



Laundromat, 7 studio art complex in Little Haiti

the compelling questions of the rebirth of Little Haiti, what does the future hold for its community, will it suffer the same fate of Wynwood, displaced artist scrambling to find affordable space, the same artists that contribute to the buzz of the community and as it grows, they find themselves outpriced and helpless. Artist Luis Valle, developer Mallory Kauderer, owner of over 400,000 square feet in Little Haiti and Kobi Karp, renowned architect and with his client is developing a major mix use project slated for 28 floors, a hotel and greenspace of over 400,000 square feet in Little Haiti south, and David Mc Caulley, Director of Laundromat and Art on the Rise, a new artist complex in Little Haiti. □

*In writing this story it was inspiring hearing the voices of the pioneers and new-comers, as they begin to align their vision and narrative of the new things to come to Little Haiti. The community of Little Haiti is pure, rich, raw, vibrant. The Haitian people are resilient, united and determined, and I know for sure that Little Haiti will never be taken from them, they are the inspiration, the American experience of rebirth and 2nd chances. Little Haiti is here to stay, grow and prosper. Welcome to Little Haiti!" Beginning in March of 2017, the Art Experience will be doing Little Haiti Art and Cultural tours, please visit [www.theart-experiences.com](http://www.theart-experiences.com) or call 305-767-5000 for information on what to see in Little Haiti.*

### Q&A WITH THE PIONEERS

**SB:** What future do you see for Little Haiti?

**Carrie Duval:** The gentrification of Little Haiti is exciting to see, as new galleries and art studios open their doors. Little Haiti has deep cultural roots and as a community we seek for developers to respect the community, but I also know we have the government, which really listens to its people. Out of the all the places I have lived, Miami and its government officials are the most accessible to their constituents. I believe that we need a united front to ensure that the community is respected, and that the same reasons the developers came to Little Haiti, should be preserved in its new projects. We hope new jobs are created and local arts are involved in the many projects slated for Little Haiti.



Little Haiti Pioneer, Carl Juste, with his recent artwork in his Art Studio, before the development in Miami Herald, 27 years

**SB:** There has been an identity crisis for some residents and developers in Little Haiti, they state that its true name is Lemon City, established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a citrus farmland. They are strong opinionated and believe the only name that it should referred to is Lemon City. What would your sentiments on Little Haiti vs. Lemon City?

**Carl Juste:** "No one comes here looking for Lemons, or a beach, or glamorous women!" they come to find a unique authentic cultural neighborhood that was built on the backs of artists, activist and those who believed in a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance! Lemon City was the past, Little Haiti is the present, it was my father, Vitor Juste that renamed the district to Little Haiti, in the 1980s as a businessman and activist, he felt the Cubans had Little Havana why couldn't the Haitians have Little Haiti. He wrote a story for the Miami Herald named the Petite Port au Prince of Miami, the Herald felt the title was too long and renamed it Little Haiti."

**SB:** How did you meet and become involved with the resurgence of Little Haiti?

**Chauney-Gonzalez:** I moved to Miami in 1990, and have always been in the arts as an admirer and collector. I was the first Haitian woman major art collector in Miami, I saw Edouard amazing works of art and began to collect Edouard Duval Carre paintings. Edouard has a great passion for the arts and the community of Little Haiti and in 1998 we founded the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance (HCAA). I sit on many cultural boards, including trustee for the Perez Art Miami Museum and with grant writing and proposals we received grant money from the French government to fund French language programs at the Little Haiti Cultural Center for the children,

Flouren Mielde Chauney Gonzalez, co-founder & Chairperson, Cultural Arts Alliance, Board of Trustees to Perez Art Miami Museum



the schools in Little Haiti have many out backs and cannot afford a French language program in the schools, so the HCAA wanted to ensure the children didn't lose their roots and heritage, with the grant money we were able to fund the program, as well as our Art Basel initiative: Global Caribbean Arts Program and our new biennial Caribbean exhibition at the Little Haiti Cultural Center Gallery, we are in our 8th year collaborating with the City of Miami, the French Government and Art Basel to bring awareness to Caribbean Arts and Artists and Little Haiti neighborhood.

### Q&A WITH THE NEW-COMERS

**SB:** Will Little Haiti face the same fate as Wynwood with its displaced artists and galleries, due to the raise in rents and property?

**Valle:** "As an artist and local, I have heard and seen what happened in Wynwood, for it happened to me, as a curator and Gallery Director of Insley Gallery for 4 years, the landlord double the rents and the gallery closed. I found myself displaced and unable to afford Wynwood. After searching for a while, I was able to find a great location and price to open my new art studio in Little Haiti! Atelier Esperanza (named after my sister who passed away in a car accident.) As long as the sharks of Wynwood stay out of Little Haiti and now developers respect the vibrancy, rich culture, and don't abuse the local artists by treating them to grant great murals and create the buzz for art receptions to lure the cultural public, then turn around raise prices to make a quick buck! I truly believe Little Haiti will not be a Wynwood, we learned our lessons, now the community and world is watching!"

**SB:** What brought you to invest in Little Haiti?

**Kauderer:** "Many major real estate developers that were investing in the late 1990s in South Beach, starting to seek new opportunities as South Beach property values inflated, which caused the catalyst for investing outside of the beach and head west into Miami. Like Goldman to Wynwood, Robbins to Design District, I was too Little River and Little Haiti. As a developer I like to keep a low profile, I am not in it for the fame, I am a developer who wants to keep the integrity of the rich culture of the neighborhood and as a company we take a vested interest in keeping the business owners affial, by lending monies and creating associations which I am President of Little Haiti Stakeholders Association. The members are comprised of local business owners, which seeks to maintain an open dialogue with the community and ensure that the vitality of the neighborhood fosters in alignment with the new developments."

**SB:** What has been the reaction from patrons of the arts towards Laundromat art complex being in Little Haiti, do you find hesitation on their behalf to visit due to it being in Little Haiti?

**McCaulley:** On the contrary, patrons, collectors will travel to see great mid-career artists and emerging artist. They come in support of their local artists, or as visitors to find something new. We have been welcomed by the Haitian community and the art community as a great addition to its neighborhood. Our exhibits and receptions have had been very successful, attracting many new comers and old art collectors to find new inspiring art, while meeting and watching the studios artist at work.

**SB:** Kobi your name is renowned as the pioneer in numerous development projects in South Beach in the early 90s, Wynwood in the early 2000s, Edgewater, Little Havana with a roster of local and international developers that create new cities, in areas that once where lost known as "the lost metropolis", it wasn't surprising to hear that you are the architect in a major Little Haiti South project. The project brings a new tower with over 2,500 rental unit to rise up to 28 floors in the sky, 400+ hotel rooms, with 400,000 square feet of green space. All bordering Little Haiti South, what do you say to those that remark "here we go another Wynwood, another monster project, displacing its community?"

**Karge:** I say that as an architect, developer and resident of Miami, I know the stakes, the struggle and the challenges. But with new development come change and growth. With the promise of new jobs, arts in public places. My developer vision, along with my firm to to hire from the community, use local artists. We intend to hire from the community of Little Haiti, to purchase and commission local Caribbean artists for our public spaces. My client has been in Little Haiti for the past 15 years, and the new project will bring money, jobs and a new destination to visit both for locals the visitors.

Sheela Swartha, into media, the DRIPS at Laundromat Art Space



About the author: Susana Baker is an award-winning historian (historian hour gallery) curator, Creative Founder of The Art Experience, the number one company in South Florida to privately curate group or individuals through Miami's Art Districts. Winning the distinguished "Certificate of Excellence for 2015" by TripAdvisor. For a private curated tour of the Design District, Wynwood, Little Havana or South Beach go to [www.theartexperiences.com](http://www.theartexperiences.com) or for Art Basel go to [www.artbaselhours.com](http://www.artbaselhours.com) or call 305-767-5000. Contact: Calls Fine Art Photography, Armando Calls 305-903-7786, [www.callsfineartphotography.com](http://www.callsfineartphotography.com)