

**15th Annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit –  
Art Activations  
November 16 & 17, 2023**

**Our Collaboration**

The [Miami-Dade County Office of Resilience](#) and [Arts Resilient 305](#), a program of the [Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs](#), collaborated in the selection of three organizations, [Artists in Residence in Everglades](#) (AIRIE), [ARTSail](#), and [Bas Fisher Invitational](#) (BFI), to curate special projects by local artists to be presented at the [15th Annual Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit](#) taking place on **November 16 and 17, 2023** at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

These three long-standing Miami-based organizations, and their artists, have come together and joined forces to showcase projects and art activations aimed at shedding light on the numerous ways climate challenges impact our region. The pieces will bring awareness, engage, motivate, and educate attendees to partake in meaningful action that will support our community and its future.



**About the Organizations**

**Artists in Residence in Everglades (AIRIE - [@airieverglades](#))**

AIRIE is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and residency program operating in [Everglades National Park](#) (ENP) and the Greater Miami Area. We believe artists are essential problem solvers who can reveal new narratives and solutions for social and environmental change through their artistic storytelling. AIRIE supports a paid month-long immersive [residency](#) for artists in the park to explore the intersection of arts and the environment. In addition, AIRIE provides its own [gallery space](#), organizes local [events](#), and fosters community with a diverse [team](#) engaged in the Miami art scene.

**ARTSail ([@art\\_sail](#))**

ARTSail Residency and Research Initiative is a nomadic and multi-faceted platform that fosters collaborations between cultural creators and climate experts to address South Florida's climate crisis. We facilitate artist connections with activists and scientists to explore the impact of climate change and man-made pollution on our waterways,

resulting in actionable climate advocacy initiatives. Our programs span artist residencies, exhibitions, and community outreach, bridging awareness to action and leveraging artists' communicative power for policy advocacy.

### **Bas Fisher Invitational (BFI - [@bfi.miami](https://bfi.miami))**

BFI is a W.A.G.E. certified 510(c)(3) not-for-profit artist-run presenting organization dedicated to creativity, experimentation, and discourse in contemporary art. BFI creates a bridge between Miami and the international art world by curating programs featuring both local and global artists at sites throughout Miami-Dade County, and in collaboration with national and international partnering organizations. BFI fosters community by offering support for artist projects, most recently through initiatives such as WATERPROOF MIAMI, a site-specific curatorial platform that presents exhibitions and public programming that directly address environmental issues facing South Florida; WEIRD MIAMI, a series of artist-led tours that show locals and visitors Miami through artists' eyes; and NOMADIC MIAMI, an experimental model for presenting site-specific projects that let artists lead the way to determine the best locations and methods to present their work.

### **Artists Bios**

#### **Dale Andree**



**[Dale Andree](#)** is founder and director of National Water Dance - NWD Projects, a performance project mobilizing dancers across the country for the environment. Focusing on the intersection of dance and the natural world, her work has been commissioned by Aspen Ideas: Climate Miami Beach 2022, Live Arts Miami for the 2020 LALA artist cohort, and AIRIE. Expanding her film work, in 2023 she presented her first Environmental Dance Film Festival: Dancing Out of Time with Andrew Chapman, director of the Mobile Dance festival. She taught for over 20 years at New World School

of the Arts in Miami and currently serves as co-chair on the National Advisory Board of the Earth Ethics Institute at Miami Dade College.

### **Joyce Billet**



Joyce Billet is a visual artist who merges her forward-looking technical expertise with conceptual ideas. Her background in architecture has influenced her work, which plays with materials and scale to mix the sensations of painting and sculpture. She explores the tensions and relationships between the natural and the artificial, between the unique and the mass produced, between tradition and progress. Her studio is located in Miami, at Fountainhead Studios. She has been selected to participate in group shows by curators such as Maurizio Pellegrin, Heather Darcy Bhandari, Margaret Carrigan, Nic Brierre Aziz, Grela Orihuela and Karen Grimson. Her sculptural installations were selected for the Untitled Art fair as part of the Special Project Program curated by Omar Lopez Chahoud. Billet graduated with a bachelor's in architecture from Pratt Institute and in 2010 she received a Master of Science degree in Advanced Architectural Design from Columbia University.

### **Reverend Houston Cypress**



Rev. Houston Cypress is a Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer artist and environmentalist from the Otter Clan of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Houston believes that when it comes to environmental conservation, indigenous rights are everyone's rights, and that creative solidarity with nature means expanding our praxis of "chosen family." He has been serving the Love The Everglades Movement for 10 years – an environmental nonprofit concerned with indigenous solidarity, action, art, multifaith coalition-building, and reciprocity with nature. He presented at Institute of Contemporary Art Miami's Art + Research Center and contributed to their Digital Commissions. He also recently co-created a short film, executive produced by Superblue and Nowness. Recent artist residencies include the Heat Exchange, the Thread Residency, the Oolite Arts Studio Residency, and the HAT Residency. Houston received the 2022 Grassroots Activism Award and the 2022 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Poetry Award. He also helped to produce the first 2LGBTQ+ Pride Festival on Miccosukee homelands.

### **Nick Gilmore**



Nick Gilmore is a Miami-based artist and educator. Born in Alabama, he was drawn from a young age to the natural world and originally planned to pursue wildlife biology. He later worked extensively in the construction trades. These two trajectories factor heavily into his artwork, which focuses on the interconnectedness, as well as the disconnectedness, of the natural and built environments. Much of his art practice entails the salvage and preservation of Old Growth Dade County Pine lumber (*pinus elliottii* var. *densa*), a precious tree unique to South Florida and critical to the area's history and ecology. This material, a symbol of fraught industrialism and ecological mortality, signifies the perennial boom of denizens seeking fortune and paradise in this land of tropical paradox. Gilmore spent most of his AIRIE residency (July 2017) amid the pine rocklands in Everglades National Park, the largest remaining tract of this habitat on the planet.

## **Loni Johnson**



Loni Johnson is a multi-disciplinary visual artist born and raised in Miami. As an artist, educator, mother and activist, Johnson understands there is a cyclical obligation to give back and nurture her community with her creative gift. Through movement and ritual, she creates healing spaces for Black women and explores how ancestral and historical memory informs how, when and where we enter and claim spaces. Johnson graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from SUNY at Purchase College School of Art and Design. She is a Coordinator/Teaching Artist at Perez Art Museum Miami and Chairperson for the National Visual Arts Selection Panel for National YoungArts Foundation. She was the recipient of the 2022 Wavemaker Grant, 2021 Oolite Arts' Social Justice Award and a Knight Arts Champion in 2019. She is a frequent guest speaker, lecturer, facilitator, and performer.

## **Claudio Marcotulli**



Claudio Marcotulli initially trained as aeronautical engineer then later received his B.F.A from Emerson College in Boston and M.F.A from Miami International University of Art

and Design. Since then, his work has been exhibited internationally and has received support from South Florida PBS, The Knight Foundation and MDC Live Arts, among others. Marcotulli is a Miami-based artist, working predominantly in media, sculpture, and performance to create works that investigate his interest in technology and nature by illuminating existential questions around these subjects. His projects range from sculpture and performance installations to film and digital imagery that often reference memory, natural elements, and issues of climate change with a surrealistic approach. Marcotulli also explores principles of aerodynamics that reveal the science and poetry behind the mechanics of flight. He has been an artist in residence at Live Arts Miami's Lab Alliance, Mana Contemporary Miami and Laundromat Arts Space.

### **Deborah Mitchell**



[Deborah Mitchell](#) is a conservation artist focused on the shifting landscape shaped by human impact. A certified Master Naturalist, she engages in immersive fieldwork with biological field stations, park rangers and cultural leaders to gather insights that drive her creative process in her quest for knowledge and comprehension of the natural realm. Transitioning from photography, her primary medium, she metamorphoses captured instants into collages that incorporate elements like paint, fabric, and installations. Born in Toronto, Canada to Scottish immigrant parents and now residing in Miami Beach, Mitchell brings more than 17 years of experience-driven methodology to her artistic creations.

## Lee Pivnik



Lee Pivnik is an artist living in Miami who works across mediums, often returning to sculpture, video, and social practice. His artwork takes inspiration from living systems to imagine a future that is based on mutualistic relationships instead of extractive economies. His drawings, sculptures, and installations share this relational quality, referencing fungal networks, epiphytic plants, and emergent animal architectures that inhabit South Florida. He co-directs the Institute of Queer Ecology (IQECO), an ever-evolving collaborative organism that brings peripheral solutions to environmental degradation so these ideas rise to the forefront of public consciousness. IQECO projects are interdisciplinary but grounded in the theoretical framework of queer ecology, a tool for understanding ourselves, our environments, our biologies, and our collaborations through queer lenses. In 2022 he began a long-term project called Symbiotic House, which reimagines the home as a potential site for climate care. Symbiotic House will grow into a learning center to inspire local transformation toward regenerative design.

## Amanda Season Keeley



[Amanda Season Keeley](#) is a visual artist, curator, and publisher. Her practice utilizes the language of printmaking, sculpture, and text-based works, often forming community collaborations and multimedia interactive installations. In 2014, she founded EXILE Books, an independent publishing house and store specializing in artists' books, which operates out of her studio in Little Haiti and continues to evolve as an experimental creative project space. She is the recipient of several grants and awards, including the South Florida Cultural Consortium Grant, the Knight Foundation Arts Challenge, Florida Department of State of Cultural Affairs Grant, and New York Foundation for the Art's Blackburn Printmaking fellowship.

### **Laurencia Strauss**



Laurencia Strauss is a queer non-binary mixed Latinx and white settler artist and landscape architect from Miami. Their participatory projects, sculptural interventions, and community-based designs have been shared nationally and internationally as experiences of mutual vulnerability and care that challenge us to adapt toward a greater sense of interdependence. They have served as an Artist in Residence with Oolite Arts, Pike School of Art, Vermont Studio Center, and Radical Intention at The Luminary, in which each location exercised their practices of responding to both sites and social contexts. They have received numerous grants and fellowships, including a Wavemaker Grant from Locust Projects and the Andy Warhol Foundation. A Danforth Scholar at Washington University in St. Louis while earning their MFA, they also earned degrees at Rhode Island School of Design (Master of Landscape Architecture), California College of the Arts (BFA Sculpture with Distinction), and Oberlin College (BA Women Studies, Environmental Studies, and Black Studies).



## Alex Tigertail-Baks



Alex Tigertail-Baks was born in Miami and now is based in the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida community. Having studied at the Universal Technical Institute Auto Mechanic School, Tigertail-Baks applies his training as an airboat mechanic and an airboat driver with Tigertail Airboat Rides, often assisting with Miccosukee conservation activities. He also works for the Tribe through Elderly Services repairing house standby generators for elderly and medically dependent community members. Tigertail-Baks' collaborative artwork has been exhibited in the Blu Print Show at Bridge Red Project Space, Miami, Pa-Hay-Okee: The Land of "Grassy Water" at Art Serve in Fort Lauderdale, and in the Mní Wičóni part of the American Indian Workshop at the University of London Goldsmiths.

## Project Descriptions

### ***Above the Ground - Seeds To Be Gathered***

**Artist:** Joyce Billet ([@billet.joyce](https://www.instagram.com/billet.joyce))



In collaboration with Center for Subtropical Affairs and FIU Robotics and Digital Fabrication Lab. Supported by Villa Albertine.

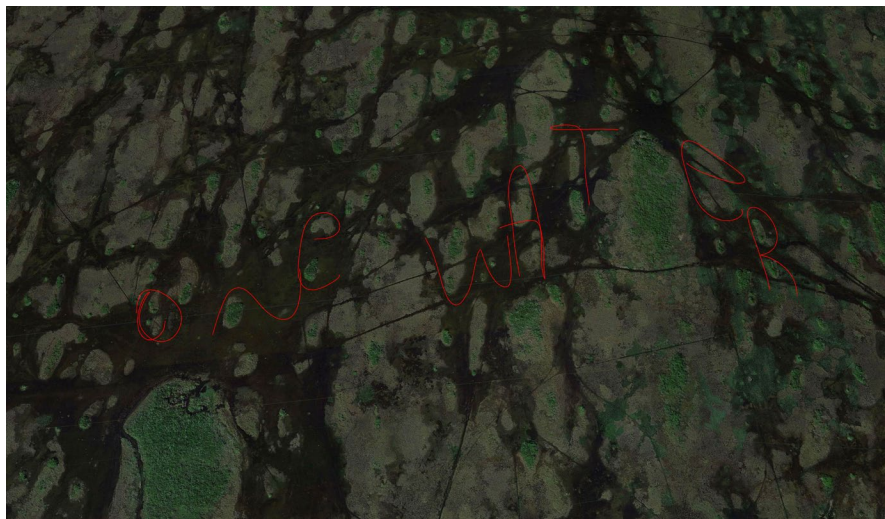
Joyce Billet's *Above the Ground* continues the artist's exploration of the connection between the natural and the digital through a sculptural intervention in which the manmade, the artificial and nature come together. Drawings and paintings from photographs of plant species inform the integrated cuts, etchings, and sculptural forms. 3D-printed renewable PLA vessels are camouflaged as organic forms filled with soil posing the question of how human beings can coexist with nature while adapting to new mediums of evolution. The installation functions as sculptures but also as an environment that plants and humans can inhabit simultaneously.

One of the main goals of this project is to spark conversation: "how can human beings coexist with nature while adapting to new mediums of evolution?"

### **Airboatography – ONE WATER**

([@laurencia.s/](#)[@love the everglades/](#)[@marcotulli/](#)[@tigertail airboat tours](#))

Artists: Laurencia Strauss, Reverend Houston R. Cypress, Claudio Marcotulli, and Alex Tigertail-Baks



A collaboration among creatives Laurencia Strauss, Reverend Houston R. Cypress, Claudio Marcotulli, and airboat driver Alex Tigertail-Baks, the team performs, experiences, and visually documents an action in the Everglades landscape.

Without GPS guidance, Tigertail-Baks used existing airboat trails on Miccosukee land to form letters by memory and traditional navigation to spell the phrase "ONE WATER." Cypress guided the movement so that letters such as the "O" were formed in keeping with the direction of the Circle of Life in Miccosukee traditions. Marcotulli documented the actions, while Strauss initiated the question of whether this experiment to write a

phrase with an airboat in the Everglades might be possible. The phrase “ONE WATER” was chosen from Betty Osceola’s words at a walk she led through Downtown Miami.

Videos and data documenting the action are combined with still images of the tracks on satellite base maps scaled to varying extents. These connect the airboat driver’s intimate knowledge of the landscape with satellite data tracking the boat. They place the action within a broad context of interdependent relationships of water across the state of Florida and demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of a person’s actions. Tigertail-Bak’s ability to write characters among sawgrass, hammocks, and tree islands in low water season - which limits passable paths - indicates his deep relationship with this part of the Everglades, a landscape that historically provided shelter for Indigenous communities while simultaneously creating distress and disorientation for the U.S. military.

“ONE WATER” attends to water as a circulating finite resource. It draws threads of continuity across temperaments and locations of water, and it emphasizes the preciousness of the health of water as a life force upon which we all depend.

Marcotulli and Strauss’ edited documentation will be visible as a video installation in the ballroom and main stage.

## Epiphyte and Stinkhorn Light

Artist: Lee Pivnik



*Epiphyte, 2022*

*mangrove, plaster, epoxy, slash pine rosin, cement, LEDs, pearl, opal, opalize ammonite, glass gemstone, oyster, wire, fabric*



*Stinkhorn Light at YoungArts Gallery.  
Photo by Jason Koerner.*

Artist Lee Pivnik's collaborative endeavor The Institute of Queer Ecology curated an exhibition for Bas Fisher Invitational and Bridge Initiative's Waterproof series entitled The Symbiotic Shore, bringing together artists who work in coastal flood zones advocating for a new empathic paradigm: to understand other species (and ourselves) through alternative survival strategies of symbiosis, mutualism and interdependence. Here, Pivnik's sculptures were made utilizing mangrove branches and illuminated with natural pine rosin, creating beacons that point toward his current research of sustainable building practices that keep in mind all plant and animal species.

## Let It Linger

Artist: Loni Johnson ([@lonijae305](#))



*Installation view of Let It Linger by Loni Johnson.*

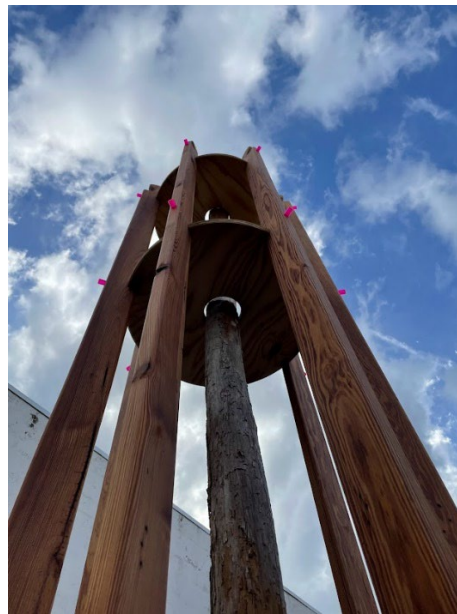
In Johnson's new work commissioned, Let It Linger, for the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Leadership Summit, sculptures of gourds are painted gold, and ornamented with photo collages of family members, cowry shells, beads, bangles, earrings, and natural material transform into devotional objects that investigate the history of African American ancestry, and how it impacts family today.

Within South Florida, climate gentrification is pushing out residents in historically Black neighborhoods that were built on higher ground, like Little Haiti and Overtown. Johnson's work honors these histories and asks us to consider what communities are being most impacted by Climate Change initiatives, and how we can use the crisis ahead to create equity rather than exclusion.

The placement of this new work encourages the viewer to look out the windows of the Miami Beach Convention Center at the surrounding construction projects, and to contemplate who was displaced to make way for luxury developments, who is seeking sanctuary as climate migration forces people from their homes, and how Miami Beach simultaneously seeks to address future climate change while displacing lower income residents.

## Reconstructed Dade County Pine Tree (Totem)

Artist: Nick Gilmore



*Reconstructed Dade County Pine Tree (Totem); 36”d x 17’h (Salvaged old growth Dade County Pine (pinus elliotii va. densa), CDX plywood, neon acrylic); 2022*

The south Florida Slash Pine tree (pinu elliotii var. densa), commonly referred to as “Dade County Pine” is a primary species within the pine rockland ecosystem. This critically imperiled habitat is found only in south Florida and a few Caribbean islands, and less than 3% of its original area remains. The lumber of the Dade County pine is exceptionally strong and weather resistant, which made it a choice building material in the early 20th century. The conjunction of technological advancements and the burgeoning south Florida real estate boom made swift work of most of the Dade County pine forests. For millennia indigenous cultures such as the Tequesta, as well as many forms of wildlife, depended on these forests. Today very few (if any) old growth Dade County Pine trees still stand.

The artist, Nick Gilmore, reclaims and collects old growth Dade County pine material and uses it in his myriad projects not only to preserve it and celebrate its physical characteristics, but also to spread awareness of the tree’s significant role in the history

of South Florida. The central trunk in this piece was found already cut into three sections. This tree had been standing dead for many years, its outer layers slowly eroding, leaving only the rock-hard heartwood, before it was cut down and soon after discovered by the artist. The outer beams of this piece were salvaged by the artist from a 1926 Miami house that was demolished in 2021. The union of these two forms of Dade County pine symbolizes the fraught history of our local environment and pays tribute to the role this magnificent tree offers regarding the built and natural environments in this land of tropical paradox.

## **Within the Tapestry**

### **Part 1 - Dance performance**

Artists: Dale Andree ([@nwd\\_projects](#)) and Deborah Mitchell ([@debmitchellart](#))



*Photos by Serna Zapata*

A captivating performance choreographed by Dale Andree, drawing profound inspiration from the concept of "sentipensar" – liberally translated as "thinking and feeling with the Earth." Rooted in the wisdom of indigenous peoples it asks us to see existence as a living weaving symbiosis, to change our thinking from the I to the we.

In the choreography, Andree masterfully weaves her personal interpretation of this ancient worldview with Deborah Mitchell's visually evocative contemplations on the kaleidoscope of Florida's natural marvels. The performance involves a dynamic ensemble of 5 dancers, accompanied by the soulful melodies of Seminole flute virtuoso Samuel Tommie, and the powerful voice of Molly Gawler.

## Part 2 - Photographic works (2 cubes, 4 x 4 x 4 feet)

Artist: Deborah Mitchell



*The Bird Cube 2022 digital collage photographs on vinyl and wood; Cube test page by Deborah Mitchell.*

Embedded *Within the Tapestry* is a captivating exploration of Florida's diverse natural wonders, portrayed through a mesmerizing blend of photographs, collages, paintings, and drawings. These artworks delve into humanity's impact on meticulously crafted environments, illuminating both our successes and failures. My creative process is deeply rooted in intertwining the rich cultural tapestry of local communities with the alarming decline of biodiversity.

Employing a methodical approach, I use my art as a medium for fostering dialogue, aiming to enhance our comprehension of the intricate relationship between humans and the natural world. Through this perspective, my goal is to raise awareness about the pressing need for environmental conservation and the imperative of coexisting harmoniously with our delicate ecosystems.

A pivotal aspect of my artistic journey involves collaborative efforts with esteemed organizations such as biological research centers, indigenous tribes, biologists, and National Park staff. These efforts have culminated in the conceptualization of the conference opening performance, meticulously choreographed by Dale Andree. Drawing inspiration from the profound concept of "sentipensar" (loosely translated as "thinking and feeling with the Earth"), this immersive performance is deeply rooted in the wisdom of indigenous peoples. It challenges us to perceive existence as a dynamic, interconnected symbiosis, encouraging a shift from individualistic thinking to a collective 'we.'

## Words to Sea / Palabras al Mar

Artist: Amanda Season Keeley ([@amandaseason](https://www.instagram.com/amandaseason))



*Action shot and wall panel installation.*

Words to Sea immerses visitors in a contemplative atmosphere of calm mindfulness and self-reflection. The interactive experience guides guests through a moment of focused gratitude and fosters inner balance as they consider their fragile ocean surroundings.

The focal point of the Words to Sea installation is an artist's book printed on water-dissolvable paper with eco-friendly plant-based ink. Each page contains a short affirmation, intention, and mantra about self-care and our environment. Viewers are invited to remove pages from the book and release these words into the nearby ocean. This ceremonial moment allows for a pause to breathe and set intentions of gratitude and positivity.

A dynamic panel system made of recycled cardboard accompanies the installation. Configured as a wave pattern within the space, this constructed environment illustrating both sunrise and sunset, provides a moment of calm and intimacy.

*It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to comply with all the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To request materials in accessible format, sign language interpreters, CART, and/or any accommodation to participate in any Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs program or meeting, please contact Francine Andersen at 305-375-4634 [culture@miamidade.gov](mailto:culture@miamidade.gov) at least five days in advance to initiate your request. TTY users may also call 711 (Florida Relay Service).*