

YoungArts Miami brings 100 emerging artists into the limelight

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Anais Perez, 17, a student at [Doral Performing Arts & Entertainment Academy](#) and a 2015 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts (above), joins the newest class of YoungArts finalists this week. Photo provided by YoungArts.

[YoungArts Miami](#) will celebrate its newest class of 100 South Florida artists by hosting [a series of public performances and exhibitions](#) March 13-15. The program will showcase students and alumni in multidisciplinary performances, readings, film screenings and

visual arts exhibitions on the [YoungArts campus](#) in Miami and at [The Colony Theatre](#) on Lincoln Road in Miami Beach.

For three decades, student artists of all backgrounds across the country have gained access to institutions, such as [The Juilliard School](#), and exclusive opportunities, such as the [U.S. Presidential Scholar of the Arts](#) award, as a result of being accepted as National YoungArts Week finalists.

In 2012, the program launched a second week of master classes and community events in Los Angeles, New York and Miami. With the support of Knight Foundation, [Paul Lehr](#), president and CEO of the [National YoungArts Foundation](#), says the initiative connects emerging and renowned artists to strengthen the South Florida arts scene. Lehr says YoungArts has granted more than \$12 million in cash awards and \$60 million in scholarships to young artists in the United States.

“Our national reach has grown substantially in the last three years and it is [the generous grant from Knight Foundation](#) that allows us to bring world-class talent to the community and open it up for anyone to experience,” Lehr said.



Grace Martini, 18, a student at [New World School of the Arts](#) and a 2015 YoungArts Winner in Theater, joins the newest class of YoungArts finalists this week. Photo provided by YoungArts.

Emerging artists, ages 15-18, were selected from 11,000 applications in a blind nomination process conducted by the National YoungArts Foundation in November. Lehr says 100 of the 800 winners in visual, literary, design and performing arts this year are from South Florida.

The winners, who were announced in January, will work alongside master teachers throughout this week, prior to the public performances that began Friday.

Grace Martini, 18, a student at New World School of the Arts and a 2015 YoungArts Winner in Theater, joins the newest class of YoungArts finalists this week and says it was rewarding to be a part of National YoungArts Week in January, when 170 of the 800 winners gathered in Miami to collaborate, exchange ideas and perform.

“I know that it sounds crazy to think that one week could change your life,” Martini said. “But my experience with YoungArts really did make me feel like I could be successful as an artist in Miami. And I think that, beyond Art Basel, it’s because of YoungArts that people are recognizing Miami as more of an artistic place.”

Anais Perez, 17, a student at Doral Performing Arts & Entertainment Academy and a 2015 YoungArts Winner in Visual Arts, says Miami has inspired her paintings and she’s eager to share it with the community. It’s rewarding to have her hard work pay off, she says, especially during senior year when the stakes are high and college applications are in process.

“It’s because of YoungArts that I met amazing people in my own city who I’ve never met before and who also aspire to do great things,” Perez said. “YoungArts was the first experience I’ve had that has taken me seriously in a professional sense, and it’s creating a space for this young, healthy artistic community to speak.”

Martini will perform at Colony Theatre this Saturday at 8 p.m.. Perez’s artwork will go on display at the YoungArts campus this Friday at 6:30 p.m. Both of them are already engaged as part of the YoungArts alumni network of more than 20,000 artists.

Some alumni include: visual artists [Doug Aitken](#), [Daniel Arsham](#) and [Hernan Bas](#); musicians [Terence Blanchard](#), [Conrad Tao](#) and [Jennifer Koh](#); filmmaker [Doug Blush](#); recording artists [Josh Groban](#), [Nicki Minaj](#) and [Chris Young](#); writers [Jenji Kohan](#) and [Sam Lipsyte](#); actors [Matt Bomer](#), [Viola Davis](#), [Andrew Rannells](#), [Anna Gunn](#) and [Kerry Washington](#); choreographer [Desmond Richardson](#); and recent “So You Think You Can Dance” winner [Ricky Ubeda](#).

YoungArts President Lehr says alumni make up 25 percent of the student body at The Juilliard School and that agents and recruiters use the YoungArts program as a one-stop shop for identifying the next generation of creative talent. He says that YoungArts encourages all artists in South Florida to immerse themselves in the program and support homegrown talent.

“This is a unique opportunity for every young artist to take,” Lehr said, “and we’re excited to be playing a role in Miami, where YoungArts was born and is housed. This is our home and we want to be as integral a part as we can.”

[Jenna Buehler](#) is a Miami-based freelance writer.

Tickets for YoungArts Miami are available [online](#). Visit youngarts.org for more information.

<http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2015/3/10/youngarts-miami-brings-100-emerging-artists-limelight/>