

Xavier Cortada
Professor of Practice: Artist at
the University of Miami
Interests: Global Climate Change,
Social Engagement, Environment



Xavier Cortada is Professor of Practice: Artist at the University of Miami as a faculty member of the Department of Art and Art History. He has [exhibited](#) his work in museums, galleries and cultural venues across the Americas, Europe, Africa and Antarctica—and locally at the **Miami Art Museum**, the **Bass Museum of Art**, the **Miami Science Museum** and the **Historical Museum of Southern Florida**.

Recent group shows include the **Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art** in Colorado (2007), the **Nobel Peace Center in Oslo**, Norway (2007), the **BOZAR Center for Fine Arts** in Brussels, Belgium (2007), and the **Ministry of Culture in Monaco** (2008). Please visit www.cortada.com/calendar.htm for details.

Cortada has created art for the **White House**, the **World Bank**, the **Florida Supreme Court**, and the **Museum of Florida History**. In his hometown, Cortada's commissioned work hangs in **City Hall**, **County Hall**, and the facade of the **Juvenile Courthouse**.

Cortada has worked with groups across the world to produce numerous large-scale murals and community art projects, including: environmental installations on **Miami Beach** and the **South Pole**. International AIDS Conference murals in **Switzerland** and **South Africa**, peace murals in **Northern Ireland** and **Cyprus**, and child welfare murals in **Panama** and **Bolivia**.

In 2007, as a recipient of the **National Science Foundation Antarctic Artists and Writers Program**, he created site-specific installations at the South Pole. In June 2008, through the fiscal sponsorship of the **New York Foundation for the Arts**, Cortada will travel to the North Pole to install some of these pieces there.

Cortada holds three degrees from the **University of Miami** – a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Public Administration and *Juris Doctor*. The Cuban-American artist's work and writings are preserved in the Xavier Cortada Collection of the University of Miami Libraries Cuban Heritage Collection.

EDUCATION

- 1987 – 1991 Juris Doctor, School of Law, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- 1986 – 1991 Master of Public Administration, Herbert Miami Business School, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- 1982 – 1986 Bachelor of Arts, College of Arts & Sciences, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- 1993 National Leadership Fellows Program for Join Together, a National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse, Boston University School of Public Health, Boston, MA

ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL

- 2020 – present Professor of Professional Practice, (secondary appointment), Department of Pediatrics, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Miami, FL
- 2019 – present Professor of Practice, Department of Art and Art History, College of Arts and Science, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
- 2011 – 2018 Visiting Faculty Administrator and Artist-in-Residence, College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts (CARTA) and College of Arts, Sciences and Education (CASE), School of Environment, Arts and Society (SEAS), Florida International University, Miami, FL
- 2000 – 2003 Voluntary Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Miami, FL
- 1998 – 2004 Voluntary Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Miami, FL
- 1995 – 1997 Program Director, South Dade Development Program, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Miami, FL
- 1992 – 1993 Research Assistant Professor and Director, Juvenile Violence and Delinquency Prevention Programs, Center for Minority Families/Center for Family Studies, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, Miami, FL
- 1990 – 1992 Executive Director, Regis House, Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center

LEADERSHIP

- 2019-present Committee of Scientists (COS), Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest, White Mountains National Forest, Compton, NH
- 2019 Influencers, Miami Herald, Miami, FL
- 2018-present Collaborator, McMurdo Dry Valleys LTER (Long Term Ecological Research), MCM McMurdo Dry Valleys, Antarctica
- 2018 – 2020 Chair, Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, Miami, FL
- 2018 Influencers, Miami Herald, Miami, FL
- 2018 – present Steering Committee, Climigration Network, Washington, DC
- 2017 – present Board of Directors, University of Miami Alumni Association, Coral Gables, FL
- 2016 – 2019 Board Member, South Arts, Atlanta, GA
- 2008-2012 Vice Chair, Florida Council on Arts and Culture, Tallahassee, FL
- 2005 – 2020 Councilor, Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs Council, Miami, FL
- 2003 – 2005 Director, University of Miami School of Law Alumni Association, Coral Gables, FL
- 2000-2003 Executive Committee, Miami-Dade Community Relations Board, Miami, FL
- 2000-2003 Board of Trustees, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Miami, FL
- 2000-2003 Board of Directors, Spanish American League Against Discrimination, Miami, FL
- 1997-1999 Advisory Board, University of Miami School of Law Children and Youth Law Clinic, Coral Gables, FL
- 1988-1998 Local Board Member, Selective Service System (Draft Board), Coral Gables, FL
- 1995-1997 Board of Directors, Health Crisis Network, Miami, FL
- 1994-1997 Chair, Juvenile Court Committee of the Dade County Bar Association, Miami, FL
- 1988-1997 Board Member, Vice Chair (1990-97), and President (1989-90), Regis House Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Abuse Center, Miami, FL
- 1991-1993 Chair, City of Miami Youth (Gang) Task Force, Miami, FL

QUOTES:

"My work aims to challenge us to find deeper meaning in our present lives by exploring the paths of those who came before us and our relationship to the natural world.

In 2006, I created **Absence of Place**, a photo installation at the Miami Art Museum. In it 180 present-day images of absent Miami structures were printed on yellow-card stock and hung in plastic bags. On the wall, beneath each photo I wrote a caption of a memory generated at that site. I did so to give context to the new building at the site -- and to give the now absent building life in our collective memory.

Other pieces explore our ability to coexist with nature: In **The Reclamation Project**, I hung 252 mangrove seedlings (in plastic, water-filled cups) at the Bass Museum and worked with volunteers to place another 2500 across South Beach, `reclaiming` an island that once a lush coastal ecosystem thriving with mangroves.

A follow-up urban reforestation eco-art effort, **Native Flags**, is currently being implemented through the Miami Science Museum to re-grow Miami's native tree canopy. Both challenge us to seek ways to coexist with the nature.

In January 2007, as a National Science Foundation Antarctic Artists and Writers Program grantee, I traveled to the South Pole to create site-specific installations about our interconnectedness to one other and our planet: In **The Longitudinal Installation**, I arranged 24 shoes in a circle around the South Pole as a proxy for those affected by global climate change in the world above.

In the **150,000-year Journey**, I used a moving ice sheet to mark time: I planted a mangrove seedling at the South Pole, embedded in the ice it will ride for 150,000 years towards the water's edge where, theoretically, it will set its roots. The piece addresses the travails of an immigrant's journey --- the displacement, the solitude, the struggle to simply integrate oneself into society. In a more universal way, the 150,000-year Journey, explores humankind as it evolves through time. It will take almost 150,000 years for this art piece to be completed. What will our world look like then? Juxtaposing Antarctica's geological time frames with human time frames (see **The Markers**, which uses flags to mark the movement of the ice sheet during the past 50 years, when humans first inhabited the South Pole), my art reaffirms the notion that we are simply custodians of the planet who should learn to live in harmony with nature."