



Xavier Cortada, "Underwater HOA: Underwater Marker 8," 2018. (Photo: Guido H. Inguanzo, Jr.)

Underwater HOA

Xavier Cortada

The New York Times

The New York Times Style Magazine

12 Artists On: Climate Change

A dozen artistic responses to one of the greatest threats of our time.



Miami Artist Repurposes Campaign Signs To Spark Conversation About Sea Level Rise



Pinecrest Is Getting An "Underwater Homeowners Association" To Help Respond To Sea-Level Rise



Miami artist Xavier Cortada continues his crusade against sea-level rise with a public project



Rising sea levels take to the streets of Pinecrest in new art display

MIAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Pinecrest Environmental Artist Xavier Cortada calls for action on rising sea levels

Killian Drive will become 'Elevation Drive' for a week



The Cultural Frontline

Art Against Climate Change



With Underwater HOA, A Florida Village Faces Its Sinking Future



Environmental artists show where sea level rise meets the road

Underwater HOA project part of this year's Art Basel



ARTIST XAVIER CORTADA'S NEWEST WORK IS A STATEMENT ON SEA LEVEL RISE



As Miami Battles Sea-Level Rise, This Artist Makes Waves with His "Underwater Homeowners Association"

Xavier Cortada's elevation markers are a colorful yet painful reminder of what Floridians stand to lose from climate change.



ART BASEL

Climate change is a hot topic at Art Basel, but this year locals are stealing the show

EDUCATION

Artist Xavier Cortada, students raise awareness of sea level rise



Xavier Cortada's re-purposed campaign sign "Underwater HOA, Marker 6," 2018. (Photo by Xavier Cortada)



Re-purpose your campaign signs to make a political statement about sea level rise

By Xavier Cortada

November 06, 2018

Tuesday, we voted in record numbers, exercising the right every veteran and civil rights leader fought so hard for us to keep. We cast our ballots. But our job is far from done.

Our nation is fractured, polarized. Governance is broken. Partisanship and divisiveness ruled the midterms. We need to come together to build a more perfect union. We need to animate democracy.

With the election behind us, let's leave the rhetoric and fear-mongering behind, too, and talk openly and honestly with each other about a threat we all face in a state surrounded by water: sea level rise.

Virtually all scientists tell us pollution traps heat in the atmosphere, warms the planet and melts polar glaciers, causing the oceans to rise. The science is indisputable. So is this: Antarctica is coming to town, and it doesn't care if you are a Republican or a Democrat. Protecting the environment can never be a partisan issue. We need to find a way to come together to solve the problem so the environment always wins.



Elevation Drive: Each intersection along Killian Drive featured one of Cortada's Antarctic Ice Paintings as a backdrop along with an number that represents that intersection's elevation number of feet above sea level. Learn more at www.underwaterHOA.com

[1] Gulliver High School students painting intersection marker. [2] Xavier Cortada lecture at Dr. Micheal Krop High School. [3] "Elevation Drive" Street sign on 72 ave. [4] 6' marker paining by Dr. Michael KROP High School. [5] 7' marker painting on 72 Ave by Gulliver High School.[6] 9' marker painting at 67 ave by Westminster High School [7] 11' intersection painting at 62 ave by South Dade High School. Photos by Adam Pascale.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, South Florida's sea level could be 3 feet higher by 2060 and as much as 8 feet by 2100. In the past century, the sea has risen 9 inches in Key West. So the trend is clear.

My house stands at 6.13 feet above sea level. Scientists say that by the time I pay off my 30-year mortgage seas may rise by another 2.5 to 3 feet. Feedback loops in the melting Arctic and our insatiable addiction to fossil fuels make that timeline woefully unpredictable. But there are other things homeowners need to worry about even before the water begins to lap at our doorsteps: Exorbitant flood insurance costs, property devaluation, contamination of clean drinking water with salt water intrusion. A rising water table will make our septic tanks inoperable. A warmer climate will affect agricultural productivity and usher in tropical diseases. Warmer waters will adversely affect marine ecosystems, making us more vulnerable to algal blooms. Rising seas will make our flood-insurance costs skyrocket, tax base vulnerable and property values unpredictable.

Let's take a stand today to protect our home. Take that campaign yard sign on your front lawn, paint it in white (the color of the Antarctic) glaciers and make a new kind of political statement.

Step 1: Visit Eyes on the Rise toolbox (www.eyesontherise.org/app). Using the toolbox, insert your home address to find your property elevation (mine is 6.13 feet) .

Step 2: Draw the number of your property's elevation on the right side of the sign. Paint a squiggly line across the bottom of the sign in blue to represent the rising seas. (You can make this drawing on paper and tape it to your yard sign.)

Step 3: Take a photo of the sign in your front yard (showing your home in the background).



Xavier Cortada "Underwater HOA: Underwater Markers 0 through 17," 2018.

Step 4: Visit the @UnderwaterHOA page on Facebook and "Like" the page. Post your photo, and a comment if desired, using the hashtag #UnderwaterHOA.

Step 5: Use the transformed political sign as a catalyst for a new kind of political conversation with your neighbors: Work together and learn to advocate for your neighborhood as we tackle the invading seas, and perhaps even organize yourselves as own the Underwater Homeowners Association. Visit www.underwaterHOA.com to learn more about this effort and our science partners at Florida International University and the University of Miami.

If a hurricane was heading our way, we would all prepare for it. Sea level rise is giving us a wider time horizon before it hits us. That's good. Given the unpredictability and the scale of the impact, we can use all the help we can to organize ourselves as neighbors and citizens. But first, we can't continue to deny the problems. Let's name it. Let's write it down, put it out there on our front lawns. Let's talk about it and problem-solve.

Unlike other global coastlines, South Florida's shoreline is particularly vulnerable. Neither a levee nor an embankment will not be able to hold back the rising seas. Porous limestone beneath the ground will allow the water to rise from beneath.

By mapping the impending crisis, I want us to make the invisible visible. Block by block, house by house, neighbor by neighbor, I want to make the future impact of sea level rise something impossible to ignore.

Let's rebuild our faith in one another. Let's come together and build a more resilient community. Let's care for one another and those not yet born. Let's create stronger democracy for those who follow.

Xavier Cortada is an artist and collaborator with the McMurdo Dry Valleys Long Term Ecological Research project in Antarctica. He was recently elected chairman of the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council, a 15-member volunteer advisory board.



Xavier Cortada's "Underwater HOA: Underwater Markers," 2018, Part of a site-specific, participatory public art installation. Photos by Adam K. Pascale

The New York Times

Excerpt from **The New York Times** "12 Artists On: Climate Change" article (August 22, 2018)

In response to South Florida's vulnerability to rising sea levels, the village of Pinecrest, Florida will encourage its 6,000 households to install an "Underwater HOA" yard sign (similar to the 18- by 24-inch "Home for Sale" yard signs used by realtors) on their front lawns during the first week of December. I numbered each yard sign from 0 to 17 feet (the municipality's land elevation range) to show how many feet of melted glacial water must rise before a particular property is underwater. The backdrops of the signs are watercolor paintings I made in Antarctica while a fellow with the National Science Foundation Antarctic Artist & Writers Program in 2006. These paintings were created using water from the very glaciers that threaten to melt and drown Miami.

By mapping the impending crisis, I make the invisible visible. Block by block, house by house, neighbor by neighbor, I want to make the future impact of sea level rise something impossible to ignore. By asking participants to join the newly chartered group Underwater HOA, I hope to engage my neighbors as problem solvers who will learn and work together now to better prepare themselves and their heirs for the chaos to come.

– Xavier Cortada



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