

# REGEN PROJECTS

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*Impressive exhibits at Locust Projects and Vizcaya show how Art Basel has spurred local venues*

BY ANNE TSCHIDA  
Special to The Miami Herald

**S**ince Art Basel Miami Beach arrived a decade ago, it has come to serve a dual purpose. Along with its satellite fairs, it brings the best in contemporary artwork to our doors, turning Miami into the world's biggest museum for one week a year. But it also has forced Miami's art community to kick it up a notch. We now expect local institutions and galleries to deliver high-quality goods. This year is no exception, and the proof is already here, beginning with *Soul Manufacturing Corporation* by Chicago-based Theaster Gates, a coup for the not-for-profit Locust Projects. Gates has become an "it" artist, with a recent cover on *Art in America* magazine, a star turn at

Germany's acclaimed dOCUMENTA exhibition and, just last week, as the inaugural recipient of the New School's Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics. Politics play a major role in Gates' world and work, as visitors learned when he was at the gallery Nov. 10 to set up shop, quite literally. A trained ceramicist, with master's degrees in fine arts, religious studies and urban planning, he has made his *Manufacturing Corporation* just that: a living, breathing workshop where skilled "makers," as he calls them, craft pottery and pound out bricks. As he tells the audience on this day, he doesn't make art. In fact he does, and here in the

• TURN TO ART REVIEWS, 6E

## KICKING IT UP A NOTCH

**MADE WITH FOUND OBJECTS:**  
Theaster Gates' 'Soul Food Rickshaw for Soul Wares,' 2012 (wood, wheels, ceramic and porcelain wares).



LOCUST PROJECTS  
AN 'IT' ARTIST: Gates at the potter's wheel at Locust Projects.



YOUNG SUN HAN/KAVI GUPTA



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Design District he was as much a performance artist as anything. He is witty and well-informed about social dynamics, racial politics and urban redevelopment. He talks about projects he has been involved in from Baltimore to his neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. But it sounds much more like a spoken word performance than a lecture.

While holding an unfinished clay pot (he once had a show called *People of the Mud*), he is funny and self-effacing, but also serious about the merits of production and the importance of rebuilding blighted neighborhoods.

His dedication to the latter won him the Vera List prize, for the Dorchester Projects, in which he bought two abandoned Chicago buildings, determined to turn them into a cultural center and library using salvaged materials. It will happen, he says, "brick by brick."

Then he returns to a bench in the gallery to continue making pottery and bricks. Visitors are free to ask him questions, and he wonders if anyone has free time — they could stop by and read from a book, maybe some poetry, to keep the crafts people entertained. To that end, he has brought in a yoga instructor and DJ who will occupy the space until the exhibit ends.

Gates does make art pieces, ones that show in his galleries, in museums and at fairs such as the 2012 Armory. Usually they are made from found objects, often from the debris of a decaying structure. One such work, a rickshaw, stands in the front of the Locust space.

Gates himself will return to work at his Soul company for the week of Art Basel, which opens Thursday, sitting at the various work stations and inviting dialogue. He'd like you to take part in this production. Gates also will be highlighted in the main convention center fair at the booth of his Chicago gallery, Kavi Gupta.



WORLD RED EYE



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GINGER PHOTOGRAPHY

'SOUL MANUFACTURING CORPORATION': Painter Yoko Fukata, from top, DJ Seamstar and a yoga instructor are part of Theaster Gates' show.

chival stills and gorgeous contemporary cinematic footage, McElheny added a narration. Referencing real characters who helped make the fantasy villa, he added a storyline about a lost diary, describing a se-

the gardens, at a location that references the imaginary passage through which the characters of the Light Club would have traveled to find their way to the electrified spa.

After that, the 30-minute