

# Neighbors

AVENTURA  
LIBERTY CITY  
MIAMI GARDENS  
MIAMI SHORES

MIAMI BEACH & THE BEACHES  
NORTH MIAMI  
NORTH MIAMI BEACH  
WYNWOOD

'Hamilton' arrives in February for the first time in Miami.



Miami

## Downtown Miami/Brickell bucket list

*The best things to do in downtown Miami and Brickell? Watch a Miami Heat game at the American Airlines Arena, shop at the Seybold Building, have drinks in Brickell City Centre, score tickets to 'Hamilton' and more, 12*



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### RELIGION

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FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

# 2 filmmakers shine light on Liberty Square, Little Haiti



BY CHRISTINA MAYO  
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When Miami Gardens resident Faren Humes was working as a location manager for the Academy Award-winning film “Moonlight,” she learned all about Liberty Square.

Now, the independent filmmaker is expanding her own film project, “Liberty,” based on the lives of residents at the public housing complex in Liberty City.

Filmmaker Edson Jean, whose work has appeared on HBO and Complex Networks, is developing another film, inspired by his mother’s first years in Miami, that centers on an underpaid nursing assistant’s efforts to help her family in Haiti.

Both filmmakers have been awarded \$50,000 each as part of Oolite Arts’ Cinematic Arts Residency program. The funds will help them develop and screen micro-budget feature films — all in Miami.

“Not only are these filmmakers products of our city, their stories are rooted in our community, and will bring to the screen narratives audiences are hungry for,” said Dennis Scholl, president and CEO of Oolite Arts. “We hope this Cine-

matic Arts Residency can be the step these filmmakers need to significantly advance their careers.”

Humes is using the residency to expand her much-celebrated short film “Liberty,” jury award winner for Best Short at the Berlinale’s Generation 14, SXSW and Miami Film Festival.

The plot focuses on the main character Milagros, as “she grapples with the disappearance of her mother’s memorial just as she is forced to leave Liberty Square so that her longtime neighborhood can be razed to create a new housing complex.”

“I’m looking forward to capturing how Liberty Square mirrors many communities across the States,” Humes said. “I’m very thankful to do so with the support of a local arts organization with ties to the community and a demonstrated commitment to independent voices.”

Jean, an actor, writer and director, who has directed eight, 23-minute episodes of the comedy “Grown” for Complex Networks, also wrote, directed and starred in “The Adventures of Edson Jean” which aired on HBO and HBOGO.

“I aim for my work to be of service to stories specific to the Caribbean and Latin experiences in Miami,” Jean said. “Telling these stories, I am able to reach out to those who experience them and let them know that they are not alone.”

Oolite Arts’ first two

Cinematic Arts Residents, Xavier Medina and Monica Sorelle, are now starting the second year of the two-year residency.

Organizers said the “farm-to-table style” residency program helps filmmakers receive the support they need to shoot, produce and screen their projects from start to finish in Miami. By displaying their talents on micro-budget features they can be prepared to take on large-scale projects.

A national jury of film experts chose Humes and Jean because of “their extensive experience making short films, their authorship of projects that center on Miami stories, and because their proposed projects embrace the ethos of micro-budget filmmaking: the idea that creative stories can be brought to the screen with a lean and inventive approach to production.”

The panel included filmmakers Kenny Riches, Channele Aponte Pearson and Monica Peña.

Andrew Hevia, producer of “Moonlight,” and Kareem Tabsch, filmmaker and co-founder and co-director of O Cinema, helped conceptualize the initiative. They will work with the two residents.

Oolite Arts’ Cinematic Arts Manager Jason Fitzroy Jeffers leads the program. Four filmmakers received Special Jury Mentions, and will receive \$1,000 toward their film projects. They are Carla Forte, Hansel Porras Garcia, Mark Pulaski, and Danny Rosenberg. To find out more, visit [www.oolitearts.org/cinematicarts](http://www.oolitearts.org/cinematicarts).



Indie Filmmaker Faren Humes, in middle wearing cap, is expanding a film project focused on Miami’s Liberty Square. Humes is part of Oolite Arts’ Cinematic Arts Residency program.

ALEX HARRIS

## BUNRAKU-STYLE PUPPETRY EXPLORES BEAUTY

In “Feos,” a man and a woman who have spent their whole lives alone and subjected to stares due to their physical deformities have a chance encounter in line at a movie theater.

As the plot of this visual feast of Bunraku-style puppetry continues, the characters go “in search of the light behind the darkness, although nothing is quite as it seems.”

Two performances of “Feos” will be 8:30 p.m., Jan. 25, and 3 p.m., Jan. 26, at On.Stage Black Box at Miami-Dade County Auditorium, 2901 W. Flagler St. The event is part of FUNDARTE’s No Borders series. Presented in Spanish with English supertitles.

The story is oriented for adults. It was written by acclaimed Chilean playwright Guillermo Calderón, and inspired by the story “La Noche de los Feos” by Mario Benedetti.

Aline Kuppenheim directs the Teatro y Su Doble production with puppets.

“This theatrical play can reach all people because one of the main issues is the acceptance, not only of those who have deformities, but of all people,” Kuppenheim said.

Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$25 for students and seniors with ID, \$20 for groups of 10 or more.

There are limited seats in the Black Box. Parking is free. Tickets at [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), by phone at 800-745-3000 and at the Box Office, Monday-Fri-

day, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. More info at [www.fundarte.us](http://www.fundarte.us).

## FUNDRAISER AT FAIRCHILD

Gala in the Garden has been an important event for 25 years. Known for hosting South Florida’s philanthropists and community leaders, the event aims to raise funds to allow Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden to continue its mission of “exploring, expanding and conserving the world of tropical plants.”

“It’s one of the most anticipated events of the year and we are always thrilled to see the outpouring of support that goes into the garden’s science, education, conservation and horticulture programs,” Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden’s Chief Experience Officer Heidi Ladell said.

Swanee DiMare and Frances Sevilla Sacarsa are chairing Gala in the Garden 2020. The black-tie event is limited to 400 guests and will be Feb. 1. Tickets start at \$1,000 per person. Contact Susannah Shubin at [sshubin@fairchildgarden.org](mailto:sshubin@fairchildgarden.org).

If you have news for this column, write to [ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com](mailto:ChristinaMMayo@gmail.com).



Miami

Gala in the Garden will be held at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Coral Gables on Saturday, Feb. 1.