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**Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places Recognized Nationally by
 Americans for the Arts for Outstanding Work in *Public Art 2014 Year in Review*
*Public Art Projects at PortMiami by Artists Bhakti Baxter and Jim Drain Selected as
 Among the Nation’s Best***

MIAMI, June 18, 2014 - Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places received national recognition during the annual Americans for the Arts Conference, held in Nashville, TN, June 11-15, 2014. A program of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, Miami-Dade Art in Public Places was recognized as commissioning some of the most innovative and exciting examples of public art in America.

Developed by the Americans for the Arts' Public Art Network, the *Public Art 2014 Year in Review* selects the most exemplary public art projects completed between April 2013 and April 2014 in the United States. Adjudicated and curated by Cath Brunner, Director of Public Art, 4Culture-Cultural Development Authority of King County, Seattle, WA, Ralph Helmick, Artist, Newton, MA, and Janet Zweig, artist, Brooklyn, NY, the projects were selected out of a field of over 340 entries, with only the top 37 projects in the nation being showcased.

“We are proud to receive this prestigious acknowledgment of the quality and creativity of the artists’ projects being commissioned by our program,” said Michael Spring, Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs. “These innovative public art commissions were so successful because of the close collaboration with our colleagues at PortMiami. We are particularly grateful for this recognition because these public art works are the first ones for two talented Miami artists.”

Miami-Dade projects featured in the *Public Art 2014 Year in Review* were Bhakti Baxter’s *Coral Reef City*, an installation of eighteen parking toll booth wraps featuring macro photographs of corals produced in collaboration with Coral Morphologic, a Miami-based scientific art endeavor led by marine biologist Colin Foord and musician Jared McKay; and Jim Drain’s *The Bollard Project*, consisting of 1,000 artist-designed bollards thoughtfully arranged in color sequences and rigorous geometries that reference maritime flag signage. These works of art have transformed the entire landscape of PortMiami into an outdoor public sculpture and serve to enrich one of America's busiest ports, welcoming more than 4 million cruise vacationers each year.

About the Artists

Bhakti Baxter (1979) was born in Miami, Florida where he currently lives and works. Baxter received his BFA from the New World School of the Arts College in Miami and his work has been featured in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Miami and around the world. Investigating the territory amid science and spirituality, his practice aims to bridge a medial relationship between the seemingly ordinary and the interpretive freedom of abstraction.

Jim Drain (1975) was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and is currently based in Miami, Florida. Drain has exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe: he was awarded the Baloise Prize for his Statements exhibition at Art Basel in 2005, participated in the DAAD residency program in Berlin in 2008, and was commissioned to create a site-specific installation for a new US Embassy compound in Rabat, Morocco. His work is held in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, among others.

** Images and project descriptions are available upon request**

Americans for the Arts' Public Art Network (PAN) develops professional services for the broad array of individuals and organizations engaged in the expanding field of public art. More than 300 public art programs exist in the United States at the federal, state, and local level. PAN is designed to provide services to the diverse field of public art and to develop strategies and tools to improve communities through public art.

The Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council develop cultural excellence, diversity and participation throughout Miami-Dade County by strategically creating and promoting opportunities for artists and cultural organizations, and our residents and visitors who are their audiences. The Department directs the Art in Public Places program and serves its board, the Art in Public Places Trust, commissioning, curating, maintaining and promoting the County's art collection. The Department also manages, programs and operates the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center, a campus of state-of-the-art cultural facilities in Cutler Bay, as well as Miami-Dade County Auditorium, Joseph Caleb Auditorium and the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, all dedicated to presenting and supporting excellence in the arts for the entire community. Through staff, board and programmatic resources, the Department, the Council and the Trust promote, coordinate and support Miami-Dade County's more than 1,000 not-for-profit cultural organizations as well as thousands of resident artists through grants, technical assistance, public information and interactive community planning. The Department receives funding through the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, The Children's Trust, the National Endowment for the Arts, the State of Florida through the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Other support and services are provided by TicketWeb for the Culture Shock Miami program, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, the South Florida Cultural Consortium and the Tourist Development Council. For more information, visit www.miamidadearts.org or www.miamidadepublicart.org

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