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ENTERTAINMENT

## Miami Film Festival is leaving its South Beach home and moving to downtown

BY RENE RODRIGUEZ AND NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

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Crowds line up outside the Olympia Theater in downtown Miami for the opening night of the Miami Film Festival in March 2016. The festival will continue to screen films at the historic venue but is relocating the bulk of its screenings from Miami Beach to the Silverspot Cinema in downtown Miami.

The Miami Film Festival is taking a lead from the cool kids and leaving South Beach for the hipper downtown Miami area.

After 17 years of screenings at the Regal South Beach on Lincoln Road, the festival is moving to snazzy new digs at the Silverspot Cinema at 300 SE Third Street.

Festival director Jaie Laplante announced the move during a Downtown Development Authority board meeting on Friday. The taxpayer-funded DDA voted to give the festival a \$100,000 grant to help longtime festival goers used to the Lincoln Road cinemas to find its new location and navigate the surrounding transit and parking options.

“The downtown area is bristling with new energy,” Laplante said about the move. “It feels like a neighborhood going through a rebirth and the Silverspot people have been so phenomenally welcoming.”

The Silverspot Cinema, [which opened in July](#), has 16 state-of-the-art auditoriums, reclining seats, a full menu of food and drink options and a bar/restaurant area. The theater is part of the 43-story Met Square tower that is part of the massive Metropolitan Miami mixed-use development. The project includes a Whole Foods market, a hotel, condos and apartments.



The 2019 edition of the festival runs March 1-10. The festival will continue to screen films at other venues such as the Olympia Theater, the Coral Gables Art Cinema, the Tower Theater and O Cinema Miami Beach.

In 2002, under the supervision of festival parent Florida International University, the Miami Film Festival expanded from its longtime home base of the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts to South Beach in the hopes of drawing a wider audience.

“Regal Cinemas has been a great sponsor to us over the last 19 years and we are grateful for the support they have given us,” Laplante said. “We just feel it’s time to move neighborhoods and return the festival to its original home of downtown Miami.”

Earlier this month, the Knight Foundation [awarded the festival](#) a \$750,000 grant, to be awarded over five years, to help fund the event’s awards and expand its programming.

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The population of the greater downtown Miami continues to swell. Currently an estimated 92,235 people live there — the majority [being young professionals between the ages of 25-44](#) — and that number is expected to grow another 19 percent by 2021.

Last year's festival, which is presented by Miami Dade College, drew an estimated 60,000 people.