
Artists Impacted By COVID Say Its Not A Pretty Picture

MIAMI (CBSMiami) – As the COVID impact rolls on, things have not gotten a lot better for individual visual artists who have seen sales bottom out.

Some have taken part-time jobs and there has been some help in the form of small grants from local organizations and the county. For many, their traditional source of income has been shut off.

“I have had shows that have been canceled,” said visual artist Gonzalo Fuenmayor. “It has been very uncertain, very hard to navigate.”

To help make ends meet, Gonzalo has picked up a teaching job at Oolite Arts which funds, encourages, and provides residencies for visual artists.

“The big drivers in the industry are the art fairs but there is no way to gather people for an art fair,” said Dennis Scholl, President and CEO of Oolite Arts. “The traditional mechanism of how to get money for young artists has collapsed, a lot of individual artists are suffering because of it.”

The Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs joined the Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation to establish the Miami-Dade Artists Support (MÁS!) which awards \$270,000 in grants of \$200 to \$500 each to 540 individual artists. Additional CARE act money has filtered to artists throughout the county and for individual artists, the hope is that art patrons will seek out artists.

“Private collectors have stepped up and made a few sales, showing an eagerness to help out during this time,” said Fuenmayor.

For many artists, grant money goes for the basics.

“We are making emergency grants so artists can pay rent, pay for food,” said Scholl.

Until art shows, festivals, and galleries open in a substantial way, artists say it’s going to be rough going forward.