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ARTS & CULTURE

81% of businesses see arts as major economic contributors

BY CARMELA CIPREDO

Three-quarters of over 500 companies that responded support Miami-Dade’s arts community, with most of them revealing that they see it as an investment, an Arts & Business Survey conducted by the Beacon Council in conjunction with the Arts & Business Council of Miami and the Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs found. The survey, conducted through online survey development website SurveyMonkey, received the responses from a cross section of industry sectors including finance, manufacturing, construction, hospitality and retail.

The intent was to survey the impact and involvement of the private sector on the arts, said Pamela Fuentes, vice president of International Economic Development at the Beacon Council.

Responses came from companies of all sizes, ranging from major corporations to small businesses.

Results showed that 75% of businesses surveyed support the arts, with 48% of them supporting one to three groups, 35% supporting four to nine groups and 13% supporting 10 or more groups.

Roughly 77% of businesses surveyed said they support the arts for business development and networking, 44% said their support of arts increases brand awareness and visibility to new clients, 70% do it because it provides a valuable tool for community relations and 44% do it for employee engagement and volunteer opportunities.

Though there are many ways to support the arts, 77% of businesses surveyed do it by offering money or sponsorship, 44% do it through donations, 41% have professionals serving on arts boards, 40% buy tickets for clients or employees and 31% have employee volunteer in the arts.

Of those 25% of businesses surveyed that do not support the arts, 35% said they don’t because they have never been asked, 21% said senior management is not interested in the arts and 13% said the arts do not align with their strategic objectives.

“For us at the Beacon Council, it’s all about promoting Miami-Dade County as an international business community with a cultural hub,” said Ms. Fuentes, who is staff liaison for the council’s Creative Design Initiative.

“We know now that in the corporate community, arts play a critical role in developing their work force.”

Roughly 81% of businesses surveyed agreed that the arts are a major contributor to the economy and quality of life and 63% agreed that arts are an important economic engine. Additionally, 81% said that arts contribute to the quality of life in the county, while 54% said it enhances diversity and 44% said it fosters connectivity between communities.

Finally, 74% of businesses surveyed said that being involved in the arts helps to recruit and retain executives and employees, 68% said it stimulates creative thinking, 52% said it fosters professional development and leadership skill building and 46% said it offers unique and innovative employee benefits.

Ms. Fuentes said that businesses do absolutely use [the survey] as a recruitment tool.

Ms. Fuentes said, “And I really think that when companies relocate or expand, they are taking a look at every facet—not just economic, not just international competitiveness. Companies care about where their employees are going to go.”

“Companies invest in art because they see the value,” she said. “They know that the arts attract business.”

PÉREZ ART MUSEUM SEES ATTENDANCE, MEMBERSHIPS SOARING

BY CARMELA CIPREDO

Officials at the Pérez Art Museum Miami have been working all year to acquire hundreds of new pieces for the carefully crafted and sometimes daringly local permanent collection, showcasing art exhibitions that transcend visitors’ ideas of what it means to spend a day at a museum, and have seen their hard work pay off by way of what they say are soaring visitor numbers.

Higher visitor numbers has translated into higher membership numbers, too, said Franklin Sirmans, director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM).

“They’ve been up up up, which is awesome, we’re really happy about that,” Mr. Sirmans said. “All numbers have been increasing, which is fantastic.”

Though the museum did not release exact figures, at least some of the success, Mr. Sirmans said, can be attributed to the museum’s visitor services team, who have been very involved with the collecting and listening to visitor feedback.

An exhibit titled “Basquiat: The Unknown Notebooks” has called the museum home since Aug.

According to the museum, the exhibition showcases Jean-Michel Basquiat’s rarely seen notebooks, filled with poetry fragments, scraps of paper, personal observations. It features 160 notebook pages, related objects, works on paper and large-scale paintings.

But, Mr. Sirmans said, the museum didn’t stop there.

Complementing the exhibition, PAMM has added works from Miami including collaborative paintings by Basquiat and Andy Warhol.

“‘All numbers have been increasing, which is fantastic.’

—Franklin Sirmans

‘You can’t just go and look at museums and look at paintings and stand there,’ he said. ‘We want people to have an experience. PAMM is about galleries, exhibitions, the education department, having an experience while looking out at the bay, shops that feature beautiful works of art, it’s the whole thing.”

In May, the museum announced more than 100 new acquisitions including works by artists including Carmen Herrera, Mark Bradford, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Stan Douglas, Yto Barrada, Nari Ward and Theaster Gates.

The pieces joining the museum’s permanent installation include 100 works from PAMM trustee Craig Robins, a film installation by Stan Douglas, sculptures by Ernesto Neto and Pablo Archuguayo, 14 prints by Mark Bradford, an installation by Hew Locke and several works from PAMM’s temporary exhibitions.

One of the most exciting acquisitions, Mr. Sirmans said, is that of works by Cuban-born Carmen Herrera, purchased by the PAMM Collectors Council.

“Carmen Herrera is an amazing woman whose work people didn’t begin to look at until the last decade,” he said. “We need to be able to show the best of artists from Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Already in the permanent collection for some time are works by Miami-born artist Tresida Fernández.

“We want people to see how we are sharing their story,” Mr. Sirmans said. “We’re a people’s museum.”

Mr. Sirmans said he’s excited about upcoming events at the museum such as the Ninth annual Corporate Luncheon on Sept. 28 and the April 2017 Art of the Party gala, but especially the convening of the Collectors Council this October.