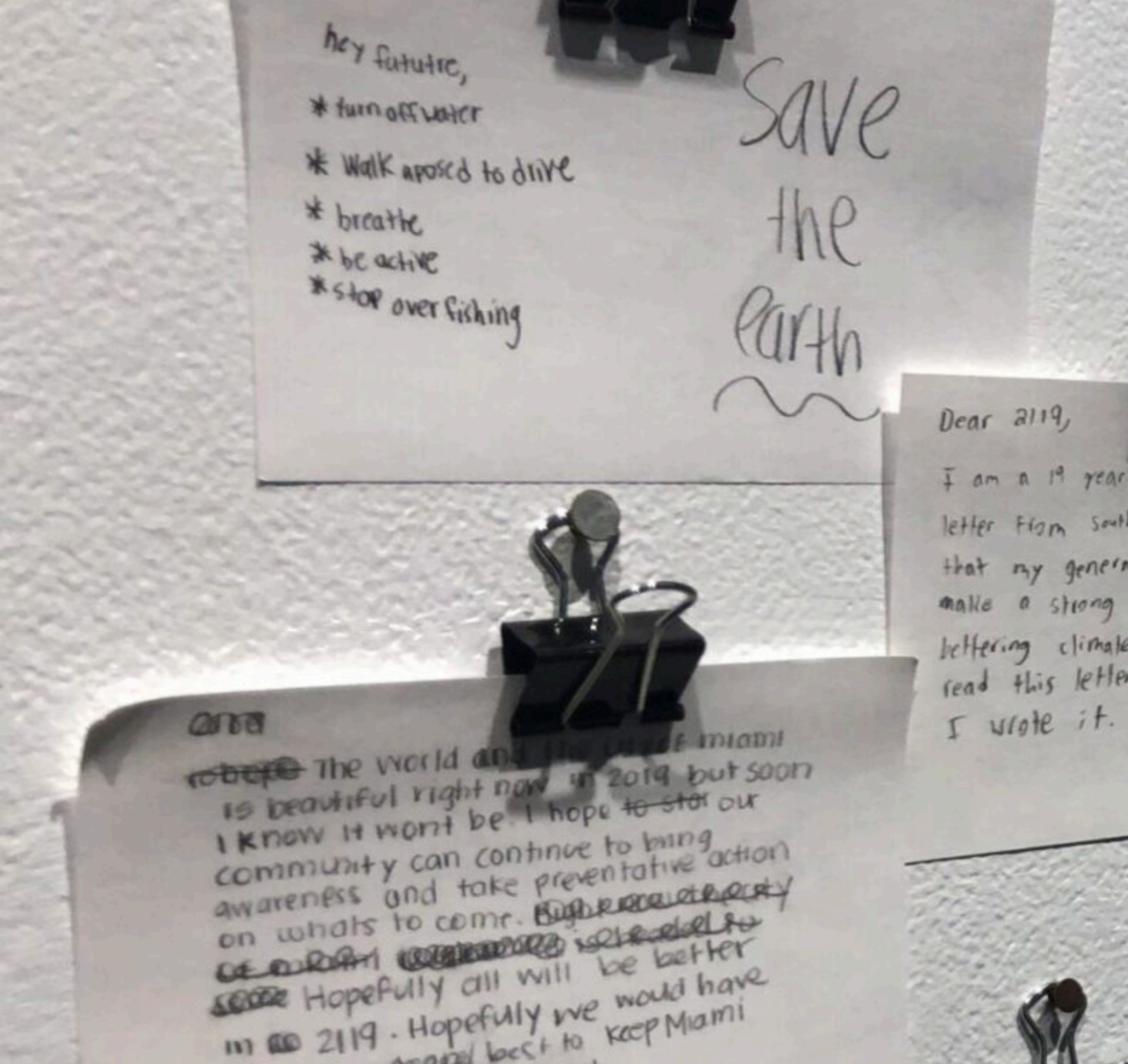


LETTERS TO THE FUTURE

BY XAVIER CORTADA

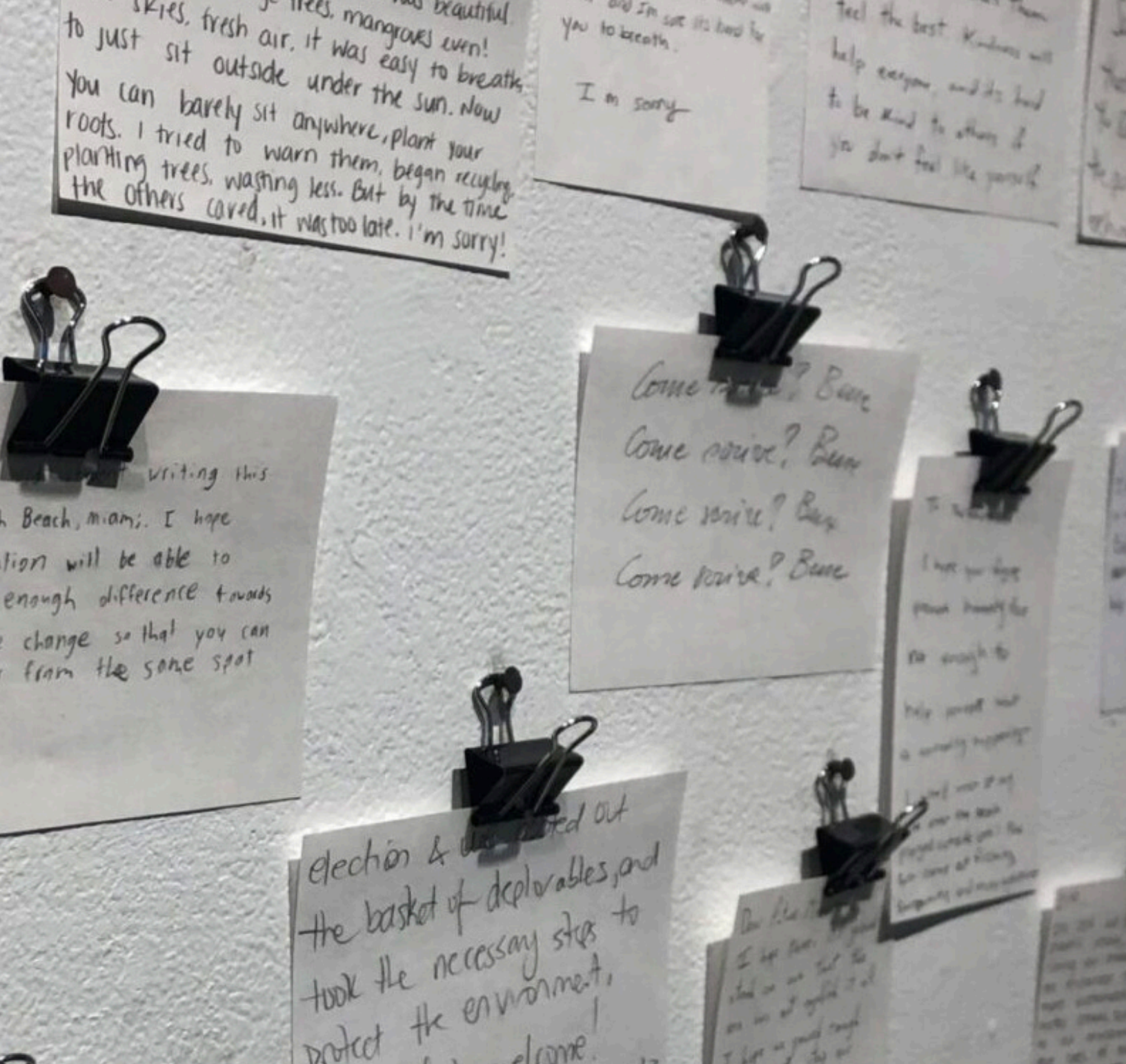


ABOUT LETTERS TO THE FUTURE

Today, too many are in denial about the human impact on global climate change. By writing to someone in the future, we can't deny their existence. By writing to them, we create a connection to them.

Being able to connect with our progeny raises the stakes for us now. It lengthens the "care horizon" beyond our lifetime. It encourages us to do all we can now to protect our planet, its future generations and the animals we coevolved with.

Participants are instructed to write a letter to a person in the future, in hope that by naming the future, they can visualize and engage with it. Letters to the Future is not intended for those the letters are addressed to, but for the "breathing present".



With the public display of letters in Letters to the Future, Cortada builds upon a body of work that utilizes written words through “message murals.” Through the usage of this medium, Cortada is able to present a platform for his participant’s voices to be heard in a way that is aesthetically recognizable as a work of art. This immediately changes the audience’s interaction with these pieces, prompting a more comprehensive examination of what’s at hand.

Through the act of writing letters that display some level of concern for the future, the audience acknowledges the connection that the present has with the future, in hopes of prompting awareness and solutions to issues that affect us now. This acceptance of the future is both a literal and conceptual undertaking, as the literal participation of the audience in Letters to the Future concurrently acts as a form of acceptance of our current environmental reality. Through this acceptance of our current state, there can be no more ignorance towards the issues that the environment is currently facing.



ABOUT DO NOT OPEN

"Letters to the Future" (2019) exists as a later iteration of the original "DO NOT OPEN" (2016) project, as a way to broaden participants' care horizons towards future generations.

Where "DO NOT OPEN" and "Letters to the Future" differ, however, is in the presentation of the participatory aspects, the letters participants write in the latter project being displayed together as a mural rather than sealed and put away for a future time.



This presents the participatory project to be viewed through a perspective that is decidedly aesthetically focused, the use of the “message mural” effective in its aggregation of participant materials.

In this way, “Letters to the Future” works to promote an emotional resonance within viewers, prompting further examination of the entirety of the project as well as a stronger sense of participation through engagement with other participants’ writings.



Xavier Cortada is an artist, Professor of Practice at the University of Miami Department of Art and Art History and Artist-in-Residence at Pinecrest Gardens, where his studio, gallery and socially engaged art practice are based. Cortada's work is intended to generate awareness and action towards issues of global climate change. Using art's elasticity to engage others, Cortada educates and inspires community members to work and learn together to solve our community's problems.

The artist has created art installations at the North and South Poles to address environmental concerns at every point in between. He has developed numerous collaborative art projects globally, including peace murals in Cyprus and Northern Ireland, child welfare murals in Bolivia and Panama, AIDS murals in Geneva and South Africa, and eco-art projects in Hawaii, New Hampshire, Taiwan, Holland and Latvia.

Cortada has also been commissioned to create art for the White House, the World Bank, Pinecrest Village Hall, Miami City Hall, Miami-Dade County Hall, Florida Botanical Gardens, Port Everglades, the Florida Turnpike, the University of Miami, the Miami Art Museum, the Museum of Florida History and the Frost Art Museum.

His work is in the permanent collections of the Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), the NSU Museum of Art in Ft. Lauderdale, the Whatcom Museum, the Phillip and Patricia Frost Art Museum, the MDC Museum of Art + Design and the World Bank.

Cortada, born in Albany, NY and raised in Miami, holds undergraduate, graduate and law degrees from the University of Miami.

To learn more, visit www.cortada.com.



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