

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**The Center for Writing and Literature at Miami Dade College to Lead Collaboration Thanks to a Knight Foundation Arts Challenge Grant**

**Miami, Dec. 16, 2014** – The Center for Writing and Literature at Miami Dade College (MDC) will collaborate with **Ranjana Warier**, winner of **The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight Arts Challenge**, which funds ideas that bring South Florida together through the arts. In an effort to highlight Miami's ever-changing and diverse cultural makeup, the project, "Indian Dance/Afro-Caribbean Poetics: A New American Performance Collaboration," will combine the talents of Warier, an internationally acclaimed Indian dancer and choreographer, and Adrian Castro, a poet of Afro-Caribbean heritage. The collaboration sets traditional Indian dance to the rhythms of Castro's verse, portraying how two seemingly disparate cultures are both about humans' needs to express themselves and to tell stories.

The Center will facilitate all aspects of this "only in South Florida" project, including two stage shows that will maintain the integrity of ancient Indian art forms while exploring themes found in the work of a poet whose artistic preoccupations are rooted in Afro-Caribbean cultural rhythms. The Center will also produce a website that will document, and encourage, an understanding of the project, including the cultures and artistic choices of the artists, how two different cultural expressions found commonalities, and how South Florida, home to people from all over the world, can serve as an example of for other cities. The process of creation will be explored during a conversation with MDC and New World School of the Arts students, shedding light on how artistic choices were worked out between the partners.

The project starts February 2015 and culminates with performances in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties during National Poetry Month, April 2016.

**Ranjana Warier** is the artistic director of Rhythms School of Dance, a training center for Indian Performing Arts. Located in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Rhythms School of Dance thrives on promoting the artistic traditions of India through professional training and student performances. For more information, visit [www.erhythms.net](http://www.erhythms.net) or <https://www.facebook.com/RhythmsFL>.

**Adrian Castro** is a poet, performer, and interdisciplinary artist. He was born in Miami from Caribbean heritage, which has provided fertile ground for the rhythmic Afro-Caribbean style in which he writes and performs. He is the author of *Cantos to Blood & Honey* (Coffee House Press), *Wise Fish* (Coffee House Press, 2005) and *Handling Destiny* (Coffee House Press 2009).

**About the Center for Writing and Literature**

The Center for Writing and Literature @ Miami Dade College promotes reading, writing and theatre throughout South Florida through activities open to all. Its Generation Genius programs for children and teens promote literacy and learning. Its creative writing program has national appeal, with courses taught by local and visiting authors. In 2012, the Center celebrated its tenth year with a renewed commitment to the advancement of literary and theater arts. The Center collaborates with a number of cultural institutions and other partners in South Florida, and throughout the state, to create innovative or theme-based initiatives year-round.

**About The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. The foundation believes that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more, visit [www.KnightFoundation.org](http://www.KnightFoundation.org).

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