

Virtual art discussion to benefit Hillel at FIU

Sergio Carmona, South Florida Sun Sentinel

Amid the cancelation of Art Basel in Miami Beach this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hillel at Florida International University has partnered with a local law firm to host a virtual art discussion.

Unity Through Art takes place at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3. The Zoom fundraiser and art panel discussion will be filmed live from the home of Alan Kluger, founder of Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine P.L. in Miami. Kluger and his wife Amy Dean, a former judge, have a private collection of contemporary Latin American art.

The panel discussion will be moderated by art professional Laura Raifée featuring contemporary artists and gallerists including David Castillo, Xaviera Simmons and Tschabalala Self. While the artists will showcase their pieces, the panel's focus will be on art as a unifier of people and their work as unifiers.

“The goal for this event is to bring people together to discuss art with some of the most knowledgeable people in the art industry,” Kluger said. “With Art Basel canceled this year, people in the art community are looking for creative ways to have a similar experience.”

Funds raised from the event will go to Hillel at FIU in support of the Jewish students at the university.

“During this unpredictable time, I found it helpful to ‘think globally, act locally,’” Kluger said. “Hillel at FIU services 3,500 Jewish students, most of whom are from the South Florida area and will stay locally after graduation. Hillel at FIU is creating the future Jewish leaders of this community where I raised my family and still consider my home.”

Kluger continued, “I saw an opportunity to create this panel to spark some interesting conversation while raising money for this great cause.”

Kluger said, regarding the partnership with the Hillel, “My daughter Lisa Jerles is the president of Hillel at FIU.”

“We started brainstorming about ways to creatively program around the Art Basel void and

then this panel was born,” he said. “We had an initial Zoom planning session with the entire panel and the energy in the room was amazing. We are excited for the event on Dec. 3.”

Jerles, who is a counsel for the law firm, said, “My goal is to introduce Hillel at FIU to a broader community.”

“We have some of the best online program out there right now,” she said. “We hosted both Miami-Dade County mayoral candidates in October. We brought Ray Allen to FIU Diversity Day to talk about his visit to Auschwitz. Our programs are thoughtful and engaging for students and locals interested in learning new things.”

Jon Warech, executive director for Hillel at FIU, explained what he feels this event will mean for the Jewish students of the organization.

“We have one of the leading diversity and bridge building programs in the nation and creating a strong program that also welcomes the Jewish community at large shows our students that this isn’t just a campus gimmick but a true path to leadership,” Warech said.

There is a minimum donation of \$360 to Hillel at FIU to view the event.

Visit tiny.cc/hillelfu to make a donation.

Visit hillelfu.org or call 305-490-3607 for more information on the organization or the event. Visit klugerkaplan.com for information on the law firm.