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‘We really can do this.’ Miami’s top teen artists showcase work during National YoungArts Week

BY AMANDA ROSA

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Talented young artists of all disciplines come to Miami for National YoungArts Week. Mason Bryant, a 2023 YoungArts winner in jazz plays the guitar. JASON KOERNER
Courtesy of YoungArts



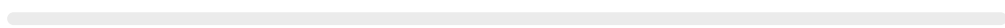
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Some of the brightest teenage artists in the country are descending on Miami this week. Many of them already live here.

Forty-nine South Florida teens won the YoungArts award, a prestigious honor given by [the nonprofit YoungArts](#), which supports emerging artists ages 15 to 18 in 10 disciplines, including theater, visual arts and music. In total, there are about 700 artists from across the United States this year, said Lauren Slone, the YoungArts senior director of artistic programs.

Monday kicks off [National YoungArts Week](#), five days of intensive programming for the 153 top winners and art events showcasing their work and talent to the public. The week includes film screenings and vocal, theatrical, musical and dance performances held at the New

World Center in Miami Beach. At the YoungArts Campus in Edgewater will be writers' readings and a visual arts exhibition.

Artist Georgia Greene is a 2023 YoungArts winner in dance. Jason Koerner *Courtesy of YoungArts*

Slone said she looks forward to see what the winners have been creating. Each winner can be characterized by their devotion and passion for their artistic craft, she said.

“The winners in particular have an opportunity to be recognized and encouraged as artists, which is no small thing,” she said. “There is very often sort of a fear about becoming an artist, so to hear from other artists, to have community members surrounding you and encouraging you to experiment, to express beauty, to devote yourself to a craft and this particular pathway is a big, big deal.”

Fourteen South Florida winners will participate in National YoungArts Week. During workshops and classes, the students will get to learn from some of the top artists in their fields, like Miami-based architect Germane Barnes and actor Billy Porter.

Among them is 17-year-old Brandon Goldberg, a jazz pianist and student at Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale. This week, he said he's excited to be surrounded by young artists across all disciplines.

Goldberg's musical journey began at just 3 years old when he started plunking on piano keys. As a little boy, his grandparents would play him

songs and watch as he managed to recreate them. At one point, he was probably the world's youngest Frank Sinatra fan, watching the crooner's television specials every weekend to learn his songs.

“There was just something that I really loved about that music,” he said. “I don't think I realized what it was about music that I loved until I heard that. I love the feeling of this music.”

Brandon Goldberg, a 17-year-old jazz pianist, is one of 49 South Florida teens to win the prestigious YoungArts award. Kasia Idzkowska

Goldberg's parents were especially supportive of his art, he said. They enrolled him in music programs, jazz camp and took him to concerts to watch his favorite musicians.

“Being an artist, it's a very strange thing. It's like, ‘I'm gonna pursue art and hopefully make a career out of this,’” he said. “I always knew how supportive my parents were, I don't think I realized how special or rare it was.”

Since her freshman year at New World School of the Arts, it was a goal for Katrine Eliev to apply to YoungArts. Eliev, 18, has two artworks on display at the [YoungArts exhibition](#), which opens Jan. 12.

Katrine Eliev, 18, is a 2024 YoungArts visual arts winner with distinction. *Courtesy of YoungArts*

Originally from Russia, Eliev moved to the U.S. when she was 12. She often uses sugar, an unconventional material, in her artwork along with

family photos from the U.S.S.R. She's especially interested in experimenting with how materials like concrete and plaster interact with the sugar, she said.

One of her artworks at the YoungArts exhibition uses ice and molten sugar, which means that it degrades over time. A plaster sculpture underneath catches the dripping sugar. Her works are ephemeral in nature to represent the change in dynamics among her family members, especially since the war between Russia and Ukraine began, she said.

“When the sugar drips it makes a mess,” she said. “I think that’s where the family unit comes in.”

Eliev is especially excited to show her work outside of a school setting and meet new people who support each other in creating art.

“We can encourage each other to continue moving forward and taking our art practice more seriously,” she said. “We really can do this.”

NATIONAL YOUNGARTS WEEK

When: Jan. 8 - 12

Where: YoungArts Campus, 2100 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; New World Center, 500 17th St., Miami Beach

Info: Full schedule of performances and events available online <https://youngarts.org/national-youngarts-week/>

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