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News: Cover Mix It Up: Spring Arts

Call them collaborations, call them partnerships, call them boundary-crossing, cross-pollinating, genre-blurring hook-ups -- whatever the term, the urge to merge has never been more prevalent in the arts than it is today. The myth of artist-as-loner was always just that -- a myth -- but for reasons both aesthetic and commercial, alliances have become increasingly appealing.

New technologies that allow for easier, faster connections among people have helped power this trend, but it's also a reflection of the ever-tenuous economic status of artists and arts organizations; they know there's safety in numbers. And it's about chemistry; mix a painter and a dancer, a rock band and a filmmaker, even an arts institution and a savvy city agency, and -- pow! -- you might just come up with something new and maybe even explosive.

That's why this year's Spring Arts Issue focuses on a woman who's been an arts alchemist for almost half a century, the postmodern dance pioneer Trisha Brown. As Megan Voeller's story on p. 22 points out, Brown has long been fascinated with the intersections between dance and other art forms, and her residency at the University of South Florida has enabled her to take those interests even further. Megan's story is also a reminder of the invaluable work being done at USF's Institute for Research in Art, where visionary director Margaret Miller is helping artists forge new paths -- sometimes with the help of the university's science departments.

Matchmakers like Miller are vital to Tampa Bay's arts community, spread out as and throughout the neighborhoods. That's where organizations like Creative Tampa serving not only as a virtual hub for arts information but also making marriages world -- like the recent Salon Night at Ruth Eckerd Hall with the Taylor 2 Dance co-presentation with city, county and state governments. Tampa's ubiquitous creative manager Paul Wilborn has already shown the power of mixing it up, helping place a collective in an unused train station and injecting new energy into the Gasparilla through the Booty Art Expo. And emerging leaders like the Tampa Downtown Project and Finn are driven by the belief that there's no shortage of talented people in the area and find a way to bring them together.



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