres una activista—o sea, alguien que trabaja por un cambio social?

8) Why do you do what you do? (if needed) ¿Por qué haces lo que haces?

9) Going back to about your childhood...why do you write/act/make music/sing/dance/perform? How were you exposed to the arts growing up? Cuéntame de tu niñez—por qué crees que ahora eres una artista? ¿Hubieron muchas influencias artísticas en tu familia ó tus experiencias en la escuela?

10) Growing up, what were your career aspirations? What did you dream of becoming when you “grew up”? ¿Cuando era joven, cuáles eran las aspiraciones de profesión?

11) Where does your motivation and inspiration come from? What motivates you to create your art? What motivates you teach? ¿De dónde viene tu inspiración y motivación? ¿Qué te inspira para crear tu arte? ¿Qué te inspira enseñar?
12) Why do you combine arts AND education? Why not just one? ¿Por qué ambos—los artes, y la educación—por qué no sólo uno?

13) How do you identify? (Culturally, ethnically) ¿Cómo te identificas? (culturalmente, en términos de étnicidad)

14) Does your art reflect your culture and identity? How? Does your art challenge popular notions or stereotypes about your group? Explain. Does your teaching reflect your culture and identity in any way? How? Does your teaching challenge popular ideas or stereotypes about your group(s)? ¿Refleja tu arte tu cultura e identidad? ¿De qué manera? ¿Presenta “un reto” a los opiniones populares tu cultura e identidad? Explica, por favor! ¿Y la enseñanza—tu filosofía, tus métodos, etc. reflejan tu experiencia y identidad? ¿De qué manera?

15) Which other artists have influenced you—both in your genre and others? Are there any educators who have had a profound influence on your decision to teach or your teaching practice? ¿Cúales otras artistas te han influenciado, tanto en tu área o en otras. ¿Hay algunos educadores que han influenciado tu decisión o modo de enseñar?

16) Which Latino artists or Latin American artists have influenced your work? Who have been greatest influence (both Latino and non-Latino)? ¿Cúales artistas latinos o latinoamericanos han sido lo más impactante en tu trabajo?

17) Who are your greatest heroes, role models, or mentors? ¿Quiénes son tus héroes y mentores, o gente que te admiran y aspiran a acercarse de ti?

18) How do you see yourself in relation to the greater society of non-Latinos? ¿Cómo te percibes en relación a la mayoría de los que no son latinos?

19) What are your views on the artist community in ________? (your city) Is there a “Latino Artist community”/movement? ¿Qué opinion tienes de la comunidad de artistas en _____? ¿Existe un movimiento de artistas latinos en tu comunidad?

20) How does your ethnicity, background and culture shape or impact your art/work/teaching? Does your art reflect your identity in any way? Does your teaching reflect your identity in any way? ¿Cómo impacta tu etnicidad a tu arte/trabajo/ enseñanza? ¿ Refleja tu arte tu identidad de alguna manera? Y tu modo de enseñar?
21) Is there a specific “culture of education”? (in other words, in your experience, do you feel the educational/teaching world has certain norms, values, expected behaviors...?) Is there a specific “culture of the arts”? How similar and how different? Are you a different person when you are “an artist” vs. “an educator”? If so, how? ¿Crees que hay cierta cultura educativa? ¿Sientes que el mundo de la educación tiene ciertas valores y comportamiento...¿Hay una cultura de los artes en específico? ¿Cómo son similares o diferentes?

22) What can the art world learn from the “culture of education”? What can the education world learn from the “culture of the arts”? (As both an artist and educator, if you could “wave a magic wand” and give one thing to teachers which most good artists possess, what would this gift be? (a talent, a perspective, a strength, an ability) and...vice-versa, if you could give one “gift” to all artists that most good teachers already have, what would it be? (This question seeks to find the most valuable “lesson” to be shared across these 2 worlds.) ¿Qué puede aprender el mundo del arte, de la cultura educativa educación? ¿Si pudieras darle una sola cosa a los maestros que la mayoría de las/los artistas buenos poseen, que sería (un talento, una perspectiva, una abilidad)?...y si de la misma forma pudieras darle algo a todos/as las/los artistas que la mayoría de las/los maestras/os buenos poseen, que sería?

23) Do you consider your art to be a vocation, trade, calling, a mission, or a profession? What about your work with children—how would you classify it? ¿Consideras que tu arte es una vocación, una misión, o profesión? Y tú trabajo con niños, cómo lo clasificarias?

24) Do you feel a responsibility to future generation(s)? If so, in what ways? ¿Sientes cierta responsabilidad hacia las generaciones futuras?

25) Do you consider your art/work to be political? Do you consider your teaching to be political? ¿Consideras que tu arte/trabajo es político? ¿Consideras tu forma de enseñar política?

26) What was your experience like in school? ¿Cúal fue tu experiencia en la escuela?

27) How do you think schools “should” be? ¿Cómo crees que las escuelas deben ser?

28) Looking at schools today, how “fair,” or “just,” or correct are they? Do you see
opportunities for the creation of a truly democratic space? Viendo como están las escuelas hoy en día, ¿cómo de justas, injustas, o correctas crees que son? ¿Crees que hay oportunidades para un espacio verdaderamente democrático?

29) Do you see yourself as having an ethical role as an artist? As an educator? If so, how? If not, why not? ¿Consideras que tienes una responsabilidad como artista? ¿Como educador? ¿Porqué? ¿Porqué no?

30) What is the relationship, if any, between your teaching/your art and the creation of a (radical) democracy? (can substitute “authentic” for radical—a system where the government is truly “of the people, by the people, for the people”) ¿Qué relación, si alguna, existe entre tu forma de enseñar y tu arte, y la creación de una democracia radical?

31) Some people claim that we have entered a “raceless, color-blind society.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Hay personas que creen que nuestra sociedad no ve las diferencias de color o cree que no existe el racismo? ¿Estas de acuerdo?

32) How do you identify? ¿Cómo te identificas?

33) Do you have a personal mission statement? If so, can you share it...¿Tienes un propósito específico en tu misión? ¿Puedes compartirlo?

34) What sacrifices are you willing to make for your art? What sacrifices are you willing to make for your teaching? ¿Qué sacrificios estas dispuesta/o a hacer por tu arte? Y por tu enseñanza?

35) How do you communicate to the audience in the classroom, and how do you communicate through your art? What makes good communication? How important is communication in performing and teaching? ¿Cómo te comunicas con la audiencia en su salón de clase, y cómo te comunicas a través del arte? ¿Cómo creas buena comunicación? ¿Qué importancia tiene la comunicación cuando estás enseñando o actualizando tu arte?

36) How important is “hope” in creating art or in teaching young people? Where does your sense of “hope” come from and how is it expressed in your work? ¿Qué importancia tiene la esperanza en la creatividad artística o enseñando a estudiantes jóvenes?
37) How is your art related to the notions of liberty, freedom, and justice? How is your teaching exemplary of these values? ¿Cómo está relacionado tu arte a las nociones de libertad y justicia? ¿Es tu enseñanza un ejemplo de estas valores?
APPENDIX C: Follow Up Questions for LAEs

“Latino/a Artist Educators and Their Role in Creating and Sustaining Alternative Democratic Spaces in Miami”
Doctoral Research Project, Deborah “Najirrah” Woeckner Saavedra

Follow Up Questions 😊 Thank you!!!

Name: ______________________________ Age: _____ # years in Miami? ______

1) How often do you listen to “música Latina”? Other genres/styles of music? How does music—from whatever genre—influence your creative process?

2) Are your parents… (circle one): married? separated? divorced? (if deceased, answer as to how they were as a couple, while living…)

3) Where do you go for inspiration? What venues or events are empowering and sustaining to you as a developing artist-educator?

4) What do you want it to read on your tombstone/obituary? What kind of legacy would you like to leave behind?

5) How connected do you feel to Latinos/as of different ethnicities/nationalities? Is there something that binds you in terms of identity? How are you similar/different from other Latinos/as?

6) Look at your circle of 10 closest friends—how many are Latino/a? Artists? Educators?

7) How would you describe your teaching style?

8) What is the role of play in your art/teaching? What about humor—how does it influence your art/teaching?

9) What three changes would you make in our educational system if you could? What three changes would you like to make worldwide?

10) Have you ever done a personality test (Myers Briggs, Colors, Enneagrams, etc)? Do you remember how it classified you?
Dear Papa Cornerstone:

I wanted to take this moment to say just a few things. I don’t really know where to begin or if this expression of emotions can ever end. On behalf of all of us Cornerstoners, I cannot come up with the words to thank you for what you have given to each and every one of us. I would like you to know and keep with you forever the fact that you have made this small little space in downtown our palace, our get away from the world of compressed and supervised art. You inspire me to keep on with my dreams and believe in myself that I can make a group of people feel as happy, satisfied, and safe as you have to us. I may not have heard of Cornerstone when it first opened, but these past 8 months have been some of the most amazing in my entire life thanks to Wednesdays and Thursdays at our precious and sacred cornerstone. Josh, you have opened my eyes and I see myself in you as I too am as well an artist behind the scenes who enjoys the blessings of all the talent within our society and communities. Soon I will have my very own little cornerstone and it will be dedicated to yours. Cornerstone has changed my life in many ways and forever I will cherish that within me. I feel so blessed to have heard of a small gallery, open mic joint that just so happened to turn into my escape, my inner peace, and my haven. Vincent van Gogh once said “for my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of stars makes me dream.” This quote is what I feel about Cornerstone, as I have only just begun my journey of life and don’t know exactly what it holds in store for me but you have given many the opportunities to know that we can go so far and be in reach with the stars. You, Cornerstone, are my brightest star, the star I pray to at night and the star in which I hope to shine with one day to come. Thank you Josh for your love and dedication to art, and for never giving up on the beauty behind creation. I one day hope to have changed just one person’s life as you have changed so many. I cannot express the sadness I have that next week I won’t be parking on the sidewalk or drinking some wine while listening to the marvels of Oscar, or the sweet melodies of Adolfo and Katrina, or the “God” song. I am already looking forward to Cornerstone coming back bigger, better, and with even more talent sent from the Greek gods themselves. Thank you once again and have a beautiful evening.

--Nikki
APPENDIX E: Cornerstone Press and Photos

Co-op an exercise in experimentation

The Wynwood art district has a new space:
Cornerstone Experiential Art space, a community collaboration of film, music and art.

BY ANDREA TORRES
atm@balex.com

The two-story beige building at North Miami Avenue and 20th Avenue has an
anguished past—a former lumber mill turned brothel, turned hangout for crooks.

Saturday, though, a close-knit and determined group of artists will try to shake off that
history and point the aging Wynwood space toward a
brighter future.

Artist Florella Podesta, former advertising sales director
Josh Weiss and local actor
André Chavarro will open
Cornerstone Experiential Art
space, 2013 N. Miami Ave.,
with their first “experiential”
art exhibit from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Saturday.

The name and the vision
for the art salon were created
by Weiss, 35, who studied
economics and international
relations at Columbia University.
"I wanted a place where
artists of all fields could
improvise and set their cre-
vativity free, without having to
worry about their artistic
experience," he said.

Inside, standing on a small
ladder, Chavarro, 28, is adjust-
ing the theater lights that Mike
Toms, the bar manager of
Churchill’s Pub in Little Haiti,
donated for the space.

For the opening, Chavarro
and a few of his actor friends
will present monologues dur-
ing the event, which they’re
calling "Childlike."

He, too, is psyched about
the new space.
"This will be the home for
poets, story tellers and lyri-
cists," Chavarro said.

Chilean-born artist Podesta
has decorated the room with
her paintings. They depict her
journeys through Bolivia, Bra-
zil, Argentina and Peru.

"Experiential art just means
you can experience the artist’s
perception of an idea or a
theme," said Podesta, 35, the
resident artist and curator.

"When Josh explains
vision, I just felt the
support. It is a place
where who loves art at
able to find refuge," said
Weiss, 42, who gave Weiss
$10,000. "I really was
daughter, Emma, to er
impact the area and
pursue dreams of an artist
Emma will not only
own art reflected across
Miami Avenue but will
take Podesta's art class.
APPENDIX E: Cornerstone Press and Photos

Experiencing the Arts: Joshua Weiss, left, Fiorella Podesta and Andrio Chavarro on Saturday will celebrate the opening of Cornerstone, an experimental art space where theater, film, visual art and music performance will be featured.

The name and vision for the art salon were created by Weiss, 35, who studied economics and international relations at Columbia University. "I wanted a place where artists of all fields could improvise and set their creativity free, without having to worry about their artistic experience," he said.

Inside, standing on a small ladder, Chavarro, 28, is adjusting the theater lights that Minds Eye, the bar manager of Churchill's Pub in Little Haiti, donated for the space.

For the opening, Chavarro and a few of his actor friends will present monologues during the event, which they're calling "Chilllike."

"When Josh explained his vision, I just felt the need to support it. It is a place where anyone, anywhere in the world who loves art will be able to find refuge," said Ubertino, who gave Weiss about $10,000. "I really want my daughter, Emma, to experience firsthand the creativity and free dreams of an artist."

Emma will not only see her own art reflected across North Miami Avenue but will also take Podesta's art classes and workshops the group wants to offer at Cornerstone during the week.

That plan has some young artists in the area excited. "This is a new beginning," said New World School of the Arts junior Anthony Villarreal, 17, who used to live and work at the Tree of Zion, a vegetarian restaurant that recently closed.

His friend, Alexander Evan, 16, a junior at DASH, agrees: "I am just drawn to it because it seems like it is going to be the new cool place."
Midtown at the Oasis
Cornerstone caters to music’s collective spirit
BY LARRY CARRINO

Nestled in the Wynwood Art District, Cornerstone, a gallery-combination-performance venue, has been host to local artists and performers since it opened one year ago in this neighborhood-in-the-making. "There’s no Website, but word of mouth. Seekers have to look carefully for Cornerstone amid the empty warehouses and vacant lots. But things change. In fact, that’s what Joshua Weiss and his supporters are banking on.

"I opened this place so that the local artists and performers I admired would have a space to come together," says Weiss, who launched Cornerstone in July 2005. A graduate of Columbia University, Weiss worked for Fortune magazine in New York City. Transferred to Miami in 2000, he got fed up and bailed on the Brooks Brothers life. "The business world has no outlet for real creativity. Staying was a matter of life or death for my spirit," he says. "I decided to leap." That brought him to the small apartment above Cornerstone. "At the time, some local kids were leasing the space below for their rock performances. It wasn’t my scene, but they were making something happen, and that motivated me."

Yesterday, when the rockers vacated, Weiss and backers leased the 700-square-foot storefront. Opening with an exhibition that received little press but garnered positive reviews, Cornerstone became a haven for some of Miami’s most talented musicians, including Jesse Jackson, Adonis Cross, and Riffen Jo Harris — a powerhouse trio that established Thursday nights at "Ringer/Comedian Night," Weiss then added a Wednesday-night "Open Mic," hosted by Rio Chavarrin, who produces many of Cornerstone’s minimalist theater pieces — minimalism being the operative word.

What it lacks in décor, Cornerstone makes up in charm. Inconspicuous Art covers the white walls. Your sweaty layers of multi-color paint coat the cement floor. Holding cameras or digital recorders, or nursing drinks from the BYOB shelf, patrons crash on large pillows during performances. Assembling a cover charge, Weiss pays out his "Dharanist Donation" to Cornerstone’s sole non-making enterprise. Weiss acknowledges that his noble pursuit has increased artist awareness but has yet to raise money. "It’s hard balancing art and commerce."

He subsidizes Cornerstone’s activities through his full-time job teaching yoga. A three-dollar donation isn’t much to some, but for many of our regulars it is," he says. "The hope is that this becomes self-sustaining, and can continue to be a haven for Miami’s artistic community." Scouring for audiences, Cornerstone has set a schedule of events during the evening. Call 706-9052 for details.

Contact the author: Idaliz Lopez. 561-941-6161. music@milamewtimes.com
APPENDIX F: Life Told in Rhyme Cast (2005)

L to R: Profet (Yusuf Malik Shabazz), Rachel “FlowDiva”, Liza “Lovechild” Nepa, and DJ Papo “Carmello” Almodovar “Life Told in Rhyme” photo shoot in front of Wynwood’s unregulated most visible wall, facing I-95, pre-Wynwood’s massive gentrification.

The performance piece was conceived by Liza “Lovechild” Nepa, and performed by Profet, FlowDiva, and Chunky (Therese Hill), who is not pictured. Liza selected universal themes such as love, acceptance, illness/death, relationships, and family and each of the spoken word artists wrote or adapted their pieces that related to those themes. Thus, the actors not only spoke to each other, but the poetic creations spoke to each other and these universal human themes. Liza served as both artistic and technical director. The show had one weekend of sold-out performances at Miami’s Globe Theater on Calle Ocho in Little Havana. The theater is gone now, replaced by a Goodwill Store, as East Little Havana morphs into Brickell and Downtown Miami.
The researcher was shocked by the dearth of articles available on the early years of Churchill’s Theatre de Underground, founded by Kristen Dawn McCorkell (now Gomez). Virtually none of the articles available really provide any substance, and very few mention the founder, who started Churchills’ now longest running open mic night in 2001—Monday nights—and ran it successfully for almost 9 years, only to have it taken over against her will by her trained and trusted protégé, Benny (Benjamin Shoulihan). Because Kristen was starting a family, she relinquished one “baby” for another, although many mourned the loss of this venue, as it transmuted and lowered its vibration substantially when the new leader assumed the reigns.

The importance of leadership, and the role of the host or emcee at a certain venue cannot be understated. The tone and tenor that they set by their actions, words, parameters, and expectations for the audience is critical for establishing a safe space for performance and creative expression. The transition (or coup) of leadership at Theatre de Underground meant that this once quirky, inclusive, accommodating, reverent, almost sacred space has become much more of a spectacle, with a more superficial tone, and an undercurrent of angry white male misogyny as spouted by the host. (Field Notes, October 2011, March 2012, November 2013).

However, this energy has been recycled into the Words-N-Wine Wednesday nights at Churchill’s Pub, hosted by Rio Chavarro and Michelangelo Chavarro (alternating weeks), brothers who are both LAEs in this study.
musical. As the self-described “most open-minded (and longest-running) open-mike night in town,” Theatre de Underground has steadfastly preserved its backyard patio stage’s reputation as a lawless, judgment-free zone upon which any humanoid with a performative talent can endeavor to earn fame, fortune, or unshakable shame. Over the past decade and counting, there have been, the evening’s overseers say, thousands and thousands of “poets, storytellers, musicians, bands, comedians, magicians, jugglers, and a few things that cannot be categorized.” This is the quintessential Miami open-mike night. And it isn’t always good. But it’s always what the average Churchill’s drunk would describe as “fucking entertaining.”

5501 NE 2nd Ave., Miami, 33137  
305-757-1807  
churchillspub.com

For the past 13 years, Theatre de Underground has been a weekly creative free-for-all where Miami’s aspiring singer-songwriters, punk rockers, and noise freaks have gathered to strum, scream, and literally crap their pants in hopes of booking a paying gig at the legendary Churchill’s Pub. Of course, the talent has never been exclusively
LAE Ray “Knowledge” Dominguez, Founder of The Write Side Poets is pictured at top left. LAE Yusuf Malik “Profet” Shabazz worked alongside Knowledge in the first two years. The youth slam teams that they brought to Brave New Voices placed in the top 10 each time they competed.
APPENDIX I: Words-N-Wine Images

LAEs pictured here:
Nikki (top right), Rio (directly below Nikki), Alonso (bottom row center)
Appendix J: Stone Groove/The Imperial Images
APPENDIX K: Raize it Up Live!

Pictured below right is the researcher's daughter Malila at Raize it Up Live! One of the hallmarks is the family-friendly nature of the venue.
APPENDIX L:
The Peoplez House, Headquarters for RNA (Republic of New Afrika) and N’COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America)
(NW 26th St, btwn NW 2nd and NW 3rd Aves in Wynwood)
APPENDIX M: Moksha Family Artist Collective

**MISSION STATEMENT**

From its inception, the artistic collective known as Moksha Family has been a nexus of cultural and artistic expressions. Composed of artists, musicians, technicians, and visionaries, we celebrate the notion that brings us with an eclectic mix of performances by individuals and groups from the local and international communities.

Some performances are contemporary. Some traditional and sacred. All are unique, meant to explore the many landscapes on the quest for renewed senses. Moksha Family gatherings are celebrations of cultural harmony and higher consciousness; they are not your average events.

"Moksha" refers to the Sanskrit term for enlightenment and liberation. Moksha Family believes the arts bring us closer to cultural and spiritual freedom. Visit this site regularly for information about upcoming events and how you can get involved.

Thank you for supporting the movement and keeping the vision alive.

For more, please visit http://www.mokshafamily.org or Facebook at www.facebook.com/MokshaFamily
APPENDIX N: Selected Poetry by Najirrah

For all my little soldiers
(Dedicated to the inaugural class of Franklin Summerbridge students, New Orleans, Louisiana Summer 1992)
Najirrah, March 2004

Their faces form a gallery
Of beauty and strength
On the back wall of my mind
A permanent exhibit installed with grace, sweat, laughter and hope
Over nearly five years
Against the backdrop of that mystical, magical city
Known as New Orleans—that fertile crescent—the birthplace of the blues…
And the laissez-faire, horn-blowing, foot-stomping, raucous gaiety of carnival time…carefree…

Their faces form a gallery
Of beauty and strength on the back wall of my mind

The shy smile of Charles Tice
The spunky sassiness of Amanda Washington
The too-young, too-soon flirtatiousness of Latoya Skidmore
The desperate neediness of Teneshia Ruffin
And her instant glow, beaming appreciation and joy
Each time I pulled into her driveway
On the edge of the Desire Housing Projects

The serious far-away look of Keith Turner
Already a man at twelve
The confident, elated reaction when Nia Mason answers a question correctly
The insistence, persistence of Trinh Vu,
Calling me incessantly to come and pick her up,
Take her to a park, the theatre, a festival…
Someplace—anyplace—anxious to escape the predictability of her Little Saigon neighborhood

Hungry for new adventures, new experiences, new horizons

Asuca Lopez, showing that despite her pint size
Her heart, voice, and determination could not be measured
The curiosity and matter-of-fact brilliance of Anthony Berryhill,
Proudly navigating his way
From poverty, battered dreams and neglected housing
With a full scholarship his ticket
to Isidore Newman School, and ultimately, to Stanford University

In their faces, I see my own struggles, fears, triumphs
It is for them I wake every morning
Committed to the continue the struggle…

¡Qué siga la lucha!
Baila con Changó…
giving birth to new beginnings and throwing fire on the refuse, the negativity, the apathy and bitter pill we swallow, accepting mediocrity, poverty, inequality, and bureaucracy…all wound up together and draped in a thin veil we call “democracy”!!

Claves, maracas, jimbæ and congæ laugh and stomp together…
Demanding your full attention
Pulling on the strings of heart, mind and body…
Then, the trance begins…a deep meditation

This mantra echoing in my head
“Excellence, excellence, excellence…”
“Opportunity, opportunity, opportunity…”
“Be the bridge…be the BRIDGE…BE the bridge”
Embracing these words of wisdom
Trying to live them daily…

“Soften your words, toughen your heart, and teach, teach, TEACH like there is no tomorrow!”

La Luna Llena
Najirrah, April 2004

She blesses us…
Basking in her golden glow
We are forgiven
We are loved—unconditionally

She protects us…
We travel safely
Under her watchful eye
We brandish her immunity from harm
She baptizes us
Cleansing our spirits
We are radiant
We are innocent and all-knowing—simultaneously

She is within us
A perfect fullness, stillness, wholeness
A never-ending shining
   floating,
   glowing,
   dancing,
   pulsing,
   magnetism…
An infinite love for ourselves and others…

La luna llena vive dentro
De nuestro corazón
El corazón comunitario
Solo un corazón
Una raza
Una oportunidad
Un sueño, pero una esperanza
Para un mundo
viviendo en paz y armonía

…¡Que brilla la luna llena!

**Women and Hope can Heal the World**
(for my friend at Churchills—Lynne)**204**

She flashed her smile
Sparkling eyes, open heart, and as I open the door
We embraced
Me regalaste una flor diciéndome que linda olía…
Pretense never lived in her

204 Lynne is deaf and mute and we communicated through sign languages, smiles and gestures. She is also homeless.
A spirit so bright and glowing

We shared a few laughs
Some lip gloss, lotion, and two long hugs,
She loves me and I love her…

More truth and honesty in our comings and goings
No matter we live worlds apart
Sometimes the largest divide
Disappears
When you extend your arms
Embrace

Embrace yourself
Your future
    Your uncertainties
Embrace your hope
Your vision of the world as it should be

Embrace anyone (and everyone)
Who looks like they need love.

Embrace the irritations, complications, and follow their convoluted path
Ride the long canyon trail
Concentrating not on the hike—
    Steep and unforgiving
But on the strength of your step
    Conviction in our concentration

La vista…el horizonte te llama…te regaña…te aplaude…
Telling you to value your inner wisdom
Trust yourself

Embrace the healing
Embrace the possibilities…of peaceful coexistence…all
Surviving, thriving through love, because of love, in spite of our love-starved ghosts…
As MF says, you want to scare away the vampires, simply guide them into the light…

Into the light…I want to jump in…dreaming of a planet that embraces all its people…and they embrace each other…finally seeing the truth in the finality and necessity of mutual interdependence…sustaining all life effortlessly…dreams and ambitions answered and stomachs and hearts full and found finally for what they can produce…fruits for generations to come…
**Set Yourself Free**
April 2006

Joyous day, given freely from above
Jah Bless…the ever-flowing river of love
An endless sky reminds us that we
Carry our own set of wings
Custom-made to set us free
Floating and gliding,
Soaring—we were meant to soar in the brilliance of the sun—
Like acrobats dipping and flipping
For kicks, tricks
Hypnotic
We are—she is—we are—she is…
She is
Our splendid breathtaking glorious globe…mother…
Earth…she reigns supreme
Queen of our destiny
Primal security
Like a blanket
She
Covers us with faith
Rains hope on our trampled spirits
Shines belief into the crevices of our self-doubt
Nudging
Prodding us through our stubbornness
Like seasons of time
Making us each feel our seed is alive
Through death she is reborn
Reinventing herself
The mirror she shines
Truth on us all
The courage to turn yourself
Inside out…Upside down
Until the movements become
Natural…Fluid
Like the currents deep in the river of time
She is—we are—she is—we are—she is…me
The me I am hoping to be
Growing to be
Knowing I’ll see
Myself—as Beauty and Love…set free!
Set yourself FREE!
Seduced
Najirrah, December 16, 2008

Have you ever been seduced by a tree?

I know…it sounds ridiculous, but it happened to me…
just today in fact, on my way to the library…
Actually, she didn’t do it alone—she had a whole string of accomplices

The softly whispering breeze caught first my heart,
Pouring out over my body like the warm December sun
Making my fingers dance, sending all kinds of swaying and shimmy-ing and slip-sliding down
my shoulders, abdomen swiveling, hips undulating, fingertips and toes stretching…
At the 2.5 minute red light—Ehrlich and Dale Mabry—that gave me ample time to do my urban
car yogalates!

She said, pssst…look how beautiful this day is…
We are all getting along today…all the elements of nature,
We are sharing the stage, (backed by Terrence Blanchard’s arrestingly beautiful soundtrack) we
may be actually an ensemble…
(No one is pouting or running away, and no one is narcissistically hogging the stage…) We
are harmonious,
An orchestra of full-dimensional art and beauty
Assembled today to inspire you (they said in chorus in my mind)!
To make you pull over, grow roots, dig deep into the soil to find your purpose
Now admire me, (this is the tree talking)
I stopped, reversed and nestled into the speckled embrace she offered

As I looked up and around to admire her,
I thought…this is a gorgeous, full, mature tree…
Look at her trunk, so solid, and well-planted
See her arms, how graceful, reaching out in all directions to protect her home…
This little patch of earth is her domain
She was sent here to protect it, to spawn new life, to be the foundation of the ecosystem

In awe and wonder, I surveyed the territory
crunching into the dry leaves, lizards dart for cover, squirrels scurry nervously eyeing me…
I look up once more—Her moss drapes elegantly…a shawl of cover, shelter for more animals
Stretching, thinking what I’d say if someone stopped to question my motives on the side of the
road, just beyond the bend of the road leading to the library.
Pulling my attention back to the sun and shadows which danced around me
Like a crystal disco ball, shimmering blinding flashes of light
The light is much more intense this time of year
Punctuated by flashes of shadows
Like yin and yang, tempering each others’ blaze and intensity
She is the net, letting the sun in and providing patches of cool relief
Temperature stability, just like a mother
Bringing everyone into her embrace—she is sculpture, she is protectress, she is trumpeter of hope, she is blanket, and warmth and security…

This mature, beautiful, succulent oak, quiet yet dignified has
been around long enough to have seen and weathered some storms
Still she stands proud and hopeful, letting everyone know that it is safe to grow…
She—as the steward of her parcel of the earth—fears not today or tomorrow
Shining example of what it means to live life bravely—never looking back—
Faith that all her needs and her children’s will be attended to by Divine Providence

Like the sirens of ancient Greek legends, she called to me,
Veering my ship into decadently luscious waters
Seducing me with light and shadow,
Focusing on finding harmony coming from difference—this counterbalance is the key to peace…
finding the equilibrium, transferring wisdom and abilities, integrating and aligning different “ways of knowing”

She is the mirror of me, the one I needed to see on the way to the library
Making me wake up and admire ME, stop focusing on all the males in my vicinity!
You don’t need them for sustenance,
Mother Earth, Father sky, Great Spirit watches over and protects you

She whispered in my ear, shook her gorgeous tresses
Stood comfortably in her age, radiant yet humble in her beauty
Purity, responsibility, optimism, fearlessness
These lessons she taught me,
One surreal December afternoon….I was seduced by a tree
Late night after the Loveapalooza Festival concluded with an Open Mic.

Pictured left to right are Oscar Fuentes, Moses Love, Malik Shabazz (Profet), Najirrah (the researcher and her two sleeping babies), Zayna de Gaia, Sergio Mora, Kelly (girlfriend of Sergio at the time) and Joshua Map Weiss. Oscar, Malik, Sergio are all LAEs and Joshua is an informant.
APPENDIX P: Sunset Summit Musings, 2013
Charting the Path Toward an LAE Collective

The researcher is interested in planting the seeds for many collaborative and fruitful partnerships among LAEs, by creating the LAE Miami Networking Guide and as evidenced by hosting an open reception to invite LAEs to meet and mingle, sharing food, music, and art, dreams and visions for Miami. The Sunset Summit hosted at the researcher’s house attempted to set in motion such a gathering place for LAEs (2013).

During our interview, Soulflower says a meeting of the “generals” is necessary to chart our collective future and discuss how to best unite for the longitudinal well-being of both artist-educators and the community. For me, “generals” would include Soulflower, Octavio, Deborah, Jude, Lucy, Teo, Oscar, Ralph, and Madelin with long-distance consulting from Magdalena and Aya from our LAE.

LAE Alberto Pena, Joshua Mapp Weiss (informant), and LAE Ika Santamaria.

Digeridoo player Joda Cook, with Liza “Lovechild” Nepa (holding the researcher’s son), and her partner Karen at Sunset Summit.
participant group. There may be others that are not Latino/a, perhaps. These “senior” LAEs represent those who are most connected with the organizations and individuals in power to shape the future of the arts in Miami. Collectively, they have the largest venues covered and know the grants-making process works; moreover, they are nationally or internationally travelled, performing widely. Jude knows the gallery world and Art Basel intimately, inside out. Lucy and Madelin know the school district and how to create innovative cultural and artistic programs while still meeting the requirements for public school funding. Ralph is a Miami socialite and philanthropist who has connections into many events and projects. Additionally, they can integrate various community organizations, including VSA Arts, Arts for Learning, Young Arts Foundation, Cannonball’s Artist Residency and Artist Advocacy Program, Little Haiti Cultural Center, The Miami Dade Public Library. Together, they could have enormous influence if they agreed to work collaboratively toward a different vision/version of the arts and education. In addition, Moksha Artist Collective should be present, an institutionalized and far-reaching cultural and historical entity in Miami. A conscientious coordinated effort would bring together the smallest number of people (LAEs) who would have the maximum amount of “reach”… interpreted as “experience, influence, following, connection, and purposeful drive.” Aside from the generals, the “lieutenants” would encompass the next level, creating the broadest possible reach to galvanize the masses. These individuals represent the face and vibration of the movement, LAEs known for
sticking their necks out to support the arts, education, creative freedom, human rights. These champions for fairness: Rio, Sophie, Malik, Marcus, Nikki, Yuki, Alfredo, Alonso, Juan Andres, Sergio, Michelangelo, Roly, and Tony. What these individuals have in common is their widespread following, experience promoting and organizing, and that they are either of the younger-ish generation or are intimately in touch with it. In the words of LAE Malik, “the goal of the revolutionary artist is to make the revolution irresistible.” These LAEs are the front-line of the revolution in thinking, interacting, creating and being, and must organize and direct their ranks to create strong currents for change. Typically, these individuals are at the cutting edge when it comes to the use of technology and social media to promote and organize events, concerts, and causes.
L to R: LAE Deborah Magdalena, Iko Manzanero, LAE Amy Baez, LAE Alonso “The Poet” Menendez, LAE Yusuf Malik Shabazz (“Profet”) spoken word artists backstage prior to their performances. The event drew 20,000 people and was held at Bayfront Park.
Figure 1: Timeline of Venues

Appendix R: Timeline of Major Venues

- **2000-2001:** Body Mind & Soul (Brother Kush) 2001-2003
- **2002-2003:** Theatre de Underground--Founded 2001-2002 by Benny Shahoulian - present
- **2003-2004:** Lyrical Drive-Bys (Emonde Love) Black on Black Rhythm
- **2004-2005:** Lyrical Sunday's (Profe) summer 2006
- **2005-2006:** Street Linguistics-A Professor Mundane @ Andy's Place in Ft
- **2006-2007:** Open Mic at the Edge of the World (Roly & Raff) summer 04
- **2008-2009:** Funk Jazz Lounge (Rashida)
- **2009:** Undercover Railroad Konicous Kulture The Poplez Open Mic--Hale Soasia & Comm. Center (Profe) 2005-10
- **2010-2011:** Words-n-Wine- Nikki--JanHouse, Legion, Grand Central, Moonshine, TS, (The Social Lubricant) August 2010-present
- **2011-2012:** She Says @ News Cafe (Ryne) 2011-12
- **2012-2013:** Inner Look: Speak! (Rob) latest 2008-present
- **2013-2014:** WynWord (Marcus) latest 2013-present

- **2013:** Bohemian Room--Hosted by Ingrid B 2007-present
- **2014:** Famous Last Fridays at Books and Books, Coral Gables, Jonathan Rose 1992-present

- **Researcher frequented these venues most, more than a dozen times (12+).**
- **Engaged in participant observation between 6-11 times.**
- **Participant observation 1-2 times only.**
- **Participant observation 3-5 times.**
- **The researcher did not visit these venues (0 times of participant observation).**
Figure 2: Age of LAEs

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Age Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>50-59</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Includes Informants 52

LAEs by AGE GROUP—GRAPH A

Range: 24-58
Mean: 36
Median: 34
Mode: 24
Figure 3: Ethnicity of LAES

- Cuban: 30%
- Puerto Rican: 26%
- Colombian: 9%
- Haitian: 5%
- Jamaican: 4%
- Nicaraguan: 4%
- Honduran: 4%
- Brazilian: 4%
- Chicano/a: 4%
- Dominican: 2%
- Ecuadorian: 2%
- Venezuelan: 2%
- Chilean: 2%
- Colombian/Cuban: 2%
- Puerto Rican/West Indian: 2%

Legend:
- Cuban
- Puerto Rican
- Colombian
- Haitian
- Jamaican
- Nicaraguan
- Honduran
- Brazilian
- Chicano/a
- Dominican
- Ecuadorian
- Venezuelan
- Chilean
- Puerto Rican plus West Indian
- Colombian/Cuban
Figure 3: Ethnicity of LAEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haitian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombian + Cuban</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilean</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican plus West Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano/a</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaraguan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaican</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuelan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4A: Birthplace of LAEs—United States
Figure 4B: Birthplace of LAEs—Caribbean Basin and Central America
Figure 4C: Birthplace of LAEs—South America
### Figure 5: Generational Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generational Status</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>LAEs only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Generation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In between 1st and 2nd Generation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### ALL PARTICIPANTS—GENERATIONAL STATUS

- First Generation: 48%
- Second Generation: 38%
- In between 1st and 2nd Generation: 6%
- Unknown: 6%

This "in-between" category created for a handful of LAEs who exemplify circular migration (Isaipa, Oscar, and Teo). Isaipa was born in NYC, but at an early age moved to Puerto Rico. Oscar was also born in NYC, but returned to Honduras for a period of time. Teo, born in Puerto Rico, but moved to the US at a young age. They have all expressed the feeling that they are not first generation, but neither do they feel second generation.
Figure 6: Sex of LAEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Interviewees (LAEs and Informants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE Participants by Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Artistic Discipline(s) of LAES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Genre</th>
<th>Number of Participants Practicing this Art Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poetry/Spoken</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (Fiction, Playwright)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Organizer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Design</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culinary Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Design</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puppetry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ARTISTIC FOCUS OF PARTICIPANTS*

- Poetry/Spoken Word: 22%
- Theater: 21%
- Visual Arts: 9%
- Music: 21%
- Dance: 9%
- Protest Arts: 5%
- Arts Organizing: 4%
- Graphic Design: 2%
- Puppetry: 1%

Taken together, the **Performing Arts** (Spoken Word, Theater, Music, Dance, Arts Organizing, Protest Arts and Puppetry) constitute **77%** of the artistic focus.
## TYPES OF EDUCATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Educator</th>
<th>Number of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer, Afterschool, Weekend Enrichment Programs</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K-12 Teacher</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative (K-12, nonprofit or higher ed)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Roles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total—much higher than the # of participants reflecting that many respondents had more than one type of teaching experience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions:
- **Supportive Roles**—counselors, therapists, coaches, resource people.
- **Summer, Afterschool, Weekend Enrichment vs. Community Outreach**—enrichment programs more established and ongoing, tend to occur on a school’s property; community outreach programs often are more infrequent/sporadic (workshops), held in churches, parks, libraries, or prisons, and are more often, but not always, on a volunteer basis.
- **Administrative**—at any level, responsible for directing and supervising the program as a whole, training and supervising other teaching artists, teachers, or artists.

---

**Figure 8: Educational Engagement for LAEs**

- 32%
- 31%
- 16%
- 7%
- 4%
- 9%
Figure 9: # of Years in Miami

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th># of Years in Miami</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Pena Jr.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo Quintana</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso Menendez</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Baez</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana López</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anitha de Amaral Sa</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina de Magdalena</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Magdalena</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Bredeylo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar Carballo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felice Lagos</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiorella Podesta</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ima Santamaria</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isma Ortiz</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Quintero</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Mep Weiss</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Andres Morales</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude Papakko</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina Granda (Ray Dominguez)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen Dawn (McCorrell)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Canzoneri-Golden</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Years in Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madelin Marchant</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Blake</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina Davis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Almaguer</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melvin Rabo</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaelangelo Chavarro</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalia Inoa</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Rodriguez</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio Campos</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Fuentes</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profet</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Yusuf Malik Shabazz)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph de la Portilla</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Chaves</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Garrido</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roly Daniel</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergio Mora</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame Raphael</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Gemmel Young</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie Moon</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soulflower</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania Duran</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo Castellanos</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Gee (Anthony Garcia)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yudelka Taverna</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9: # of Years in Miami**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EARLY WAVE (2000-2008)</th>
<th>BOTH WAVES—STAYING POWER (2000 or earlier through present)</th>
<th>RECENT WAVE 2008-present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Nikki (2006-present)</td>
<td>Alfredo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Profet</td>
<td>Juan Andres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Melvin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>Felipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Sophie Moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>Isaida</td>
<td>Alberto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Gee</td>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Ika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo</td>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Melissa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>Roberto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Soulflower</td>
<td>Jesus (2007-2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>Carolina (2008-2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yudelka *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fiorella *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucy **</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madelin **</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michelangelo (2006-present)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*now engaged in more solitary artistic pursuits, more high end: Yudelka with interior design and Fiorella with large-scale commissioned pieces.

** both are educators employed full-time in schools, and although the presence of both of these strong female LAEs is constant and their impact on youth and families undeniable, they are not part of the Miami performance art element.

Outside of Miami at time of interview: Alicia, Aya, Sulko, Miguel, Magdalena

Early Wave LAEs who moved from Miami since interview: Stanley, Malena Gaze, Karina (both Malena and Karina were in high school during first wave, but since then, each has developed a unique positionality at the intersection of education and/ or activism, and the arts.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY STRUCTURE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single no children</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married or partnered with children</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent with children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnered and expecting a child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11: Family Structure**

**FAMILY STRUCTURE FOR LAES**

- No children—single or partnered: 66%
- Married or partnered with children: 19%
- Single parent with children: 13%
- Partnered and expecting a child: 2%
Figure 12: Family Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAEs' PARENTS' STATUS</th>
<th>Number in this category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or both deceased at an early age</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 1: Dates and Locations of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE FIRST NAME</th>
<th>DATE INTERVIEWED</th>
<th>LOCATION OF INTERVIEW, TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>July 1, 2008</td>
<td>Starbucks in Hialeah, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo</td>
<td>October 10, 2013</td>
<td>Bookstore in the Grove, 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>October 3, 2008</td>
<td>PRSA Viejo San Juan, 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>June 20, 2008</td>
<td>Wallflower Gallery, Downtown Miami after show, 11 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>June 25, 2008</td>
<td>Her apartment, North Miami 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>June 26, 2008</td>
<td>My car, parking lot at Churchill’s Theatre de Underground, raining 11:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrio (Rio)</td>
<td>June 26, 2008</td>
<td>His apartment, above S&amp;S Diner Overtown/ Wynwood, 2 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aya</td>
<td>October 2, 2008</td>
<td>PRSA Viejo San Juan, 12 noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>June 1, 2011</td>
<td>Her house Miami Shores 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>June 17, 2008</td>
<td>Starbucks, Miami Shores, 10 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Dennis•</td>
<td>August 28, 2010</td>
<td>Kristen’s house, Silver Bluff, 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>June 24, 2008</td>
<td>Musical Theater Summer Camp at Barry University, 11 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>April 15, 2013</td>
<td>Jamhouse Biscayne Blvd, 9:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiorella</td>
<td>February 17, 2013</td>
<td>Her apartment, Coconut Grove, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>June 17, 2008</td>
<td>Her apartment, Coral Gables, 1 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iksaid</td>
<td>July 21, 2010</td>
<td>My cottage, Morningside, 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td>June 24, 2008;</td>
<td>Musical Theatre Summer Camp at Barry University, 1 pm; His house in Miami Shores (part II), 6 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 1, 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Joshua•</td>
<td>September 23, 2013</td>
<td>His apartment, Upper Eastside, 9 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>October 10, 2011</td>
<td>Email, from Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Andres</td>
<td>October 6, 2013</td>
<td>Pizza parlor in Weston, 8 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude (Papaloko)</td>
<td>May 7, 2013</td>
<td>His gallery, Jakmel in Wynwood, 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina</td>
<td>November 15, 2010</td>
<td>Email, from NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge (Ray)</td>
<td>June 21, 2008</td>
<td>His house in Lauderhill, and in car driving to the beach for photoshoot, 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Kristen•</td>
<td>June 23, 2008;</td>
<td>Her apartment in North Miami; her apartment in Silver Bluff; My house in Coconut Grove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 28, 2010;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 15, 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>Location/Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>June 22, 2008</td>
<td>Her house in Countrywalk (Kendall), 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madelin</td>
<td>July 20, 2009</td>
<td>Tita’s house, North Miami Beach, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>December 7, 2012;</td>
<td>Initially via telephone to MA, then via online chatting through Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 8, 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>September 24, 2013</td>
<td>Panther Coffeehouse, Wynwood, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>April 2009</td>
<td>Via telephone to Switzerland, 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>December 15, 2009;</td>
<td>Initial via telephone to MA, then via online chatting through Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 15, 2011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melvin</td>
<td>April 15, 2013</td>
<td>Jamhouse Biscayne Boulevard, 9:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michaelangelo</td>
<td>October 20, 2013;</td>
<td>Online chat via Facebook; at his townhouse in Little Haiti, 10 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February 19, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>November 11, 2010</td>
<td>Email from California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalia</td>
<td>April 15, 2013</td>
<td>Jamhouse Biscayne Boulevard, 9:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>April 15, 2013</td>
<td>Jamhouse Biscayne Boulevard, 9:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>June 19, 2008</td>
<td>Camps mission offices, Jose Marti Bldg in Brickell, 10 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>June 28, 2008; May</td>
<td>Kristen’s apartment, North Miami, 6 pm; follow-up at his work Miami Dade Public</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3, 2013</td>
<td>Library Courtyard, Downtown, 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>June 20, 2008</td>
<td>Composition Offices (Jose Marti Bldg) in Brickell, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>June 30, 2008</td>
<td>Pizza shop in Brickell, next to Composition offices, 8 pm (after Afro-Cuban dance class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto</td>
<td>June 27, 2008</td>
<td>His apartment in Coral Gables, 3 pm after observing him teaching in summer program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roly</td>
<td>October 29, 2013</td>
<td>His mom’s house, West Miami, 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td>May 16, 2013</td>
<td>My house, Coconut Grove, 9 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame</td>
<td>June 29, 2008</td>
<td>My car, parking lot of CVS, 3 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>October 25, 2013</td>
<td>Her work/live space, Buena Vista, 2 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soulflower</td>
<td>September 27, 2013</td>
<td>Legion Park in Upper Eastside, 4:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>June 25, 2008</td>
<td>Churchills, car, Dunkin Donuts Little Haiti, 12 midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suiko</td>
<td>October 2, 2008</td>
<td>PRSA Viejo San Juan, 5 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>June 23, 2008</td>
<td>Her apartment in North Miami, 8 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo</td>
<td>May 15, 2012;</td>
<td>Salsa Fiesta on Biscayne, after his one-man show at Arsht Center, 8 pm; Coffeeeshop in Coral Gables, 4 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>March 25, 2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Gee</td>
<td>September 23, 2013</td>
<td>His apartment 23 floor, 1700 Biscayne Blvd, 9 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yudelka</td>
<td>June 25, 2008</td>
<td>Her apartment in Design Place, Little Haiti, 7 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf “Malik” (Profet)</td>
<td>June 18, 2008</td>
<td>His apartment in North Miami Beach, 5 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* denotes an “informant” rather than an LAE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE</th>
<th>Family Artist Influence</th>
<th>Creative Bridge</th>
<th>Non-traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberto</td>
<td>?? poco</td>
<td>Mom—scrapbooking and Modern Dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>Lots of free time to explore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia (only)</td>
<td>Yes—mom and grandma writers (Aurora Levins Morales)</td>
<td>Started young</td>
<td>Communist, radical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alonso (only)</td>
<td>Mom’s uncle famous Cuban poet</td>
<td>Exposure—Montessori school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>YES in terms of culture, father played flute…music at family gatherings,</td>
<td>Cheerleading</td>
<td>she feels self-driven and minimal exposure (maybe to arts, but…) she played instr/chorus/band in elem school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aya (only)</td>
<td>Mom visual artist, vocalist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>No—both parents bankers</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Father, Brother musicians, (Nestor Torres Jr and late Nestor Torres, and great Aunt is Ruth Fernandez</td>
<td>Surrounded NYC family friends who were performers, dramatic, hairdressers, stylists, glamour and music always</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>Yes, mother very creative and artistic—always singing</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
<td>Creative Bridge</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<td>Edgar</td>
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<td>LAE</td>
<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
<td>Creative Bridge</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiorella</td>
<td></td>
<td>Privileged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td></td>
<td>Father carved tombstones—artistic, create with his hands, and also told stories</td>
<td>Traveling and moving from city to city because father had gambling problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaida (only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Both parents musicians—church</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Andres</td>
<td>Grandmother writer—bohemian lifestyle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Surrounded by creative types from early age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jude Papaloko</td>
<td>Mother--?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Karina</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure—mom encouraged galleries and other cultural outings and explorations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Always went to the PR day Parade… music Fania All Stars, show (big deal)</td>
<td>Streets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>Karate and discipline of martial arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
<td>Creative Bridge</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>multiple musicians in family, grandfather recited poetry</td>
<td>Dad—global citizen; Moving from NYC to Orlando and back —appreciate diversity and culture</td>
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<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
<td>Creative Bridge</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madelin</td>
<td>Mother was hairdresser… Father talk radio—aspect of performing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Storytellers parents —creative people, witchcraft of the poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>??</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Exposure—she asked for it</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melvin</td>
<td>??</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michaelangelo</td>
<td>??</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalia</td>
<td>??</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>??</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>Mom frustrated movie star</td>
<td>Exposure—plucked out of elem, Westminster Music program</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Grandfather carpenter and carver, sculptor (tombstones)</td>
<td>Dad—beekeeping and karate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Living abroad in Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
<td>Creative Bridge</td>
<td>Non-traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renee (only)</td>
<td>Both parents very creative people, art as life…</td>
<td>Strong cultural roots—asked for and began ballet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roberto</td>
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<td>LAE</td>
<td>Family Artist Influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roly</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Mother is medium, helps lost spirits find their way back home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Mother encouragement, nurturing</td>
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<td>Sesame</td>
<td>Yes—both—dad writer and mom visual artist</td>
<td>Travel—moving a lot</td>
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<td>Sophie</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mom moving, make new friends, forced to be social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soulflower</td>
<td>Dad played jazz… growing up in NYC</td>
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<td>Stanley</td>
<td>??</td>
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<td>Suiko</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo</td>
<td>??</td>
<td></td>
<td>Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Gee</td>
<td>Mother is jewelry maker and visual artist</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yudelka</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Travel and languages</td>
<td>Counting in French, music, constant variety</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMS</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nation of Islam</td>
<td>Streets</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAE Interviewing</td>
<td>Mentioned other LAE or MAE (Miami Artist Educator)</td>
<td>Venues Most Sustaining or Valuable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Aya</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Melkisedek (MAE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>Oscar, Kristen, others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>JamHouse (Nikki, Melvin, etc)</td>
<td>Words N Wine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiorella</td>
<td>Josh (inferred)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaida</td>
<td>Deborah, Teo, TWSP (Knowledge)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Alonso, Amy, Deborah, Profet (Yusuf)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Chet (MAE), Sophie</td>
<td>Majestical Lips, Stone Groove, White Rabbit Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>JamHouse, Josh, Alonso</td>
<td>Words N Wine</td>
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<td>Ralph</td>
<td>Octavio</td>
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<td>Renee</td>
<td>Jude Papaloko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sergio</td>
<td>Oscar, Rio, Josh, Profet, Kristen, Najirrah (researcher)</td>
<td>Theatre de Underground, Cornerstone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>Michelangelo, Cornerstoners</td>
<td>Moksha Gallery, The Stage</td>
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<td>Najirrah (researcher)</td>
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<td>Roly</td>
<td>Rafael Cubela (MAE)</td>
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<td>Josh</td>
<td>Kristen, Rio, Fiorella, Oscar</td>
<td>Cornerstone, Churchills (Theatre de Underground, Words N Wine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Rio, Oscar</td>
<td>Theatre de Underground</td>
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<td>Michelangelo</td>
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<td>Wallflower Gallery, Cornerstone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oscar</td>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Libraries, museums, parks (other public spaces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAE Perspective</td>
<td>Artistic Influences</td>
<td>Educators Influence</td>
<td>Heroes and Mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>Nia Michaels</td>
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<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Aya de Leon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Rico Pabon</td>
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<td>Alonso</td>
<td>Jimi Hendrix</td>
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<td>Alonso</td>
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<td>Grateful Dead</td>
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<td>Jethro Tull</td>
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<td>Francis Ford Coppola</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>Mouse and Kelly (Jefferson Airplane posters)</td>
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<td>Artistic Influences</td>
<td>Educator Influences</td>
<td>Heroes and Mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>Miguel Pinero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Rah Goddess</td>
<td></td>
<td>My family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Rafael Lima</td>
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<td>Parents brother</td>
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<td>Rita Moreno</td>
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<td>Joseph</td>
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<td>Karina</td>
<td>Frank Stella</td>
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<td>parents and teachers</td>
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<td>Karina</td>
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<td>Octavio</td>
<td>Pina Bausch</td>
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<td>Jorge Guerra</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Gabriel Garcia Lorca</td>
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<td>Melissa</td>
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<td>Ms. Chifulio--8th grade teacher</td>
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## TABLE #5: LAE ARTISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS AND THEIR PORTALS/LINKS

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<td><a href="http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/01/occupy-miami-may-day-rall_n_1468928.html">http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/01/occupy-miami-may-day-rall_n_1468928.html</a></td>
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<td>facebook.com/iamAlonso</td>
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<td>Amy Baez</td>
<td><a href="http://www.soulofmiami.org/2014/03/24/10th-annual-vanessa-baez-memorial-womens-brunch-33014/">http://www.soulofmiami.org/2014/03/24/10th-annual-vanessa-baez-memorial-womens-brunch-33014/</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://spokensoulfestival.com/home/about/">http://spokensoulfestival.com/home/about/</a></td>
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Analyze—N/A

Andrio Chavarro
http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2139252/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ITc5gzhQ1U
https://www.youtube.com/user/ELRIOdeMIAMI

Aya de Leon
https://ayadeleon.wordpress.com/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBg2sCPN1_Y

Carolina de Amaral Sa
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nx6WGQAI0Dk

Deborah Magdalena
http://www.deborahmagdalena.com/
http://www.womenarts.org/2009/03/12/deborahmagdalena/interview/
http://spokensoulfestival.com/home/author/deborahmagdalena

Dennis Breedlove
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJeoZY1G0z8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4NRTSyu1Ag
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9GvUVyrQ-8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooezLTeYP_s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6AlcSDLt9M
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2-54zR85wY

Edgar Caraballo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u6BV0VT55U
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzD3YgH8L4E

Felipe Lagos
https://www.youtube.com/shared?ci=9oLCnWBm12A
https://youtu.be/OelYNBttq4E
https://youtu.be/iOHWAc6_81Q

Fiorella Podesta
http://www.artbyfio.com/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSDjHA4CNPk

Ika Santamaria
Acting Instructor at New York Film Academy https://www.nyfa.edu/about/faculty/sb-acting.php
Actor/Acting Coach on “Zenu” https://www.facebook.com/zenushortfilm/
Link with film FLEA MARKET FINISH LINE https://youtu.be/vuMQY2KzlIVY
Link with teaser MENTAL SNIPER https://youtu.be/R_m_hgDAAbo
Iphone Monologue series by Ika https://youtu.be/7Uni2txMbII
https://youtu.be/xN-GqXQvitY
https://youtu.be/Q2eLmiuXiPU
http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2846520/

Isaida Ortiz
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pViExUZA2TY
http://spokensoulfestival.com/home/ssf-alumni-2008/
https://www.reverbnation.com/isapoetiza

Jesus Quintero
www.americanlabtheatre.com

Joseph Valbrun
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEY3lE-p7jw

Joshua Mapp Weiss
heartplay.com

Juan Andres Morales
https://www.youtube.com/user/kobaincito
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Sk8-e17Tss
http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/30/politics/puppet-protest/
http://www.soaw.org/puppetistas
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmW83NTxyUhog0T6v8nz-JQFlWIVuAm-U
http://autonomousplayhouse.tumblr.com/

Jude Papaloko
http://judepapalokothegenus.com/
http://jakmelartgallerymiami.com/

Karina Granda
http://www.karinagranda.com/
Knowledge (Ray Dominguez)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tajXs0qpv5

Kristen Dawn Gomez (McCorkell)
https://www.facebook.com/kristen.mccorkell
http://www.imdb.com/name/nm3229784/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1

Lucy Canzoneri-Golden

Madelin Marchant
http://www.imdb.com/find?ref_=nv_sr_fn&q=madelin+marchant
https://www.facebook.com/madelin.marchant

Magdalena Gomez
www.magdalenagomez.com
www.teatrovida.com
https://www.facebook.com/magdalena.gomez
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magdalena_Gómez
www.latinapoet.com
www.latinapoet.net

Marcus Blake
http://www.mdotblake.com/about/
https://www.facebook.com/marcusblakerebel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNcclBC0Ysk

“Melina Gaze”
www.kpasausa.mx
www.labauboratory.com
https://www.facebook.com/melina.davis

Melissa Almaguer
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DnYt5X2wAmIc&h=ATQ46ZANvGyNwQzHe7bhpK53ndfXCMvsntPara2erbgBzhVKtW-DgcNIWKupaZVsKT6m6FFSOMM5pGrmdtRv6K-tqmPp3RvOrpmeOGa1HTXLnECryxms7o_GGVVIQKzyhxRppHJzzdQ
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DJd3XcoTsOpY&h=ATM4nqVX9-gsemqDWNDfoAArU5licQYT08i-OS-7xOglqfPCxfQU19o_d0lvZAWzngiSyftz97mpDAMBFPut2whV8CT8ehg3bcV46Lpvc4B7cxS1X3COAlcFBR-vRPWV6AXs9lgq_jg
https://www.facebook.com/WhiteRoseMiami
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQBZTdcxS1M

Melvin Bravo
https://melvinvrabo.wordpress.com/

Michaelangelo Chavarro
http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Finstagram.com%2Fmichelangelo305&h=ATMAizsc_m1kDZMPFQFDDR42L2UFRAqtxR4HKHfrZ8wUkQGdWlVSb2ToinU-LZFnicr-7gzdUazE3WBtxRzjWs7YUZAGfleRwCz4vsTKMqSl90xlyTPBjR5mXDgYgLSET7O3guU83cw
http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fmichelangelo305.com%2F&h=ATNfcmAgPZKzIvUKRkz-ckM_rrZ5A0gCYv17VIbjuFUt4AzyOFLNFb9PS95jegl9dWjyziM55AoZBbcAbYLuSQjAFTqukwV_DMdNLwfts-wnlzhM7xAMYRxtdBei4p2b3n9VZVyyGw
https://www.facebook.com/michelangelothe1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg_xl_lTPH4

Miguel Prieto-Valle
http://independent.academia.edu/MiguelPrietoValle
Natalia Inoa
https://www.facebook.com/natalia.inoa

Nikki Rodriguez
https://www.facebook.com/NikkiWnW
https://m.facebook.com/wordsandwine/

Octavio Campos
https://www.youtube.com/user/octibeach
http://camposition.org

Oscar Fuentes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVDO63_YLIQ
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.642884105739728.1073741825.168722766489200&type=3#!/oscar.fuentes.9?fref=ts

Yusuf Malik Shabazz (Profet)
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.642884105739728.1073741825.168722766489200&type=3#!/malik.shabazz.547

Ralph de la Portilla

Renee Chaves
https://www.facebook.com/LaFortunaMuse?fref=ts#!/LaFortunaMuse/photos?source_ref=pb_friends_tl

Roberto Garrido—N/A

Roly Daniel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--E2VdoNNfGs
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xi0L3VSupik
Sergio Mora
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2-54zR8SwY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJEoZY1G0z8

Sesame Raphael
https://myspace.com/sesamerap

Stanley Gemmel Young—N/A

Sophie Moon
https://soundcloud.com/sofreemoon
https://www.facebook.com/Ms.moon.ent?fref=ts
http://fusionandomundos.com/
https://www.facebook.com/events/1670580839884537/
https://www.facebook.com/events/1071519406220269/
https://www.facebook.com/events/1533059040342091/
https://www.facebook.com/ComunUnion/?ref=ts&fref=ts
http://festivaldelatierracolombia.blogspot.com.co/
www.festivaldelatierra.com
http://unityischange.wix.com/motherscalling
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGN0LJH3sBw&feature=youtu.be
https://www.facebook.com/unityischange
http://allevents.in/miami/union-sophie-moons-departure-sharemony/1410796139215306#
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008899004899

Soulflower
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-x6dKTBJUl
http://mothershipmovement.org/
https://myspace.com/soulflower777
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmWZ8_Pibbo

Suiko Garcia—N/A
Tania Duran—N/A

Teo Castellanos
http://thecombathippies.com
http://www.thirdtrinity.com/

Tony Gee (Anthony Garcia)
www.facebook.com/tony.gee.poet
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNnEExSONuM

Yudelka Tavera
www.artslant.com/global/artists/show/284420-yudelka-tavera
http://sailboatbendartists.com/tag/yudelka-tavera/
https://instagram.com/bohemiablue/
https://twitter.com/yudelkatavera

Name highlighted indicates that they updated their links as of 2017. All others updated as of 2016.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE Name</th>
<th>Activist Pursuits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aya</td>
<td>Self-Love Festival, Anti-Nuclear War protest as teenager (100 ppl participated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>TFAA protests in 2004 (Miami Model), Action of a Smile (Art Basel 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfredo</td>
<td>Occupy Miami Organizer, multiple other protests and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Youth Worker, many movements in Bay Area, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Founder of Spoken Soul Festival (SWAN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>DJB (Dance Just Beautiful) Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>Art Outreach through Kampong in Coconut Grove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaida</td>
<td>TWSP and SWAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Andres</td>
<td>Puppet Playhouse with Nathan (puppetry of protest and critique)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude Papaloko</td>
<td>Papaloko for Kids, Inc (for children in Haiti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Founder of CRMA (Coral Reef Montessori Academy), SGI Buddhism (World Peace Day, others), annual youth trip to United Nations Assembly in NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Teatro Vida (founder and director)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus</td>
<td>Activist for other artists, hosting several venues simultaneously—currently (2016) hosting 3 weekly venues, and one monthly venue. Not unheard of but his dedication is “extra.” Profet (Yusuf Malik) had 2 venues for a minute, also Sophie had multiples for a short time span, Will da Real One had multiples, Ingrid has had multiples, Chris da Imperial also. Will and Chris are BAEs (Black or African-American Artist Educators). Ingrid is an artist promoter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Founder of White Rose Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>PrideLines (LGBTQ work with youth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
<td>RNA (Republic of New Afrika) and NCOBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America), Haile Selassie I Learning and Cultural Center special community programs, weekly Feed the Poor outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>Barnyard in Coconut Grove, and VSA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6: Activist Pursuits of LAEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAE Name</th>
<th>Activist Pursuits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>Rockers Movement and Unity is Change (Unidad es Cambio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soulflower</td>
<td>Homeschooling children, Raize it Up! Typhoon Relief, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Underground Outreach Founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teo</td>
<td>Tigertail Coach, Brave New Voices Sponsor, Piano Slam at Arsht Center Producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>extremely interactive and comedic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>impulsive and instinctual, need to have structure in mind though...teach creativity more than acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuki</td>
<td>kamikaze--energetic and dynamic; performance and theatrics highlighted, having fun, when I am excited, my students are as well :) celebrate once goals are met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Holistic and respectful of what students already know. Structured and disciplined. Based on real relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>interactive and thought-provoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>multisensory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>give freely of my perceptions and creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>speaking loud and physical contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>community-based; ancestral/ancient/wisdom seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>based on my memories of being a student and how I would like to be treated--one-to-one relationships, be open to changes in methodology (individualize) to create open dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>Fusion style, each student is unique and different; need to create a bridge for each student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaida?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina</td>
<td>loving, open-minded, activity-based, conversation-based, fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>follow the child; spontaneous but good planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalen</td>
<td>transgressive and experiential; have always been aware of multiple attentions, teach students HOW to think, lecture is ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>Wacky and creative, experiential sometimes exasperated and tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>emphasized the importance of understanding one's identity and relationship to culture and community. Reflective practice, I must adapt to the way that they learn...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>very childlike and impulsive; I like to be different and original when it comes to getting a child's attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>eclectic, organic and process-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>very hands-on; closely supervising,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>heavenly, from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
<td>no-nonsense, sugar-free style, meaning delivering truth to people regardless if it hurts their feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 8A: Role of Humor in Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>Naturally funny/comedic; I am a somewhat frustrated “Oprah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>Helps to not take things personally and keeps everything light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuki</td>
<td>Not scared to act out and make a fool of myself, be carefree to facilitate teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>The only thing that keeps me going as an artist and teacher! Laughter breaks tension and allows us to absorb new information, keeping it light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>Effective way to reach people, as much a part as anger, sadness, absurdity, and all other forms of feeling and expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>I try to incorporate it as much as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>Humor is the conscious balance between life and death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>Part of everyday life, incorporate it every chance I get</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>Witty maybe, but overall, I am a very serious teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaida</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Very fun, light and easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina</td>
<td>Definitely affects teaching, influences discipline, if you can laugh with students and they can laugh with you, you have a big advantage in the classroom!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>I love to experiment and work collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>Hard for me to incorporate humor into teaching because my sense of humor is pretty vulgar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>Relaxation and humor help to build connections across tensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>Be goofy, sincere and fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>I laugh at myself constantly and love laughing with my students, especially when we take risks and create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>Humor a bit more advanced, reserved for older students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>Everything in life is humorous; if you are not laughing and happy, you will never create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
<td>Try to incorporate it as much as possible because it is a good way to lower the defense mechanisms of those listening/in the audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8B: Role of Play in Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deborah</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>let students know I understand them as creative beings, always play a friend role to some degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuki</td>
<td>have no ego in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alonso</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio</td>
<td>totally…play is the mind innocently wandering into the infinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>creative time to freely explore movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ika</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaida?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>very fun light and easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karina</td>
<td>play has a huge role…allows students to help each other and remember a concept more easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>I love to experiment and work collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>have never separated work from play, &quot;Play is the greatest form of research. -Einstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>tried to incorporate games in my teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miguel</td>
<td>Play keeps mind youthful and sharpens analytical abilities by allowing for decompression and abstract thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>you can't be too serious with children; let them know that you are one of them at heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octavio</td>
<td>use theater games constantly to create metaphors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>play is the essential component of teaching…75% is exploration through play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
<td>???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Other Potential LAEs to Interview—Beginning List

**Latino/a Artist Educators**
- Jasmine Burgos
- Drozopon
- Laura Herrera
- Ignacio “Nacho” Londoño
- Emonde Love aka Mi Corazon
- Laura Luna
- Kimani
- Marina Maghalaes
- Liza “Lovechild” Nepa
- Adrian R’Mante
- Renzo “Flex” Vargas
- Mercury Wolff

**African-American/Black Artist Educators**
- Shamele Jenkins
- Kyla Mauull
- Terri Meredith
- Baba PearSun
- Ras Abedi
- Rachel “FlowDiva” Finley
- Afroslang Kushi
- Chris da Imperial
- Wally Jennings

**Informants**
- Candace Meyer
- DJ Brimstone (Seth Brimstone)
- Chad Bernstein