

# ON THE ROAD

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA  
1984-1994

*When the artists owned the Road*  
Charo Oquet



Charo Oquet. Courtesy of the artist.

ON THE ROAD  
1984-1994



Roberto Juarez. *Invitation of Roberto Juarez' exhibition.* Courtesy of Carlos Betancourt.

When Charo Oquet asked me to think back on some of the exhibitions and events that Jenni Person and I had put together in the '90s at the ArtCenter, I went digging into my box of files I had stored away. As it turns out, we did some great things from 1993 through 1997 at what was dubbed "Ground Level," an alternative gallery space that for most of its existence was housed in the building that once occupied the lot across from the Colony Theater and is now the home of "Pottery Barn," on the corner of Lenox and Lincoln Road. Given the lack of funds available to us, looking back, I am really not sure how we did what we did. We had performances by people like Tim Miller, one of the NEA Four, or hosted exhibitions like the one for the winners of the NEA/Southern Arts Federation individual grant recipients. Installations on the Road with artists like Patrick Dougherty and inside like "Object and Sound: Automation of Accidental Gesture," a collaboration between sculptor Sue Rees and composer Jonathan Bepler that resulted in an "automated orchestra," were the norm for Ground Level. Barbara Young's "Artist's Sketchbooks and Exodus," an exhibition I co-curated with Cesar Trasobares (that included actual *balseros*) were among some of the memorable shows. Alfredo Triff, Steve Bollman and Gene Ray curated "The Black Box," which was a month long project "that combined in a single space a rich menu of arts-related and public activities..." the goal of which was "to unite and galvanize the Miami arts community... countering the negative tendencies of geographic dispersal and apathy." Looking over a flyer from June of 1995, I see listed "Spoken Word Grand Slam," "Here & Now Festival" in collaboration with Miami Light Project, "Contemporary Expressions of Haitian Art" with an accompanying catalog and panel discussion, an exhibition of ceramic artists at "ClaySpace" and an exhibition in the 800 building of resident artists.

The '90s were a time of transition on Lincoln Road that afforded the artists that were there a certain freedom to experiment and do things that wouldn't be possible now. When ArtCenter artist "Tomata du Plenty" organized and led a New Orleans marching band, made up of elderly African American men in high styled uniforms down Lincoln Road, in a spontaneous performance that entered every open business on the Road, I was truly happy that I had been there to see it. When ArtCenter artists were tasked with "Holiday Decorations" for the Road and given a budget of \$500 per block, there was outrage from business owners when Jens Diercks rigged a Styrofoam Santa Claus on the exterior of the 810 building that would climb a rope and then drop down the face of the building over and over. It wasn't too bad except when it would get stuck and looked like a lynched Santa. Linda Fanuf painted 50 versions of her trademark "Old Ladies" on cutout plywood and hung them in a dead tree on the Road.

What I do miss and think is worth retrieving, is the diversity of work that was part of the of the '90s, performance-based works, installations, collaborations, painters, sculptors, found object artists, filmmakers, printmakers, fashion designers, jewelers and potters. I vividly remember the Haitian man who worked as a grounds keeper who shaved down a pencil length lead and then carved it into an intricate figure you could only see with the help of a magnifying glass. His work was featured in one of the shows. This kind of diversity can make for a dynamic and vital community.

James Herring, July, 27, 2014

"When I was a teenager, Lincoln Road was like Worth Avenue is in West Palm Beach today. Things went downhill quickly and it appears that the art scene that developed on Lincoln Road was a catalyst for what it is today."

Karen Rifas

# Art 30

1984  
1994



George Goodridge. *Courtesy of the artist.*

Eduard Duval-Carrié. *Courtesy of the artist.*

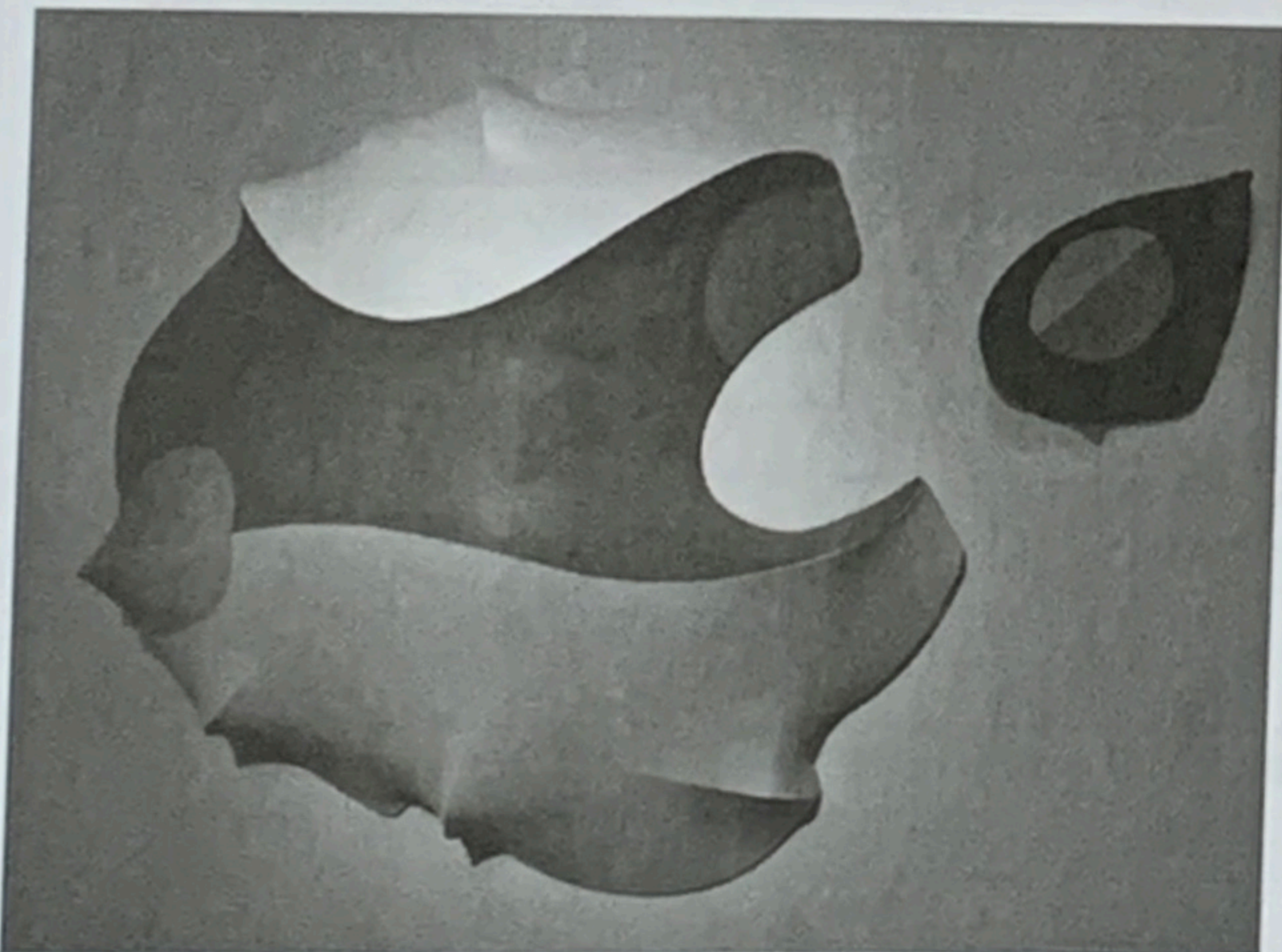
Karen A. Rifas. *Courtesy of the artist.*

Lincoln Road Mall was wonderfully dilapidated; there was only one café, an affordable, typical Cuban joint at that, open on the western end of the Mall. We used to shoot in the wonderfully surreal environment of the largely abandoned Mall without the slightest notice. It was incredibly fun and had a slightly subversive feel at times. Bill Orcott of the Alliance Cinema had secured a grant for the Alliance Film/Video Cooperative and received donated video, 16MM and Super-8 film equipment (all this was just a few years before the digital revolution). A few months after opening the Co-op in an upstairs office space across the Mall, an unfinished open space was leased on the end of the block as a classroom/shooting/screening facility and Mark Boswell and Willie Keddell began holding classes with David Schweitzer (who worked on *Hairspray*, as I recall). All this was ancillary to the ArtCenter/South Florida and provided not only an outlet for film/video art, but a real education in film.

It would be wrong to call the actual ArtCenter/South Florida, the studio building, an "anchor" of the area as this term is used in describing commercial businesses that serve to draw customers to an area for the rather mindless exchange of money. The ArtCenter probably had a commercial element, and certainly many, if not all of the artists had ambitions as professional artists, but it existed for its art. It was a phenomenon. When it opened its doors for exhibitions, the things you saw in that wonderful stench of paint and adhesives, inspired and boggled the mind. Technical, concentrated, whimsical, provocative: the vocabulary of description escapes me. Once inside the door, the cluttered studios seemed to grow out of proportion to their numbers, like Alice's Wonderland, and then you discovered the stairs and it took on the quality of a delightfully disorienting three-dimensional labyrinth.

Truly, the ArtCenter/South Florida in the mid-1990s represented an important era. It was a "scene" in all that term suggests with regard to community and creative energy. It was a privilege to have experienced this unique moment in time. Memory is an odd thing. Lincoln Road was suddenly transformed into a sea of tables, chairs and photogenic wait staff as if in a single day. It was really quite remarkable.

Paul Berry—Alliance Film/Video CoOp member



George Goodridge. Courtesy of the artist.

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“Being at ArtCenter was instrumental in launching my professional career as an artist both locally and nationally! Opening my studio/storefront in 1988 through 2000 enabled me to develop my skills and launch a very successful career creating over 50 site-specific art in public places installations throughout the United States and abroad. Because of the ClaySpace gallery and ceramic commune at that time, I was able to develop most of my special ceramic and glass techniques and serve on the board learning the intricacies of professionalism in the art world.”  
Carlos Alves

“Truly, the ArtCenter/South Florida in the mid-1990s represents an important era. It was a 'scene' in all that term suggests with regard to community and creative energy. It was a privilege to have experienced this unique moment in time.” Paul Berry



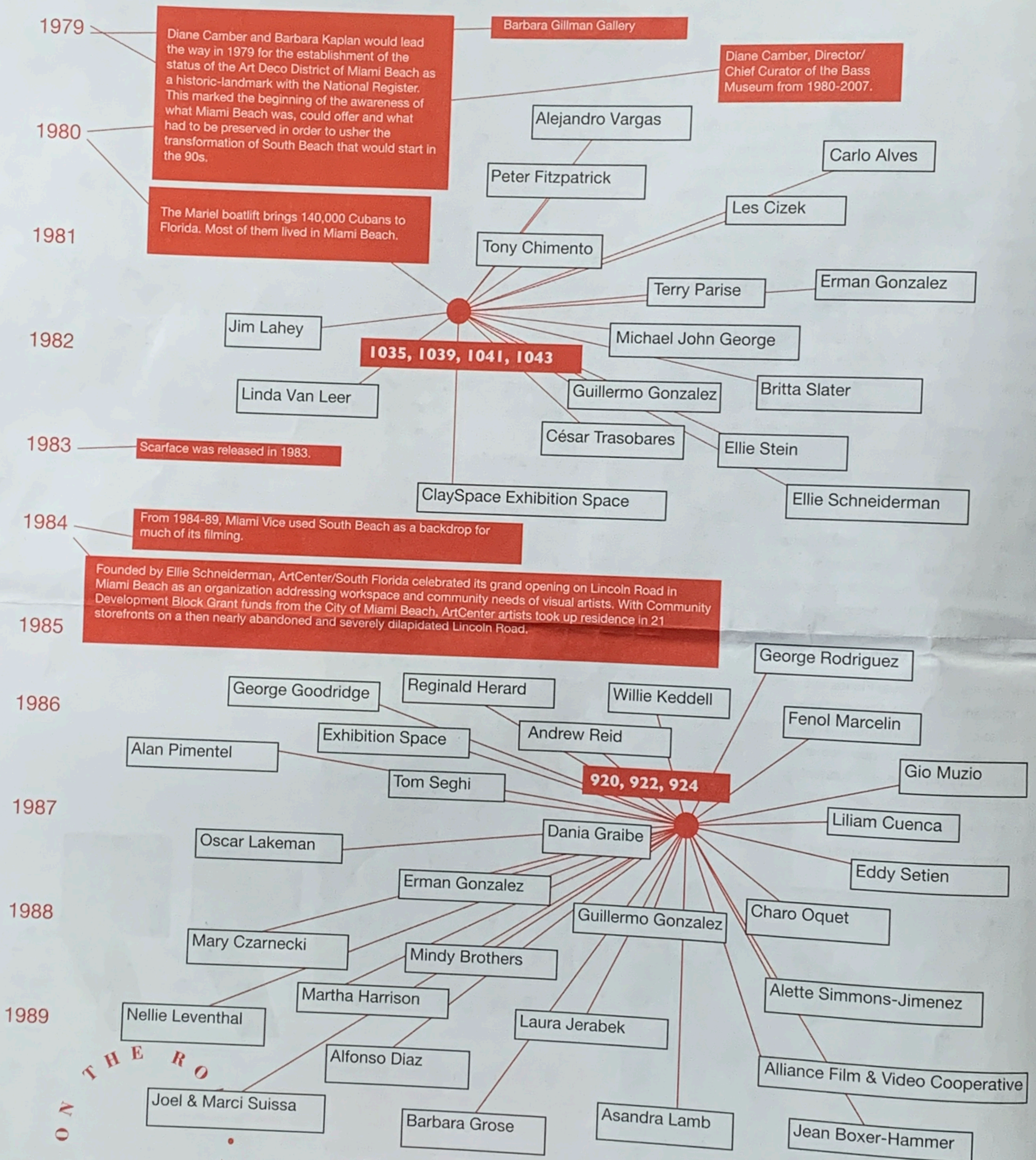
Marcos Lora Read. Courtesy of the artist.



Carlos Alves. Courtesy of the artist.

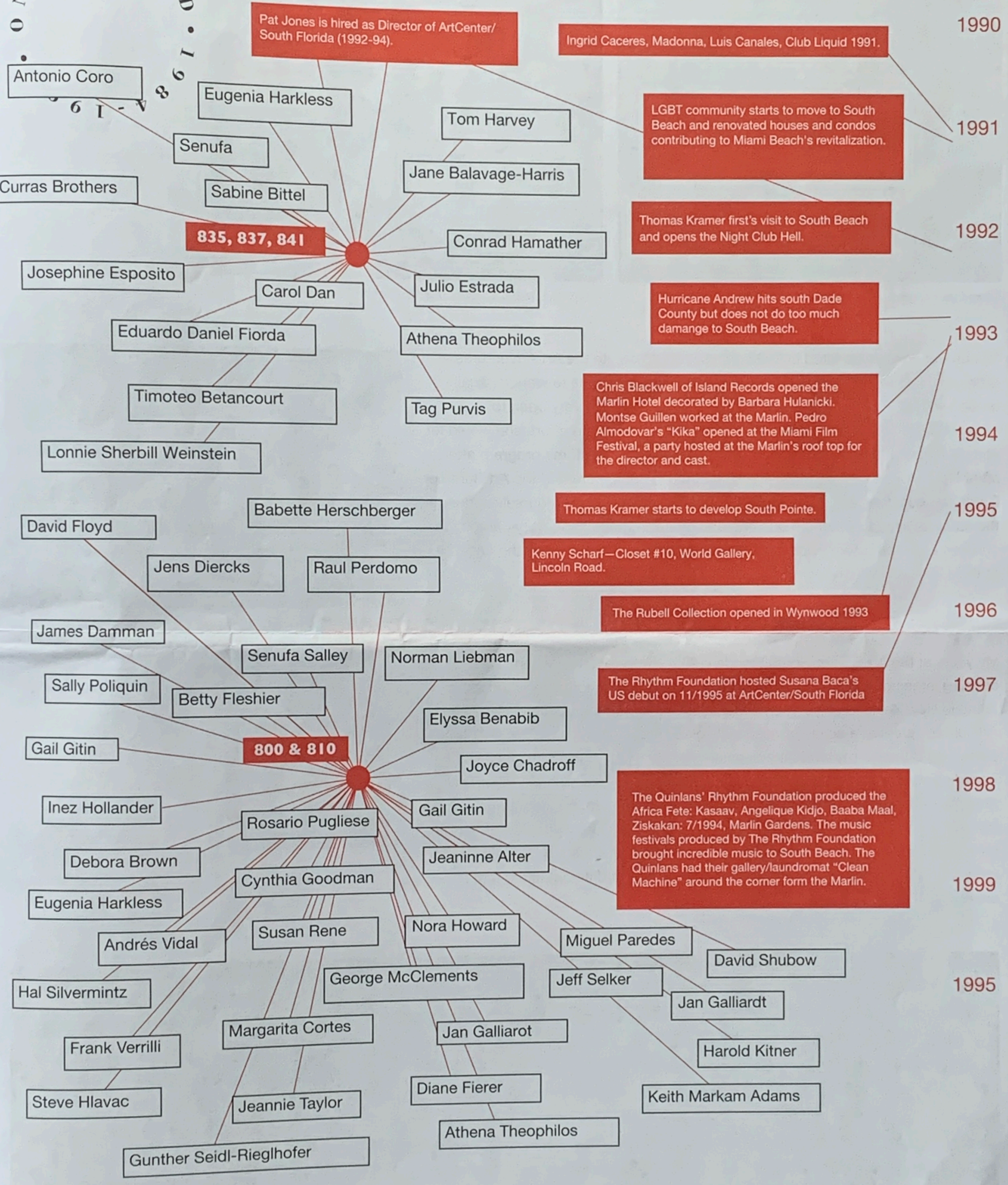
“Ellie Schneiderman and ArtCenter/ South Florida were the instruments that developed not only significant artists but Miami's art scene. Even the *New York Times* was quoted as calling Lincoln Road the new SoHo in the '90s. The 1990s were the best of times.” George Goodridge

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ON THE ROAD.  
1961-1986



ON THE ROAD  
1961-1981

ON THE ROAD.  
1986-1987





Charo Oquet. Courtesy of the artist.



George McClements. Courtesy of the artist.

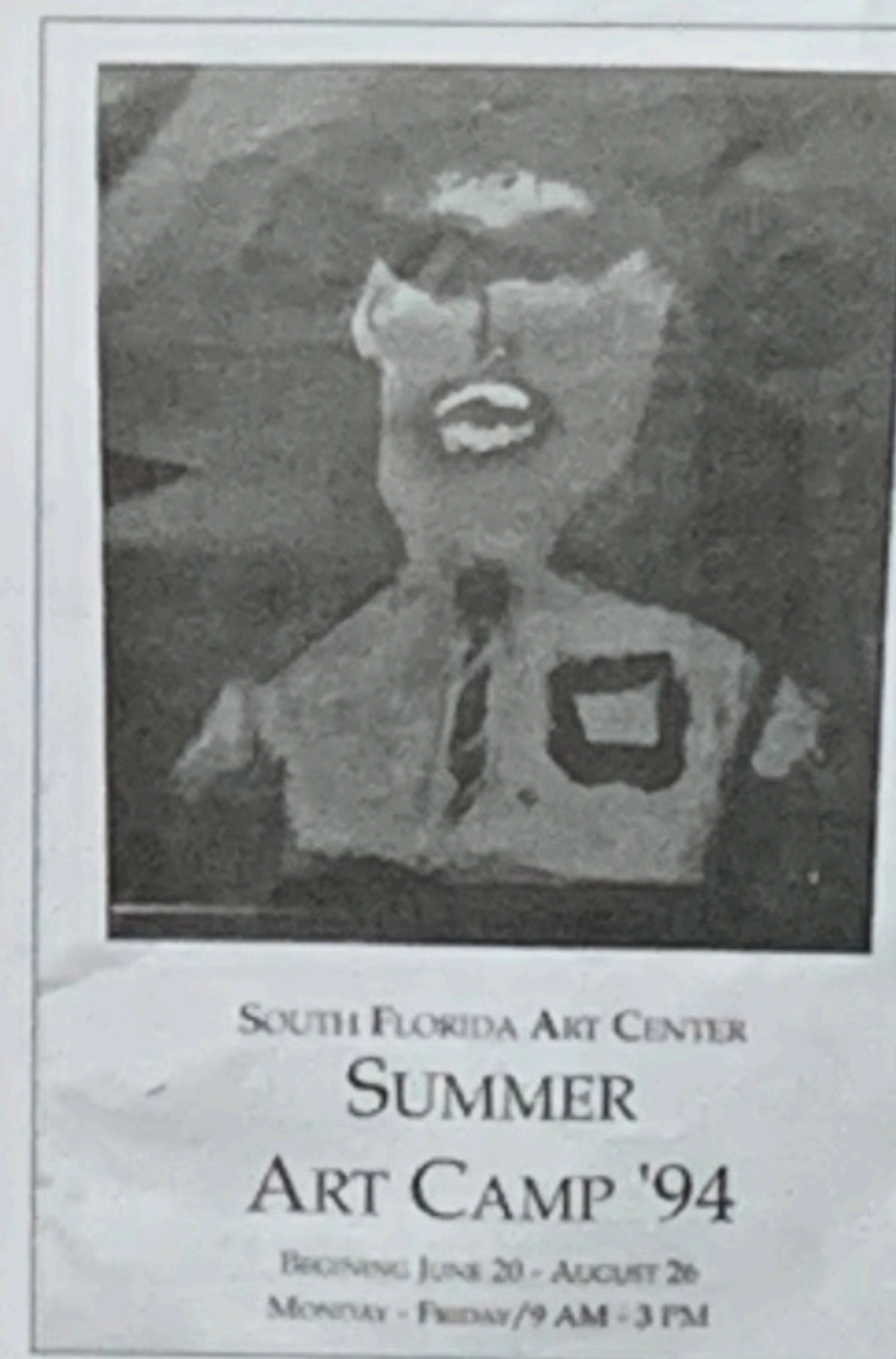
THE ROAD • 1981 - 1986

"When Pat Jones was hired in 1992, she set out to create the Art Adventures program which brought students from nearby public schools to work in small groups with ACSF artists, providing jobs for us. Jones was very open to suggestions and, as long as you were willing to put time and effort, she would let you do things. I took over the coordination of the Art Adventures program after artist Nora Howard left ACSF. At the same time in 1994, I created the Art Summer Camp for kids, which is still going strong, with the idea of hiring ourselves during the summer season, when no one had any money, creating specialty camps for children at a time when it was a new idea. Jones and I also created the print shop at the ACSF." Charo Oquet

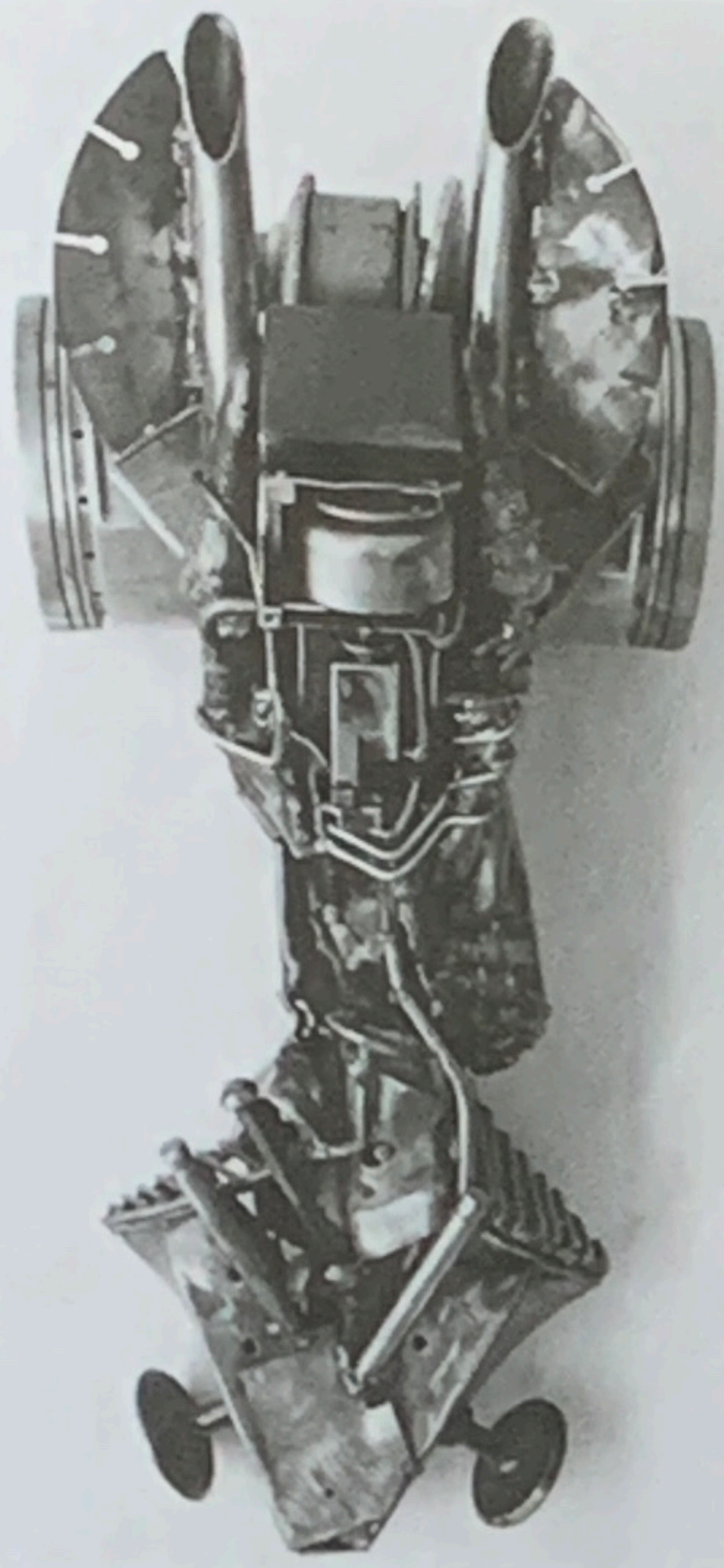


William Keddell. Courtesy of the artist.

My years at the Art Center/South Florida (1992-96) were a time when I was creating large figurative and narrative painting, a continuation of what I had been doing in New Zealand since 1982. Later, after moving to the ceramic area of the ArtCenter, I created a series of beautifully glazed ceramic vases. A big shift took place at this time in my work: the beginning of my performance and installation based photographs and work. This shift would fundamentally shape my artistic practice in the years to follow making a decisive impact on the future direction of my work and ushering my installations and my performance work. In that period, for my performance photographs, I began to dress myself as a powerful Mambo (priestess of the voodoo religion) against a backdrop of different altars that I created." Charo Oquet

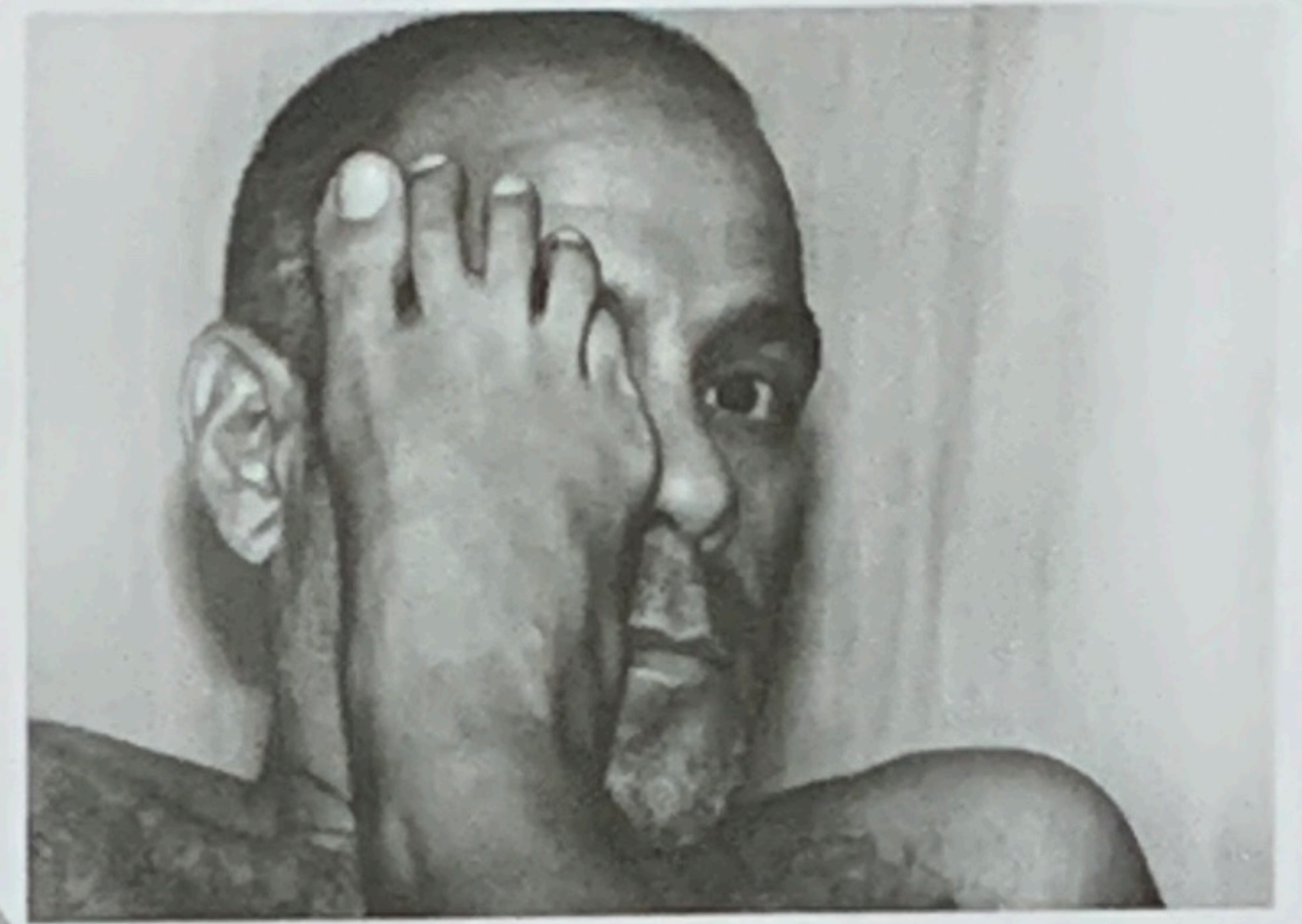


**CHARO OQUET** born in Dominican Republic, is a Miami-based interdisciplinary artist, curator and cultural producer concerned with counter-hegemony, new narratives and historical context being addressed today that recognize the inclusion of suppressed histories, communities and identities. She creates poetic and political pieces in media spanning painting, video, installation, drawing, collage, performance and photography. Her work has been extensively exhibited internationally and she was included in many books and catalogs. Oquet has had numerous solo exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world. Her work is in many museum collections in the US and abroad. She is the recipient of several awards and fellowships, most recently: Winner of the Grand Prize, Visual Arts Biennial, Museum of Modern Art of Santo Domingo (2011); State of Florida Individual Artist Fellowship (2014, 2006); State of Florida Artist Enhancement Grant (1999); South Florida Cultural Consortium Fellowship for Visual and Media Arts (2005); Creative Capital Grant, 2007; Miami-Dade County Artist Access Grant (2005). She received a BFA from Florida International University.



Daniel Fiorda. Courtesy of the artist.

“What was special about having a studio at ACSF was that it pushed me even harder – at a young age – to be a committed visual artist. Plus, it gave me the opportunity to meet all of you, my dearest compañeros artistas!” Daniel Fiorda



Juan Si González. Courtesy of the artist.

“Being at the ArtCenter/South Florida was great because I could experiment with dissimilar forms of expression, live and interact with many artists from around the world and insert myself in a more cosmopolitan context, leaving the Cuban/Latino ghetto.” Juan Si González



Scull Sisters (Haydee and Sabara) with South Beach Mega Diva Tara Salomon.



Craig Coleman. Courtesy of Carlos Alves.

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1984  
1994  
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“The Art Center/South Florida provided the opportunity for me to make art night and day within a creative community in a tropical paradise, an incubator for ideas and like-minded friendships. The artists were my muses and Ellie Schneiderman... my angel. It was magical” Jane Harris



Jane Harris. Courtesy of the artist.

KEITH MARKAM ADAMS  
 CARLOS ALVES  
 JEANINNE ALTER  
 JANE BALAVAGE-HARRIS  
 ADRIAN BALER  
 ROY CHANG BARRERO  
 ELYSSA BENABID  
 CARLOS BETANCOURT  
 TIMOTÉO BETANCOURT  
 SABINE BITTEL  
 JEAN BOXER-HAMMER  
 MINDY BROTHERS  
 DEBORA BROWN  
 CAVA ARTISTS  
 JOYCE CHADROFF  
 TONY CHIMENTO  
 LES CIZEK  
 ANTONIO CORO  
 MARGARITA CORTES  
 LILIAN CUENCA  
 CURRAS BROTHERS  
 MARY CZARNECKI  
 JAMES DAMMAN  
 CAROL DAN  
 EDUARDO DA ROSA  
 ALFONSO DIAZ  
 JENS DIERCKS  
 TOMATA DUPLÉNTY  
 EDOUARD DUVAL-CARRIE  
 SILVIA ESPINOSA  
 JOSEPHINE ESPOSITO  
 JULIO ESTRADA  
 LINDA FANEUF  
 MARINA FERNANDEZ  
 DANIEL FIORDA  
 DIANE FIERER  
 PETER FITZPATRICK  
 BETTY FLEISHER  
 DAVID FLOYD  
 ROBERT FLYNN  
 MURRAY GABY  
 JAN GALLIARDT  
 MICHAEL JOHN GEORGE  
 GAIL GITIN  
 ERMAN GONZALES  
 GUILLERMO GONZALES  
 JUAN SI GONZALEZ  
 DIANE GOODMAN  
 GEORGE GOODRIDGE  
 DANIA GRAIBE  
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 PATRICK TERJAK  
 ATHENA THEOPHILOS  
 ESTELLE TIEMAN  
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