

#### 4. Hanging Garden

**Problem:** Eco-artists work with scientists to develop ways of engaging communities in bioremediation. The natural world is truly an interconnected one. Sometimes, rebuilding healthy ecosystems requires not just replacing the native species humans removed, but also eliminating the dangerous ones humans introduced. The Hanging Gardens project is a series of indoor eco-art sculptures and installations developed by Miami-based artist Xavier Cortada that address the problem of exotic invasive species destroying South Florida's ecosystems. Describing the project, Cortada has written:

“For ‘Hanging Gardens,’ I propose to create vertical gardens... comprised not of species we want to grow, but of trees we want to kill. The installations would be a series of five “hanging” gardens, each created using plant matter (e.g.: cut branches, vines, bark, cones) from a different exotic invasive tree cut down and removed from the local environment... [I will] work with volunteers to remove exotic invasive species from the community and use the plant matter as the material/medium for the installation... Serving as public hanging gardens, the installations ... would enlist local residents in re-creating them at home. Making commodities out of plants and trees too costly for the state to remove, the eco-art project would encourage residents to seek, cut down and remove the vegetation themselves. Showcasing their work, these participants would then encourage their neighbors and friends to also “un-grow” plant species that threaten the their local ecosystem as vertical gardens in their homes. Indeed, through Hanging Gardens I want to encourage today’s city dwellers to go on a new kind of wilderness safari.”

For this assignment, you will each create a Hanging Garden sculpture using invasive species that have been introduced to the ecosystems of East-Central Alabama.

After reviewing Cortada’s project online, we will have a guest speaker from the Alabama Invasive Plant Council lecture to the class. You will then choose and research an invasive plant to use as the raw material for your sculpture. You will use the problem-solving process covered in the Introduction to Sculpture course to begin exploring this problem. We will discuss these ideas as a class before you begin developing prototypes of your sculptures.

**Caution:** Do not trespass on private property to obtain your wood. It is illegal to harvest wood from state parks. Wear blaze orange colors during hunting season. Beware of poison ivy. Do not fell large trees without professional assistance.

**Possible Materials & Tools:** You must again use wood to create a significant portion of your object, but all materials are at your disposal.

#### **Objectives:**

To consider how eco-art can engage with community to mitigate environmental damage and to help rebuild local ecosystems

To consider the broader ecological context as a source for untraditional artistic materials.

To understand the theory and practice of cradle-to-cradle design

To use drawing to investigate forms, concepts and construction methods

To execute your sculpture with an appropriate level of craft.

**Value:** 40 points

**Proposal due:**

**Working drawings due**

**Critique:**