

The Reclamation Project

Coastal Reforestation

by Xavier Cortada



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The Reclamation Project explores our ability to coexist with the natural world. It reminds us of what our community looked like before all the concrete was poured.

Mangrove “Reclamation”

Mangroves are important for they create the interface between land and water where marine life takes hold. Small fish find refuge from predators in their intricate roots, which also serve to protect the shoreline from erosion during hurricanes.

Mangroves once existed across South Florida, lining Biscayne Bay and its connecting waterways. Today however, there are few places where mangrove seedlings can take root on the Bay, for it has been barricaded by man-made barriers such as sea walls and development.

The Reclamation Project enables mangroves to take root once more. Every year, Project volunteers collect mangrove seedlings from nature preserves, in areas where they would have otherwise perished, and distribute them across the community, symbolically “reclaiming” urban areas where mangrove forests once flourished.



Origins

This participatory eco-art project was launched by Xavier Cortada on Earth Day 2006, during the opening of a month-long installation at the Bass Museum of Art. In this inaugural year, 2,500 red mangrove seedlings were adopted by retail businesses across South Beach. In subsequent years, volunteers have collected seedlings and distributed them to retail and commercial businesses in South Beach, schools and the Miami Museum of Science.



The Reclamation Project: Coastal Reforestation

The Reclamation Project installation at the Miami Science Museum displays over 1,100 mangrove seedlings in clear, water-filled cups. There they will grow for a year until they are ready to be reforested.

Mangrove Reforestation

The Reclamation Project Red Mangrove seedlings, adopted and cared for by community members, are re-collected by volunteers at the end of the adoption period, then planted at a coastal restoration site in a group work day.

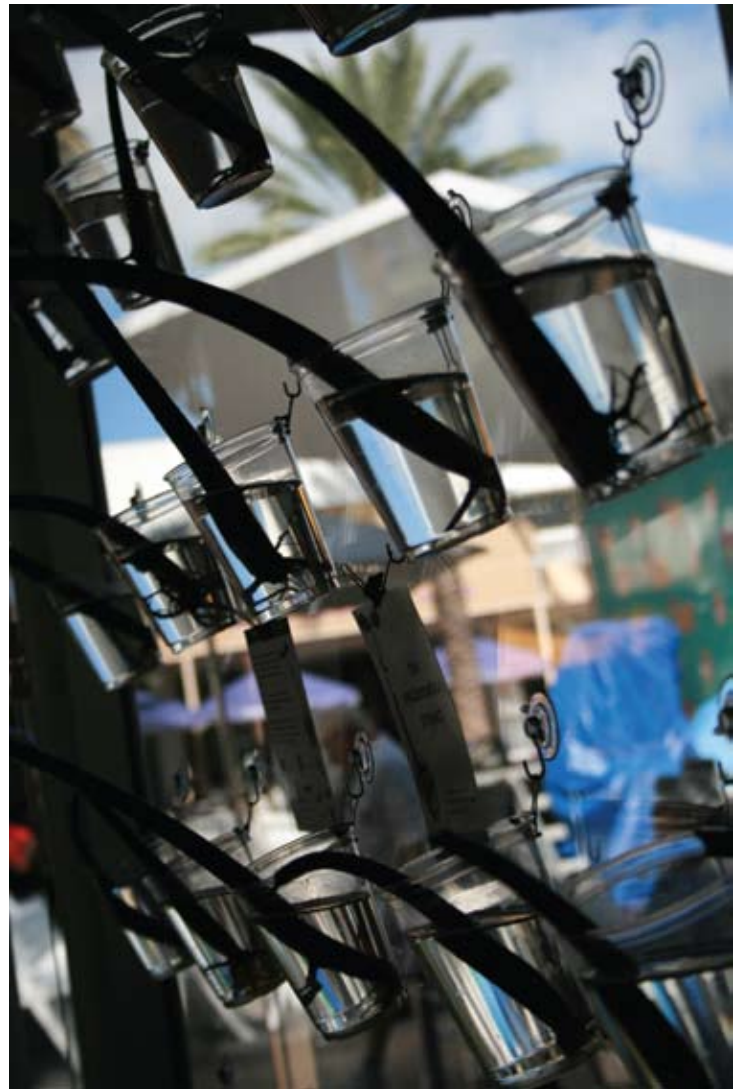
Annually, the Reclamation Project plants thousands of mangroves along our bay, rebuilding ecosystems above and below the water line.



Urban Reforestation

The project expanded in 2007 to include native tree reforestation in urban areas. Instead of mangrove seedlings, South Floridians are encouraged to plant native tree seedlings and a green flag in their yards. These green flags act as a catalyst of conversation and a call to action for neighbors to restore our native tree canopy. As their native trees grow, so should their interest in creating coexistence between our urban and the natural world.





Xavier Cortada

**The Reclamation Project
(Installations across South Beach)**

2500 mangrove seedlings in water-filled plastic cups on retail windows across South Beach
(Miami Beach, Florida 2006)



Xavier Cortada
The Reclamation Project
("Re-permanent" installation at Florida Botanical Gardens)

150 mangrove seedlings in water-filled plastic cups on wall
(Largo, Florida 2008)

A project of the Percent for Art Program, Pinellas County Cultural Affairs Department.



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**The Reclamation Project
("Re-permanent" installation at Miami Science Museum)**

1,100 seedlings in water-filled plastic cups on wall
(Miami, Florida 2007)



Xavier Cortada

**The Reclamation Project
(Installation at Bass Museum of Art)**

252 mangrove seedlings in water-filled plastic cups on glass wall
(Miami Beach, Florida 2006)



Xavier Cortada

**Reclamation Project
(Installation at Tampa Prep)**

400 mangrove seedlings in water-filled plastic cups on glass wall
(Tampa, Florida 2008)

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