

## Rally to cultivate Miami's designers

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Art Basel Miami Beach has just completed its 13th show — an exhilarating week. The debate continues as to whether it has sufficiently inculcated Miami year-round. But what is not debatable, and what I yearn for, despite the aptly named companion fair, Design Miami, is a deeper cultural appreciation of design and craft in and of the South Florida community.

As a designer myself, and as one who worked on Design+Architecture Day with Judith Arango while I was an assistant professor in the School of Architecture at FIU, I had hoped for a recurring annual event to celebrate all that design, fabrication and craft. But without a school of art and design, like OCAD in Toronto, or the CCA in San Francisco that includes craft media, ceramics, fibers/textile, glass, jewelry/metal and wood/furniture, it is hard to establish or populate the local community with a design and craft culture.

In a conversation with David Russell, co-owner of the newly reopened Arango, following a panel discussion led by Beth Dunlop, he agreed that we need more emphasis on design, and especially industrial design, in schools. The recently opened Museum of Art + Design at Miami Dade College, has the intention, encouragingly, right there in its name. My quest is to see more design and one-of-a-kind functional and decorative objects made here in South Florida.

Already there are artisans and fabricators, designers and manufacturers of small-run lines, craftspersons and unique shops that support original work and design locally. Motivated to access them, I have created an event, Objects of Design Curated Studio Rally. My bigger vision is that, with momentum, we just might grow the culture I seek, by

energizing a conversation dedicated to an arts-and-crafts program, or better still, establish a design museum along the lines of the Crafts Council UK.

Objects of Design Curated Studio Rally, Meet Your Makers is a self-conducted driving tour of South Florida designers/manufacturers, studios, workshops and retail stores of mostly functional well-made objects. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20. To participate, go to <http://bit.ly/1Gwc68c> for the rally map and more information.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article4648074.html#/tabPane=tabs-c837affa-1#storylink=cpy>