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VIEWPOINTS

## Make arts and culture the focus of growth in downtown Fort Lauderdale | Opinion

By Francie Bishop Good  
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The NSU Art Museum in downtown Fort Lauderdale has hosted artwork by renowned artists such as Frida Kahlo, Renoir and Picasso, while also keeping a focus on local artists. (Steven Brooke/CORTESIANSU)

In early April, Nova Southeastern University Art Museum Fort Lauderdale hosted the first ever international summit “Codaworx: Experience.” The conference brought together hundreds of creatives, civic leaders and technology companies whose fusion of art and technology create phenomenal civic projects. These projects foster economic development, promote civic engagement and drive tourism. The two-day event included an evening display of an awe-inspiring animated artwork projected via advanced laser projection technology onto the museum’s modernist building facing Las Olas Boulevard.

NSU Art Museum was the fitting location for this cutting-edge event. For over 60 years, the museum has remained a premier mainstay and driver of the cultural blossoming of downtown Fort Lauderdale. NSU Art Museum is the central meeting point (literally and figuratively) in South Florida, representing a crossroads of culture. It has an extensive permanent collection of artworks and has produced world-class art exhibitions that have featured such renowned artists as Frida Kahlo, Frank Stella,

Keith Haring, Kehinde Wiley, Anselm Kiefer, Renoir and Picasso, while still being dedicated to showcasing and nurturing the work of local artists.



Francie Bishop Good is chair of the Board of Governors of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.

NSU Art Museum is on par with the finest museums in the world. Since its merger in 2008 with Nova Southeastern University, one of the largest private research universities in the United States, NSU Art Museum has actively fostered a strong community through the arts where families can build memories and art enthusiasts connect with the international art world. Its popular free school field trips and art workshops bring over 3,000 Broward County youth from low-income families to the museum annually, and its free Teen Arts Council provides teens with exciting career training in the arts.

Thriving arts and cultural organizations are what make cities vibrant and iconic. There are no great cities without great museums. Sustained growth is fueled by a sustained culture and varied types of interesting elements from visual arts to performing arts to museums and beyond. Since 2010, Fort Lauderdale has seen a 43% increase in downtown population of 25-to-44-year-olds, according to the

International Downtown Association.

The museum is a connector in that it is more than just a place to see art. It is a place to build relationships with others through exhibitions and family programming. Its mission is to make art and learning accessible, no matter the circumstances. NSU Art Museum partners with the city of Fort Lauderdale to provide all its residents with free admission the last Sunday of every month, and thanks to the support of Broward Health, the popular Free Starry Nights have returned, providing all visitors free admission on the first Thursday of every month. All children ages 12 and under always receive free admission, as do families receiving food assistance (SNAP). These initiatives are generously supported by the museum's volunteer Board of Governors, corporate and individual donors and local foundations, including the Community Foundation of Broward and Funding Arts Broward.

To its core, NSU Art Museum embodies all the things necessary to make a solid cultural and art base and platform to grow a flourishing and culturally rich community. As we continue to expand as a city, connection and celebration of the arts should remain a focus for strategic and sustainable growth of Fort Lauderdale.

*Francie Bishop Good is chair of the Board of Governors of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.*